

# BBS

CALLERS DIGEST

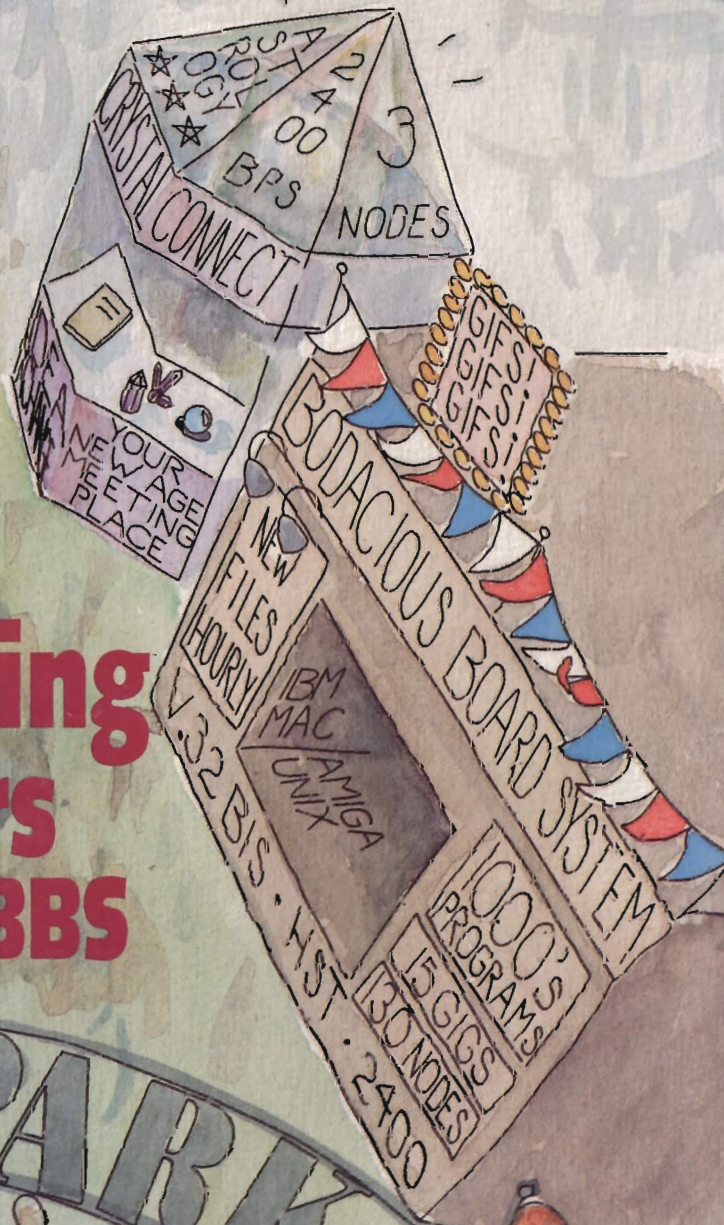
THE  
BULLETIN  
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MAGAZINE

May 1992

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# BBS

## CALLERS DIGEST

### Publisher/Advertising Director

Richard Paquette

### Associate Publisher/Editor

John Carcione

### Design and Illustration

Terry Wilson

### Art Director

Jeanne Lorenzo

### Subscription Manager

Joyce Harrington

### Printing

CEI Printing Co.

### Newsstand Consultant

William A. Townsend

BNL Distribution Services, Inc.

100A Centre Blvd. Marlton, NJ 08053

Tel: 1-609-985-8550

### Fulfillment Operations

Starr Fulfillment Corp.

900 Haddon Ave., Ste 326

Collingswood, NJ 08108

Joseph Starr, President

1-609-858-4411

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COVER: *Illustration by Terry Wilson*

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Rusty

Eddie

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# LINE NEWS LINE NEWS LINE NEWS

## PARAGON CANCELS ACCU\*LINK SERVICE.

Mr. Richard Paquette, Publisher  
BBS Callers Digest  
701 Stokes Road  
Medford, NJ 08055

Dear Richard:

Thank you for your very flattering review of Paragon Communications, Accu\*Link service in the April 1992 issue. It was a true pleasure working with BBS Callers Digest on the interview about the service.

It is with great regret that I must inform you that Paragon Communications has cancelled the Accu\*Link service. Unexpected changes in the ownership of the Corporation has caused this. Paragon Communications is actively seeking a buyer for the Accu\*Link service, so hopefully it will be back on the market, under

new ownership sometime soon.

Again I want to thank you and your staff for the excellent article and review of the service and apologize for any inconvenience this has caused you or your readers.

Sincerely, Terry Rossi, Director

## GALACTICOMM REVOLUTIONIZES PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR ONLINE TIME: 976-BBS OFFERS CALLERS CONVENIENT PAYMENT METHOD FOR BBS USE

Fort Lauderdale, FL — Galacticomm, Inc., the leading manufacturer of multi-user electronic bulletin board system software and hardware, has just introduced 976-BBS, a software/hardware package that interfaces with a "976-" or "1-900-" number to allow purchase of BBS connect time. System operators (sysops) of The Major BBS, Galacticomm's premiere BBS product, can now offer their users an easy, convenient way to pay for online time.

Callers dial the 976- telephone number and listen to a voice-synthesized message which issues a unique redemption code. The user then dials into the BBS and enters the code, which causes the system to post credits to that user's account.

976-BBS is the first package of its kind which integrates the "976-" technology with BBS accounting methods. "976-BBS opens a new door to callers in terms of payment options," says Galacticomm president, Tim Stryker. "No longer will a credit card or a pre-paid check be necessary to receive online time. Until

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Continued on page 43

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# ATTRACTING CALLERS TO YOUR BBS

What does it take to run a BBS so dynamic, callers will pay for a phone call to access it?

Paul Waldinger, age 41, had a very interesting story when we (BBS Callers Digest) visited him and SOM some time back.

Paul has a most interesting music collection. The need to catalog his vast collection drove Paul into computers. He had been working with one at his office, then he bought himself an Apple computer and a 300 baud modem. Then he started calling CompuServe and buying commercial software until one day he noticed that all this expense was dipping into his grocery monies!

Well, at that time in 1981, BBS's were far apart from each other. He did find Long Beach BBS, which turned out to be almost a local call, only 5 miles away from his home in Oceanside, Long Island, New York. When finding out that he could download "shareware" from this bulletin board that was in a lot of cases comparable to the "commercial" software, he took advantage of it and found a reliable package to catalog his music collection! Happy, yes he was.

Paul finally decided to start his own BBS for other music collectors, thinking that he could enhance his collection along with allowing other music collectors to enhance theirs. So he set off for some BBS software and fell onto RBBS 14.1.

So, now in late 1981 Paul Waldinger has a BBS, called Sound of Music BBS. After a couple of months, he switched to PCBoard 10.0 software with Eric Leitner uploading the code

to SOM. The main theme of Sound of Music BBS was music appreciation with conferences (local) lending themselves to collectors.

When PCBoard v11.3 was released, Paul decided to increase his incoming calls by adding another node. Now his system was capable of receiving double the amount of daily calls using a multi-tasker (Desqview). This solution didn't last long. Another node was needed for the increased calls along with Paul himself wanting to use the system to catalog his music, so he installed slave cards with another node.

Now up to three nodes and a few years later (1989), Paul, being adventurous, had not been afraid to "let's do this and see what happens". Well, it looked like things were going well and then he decided to install a Lan Network so that he

could add more nodes to the already very busy SOM BBS.

To date, the once known Sound of Music BBS with one node is now called Sound of Music Premium Information Net running 16 Nodes.

During the growth years, Rob Waldinger, now 18 years old and attending Nassau Community College, had watched very earnestly what his dad was doing. When his dad would call home to find the BBS locked up for one reason or another, he was able to walk Rob through fixing the problem. Thus Rob started learning what the BBS was all about.

Rob now Co-Sysops the SOM Premium Information Net. After the 1989 Gateway Convention, both Paul and Rob thought it would be a good idea to start a "Soap Box" conference where young callers could express their thoughts on almost any subject. Well, Rob monitored this message area and developed it to one of the top 5 conferences echoed in SmartNet.

Another message area that Rob started was the Teen Talk area which allows Teenagers a place to communicate with each other on subjects like Expressions, bowling, miniature golf, jogging, video games, and abortion. While visiting, we had the opportunity to watch Rob go through the day's messages and thought that he was doing an excellent job, relieving his dad from some of the day to day messaging so that dad could get some of the constant calls from modemers all over the country.



Paul Waldinger

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In fact, during our visit Paul received a voice call from a person that had just bought a new modem and didn't know how to log into the SOM Premium Information Net, so we listened to Paul actually walk this individual through the communication software setup, call the BBS, and download the new member packet. It was impressive to see a person as busy as Paul Waldinger take the time with new callers as he did.

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*The uniqueness of your BBS determines why both local and long distance callers will continue to use your system.*

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In talking with Paul, we asked him to offer us his opinions on one question which he covered rather well at Gateway: *Why should someone make a long distance call to his BBS?*

The following is what Paul offers to sysops running a BBS so that callers will "make a long distance call to your BBS"!

### **1. BBS UNIQUENESS**

The uniqueness of your BBS determines why both local and long distance callers will continue to use your system. Let's focus in on the theme or attraction that you gave your system — that is, every bbs has a design, goal or purpose; or should I say every "good" bbs has a motif of some sort.

Does your bbs clearly display the goals or motives of your system? Sometimes these themes are not clear to your new callers and they have to search through your bulletins to find the theme of your system.

### **2. BBS ACCESS— AVAILABILITY TO YOUR AUDIENCE**

Let's talk about bbs access, or the availability of your bbs to your audience. Your bbs can be compared in many ways to a magazine where your readers are your users or callers.

However, the major difference between a newspaper or publication and your bbs is the connectivity which you and your users need to communicate with each other.

That "connectivity" comes in the form of a modem and modem (compatibility) or COMPLIANCE (a magic Hayes work). Why? For example, I wanted SOM to be reached easily by as many people as possible. Since many people dial up the bbs during the business day, I wanted to be sure that there would not be a problem of compliance when they attempted to dial into SOM.

### **3. BBS DESIGNS**

By definition, a **file system** is a bbs system which specializes in having the latest shareware files and other files available for its user base. File systems range from direct product support systems offering upgrades to registered owners of their products to multi-gigabyte, multi-node systems with large file servers for their subscriber base.

**Messaging systems** are those which specialize in E-Mail exchanges among its users. Most messaging systems have grown into multi-conferencing systems which have specialty areas in conferences or forums.

**Conferencing systems.** Once you have established a basic theme to your system, you may wish to offer some variety to your users. The variety of themes which you offer them usually creates a "conference" or forum whereby a unique theme is further developed through the message base, bulletins and file directories.

**Multiple topics of discussions.** A successful conference will have multiple message threads evolving at one time, all relating to the central theme of the conference. High trafficking message conferences such as the SOM "Soapbox" conference display this feature all the time. It's not unusual to find 150-200 new messages a day in a this conference.

**Single area topic/file distribution.** Product distribution areas usually find themselves with conferences that have unique message threads with supporting files. Very commonly

found on commercial bbs systems that offer software upgrade support such as the FAS support area for the JTFax boards on the "Online with Hayes" bbs.

**One theme with supporting files.** Large mega bbs systems find themselves offering multiple conferences. Remember to keep each conference area unique. Nothing is more confusing to YOUR users than multiple conferences of the same theme on your system. Combine them. It will make it so much easier for your users to keep up with their mail and the various areas that interest them.

There's a mega-bbs system that supports five different WordPerfect user conferences, one for each of the major Email network systems. Problem is, users log on, and don't know which one they want to use and find it confusing to find threads that they really want to follow and participate within.

**Daily changes on the BBS (files and mail).** No one enjoys reading the same headline on the newspaper every day. In fact if they read the same header each and every day, they just stop reading it, and eventually stop buying that particular newspaper. Your bbs has the same analogy. Your users must be able to see these

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*Just by changing the color schemes, users are impressed by the new and refreshing look that you give to your system.*

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changes, from conference news bulletins, to new file directories and file areas, new conferences, new welcoming screens to other maintenance areas that many of us "dread" working with. Keep your system alive. Just by changing the color schemes, users are impressed by the new and refreshing look that you give to your system. Use color wisely. It can make or destroy your bbs system

*Continues...*



# IBECC

A Non-Profit Educational, Literary, and Scientific Society

P.O. Box 486

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## The 1992 International BBSing and Electronic Communications Conference

(303) 426-1847 [voice]

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### What is IBECC '92?

IBECC '92 is the second annual International BBSing and Electronic Communications Conference.

It will be held August 13-16, 1992 in Denver, Colorado. This year's theme is "*Socially Responsible Computing*."

### Attending IBECC '92

IBECC '92 is an intensive three-day conference. Sessions planned include: "**Introduction to BBSing**" (What is a BBS, and How Do I Use It?), "**BBSes and the Law**" (The Legal Rights and Responsibilities of BBS Operators and Users), "**Safe Computing**" (The Detection and Prevention of Computer Infection), "**Rumor Control 1992**" (Knowing the Difference Between Fact and Fiction, and Taking Action Where Needed), "**Why Kelly CAN Read**" (An Exploration into Education and the Computer), "**NREN**" (The National SuperComputer Highway and How it Will Affect Us All), "**Staying Alive**" (BBSing, Electronic Communication and the Homebound / Physically Challenged), and "**Security? What's That?**" (The What, Why, and How of Keeping Your Data and Information Safe).

Should you attend? If you have an interest in electronic communications, bulletin boards, telecommuting, security or safe computing, yes. If you would like to understand what a "hacker" is, and is not, and what you can do to protect your electronic privacy, yes. If your children make more use of your modem or computer than you do, yes. In fact, unless you have absolutely no interest in using your computer for interacting with the world, you should be there!

So that the conference will retain its personal and informal atmosphere, attendance at IBECC '92 is strictly limited.

### Special Guests

**Dr. Jerry Pournelle, Ph.D.** – Computer Columnist and Editor (*Byte*), Author (Science Fact and Fiction), Lecturer, Consultant on the Impact of High Technology on Society, Chairman of the Citizen's Advisory Council on National Space Policy, and Outspoken Social Critic – Speaking on "*Socially Responsible Computing*", the future of communications and technology in an electronic world, as well as his own views on the society of tomorrow.

**Larry Niven** – Futurist, *Hugo* Award-Winning Author, Designer of Worlds, Supporter of Space Conquest – Speaking on the future of networks as personal interfaces, reality overtaking fantasy, and living with computers when you really don't want to.

**David Hughes, Sr.** – Architect of *Big Sky Telegraph* (the Montana Electronic School House), Consultant, Mover and Shaker, President of Old Colorado City Communications, U.S. Military (ret) – Speaking on NREN, the SuperComputer Highway, and education through computers and networking.

### What Is IBECC?

IBECC is a Non-Profit Educational, Scientific, Literary and Charitable Society (*IRS 501(c)(3) applied for*). Incorporated in Colorado, IBECC's purposes include the promotion of national and international electronic communications, the advancement of telecommunications and teleconferencing, the improvement of communications between electronic networks, education in the uses, requirements, and security of online services, and general support of the electronic community.

A non-profit organization, IBECC is much more than just another 'trade show' – it is a year-round clearing house for ideas, news, and relevant information. IBECC represents the interests and concerns of not only the professional, but the hobbyist and home user as well.

IBECC is primarily volunteer-run. Membership (currently \$25.00/year individual, \$100.00/year corporate) pays for the IBECC Newsletter and electronic Bulletin Board System (BBS), telephones, support and information services, etc. – not salaries. The founders of IBECC, who are all handicapped, are extensively involved in computer networks and electronic communications, and also run several BBSes in the Denver area.

### IBECC '92 Membership & Hotel Information

(All Rates are in U.S. Dollars)

#### VIP (Includes IBECC Membership and VIP Suite)

March 1, 1992 through June 15, 1992: \$125.00

June 16, 1992 through July 31, 1992: \$175.00

August 1, 1992 and at the door (if available): \$200.00

Spouse/Significant Other, with VIP Member: \$9.69

Children (Under 14), with VIP Member: FREE

Call or Write for Other Rates

#### Conference Location

Sheraton Denver West Hotel & Convention Center

360 Union Boulevard, Lakewood, CO 80228

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#### Rates

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for users who enjoy color.

**Bulletins—system overall information update.** One area that we often find neglected by sysops are their online bulletins. Usually located off the main area of the bbs system, these bulletins describe the fundamentals of user participation, guidelines for the bbs operation, and other necessary posting's to the users.

Keep the bulletins up to date. Don't let them lag behind, especially those bulletins that relate to new users. New users generally search through the bulletins to see what the sysop offers and requires from them.

#### 4. FILES

How could we talk about a successful bbs without talking about files! Remember what was the first reason you called a bbs? And what was the first reason you were putting up a bbs? To "collect" files! In many cases

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*Nothing is more discouraging to users than a directory which has not been maintained.*

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a successful bbs has been described as one which carries the most variety of files in addition to having the latest version of any particular shareware software package online.

**Specialized files by bbs theme or by conference theme.** If you are going to have a specialized bbs system or place files within a specific conference such as a Hayes tech support conference, you would have files relating specifically to that topic. As an example within the Hayes conference you would have all your Smartcomm Exec script files available for downloading.

**Hobby BBS vs Commercial BBS.** Let's not forget about Storage capaci-



Rob Waldinger

ties which have always played a major role in the difference between commercial and hobby bbs systems as I've already discussed.

**File Storage needs and balance between files for downloading and removal.** Just how much file storage can you afford? Do you keep every file that is uploaded to your system online? In the past, systems began with 10 and 20 meg hard drives. By mid-1986 we began to see bbs systems breaking the 100 megabyte marker. Today, we see mega-systems with GiGabytes of disk storage.

While it is important to have a good collection of files available for the users, it is equally important to clean up the file directories. Nothing is more discouraging to users than a directory which has not been maintained, with duplicate files appearing under various names and every possible version of a file since the author first began writing the program as a college freshman Pascal project.

**The infamous "upload" directory.** I would say that 95% of all daily downloads are taken from your daily upload directory in the Main Board area. File downloaders log onto your system, use the <N>ew files option, and scan for the latest files to your system. They do nothing further, and would never know about anything happening to your system unless you display additional ASCII data in that portion of your system. Utilize the space that displays new files wisely!

Keep the UPLOAD directory

alive! Nothing can slow the progress and growth of a bbs system than an inactive upload directory. Many users are first discovering bbs systems or are collectors of software. I recall visiting the home of one of the users of SOM to discover in his computer room cases of Maxell diskettes all labeled very neatly and organized with WSSI (a great diskette cataloging program). He had every possible copy of every imaginable shareware or public domain program ever written. If I ever

needed a backup or archived file which we did not have on our drives, he was sure to have it.

**Are users uploaders?** Yes and no. As your system grows, you'll find those particular users who like to maintain a consistent upload/download ratio. But on average, this is not the norm. Most users to SOM utilize the board for its downloading capabilities. We specialize in conferencing and conference related file directories. Users like to visit SOM to locate files which are specifically needed by them. They know exactly where to locate their Corel Draw support files.

How do YOU get files for your system? Be an uploader to other bbs systems, and the sysop will reciprocate.

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*How do you get files for your system? Be an uploader to other bbs systems, and the sysop will reciprocate.*

---

cate with permitting you to download files for your own system. If you operate a commercial system, subscribe to other bbs systems. Most commercial boards have various levels of subscribing depending on your needs to support your own board.

*Continued on page 12*

# JUST DON'T CALL IT A COMPUTER!

BY ALAN R. BECHTOLD

TV Answer is quickly moving forward in the melding of telecommunications and television.



Hang on to your hat. The telecommunications industry is poised for unprecedented growth. Like some hungry eagle, readying itself to spring upon a rodent scurrying in the valley far below. If you've been modeming for any time at all, I'm sure you've heard these predictions before. Recent developments have convinced me the telecommunications industry is finally ready to reach the mass market like never before.

But, with growth comes change. The "bulletin boards" of tomorrow, the integrated telecommunications system that will finally attract the mass market, most likely won't bear the slightest resemblance to the online information systems that are popular today.

In fact, this telecommunications system of tomorrow probably won't be online at all. It might not require a modem and the home unit it utilizes most certainly won't resemble any personal computer we've accustomed ourselves to struggling with today.

The chances are good it will look more like — television! TV Answer, based in Reston, VA, has been working since 1986 on a system the company hopes will be the wave

of the future. It's interactive television and, if the company gets its wish, we'll all soon be able to shop, bank, pay bills, and order food and other services, right on our home television screens.

It all sounded too familiar, at first. TV Answer's plan sounded too much like predictions I've heard for years but have yet to see reach anything near fruition. Several recent developments, however, have convinced me to watch this company like a hawk.

---

*...we'll all soon be able to shop, bank, pay bills, and order food and other services, right on our home television screens.*

---

It looks like TV Answer might just be on the right track. In January, the FCC decided to allocate 1 Mhz of radio spectrum for interactive television use. The decision was the result of a petition filed by TV Answer in December of 1987. The FCC will issue two licenses per market by lottery, following a process similar to the roll-out of cellular telephone service in the United States. The agency plans to begin issuing licenses before

the end of this year.

If it's properly utilized, the new spectrum could become the catalyst for major change in television, from the one-way information and entertainment vehicle we know today to a two-way wireless communications tool in the very near future.

According to company officials, TV Answer believes it is currently the only company with the technology and hardware designed to operate within the bandwidth allocated by the FCC for interactive-TV use.

The hardware, it appears, will be manufactured by none other than Hewlett-Packard. TV Answer has announced an agreement which authorizes Hewlett-Packard to use its patented wireless interactive technology to manufacture and market affordable interactive television home units that can be used to control a two-way TV system in the home.

The compact plug-and-play unit Hewlett-Packard plans to make is about the size of a VCR and attaches to cable-ready or standard-broadcast TV sets with two easy-to-install cables. A wireless hand-held joystick controls the system.

Set to retail for less than \$700, the units will make it easy for the average consumer to tap into TV Answer's own national interactive television network. Hewlett-Packard says it plans to manufacture as many as 1.5 million of the home interac-

tive-TV units this year.

Last September, TV Answer teamed up with Hughes Network Systems, a giant in the satellite industry, to provide the satellite personal Earth stations (VSATs—very-small-aperture-terminals) for use in TV Answer cell sites across the nation.

Information will be transmitted from home units to local cell-site VSATs, much like a cellular telephone calls, then on to TV Answer's satellite network hub site in Reston. From there, the signal will be re-routed via satellite to service providers who will satisfy customer requests.

Unlike current telephone-based interactive systems, TV answer's technology employs an open-systems architecture. This will allow a wide range of service providers to par-

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*CD-TV... is little more than an Amiga personal computer with a built-in CD-ROM drive, disguised as a home entertainment appliance.*

---

ticipate in the system, bringing unlimited numbers of possible programming choices to the consumer.

Television programming companies are interested in the possibilities for interactive television because the new technology has the potential to increase viewers and revenue. The system will also have the capability to provide educational classroom training, participation in game shows, news polls and promotional contests in which individual and national viewer response can be immediately televised, and even personal message services.

I have to admit it has all the qualities of the Next Big Step in telecommunications. American consumers are undeniably married to their televisions. Although there are currently more personal computers in homes than ever before, they're still not the everyday appliance the computer industry has long hoped they

would become. Still less homes have a modem.

But, the same people who balk at spending \$1000 on a personal computer have no problem justifying a similar expenditure on camcorders, big-screen televisions, CD players and stereos. Nolan Bushnell, the brains behind the Atari home video game system, is now working with Commodore on his new CD-TV, which is little more than an Amiga personal computer with a built-in CD-ROM drive, disguised as a home entertainment appliance.

TV Answer seems, wisely, to be following Bushnell's lead. The company has not only developed an entire telecommunications system, disguised as another home entertainment appliance, it's also tied it to the television.

With its innovative technology, recent success with the FCC and solid working relationship with computer giant Hewlett-Packard and satellite communications giant Hughes Network Systems, TV Answer appears to be perched right on that craggy ledge with the eagle, ready to pounce on the huge untapped telecommunications market scurrying below. Will TV Answer change television as we know it? Most definitely. But the impact of TV Answer's on the thousands of bulletin boards and online information systems we now happily visit by modem is yet to be seen.

Savvy BBS operators, especially those currently developing the attractive graphics-based systems we're now seeing, are already set to tap into this potentially huge new market. I can already name several large systems that would fit nicely into TV Answer's master plan. But those same systems wouldn't have to go offline to tap into the TV Answer network.

And, if history is indeed a good teacher, the TV Answer market will remain closed to the vast majority of fiercely independent and delightfully eclectic online information system operators who are currently online, economically or otherwise.

Even if TV Answer has THE answer, the one system that finally

makes electronic information a product used regularly by average Americans, I'm betting most BBSs will stay online, answering those calls, providing their rich potpourri of information, entertainment and intellectual intercourse for a still-growing number of people lucky enough to know how to use a modem.

Still, it's gonna' be fun to tell Vanna which vowels WE'D like to buy — right from our living rooms — and maybe even send her a little love note on the side. ■■■■

*Alan R. Bechtold is president of BBS Press Service, Inc., a publisher and distributor of online publications for more than eight years. He is also editor of ONLINE DIGITAL MUSIC REVIEW, a twice-monthly review of music that is distributed worldwide by BBS Press Service, (available on The Livewire BBS, support board for BBS Callers Digest), and manager of the MUSIC RoundTable on GE's Genie online information service.*

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# A LITTLE RESPECT, PLEASE

BY KELLY WRIGHT

**Behavior online shouldn't be any different from face-to-face conduct.**



**T**his month, I'd like to talk about a topic that we all should be and undoubtedly are aware of, though unfor-

tunately, seems to be given little serious consideration by many people: BBS etiquette. The reality is, nothing likely contributes more to one's online reputation than an understanding and application of the basic rules of proper BBS behavior.

Remember, all societies have rules of proper conduct and behavior, with telecommunications being no exception. As users of telecommunications technology, we automatically become members of the BBS community. Obviously, this isn't something new, and in fact, there have been bits and pieces relating to this subject covered in BBS CALLERS DIGEST before.

The February '92 issue, page 35, had a very good piece entitled "The 30 Commandments of BBS'ing". Though the 30 Commandments was written in a humorous style (and was very well done I might add), there is a great deal of truth contained within the text, and the point the author was attempting to make should not be overlooked. I'll not be discussing each

point covered in the 30 Commandments, though I will touch on one or two in particular that I feel deserve reinforcing. I do suggest that the everyone go back and re-read the 30 Commandments, as it is excellent reading.

## **MIND YOUR MANNERS!**

Most people have no idea of the time and effort, to say nothing of the expense, the typical Sysop invests into operating a private BBS. Consequently, I think it's important that one remembers they are a guest of the Sysop, visiting the Sysop's home or place of business, and should conduct themselves accordingly. Even with a subscription or pay system, this notion still applies, and doesn't give license to leave one's manners at the door. As simple as all this may sound, I frequently encounter examples of online behavior that reminds me not everyone has a grasp of how they should conduct themselves.

Probably the most visible evidence of this is the FLAMES (unnecessarily argumentative, or antagonistic messages) that crop up in the message base or conferences. It seems some folks feel that since they can't actually SEE the other person, then it's acceptable to launch into a character assassination or some other type of personal attack simple because

they don't agree with another person's position on an issue.

Where this concept came from is beyond me, but it's there nonetheless, and I see it far more often than I care to admit. I'd be willing to bet that if two people involved in debate were to meet in person to discuss their differences, their conduct would be considerably different, with the rhetoric certainly diminished. The point I'm trying to make is this, (and any similarly to the "golden rule" is purely intentional): Treat others online as you would like to be treated. If you have an issue with another person, spare the rest of us by conducting your conversations in a mature, responsible manner or take the discussion to private mail.

That's not to say one can't publicly disagree with others, of course, but the way this is done is the issue. Other BBS users will appreciate not having to wade through embarrassing messages, the Sysop will avoid the distasteful chore of having to intervene, and your reputation will remain intact.

Also, though I shouldn't have to mention it, I will. Abusive or rough language is no more appropriate in the public message base of a BBS than in any other public, socially mixed setting. And in fact, is one sure fire way to bring an admonishment from the

Sysop, if not a reduction in BBS privileges, access or outright deletion of one's account! If nothing else, this type of behavior is simply rude, in very poor taste, and reflects negatively on the individual.

### BE SPECIFIC ON BUG REPORTS

BBS problem/bug reporting is another issue that fits into the realm of proper BBS etiquette (in my opinion anyway) and certainly merits discussion. Most Sysops spend a significant percentage of their time on problem resolution so the identification of specific problems to the Sysop becomes important. Particularly the quality and form of communication detailing an apparent problem. For example, to simply drop feedback to the Sysop stating "I can't download" isn't terribly helpful, and can be quite frustrating for the person at the other end.

This is equivalent to leaving your automobile at the garage with a note to the mechanic saying "It

doesn't run right". You know what the mechanic is going to ask: "WHAT is the specific problem? What are the symptoms"? There is really no difference when discussing a problem on a BBS; be as specific as possible. For instance, if you're having difficulty downloading, what are the symptoms? Are you receiving error messages from the BBS? If so, what are they? What protocol and terminal

*Continues...*

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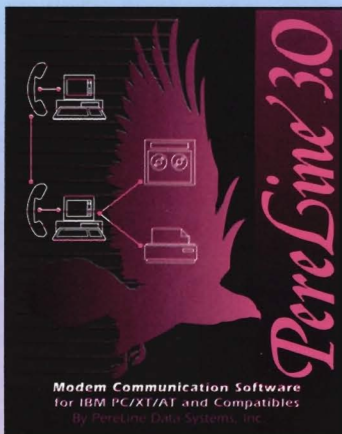
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package are you using?

These are the types of questions the Sysop will likely ask anyway, and providing as much information when initially reporting the problem will not only save both of you time, but is much less frustrating for everyone involved.

Remember, chances are you may not be the only user with a problem, and the Sysop has other issues, mail or messages to respond to that day. So to facilitate this communication, be as specific as possible and exercise patience, which is always a welcome virtue in any Sysop's book.

These are just a couple of items I thought appropriate to point out and will go a long way to allowing one to become known in the BBS community as a person with "character". Acting in a responsible, mature, adult like fashion (no matter what your age) will certainly contribute to building one's reputation and ensuring you will be welcome no matter where your online travels might take you. Best regards. ■■■■■

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## ATTRACTING CALLERS *from page 7*

**Backups - will those hard drives ever give up?** Just a quick note about backups. Almost everyone has experienced a hard drive crash. If you have not, your system is living on borrowed time. Be prepared for a complete system failure. How often do you do a complete system backup? How about those daily backups? Does your present tape backup system meet the needs of your present hard drive configuration?

### 5. E-MAIL SYSTEMS

Files aren't everything on your bbs system. You do everything in your power to get users to read mail, but it basically comes to their attention once they've reached the point when they can't fit another file on their hard drives. Users also discover the world of off-line readers, and wonder what all the commotion is with these new reader programs.

While many systems specialize as being "file" systems which we've already discussed, all bbs

systems rely to some degree on messaging between users or Email. The Email facilities on your bbs offer direct communications between users and between users and the sysop. It is your direct source of input from your users, and the means by which you can receive their comments. Users also have the opportunity of meeting other online users and discussing many topics through a good conferencing system.

**Commercial BBS user.** Whether you operate a commercial bbs system or hobby system, there will come a time when the experienced bbs user will visit the system. Professionals love email systems. They find the Email to be the core of the bbs systems and the present bbs networks.

**Get online — get the morning mail — get off line.** Easy on - Easy off with the morning mail is the motto we have for the professional and commercial users on SOM. We always find that our lines are busy in the early morn-

ing hours with users downloading their morning Email. Email doors (or DOS extensions of the bbs code you are operating), scan your active message bases, prepare a file by zipping the files together needed for the various off-line reader programs, and allow the users to download these unique mail files directly to the users systems.

Users are then able to use these specialized mail reader programs to review the mail packet, reply to those messages that interest them, and prepare a reply mail packet for uploading on their next call to the bbs.

### 6. COSYSOPS

Let's not forget one last key element to many good bbs systems. Co-Sysops. You've heard enough about disasters with co-sysops but there are many advantages to having co-sysops. They lend their support in developing your system. In most instances, they

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*One last key element to many good bbs systems:  
Co-Sysops.*

---

assist in the maintenance of your bbs along with answering mail on your system. And don't forget they can assist in helping your system

grow by giving valuable input towards what your users wish to see online.

**Format C:** Pick someone who you would trust with your entire system and user base. If they have access to DOS remember they will have access to all your DOS files!

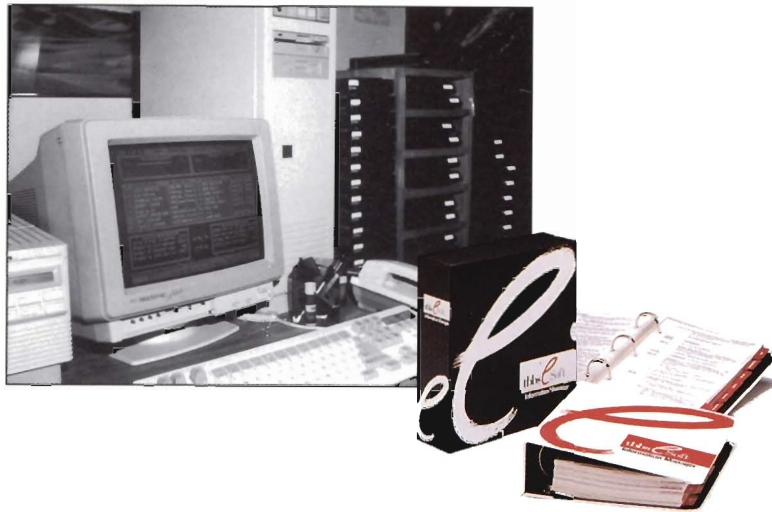
**New book by Paul Waldinger and Elizabeth Powell Crowe.** Along with Paul's busy schedule, he and Elizabeth Powell Crowe have contracted with Tap Books, McGraw-Hill, Inc. to publish a book exploring alternative online systems called "The Electronic Traveller" which is currently in the catalog and has a book store release date of Aug 1, 1992.

This new book is an informative and entertaining journey through the backroads of electronic communications. Everyone with a PC and a modem has at least heard of, if not used, big online services such as CompuServe, Genie, and Prodigy. But

*Continued on page 43*

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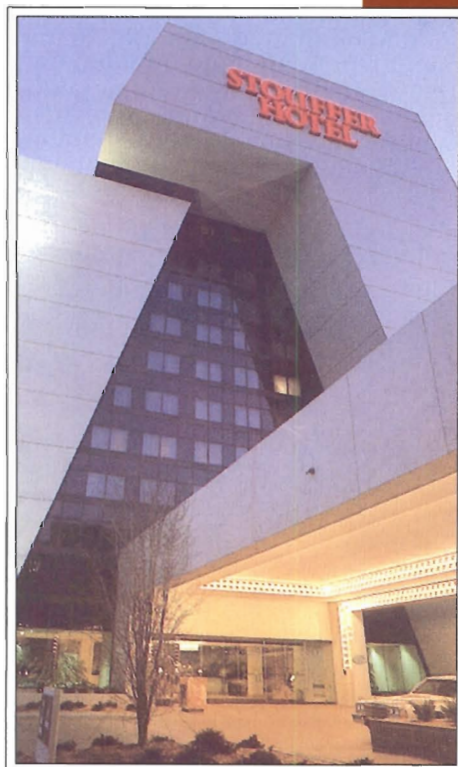
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# COPYRIGHT AND YOUR BBS MESSAGES

BY CHARLES B. KRAMER, ESQ.

Just when does what you post on BBS get "written" and who owns the copyright? There is more than one answer.



**F**rom your local BBS to a remote BBS by echo, and from there to another network of echoing BBS's, and from there

to the world: increasingly, messages you post locally are copied, quoted and re-posted to the nether regions of cyberspace.

"Great!" you may say, especially if your message was a request ("how do ruby slippers work?") because the wider its distribution, the better your chance of getting a useful reply. But not all distributions of your messages may please you. Consider, for instance:

- Some conferences create "novels" consisting of the embellishments of a thousand authors to a plot seed left by one person. Would you be pleased to discover that novel edited, printed and for sale in a bookstore if you contributed parts of it?

- Some conferences deal with scholarly issues. Suppose, tempted into the spontaneity that BBS messaging naturally encourages (and as a result of drinking too many cups of mint tea the night before), you one

day leave an impassioned post ("not only is Shakespeare a myth, but Queen Elizabeth was a court jester with a wig and falsetto!") that you later regret. Imagine your horror months later, when you discover your post quoted in a footnote in a scholarly paper!

- Other conferences deal with extremely personal issues, and depend

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*Writers obtain a copyright automatically just by "fixing" their writings in a physical form.*

---

for their success on the strange intimacy that the disembodiment of BBS voices sometimes fosters. Would you be pleased that your post had migrated to one of those BBS's that preserve their message threads indefinitely, a testament to your youthful fascination with the erotic possibilities of toupees?

What your legal rights are in

these circumstances depends, in part, on whether you have a copyright in what you post on a BBS, and if you do, on what rights you've given to quote, copy, change and distribute your post to that BBS, to other BBS's, and to other BBS callers. BBS callers and Sysops both have some control over the copyrights of BBS callers, although few exercise their control. But first, what is a "copyright"?

## WHAT IS COPYRIGHT?

A "copyright", among other things, is the exclusive right of writers to make and distribute copies and derivative versions of what they write. Writers obtain a copyright automatically just by "fixing" their writings in a physical form. A poem written on a bar napkin is copyright protected, as is one saved by its author on a computer disk or dictation tape.

Registering the copyright with the Copyright Office is not necessary to preserve it, but among other advantages may make it easier for the author to be compensated for certain consequences of infringement. Using copyright notice ["COPYRIGHT [YEAR FIRST PUBLISHED]

*Continues...*

[AUTHOR'S NAME]" isn't necessary either, but among other advantages, may prevent an infringer from getting damages assessed against him reduced on the grounds that his infringement was "innocent".

### WHO HAS A COPYRIGHT?

When a BBS caller writes a message off-line and uploads it to a BBS later,

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*When you write a poem on someone else's wet cement sidewalk, you own a copyright in your poem. The sidewalk owner merely owns the sidewalk.*

---

he owns a copyright in it the moment he saves it to a disk. But when he writes it online, it's saved for the first time on a disk of the BBS host's machine. Does the BBS caller own a copyright in his message then?

Well, probably. If a BBS caller who writes online is like a public speaker whose words are saved only by an audience member's tape recorder, then no one may own a copyright in his messages. But writing online is more like broadcasting a live news report that's recorded while it's broadcast: in both cases, information is saved by the writer's efforts, and not by the happenstance of a recorder amongst his audience. Since such newscasts are copyright protected, so

should be BBS messages written online.

The fact that the BBS caller doesn't own the medium his message is saved on doesn't deprive him of his copyright, since in copyright law, the medium and the copyright are separate things. When you write a poem on someone else's wet cement sidewalk, you own a copyright in your poem. The sidewalk owner merely owns the sidewalk.

BBS's raise other copyright ownership issues. Sysops, for instance, often selectively prune and rearrange messages left by BBS callers in order to maintain the clarity and consistency of the threads they are posted in. Such efforts, at least if they involve more than mechanical arrangement by date or the like, is like the work of an editor who selects short stories for a published collection. And like the editor, who owns a "compilation copyright" in the collection, the sysop may own a compilation copyright in his selection and arrangement of messages in a thread.

Another issue is raised by the collaborative nature of BBS message threads. A "thread" can be defined as a series of related messages by two or more BBS callers. Typically threads begin by exploring an issue raised by the message that is their common origin, and evolve to explore related issues. While threads are the hallmark of networks of independent, echoing BBS's, the idea of them is most vividly conveyed by the graphic "tree" CompuServe uses to help callers navigate the sometimes complex structure of their internal references.

Since some BBS's save some threads and permit them to be downloaded as a group with all of their internal references intact, they are arguably "prepared by two or more authors with the intention that their contributions be merged into... interde-

pendent parts of a unitary whole." Such works are considered "joint works" under the Copyright Act, and are co-owned by the authors of its component contributions.

In short, messages left by BBS callers may be subject to three copyrights: one belonging to the person who wrote the message, the second belonging to the sysop who edited the message or its position in a thread, and the third belonging to all of the thread contributors jointly. But if this is all true, aren't sysops infringing the copyrights in their callers' messages when they copy and distribute them to other BBS's by echoing? And when a BBS caller copies a thread from one BBS to another, isn't he infringing both the respective copyright each caller has in their own messages, and the sysop's compilation copyright in their organization? Besides [someone

---

*The sysop may own a "compilation copyright" in his selection and arrangement of messages in a thread.*

---

out there, I know, is shouting) sending everyone's messages everywhere is the point of BBS's! And every BBS caller knows it! To which I say: exactly, but for reasons of contract law.

### IMPLIED COPYRIGHT LICENSES

When most of us think of a contract, we have images of small print, antique language, and signature lines at the bottom of a long page. Contracts can be much less formal than that, and can be made without anything on paper and even without words. When you hold up an apple from a street corner fruit stand, point to your watch, and rush into the building you work in, the vendor understands that you are in a hurry and will pay him for the apple later. No words have been spoken, but by your behavior and prior relationship with the vendor, you and he have

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implicitly formed an enforceable contract.

BBS's also work on shared understandings based on knowledge of how BBS's work. Callers to echoing BBS's know their messages will be echoed, and implicitly grant to those BBS's the right to echo. In legal terms, they have granted an implied, non-exclusive copyright license to copy and distribute their messages.

This implied license probably has limits. BBS messages are typically copied and distributed only electronically, and typically float in the collective world of BBS's for a limited time until they are replaced by newer messages. Copying or distributing a BBS message other than electronically, or in a way that preserves it for public view for an indefinite time, is probably not within the expectations of most BBS callers, and not within the copyright licenses they implicitly grant.

But whether the three examples above (the BBS novel in a bookstore, the BBS post in a scholarly footnote, and the "toupee" post that migrates to a BBS that never purges old messages) are not within the license and would constitute copyright infringement is an open question. The expectations of BBS callers on a chat BBS and those on an Internet differential calculus conference are probably different, and the terms of the copyright license that can be implied by posting on those conferences are probably also different. Callers who leave messages on a BBS that makes clear its messages threads may be indefinitely archived, for instance, cannot complain when their messages are.

#### **CAN OR SHOULD ANYTHING BE DONE?**

To some, the infinite echoing of BBS messages has a special democratic character. In a culture that encourages pie faced staring at that "other" video screen, the television, the interactive world of BBS's seems

like subversion. But BBS callers may justifiably wish to assert control over some of the messages they post, and BBS sysops may want to assert their power to clarify how, on their BBS's at least, copyright law should work. What can BBS-callers and Sysops do?

---

*"joint works" under the Copyright Act are co-owned by the authors of its component contributions.*

---

BBS callers can learn the copyright policies of the BBS's they call with respect to the copying and distribution of their messages, since they implicitly agree to those policies. Callers to BBS's with links to echo networks, for

instance, are generally informed that their public messages will be echoed to other BBS's. But callers logging on to THE WELL, on the other hand, are greeted with this statement:

"You own your own words. This means that you are responsible for the words that you post on the WELL and that reproduction of those words without your permission in any medium outside of the WELL's conferencing system may be challenged by you, the author."

BBS callers can also try to take direct control, by tagging their messages to limit the implied copyright license they otherwise grant. As long as not inconsistent with the express policies of the BBS the message is left on, a tag could, for instance, say:

*THIS MESSAGE  
MAY BE DIS-  
TRIBUTED, IN  
WHOLE OR IN  
PART, ONLY  
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IC MEANS.*

Similarly, a tag can specify "this right expires at the end of 1995", or "this message may be distributed only in whole, but not in part", or "this message may be distributed only if its author is credited". In any event, any BBS caller who wishes to assert a copyright in his messages should place copyright notice on them. Any BBS caller who wants to copy and distribute a message left by another caller should, if doubtful about his rights, seek the permission of the author of the message.

Most BBS's, of course, don't have an explicit copyright policy, but they should. Once a Sysop has determined his BBS's policy, he should take steps to implement it by requiring, at least, current users to read it once, and new users to read it on registration. The policy will be somewhat longer than that presented on THE WELL at log in, since their succinct policy could make clearer, among other things, that callers may grant permission to copy their posts

*Continues...*



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## \$\$ BUCKS \$\$

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freely by using an appropriate tag line.

If you are a sysop and want to set a copyright policy, do you want the power to rearrange messages within threads on your system? Do you want the power to edit the messages themselves? Should callers to your system feel free to copy messages left by others, and free to post them on other boards? Is your policy like that of THE WELL, or is your policy that anything contributed to your BBS is automatically contributed to the public domain, and may be copied by anyone in any medium without permission?

And finally, may callers to your BBS assume that their posts will scroll

off eventually, or do you wish to reserve a right to make all posts accessible for an indefinite time? Sysops should take care in making these choices, because some of them have implications for sysop liability apart from the copyright laws.

As what we write is increasingly posted on interconnected electronic systems, I suspect we will find ourselves increasingly asking questions about what rights we have in what we write, and about which of those rights we don't want to give up.

CHARLES B. KRAMER is a member of the New York and Illinois Bars and has lived and practiced law in New York City since 1982. His practice includes corporate, copyright, and trademark law, including clients in the software development, publishing, online information and entertainment businesses. He can be reached at CompuServe 72600,2026, Internet 72600.2026 @compuserve.com

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\* Any resemblance Brand X has to Wildcat!, PC Board, RBBS, or Searchlight systems you may know is purely coincidental.

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# THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION

BY GARY YOUNG

This month we highlight the messaging features of Oracomm.



**Y**ou enter the "Office of Information", a large room with many walls, and the first thing you encounter is a row of mail boxes. You open your mail box and read your private messages as your top priority. As you look around the room, every wall is a cork-covered bulletin board with a sign near the top describing the subject matter of that wall, such as "Current Events", "For Sale", "Help Wanted", "Personals" and "Technical Questions". Under the signs are pieces of paper with messages about the subject matter of that wall.

On these messages, other people have written their comments, suggestions, opinions or solutions about the message. The messages are in order of the most recent, at the top, so you can read the latest ones first. Some walls are hidden so you need permission to see (access) them. There is a special wall where messages posted there are sent to other Offices of Information around the country and which contain messages from those other "Offices" (or networks).

On each wall there is a questionnaire for you to answer which has questions about the subject matter of

that wall. Questionnaires that other people have already answered are also there so you can search through them looking (matching) for people who have specific replies to certain questions. On each wall (also known as a forum, conference, or sub-board) there is a filing cabinet with 35 drawers, and each drawer contains any number of files which you can remove (download).

The kind of information in each filing cabinet (or DOS directory) will depend on the subject matter of the wall you are looking at. Whatever you can do on one wall, you can do on all walls, (read messages, enter messages, answer questionnaires, or download information) only the subject matter is different. In the center of the Office are little booths, and two or more people are in each booth talking (or chatting) either privately or in groups.

Oracomm Multi-User Bulletin Board software is this "Office of Information". The design of the software was intended to lead users through easily, so they could get the most information from their logon session. Rather than having forums or conferences as a separate entity on the bbs which must be entered, Oracomm has the sub-boards integrated so the entire system is a consistent set of commands with only the subject matter changing.

Entering B shows what (B)oads can be viewed and will select the subject matter applied to all the commands. Logical commands such as R to (R)ead a message, E to (E)nter a new public or private message, M for (M)atchmaker questionnaires, W for (W)ho is a user, D to (D)ownload, F to list (F)iles, or C to (C)hat make Oracomm easy to learn.

Subcommands such as L for messages since LastLogon, S for Search, B for Backward new to old, A for by user Account, T for Today, C for Complete across all subboards add flexibility and define the range of information displayed. Oracomm is the only software which allows Comments onto the messages, a Copyrighted feature.

Rather than finding a solution to a problem several messages away, Oracomm includes the comments right on the message along with the date/time and originating account of the commentor. Private messages can be forwarded from a public message without knowing the originator. All private messages are found on the private mail board regardless of the board on which they were originally entered, so private mail can not be missed.

Every message can be up to 9000 characters, no line limit, and there is no limit to the number of public or private messages a user can have.

When a message fills the character limit, a new message is started and linked from the full message, all automatically.

Most System Operators (SYSOP's) have their Oracomms configured so that the first subboard you enter, the first wall that you see, is the private mail board. No matter what subboard a user is on when he enters private mail, the messages always go to the private mail board. Since private mail board is the first board entered, you can never miss an important message.

So, when you log on to an Oracomm, you are on the private mail board and the system does an initial command for you. The Sysop may define that initial command to be a Read or a Summary of messages only. He may also define the scope of the messages shown to be Complete across all boards, only private Mail to you, or messages added since your Last Logon. The command structure in Oracomm is always: Command, Subcommand, Parameter, if any.

The subcommand limits or refines what is shown by the main command, and that parameter provides additional information if necessary. The commands are intended to be logical and easy to remember. Pressing a question mark will display commands or subcommands that are available. Entering an H will activate Oracomm's Extensive On-Line Help files.

The basic commands are Read a message (Summary is like Read but just shows who/when/what about the message), Enter a message, Who is a user, and subBoard selection (to change subject matter, conferences, or which "wall" you are looking at). The subcommands are basically the same across all commands. RC is Read Complete and will display all messages that have been added or changed since your last logon across all boards.

SC is similar, but you will note a 3-letter abbreviation ahead of the message number to tell you which subboard this message is located. RM or SM will read your Mail when you are on the private mail subboard. If you are on one of the public message boards, it will not find your private mail there. To Enter a private message, simple press E and the account code of the user who is to receive the message.

A private message can be entered from any subboard and it will be routed to the private mail board. To enter a public message, you need to first determine what the message is about, and where should the message go. To see what public message boards are available, enter B for the board selection menu. If the message is a technical message, select that subboard. Then enter E ALL to make a public message addressable to ALL users. You can not enter a public message on the private mail board since messages are divided by subject matter.

Each user is identified by a four to eight character account code. You will need to know this account code to send private mail. To display information on A c c o u n t JOEUSER, you ask Oracomm, (W)ho is (A)ccount JOEUSER? So, the command is WA JOEUSER. To show (W)ho is (O)nline, enter WO. To show your own informa-

tion, (W)ho (M)ine, enter WM. To show (W)ho was on since your (L)astLogon, enter WL. Entering simply W and pressing [Enter] will display all the options of the (W)ho command, that can be chosen, determining what users are displayed.

In future issues we will discuss Chat, Matchmaker, International Networking, Upload and Download Commands and the topic of running a successful BBS.

If you want to experience the Oracomm Office of Information, first hand, please call either; Oracomm Central BBS, (619) 346-1608 or Oracomm Technical Support BBS, (612) 894-5879

On either system you can try out these commands, as well as see additional features of Oracomm BBS Software, plus see a listing of an Oracomm BBS system near you, to call. You can also download either a Shareware (Orashar1/2.ZIP) or Demo Version (Orademo1/2.EXE) of Oracomm to evaluate for yourself.

Won't you join us, in the excitement of experiencing our Oracomm Office of Information? ■■■■

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*Rather than finding a solution to a problem several messages away, Oracomm includes the comments right on the message*

---

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*This BBS uses V.32bis modems and supports all lower speed  
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*The Black Cat uses Wildcat version 3 software*



# AUBURNDALE, WI PAPILLION, NE CHATHAM, NJ

BY PATRICK GROTE

May's picks are The Twilight Zone BBS, Church Chatters, and The Collectors' BBS.



**W**elcome back to BBS NOTEBOOK. The main focus of the column is to present three BBS' a month to you

in a tour guide atmosphere, where the primary goal won't be on whether a BBS is worth your money or time, but rather, what does the BBS offer to you, the modemer.

This month we look at three very different BBSs with three very different sysops. Have you noticed that a sysop's influence into the BBS can be very reaching? Check out the way files are described sometime. Every sysop has their own method of cataloging files.

On to our first BBS:

## THE TWILIGHT ZONE BBS

**Sysop:** John Hrusovszky  
**Location:** Auburndale, WI  
**Phone Number:** (715) 652-2758  
**Modem Type:** USR Dual Standard  
**BBS Software:** RBBS v17.3c  
**Motto:** "C:>HELP <A>bort <R>etry <T>wilight Zone BBS TZone exists for the Central Wisconsin IBM Users' Group for the sole purpose of attracting computer users to our club and to grow and learn with them.""

Nestled in the dairy state of Wisconsin, The Twilight Zone BBS

(Tzone) isn't your every-day "utterly" remarkable BBS [writing gives you a license to make corny puns].

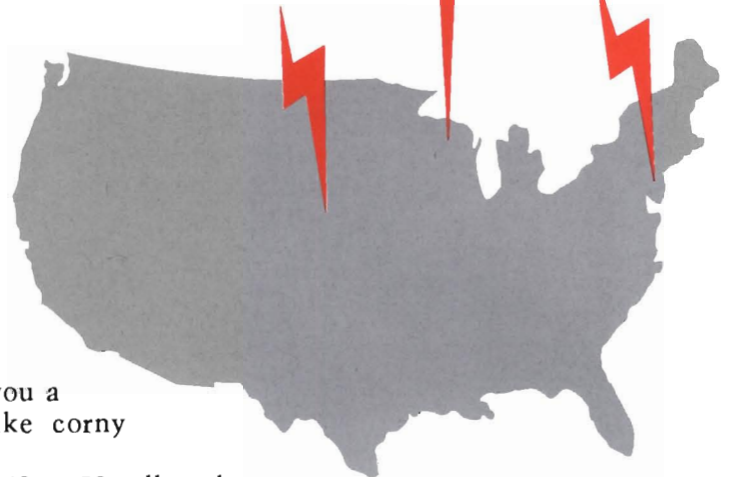
Garnering 43 to 50 calls a day with over 590 active users, Tzone is the hub of activity for the Central Wisconsin IBM Users' Group (CWIUG). Being an approved ASP BBS and participating in FidoNet, ParaNet, UFONet and Odyssey message networks, Tzone is constantly giving each of its users a wide selection of programs and information.

Sysop John Hrusovszky, a mild mannered sales and service man during the day, runs the BBS. Relating his funniest moments on line brings a tear to your eye. John recalls, "One evening, this person called while I was working with Clarion [I multitask when programming, so many times when a user calls I am working in another window. I check to see who it is most of the time). Anyway, this new user filled out the registration form and

## Twilight Zone

## Church Chatters

## Collectors' BBS



proceeded to our file section. After a bit of searching around he/she paged me. So, I hopped into chat mode and asked what I could do to help?

"The person asked me where the 'DOG FILES' were located. Of course, I didn't understand what they were asking, so I told them so and asked them to please explain

what it was they were looking for. Again, they wanted to know where I had put the 'DOG FILES'. I said I had no idea what they were talking about, and they just kept insisting that I had hidden the 'DOG FILES' and they wanted them! I

finally had to tell them that they were accidentally chased away by the CAT FILES! Some People!" . <Must get cold during winter in Wisconsin>

When people aren't looking for files of a pedigree nature, they can join one of the many conferences

---

*The best UFO related feature is the UFOBASE door where you can actually record what, when, where and how a UFO appeared to you.*

---



available. Each conference is listed when hitting the J key for the join command. The listing is very descriptive and enlightens a user as to what privileges they have in each conference.

The bulletin section is complete with a WHAT IS SHAREWARE bulletin. You can check out system statistics and read stories by local authors. The slant of helping users shows up in the bulletins entitled HOW TO ZIP AND UNZIP A FILE and NETMAIL — WHAT IS IT.

Being an official Apogee Distribution BBS, Tzone is home to the fiercest game players in Wisconsin. Games aren't the only files available of Tzone. File areas run from the usual utilities to a section devoted to UFOs.

UFOs, you will also find, pervade the BBS. As mentioned earlier, Tzone is tied into the UFONet, but the best UFO related feature is the UFOBASE door where you can actually record what, when, where and how a UFO appeared to you.

As for costs, Tzone is free, though the users who give more than \$20.00 to support the BBS have their file ratios eliminated.

As you leave Tzone, the "official" Modem Addictus seal is displayed, confirming what you thought... you were actually on an alien vessel <grin>.

*As we fly southward....*

## CHURCH CHATTERS

**Sysop:** Tom Hansen

**Location:** Papillion, NE

**Phone Number:** (402) 593-8863

**Modem Type:** USR HST v.42bis

**BBS Software:** RBBS v17.4 — BETA

**Motto:** "Church Chatters was initially set up as a proposed project for the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska as an alternate means for communications among its clergy and people. The system is still maintained for this purpose and is ready to be used in that capacity when the Diocese is ready. We also serve as a support system for RBBS-PC and a beta test site for the RBBS software."

When you first contact Church Chatters you may think of one word:

friendly. Running the latest in RBBS software, Sysop Tom Hansen has created an atmosphere of friendliness and helpfulness.

The focus of this being a religious board is not all encompassing. In fact, the BBS is sectioned off so that the Church in Church Chatters can be accessed through a different conference.

Serving as a testing ground for the latest in RBBS software, Church Chatters always brings to its users the friendliest updates imaginable. If you want, you can take the time and wander through the on-line tutorial.

With 530 active callers, 100 of which call each day, it is easy to see how the BBS supports 30-50 downloads a day with about 6 new uploads. Your file choices are encompassed in one of 28 areas. These areas range from Windows to RBBS add-ins and modifications (Church Chatters is home to over 20 megabytes of RBBS files alone). Speaking of size, a total of 100 gigabytes is available for storage, ensuring that Church Chatters has room to grow into the future.

Not suprisingly, Church Chatters relays mail in the RIME network with RBBSNet coming soon. With close to 40 conferences to choose from, the user will have no problem finding something of interest. As for getting that mail... Church Chatters is all ready for whatever type of user will call the BBS. Mail doors provided are TQM, Jimmer, Mailman and Megadoor: something to quench everyone's needs.

In typical clergy fashion, Sysop Tom Hansen, an Episcopal Priest, confides that the best online experience he ever had was when "...a couple met through BBSing and eventually got married." See, what happened was the lady involved received a modem for Christmas, got the modeming bug and met the gentleman involved on a BBS. They kept contact with each other through Church Chatters.

Bulletins on Church Chatters are not your everyday bulletins. Sure, they have your normal bulletins pertaining to Top Downloaders, Top Uploaders and such, yet there are bulletins on game scores and more.

Games also are popular at Church Chatters. Over five game doors get called upon heavily during the day. Feel like a game of Mahjohng or Blackjack? Church Chatters can fill that need. No, bingo isn't available as a door yet.

Public access to Church Chatters is limited, but you can get things done with it. Paid subscriptions start off at \$15.00 for 6 months and range to \$25.00 for a year.

*Zooming back east towards New Jersey...*

## THE COLLECTORS' BBS

**Sysop:** Eric Marks

**Location:** Chatham, NJ

**Phone Number:** (201) 635-4519

**Modem Type:** USR Dual Standard

**BBS Software:** TBBS 2.2, 16 Line Version

**Motto:** "Messages and information for the serious collector."

From the motto you can tell the BBS means business! Dedicated to all collectors for whatever they collect,

*Continues...*

## ISLE-NET

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THE COLLECTORS' BBS (TCB) offers many resources.

The resources start with the diversity of callers. Since this is one of only several specialty boards in the world, TCB garners calls on a usual basis from places like Portugal, Germany, Israel and Australia. These callers make up the 545 people in the user log, of which 200 call every 30 days.

A collector of "punchboards, postcards, advertising, ephemera and Americana" himself, Sysop Eric Marks' goal was to create a BBS where "the mature, serious individual with tastes from very expensive to very inexpensive could feel comfortable." He continues that the users are looking for "a mature, friendly, easy to use resource for finding and providing information about collecting and collectibles."

Began in mid-1990, TCB is starting to be recognized by dealers and customers alike as the one stop resource for finding, buying and selling collectibles. Online there are many conferences available to suit your particular collectible. These conferences are hosted by an expert in the area of collectible. When I was

last on, the latest conference host to be named specialized in Tribal Art. The dealer, John Buxton, specialized in pre-Columbian and other types of Tribal Art.

If you are beginning to think that TCB caters to only the affluent collectibles, stop right there. TCB

---

*[The Sysop] has set up a mini-auction on the BBS, so collectors can place things to buy and sell.*

---

does offer support for sports trading cards and comics. Although, no matter what your collectible, Eric is more than happy to set a conference up for you and other collectors.

One of the sharpest applications on the BBS is the auction house. Eric has set up a mini-auction on the BBS, so collectors can place things to buy and sell. Each auction runs for a month and is monitored closely by Eric.

Another neat application run-

ning on the BBS is the DATA BASE SEARCHES. In this application, you can search for who collects what, who has called the BBS and even peruse a Collectible Market Report that is full of information.

TCB offers little in the way of files. The standard "top ten" from the shareware field is available, but the focus of the BBS is really on messages and information exchange.

Bulletins are another strong suit of the BBS. Bulletins run the gamut from What's New to How a Cat was Appointed Sysop. All are filled with information and should be read.

Games, yes games, play a part on TCB. Over 18 games are available in the Game Room for users to play. Challenging competitions can be found in each game.

Last but not least, the BBS offers something that every BBS should have: A SYSOP'S DIARY. The Sysop's Diary details any changes the sysop has made in the BBS, where the BBS is headed and other information that users will find useful.

Subscription rates to TCB start at \$15.00 for three months and extend to \$40.00 for one year. ■■■■

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System Requirements : IBM-PC Compatible, 640k RAM, modem (up to 38,400bps). Site licensing available. DOORWAY is the trademark of TriMark Engineering.

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# EXPRESS YOURSELF WITH TAGLINES

BY PHILLIP BAILEY

A collection of bumper stickers for the BBSer



**I**n the August 1991 edition of the BBS Callers Digest, Michael Brunk wrote an excellent article on taglines. It contained all

the information that you would ever want to know about taglines. Basically, a tagline is the last line in a message that is echoed through a network. It usually states the node identification or the name and number of the board from where it originated. A tagline can be appended by the BBS' software, the network software or the users message editing software.

In keeping with the theme of this column, I will not discuss all the technical aspects of taglines. Here you'll find the taglines that are composed by the message writers themselves. You know, those unusual one line sayings that catch the eye of the reader. To make it more amusing, I have grouped together the taglines from the message conferences from which they were taken. So message readers, humorists and tagline thieves read on for some of the best taglines from across the networks.

**DEBATE CONFERENCE:** I have a speech impediment...my foot. Taxation is legal theft. Sex, Drugs, Alcohol and Crime...Don't you just love Congress? Diplomacy: Saying "nice doggy"...until you find a rock. Is

politics a legitimate form of entertainment? The fewer the facts...the stronger the opinion.

**RELIGION AND RECOVERY CONFERENCES:** Black holes were created when God divided by zero. One day at a time. I tried to drown my problems, but they can swim. Just call me Cleopatra, Queen of Denial.

**EMT AND POLICE CONFERENCES:** Emergency Medical Technicians...on the bleeding edge of technology. Desk Sergeants are not from this world. Is an idiot Desk Sergeant a "noncompoop?" All right drop carrier...we have you surrounded.

**PROGRAMMERS CONFERENCE:** "C" Spot Run. Now from the makers of Edlin: Windows! Have computer will travel. We all live in a yellow subroutine.

**WRITERS CONFERENCE:** Originality is the art of concealing your sources. Get everyone's attention...make a mistake. Recursive, adj.;see recursive. If this were an actual tagline, it would be witty. If you shoot at mimes, should you use a silencer?

**COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE:** It's only a hobby...only a hobby... On a clear disk you can see forever. Oh, I thought you had the ORIGINAL! Backup my hard drive? I can't find the reverse switch. He who dies with the most RAM wins! Read the Docs? Wow what a radical concept.


**PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE:** Apathy error: Strike any key. Or none

for that matter. If you try to fail and succeed, which have you done? Four minus two is one and the same. No matter where you go...there you are. Nothing is so simple that it can't get screwed up. When you know you know...that's all you need to know. No sense in being pessimistic. It won't work anyway.

**LEGAL CONFERENCE:** A motion to adjourn is always in order. I wasn't there, I didn't do it and you can't prove it. Yes, as a matter of fact, I am a lawyer.

Here are some of my favorites that did not come from any particular conference or fit into any specific category: Please reply if you don't see this tagline. Make headlines! Use a corduroy pillow. Look out for number one, but don't step in number two. Never say "I'm game" at a NRA meeting. A job without aggravation = no job. If all else fails, lower your standards. Oatbran can cause cereal output errors. Jesus saves! Moses invests! Radioactive Halibut will make fission chips. —T-A+G-L-I+N-E—M-E-A+S-U-R+I-N-G+—G-A+U-G-E—. Disneyland: A people trap operated by a mouse. Walt Disney is in suspended animation. Press <CTRL> <ALT> <DEL> to continue. I can resist everything except temptation. Curiosity killed the cat...but for a while I was suspected. Stupid question: the one you didn't ask. I left my tart in Aunt Fran's Crisco. De agony of Delete.

Taglines, like ideas, cannot be copyrighted. So there are many tagline thieves out in the networks. If you look real hard you might even find a tagline in this column that you have used in a message. Maybe you are the originator of that tagline. If so, congratulations! But as most taglines are repeated hundreds of times chances are...

See you on the boards! 

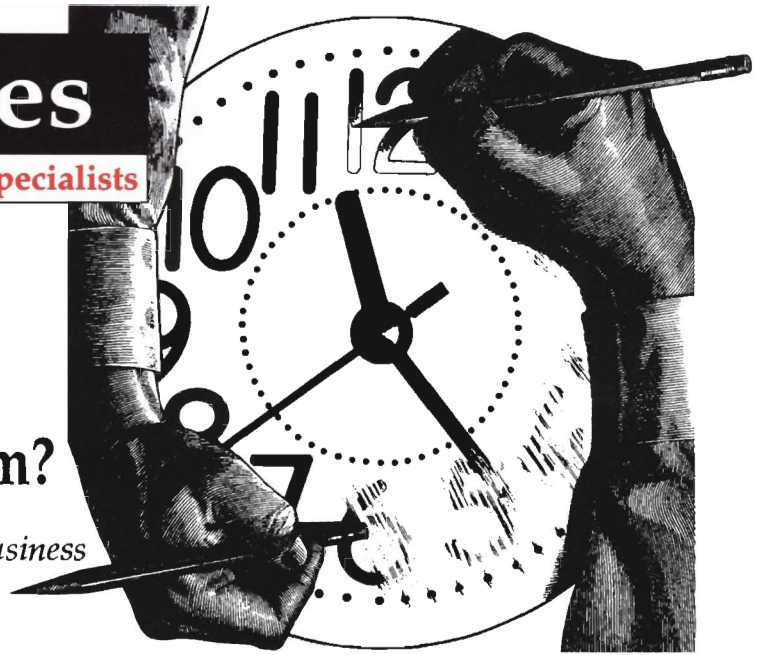
*Phillip Bailey can be found in the RIME conference titled "BBS Callers Digest," on GENIE address mail to P.BAILEY2.*

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# DEVELOPING A COMMERCIAL PROGRAM

## PART THREE: DISTRIBUTE IT!

BY FRED CLARK

How to put your software in the public's eye, and what to do once it's successful.

Part 3 of a 3 part series.



**O**K, so now you know who your market is and what they want and need, you have written the code so it will

operate as your potential customers expect, you have tested it until you are absolutely-positively sure it is 100% compatible with every type of system it can reasonably be expected to run under, and you have spent a reasonable amount of time in preparing some decent documentation to go along with it. Now it's time to start with your distribution efforts.

As mentioned earlier, if you have done your homework in determining your potential market, you may already have acquired a list of potential customers. If that is the case, one of the easiest and cheapest ways of letting them know about your product is to send out a flyer to them. The cost of producing a simple flyer can be quite reasonable and can generate a lot of interest for your package.

Second, BBS's can be an excel-

lent source of spreading the word on your program. Remember however that only BBS users will likely be made aware of your program initially. If you are shooting for a large horizontal market, it may take quite a while before your package finds its way out of the BBS arena and into the hands of the general public. Additionally, if you are producing a very specific vertical market program, you may find that placing information about it on BBS systems does nothing to inform your potential customers of its availability.

When starting out, most likely you will not have a great deal of money for the direct advertising of your product. However, you can consider buying small classified ads in the back of a trade publication which is targeted towards your market area to help get the ball rolling. In the long run though, your best advertising will come via 'word-of-mouth'. If one customer is happy with your product, most likely they will tell another and so on. Just be patient. Although word-of-mouth advertising is highly effective, it also takes a great deal of time to establish.

If you are hoping for immediate world-wide success with your pack-

age by a simple mailing, BBS placement or classified ad, you will be sorely disappointed. Unless you have the capital required to flood the market with professional ads, it will take at least a full year for your product (if it is good as you think it is) become relatively successful. From that point on, hopefully your cash flow will be a lot better and you can start taking advantage of other advertising opportunities.

### DEALING WITH SUCCESS!

Assuming you have done everything right up to this point, you probably think you are in a good position to sit back and start reaping the rewards of your efforts. Wrong! Now some of the really hard work begins — dealing with success and expansion. Since you most probably

have a large customer following by now, you will find that supporting them begins to take more and more of your time — time away from programming and other 'fun' tasks. And, quite honestly you may find that an increasing number

of your customers are less than 100% computer literate — aggravating your support woes. All this will definitely begin to place a drain on

---

*Unless you have the capital required to flood the market with professional ads, it will take at least a full year for your product become relatively successful.*

---

you financially, physically and mentally until you reach the point of either giving up the effort or by bringing in additional help. Don't be afraid to make the decision to expand if your long term goals are to stay with software production.

However, if you are not committed to a future in the software publishing business — then don't bring other people into your company without explaining your future plans and goals. Most likely they will be looking for long term employment rather than a quick stint with someone who is not serious about staying in business. If you decide that continued long term software publishing is not for you, you may want to consider selling the rights to your program once support requirements reach a level beyond which you can not handle them. In other words, don't kid yourself or your customers in carrying on when the weight of maintaining, producing and supporting your product is beyond what you can dedicate in time and effort. You and your customers will be better off by selling your technology to someone else who is willing to continue on with the product and who has the resources to do so effectively.

Assuming you make the decision to stick with it, here are some other items to keep in mind as you

grow (most all of them involve either time or money or both!):

1. Increased advertising — not to exceed 25% of total revenue.

2. Increased manpower for support and programming functions.

3. Increased manpower for technical writing and office support staff.

4. Increased product production procedures to insure sufficient product supply.

5. Upgrade policies and procedures along with software upgrade procedures.

6. Legal protection (i.e. incorporate your business, copyright filings, etc.)

7. Accounting responsibilities (federal, state and local requirements)

8. Business Insurance (for employees, company property, etc.)

9. Additional Space (i.e.

new offices, production and storage facilities, etc.)

10. Furniture and computer equipment for new employees.

11. Phone expense for lines and equipment for product ordering and support.

12. Payroll responsibilities (others are depending on you!)

From experience in dealing with a number of startup companies, you should expect that it will take at least five years or more to build your company up to a size which will allow you to delegate some of the above responsibilities to others in your employment. By that time of course, you should be beyond the point of writing and developing the software itself and concentrating instead on running the business as a whole. At the point at which you are simply signing the checks, then you can start to relax and begin to reap the rewards you so well deserve.

*You may want to consider selling the rights to your program once support requirements reach a level beyond which you can not handle them.*

# BBS

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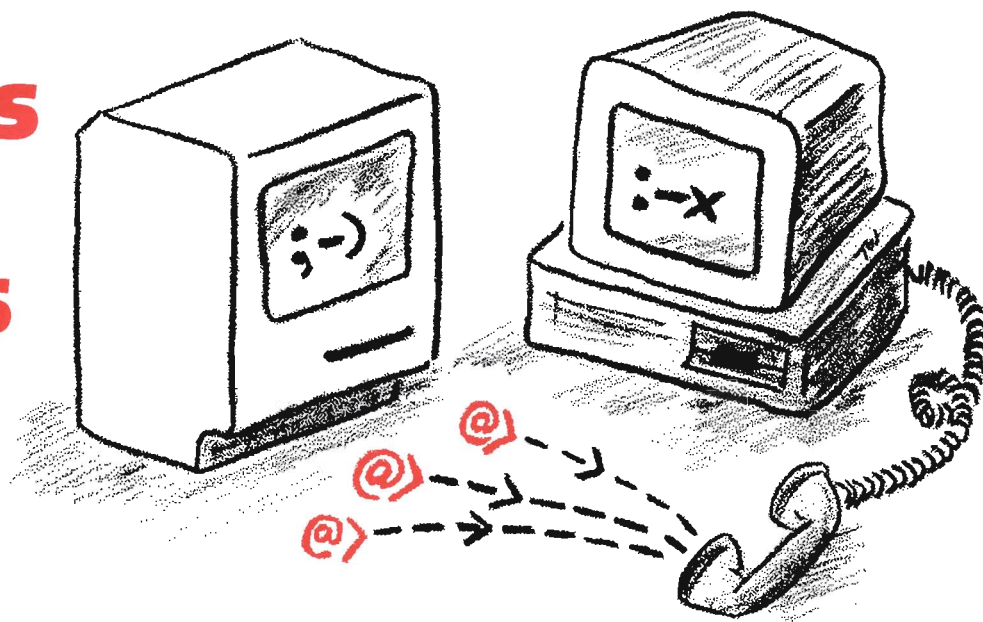
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# ANECDOTES & ACRONYMS

BY CAROL CARMICHAEL  
AND ED LAZAROWITZ



Sometimes those of us who have been BBS'ing for awhile forget what it was like to be a "newbie". The following comments by other SysOps share their recollections of some of the experiences their callers have endured...

"I had one caller leave me a message once asking if he had registered the game he was playing since his last score had been recorded on the high scorers bulletin".

"When I was setting up my second node, I was trying the game doors out one by one to see if they all worked. I had forgotten to change the COM port on one of them and the poor caller that was on node one become ME and it scared her. She thought she had done something wrong and she left me a lengthy message apologizing to me for any error she might have made."

"My spouse was eager to see if he had any new messages in the Aviation conference, so he expectantly sat down at the keyboard. The screen was displaying ENTER FIRST NAME, so my spouse keyed away his first name, last name and password — all on the same line — so anxious was he to get his mail. He spent an enjoyable session online answering the mail and then logged off for the evening. We sure were surprised when the following morning we discovered a message from a concerned caller who was kind enough to suggest maybe my spouse would wish to

change his password. It seems this caller had dialed in and gotten to the first name prompt and was just getting ready to sign on when the keyboard was taken over!!!"

That last story provides a good opportunity to remind you that it's a good practice to ALWAYS type your password in separately so it is protected by the dots. In addition to avoiding what happened with my spouse, you may never know who may be viewing the SysOp's screen and seeing what your password is. (For additional password security tips, see Ed Lazarowitz's article on "BBS Access Security Revisited" in the Feb. 1992 issue of BBS CD.)

## EMOTICONS & ACRONYMS— FACT OR FICTION?

**Acronym:** n. A word formed from the initial letters of a name, or by combining initial letters or parts of a series of words.

Last month we presented a list of a few of the more complicated emoticons floating around. This month, we figured we flip over to the acronym side of the coin and share with you a few of the lesser known of those beasties...

ASCII American Standard Code for Information Interchange

BASIC	Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code
BIOS	Basic Input Output System
CCITT	Consultative Committee for Internatn'l Telephony & Telegraphy
GIGO	Garbage In, Garbage Out
MNP	Microcom Network Protocol
NIMBY	Not In My Backyard!
UART	Universal Asynchronous Receiver/Transmitter [communication]

More next month...

## WHO'S ON FIRST?

The other night we were doing regular maintenance on Struppi's. Ed has always praised the capabilities of Directory Scanner, a program by Nat Martino, so Carol decided to purchase a registered version and load it on the BBS for their convenience. Ed has used the program more or less since its inception, but Carol, probably like anyone learning a new program, had to be walked through each function, keystroke-by-keystroke. As usual, Ed was very patient, but Carol per-



ceived he was starting to run out of patience just a little bit, with her continued and -repeated- questions.

However, the tables were quickly turned when Ed decided to do a little bit of work on Carol's stand-alone PC. Carol uses an excellent shareware menu program, but if you've never used it before, it can be a bit confusing at first. Although it's difficult to portray the scenes which followed, just picture the classic Laurel and Hardy "Who's on First" routine with Ed and Carol going back and forth asking each other questions on what to do next! The morale of this story is a reminder that, in case you had any doubts, that yes, SysOps are human too! <grin>

As mentioned at the start of this column, we have dedicated this column to the lighter side of computing. If you have an experience or thought that you'd like to share with us, please do not hesitate to drop us a line via RIME. Although we prefer to be reached via RIME conference #234 [BBS Callers Digest], Ed and I can both

## TAGLINE FUN

This month's crop of taglines come from several sources along the 'baud waves', so we won't bother to attribute them to any one BBS.

- \* All wiyht. Rho sritched mg kegtops awound?
- \* Lights, camera, uh...uh...Spock, what's next?
- \* But God TOLD me to use a GOTO.
- \* Minds, like parachutes, work only when open. \* Shin - Device for finding furniture in the dark.
- \* Radioactive cats have 18 half lives.
- \* TAG: a primitive game where one person is it
- \* Misspelled? Impossible. My modem is error correcting.
- \* This is your Sysop. -<¥ã\$ >s ùÈÊ, \$òsĭp ĩş d,Êg\$!

And in tribute to March's Michelangelo scare...

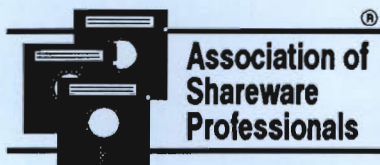
- \* SCAN Today - Compute Tomorrow!
- \* Avoid Computer Viruses - practice safe HEX!
- \* Is a Computer Virus a 'micro' organism?
- \* Viruses are considered ScareWare!

be reached via any RIME conference if your local board does not carry conference #234. Please route your message to node id ->STRUPPI. We look

forward to hearing from you. Carol Carmichael, SysOp - Struppi's BBS and Ed Lazarowitz, Co-Sysop - Struppi's BBS

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# DELUXE<sup>2</sup> & ROBOCOMM: GREAT TOGETHER

BY RICHARD KOZIK

These two shareware offerings combined can save you lots of time by automating some routine tasks.



**H**unched in front of your terminal, you try to log onto your favorite PCBoard system just minutes before midnight. Hoping to make use of the day's allotted hour of on-line time before the twelfth bell strikes those sixty minutes into oblivion, you wait anxiously as your machine repeatedly auto-dials, each time resulting in the message "BUSY."

This is crazy, you think to yourself. With your long work day, social obligations, time out to eat and to pay at least minimal attention to your family, how do you find time to call all the bulletin board systems which carry your mail and the files you want without sacrificing time from your other daily obligations? Here it is just about midnight — maybe seven hours until you have to be to work again, and you're now sacrificing sleep to watch your screen repeat the word "BUSY" over and over again. There's just not enough time in the day!

Another sad cliché sticks in your tired mind as the last redial attempt of the day is made: So many boards, so little time. Pathetic isn't it?

Suddenly an eerie chill sweeps the room, prickling the hairs at the back of your neck. As you stand from your desk, you notice how the light of midnight's full moon falling through the boughs of the tree outside your window casts ghostly shadows as a gentle wind sweeps its leaves. As you nervously laugh out loud, dismissing any thoughts of impish figures dancing about your room, you glimpse a dark figure looming at the edge of your peripheral vision. In the half-moment it takes to snap your head around to look at it, however, the specter vanishes.

Now this is too much, you think to yourself, it's definitely time to get some sleep! I must be overworked to be suddenly be seeing...

"Time," rasps a voice from just behind you, so close you can feel the speaker's breath in your wildly raised hair, "Is this what you want?"

As you turn to face a tall, slender figure impossibly wrapped in shadow, you exclaim, "HOLY COW!! What in the...? Who in the...? What's going on here?"

"I offer you what you seek. I will sell you time," comes the rasping voice again. "Oh no! You're not going to get my soul, you...you..."

"Relax, I haven't come to bargain for your soul. You need time, I'm

here to offer it to you. All it will cost is the price of two magnificent shareware title registrations," rasps the figure derisively. With these words he extends his arm to point a bony hand toward your SVGA screen. At once you notice two new directories displayed on your hard drive, C:\ROBOCOMM and C:\DELUXE2.

The dark shape draws near to you, edging you back toward your desk, and you quickly decide to sit down before your computer again to examine these phenomena.

"Oh sure," you say, "I've seen these before. Deluxe<sup>2</sup> is the mail reader developed by Mark 'Sparky' Herring, author of the QMAIL door and the .QWK mail packet standard. Robocomm I've seen too. But I've already got a terminal program, and I like to answer my mail on-line so it doesn't get stale. Besides, these things are too hard to set up and maintain. I don't want to have to devote all my time to learning new software."

At once, keys begin falling and rising on your keyboard with the familiar klakkety-klak noises of typing as your machine is guided by an unseen operator into the Deluxe<sup>2</sup> version 1.21 mail reader. You briefly look back at the shadowed figure, wonder to yourself if it has a face at all, and

then turn back to find Deluxe<sup>2</sup> with TUTORIAL.QWK loaded and ready for viewing.

You somehow feel compelled to look further; to explore what's being offered to you. Still a little uneasy, what with the sudden appearance of this mysterious visitor and the spooky things he does, you reluctantly give yourself over to Qmail Deluxe<sup>2</sup> and it's accompanying tutorial.

The interface, you decide, is intuitive and quick. You easily find your way through the bulletins, news, and begin reading messages. The William Tell Overture at once bursts forth from you PC's speaker, and ANSI graphic screens paint color on your monitor. This is great, you think to yourself. Even a PCBoard-like "Zippy" search command is included among the messaging functions, allowing you to search a board's individual conferences or the entire available message base for specific words or phrases.

Navigating the message bases couldn't be easier: The [Ins] key brings up a list of messages by conference, which you can scroll through, browsing the subject of each. The [Enter] key jumps from message to message, while the [Page Down] and [Page Up] keys page through long messages. The [Space] bar acts like the [Enter] and [Page Down] keys combined, each press paging you through long messages before jumping to the next. Deluxe<sup>2</sup> even gathers all of your personal messages into one area and 'beeps' to alert you that you have mail waiting.

You decide to try replying to a message from the SysOp, and right away discover that your favorite text editor is loaded with the quote text and header already in place, ready for

your reply. "Too slick," you mutter almost breathlessly to yourself. On saving the message, the program asks you to verify the recipients name and message subject, and even offers password-protected message support in addition to PCBoard's public and personal message security.

"There's more," comes the unnerving voice over your shoulder yet again. It seems so impossibly close that you can feel the tension of the figure's presence just next to your skin; its breath at your back. Each time the dark shape speaks, your nerves light with adrenaline as if hearing the eerily scraping voice for the first time. Yet above all else, you are puzzled; why would this thing conjure itself from the shadows just to peddle shareware?

The screen flickers and jumps to a new display, this time of file listings with their descriptions in PCBoard directory format. The list, you discover, contains files in the form of a new files scan. Each time a mail packet is requested, files from each of the selected conferences are scanned, and new files since your last scan are included with your mail. Once off-line, you can then browse available files along with their descriptions to decide what latest files to download next time around! You begin to see how perhaps this Deluxe<sup>2</sup> can really save you time after all.

With your reservations about a mail reader program beginning to wane, you decide to open the configuration menus to see what it really takes to setup and run this thing. You are pleasantly surprised and relieved to find that all the configuration options are straightforward and easily understood, and the more advanced features are explained fully in the on-line context-sensitive help, as are all features and functions in Deluxe<sup>2</sup>.

"Okay," you say coolly, "I can

live with the Deluxe mail reader, but I really don't think this Robocomm stuff is for me. I looked at it once a long time ago and I just didn't get it — it was too complicated. Probably more than I need from a terminal program anyway. I can probably just put together some scripts to do the same things Robocomm..."

You stop abruptly in mid-sentence as you notice the shadow leaning menacingly over you with both hands extended toward your neck. Both you and the figure pause in the silence, and the voice starts again.

"See for yourself, it's not so difficult as you believe." And with that your keyboard immediately begins clattering away again.

"Neat trick. If you could sell me that I could get all kinds of work done without even touching the keyboard!" "Even better, what I'm showing you can do more than just enter keystrokes," the shadow says as it glides nearer. "Observe."

*Continues...*

---

*A PCBoard-like "Zippy" search command is included among the messaging functions, allowing you to search a board's individual conferences or the entire available message base for specific words or phrases.*

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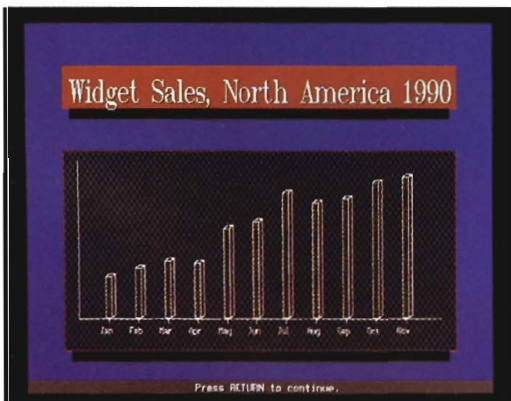
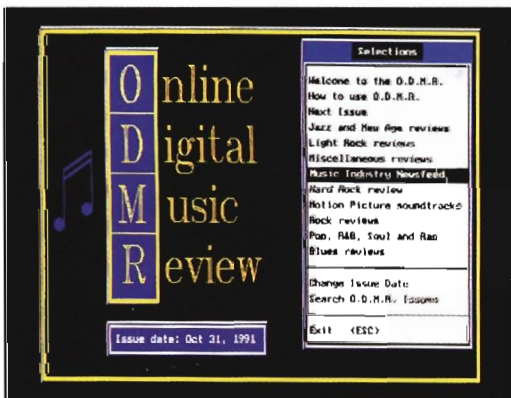
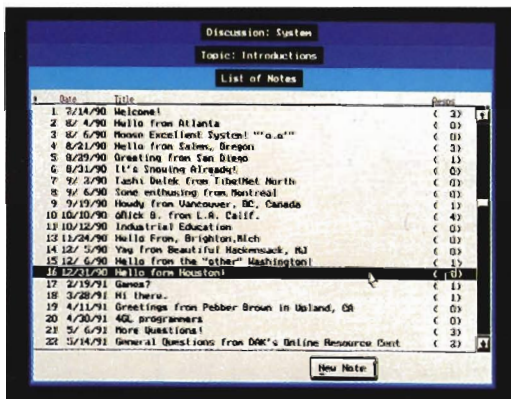
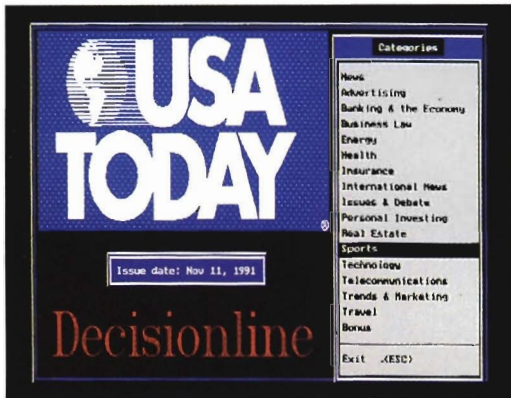
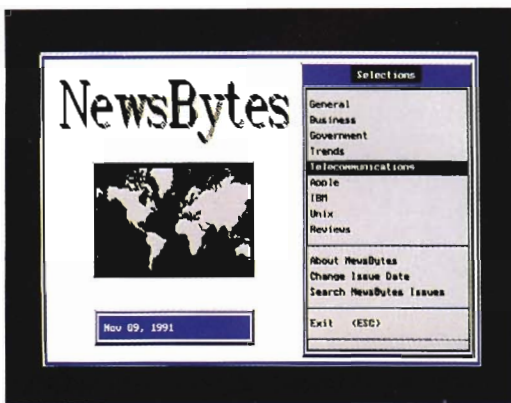
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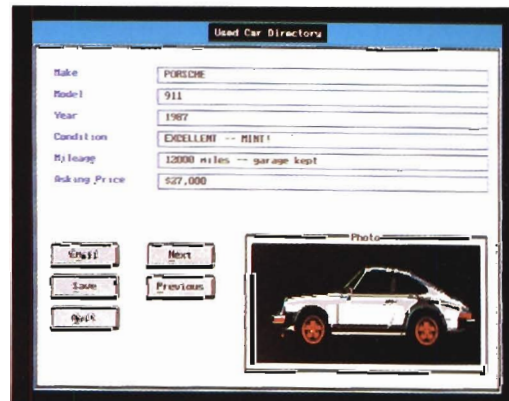
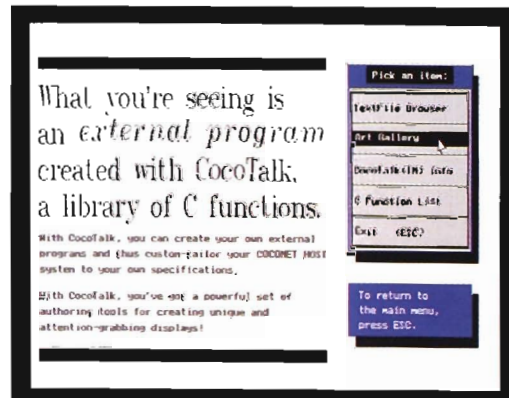
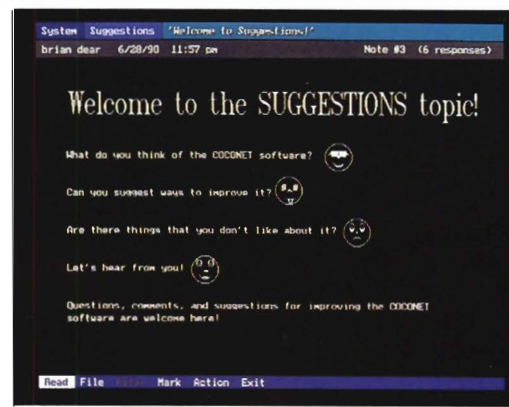
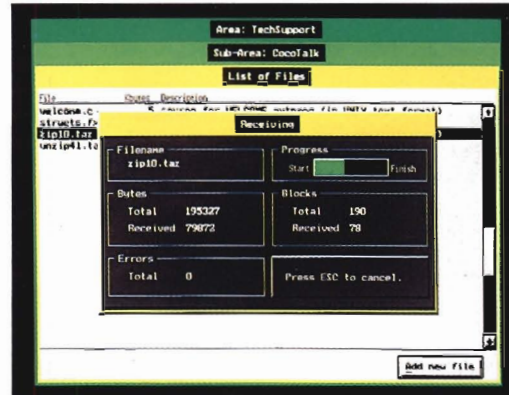
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On the screen, you see Robocomm being initiated. A moment later, you are reading the startup information screen, which gives brief, direct instructions for getting right down to business. You watch carefully as configuration information is entered, giving details about your system, your modem's COM port and baud rate, and file paths. You even note directories and protocol selection for your new mail reader, and a direct reader startup command for reading your .QWK mail packets from within Robocomm.

As you come to the BBS information screen, you discover that you are typing for yourself now, entering BBS names, numbers, and simple information about each system. With a handful of systems entered into Robocomm's database, you open the AGENDA menu to create your first automated session.

Your new agenda's blank screen is a little intimidating at first, but like the first stroke of a brush on canvas, you decide to start with something simple by entering SCAN [N]EW FILES from the on-screen list of available commands. Immediately, a

*With a handful of systems entered into Robocomm's database, you open the AGENDA menu to create your first automated session.*

box opens on the screen which requests the system name for which the scan will be performed. The [F10] key drops open a list of available PCBoard systems, which you may move through with the cursor keys. Striking [Enter] on the highlighted system inserts the system information into the agenda. At all times, context-sensitive help is available by striking the [F1] key to guide you through Robocomm's prompts and available functions.

After adding [G]ET QWK PACKET and a few more items to your



SCREEN FROM DELUXE<sup>2</sup>. Deluxe<sup>2</sup> reader's menu options are similar to those available while online.

agenda, you decide to try it out. You escape to save your agenda and then select RUN AGENDA [N]OW from the GO menu. You watch in awe as your machine flawlessly performs a login, new file scan, and retrieves a fresh mail packet from the board's Qmail4 door. After logging off, you notice Robocomm processing the list of available files just before clearing the screen to put up its screen saver completion notice.

Curious, you enter Robocomm's [A]VAILABLE FILES list to find every file scanned in the earlier call, each complete with its PCBoard description. From this database, you discover you can flag files for download, delete and sort entries, even search for keywords in the file name or description, similar to PCBoard's Zippy Scan. In addition, you can use filter and preference words to control

your database, and change vague descriptions on files that you've downloaded before flagging them for upload to other systems; a great way to keep your file ratios in shape.

You'll soon also learn about Robocomm's scripting and file processing capabilities, macro keys, mouse support and other features which make it one of the most powerful communications programs around. Combined with Deluxe<sup>2</sup>, your computer can certainly become one of the most valuable, time-saving communications tools available to you.

*Continues...*

## Windows Users

Now you can access America's Finest collection of Windows Shareware & Public Domain software via modem at a very low cost! 3 gigabytes of files to satisfy all your DOS & Windows needs. 100's of E-mail areas.

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# AQUILA BBS

Chicagoland's Largest System

Since 1988

Aquila has filled the computer screens of Chicagoland for over three years, growing from a single modem line system in 1988 to over 25 lines in 1992. Aquila's success over the years is due to the enthusiastic support of our users. New callers are encouraged to download our current file list and electronic mail conference listing. A short guided tour highlighting our system services is also available for new users. All of our information is automatically mailed to you to read in the comfort of your home or office. So pick up your modem and give us a call! You will find Aquila BBS to be the most valuable bulletin board in your dialer.

## Programs - Thousands On-Line

Give your modem a workout! We add new shareware and public domain programs everyday. Over 400 programs are added weekly. With more than 5 Gigabytes of on-line storage, we stock over 50 thousand programs. Aquila makes it easy to find the programs that are important to you, by organizing them into 120+ file directory categories everyday.

### We cater to the Windows User.

With Windows becoming the most popular user interface around, we make an extra effort to keep you supplied with the latest programs and enhancements by devoting a special conference area just for Windows containing 2000+ files organized into 40+ file directory categories.

Our organization and the latest programs make our file areas the most popular around. These are just a few of our most popular categories available:

Diagnostic Utilities  
System Enhancements  
File Organizers  
Word Processing

Computer Games  
Music and Midi Sound Files  
Computer Animations  
CAD Drawing Utilities

Business - Finance - Tax  
Novell and Lan Utilities  
Database  
Programming

Icons - Icon Managers  
Wallpaper - BMP's  
Multi-Media Related  
Fonts - Font Utilities



The AQUILA BBS Team (Left to right: Kevin & Kristy Behrens, Steve Williams, Chris Babb)

## New User Information

All first time callers receive by mail, our printed 'New User Information' and 'E-Mail Conference Directory' guide, as well as a 'Quick Command Guide' to help you get the most out of Aquila. The new user information covers system services such as answers to commonly asked questions, USA Today, Boardwatch Magazine, and Electronic Mail off-line readers. The 'Quick Command Guide' is a desktop lookup for using Aquila commands.



708-820-8344

New User Information

### Aquila Starter Kit

Callers that are new to modem communications will find 'The Aquila Starter Kit' a great time-saver. Easy for the beginner and helpful for the expert! This \$39.95 kit includes the following:

Procomm (communications program)  
Full documentation for all BBS commands  
Off-line file browsing program

Our complete file listing on floppy disk  
Off-Line E-Mail Reader  
Three month basic membership

## Around The World E-MAIL

Over 450 Conference Topics

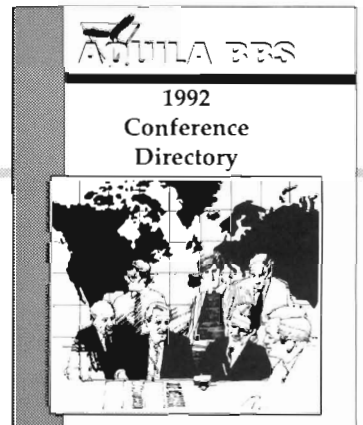


We currently echo to and from ILink, RIME, Fido-Net and Throbneth with more to come in the near future. You can get virtually any question answered here and join in on lively discussions with people from across the country and around the world. We also publish our own 'E-Mail Directory' that is sent to all users of Aquila BBS. This directory lists all of our conferences by category and gives a brief description of the topic of each one. Here is a small sampling of over 450 interesting topics that we offer:

General Discussion  
Computer Related

Vendor Support  
Programming Languages

For-Sale  
Current Events



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Agenda SALTAIR1

Call Graphics Connection

- ↓ J;0->Scan new files since last logon in: A (SMTWTFSS)
- ↓ Get QWK mail packet (SMTWTFSS)
- ↓ J;0->Download LOGO\_10.ZIP (SMTWTFSS)
- ↓ J;0->Download SSN-9203.ZIP (SMTWTFSS)
- ↓ J;0->Upload D2-121DX.ZIP (SMTWTFSS)

Call Salt Air BBS

- J;9->Scan new files since last logon in: A (SMTWTFSS)
- Get QWK mail packet (SMTWTFSS)
- ↓ J;1->Download AS2B.ZIP (SMTWTFSS)
- ↓ J;9->Download NEWS610.ZIP (SMTWTFSS)
- ↓ J;1->Capture & Append: Z;ZIP;&;CODE (SMTWTFSS)
- ↓ Run Program "MAKELIST.BAT" (SMTWTFSS)

G = Get QWK Packet      D = Download Files      E = Execute Script File  
 S = Send REP Packet      U = Upload Files      Alt-P = Edit Parameters  
 M = MegaMail/PCRelay      N = Scan New Files      Alt-D = Select Days  
 P = PCBoard Mail      J = Jump to Terminal      + = Completion Status  
 R = Run Program (DOS)      C = Issue Command      - = Temporary/Permanent  
 F1=Help    Tab/Sh-Tab=Move    Del=Delete    Alt-R=Reset Agenda    Esc=Save & Exit

SCREEN FROM ROBOCOMM. Robocomm 4.0's Agenda Editor allows you to perform just about any on-line actions, including capture results and scripting.

"Wow, this is really great," you begin; but as you turn to speak to your dark visitor, you find yourself again alone in the room. On the desk beside your mouse pad you notice two business cards that you're sure weren't there just moments before.

On the first, between SPARKWARE and Mark Herring's name are the handwritten words: DELUXE<sup>2</sup> 1.21 REGISTRATION \$20.

Along the top of the other card, that of Parsons Consulting, a similar message was neatly written: ROBOCOMM 4.0 REGISTRATION \$40,

Early the next morning, you wonder to yourself over breakfast about the strange events that your tired mind conjured up in your sleep. Reading new shareware documentation so late in the night would inevitably cause you to have strange dreams, even nightmares, you decide. Still, Robocomm and Deluxe<sup>2</sup> are some pretty impressive programs.

## BBS CALLERS DIGEST BBS LIST

The following is a list of BBS's authorized to accept New or Renewal Subscriptions to BBS Callers Digest Magazine.

The Livewire BBS .....	Richard Paquette .....	609-235-5297
BBS Data Systems .....	Greg Kaiser .....	708-991-2452
Channel 1 BBS .....	Brian Miller .....	617-354-8873
Chuck's Attempt BBS .....	Chuck Ammann .....	201-729-2602
City Lites .....	John Lundell .....	701-772-5399
Chemeketa Online .....	Bob Hunter .....	503-393-5580
Mountain Air BBS .....	Edward Wood .....	703-427-0226
Music Connection .....	David Coleman .....	404-936-0550
The Next Generation BBS .....	John Carcione .....	609-482-7345
Rusty & Edie's BBS .....	Russ Hardenburg .....	216-726-2620
The PereLine BBS .....	Tom Serface .....	408-364-2789
Uncle Hank's BBS .....	Hank Hurteau .....	413-527-8977
Executive Info Network .....	Andy Keeves .....	914-667-4567
The Beckett BBS .....	Jerry Liddle .....	609-467-3898
The TAO BBS .....	Bob Watson .....	609-584-7947
The Modem Zone .....	Don Cheeks .....	513-424-7529
Salt Air BBS .....	PCBoard Support .....	801-261-8976

As more BBS's register the CD-SUB program (CDSUB35.ZIP), they will be listed in the next issues. Each registered bbs gets free access to The Livewire BBS 609-235-5297 for newer versions. If you registered and are not listed, please give us a voice call (1-609-953-9110, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., M - F, EST) to make the correction.

# TEN YEARS AT THE PC

BY LANA FOX

Jim Reid shares his journey into BBSing with us this month.



**H**i, all!  
This month, we have another special treat for you! The caller profile this month is written by Jim Reid

himself, a regular caller to Struppi's BBS. I hope you enjoy his warm and witty style as much as I do!

I bought my first PC in 1982 for self-defense. Even back in those stone ages it was clear that PC's would become the dominant computing force, so I got one to avoid becoming technically obsolete. At work I had an old asynchronous mainframe terminal on my desk. A dinosaur.

My home PC was a Leading Edge Model M — dual floppies and monochrome monitor. I set about getting my hands on all of the ...er....copied software I could. Hundreds of diskettes of software, although I only used a few regularly. Copy protection was rampant in those days, so my most-used PC programs were the ones that could copy protected diskettes.

I was genuinely afraid to open the chassis of the PC for fear of the dreaded static electrical discharges what would leap from my fingers and

fry the collection of Japanese chips. My only hardware upgrade was a Hercules clone display adapter and an oddball short card that let it emulate CGA...more or less anyway.

That PC served me faithfully for four years!

In 1986 I bought a no-name Korean-parts 286/10mhz PC with EGA and a hard drive. Now this was living! The old PC was exiled to my oldest daughter's room for her word processing. Not long thereafter the Leading Edge died. I never figured out whether it died from the pain of disuse or some action inflicted by my daughter so she could use the new PC instead.

By now I was buying most of the software I used and the old diskettes of copied programs were gone. I guess it was the fact that I now knew which programs I wanted and which I didn't that caused the change in me. Or maybe it was the guilt.

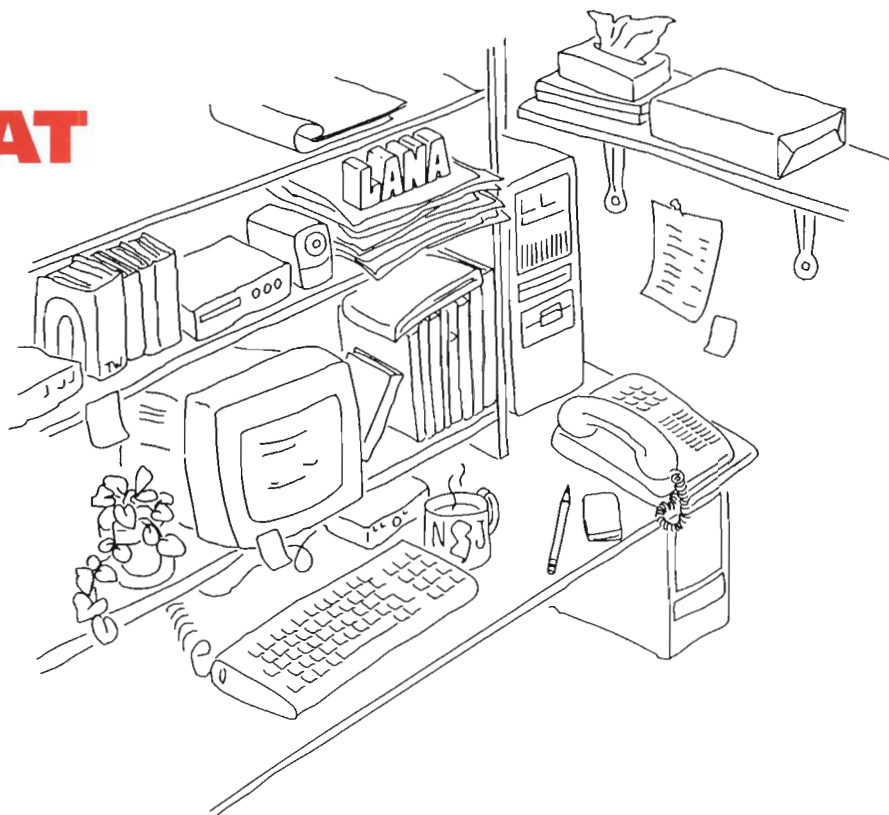
At work I had a new IBM 3270/PC on my desk because an IBM senior V.P. told us that this was their strategic PC platform for the 90's. It

was a clunker, and I was proud of having more computing power at home than on my desk at work.

By this time, I wasn't afraid of the insides of a PC any more. I upgraded the disk adapter, replaced a failed display adapter, replaced a failed hard disk, added an expanded memory board, added more memory on the main board, and...installed my first modem.

It took me a week to make the modem work. My oddball Korean PC had a single serial port configured as COM1, but something in the multi-function board was also claiming the COM2 port interrupts, even though I had no visible COM2 port. Trial, error, and divine intervention helped me find how to set IRQ's and use COM4 for the modem. And then I had to add a new telephone extension to the computer room and learn how to disable call-waiting.

All of this hardware work taught me two lessons: (1) If you can afford it, buy everything at once, bundled together by the vendor; and (2) In PC parts, you get what you pay for. The





money I saved buying a no-name Korean PC was more than spent buying replacement components.

I soon discovered Telix and local BBS's. And I did like most people new to BBS's do...I desperately looked for stuff to upload so I could get credits to download a raft of shareware. A jillion bits of junk passed both ways before I learned to be discriminating in my file selections.

Just as I had done with my first PC software experiences, I joined dozens of BBS's — not registering (paying or donating to) a single one of them. The first one I *did* register immediately moved to Maryland, out of my local calling range, so I felt justified in not paying for BBS use when SYSOPS were obviously just modern-day gypsies.

After a year, I was down to just three BBS's — the ones that met my needs the best. They were stable, helpful, and tolerant of my learning curve. And I finally joined each of

them by paying the registration fees. No more upload requirements for me.

What I learned was that different boards have different purposes and characters. One board I use entirely

---

*What I learned was that  
different boards have  
different purposes and  
characters.*

---

for its quality shareware; the SYSOP does a wonderful job of screening out viruses, pirated stuff, commercial or questionable items, games, pictures, etc. Another board has I-Link and SmartNet links to some vendors whose products I use. So it saves me long distance Tech Support calls. The third board has RIME and other nodes, plus a really friendly local

group of callers.

Last year I bought a new Gateway 2000 386/33mhz and exiled the old 286 to the guest bedroom as my daughters' PC. But the hard drive is too full and too slow, the graphics are only EGA, and the computer is too slow...so I still have to schedule use of the new PC around my kids' school work.

I no longer have or use "copied" software, but I'm spending a fortune on software upgrades to stay current with everything I've purchased to date.

At work I have a PS/2 Model 80 on my desk...still slower than my home PC, but equally functional.

And now I'm dreaming of a 486/33 and 9600 v.42bis modem... Some things don't change that much.

*Jim's messages always display the wit, charm and delightful humor as demonstrated in his tale above.*

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The classified ads are for **Pre-Owned items & Software**, and for **BBS ads** only. Ads for new equipment must be inserted in the regular display advertising sections. No logos, or photos, or any other illustrations can be used in the classified ad section.

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**SUBURBAN SOFTWARE**, PCBoard Ver 14.5/E3, Sysop: Chuck Valecek, 1-708-636-6694, RelayNet, MetroNet, Home of:

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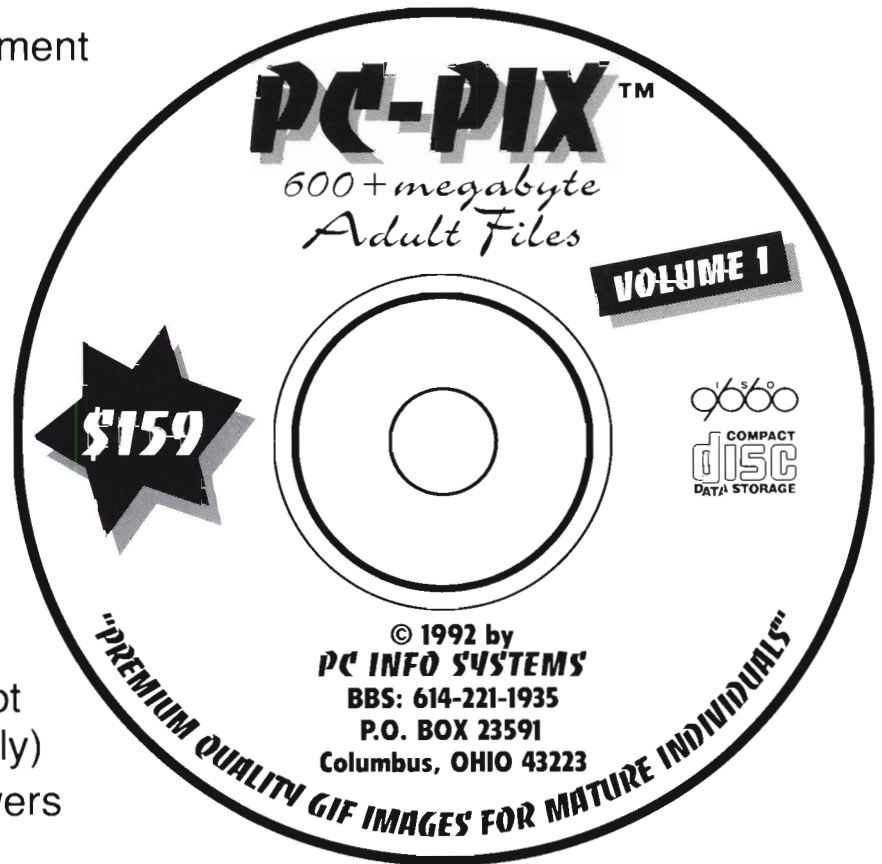
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now, there were quite a few difficulties associated with payment methods for online time. Because of the threat of credit card fraud and the fear of the card number being seen by a "hacker", many credit card holders were reluctant to charge their accounts," relates Stryker. "And a significant portion of the under 21 population, which represents a large number of BBS callers, don't even possess a credit card." "If a caller chose to pre-pay for online time, a check or money order had to pass through mail, bank and accounting delays before credits were made. Even invoicing a user for credits didn't provide an adequate solution. The overhead involved in billing and collection processes for a large user base sharply reduces profit potential. Imagine if McDonald's required a customer to establish a credit card account before he could buy a hamburger. Convenience of payment is a 'must' for the for-profit BBS sysop."

The 976-BBS package includes the "976-BBS Redemption Center," an online module which the sysop integrates into the executable BBS, an offline configuration and reporting utility, which operates on a separate

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The software is voice-configurable, allowing the Sysop to record messages using a standard telephone handset. The Sysop also determines the dollar amount charged per call and the amount of online time a caller will receive.

The 976-BBS software uses a proprietary, dual-password scheme allowing the voice-server and the online redemption mechanism to generate the same sequence of codes without being connected via a local area network or a dedicated phone line. The security architecture also guarantees each package will generate its own unique code sequences, reducing the odds of hacking a code to less than one in ten million.

Galacticomm Vice President, Scott Brinker explains, "We want to give sysops the opportunity to make their bbs's as profitable as they can be. Eliminating the headaches of old-fashioned payment methods is a big step forward for sysops everywhere."

The Galacticomm Demo System can be accessed free of charge by dialing (305) 583-7808 [N,8,1] with a modem. Galacticomm's voice number is (305) 583-5990. ■■■■■

**ATTRACTING CALLERS** *from page 12*

there are hundreds of other interesting and useful information outlets that can be accessed by computer, most of them a lot less expensive and a lot more fun to use than The Big Three!

"The Electronic Traveller" takes a breezy, colorful, and sometimes irreverent look at the best spots on the underground online map, complete with information on how to get there, tips on what to do and see while there, and plenty of tongue-in-cheek advice on how to remain a welcome visitor. Paul Waldinger and Elizabeth Powell Crowe profile such lesser-known, but nonetheless worth while online/bulletin board services as UseNet, BitNet, PeopleLink, America Online, The Well, Exec-Pc, FidoNet, BIX, Connect, ILink, SmartNet, Portal, plus many more.

"The Electronic Traveller" offers complete explanations on how to access and log on to each system; descriptions of the special attractions, events and people on the networks; entertaining critiques on the personality of each online system, including the unique customs, rituals, and quirks of the regular clientele. It has important background information on the networks, including size, geographic range, number of nodes and users, daily message flow, and other "gee-wiz" statistics. It reports on alternative European networks and what the future holds for the online underground, technological and other.

Hope you enjoyed Paul's insights on running a bbs and if you see your favorite bbs needing some special attention, you might want to leave some Email to the sysop with suggestions. ■■■■■



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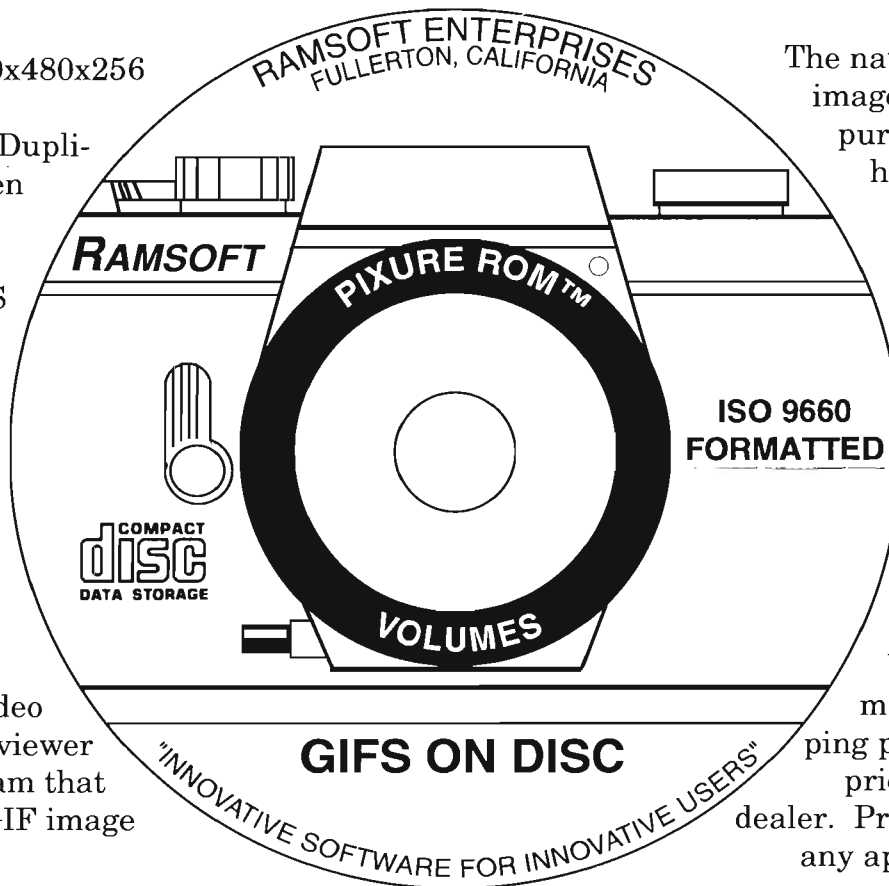
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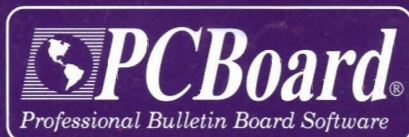
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