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MARCH 1992 $2.50

COMPUSERVE MAGAZINE

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Making Mutual Decisions–p.30

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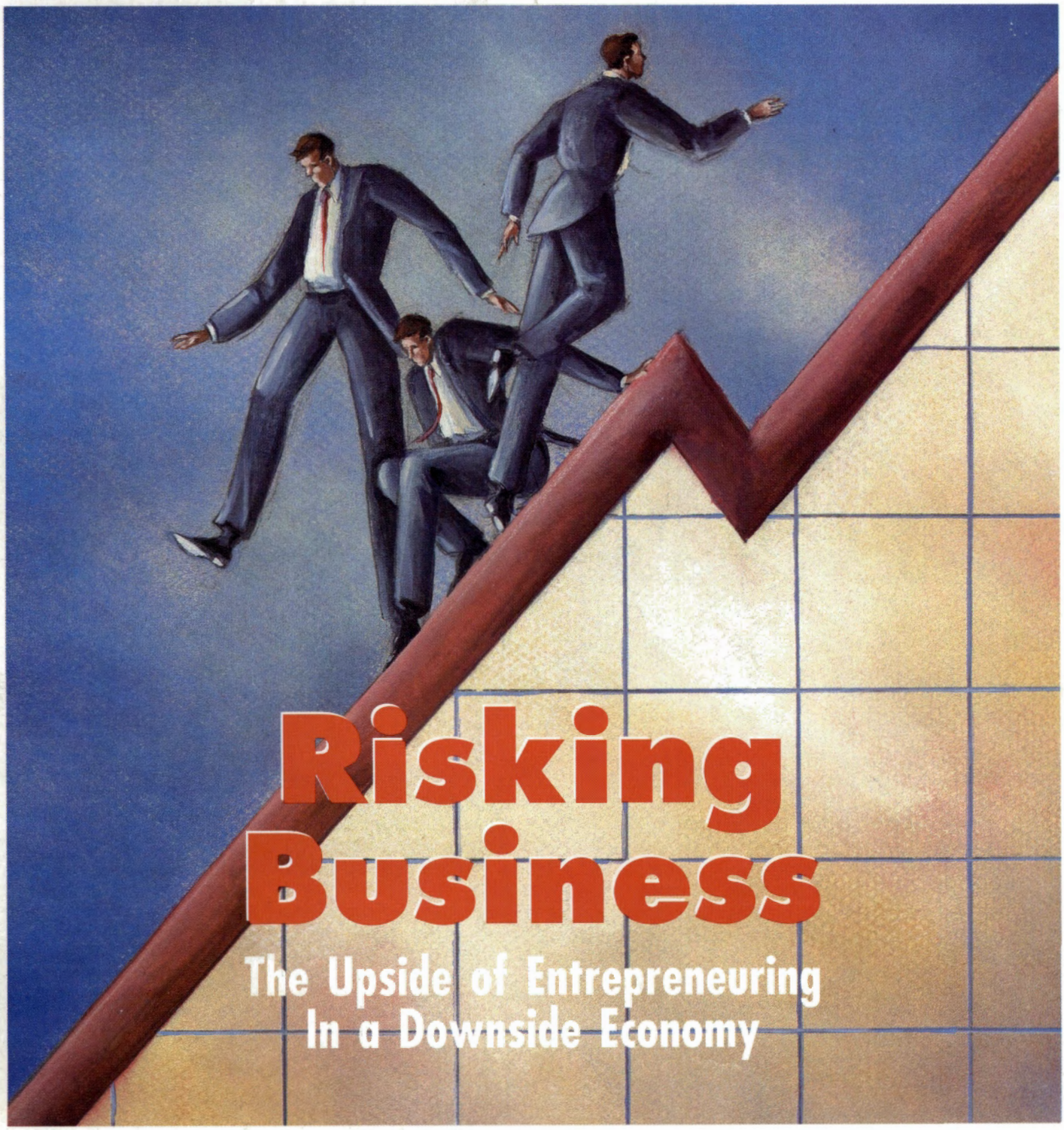
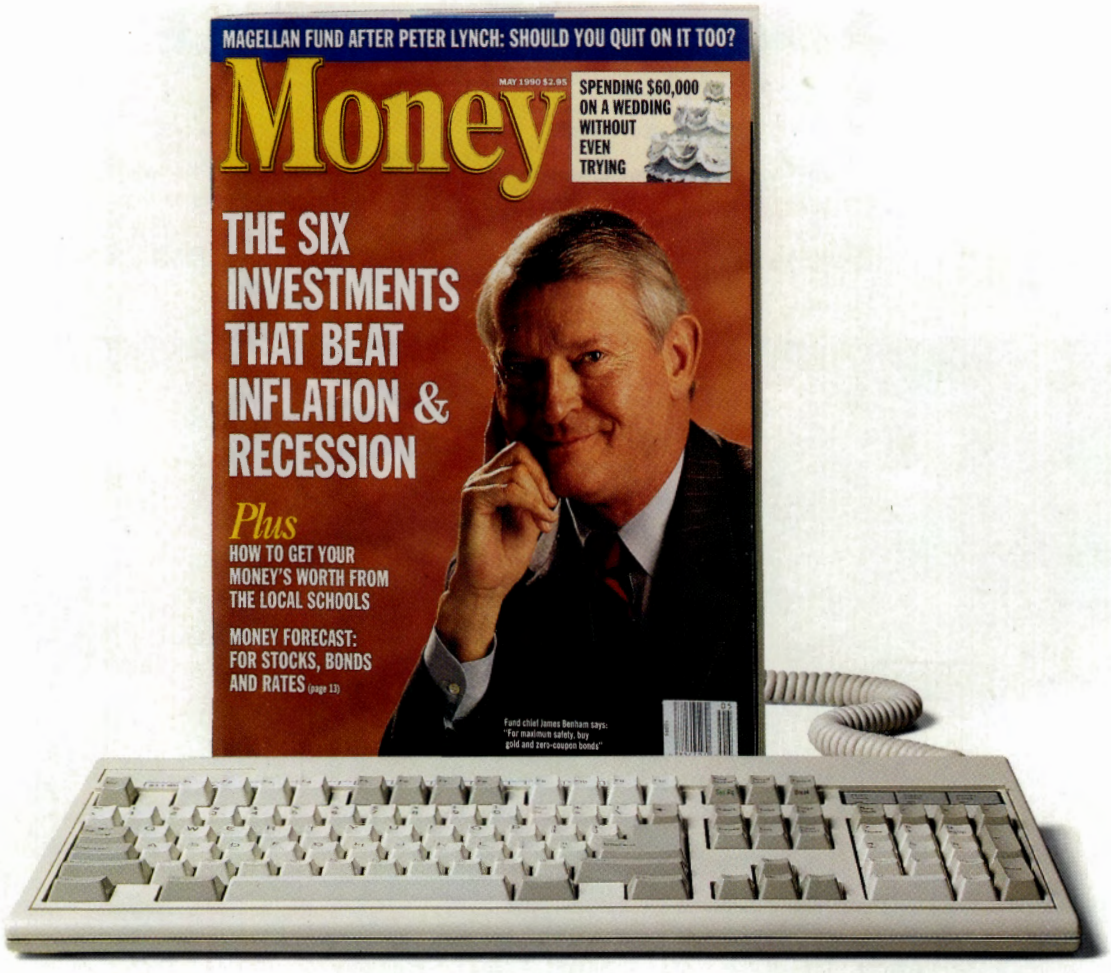


Risking Business

The Upside of Entrepreneuring In a Downside Economy



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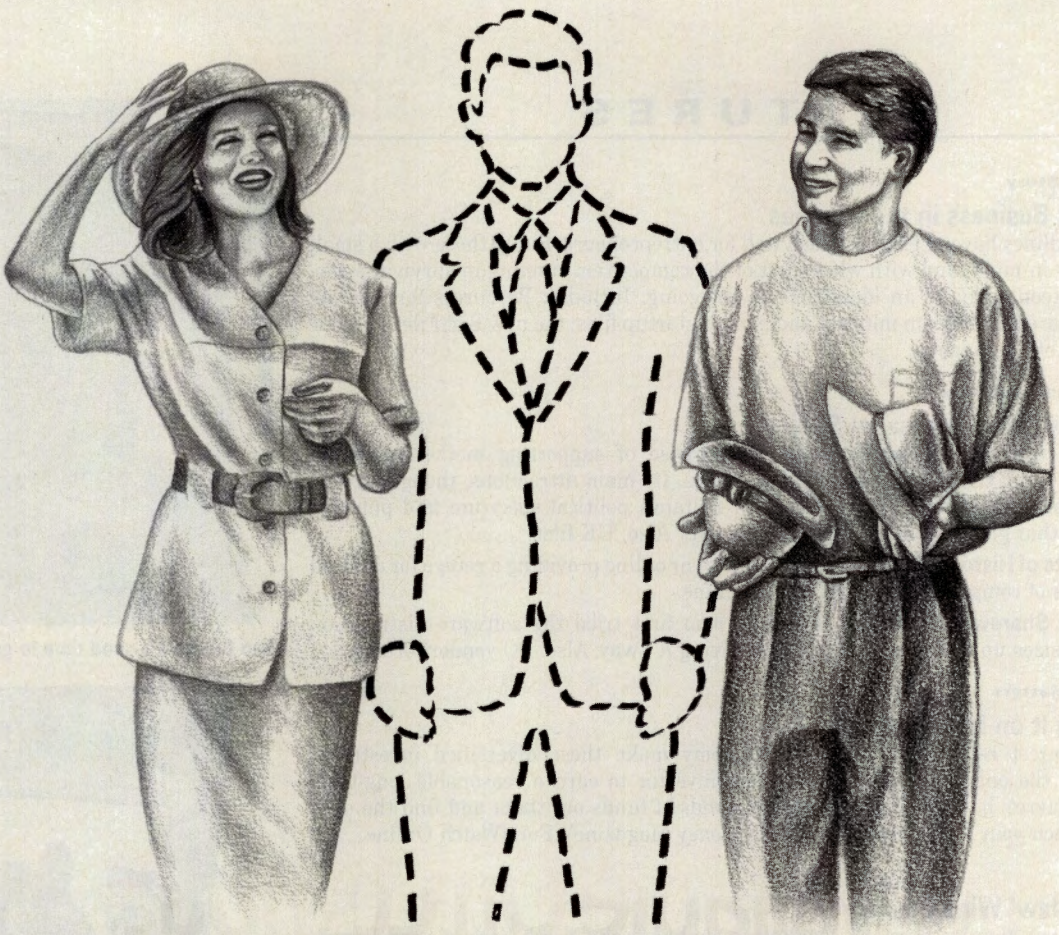

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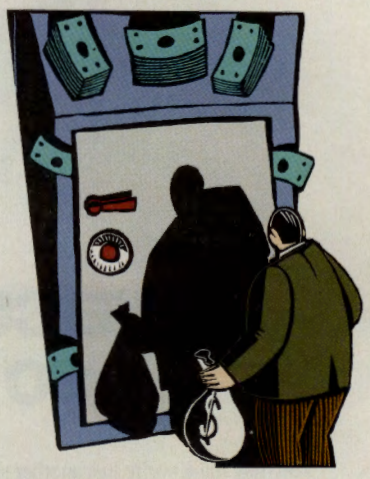

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▶ Catch computer industry news as it happens, read special reports, commentary and more product reviews. You'll find it only in *Online Today*, a daily updated newspaper.

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By definition, an entrepreneur is one who can seize opportunity out of adversity or even misfortune. These days, it seems there is plenty of adversity and misfortune to go around, especially when one looks at the uncertain condition of many economies in the developed world. That's why many experts say if you can summon your courage and take on an entrepreneur's mindset of self-reliance, this may the one of the best times to start or expand your small business.

Sound too far-fetched? Consider this: someday soon, you may not have much of a choice. In a growing number of cases, becoming a contract worker or consultant—or starting up a business—may be the only viable alternative for many unemployed and soon-to-be-unemployed professional salaried workers. In the United States it is predicted that many comfortable, long-term salaried jobs will be eliminated forever by the end of the decade. Many firms looking to cut costs will shed all but the most essential workers for the core business and hire out support services on an as-needed basis. Even for those employees who remain, the health, retirement and other fringe benefits that have made a "company job" so secure in previous years will be greatly reduced or eliminated. The upshot: fewer traditional jobs, but plenty of work for free-lancers, contract workers, consultants and small business people—entrepreneurs like you who are ready to take advantage of change.

In this month's cover feature beginning on page 10, we examine the opportunities that abound for those striking out on their own (or considering it), or looking to expand an existing home-based business in the current economic climate. We show you how to "get the right attitude," how to finance your business, where the best online resources are, how to find clients worldwide, how to manage change and global growth in a new or expanding business—even how to set up your office. And, as always, there are plenty of examples of CompuServers who have already taken the path to self-reliance and can provide you with advice and inspiration.

* * *

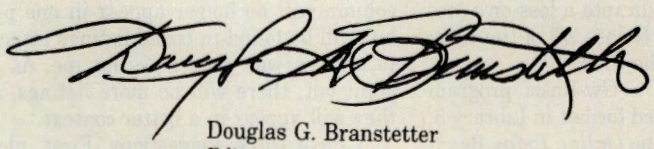
With the CompuServe Information Service's rapid global expansion, it's not surprising that national and regional groups are beginning to form a distinguished presence online and carve out their own niches in the forums. Lately, some of the most vibrant participants just happen to sign on from the United Kingdom. Many British congregate in the UK Computing Forum, headed up by a colorful pair of sysops known as Steve Manners and Andy Johnson.

Some say the UK Forum is more like a British pub for people who also happen to be interested in computers. Others might think that with the Right Honourable Gentlemen Manners (a Margaret Thatcher Conservative) and Johnson (a Labour Liberal) exchanging political barbs, they've somehow stumbled into the crossfire of a table-thumping debate in the House of Commons.

Whether you're British or not, you're sure to enjoy the spark of this up-and-coming forum, and we invite you to take a look at it and all things CompuBritish beginning on page 20.

* * *

Next month your *CompuServe Magazine* will be a little heftier than usual. The added bulk is a resource guide to all services and GO commands on the Information Service. A comprehensive listing of CompuServe products and services is frequently requested in magazine readership surveys. We are happy to offer this feature and hope you will find it useful.



Douglas G. Branstetter
Editor

Letters

Chrysler or Capricorn

"Chrysler or Capricorn" (Monitor, Nov. 1991, p. 6) and the subsequent letters ("Math Bozo's Redux," Jan. 1991, p. 4) concern the same logic problem recently highlighted in Marilyn vos Savant's "Ask Marilyn" column in *Parade* magazine. These columns received extensive coverage in the US press, such as the *New York Times*, which reinforced the public's fascination with the puzzle.

It is, by now, well established that the correct answer is that the odds improve from 1-in-3 to 2-in-3 by switching. It is also well established that few people get the answer right the first time. Intuition is confounded because the host doesn't act randomly; he opens a door that he knows not to reveal the prize.

The answer is easier to appreciate if the game show had a million doors, only one of which would hide the car. (The rest would hide goats.) The contestant's odds of picking the correct door would be 1-in-1,000,000.

If the host then opened 999,998 doors he knew did not hide the prize, and gave the contestant the chance to switch to the one remaining door, the contestant should jump at it. The odds of his first guess being correct are still one in a million. However, the helpful host has shown which door among the remaining 999,999 possibilities would hide the car if the original door didn't.

Jonathan E. Hardis
Gaithersburg, Md.

It seems the first reader, Donny Johnson of Cedar Park, Texas, has a correct understanding of the problem. I'm sure a lot of other readers are also confused with the problem. They are not alone. The problem seems simple and it is, if you have a clear and correct grasp of probability.

If you play and never switch, most people would agree you should win 1/3 of the time (thus losing 2/3 of the time). When you switch every time, you are turning what would have been a win into a loss or a loss into a win. You used to lose 2/3 of the time; now you win 2/3 of the time.

I have uploaded a Gw-Basic program (GAME.BAS) in zipped format in Library 3, "To The Editors," of the *Online Today* Readers' Forum. It should be helpful for experimenting with the situation and in reconciling one's theories with what actually happens.

Fred Iobst
Mathematics, B.S.
Pennsylvania State University
Danville, Pa.

The Ultimate Orientation

I enjoyed Robin Garr's article regarding Japan ("The Ultimate Orientation," Nov. 1991, p. 34–37), but I need to point out that the photo captions are incorrect.

The picture on page 35 is not of the Tokyo airport but a picture of Shibuya station in Tokyo. Second, the shoes pictured on page 36 are not sandals but "zouris." They are not worn at home. We Japanese wear zouris only at special occasions.

Dr. Yasuhiro Sugiyama
Seattle, Wash.

I've just finished reading the excellent article "The Ultimate Orientation." As a fluent speaker and translator of Japanese who lived in Japan for more than 10 years, I was impressed at the accuracy and relevance of the information in the article.

I did, however, notice a couple of inaccuracies. The picture on page 35 ("Strange faces, signs, Tokyo airport") is, in fact, a picture of Shibuya railway station in downtown Tokyo, not Narita airport. (I used to live on one of the train lines that run out of Shibuya and walked through the area pictured almost every day for seven years.)

The sandals shown in the picture on page 36 ("Sandals, not street shoes, are worn at home: Japanese custom") are actually worn as street shoes. Note that they are shown resting on paving stones, not the wooden floors usual in the entrance halls of Japanese homes and traditional hotels. Slippers, not sandals, are worn in Japanese homes and Japanese-style ryokan.

These errors notwithstanding, I was impressed with the overall content of the article. I hope you will continue to publish material of comparable quality.

John Brannan
Canberra, Australia

File Listings

Your announcement that the Uploads column will no longer appear in one place but will be found in boxed listings attached to articles was good news for me. As you point out, there will be more listings, and they will appear in a better context.

I have three suggestions. First, please list these sidebars in the table of contents. Second, in the individual annotations, please continue to list file sizes in bytes. Finally, if the programs are shareware, indicate the cost of registration.

Martin Davis
Charlottesville, Va.

I have been a CompuServe member for several years and regret your decision to drop the Uploads column. Like many of your members, I do not have the time, as you put it in the Dear Reader column, to leaf through an entire issue.

Over the years I've gotten hints to interesting forums from the Uploads column. With a service as large as CompuServe it is difficult to know what is available and easy to miss something interesting. The Uploads column provided a place a busy user could go and quickly find something interesting.

I hope you reconsider the decision to drop the Uploads column.

Philip C. Hutcheson
Lithia Springs, Ga.

Gift Guide

I was dismayed to read your "Gift Guide to Electronic Merrymaking" (Monitor, December 1991, p. 7). Two computer games were recommended as holiday gifts and both are war games!

Some of us still believe the year-end holidays are a time for celebrating a vision of "Peace on Earth." How does planning war strategies or piloting an F-16 fighter further that cause?

Not all computer game-players are of a military mind.

Steve Freedkin
Executive Director,
Peace Resource Center
Santa Barbara, Calif.

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MONITOR

Beyond the Screens

Virtual reality was once the product of science fiction; now it is touted as the future wave of computing.

"What lies around the corner is a quantum leap in thinking about how humans and computers interact," says John Eagan, who leads the new Section and Library 13, "Virtual Reality" in the Computer Art Forum (GO COMART).

What is virtual reality? It's a way of adding animation to computers that moves us into the four dimensions of height, width, depth and time. It's computer simulation of the environment that actively involves the user in the four dimensions.

Eagan notes computers have already changed the way we view our world. Spreadsheets and databases allow us to see data in a new perspective, viewing numeric data in graphic form to perceive trends and patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed.

But virtual reality goes further. "It attempts to bring the user 'into the world' created within the computer," explains Eagan. "The computer becomes not a box that we 'look at' or 'type to,' but the medium through which we 'enter into' a new world that exists only by means of the computer."

We now view information on a flat screen. Imagine the changes when we can see in three dimensions and "virtually" grab objects, icons and 3-D graphs.

Some virtual reality uses are being pioneered at the University of North Carolina, including molecular modeling by direct "virtual" manipulation of atoms, as well as architectural simulations that permit a "virtual walk" through a building that only exists on a computer.

They're Truly Mad About the Mouse

Every Tuesday evening in the Florida Forum (GO FLORIDA), a group of normally rational people gather at 9 p.m. EST in Conference Room 13, "Disneymania," to talk about Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Daisy and other enlightened figures of our time.

The event is the forum's "Tuesday Trivia" game. And the conversation, not surprisingly, often gets downright "Goofy."

If you think the questions posed during "Tuesday Trivia" are strictly "Mickey Mouse stuff," try your hand at these puzzlers:

1. In what year was the film *Pinocchio* released?

THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY

2. Was the *3 Little Pigs* a color cartoon?

3. Name the first cartoon Pluto appeared in.

4. How many fairies are in *Sleeping Beauty*?

5. What did Mr. Toad allegedly steal?

6. Who appears as Bert in *Mary Poppins*?

7. How many *Love Bug* movies were made?

8. Was a boy's or a girl's voice used for Peter Pan?

9. Who was Retlaw Yensid?

10. How much did it cost to make *Snow White*?

All contest participants and their accumulated points are honored in a weekly updated file, POINTS.TXT, in the forum's Library 13, "Disneymania." (Answers: 1. 1940, 2. Yes, 3. *The Chain Gang*, 4. Four, 5. A car, 6. Dick Van Dyke, 7. Four, 8. Boy's, 9. Walter Disney, when he wanted an anonymous credit, 10. $1.5 million.)

Little Man Draped

Randy Newman wouldn't be caught dead there, and Wilt Chamberlain wouldn't find anything big enough to cover his basketball. But if Napoleon had had a modem, he would have had more options than tacky jackets with the hand warmers in the chest.

Short Sizes Inc., offering "distinctive apparel for the shorter man," is open for business in The Electronic Mall (GO SS). Founded by a man who is 5 foot 2 inches tall, Short Sizes sells money-back-guaranteed clothes to men under 5 foot 8 inches, including those with "athletic" builds (i.e., small waists) and those who might be classified as "portly shorter men" (i.e., not-so-small waists). No word on whether the spring collection will include short shorts.

MEMBER ESSAY

Sketchy Details

It has become a tradition in our family to custom-make invitations to birthday parties for my sons, Benjamin and Joel. With access to my wife's new laser printer, I started nosing around the Comics and Animation Forum (GO COMICS) for images that might make a spiffy card announcing Benjamin's fifth birthday.

Unable to find an image of Benjamin's favorite cartoon character, I posted a brief note asking if anyone had one.

Checking in the next day, I was surprised to find an answer from Tad Stones, the person who created the character. He was unable to supply us with a computerized image, but was kind enough to send the kids something even better: a signed, original, hand-drawn birthday picture—a fine reward for a few minutes' work on CompuServe!

Charles Meyerson
Oak Park, Ill.

It's the Disc Jockey's Initials

Secret messages may or may not be found by playing heavy metal songs backwards. But you can find hidden meanings in the call letters of many American radio stations. For proof, check out file ORIGIN.ZIP in Library 10, "Radio," of the Broadcast Professionals Forum (GO BPFORUM).

The file, compiled by dedicated radio enthusiasts, lists the meanings behind nearly 500 radio station call letters. Some of the acronyms are easy enough to figure out: like WCBS or KABC. Many others, however, are downright cryptic.

San Francisco's KFRC, for example, means "Keep Forever Radiating Cheer." WEVD in New York was named after Socialist presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs. And Columbus, Ohio's WBNS was named "Wolfe, Bank, Newspaper and Shoes" in honor of its founders.

Does Jesse Helms know about this?

SCOTT MATTHEWS

Wedded Wit

Andrew Tobias, author of the Managing Your Money personal accounting program, is a frequent visitor to several CompuServe forums. Recently in the IBM Applications Forum (GO IBMAPP), a member with his tongue planted firmly in his disk drive suggested that Tobias market a new program called Managing Your Marriage, complete with wedding guest database, household budget, prenuptial agreement ("Look what the computer printed, honey, we better sign it") ... and possibly rebate coupons for the follow-up program, Managing Your Mistake.

Tobias shot back: "We're working on Managing Your Midriff, Managing Your Mantra, Managing Your Mercenaries (a program with a small but very wealthy customer base, mostly emirs), and, for pet-lovers, Managing Your Menagerie."

Tobias passed on Managing Your Marriage, gallantly noting: "The problem is that, romantics that we are, we would really hope not to get repeat business." Look for Tobias on the new MECA Forum (GO MECA).

Entering a Whole New Dimension

Has this ever happened to you? You're catalogue browsing through a service like Shoppers Advantage Club, attempting to compare two personal stereos. From reading the product descriptions, you discover that the first, a Sangean DT-200v, measures 113mm wide by 66mm high and 22.5mm deep; while the second, a Sony WMFX40, is reported as 3⅜ by 4⅜ by 1 7/16 inches.

For a quick conversion, check the recently uploaded 39K file UNITS4.ZIP in Library 13, "Computer Applications," of the Safetynet Forum (GO SAFETYNET). Lars Josefsson of Sweden has furnished this IBM and compatible shareware package for those who need to convert units between SI, metric, English, pharmacy, civil engineering, and other more obscure units and sets.

Roaming the Fifth Estate

Chicago Tribune feature writer Dan Kening has discovered that the Broadcast Professionals (GO BPFORUM) and Journalism (GO JFORUM) Forums are more than just places for media insiders to hobnob. Two of his recent regular Tuesday radio columns demonstrate that CompuServe in general and these forums in particular are excellent places to do article research. They also are a good way for the general public to learn about the media from the inside.

The first of these columns, found in the Journalism Forum's Library 6, "Radio/TV," file NEWS.TRB, was inspired by a message board discussion on newscasters reading commercials on-air. The more recent CSERVE.TXT, also available in the Broadcast Forum's Library 10, "Radio," presents the forums as electronic water coolers where listeners can get the scoop on developments on both the network and local level as well as trade comments with some of the people they listen to daily.

"What I enjoy about both forums are the kinds of shop-talk discussions you get into with colleagues over a cup of suds," observes John Bry, news director of a station in Grand Rapids, Mich. "They are like bull sessions in a convention hallway, except here the participants are likely to be in another industry or on another continent."

Adds Paul Harris, morning disc jockey at WCXR in Washington, D.C.: "The information we pass around here is often days ahead of the trade papers and more in-depth, too."

Monitor

Contributors:
Cathryn Conroy, Mike Pietruk, Lindsy Van Gelder

MONITOR

John Hancock

Sign Here

"A name is an uncertain thing. You can't count on it," wrote German playwright Bertolt Brecht.

But members of the Collectibles Forum (GO COLLECT) who frequent Section 11, "Autographs," would respectfully take issue with that thought (and maybe even ask ol' Bert for his "John Hancock").

Contrary to the stereotype, serious autograph seekers don't hang around stage doors and never thrust crumpled bits of paper at passing celebrities. The Collectibles Forum members tend to do most of their collecting by mail. They use their computers to trade war stories and swap the addresses of friendly notables.

For example, member Cheryl Taschner recently announced: "I received my second autograph this week! It was from Greg Norman—a short note personally inscribed to my husband and me thanking us for our support. It was signed by Norman with a picture of a flag on the green with a golf ball."

Ralph Roberts, co-author of *The Price Guide to Autographs* and the *Collector's Guide to Autographs* (both published by the Wallace-Homestead/Chilton division of Capital Cities/ABC) notes that the forum has become virtually indispensable for the serious collector. "We supported the autograph area with a whole chapter in the current edition of the *Price Guide*," he says.

For an introduction to the hobby, read files TAY.TXT and GLOSSA.TXT in Library 11, "Autographs."

No Bull: Harry's Just Wild About Logging On

Fans of TV's *Night Court* were treated recently to a special online evening with Judge Harry Stone, from the program's Warner Brothers stage in Burbank. Hosted by Nick Arnett and the Multimedia Forum (GO MULTIMEDIA), the conference with actor, comic, magician and Macintosh fanatic Harry Anderson attracted more than 50 members.

"I'm not sure how it was for the folks who joined us, but Harry and I were laughing so hard our sides hurt," says Arnett. "Of course, maybe the bottle of champagne we were sipping (a late birthday gift Anderson felt compelled to open) had something to do with our mood."

Fortunately for those who missed it, Arnett captured the informal get-together and placed it in the forum's Library 1, "General Information," file HARRYA.TXT. The two-and-a-half-hour Q&A session featured no shortage of smart remarks, some more serious ones and a sprinkling of chatter on computers and multimedia.

Anderson's love of computers and CompuServe has rubbed off, as virtually the entire *Night Court* cast has been online at one time or another.

So Good, He Just Phoned It In

Aldus Corp. and Quark Inc., publishers of two leading desktop publishing programs, may seem like competitors, but beneath that tough, corporate exterior are employees with helpful hearts.

Phil Gaskill from Aldus, Paul Tower from Quark and Ken Vandagriff from Ventura Software Inc. recently participated in an online conference in the Desktop Publishing Forum on the topic of technical support. The conference was proceeding smoothly when Tower suddenly lost his connection. So he called his competitor Gaskill for a little help.

With the phone in one hand and his keyboard in the other, Gaskill told Tower the conference proceedings and typed in Tower's responses as he dictated them over the phone.

Gaskill says he and Tower—competitors though they may be—have gotten to know each other well on the forum. "We feel almost like brothers," he says. "Tech support types tend to empathize with each other."

Tower agrees. "Phil and I are kind of on the inside, facing a sometimes harsh world," he says of technical support. (Think about that the next time you call for help!)

If you want to catch the show, the Desktop Publishing Forum (GO DTPFORUM) hosts regular conferences on Tuesdays at 6 p.m. EST. A transcript of the technical support conference is in Library 1, "Forum Transcripts," under the filename TECHCO.TXT.

Guiding the Guide for Civic Architects

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
Journal
For America's Municipal & County Planning Boards
Taming the Automobile
How We Can Make Our Streets More "Pedestrian Friendly"
by Richard Untermann
NUMBER 1 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1991

For the thousands of US citizens who are shaping their communities' futures by volunteering on municipal and county planning boards, a new magazine called *Planning Commissioners Journal* is available.

The brainchild of CompuServe member and attorney Wayne Senville, the publication is meant to fill the knowledge gap in basic planning and land use issues.

But the magazine has a high-tech twist. The first drafts of articles are uploaded to the Legal Forum (GO LAWSIG), Library 10, "Municipal Planning," where forum members are encouraged to read them. Comments and questions are forwarded to the authors. "It has worked well," says Senville. "Several articles were significantly improved as a result of questions raised by CompuServe members who read the first drafts."

Another benefit is the emerging, informal network of planning volunteers. "They are able to share information and learn how planning boards elsewhere deal with similar issues," says Senville.

For information or a sample copy of *Planning Commissioners Journal*, contact Senville via CompuServe Mail at User ID number 72570,460.

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Just add the samplers by putting their codes as a comment on your $6.00 catalog order.

Shanachie First Family Reggae - This 67 minute, 15 cut CD Reggae disc contains songs from your favorite performers. Featuring Bunny Wailer, Rita Marley, Judy Mowatt, Mutabaruka, Alpha Blondy, Eek-A-Mouse, Yellowman and more. Regularly $13.99, only $3.99 for S&H when you order on line. (64557)

Teldec Classics International - This 69-minute CD contains 22 tracks. Includes selections from Wagner, Haydn, Mozart, Bach Beethoven and more. Only $3.99 for S&H when you order on line. (61539

JVC World Sounds Catalog - 40 cuts with music from all over the world. Includes selections from China, Bali, Zaire and more. Regularly $11.99, only $3.99 for S&H when you order on line. (49063)

Vienna Master Series Sampler - New from Pilz is an all digital classical CD sampler featuring works by Beethoven, Mozart, Vivaldi, Brahms, Chopin, Verdi, Bach and Bizet. Only $3.99 for S&H when you order on line. (49073)

Royal Crown Classics Sampler - The Pilz group presents a sampler with superior sound quality, featuring works from Mozart, Wagner, Vivaldi, Chopin, Tchaikovsky and more. Only $3.99 for S&H when you order on line. (48225)

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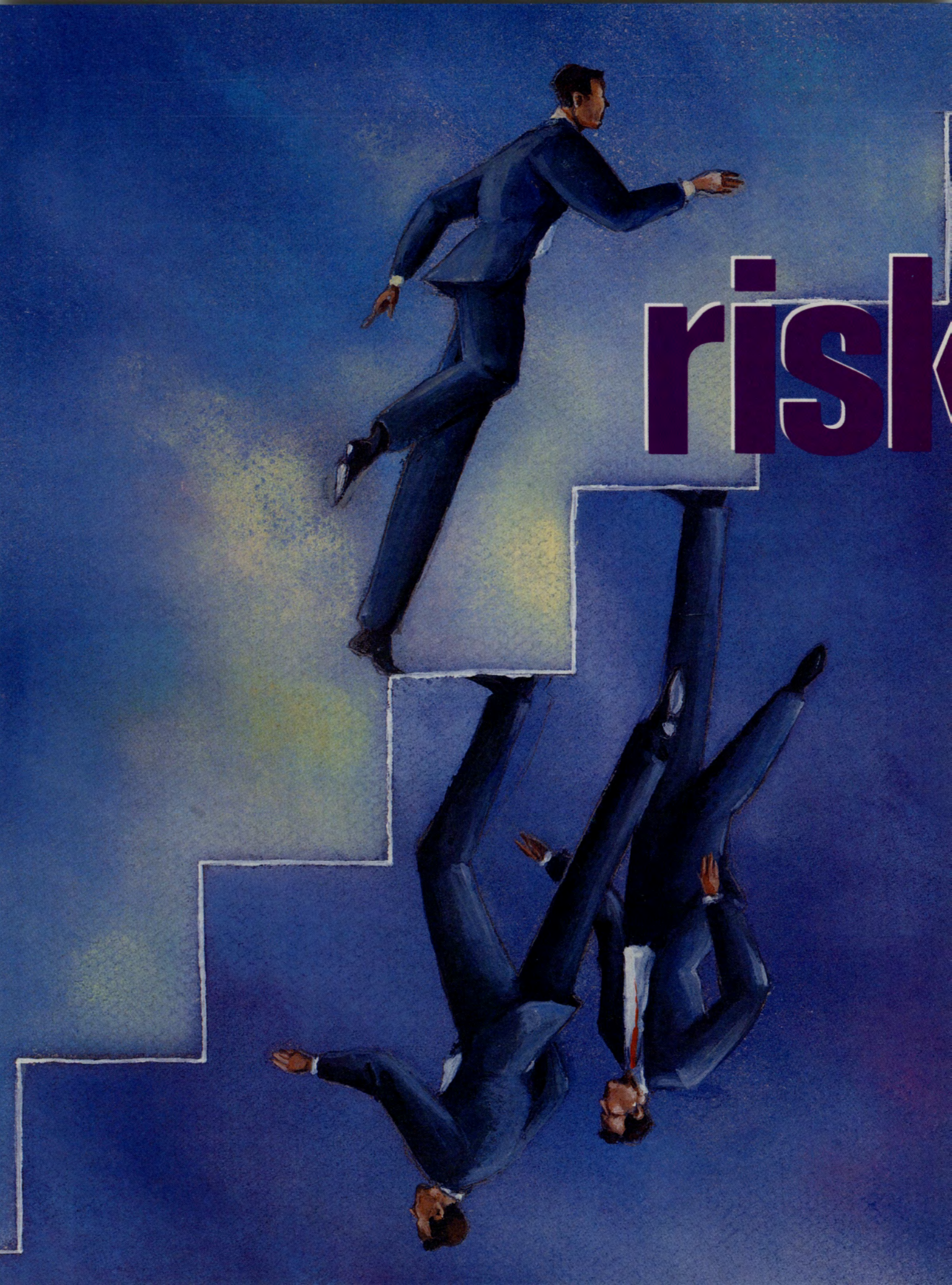

risk

by Cathryn Conroy

ing BUSINESS

The global economic shakeout may be the chance aspiring entrepreneurs have been waiting for.

The '90s recession has taken its toll on small businesses—they are starting slower and failing faster—but despite the hard times, this may be the best time to open shop.

Entrepreneurs should prepare for the economy's recovery by opening or expanding a business now because much of the competition is disappearing, says Sam Reprogel, public information officer for the Small Business Administration's Baltimore, Md., district office. "With most existing businesses focusing on survival, now is a good time to get a piece of the marketplace," he says.

Established competitors are one of the biggest risk factors for new entrepreneurs, but during a recession, those competitors are just trying to stay in business and meet their payroll; they are at their most vulnerable point competitively. An entrepreneur can creatively grab hold of this opportunity and make the most of it—the credo of the recession-struck small-business person. It doesn't necessarily mean shelling out a large and risky monetary investment, but rather seizing the moment. It takes brains to recognize opportunity and guts to grab hold of it, but the payoff can be extraordinary.

How does a small-business owner—or someone dreaming of going it alone—seize opportunity?

- Redefine your idea of risk.
- Think like an entrepreneur.
- Turn problems into solutions.
- Become a first-rate marketer.

Redefining Risk

Starting or expanding a small business in a recession would seem to be fraught with risk. Not so, says Sarah Edwards, who, along with husband Paul, is co-sysop of the Working From Home Forum and author of the home-based business bible *Working From Home*. "Risk has suddenly changed its meaning," she says.

Security once meant a job with the largest employer in town, regular raises, health insurance and a fat pension plan. Now US employers are laying off workers at the astounding rate of 2,200 a day, according to *USA Today* while many of Europe's largest companies—Italy's Olivetti, the Netherlands' Philips and Germany's Siemens, to name a few—are restructuring, eliminating jobs and merging just to stay afloat. For those lucky enough to retain their jobs, salaries are often frozen or even cut, health benefits are scaled back and pension plans are in jeopardy.

FEATURE

CM's Cover Story:

An Ace in the Recessionary Hole

▼

Finding Clients, p. 12

▼

Startup Files, p. 14

▼

Essential Electronics, p. 18

The Edwardses advise us to rethink our ideas of security. "The corporate paycheck is a false sense of security," says Sarah. "True security lies within yourself."

Futurists predict many jobs lost today will not return. "The economy may be permanently restructuring into a flexible workforce. "People will need to make it on their own because the jobs just won't be there," says Sarah.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KAREN STOLPER

Patronize Me: Finding Clients

You may not think of yourself as a marketing genius, but if you want your business to succeed, you'd best become one. The experts advise that you spend at least 40 percent of your time marketing—whether that be advertising, networking, writing letters, making phone calls—in the early days of a business. Once you're established, you can devote about 20 percent of your time to getting work.

Successful marketing maneuvers don't just happen. They require careful planning and research. Grant Slinger, who imports hand-knits from the United Kingdom and sells them mail-order through *The Celtic Catalogue*, is always on the lookout for companies worldwide that might be interested in a joint venture. Before approaching them, he does his homework, which always involves CompuServe research in such databases as D&B-International Dun's Market Identifiers and TRW Business Profiles. He uses the information to convince marketing managers to make a deal. "By having figures and other relevant information, it is possible to turn a 'no' into a 'yes'," says Slinger.

ONLINE RESOURCES

D&B-Dun's Market Identifiers (GO DUNS)—A directory of more than 6.7 million US public and private businesses.

D&B-International Dun's Market Identifiers (GO DUNS)—A directory of 2.1 million public, private and government-controlled companies in 120 countries.

Dun's Electronic Business Directory (GO BUSDIR)—Directory information on more than 8.5 million US businesses and professionals.

Thomas Register Online (GO THOMAS)—Information on approximately 150,000 US and Canadian manufacturers and service providers.

European Company Library (GO EUROLIB)—Selected financial information on more than 2 million European companies from leading business databases, including D&B European Dun's Market Identifiers, Europe's Largest Companies, Hoppenstedt Austria, Hoppenstedt Benelux, Irish Company Profiles and Kompass Europe.

Disclosure II (GO DISCLOSURE)—Company and ownership reports that provide financial statements, management discussion, insider and institutional holdings, and more.

TRW Business Credit Profiles (GO TRW)—Credit and business information on more than 13 million organizations, including credit histories, financial information and ratios, key business facts, UCC filings and more.

Biz*File (GO YEL)—Directory of more than 10 million US and Canadian establishments, searchable by company name, industry or type of business, and phone number.

Business Database Plus (GO BUSDB)—Full-text articles from more than 450 regional, national and international business and trade publications.

Business Dateline (GO BUSDATE)—Full-text articles from more than 115 US and Canadian regional business publications.

Newspaper Library (GO NEWSLIB)—Selected full-text articles from 48 US newspapers.

UK Newspaper Library (GO UKPAPERS)—Selected articles from leading United Kingdom newspapers.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

IQuest (GO IQUEST) databases also offer information:

Sales Prospector—Full-text newsletter reporting on industrial, commercial and institutional expansions and relocations. Arranged by region throughout the United States and Canada.

Trinet US Businesses—Summary descriptions of 7.5 million public and private US businesses with 20 or more employees.

FEATURE

Peter Geiger, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist turned public relations practitioner, is one of those who recently lost his executive position when the northeastern Ohio PR agency he worked for went out of business a year ago. "I never had faith in the inevitability of the paycheck," he says.

Counting up his savings and investments, Geiger got online in the Working From Home Forum and asked the experts how much cash he would need to start his own home-based public relations firm. The early months have been lean, and he admits he is only earning as much as he did several years ago. Geiger knows that should the economy continue its decline, he may lose the few clients he now has. "That small discomfort may not be such a bad thing for an entrepreneur. The fire in the belly doesn't always burn with the same vigor. On those days when it's less intense, there's always the wolf at the door for inspiration," he says.

Entrepreneurial Thinking

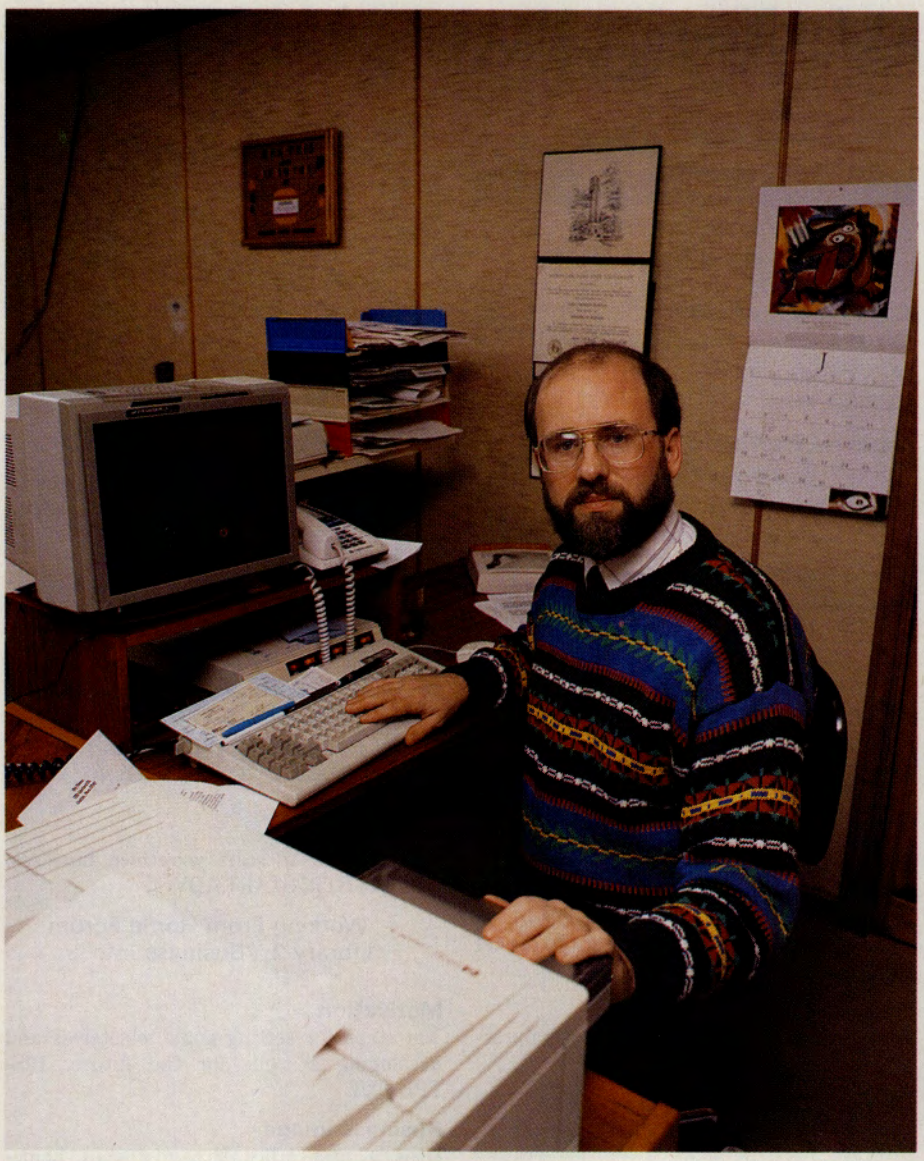
Most people think the difference between entrepreneurs and the rest of the world is that entrepreneurs thrive on big risks. Smart entrepreneurs don't take undue risk; instead, they know how to tell the difference between a shaky idea and one that will work, and have the courage to put it into action.

CompuServe member Gary Elfring, president of Elfring Soft Fonts, develops and then sells or distributes as shareware soft fonts for LaserJet, DeskJet and PostScript printers. Shareware distribution by its nature cannot be controlled by the author. This is true for Elfring, whose products have ended up in several European countries without any effort on his part. "People in these countries started sending me money. This amazed me!" he says.

It was especially amazing because the font sets they were purchasing were designed for US ASCII characters. But Elfring thought like an entrepreneur and turned his "problem" into opportunity. Instead of pocketing the unexpected receipts and leaving it at that, Elfring explored the European market, something he never before considered. If people were willing to pay for something that wasn't even useful, think what they might do if he catered to their needs.

Elfring studied the European market and decided it would be a solid source of additional sales. He designed a two-step approach to European marketing that began with the development of inexpensive shareware fonts for the major languages of Europe, which were then distributed as widely as possible. He then attended trade shows and met with international publishers and distributors. "As my fonts became more popular, my personal relationships with the publishers began to pay off," he says.

While Elfring's international expansion fell in his lap, some opportunities aren't as easy to grasp. When David Shank found himself "between jobs" several years ago, he



KAZ AYUKAWA

Trickle of shareware fees from abroad developed into stream of European soft font business: Elfring

started doing free-lance public relations work while looking for an executive position in the field. With no job offers in hand, Shank and his wife, Marilyn, saw a glimmer of opportunity in the steadily growing free-lance work. "We broke every rule in the 'How to Start a Successful Business' book," quips David. "We weren't undercapitalized; we were capital-less! We made a commitment to go for it and swore we wouldn't look back."

The Shanks, who now regularly offer advice to others in the Public Relations and Marketing Forum, may have started out on a shoestring budget, but they did do some things by the book. The two carefully planned their business management, marketing, finances, and short- and long-term goals, seeking the advice of experts when needed. "Our marketing and mental position was that our abilities and products would be every bit as good, if not better, than those of any other public relations firm in the United States," says David.

They established operational objectives, incorporated as a subchapter "S" corporation and began working with a good small-business attorney and a certified public accountant who could offer expert assistance. They computerized, leasing equipment to save cash assets.

Thinking like entrepreneurs paid off. Shank Public Relations Counselors Inc. started as a home business, but is now a much larger enterprise with leased office space and three full-time employees.

Thinking like an entrepreneur also means being perceptive to changes in the larger economic and political climate that might have a bearing on business opportunities. Hundreds of thousands of European businesses, small and large, have been gearing up for several years to take advantage of the single market being created by the European Economic Community. Not knowing what effect it would have, but knowing the structural market change it provided was a risk worth taking, Silvano Stagni of Bologna, Italy, expandedhis company, International

It's All Attitude: Advice from *Making It*

Taking that first step to start or expand a business is the most difficult one of all. It's easy to dream; it's quite another to act.

In *Making It On Your Own* (Tarcher, 1991), a how-to book that benefits novice and pro alike, Paul and Sarah Edwards offer common-sense advice on how to take the first step and many steps thereafter:

- **Adopt a new, self-reliant mindset.** Being on your own requires a mental shift in how you think about security and risk.
- **Put your show on the road.** Take charge of your life and be its director, rather than letting it run you.
- **Become your own boss.** Learn to manage yourself so you achieve your goals. The "self-management muscle" is an essential ingredient for success.
- **Spend money so you can earn it.** If you're starting out, lease or buy office equipment so you can produce a product. Embark on a marketing campaign if you want to expand your business. You have to support your business before it will support you.
- **Change the way you think about time.** Decide how you want to fill your day. Identify your purpose for being on your own, clear out your backlog of work and schedule your day to yield the best results.
- **Toot your own horn.** Get the attention you deserve by developing a "marketing mindset" that promotes *what* you do, not *how* you do it.

Watch Your Backing

Whether you're gathering courage to start a business, trying to maintain one, or defying nay-sayers and attempting to expand, you need capital to succeed.

Although some businesses require large sums of ready cash—expensive inventory for a retail store, for instance—many lucrative enterprises can be started or expanded with more ingenuity and frugality than money.

Here are experts' tips for collecting cash:

- Build the business on the side while you're still employed to reduce risks.
- Line up two or three clients before you leave your job.
- Tap your employer as your first client.
- Let people know you are in business.
- Lease computers and office equipment rather than purchasing.
- If you can't get a bank loan (most home-based businesses don't qualify), consider tapping your retirement savings or borrowing from friends and relatives.
- If you can't borrow money elsewhere, use your credit cards, but plan how you will pay the bills.
- To save the most money, work from home rather than leasing office space.

Slowdown Startups: Files for Planning, Marketing & More

Launching a business and then operating it efficiently can be an administrative nightmare. Let CompuServe help you master such daunting tasks as business plans, marketing strategies, insurance protection and more.

Good sources of business information include the International Entrepreneurs Forum (GO USEN), the Working From Home Forum (GO WORK), and the Public Relations and Marketing Forum (GO PRSIG). Here's a sampling of files available:

MONEY MATTERS

Entrepreneurs Forum
Library 5, "Finance":

Income and Billing Program
Descriptive invoices providing all income data required by most accountants. MS-DOS. Shareware ($69). GIST54.EXE.

Government Loan
How to qualify for a Small Business Administration loan. SBA.

Export
How to qualify for a US government loan to get into the export market. GOVLOA.TXT.

Working From Home Forum
Library 2, "Business Info":

Old Debts
Collecting overdue debt without losing the client. DEBT.THD.

Merchant Status
How to get merchant status for a home business so payment by VISA or MasterCard can be accepted. CCARDS.THD, MERNUM.-TXT, VISA.HOW.

Library 9, "Accounting & Tax":

Bookkeeping vs. Accounting
What's the difference? BKACCT.THD.

Cash vs. Accrual Accounting
Differences and merits of each. CSH-ACR.THD.

Cash vs. Assets
Is it better to contribute cash or assets to a new business? ASSETS.THD.

Software Reviews
Various accounting packages are reviewed. ACCTSW.THD.

Loan Amortization Schedule
Calculates loan variables, including principal, interest rate, payment amount or number of payments, and generates payback schedules. Shareware ($10). AMORTZ.EXE.

Getting Credit
Tips on how a new business can establish credit with new vendors. CREDIT.THD.

BUSINESS PLANS

Entrepreneurs Forum
Library 8, "Business Plans":

Cash Flow Forecaster
Covers a three-year period. CASHFL.ZIP.

Plan Outline
BUSPLA.ZIP.

Business Plan Toolkit
Software for the Macintosh. BPLANS.SIT.

Prospectus
Plan for a new restaurant. YELPRO.TXT.

INSURANCE

Working From Home Forum
Library 2, "Business Info":

Equipment Insurance
Tips on finding insurance for equipment used in your home office. HOINS.THD.

Library 9, "Accounting & Tax":

Repaying Employees
Tips on how to use pretax dollars to repay employees for medical deductibles, co-insurance payments and other out-of-pocket expenses. BENEFI.TXT.

Are You Liable?
Is it important to carry liability or malpractice insurance? LIABLE.THD.

Entrepreneurs Forum
Library 7, "Managing Your Company":

Small Business Info
Health insurance information for businesses with three to 25 employees. AB.CIS.

Public Relations and Marketing Forum
Library 1, "On Your Own":

Self-employed
Types of insurance needed by the self-employed. INSUR2.STR.

MARKETING TIPS

Public Relations and Marketing Forum
Library 1, "On Your Own":

Tips for the New Entrepreneur
Creative ideas for getting business. MK-THLP.STR.

"Cold Calls"
Is this an effective way to get new clients? CALLIN.STR.

Getting Clients
Coalition building as a prospecting technique. PRSPCT.ST2.

Recessionary Times
Marketing during a recession. RECESS.-MKT, RECESS.ART.

Working From Home Forum
Library 2, "Business Info":

Advertising Basics
Beneficial message thread to help those starting out. ADVICE.TXT.

Promotion
Design a videotape to promote your business. Learn how to formulate ideas and work with a scriptwriter. D.TV.

During Recession
Should you be more concerned with sales and marketing or controlling costs? RE-CESS.THD.

OTHER MATTERS

Public Relations and Marketing Forum
Library 1, "On Your Own":

Starting Out
Tips on how to start your own business. GOFOIT.STR, START.ADV.

Working From Home Forum
Library 2, "Business Info":

Motivation
Ten steps for setting goals, objectives and developing a focus for the future. 10S-TPE.TXT.

Business Image
Does a post office box give your home-based business a "fly by night" image? POBOX.THD.

Meeting Clients
Should you receive clients in your home office? HMVSIT.THD.

Library 3, "Specific Businesses":

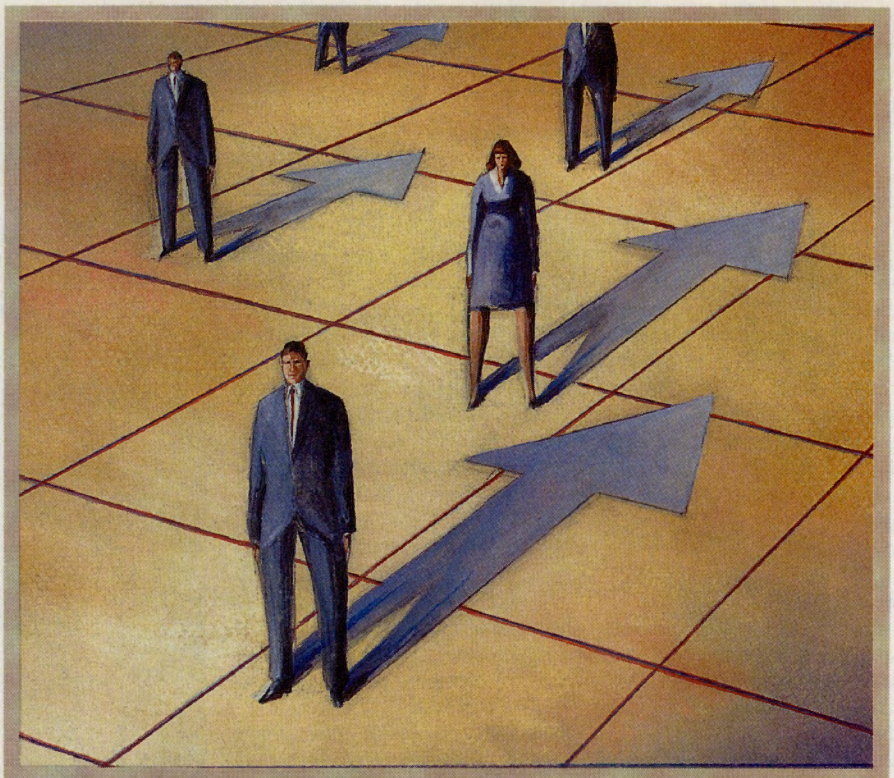
Independent?
When is an independent contractor really an employee? IRSIC.THD.

Library 9, "Accounting & Tax":

Growing the Business
Advice on merging companies with similar directions. MERGCO.THD.

Incorporating
The benefits and problems of registering as a Subchapter S corporation. SUBCHS.THD.

Name Registration
Requirements for registering a name for your business. DBA.THD.



The Other Guys: Tracking Your Rivals

When you're in business for yourself, it's easy to view the rest of the world as competition. Keeping track of your competitors is not only the best way to stay ahead of the pack, but also an effective way to get new ideas and spark your imagination.

Selected CompuServe databases offer a fast, efficient and affordable way to keep a wary eye on the competition, so you'll be informed of new products and special promotions as well as expansions and divestitures.

To track sales and marketing ideas, product news, and industry trends and analysis in a variety of industries, such as agriculture, manufacturing, retailing, telecommunications and trade, check Business Database Plus (GO BUSDB). Full-text articles from scores of professional journals and other publications ranging from *ABA Banking Journal* to *Wood World* are available.

IQuest (GO IQUEST) is a comprehensive reference and information service providing access to more than 850 databases containing articles, indexes and numerical data.

Worldwide business literature on new products, foreign trade and market data is indexed in PTS PROMT, available through IQuest. Global markets, products, technologies, acquisitions and marketing strategies for all major industries are covered. Searches can be conducted by subject, event, company, product, country and more.

PTS MARS, also within IQuest, provides information on the advertising and marketing of consumer goods and services, including advertising agency activities, sales strategies and promotional campaigns. US activities are primarily covered, although some international data also is available. Searches can be conducted by company, product information, advertising or marketing concept, event, spokesperson, geographic area and more.

Both PTS PROMT and PTS MARS should be searched using IQuest-II, in which you specify the database name.

Business Database Plus and IQuest carry surcharges.

Technology Advisor Ltd., a firm that specializes in cross-border merger and acquisitions talks. In addition to his Italian clients, Stagni now boasts customers in Switzerland, Belgium and Germany.

Although going global means more competition from larger companies and a longer return on his marketing investment, Stagni insists the results are worth it. To stand out in the crowd, he has begun to specialize, carving out a niche.

"We did a lot of promotional activity that took much longer to give results. Be ready for initial longer returns on your money. As a rule of thumb, add 30 percent to your financial exposure for each country you are seeking to do business with," he advises.

Stagni's risk increased when he expanded beyond Italian borders because he could no longer finance the business himself and had to secure a bank loan; however, he compensated for that risk by using a factoring service that gives him advances on half of his invoices.

Finding Solutions

Sometimes opportunity may be disguised as a problem, but eventually emerges as a new chance.

Bill Vick of Plano, Texas, gradually realized that his vision of what he had to offer as an employee was radically different than his employer's vision. Vick turned 50 and hit what he describes as the "age wall." Rather than spend the 15 years until retirement in a position that didn't challenge him, Vick quit and started his own company. Vick & Associates is an executive search firm specializing in mid-level and senior marketing and sales associates in the microcomputer industry.

FEATURE

Says Vick, "I found that the way I saw myself—dynamic, aggressive and alive—was not the way companies saw me—50, 50, 50—so I set out to provide a living for my family, send one of my daughters through college and provide for another daughter's wedding." He now earns in excess of $250,000 annually, much more than in his days as an employee.

It was the problem of a depressed economy that forced Charles Sayers, a former vice president of marketing for an Atlanta publishing company, to start his own business, Creative Direct. "Whenever there's a downturn in the economy, companies tend to cut back on their marketing and advertising staff—even though they need just as much work done," he says. Instead of bearing the financial burden of full-time employees, many companies hire free-lancers.

Well-connected in the field nationally, Sayers received calls from colleagues looking for reputable, dependable direct mail copywriters and designers. "I saw this as an opportunity," he says.

The most unusual thing he did was to call on the competition. "I called every free-lance copywriter, designer and direct-marketing agency I had ever worked with as VP of marketing. I asked them about the current market environment. Every one of them, without exception, was courteous, helpful and willing to share valuable advice."

Marketing

Fact #1: To succeed as an entrepreneur, you have to be a marketing expert.

Fact #2: Most new entrepreneurs don't have any idea how to market.

Fact #3: They'd better learn—fast.

And in this recessionary economy, there is little room for error. Expensive marketing campaigns are a luxury of times past. Forced to rely on lower budgets, today's entrepreneurs need to be more creative than ever in their marketing endeavors.

FEATURE

When Jeff and Mary Freeman of Chatsworth, Ga., decided to open a home-based computer store, they knew marketing began with a clever name. Front Porch Computers was born, and it's proved to be a name people remember.

Because it is home-based, Front Porch Computers differs from most computer resellers in that it can offer much lower prices. "We constantly monitor the various computer networks for new developments in the industry and business in general. CompuServe has been beneficial to our company in providing the needed information," he says.

To tap more than the local Chatsworth market, they started advertising in the CompuServe Classifieds with short, to-the-point ads, and have been inundated with business, including customers from outside the United States. To handle the calls more efficiently, the Freemans established a toll-free number that CompuServe members are likely to remember: 800/GO PORCH.

"The Classifieds' responses have grown larger than our local business," says Jeff.

"We've had customers from several countries contact us via CompuServe for various computer and office items. These are sales we never would have known about had it not been for CompuServe."

Networking is another effective marketing tool for the new business person. Ronald A. Frano, executive director of the American Small Business Association, is so convinced networking is one of the best ways to market, that the association has set up a private forum on CompuServe for its members to electronically exchange ideas, buy and sell products and services among themselves, and access information on small-business programs offered by the US Small Business Association and other government agencies.

The ASBA XChange also will serve as an international network, linking entrepreneurs from around the world. Several African countries have expressed interest in joining, and once the former Eastern Bloc nations are computer literate, Frano wants

Business Locator: Introducing Biz*File

To be a marketing expert, you not only need creative ideas for selling your wares, but also information—names, addresses and phone numbers. Getting such lists can be pricey for the small entrepreneur. Until now, that is.

Biz*File (GO YEL) from American Business Information is a searchable database of 10.5 million businesses in the United States and Canada, complete with business name, full address and telephone number. Information is compiled from the local yellow pages, but ABI staffers in Omaha, Neb., verify by phone every listing to ensure even greater accuracy.

There are three ways to search Biz*File: by company name, by industry or type of business, and by phone number.

If you want to contact ABC Aluminum Inc. but have no idea where it is located, you can conduct a search of Biz*File to track it down. If a match is found, you'll receive a full profile that includes address, phone, type of business, a six-digit SIC code, when it first started advertising in the yellow pages and the size of its ad—bits of information that tell a lot about a company.

You also can search by industry or type of business by entering a descriptive keyword, such as COMPUTER or RESTAURANT. When you enter a general term, such as COMPUTER, you'll receive a menu of options to help you narrow your search that will include Computer Furniture, Computer Graphics, Computer Programming Service, Computer Software, Computer Timesharing Services and more.

"Without a doubt, Biz*File is the ultimate way to locate a business quickly and cost-effectively," says Bill Chasse of American Business Information. "It's a powerful database, but searching is simple."

Best of all, it is less expensive than using directory assistance and you don't need to know a company's location to find it.

Small-business owners can use Biz*File as a marketing maneuver to develop short mailing lists of 25 to 30 potential clients. If you just wrote the Great American Software Program and want to market it yourself, use Biz*File to generate a list of computer software resellers in a specific location.

You also can use Biz*File to target businesses to help you do long-distance shopping and travel planning. For instance, if you want to send flowers to your sister, congratulating her on the birth of your new nephew, you can use Biz*File to quickly locate a florist near her home and order the flowers yourself, saving the extra charges a florist in your city would charge.

Biz*File carries a surcharge of 25 cents per minute.

JOHN DICKERSON

Chatsworth, Ga.'s Front Porch Computers started with the clever name and advertisements in online classifieds: Jeff and Mary Freeman

to include them in the XChange. "Our members can talk to others with similar problems, get solid advice and never even have to walk out their front doors," says Frano.

Although many small-business owners join their local Chambers of Commerce, it is easy to get lost in the crowd of big businesses. "The little guy gets buried in that type of organization. He doesn't end up talking to the people he needs to talk to—people doing the same thing he is doing. This forum allows that interaction and exchange of ideas," he says.

Using networking to cooperate rather than compete is the result of Afroditi Price's efforts to successfully free-lance as a paralegal. She operates her Trial Prep: Text & Visuals, a paralegal support firm, from her Berkeley, Calif., home. When she started out, she called all the paralegals and attorneys she knew and followed up with letters. Rather than compete with other free-lance paralegals, Price organized the disparate individuals by co-founding the California Association of Freelance Paralegals. The group helps its members market their services, publishes a directory and provides a free referral service for the legal community.

FEATURE

Once you've established a business and want to expand, your marketing plans should reflect your experienced status in the marketplace by zeroing in on specific goals. Unlike the novice entrepreneur who usually takes any work that pays, expanding entrepreneurs should define and focus their marketing strategy for the greatest success. Find a niche and fill it.

Mike Walker of Scottsdale, Ariz., did just that when he expanded his public relations agency. "I looked at the PR climate and clutter in Phoenix and decided instead to make my mark in the outdoor recreation business," he says.

The ploy worked. Clients for the 10-year-old firm that is now grossing $3.5 million annually include Yamaha Motor Corp., Lowrance & Eagle Marine Electronics, Columbia Sportswear, 3M Scientifics Anglers, 3M Sportsman's Video Collection, Shimano Fishing Tackle and 35 independent boat builders. The Walker Agency boasts 14 employees with two offices in two states and was named in 1988 to *Inc.* magazine's list of 500 fastest-growing companies in the United States. And it all began in Walker's home.

He uses CompuServe to market and manage his business. "I'm online daily, sometimes twice, to keep up with the outdoor writers in the Outdoors Forum. I regularly upload our press releases. I buy stories from the writers and download them for use in *Escape from the Outdoors*, a radio program we barter to 400 stations daily, six days a week," Walker says.

Going global is a whole new marketing challenge, but one that can provide rich

Office Electronics: What You Need, What You Don't

A small business, whether inside or outside the home, requires a reasonable investment in business equipment, such as a computer, a modem, a fax machine, a copier, an answering machine and perhaps a small-business phone system. With a little smart planning, these tools should last well into the next century.

The Phone

With the preponderance of fax machines and modems in most business arsenals, your phone system is the link that ties you to the outside world. You will need at least two or three phone lines depending on your business. Line 1 should be dedicated to home calls; line 2 is for business voice use; and line 3 could be used solely for fax/modem communication. If you use your fax or modem only once or twice a day, you can get away with a fax switcher/router tied into your business voice line.

If your budget doesn't allow for a business phone system, you can buy a two- or three-line phone for your office. Models from Panasonic and others provide speaker phone, memory dialing, conference calling, answering functions and other amenities in a single unit. Southwestern Bell has a two-line phone (Model FD-8100) that features alphanumeric memory dialing.

If you need a more flexible arrangement, check out the new small phone systems that use your home's existing wiring. Many of these units offer such features as paging, intercom, music-on-hold, conference calling, privacy modes, speed-dialing and speaker phone capabilities. In most cases, these systems use a master phone that communicates with up to 12 extension phones via one to four pairs of loop-through wiring. Some units, such as the AT&T System 2000 can even use single-line wiring to transmit two lines to up to five extension phones. Other manufacturers to look for are Southwest Bell, Panasonic, BellSouth and Northwest Bell. Prices for these systems vary, but expect to pay between $200 and $300 for the master phone, and $100 to $200 for each extension phone.

If you want a system that will grow with your business, consider a dedicated small-business phone system. These units require "home-run" wiring from each extension phone to the master KSU (Key System Unit —a main control box used in most business systems), so it's always best to install the wiring when building or remodeling an existing structure. However, a good installer can work with your current home, and hide the wiring from sight.

The advantages these dedicated systems afford are numerous. Many permit not only the addition of extra phone lines or extensions when you need to expand but some also allow the connection of a door-phone. Depending on the system, you'll get features such as call restriction, account code tagging (where you can attach a special code to your clients' calls for billing and then print a special report), call forwarding, automatic attendant routing, data line security (a must for modem or fax use), call timers and more. The Panasonic Key Systems are popular not only because they have more features but also because they allow you to use any standard phone, fax or modem on any extension. This way you can save money and add extension phones as you can afford them. Pricing for dedicated systems varies, but expect $400 to $1,900 for the KSU, and $100 to $250 for each extension phone.

Copiers are low-maintenance: Canon's PC6RE

Answering and Fax Machines

When it comes to choosing an answering machine, make sure you buy a two-line unit. Even if you have only one line now, you might want to add an extra line later. The machine can handle family calls on one line and business calls on the other. The device should have the ability to store two separate outgoing messages (OGMs)—one for home calls and the other for business calls. Almost all answerers these days have beeperless remote control, and the ability to remotely change your OGM when the need arises. Some units can even call you or your pager at a preprogrammed phone number to alert you that messages have been recorded.

Due to plummeting price tags, fax machines and the more recently introduced fax boards for computers are becoming more popular. Be sure to purchase a fax machine with both an automatic paper cutter, and a multisheet document feeder. Models with these features are priced at $650 and up. Other amenities to look for include automatic fax routing or switching that senses when an incoming call is either a fax, modem or voice call, and routes the transmission accordingly; and broadcast capability, where the machine can send the same document to numerous different phone numbers.

If your budget permits, look at the new plain-paper fax machines. These thermal or laser-based units sell for about $1,400 to $3,000, but they are the most convenient to use and handle large volume work loads most easily. If you already have a fax machine, you can purchase a plain-paper receiving unit that connects to your laser printer for about $700 to $1,000. Fax boards work quite well; however, you must leave your computer on to receive documents. While some brands work in the background, they do tend to tie up your machine.

Copiers

The latest personal copiers are less expensive, require little maintenance and offer many features. No matter which brand you choose, make sure the unit has reduction/enlargement capability. Although you might not think this is important now, later on you *will* need this feature. Also, if space is a problem, check out the mid- to upper-end of the Canon PC line. These copiers feature stationary platens in a fairly compact enclosure. Expect to pay between $750 and $1,000 for a good copier.

Finally, there's nothing worse than relying on a single unit that does everything and losing all functionality should the device need servicing. Basically, this refers to fax machines with a built-in answering machine and copier functions. For this reason, buy each unit separately. In addition, when buying a personal computer, make sure it has plenty of expansion capability—i.e., extra space for additional boards, memory and disk drives. If possible, stay away from modem cards that you can't easily transport from machine to machine. External modems are your best bet.

For more information on copiers, phone systems, fax and answering machines, visit the Consumer Electronics Forum (GO CEFORUM). Likewise, information regarding computers or fax boards can be found in the IBM Hardware Forum (GO IBMHW) or the Apple forums (GO MAUG).

Dawn Gordon has published more than 350 articles on consumer electronics for such publications as Rolling Stone, Playboy, Billboard, Stereo Review, Video, Popular Science *and* The New York Post. *She is the founder and manager of the Consumer Electronics Forum on CompuServe.*

results—and you don't have to be a daredevil to succeed. One low-risk international marketing maneuver is to link up with another company that will do much of the advertising for you.

FEATURE

Grant Slinger owns the Chicago firm Brykant (USA) Inc., which imports fine-quality hand-knits from Scotland, Ireland and Wales and sells them mail-order through *The Celtic Catalogue*. To take advantage of the lucrative Japanese market, Slinger is working with Donnely Directory, which publishes a directory of American mail-order houses complete with full-page advertisements. The orders are taken by an agent in Japan and sent electronically or by fax to each mail-order firm. "We receive our orders via CompuServe Mail," says Slinger. "It's less expensive, quicker by far, and any relevant messages concerning the market or new opportunities can be exchanged at the same time. Besides, it offers a personal contact with our Japanese agent."

To explore the European market, Slinger first conducts extensive research on CompuServe, using the Executive News Service, Magazine Database Plus, Newspaper Library and a number of forums. "I look out for company releases on new products, expansion or anything that I think would be marketable in Europe," he says. With two brothers in the United Kingdom, Slinger taps their expertise and geographic location to contact the company and discuss joint ventures and exporting opportunities.

"The advice I would give others is just do it! Procrastination is the killer. CompuServe gives you an edge, so use it," says Slinger.

Taking that edge to create an opportunity is all part of the entrepreneurial spirit. Whether your dream is to start a small, home-based business or expand an established company beyond your own borders, it can happen with the right mix of brains, creativity, technology and guts.

And with CompuServe, you're never alone. Michele McCormick, chief of MMC Communications, credits online support with giving her the determination to open her own public relations firm.

"The Public Relations and Marketing Forum gave me the final boost of confidence essential to going out on my own. I never felt alone. I knew dozens of helpful, expert friends were right there at any time, waiting to pull me out should I accidentally fall in too deep," she says. "That safety net has made a big difference in the way I've approached my business."

Cathryn Conroy is senior writer for CompuServe Magazine. *Her CompuServe User ID number is 70007,417.*

ASBA's Private Business XChange

Members of the American Small Business Association can use the new ASBA XChange, a private CompuServe forum, to learn more about running a small business. Not only is expert information from ASBA offered, but also other entrepreneurs worldwide are online, providing a unique opportunity to network.

In addition to the forum, frequent updates on pending federal legislation pertinent to entrepreneurs is offered, as well a listing of US Navy contracts small businesses can bid on.

Membership in ASBA is $110 annually, $20 of which goes to the local chapter. There is also a $20 fee for the CompuServe software and User ID number needed to access ASBA XChange. Only members of ASBA can participate in the XChange. For information, call 800/ASBA911.

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GO OLI for more information.

by Wendy M. Grossman

WENDY GROSSMAN

UK Computing Forum's dynamic sysop duo tend bar in the pub-like environs: Manners & Johnson

Bring on the Brits

An English odd couple hosts a mix of lively pub prattle and tech talk in the UK Computing Forum.

They're an unlikely pair. Steve Manners likes to wear suits and ties; Andy Johnson likes to wear jeans, T-shirts and those jackets the British call "anoraks." Manners votes Conservative, thinks Margaret Thatcher is "brilliant," and hates labor unions. Johnson votes Labor, thinks Margaret Thatcher was one of the worst disasters ever to befall Britain, and is a trade union official. Manners sells cheese (minimum order: one ton) for Express Foods, a subsidiary of Grand Metropolitan, the company that owns Burger King; Johnson is a train driver for British Rail. And yet, together they run the UK Computing Forum (GO UKFORUM), the largest and most active of CompuServe's European forums.

The UK Computing Forum is more like a British local pub than it is like any other forum on CompuServe. While it has specialist support areas for UK-based manufacturers such as Amstrad and Psion run by a staff of expert sysops, the forum has a strong social and personal orientation.

Lively, not to say heated, argument is typical, particularly in the section called Rovers Return Pub, named for the pub in *Coronation Street*, Britain's longest running TV soap opera. The Pub is volatile: a message posted there asking for comments for this article spontaneously combusted into discussions of the practicalities of dual citizenship, allergies to peanuts and the quality of UK computer magazines.

Although the character of the UK Computing Forum was formed by Manners and Johnson after they took it over last May, the forum was born in January 1991, when AT&T Istel closed down the MicroLink service. MicroLink members were offered free introductory memberships and a couple of hours' worth of usage credit for CompuServe, plus a month's free access to the new forum. Recently, a similar offer was made to members of the now defunct Micronet, which was part of British Telecom's videotex online service, Prestel.

Many former MicroLink and Micronet members already knew Manners and Johnson, who ran PC support areas on those services. Manners and Johnson themselves met through Micronet more than four years ago, after both bought the first inexpensive PC available in the UK, the Amstrad 1512, the day it came out. They also have a company, Powerline, through which they build PCs and sell modems, supply the cover disks for the UK magazine *PC Today*, and run a large bulletin board called DirectLine.

Manners and Johnson like to meet in

COMPUTING SERVICES

CM's Computing Services Credo: For those who call out for advice, answers, even mere companionship in a discomfiting computer world, we throw you the online rope that connects to the main. No man is an island unto himself. Herein the Control-G tolls for thee.

▼
Regal Support
▼
UK Files, p. 22
▼
AtariNet's Tenth, p. 23
▼
Shareware's Button, page 26

person the people they meet online. To this end, they run what they call "meets" about four times a year; the most recent one was held on Dec. 8 at a shooting club in Oxfordshire and was planned to coincide with the *Computer Shopper* Show, held that weekend in London. They invite everyone from all the online services they're involved with to the meets, which typically feature a room full of computers and online demonstrations of CompuServe.

Manners and Johnson aren't the only sysops involved with the forum. Five assistant sysops, who read all of the 200 to 300 messages that come into the forum each day, also contribute from their areas of expertise. Cliff Lawson, a private pilot and amateur bell ringer, has worked for Amstrad for more than seven years designing computers and writing software. Terry Love, a BT software engineer, has extensive knowledge of BBC computers (no relation to the British Broadcasting Corp).

David Moore, a pilot for Rolls Royce and an Amiga/ST user for many years, logs from all over the world, wherever he happens to be flying the company's executive jet. Nigel Peacock is a bookkeeper and, in addition to running the business section, has written and uploaded a number of popular files on such topics as UK tax information.

Finally, Warwick University mathematician John Rawnsley has extensive Macintosh experience.While CompuServe has many other Mac support sections, he believes Apple's lower penetration in the UK market means that British users need more help.

Rawnsley's mathematical interests are in tune with another major forum topic: numbers. The longest running thread in the forum, known as "Mystic Algebra," ran to 335 messages between June 30 and Aug. 18. It has now been immortalized in an archived

London Calling: UK, European Areas

The heart of CompuServe is still very much technical support, and most of the new European forums and sections reflect this. However, there's more to it than that. Many Europeans are not used to online services, and may find CompuServe intimidating at first. For British first-timers, being able to type FIND UK and wind up in the UK Computing Forum helps them feel part of the CompuServe community.

Here's a guide to other European forums and sections currently available on CompuServe:

UK Shareware Forum (GO UKSHARE)—Support forum with a commercial orientation and managed by several UK-based shareware publishers. Most of the message areas support specific products or publishers; however, Steve's Lounge is a general discussion area, and Flame On! is for heated arguments.

***PC Plus* Online (GO PCPLUS)**—Support service for readers of *PC Plus*, a leading UK PC magazine. Includes the *PC Plus* Forum (GO PCPFORUM) where readers can discuss the magazine and download many of the programs reviewed. Also includes Top 10 downloads and a news area.

IBM European Users Forum (GO IBMEURO)—Primarily a technical support forum, but because it's the most international of the forums, lots of helpful advice is available on such topics as dealing with different phone companies and which German hotels are modem-friendly.

Nantucket GmbH (GO NTD or GO NANGMBH)—German language support forum for Nantucket products Clipper and Nantucket Tools.

Microsoft Central Europe (GO MSF)—German language support for Microsoft products, primarily programming languages, LAN Manager and developers' tools.

Markt & Technik (GO MTD)—German language forum for readers of *PC Magazin*, *Computer Live* and *Computer Personlich*, German magazines from the publisher of *Dr. Dobbs' Journal*. A display area provides computer industry news written in German.

Two more German language forums are planned for early this year. One is a support forum for Borland/Ashton-Tate products; the other is a support forum for Germany's leading modem manufacturer, Dr. Neuhaus.

—WMG

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Teapots, Travel Tips and Mystic Algebra: Files from UK Forums

Using European-made equipment and wondering where to find support and utility programs? Relying on out-of-date travel guides for advice on restaurants, hotels and customs regulations? Trust your local, native guides. The following files should help.

From the UK Computing Forum (GO UKFORUM):

Tea-making Instructions—Two recipes for making the perfect (British) pot of tea, Library 1, "General & Library Info," TEA.TXT.

Standard Dialing Code Finder—Complete listings of UK domestic and international telephone codes ordered by both area and number, including the 1990 dialing codes for London. PC version, Library 1, STD.ZIP; Amiga version, Library 7, "Amiga/ST," STD.LZH.

Mystic Algebra—UK Forum's longest-running message thread, a discussion of whether the infinitely repeating decimal 3.9999 ... is or is not equal to 4. Not for the faint-hearted. Library 1, MYSTIC.ZIP.

Windows Utility—Shows current Windows mode as an icon. Written by Assistant Sysop Cliff Lawson. Library 3, "DOS and Windows," CPUMOD.ZIP.

Dr. Who* Tiles for *Mah Jongg—Tile set featuring the Daleks and other characters from the long-running BBC TV show seen in the United States on PBS. Use with MAHJ35.ZIP, available in the same library. Library 3, WHOTIL.ZIP.

Psion II Utility—Adds question marks and apostrophes to the British-made Psion Organiser II; unpack the program on a PC and transfer it to the Psion to run it. Library 6, "Psion & Z88," NEWKEY.ZIP.

Music Maker for the UK-made Acorn BBC Micro—How to turn your computer into a fairground organ. Library 8, "BBC," BBIOLI.ARC.

Application Switcher for Apple System 7—Freeware written by UK author Jeremy Roussak allows menu- and key-driven cycling through open applications. Library 9, "Apple," APSW7.SIT.

UK Tax Rates for 1991–92—Summary of rates of all forms of UK tax, including VAT, capital gains, income and personal pensions. Library 10, "Business," TAX.TXT.

Cricket Primer—Explanation of the British game of cricket, including how scores are determined. Library 12, "Sport," PRIMER.TXT.

Pictures of Forum Regulars—Taken at the last meet and scanned in. See Andy Johnson talk to Lew Lewis, well-known BBC actor. Library 13, "Graphics," LEWAND.GIF.

UK Travel Information—Six comma-delimited files for import into spreadsheets or databases that cover UK airports, London restaurants, motorway service areas, and several hotel and restaurant chains. Library 14, "UK Info," UKTRAV.ZIP.

Traveling with Laptop Computers—Long-running message thread that includes everything from diagrams for telephone connections to shops that stock the necessary components. Library 14, UKLAP.TXT.

Game to Teach Visitors UK Road Signs—Be safe, and be sure you know the highway code before you start driving on the left. Library 14, ROADS.ZIP.

From UK Share Forum (GO UKSHARE):

Full-featured Communications Package—The latest version (1.5) of Odyssey, written by Scottish shareware programmer Don Milner. Library 5, "UK Authors," ODY150.ZIP.

UK Accounting Program—Page Financial Controller, a menu-driven integrated package including nominal ledger, stock control, job costing and bill of materials. Shareware. Library 5, PAGE.ZIP.

Multiuser Bulletin Board—Supports up to four comm ports, plus FidoNet Mail; written in A86 assembly language. Library 5, MERLIN.EXE.

From IBM European Users Forum (GO IBMEURO):

Survivor's Guide to Traveling with a Modem—Complete information for going online on the road in Europe. Library 7, "Help," TRAVEL.ZIP or TRAVEL.KIT.

Historical Calendar Program—Displays Julian, Gregorian and other early calendars. Library 9, "Entertainment," HIST.ZIP.

Empire Game—Manage your medieval estate and survive famines, wars and assassination attempts. In French. Library 9, EMPIRE.ZIP.

Language Logic Game—Game of logic played in French, English, Swedish, Italian, German, Dutch or Russian (the latter only for a Cyrillic Windows version). Requires Windows 3.0. Freeware. Library 9, LOGIC.ZIP.

—*WMG*

file (Library 1, "General and Library Info," MYSTIC.ZIP). The discussion, started by Dennis Lefebvre, revolved around whether the infinitely repeating decimal 3.999 ... is equal to 4.

COMPUTING SERVICES

Moving from the esoteric to the practical, many members use the forum for travel information. British members regularly advise prospective visitors to the United Kingdom on hotels, restaurants and what's on in London theaters. Also practical is news coverage. The American and British press, for example, don't get the same news at the same time or from the same slant. Exchanging information about such events as the Gulf War and the death of media tycoon Robert Maxwell has enabled members to get the best of both news services.

But for many members, the social and British element is the main attraction. UK-based Ray Parnell, for example, who moved to CompuServe when Micronet shut down, likes the broad range of participants and the fact that computers are not the only topic of discussion. "The ability to converse in (near) real-time with people around the world while retaining a British slant on things," he said in a message posted in the Pub, "is perhaps what made me plump for the UK Forum over and above the rest." Digging slyly at American readers, he added, "Perhaps what I find most enjoyable is the ability to further the education of those 'across the pond'."

For British expatriates, the forum also provides a taste of home (sometimes literally). Dave Watkins has managed to get back to the UK only three times, for two weeks each, in the last seven years. He says, "I miss hearing day-to-day tidbits of information about the 'motherland.' Since I discovered the UK Forum about two months ago, that void has been filled."

A number of the regulars describe themselves as addicted. Says Tom Jones, "I can't go more than 24 hours without having my daily 'fix'." Similarly, former Micronet member Pete Hall says the forum has taken over his social life and filled up his hard disk with messages—at 200 a day, they add up fast.

But, says Hall, no other forum on CompuServe is comparable. "Where else could the same thread contain messages about quantum mechanics and whether the light goes out when you close the fridge door?"

Wendy M. Grossman is founder and former editor of The Skeptic *magazine (UK) and a free-lance writer and folksinger. Her CompuServe User ID number is 70007,5537.*

by Michael Naver

ARNE ROSLUND

Never needed a 'serious machine': Luks

Ten for Atari

Users of computerdom's perennial underdog mark a decade online.

As veteran Atari forum members tell the story, it was a classic example of the generosity and closeness of the Atari forum community on CompuServe: One member, immobilized in a body cast for three months after a car accident, was keeping in touch with the outside world through messages from his colleagues on the Atari ST Forum.

It was perhaps the most dramatic but otherwise characteristic example of the loyalty members express as they mark the 10th anniversary of Atari forums on CompuServe (GO ATARINET).

Looking back on it now, the accident victim, Dave Groves, then an assistant sysop, says the time and closeness spent with the staff and members made the forums a home away from home. This sense of family has characterized the Atari forums from the beginning, in the fall of 1981, when the original (and current) forum manager, Ron Luks, along with two other pioneers, started the Atari 8-bit Forum.

"Atari computer users have been the underdogs of the computing world from day one," says Luks. The forum was the only place people could go to get support for Atari machines. Users tend to develop an intense loyalty to the machines and to each other."

The family spirit is matched by a strong independent streak. "We support the products, and at times have not been very popular with the company," says Luks. "Our current relations with the company, however, are the best in years."

Luks remembers his own introduction to Atari—as a stock/options trader in a Wall Street brokerage firm in 1981. He was planning to buy an IBM PC until he saw the Atari 800 running a game called *Star Raiders*.

"I was so mesmerized by the game that I bought the Atari, figuring I would play with it until I got a serious machine," recalls Luks. "But that old 8-bit machine did everything I needed, so I never bought the IBM."

With his modem and CompuServe introductory membership packet, Luks soon was telecommunicating in an Atari section of the Popular Electronics Forum. A few months later, he was called upon to manage the first Atari forum on CompuServe, called informally "Sig*Atari."

A second pioneer, Michael Reichmann, of Toronto, remembers CompuServe was sponsoring a promotion in Toronto. He bought a 300-baud modem and "got hooked."

"There was something very clubby about the Atari community in the early '80s that was unique," he says. "If you had an Atari, you knew you had a great machine, but the rest of the world didn't. It was a tightly knit group of a few hundred people, and 80 percent of us hung around Sig*Atari."

At the time Reichmann was a vice president of the Canadian Press news agency. "My background was in photography, so graphics was important. Back in '81 the Atari 800 was the whiz-bang graphics computer. With CompuServe, he was able to correspond with Atari software developers throughout the United States and Canada.

The third founder, Steve Ahlstrom, of Littleton, Colo., recalls, "All of us were discovering not only the Atari computer but also the power of telecommunications. We came from vastly different walks of life, but became close because of our common interest."

Ahlstrom served as an assistant Atari sysop for five years, where he, too, found business opportunities writing Atari software. Later he became manager of the Amiga forums, where he can be found today.

Ahlstrom was not the only Atari forum pioneer to branch out to other CompuServe forums. Groves' story of his car accident is another example.

A resident of Miami, Groves was driving home from his job as a bank vice president when he fell unconscious at the wheel, the result of faulty diabetes medication. He hit another car on the expressway at 65 miles an hour. After three months in a body cast, he spent nine months in therapy. It was during this time that Groves felt the support and loyalty of his fellow Atari forum members. The accident led Groves to establish the Diabetes and Hypoglycemia Forum (GO DIABETES) three years ago to share information to prevent accidents like his.

The Atari ST is still Groves' computer of

Eight Bits of History: Atari Timeline

1980
8-bit Atari machines supported in Atari section of Popular Electronics Forum.

1981
Atari 8-bit Forum opens, called "Sig*Atari."

1985
Atari ST introduced. Section for it opens in Sig*Atari, then Atari ST Forum opens. Atari Developers Forum opens.

1987
Atari ST Forum reorganized into Atari ST Productivity Forum, Atari ST Arts Forum and Atari Vendors Forum.

1989
Atari Portfolio Forum opens to support the Atari Portfolio palmtop computer. Atari File Finder opens, permitting quick searches for all forum files.

1992
AtariNet forums include 8-bit, ST Productivity, ST Arts, Atari Vendors and Portfolio Forums.

Sysops' Picks: Atari Forum Files

Of the hundreds of files in the Atari forum libraries, the forum managers have selected those listed below as the cream of the crop. They're free or inexpensive, and they're ready for downloading.

"These files were chosen because of their enduring popularity and because they illustrate the range of possible applications on the different classes of Atari machines," says Ron Luks, manager of the Atari forums. You're invited to try them.

ATARI 8-BIT FORUM (GO ATARI8)

DOS Customizer—Customizes screen color and (on XL/XE) keyboard rates, scroll rate, alternate character set. Library 3, "System Utilities," DOSCUS.ALF.

Extractor—Stand-alone archived file extractor. Library 3, UNARC.COM.

Picture Show—Displays pictures created in any of the "classic" Atari formats. Library 4, "Graphics/RLE/PICs," OMLOAD.XMO.

Textpro—Could be the best word processor available for the Atari Classic. Shareware. Library 5, "Productivity Software," TPD45*.ARC.

Create Music—Atari Music System, a popular format for many years in creating music files that can be played back on an Atari. Library 6, "Sound & Music," THPLYR.ARC.

Music Processor—Antic Music Processor, a more recent development from Antic. Can display lyrics as well as music. Library 6, AMP2.ARC.

Stud Poker—Machine language stud poker, with many variations. Library 10, "Games/Entertainment," STDPOK.ALF.

Bacterion—Arcade game from Analog puts you in control of a miniaturized vehicle seeking to zap invading bacteria. Library 10, BACTER.XMO.

Maze War—Arcade game for one to four players. Small, fast and great fun. Library 10, MAZWAR.XMO.

Turbo BASIC—A new BASIC, written in Europe, and released in the public domain. Compatible with programs written in Atari BASIC. Library 14, "Programming Aids," TBAS*.ARC.

ATARI ST ARTS FORUM (GO ATARIART)

Arcade Game—A freeware version of the popular arcade game *Robotron*, called *Llamatron*. The 1MB version has extended sound capabilities. Library 2, "Games," TRON*.LZH.

Picswitch—John Brochu's picture format converter/viewer. Library 14, "Viewers/Utilities," PICSW7.ARC.

Draw Program—Robert Birmingham's freeware drawing program for the Atari ST. Library 14, ART232.ARC.

Newsletters—Two popular weekly electronic newsletters in their fifth year of online publishing. Library 15, "News and Reviews," contains issues of *ST-Report* and *Z*Net Online*.

ATARI ST PRODUCTIVITY FORUM (GO ATARIPRO)

Virus Killer—A floppy disk virus detection/fix program. Library 4, "Utilities," VKILLR.LZH.

Diskcopy—A file reader/converter/editor with ARC/unARC capabilities. Library 4, DCOP36.ARC.

ARCSHELL—Version 2.6 of this mouse-driven shell for using the ARC and LHARC (LZH) utilities. Shareware. Library 4, ARCSHL.ARC.

Showit—DC Showit version 1.1 by Double Click Software. Freeware program replaces the GEM desktop Show/Print file routines, improves file viewer routines and displays many Atari ST picture formats on the screen. Library 4, DCSHW1.ARC.

Archiver—ARC utility, version 6.02, supports archiving of entire subdirectories. IBM compatible, for all ST ARC files. Library 4, ARC602.TTP.

Compression—Questor's LHARC utility program uses the more efficient LZH format. Compatible with MS-DOS versions. Library 4, LH201H.LZH.

VDOS—A replacement to the Atari ST's GEMDOS program. A series of four files including detailed documentation. Shareware. Library 6, "Accessories and Setups," VDOS*.ARC.

ATARI PORTFOLIO FORUM (GO APORTFOLIO)

XTERM—Telecommunications program for the Portfolio by Jim Straus. This freeware program allows you to access CompuServe and other networks, and supports XMODEM file transfers. Library 2, "Communications," XTERM2.COM.

Extractor—PKUNZIP de-archiver extracts files on the Portfolio. Library 3, "Utilities," PKUNZI.EXE.

PBasic—This BASIC interpreter for the Atari Portfolio supports the customary commands and some special Portfolio-only functions such as MENUs. Library 8, "Programming," PBAS48.ZIP.

Graphics Show—Portfolio Graphics Show program by Don Messerli gives graphics capabilities to palmtops. Library 11, "Graphics," PGSH21.ZIP.

choice. "I use it for heavy-duty business applications, which surprises some people. It is a serious business machine."

Newer forum members—people not present at the creation of the 8-bit or ST Forums but who have become loyal Atari ST users—cite the same community spirit.

Bill and Pattie Rayl of Ann Arbor, Mich., met in college and got an Atari ST as a wedding gift three years later. The following year, 1987, they joined CompuServe. "Our CompuServe experience has meant making a lot of friends and business contacts," says Pattie. The couple produces a national magazine for Atari users called *Atari Interface*, one of only two publications for the Atari.

The Rayls are unofficial sponsors of the twice-weekly conferences—Sunday evenings for Atari 8-bit users and Thursday evenings for ST users. "The sysops take a hands-off approach, and let the users do their thing," says Pattie.

COMPUTING SERVICES

Another enthusiast is Jim Ness, a West Chicago, Ill., motor equipment salesman. In 1986 he bought an Atari 520 ST, which he described as a "basic but competent machine with a color monitor and disk drive selling at Kmart for about $500."

Ness began spending time in the Atari ST Forum. "I knew that if you could find a group of people who used the machine, you could find Atari software, plus advice on how to use your computer."

Ness became a hobbyist programmer and wrote the only automated access program for the Atari, QuickCIS. "Most people who regularly visit the Atari forums use it," he says.

Assisting Luks as forum sysops are Mike Schoenbach, assistant manager; Dan Rhea, Bill Aycock, Keith Joins, Bob Retelle, David Ramsden and John Davis, ST sysops; Don LeBow and Bob Puff, 8-bit sysops; and Marty Mankins, Judy Hamner and B.J. Gleason, Portfolio sysops.

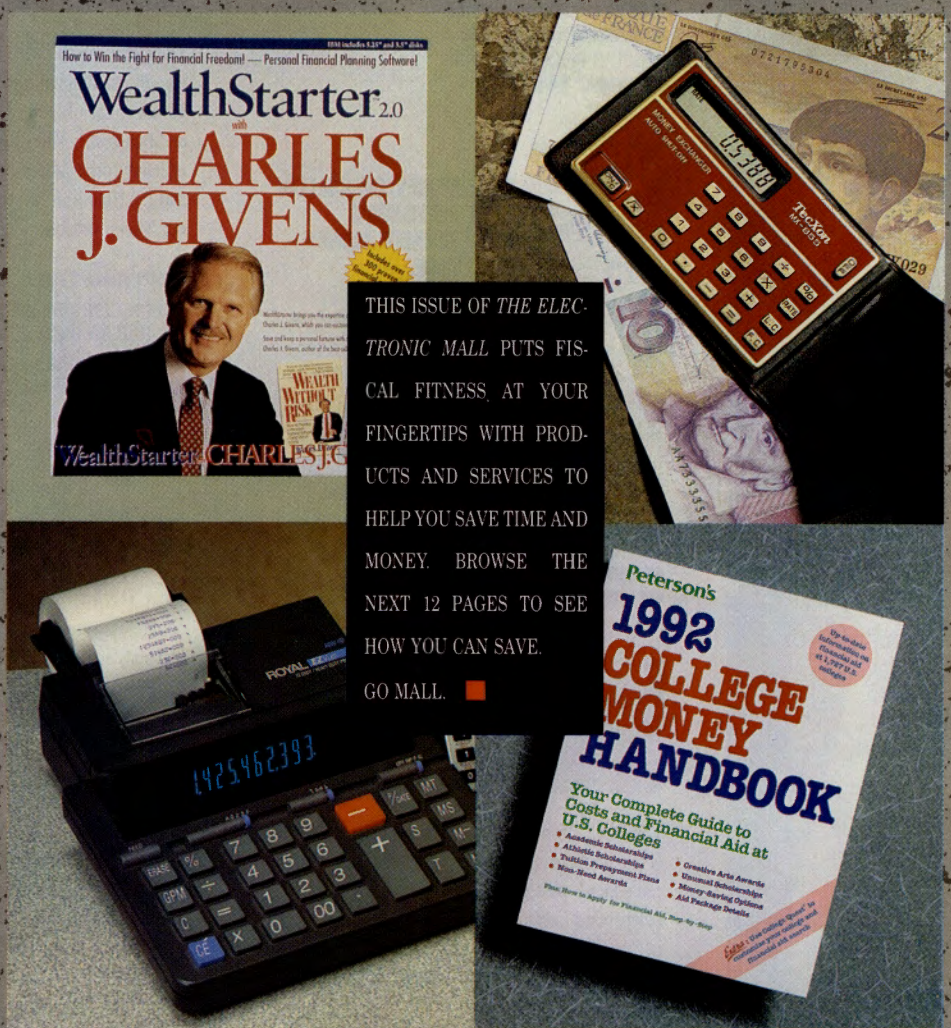
What's ahead for Atari? No one knows for sure, but Luks notes that since the days when Atari was on the cutting edge as a low-cost, high-powered graphics computer, there was a dearth of new products for several years. Now significant products are being released. As they are available, Atari's loyal band on CompuServe will be ready.

Michael Naver is a contributing editor of CompuServe Magazine. *His CompuServe User ID number is 76004,2242.*

GUIDE TO SHOPPING ON THE COMPUSERVE INFORMATION SERVICE

THE ELECTRONIC M·A·L·L

MARCH 1992



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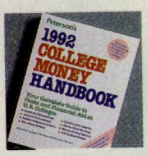

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The CompuServe Store offers great prices on dozens of items including the *CompuServe Information Manager* membership kit for non-members (DOS or Macintosh), *Navigator* software, and a selection of handy print guides such as *CompuServe A to Z* and the *Financial Services Users Guide*. Look for our March specials.

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GO MALL

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Many Electronic Mall merchants offer shoppers the opportunity to request **free** print catalogs online. Stores offering **free** copies of new Spring catalogs include Brooks Brothers (GO BR), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (GO FA), Barnes & Noble (GO BN), Penny*Wise Office Products (GO PW), The Chef's Catalog (GO CC), Hammacher Schlemmer (GO HS), Dalco Computer Electronics (GO DA), Figi's (GO FG), Multiple Zones (GO MZ) and Short Sizes (GO SS). Visit The Catalog Store (GO CA) for more than 40 **free** catalogs or brochures from direct marketers such as J. Crew Clothing, Burger's Smokehouse and King-Size Clothing. Fancy Foods and Specialty Gifts (GO FANCY) also offers you the opportunity to order multiple catalogs, including Legal Seafood, Downey's Liqueur Cakes and Smithfield Collection Smoked Hams and Turkeys.

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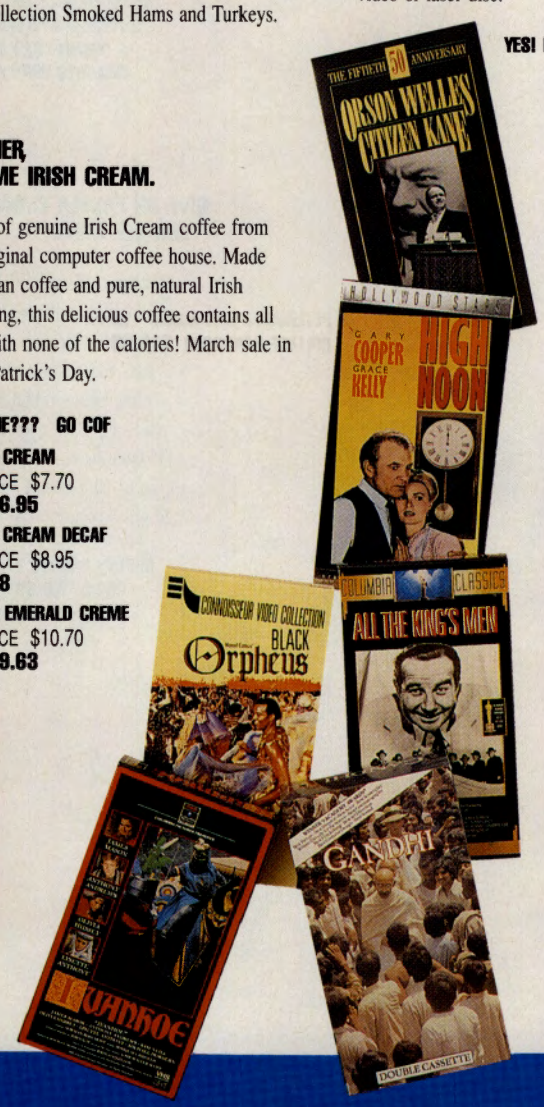

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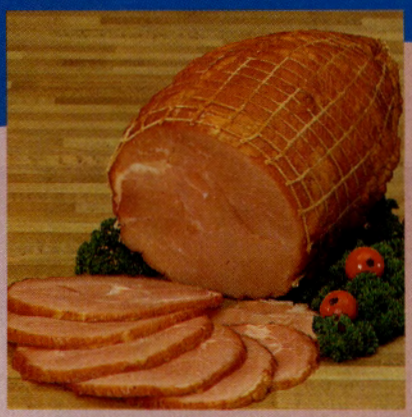

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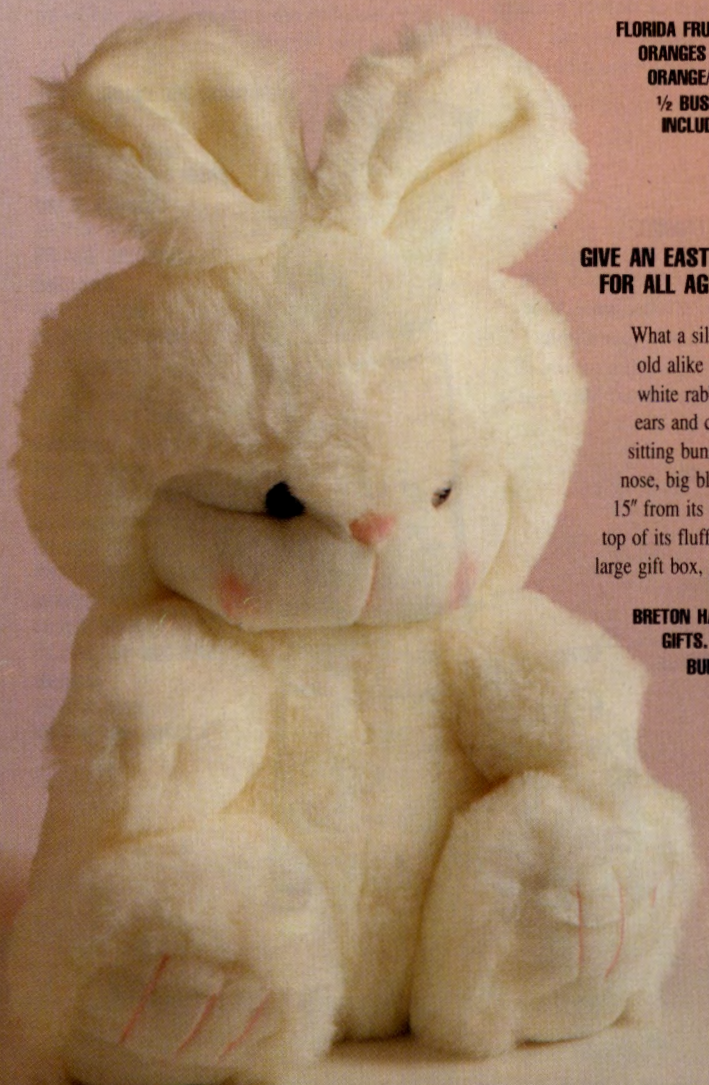

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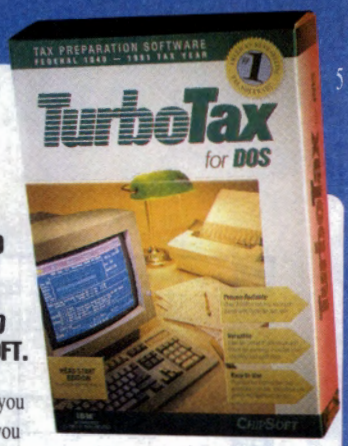

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Advantage Communications	AD					•						•																						
AT&T Toll-Free 800 Directory	ATT	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•										•		•	•	•				
Air France	AF															•												•			•	•		
Affordable (50%–off) Software	AS							•								•		•	•		•						•							•
Alamo Rent-A-Car	AL			•								•				•																		
American Express	AE								•							•			•					•										
American Management Assoc.	AMA					•						•															•	•	•		•			•
Americana Clothing	AC	•							•						•			•	•					•			•	•	•					
Apparel Concepts For Men	AP	•																•																
Automobile Information Center	AI			•														•	•								•	•	•					
AutoQuot-R	AQ			•														•	•															
AutoVantage Online	ATV			•														•	•															•
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Berkshire Record Outlet	RO		•						•									•	•								•	•	•					
Boat Xpress	BX											•						•	•															
Bose Express Music	BEM		•															•	•					•			•	•	•		•			•
Boston Computer Exchange	BCE							•				•						•	•								•	•	•					
Breton Harbor Basket & Gifts	BH				•				•	•	•							•	•								•	•	•					
Broderbund Software	BB							•										•	•															
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Buick Magazine	BUICK		•																							•					•			
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The CD Club	CD	•																							•							•			
Checkfree Corporation	CF					•		•									•	•	•															
The Chef's Catalog	CC								•								•	•	•		•										•			
Coffee Anyone???	COF								•								•	•	•								•	•	•					
CompuServe Store	ORDER				•			•									•	•	•								•	•	•					
Computer Express	CE							•									•	•									•	•	•		•			
Computer Shopper	CS					•		•	•								•	•							•		•							
The Computer Store	TCS					•		•									•	•	•		•										•			
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The Court Pharmacy	RX	•							•		•	•					•	•	•		•		•				•	•	•					
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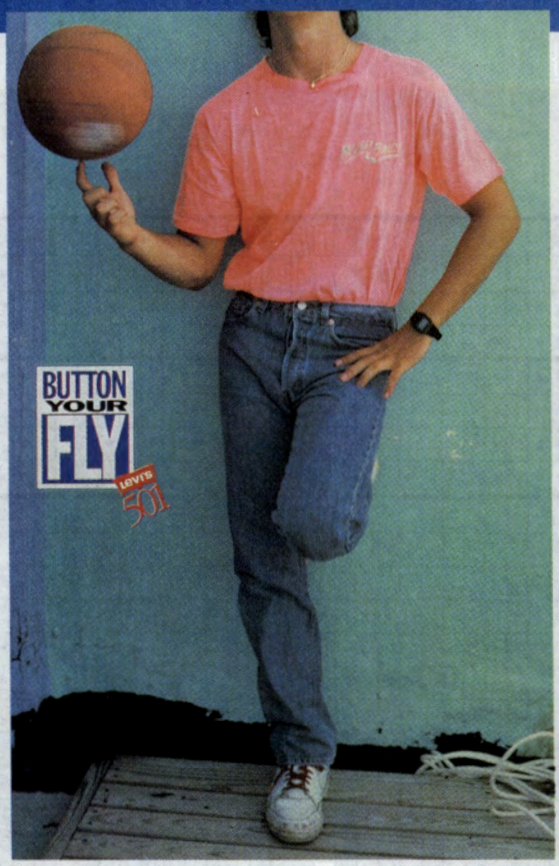

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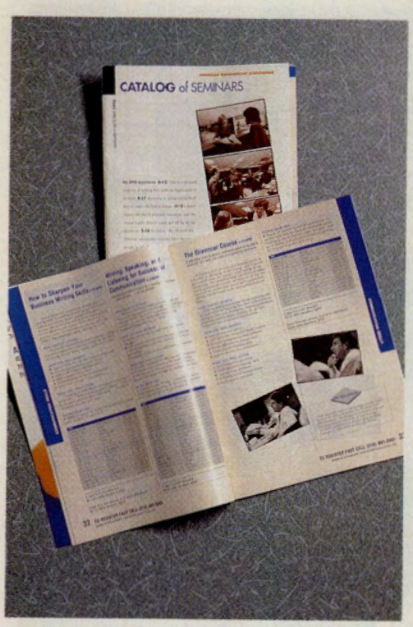

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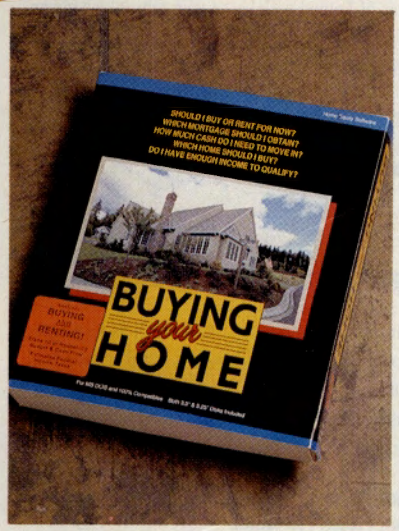

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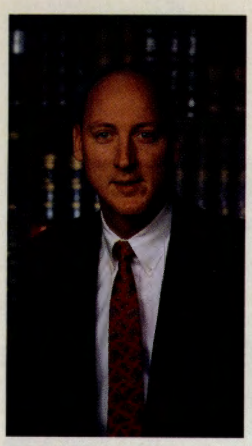

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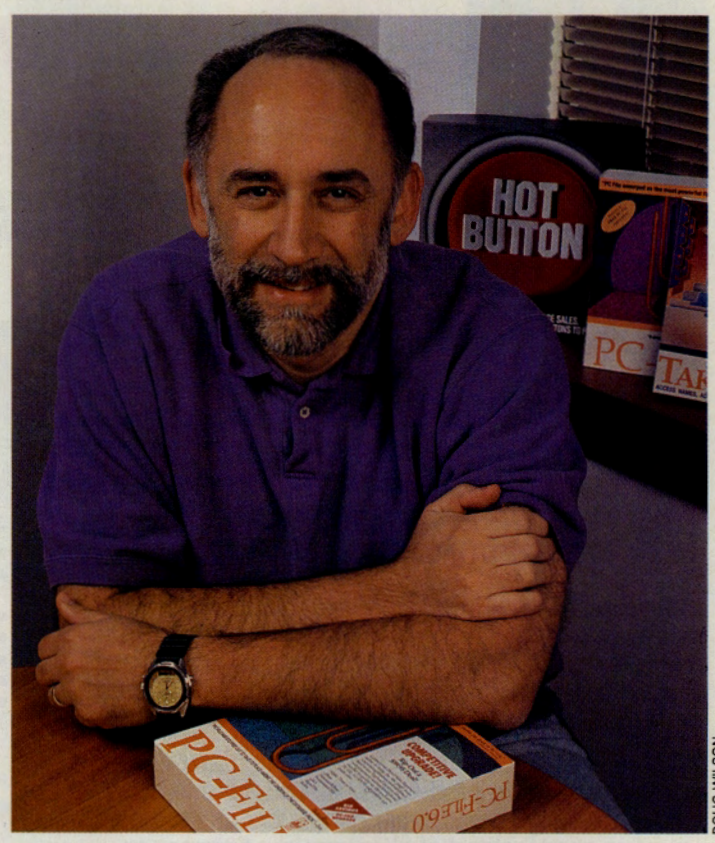
by John Edwards



DOUG WILSON

CompuServe turned weekend project into popular product: Button

Meet Mr. Shareware

An early one-man software firm sizes up 'trying it' then and now.

Jim Button has heard all the jokes, including the quips about "pressing the right buttons" and, of course, being "on the button." He's heard them a thousand, maybe a million, times. But the PC software pioneer did indeed do something right in 1982 when he slipped a little electronic notice into PC File—the flat-file database manager he was graciously giving away for nothing—inviting people to mail in a voluntary payment if they liked the program.

"There were at least a couple of other people who hit on the shareware idea at around the same time. But I will take credit for being one of the first," says Button.

While he may not have created shareware—copyrighted programs made available to users on a trial basis—Button did manage to fully exploit the concept. In much the same way that IBM took the microcomputer and turned it into an acceptable business tool, Button grabbed the "try before you buy" idea and made it a popular—and profitable—way to sell software. At last count, PC File was managing the databases of more than 700,000 users.

Today, Button is CEO of ButtonWare, a 25-employee software company based in Bellevue, Wash. In addition to PC-File+, the firm's product line includes PC-Calc+ (a spreadsheet), PC Type II (a word processor) and Baker's Dozen (a set of 14 utility disks). ButtonWare also recently introduced TakeNote, a personal filer that marks the company's first move into the Windows market.

COMPUTING SERVICES

In the late 1980s, Button set in motion his plan to achieve every shareware author's dream—getting out of shareware. He decided to take ButtonWare into the retail market. "In the past year, we've moved almost totally out of the shareware department and into the standard distribution channels, mostly at the insistence of our larger distributors," says Button.

But ButtonWare's transition into the retail market wasn't painless. Although the company was able to get its products supported by more than 2,000 dealers, sales were poor. ButtonWare was in danger of becoming just another promising software company that had overextended its reach. "For shareware authors, advertising is pretty inexpensive," notes Button. "In retail, profits tend to be squeezed because you have to discount your product so hugely to the distributor."

Realizing he needed someone with professional marketing experience to guide ButtonWare during its transformation into a full-fledged software publishing company, Button tapped Jim David, an Egghead Discount software sales and marketing manager, to become company president.

David and Button revamped ButtonWare's product packaging, repriced the software to reflect the cost of doing business and worked to get major distributors, as well as big-name resellers such as PC Connection, Egghead, Waldensoftware and CompuAdd, to handle the products. Within a year, sales and profits had climbed impressively, and ButtonWare was solidly positioned in the retail market.

While ButtonWare has changed dramatically over the last few years, the company remains true to its shareware roots by offering customers extensive one-on-one support. Button has backed his products through CompuServe since 1982. In fact, ButtonWare was the first company to support its products in the PC vendor forums. Today, the firm can be found in the PC Vendor A Forum (GO PCVENA) in Section and Library 1, "ButtonWare." (See table on p. 29 for companies represented in the PC vendor forums.)

"I visit the forum every day to see what's happening, to see what the support issues and questions are," says Button. "As an author, I need to keep my finger on the users' pulse. Sometimes, if our support person is away for awhile or misses an important

Shareware Central: ASP Forum

Although Jim Button had virtually no outside support when he introduced his first software product, today's shareware authors can tap into the formidable resources offered by the Association of Shareware Professionals, represented in CompuServe's ASP/ Shareware Forum (GO ASPFORUM).

The ASP was formed in 1987 by a group of shareware authors, including Button, who wanted to improve their industry's practices and image. Today, the ASP promotes shareware as a "try before you buy" method of distributing software. It also sets programming, marketing and support standards, and helps its members to market their software around the world.

The ASP uses the forum as its online headquarters—a place where ASP members can communicate, share ideas and learn from one another. You don't have to be a member of the ASP to join the forum and participate in its discussions.

Savvy aspiring shareware authors frequent the forum's Section 4, "New Authors," where they get practical, nuts-and-bolts programming and marketing help from industry veterans such as Button. Section 2, "Ask the ASP," is a clearinghouse for information on the organization.

The forum's libraries feature a wealth of technical and business material. Many of the files provide essential information for new shareware authors. Here are a few:

Association Shareware Catalog—The ASP's official product catalog, which describes each product and gives its location on CompuServe. Library 2, "Ask the ASP," CATLOG.ZIP.

Author Application Procedures—Information on how to become an ASP author-member. Library 2, APPROC.EXE.

Membership Application Form (PC version)—Application and instructions for joining the ASP. Library 2, APPLIC.EXE.

Membership Application Form (Macintosh version)—Application and instructions for joining the ASP. Library 2, APPLIC.SIT.

Definition of Shareware and ASP—Detailed look at shareware and the ASP's role in the field. Library 3, "Shareware!," DEFINE.ZIP.

Shareware Programmer's Guide—Tips on writing, documenting, legally protecting and marketing software through shareware. Library 4, "New Authors," GUIDE.EXE.

question or misses the point, I chime in and provide the answer. I read everything that comes across the board."

Button got into the shareware field the way most people do, as a computer hobbyist. While still employed as an IBM manager, he began to build kit computers with his then teen-age son, John, in the late 1970s. By the time the IBM PC appeared on the market in 1981, the Buttons were experienced microcomputer programmers, ready to meet the needs of thousands of new PC owners. (John is now a product manager with ButtonWare.)

"I wrote PC File as a weekend project to help me keep track of old business contacts, handle mailing labels for my church and things like that," recalls Button. "I offered the product as freeware, but the program was so highly accepted that it quickly overran me as a hobby and I had to turn the whole thing into a business venture."

Button says CompuServe was the perfect channel for publicizing PC File. While today CompuServe allows shareware authors to place programs directly into specific forum libraries, a decade ago Button had to resort to a more primitive distribution method.

"I bought a CompuServe subscription and put a message up about my program and how people could get it for free by mailing me a disk with a return envelope and postage," he says. "That message on CompuServe was the

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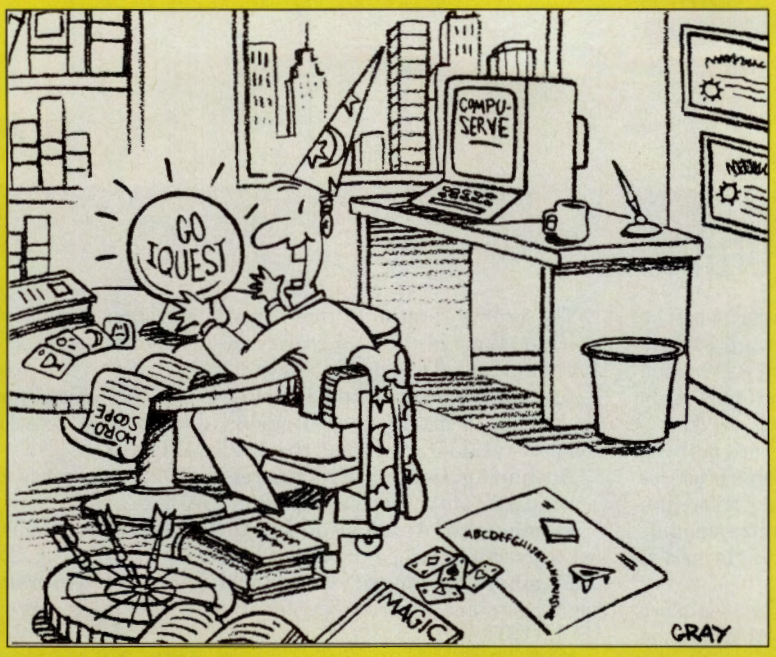

Having exhausted all his decision-making tools, Miles was finally on to something big.

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first 'ad' I ever ran. It enabled me to get into a lot of bulletin boards and gave me entry into some of the first computer clubs." It also helped Button to get the word out to magazine editors and other influential people in the computer community. The rest, as they say, is history.

Button's experiences on CompuServe led him, with several other leading shareware authors, to found the Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP) in 1987 (see "Shareware Central," p. 27). Button still enjoys helping new shareware authors get a foothold in the field, although his company's recent shift into retail marketing has forced him to relinquish his seat on the association's board of directors. Nevertheless, in appreciation of his efforts on behalf of shareware over the past decade, the ASP presented him its 1991 Shareware Honor award.

Button says the key to becoming a successful shareware author is hard work. "The most important thing is to create the best possible program before you put it into the shareware tent. You shouldn't get into shareware unless you're seriously interested in devoting the time that's required not only to write your program but also to support it, document it and market it. Once you're a shareware author, you're becoming a one-person software company."

Despite the difficulties he experienced in taking ButtonWare into the retail market, Button still thinks it's a goal all serious shareware authors should aspire to. But he stresses the importance of careful planning. "You have to build up a huge following," he notes. "Your product has to become so well-known as a shareware product that you can generate some pull on the retail shelves just by the recognition of your product name."

Button still tinkers with new programs and ideas, and continues to see opportunities in shareware. "It's the perfect way for anyone to get into the software publishing business. Regardless of the platform, you can get started with a minimal investment. All it takes is some talent and the ability to hang in there. You also have to be willing to promote yourself—that's an important part of achieving success."

And while it's true that Jim Button has heard the line about "buttoning your lip," he never took it seriously. Good for him.

John Edwards is a contributing editor of CompuServe Magazine. *His CompuServe User ID number is 70007,412.*

PC Vendors Galore: Forum Summaries

ButtonWare was the first company to provide product support in a CompuServe PC vendor forum. Today, you can find ButtonWare in Section and Library 1 of the PC Vendor A Forum.

Here's a quick look at the companies that support their products on CompuServe's five PC vendor forums. The section/library number follows the product name.

PC Vendor A Forum (GO PCVENA)
- Broadview Communications (15)
- Bröderbund (4)
- ButtonWare (1)
- Ctrlalt Associates (12)
- Custom Technologies (7)
- Enable Software (3)
- Foresight Corp. (13)
- Magee Enterprises (6)
- Mansfield Software (2)
- MultiSoft Corp. (14)
- Mustang Software (9)
- Northgate (10)
- Qualitas (8)
- Quercus Systems (11)
- Sitka (TOPS) (5)

PC Vendor B Forum (GO PCVENB)
- Advanced Gravis (14)
- ChipSoft Inc. (7)
- DacEasy (8)
- Great American Software (13)
- J.P. Software (10)
- Korenthal Associates (3)
- PDC Prolog (11)
- Personics Corp. (4)
- Primavera Systems (2)
- PRO-C Corp. (9)
- Quarterdeck (1)
- Quicksoft (5)
- SPECTRA Publishing (12)
- TurboPower Software (6)

PC Vendor C Forum (GO PCVENC)
- Brightbill-Roberts (1)
- Gateway 2000 (13)
- Hooper International (5)
- IBM CAD (4)
- Innovative Data Concepts (6)
- Macola Inc. (14)
- Megahertz (9)
- NetFRAME Systems (3)
- Parsons Technology (8)
- PKWare Inc. (11)
- Rupp Corp. (10)
- Vericomp (2)
- Wordtech Systems (7)

PC Vendor D Forum (GO PCVEND)
- Artisoft (2)
- Brightwork Development (3)
- Complementary Solutions Inc. (7)
- Coordination Technology (13)
- Cumulus Corp. (6)
- Dell Computer (1)
- GO Corp. (5)
- Hyperkinetix (9)
- Magma Systems (10)
- Procom Technology (12)
- Tech III (4)
- TIMESLIPS Corp. (8)

PC Vendor E Forum (GO PCVENE)
- Farallon Computing (4)
- Iomega Corp. (3)
- Turbo Power C++ (1)
- XTree Company (2)

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by Mike Pietruk

MATT WALTON

Mutual Decisions

In tougher times, these managed, diversified funds are a safe bet. But how do you single one out?

Los Angeles private school educator and Investors' Forum member Rolfe Windward believes diversification is the best way to go when investing in mutual funds. "I don't know which investment styles will be hot at any given time. By having my eggs in various baskets, I stand to profit whatever the economic climate," he says.

MONEY MATTERS

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

A Return Amidst Stagnation

In today's sluggish US economy, where low interest rates prevail, building a good mutual fund portfolio may be the only means an average investor has to earn a decent, long-term return. But how do you approach the more than 3,000 professionally managed and multi-issued diversified fund portfolios and select the most appropriate ones?

Windward, whose holdings include 20th Century Balanced, Benham Equity Gold Index, Price International Discovery and the Benham Target Maturities Trust Zero Coupon Bond funds, follows a global assets model created by newsletter writer Harry Browne. This model identifies four classes of investments corresponding to four broad economic scenarios: (1) Stocks for profit during times of general prosperity or declining inflation; (2) Gold and international stocks for surviving periods of inflation or a declining US dollar; (3) Bonds, which profit during times of declining interest rates and disinflation; and (4) Bank accounts, certificates and money market funds for stability when other investments aren't faring well.

According to Windward, Browne tells his followers to find securities that represent each of the four groups and invest 25 percent of their portfolio in each group. The strategy is called the "permanent portfolio." The system requires minimal active management as it advocates few switches in and out of funds once the portfolio is established. This has the added advantage of allowing the investor to compound capital gains on a tax-deferred basis, postponing payments to the IRS.

Windward tinkers a bit with the Browne formula, emphasizing some funds and lightening others according to how he perceives economic development.

"Granted, I don't achieve spectacular returns, but there's always a portion of my portfolio that does well," Windward says. "I don't hit too many home-run years, but I always end up with at least a decent batting average. That, after all, is the name of the game." Over the past four years, Windward boasts a 12 percent annual average return on his portfolio.

It makes sense to spread investments

among funds with differing objectives, according to John Collins, a spokesperson for the Washington, D.C.-based Investment Company Institute, the mutual fund industry's trade association. "That way, one fund or another will be ready for selling when you need the money," he says.

But Collins also advocates allocating investment dollars according to personal objectives, another successful approach when considering mutual funds. "If the objective is long-term growth for a retirement two decades down the road, I'd seek growth stocks," he says. "On the other hand, if I were setting aside money for a home down payment, I would consider either a money market or short-term bond fund. Their net asset value (price) at a given rate down the road is more predictable, as they're less volatile."

Richard Sadowsky, a software engineer with TurboPower Software, and his wife, Cyndi, adhere to this goal-oriented strategy. In spite of current economic uncertainty, the Colorado Springs, Colo., couple is maintaining a focus on long-term goals by adding to holdings in a variety of aggressive growth and balanced no-load funds (those with no initial sales charge) that have displayed consistent outstanding performance over the past decade.

Much of their investment effort is directed toward building a nest-egg they hope will provide a comfortable retirement 25 or so years from now. In these accounts, the mix is approximately 80 percent aggressive growth with such funds as Twentieth Century Ultra and Berger 100, hedged by a 20 percent stake in the balanced Pax World Fund. Balanced funds invest in stocks and bonds and aim at providing stable returns in good times and bad.

Like many Baby Boomers, the Sadowskys also have immediate plans, including the down payment on a home, which is accumulating in Twentieth Century Balanced. Another is the future education of their 2-year-old daughter, Jaquelyn. The Sadowskys are building an education fund with monthly deposits in the aggressive Janus Twenty. "I was attracted to this fund by the 'Buy 20 Stocks For $50 a Month' ad Janus runs," says Richard. "After investigating and reading *Forbes*, *Money* and *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, I decided it would be an excellent vehicle for my 15-year savings horizon."

Regardless of whether the approach is to diversify or focus on a single objective, specific funds must ultimately be selected. But what criteria do you use?

Many investors, observes *Money* magazine Senior Editor Eric Schurenberg, glance at the lists of top-performing funds under the category that best fits their needs, and buy the ones at the top of the charts. "Often, these are among the most volatile and may, in a quarter or two, become also-rans or appear on the lists of worst-performing funds as they go through their inevitable cycles of boom and bust," he says.

Many of the short-term, top-performing funds are specialized, such as those investing in gold, biotechnology or some other area that happens to be in favor. "When that part of the market ceases to be vogue," says Schurenberg, "the funds naturally will underperform."

The case of international stock funds is a prime example of the danger of jumping onto a bandwagon. Many of these darlings of the 1980s have fallen on hard times during recent years.

The impulse is to blame the managers for the abrupt turn of events. But, as Collins points out, the problem may be out of their control. Managers work under a given set of constraints that can limit their investments and trading activity. These constraints are always outlined in a fund's offering prospec-

Picking a Winner with FundWatch Online

Thinking of mutual funds? Make FundWatch Online by *Money* Magazine (GO MONEYMAG), part of the *Money* Magazine Financial Information Center, your first stop. If you have specific funds in mind, select Option 1, "Detail a Particular Fund," from FundWatch Online's top menu. A comprehensive profile is presented, including actual performance data over seven time frames, ranging from the current to 10 previous years and the most recent bull and bear markets; comparative rankings with other funds; and information on the fund's largest portfolio positions.

The real power of FundWatch Online, however, is its ability to sift through data and provide a listing of funds that meet your criteria. Choose Option 2, "Screen Top Performing Funds," and identify your investment objectives—aggressive growth, balanced growth, growth and income, international, municipal bonds, precious metals or taxable bonds.

Let's assume you are cautious on the economy and the stock market, but don't want to go into cash because you are afraid you might miss a major rally. Balanced funds may be your best choice, and FundWatch Online allows you to screen more than 100 of these funds to locate those with characteristics suited to your needs. Choose among fees and expenses, performance, size, management company, and yield and risk as narrowing criteria. For example, when paring by yield and risk, you can sort by annual dividend yield, market sensitivity (beta) or risk rating.

When screening by risk rating, the results uncovered no balanced funds with "very low" and 10 with "low" risk. Further pruning revealed five funds that had outstanding expense ratios less than 1 percent. Ranked by five-year annualized performance, they were Mathers Fund (13.4 percent), Lindner Dividend (9.3 percent), Axe-Houghton Fund (9.3 percent) and Permanent Portfolio (4.4 percent).

Also in the *Money* Magazine Financial Information Center is *Money* Magazine Online where you can read carefully selected articles on education, taxes, home ownership, managing family finances, controlling a portfolio and spending. All are geared to giving practical advice.

Of particular note is "New Ways to Make the Most in Mutual Funds" from the May 1991 issue of *Money* magazine. The article probes the growing dissatisfaction among fund shareholders and examines whether the complaints are warranted. The portfolio management feature "Nine Great Ways to Get 10% Safely" from the July 1991 issue explores places where double-digit returns may still be obtainable without assuming enormous risk. Several mutual fund suggestions are included.

Most major fund companies offer an array of products to satisfy the diverse needs of their customers. These fund families, as they are called, are especially attractive to those with multiple investment goals or those who are intrigued by the idea of switching between funds in order to take advantage of shifting market conditions. One of the largest such families, Dreyfus, is online in The Electronic Mall (GO DR). For details about the more than 50 mutual fund offerings from Dreyfus, review its electronic brochure by selecting Option 3, "Our Portfolio of Free Prospectuses," from the Dreyfus main menu.

Stock Recommendations

If you don't want to turn your portfolio over to a mutual fund manager but don't feel comfortable analyzing stocks on your own, CompuServe offers services that supply stock recommendations:

Standard & Poor's (GO S&P)—Option 1, "S&P Master List," provides a compendium of favored securities that S&P believes are core holdings in meeting specific investment goals. The supervision of the Master List is continuous. When conditions affecting any issue change for the worse, the stock is deleted. Option 2, "Investment Ideas," offers more short-term-oriented plays that S&P expects to outperform the market over the next year. The goal is active, aggressive management of a portfolio limited in size. When a stock no longer meets this investment style, or can be replaced with another expected to better meet the objective, a substitution in the list is made.

MMS International (GO MMS)—Through its *Daily Equity Market Report* newsletter, MMS' 50-person analytical team stationed in 12 world money centers, gives it stock predictions. Released each business day by 8 p.m. Eastern Time, the newsletter includes a model portfolio of up to 20 stocks with suggested purchase and target prices, along with protective stop-loss points.

tus, a must-read document before purchasing.

Furthermore, "International funds are not only subject to the whims of world markets but also to fluctuations between the US dollar and currencies of other nations," says Collins. "Thus, while one country's market might be rising, a change in currency conversion could more than offset the gain." Some international funds hedge the risks of a falling US dollar by buying and selling currency futures to offset their stock purchases. This information is always given in the prospectus, too.

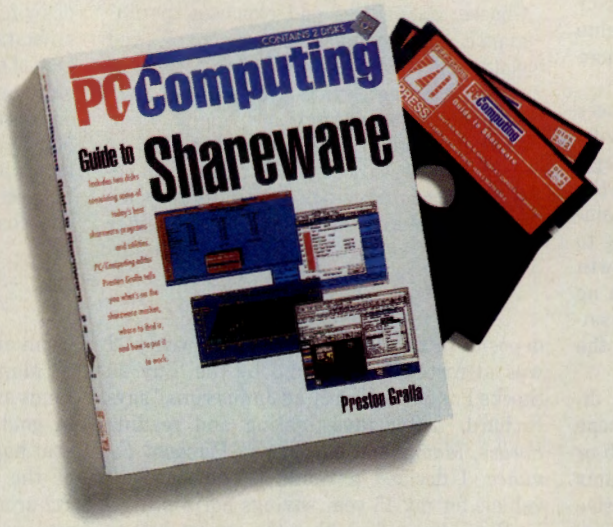
It's a good rule of thumb to examine past performance and concentrate on funds that display a consistent record of outstanding returns over 10-year periods, through good and bad markets. Make sure the fund manager who achieved the outstanding long-term returns is still around. And don't forget to consider the cost of operations.

Schurenberg reminds investors that fund expenses must be distinguished from initial sales charges or redemption fees. The former are actual expenses (management fees and accounting and legal expenses), while the latter are fees paid to those marketing the product to the public.

"I prefer no- or low-load funds, as there is no statistical evidence that paying higher loads brings better performance," he says. "Even more vital, it has nothing to do with internal fund expense ratios despite what many brokers tell their customers."

Once the approach is defined and the funds selected, how do you invest in them? Some investors, like Jon Johnston, a computer network consultant from Eden Prairie, Minn., gradually invest using the dollar cost-averaging technique whereby they buy the same dollar amount of a fund each period. For Johnston, this means automatic monthly transfers from a checking account, regardless of price. This way, more shares are acquired when prices are low, and fewer when values rise.

Dan Wiener, editor of the *Vanguard Advisor* newsletter, suggests keeping things simple and investing all available money at once. "My feeling is that the stock market



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rises over time," he says. "Over several years, you aren't going to have a negative return if you've done your homework. So, why not get money working immediately?"

MONEY MATTERS

Timing purchases to catch a bottom market, however, is not the best way to go. "I know of no one who has been consistently successful at that game, and theassociated risks of being out of the market outweigh the possible benefits," says Schurenberg.

The futility of timing was demonstrated by professors P.R. Chandy (University of North Texas) and William Reichenstein (Baylor University), as reported in the Sept. 16, 1991, edition of the biweekly *Dick Davis Digest* newsletter. The professors found that market profits were concentrated in an amazingly small number of short bull runs, which, if missed, left one at best only even.

For the period 1926–87, the average monthly gain of the Standard & Poor's 500 Index was 0.71 percent (9.48 percent on an annualized basis). If an investor had stepped to the sidelines, accidentally missing the best 50 months—6.7 percent of the total—all of the gains over the 62-year period are lost.

For the average investor, remaining in the market can earn a decent return over time, through the ins and outs of a fluctuating economy. Mutual funds furnish a prudent means of earning that return. Schurenberg, a knowledgeable investor who daily comes in contact with Wall Street's top stock pickers, chooses to rely on mutual funds. "I don't have the time to analyze balance sheets and income statements," he says. "Even if I did, I find it hard to believe that I could consistently outperform such legendary managers as John Neff (Vanguard Windsor), Albert Nicholas (Nicholas Fund) or John Templeton (Templeton Funds)."

Mike Pietruk is a contributing editor of CompuServe Magazine. *His CompuServe User ID number is 76703,4346.*

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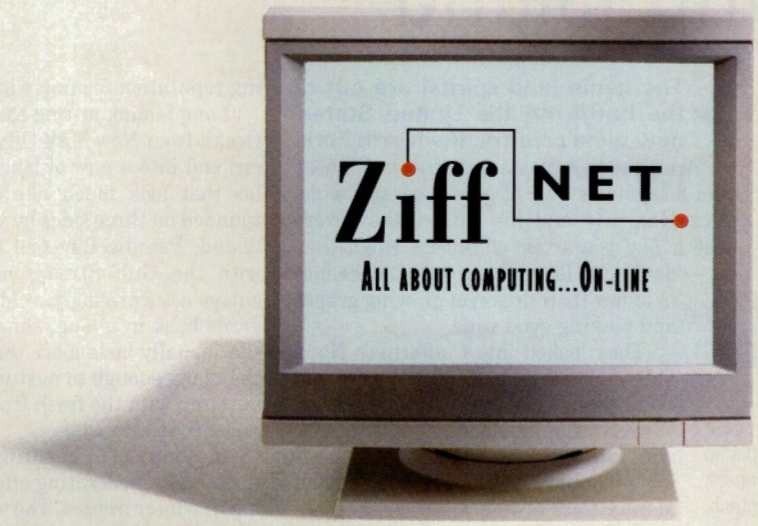

How To Get It.

Every program in the "PC/Computing Guide to Shareware" is available through ZiffNet, the on-line service all about computing. You can easily download programs from a fully indexed software library.* ZiffNet also plugs you into information on what to buy, delivers industry news even before it's in print, and offers forums hosted by the editors of *PC Magazine* and *PC/Computing* so you can ask for advice or discuss issues. Sign-up today. And remember, if you want to get into shareware, you need just two things. This guide. And ZiffNet.

Ziff NET

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by Robin Garr

One of the first on the North Fork's main road, a modern complex with a self-guided tour of grape-harvesting equipment: Palmer Vineyards

A Hint of Long Island

The genie (and spirits) are out of the bottle on the United States' new wine country, the North Fork.

Armed with a master's degree in Chinese and a layman's love of good food and wine, Alex Hargrave and his wife, Louisa, were just a few years out of college when they decided to leave the world of academics to follow their dream of growing grapes and making good wine.

They looked into California's Napa Valley and the Pacific Northwest and even thought about other countries, but settled on land long used for potato and cabbage farming on New York's Long Island, less than 100 miles east of Manhattan's towers.

Early in 1973, American consumers were beginning a flirtation with fine wine that led to a booming growth in sales lasting nearly two decades. It was then that the Hargraves planted their farm near the village of Cutchogue with quality French grapevines.

Despite near-hurricane storms that battered the vines, not to mention incredulous looks from friends told of their plans, the Hargraves soon found wine lovers beating a path to the winery door. It wasn't long before friendly competitors started making wine, too. And now, although Long Island wine by and large remains a delicious secret, the region is gaining a growing reputation for fine wines.

Long Island, jutting east into the Atlantic Ocean from New York City, forks at its eastern end into a pair of long, narrow peninsulas that look much like a crab claw. Surrounded on three sides by water (Long Island Sound, Peconic Bay and the Atlantic), and with the Gulf Stream nearby, the region enjoys a surprisingly mild climate. Its vineyards bask in a long, sunny growing season that usually lasts more than 200 days: more than long enough to nurture fat, juicy grapes bursting with the fresh fruit sugar needed to make first-rate wine.

In addition to ensuring a long summer, the ocean's moderating effects guard against harsh winter freezes. The well-drained, gravelly soil and low, scrubby profile of the North Fork, in particular, resemble the geology of Bordeaux, France, source of some of the world's finest wines. It is no coincidence, then, that even prominent French wine experts now hail the wine-making potential of the North Fork of Long Island. "One of the most promising viticultural areas in the United States," enthused the noted French wine maker and writer Alexis Lichine. "The area shows good promise ... Long Island wineries should show rapid gains." That's what the Hargraves were hoping when they had the crazy idea of planting grapes instead of potatoes, and they have achieved considerable acclaim, not to mention the imitation

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▼
Napa on the Atlantic
▼
Online Tastings, p. 36

Good Wine, Grape Taste: Food and Drink Files

A good wine makes a good meal even better, and good food goes a long way to enhance the pleasure of even the finest wine. The marriage between food and wine (both on the table and in the pot) is a subject of considerable interest to members of CompuServe's Bacchus Wine Forum and its "next-door neighbor," Cooks Online Forum. Both forums' libraries are filled with excellent files containing information on tasting food and wine, as well as tasty recipes for cooking with wine. Here, just to whet your appetite, is an alluring sampler from the bill of fare:

BACCHUS WINE FORUM (GO WINEFORUM or GO BEER)

Most wine-and-food matching discussions, along with a potpourri of outstanding wine-cookery recipes, are in Section 4, "Food & Wine." Highlights from the Food & Wine library include:

Conference Transcript—From a Cooks Online conference on matching food and wine.

Brunch Entree—Eggs in a sauce made with Barolo, a hearty Italian red wine. EGBARO.SB.

Clam Dish—A piquant clam dish and salsa appetizer. CLAMS.RH.

Chicken Entree—Chicken and shrimp in tomato sauce, a festive wine-laced entree. CHICK.DP.

Beer Cookery—Beer fanciers have a selection of recipes archived in Library 15, "Commercial Beer," as the "Cooking With Beer" series, files CWB01.TXT through CWB13.TXT. Also available in Cooks Online.

COOKS ONLINE FORUM (GO COOKS)

Wine-cookery recipes in Cooks Online are found in various forum libraries, depending on the primary ingredient in the recipe.

Cool Down—How to make your own wine coolers. Library 3, "First Choice," COOLER.TXT.

Wine desserts—Berries and cantaloupe desserts in red wine, FRTWIN.TXT; and hazelnut cake with wine-scented nectarines, HZLNUT.TXT. Library 5, "Desserts and Sweets."

Heartier fare—Wine-related entrees, including brisket, BEFBRK.TXT; red wine pot roast, REDWIN.TXT; and beef à la mode from the Colony Club, BEEF.TXT. Lighter dinner items with wine include shrimp in orange-mustard sauce, SHRMUS.TXT and chicken fricassee with peppers, CHICKP.TXT, in Library 6, "Meat-Poultry-Fish."

that is the sincerest form of flattery. The island houses 13 wineries now, virtually all of them stretched along a 20-mile swath of the North Fork. They produce an estimated 2 million bottles of wine in an average year.

Long Island wineries are well-known for prize-winning Chardonnays, Rieslings and Gewurztraminers, but red wines, particularly Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, are also winning critical accolades. The region's wines have won more than 400 awards in state, national and international competition, says Robert Palmer, New York City advertising executive and proprietor of Long Island's Palmer Vineyards.

All of the wineries offer wine-tasting (most with a nominal fee), and a few invite visitors to follow along on generally informal tours. Although few people associate a day in the wine country with a trip to New York City, the North Fork is quite accessible to the city. While schedules vary seasonally and change frequently, virtually all of the wineries are open to visitors daily during the summer and on weekend afternoons most of the year. At other times, it's wise to call ahead, particularly during the winter.

To get to the North Fork wine country from New York City, take the Long Island Expressway to its eastern end, a 75-mile route that can, unfortunately, be congested and slow on summer weekends and during commuter rush hours. Follow Suffolk County Road 58 to Route 25 (Main Road), where

GO OLI for more information.

After farm antiquities, steel tanks and oak barrels, the main attraction: Palmer Vineyards tasting room

large, green-and-white "Wine Country" signs direct tourists to the wineries.

Palmer Vineyards (Box 2125, Sound Ave., Aquebogue, NY 11931, 516/722-WINE), one of the first wineries you'll reach, is an excellent place to start, with a self-guided tour of the modern, low-slung gray wood complex offering a quick primer on wine making. Large signs offer simple explanations as you walk past machines that remove the stems and break the skins of fresh grapes as they come into the winery at harvest time, then press them to release the sweet juice that will become wine. The skins, stems and seeds are removed from the juice to make white wine, the signs explain; more robust red wines are fermented with all the fruit remaining in the juice.

Moving through the bright corridors of the long building, past antique farm implements, visitors pass gleaming steel tanks and oak barrels, where the young wine is fermented and aged, and then a miniature assembly line where automatic machinery fills, corks and labels the bottles. At the end of the tour, visitors are welcome in a cozy tasting room, where adults can sample the winery's products for 50 cents a glass (with a 25 cent refund on each taste if you buy wine to take home). Current offerings include a crisp, slightly sweet 1988 Gewurztraminer ($7.75); an oaky, apple-like 1989 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay ($12.75); and a fruity 1987 Merlot ($11.99) with a delicious hint of cherries in its aroma.

A few miles farther out on the North Fork, the next recommended stop is Hargrave Vineyard (P.O. Box 927, Cutchogue, NY 11935; 516/734-5158). As the

Fresh, Fruity or Utterly Brackish? Wine Forum Tastings

You can almost hear the clink of glasses and the buzz of happy conversation when the wine lovers and beer tasters of CompuServe's Bacchus Wine Forum (GO WINEFORUM or GO BEER) gather for their monthly "OnLine Tastings," which with the economy of prose typical of online enthusiasts, they abbreviate to "OLT."

No, Wine Forum members haven't solved the technical problem of funneling wine or beer through their modems. But they're doing the next-best thing by using the forum conference mode to gather at scheduled times to learn more about their favorite beverages and to share the joy of wine appreciation with online friends.

In addition to its traditional tastings of seasonal specialties, including conferences to hail the annual release of the French Nouveau Beaujolais in late autumn, warming Ports and Sherries in mid-winter, and light-hearted "picnic" wines in summer, the Wine Forum has recently initiated a monthly series of "palate calibration" tastings for wine (the first Wednesday of each month at 9:30 p.m. Eastern time) and beer (second Wednesday, same time).

The concept is simple, as Forum Manager Jim Kronman explains: "The purpose of these tastings is to assist both beginners and experts in agreeing on common vocabulary for describing the aroma and taste sensations experienced from various types of wines." The term "palate calibration" expresses it well. Everyone in the conference tastes the same wine or beer at the same time and discusses their reactions in search of a consensus on basic tasting terms, such as "acidic," "tannic," "malty," "hoppy," "fruity" or "bitter."

Novice tasters get expert guidance, while more knowledgeable aficionados have the pleasure of matching their taste buds with the experts. The only firm rules are that everyone's opinion, from beginner to guru, is worthy of respect, and that an analytic tasting of beer or wine is fun.

The tastings, held in the forum's Conference Room 1 (The Main Hall) or Room 5 (The Brewery), are formally conducted to ensure that everyone gets a chance to participate. Members take turns describing the impressions they get from sniffing and tasting the wine or beer being tested, then exchange comments with others in the group. "One primary rule of tasting in this forum is that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' sensations," Kronman says. "The objective is to correlate the personal sensation with a shared vocabulary."

Wines and beers for the palate calibrations (inevitably abbreviated to "PalaCals") are chosen by an informal poll of members in forum messages, with the emphasis on wide availability in the United States, Canada and Europe, and reasonable price. Recent selections for wine "calibrations" have included the 1988 Beaulieu Vineyards "Rutherford" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon and the 1990 Chateau Ste. Michelle Washington State Dry Riesling, both first-rate wines available in the $10 range within the United States. Beer "calibrations" have featured the products of outstanding US microbreweries including Samuel Adams of Boston and Anchor Brewing of San Francisco. Specifics of each month's tastings are announced well in advance in forum messages and the forum's News Flash announcement.

For more background on online tastings, new members also are encouraged to download transcripts of past conferences, such as file 1106CO.SCR in Library 0, "General/Questions," a tasting of Beaulieu Vineyards "Rutherford" Cabernet; or 1009CO.SCR in Library 15, "Commercial Beer," featuring the Anchor beers.

"What all members gain from this experience is a greater confidence in their own palates and the ability to taste and communicate the sensations experienced with others," Kronman says. What's more, sharing the experience with online friends makes wine and beer appreciation fun.

—RG

Riesling and Merlot grapes fill the fields, treaded upon by the occasional feline: Bedell Cellars

oldest vineyard and winery in the region, it boasts the advantage of older grapevines, which usually produce more complex wine than new plantings. There's nothing pretentious about the Hargraves' low, simple gray building, set back about 100 yards from the highway and surrounded by vineyards. Its decor is limited to walls covered with awards, prize ribbons, and articles from national and international publications praising the vineyard; the wines on display in the small tasting room are perhaps the area's best.

Current selections range from $7.99 for the "Petit Chateau" Cabernet Sauvignon, a non-vintage bottling that's fresh, fruity and light, to $16.99 for the 1988 Cabernet Sauvignon, a cellar-worthy red wine with a pleasant scent reminiscent of blueberries.

Around on the south shore of the North Fork, amid villages dotted with quaint white church steeples and old stone houses, The Lenz Winery (P.O. Box 28, Peconic, NY 11958; 516/734-6010) is located in an old farm complex painted a startling pink. A house, the winery buildings and tasting room form a quadrangle around a courtyard shaded by ancient maple trees.

TRAVEL

Former restaurateurs Peter and Patricia Lenz planted their vineyards in 1978 and opened the winery in 1983. One of its best current wines is the 1989 Gold Label Chardonnay ($14.99), with an exceptional aroma of pears and chestnuts and a rich, almost buttery flavor.

Westward along the North Fork's south coast, cat lovers will find kindred spirits at the home of Bedell Cellars (RR 1, Mail Road, Cutchogue, NY 11935; 516/734-7537), where "Caution: Cat Crossing" signs greet Kip and Susan Bedell's visitors. The winery, a chocolate-color building, is back from the road, almost hidden behind an old farmhouse with vineyards out back.

A particularly lovely pink wine, the non-vintage "Cygnet" ($6.49) is a blend of Riesling and Merlot. The 1989 Merlot ($13.99) and 1989 Cabernet Sauvignon ($14.99) demonstrate Long Island's growing intrigue with fine Bordeaux-style reds.

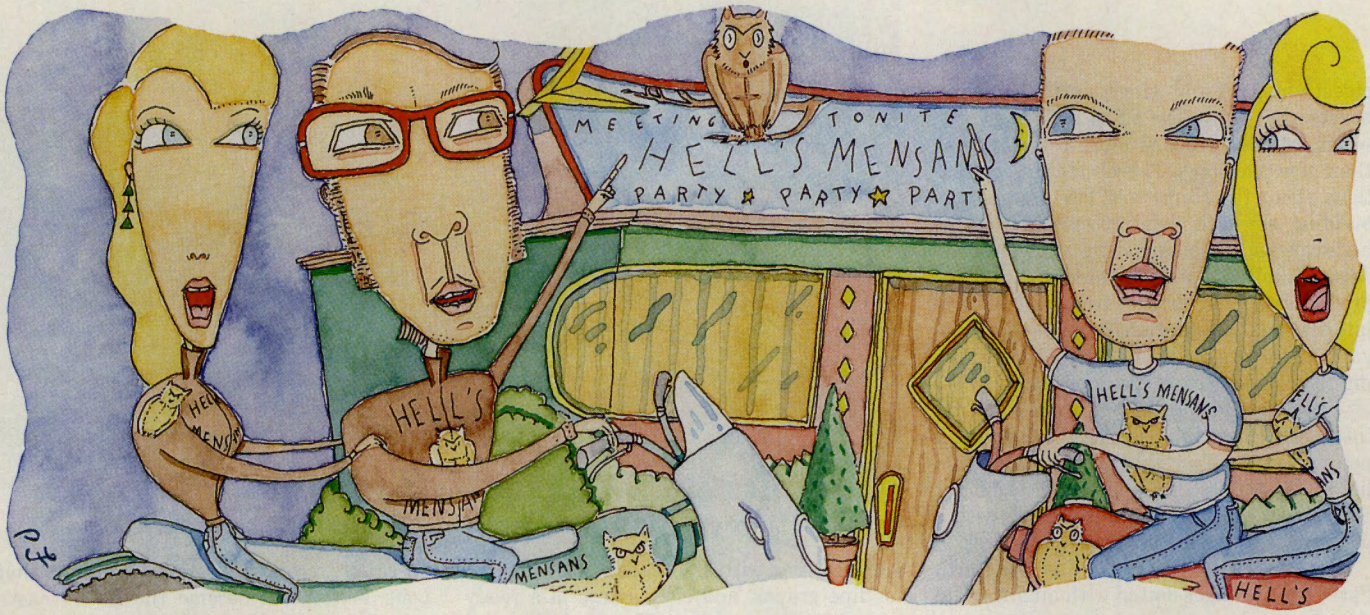
Finally, a stop at Gristina Vineyards (P.O. Box 1009, Cutchogue, NY 11971; 516/734-7089) completes a full afternoon of wine touring. Dr. Jerry Gristina and his wife, Carol, have built one of Long Island's newest wineries in a striking contemporary structure of wood and glass. It sprawls atop a low hill, with oversize windows and a broad veranda overlooking 30 acres of vineyards. Gristina's 1990 Chardonnay ($12.99) is rich and oaky, and its 1989 Merlot ($12.99) and 1989 Cabernet Sauvignon ($13.99) both show good fruit and signs of improving with age in the bottle.

With quality wines coming from vineyards blessed with an excellent environment for fine grapes, and easy access to a ready market in New York City and beyond, Long Island's wine country won't remain a secret for long.Wine publisher and beverage-marketing expert Marvin R. Shanken, editor and publisher of *The Wine Spectator*, recently observed, "I predict that Long Island will become the East Coast's answer to the Napa Valley ... respected around the world for the outstanding quality of its wines."

Robin Garr, associate sysop of CompuServe's Bacchus Wine Forum, is a New York-based writer who frequently covers travel, food and wine. His User ID number is 76702,764.

GO OLI for more information.

by Martha Barnette



PAUL FISCH

Sheer Genius

Defining the nebulous notion of 'intelligence' gets heady in a new forum from the Mensa brainiacs.

If you think of Mensa as a haven for eggheads and nerdy social misfits, then you've never met any of the "Hell's Mensans" —the international high-IQ society's unofficial wild-and-crazy bunch. Their stated purpose, according to Mensan Dave Van Geest, is "to *party*."

You can pick them out at any Mensa gathering: They're the ones in the black-and-white T-shirts à la Harley-Davidson (with an owl replacing the eagle insignia). Some of their more resourceful and fashion-savvy members even sport studded leather pocket protectors. So who says Mensans don't have a sense of humor?

In fact, Mensans insist that the stereotypical image of their elite organization—the notion that they're all either insecure snobs or brilliant dweebs —is as outdated as the slide-rule. And now you can judge for yourself, because Mensa is now online.

The Mensa Forum (GO MENSA) is open to all CompuServe members, regardless of whether they belong to Mensa. Visitors will find "varied and scintillating discussions on a variety of topics," says Mensa Chairman Dave Felt. The forum is unique, Felt says, in that the subject matter is extremely wide-ranging—from paleontology to puzzlesolving, from visual art to intelligence testing—whatever forum members have on their minds.

When two English barristers founded the first Mensa chapter at Oxford University in 1946, they envisioned bringing together highly intelligent people to help solve the world's problems. They chose the name "Mensa" (Latin for "table") to reflect their ideal of "a roundtable of equals." Today the organization boasts 100,000 members in 100 nations worldwide, with new chapters in Eastern Europe.

Mensa's requirement for membership is a score in the top 2 percent of the population in any of a variety of standardized tests. While the society once relied solely on IQ tests to screen members, it now accepts comparable scores on such tests as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Graduate Record Exam (GRE), and Army/Navy Classification Tests.

Mensans range in age from 4 to 94, and are quick to point out the diversity within their organization. Mensa, they say, provides a common meeting ground for such disparate groups as millionaires and unemployed inventors, high-school dropouts and post-doctoral students. Its famous members have included writers Jean Auel and Isaac Asimov, actors Alan Rachins (Douglas Brachman on *L.A. Law*) and Geena Davis of the hit movie *Thelma & Louise*, Florida Judge Ellen "Maximum" Morphonios, and professional domino-toppler Bob Specta Jr.

Among the organization's biggest attractions are the nearly 200 Mensa Special Interest Groups (SIGs) scattered throughout the United States. Mensans have formed SIGs based on such shared interests as chocolate, vampires, hang-gliding, punk rock, nudism, bodybuilding, clowning and cats. There are Mensan SIGs for Egyptologists,

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▼
Smart Talk
▼
A Doorway for the Deaf, p. 41

Download off the Mind: Mensa Forum

As the French essayist Montaigne observed, "It is good to rub and polish your mind against the minds of others." Mensa invites you to do just that in its new forum. Here's a look at what you'll find in its sections and libraries:

"About Mensa"—Background information, plus sample quizzes to give you an idea of how you'd score on a qualifying test. Includes profiles of famous Mensans, such as a boxer who once fought Mike Tyson, and a former chairman of the Ford Motor Co.

"Testing & Research"—Are IQ tests valid? How do you measure giftedness in the arts?

"General Discussion/Living Room"—An online salon.

"Gifted Children"—Resources for parents, teachers and children.

"Scholarship Programs"—The Mensa Education and Research Foundation awards thousands of dollars each year in scholarships. Learn how to apply.

"Literacy and Education"—Information about promoting literacy, a favorite Mensa cause.

"Science & Technology"—A wide spectrum of discussion.

"The Arts"—Conversations about art and creativity.

"Mind to Mind"—About relationships.

"Gatherings"—The latest on upcoming offline Mensa gatherings, which are usually open to the public.

"International"—Talk with smart people in Romania, Hungary and other locations.

"Interest Groups (SIGs)"— Special Interest Groups.

"Teasers and Puzzles"— Match wits with Mensans. Pun control advocates beware: This section promises to be paronomasia paradise.

feudal Japan enthusiasts, lesbians and gays, Sherlock Holmes fans, tap-dancers, as well as a group called "Two Percent for Christ." "We really are a microcosm of the rest of society," says Felt.

Indeed, talk to Mensans long enough and they begin to fit the profile of CompuServe members in general—literate, reasonably bright and intensely interested in at least one topic. So why have an online Mensa Forum? "Granted, there may be some overlap between this forum and others," says Felt, "but I don't think that'll do anything but help us all."

Elna Tymes, the forum's co-principal sysop, notes that in addition to providing a place for meetings of the mind, "we'll also have more humane, person-to-person support." Intellectually gifted people often face a difficult time growing up in this society, she says, and the forum offers them "a place where it's OK to be smart." It also includes sections devoted to parents of gifted children, literacy training and scholarship programs.

Primarily, though, the new Mensa Forum will be an online salon for lively, wide-ranging discussions with like-minded folks. It is certain to spark debates about what constitutes "superior intelligence" and how reliably it can be measured. Mensans them-

GO OLI for more information.

Smart Enough for Ya? A Mensa Quiz

Test your mental acuity with the following Mensa mini-test. Answers are online in the Mensa Forum's News Flash (GO MENSA).

1. If two typists can type two pages in two minutes, how many typists will it take to type 18 pages in six minutes?

2. If it were two hours later, it would be half as long until midnight as it would be if it were an hour later. What time is it now?

3. Pear is to apple as potato is to:
a) banana
b) radish
c) strawberry
d) peach
e) lettuce

4. Which group of numbers best continues the series of numbers?
1 10 3 9 5 8 7 7 9 6 ? ?
a) 11 5
b) 10 5
c) 10 4
d) 11 6

5. Which of the following is least like the others?
a) poem
b) novel
c) painting
d) statue
e) flower

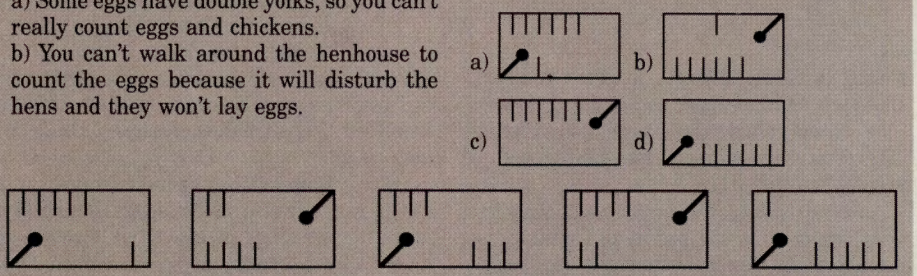
6. Unscramble the following word.
H C P R A A T E U

7. What number is one-half of one-quarter of one-tenth of 400?

8. Which sentence below means approximately the same as the proverb "Don't count your chickens until they are hatched"?
a) Some eggs have double yolks, so you can't really count eggs and chickens.
b) You can't walk around the henhouse to count the eggs because it will disturb the hens and they won't lay eggs.
c) It is not really sensible to rely on something that has not yet happened and may not ever happen.
d) Since eggs break so easily, you may not be accurate in your count of future chickens.

9. The same three-letter word can be placed in front of the following words to make a new word. What is it?
_____ light
_____ break
_____ time

10. Which figure a-d best completes the series of drawings?



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selves are divided on this issue. "Is an artist who can't read 'smart'?" muses Felt. "He may be a blooming genius. *Some* form of test would show that." Van Geest, the forum's other sysop, notes that "tests are designed by humans, and humans are fallible."

A growing recognition that intelligence takes many forms has prompted Mensa to expand its eligibility criteria to include tests that are strictly visual rather than verbal, and the so-called "culturally fair" IQ tests devised to deflect charges of bias. Still, Mensa remains 65 percent male and less than 3 percent are from minority groups, suggesting to some members that even those tests are faulty. Intelligence testing is such a hot topic that one section of the forum is devoted entirely to it.

Mensans welcome comments from skeptical non-members. "Mensa created a bit of a publicity difficulty years ago when it promoted itself as the high-IQ society," says Felt. "Granted, we still do that, but I think much of the population read that as 'The Genius Society.' We have geniuses, certainly, but ... if you're bright enough to be on CompuServe, you're probably bright enough to be in Mensa—and that includes a lot of kids.

"In many ways, we're pretty standard folks," he says. "So stop in and give us a try."

Martha Barnette is a writer in Louisville, Ky. Her book of essays on etymology, A Garden of Words, *will be published this spring by Times Books/Random House.*

by Holly G. Miller

Lending an Electronic Ear

CHRISTOPHER HARTING

Pre-surgery queries answered by e-mail, he now hosts cochlear implant confabs: Orloff, with Rauch

Larry Orloff admits he was nervous the day he entered Dr. Steven Rauch's office at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary to weigh the pros and cons of cochlear implant surgery. Then he spotted a copy of *Online Today*, forerunner to *CompuServe Magazine*. That broke the ice and calmed the jitters. After all, online discussions and lively message threads had first stirred Orloff's interest in the delicate procedure that eventually would improve his ability to hear.

"We spent several minutes talking about our involvement with the CompuServe Information Service," says Orloff, now leader of the Hearing-Impairment section of the Disabilities Forum (GO DISABILITIES). "Later, as I went through several months of preliminary testing, I was able to share my concerns and ask questions via CompuServe Mail. I consider myself fortunate that of all the ear surgeons at the infirmary, I was referred to a fellow CompuServe member."

The long process culminated in an operation that was perfect in every respect, according to Orloff. Forum members cheered when he reported hearing, for the first time, the squeaky door his wife had urged him to fix. Two years after surgery, Orloff continues to host conferences about cochlear implants—but now he does it with added insights.

"Larry patiently answered my zillions of questions while I was waiting for, having and adjusting to the implant," says Joan Maxwell, who describes her surgery as "a smashing success." The cycle continues: Maxwell, in Massachusetts, hopes to provide thesame kind of support for Joanne Schneider, currently being screened for the implant in California. "We keep in constant touch through electronic mail," she says. "It's my turn to answer zillions of questions, and I'm thrilled to do it."

PERSONAL BUSINESS

Online discussions aren't limited to cochlear implants, but rather delve into the specifics of speech-recognition software, training programs for hearing-ear dogs and innovations in deaf education. Problems are quickly solved: A father learns how to communicate on the telephone with his profoundly deaf daughter; an office worker gathers tips on overcoming communication difficulties caused by a new open floor plan.

"Many people with hearing impairments don't know others with this disability and have never been able to share experiences," says Orloff. "The Hearing Impairments section is a meeting place. Here, the inability to hear is *not* a handicap. We can communicate as well as anyone with normal hearing, and this is a tremendous benefit—especially for those feeling isolated because they have difficulty in social interactions involving spoken communication."

Debates fire up when proponents of sign language argue in favor of a "deaf culture," and oralists support lip-

Read More About It

By selecting the key words HEARING IMPAIRED and DEAF, CompuServe members can retrieve from two online databases more than 100 magazine and journal articles related to hearing loss. Entries offer updates on technological breakthroughs, profiles of prominent deaf persons, status reports on legislation of interest to the deaf community and reviews of new products.

Several articles contained in Magazine Database Plus (GO MAGDB) deal with cochlear implants for children, a recently approved procedure:

- "New Hope for Deaf Children" suggests promising results for children 2 years of age and older who have a tiny 22-channel device implanted in their ears, by Gillian Weiss, *American Health: Fitness of Body and Mind*, Nov. 1990, article #09004444.
- "FDA Approves Marketing of Cochlear Implant for Children" offers details on the government's 1990 decision, *FDA Consumer*, Oct. 1990, article #09073314.
- "Electronic Earful: Cochlear Implants Sound Better All the Time" explains advancements in the devices first implanted in adults in 1984 and now available to youngsters, by Deborah Erickson, *Scientific American*, Nov. 1990, article #09021214.

The role that computers play in the lives of the hearing impaired is covered in several articles in Business Database Plus (GO BUSDB). Among them:

- "High-Tech Aids Offer New Options to Deaf, Blind," *The Futurist*, Sept.-Oct. 1989, article #07893027.
- "Computers Star in New Communication Concepts for Physically Disabled People," by Marsha F. Goldsmith, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, March 3, 1989, article #07365969.
- "Cheers to IBM for Uncovering Technology's Human Side," *PC Week*, Jan. 16, 1989, article #06946968.

reading and speech as ways to function in the mainstream of a hearing society. Message threads grow long as section members make their points and illustrate them with personal experiences.

"It's a great show and never boring," says Henry Kisor, literary critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and author of *What's That Pig Outdoors?,* his acclaimed autobiography about coping with lifelong deafness. (The title comes from an inaccurate lip reading of his hearing son's question, "What's that big, loud noise?") "I see a wide range of views that sometimes clash. They have underscored for me the idea that each case of deafness is unlike that of any other, and that coping strategies differ widely. I've learned from the strategies and philosophies of others. Deaf and hearing-impaired participants in this section tend to be very bright, spirited, contentious people—and also very articulate. The discussions are always interesting and sometimes heated. We gain great insights into the lives of others like us." Hearing users also can learn from participating in the section, says Kisor. "For instance, an employer considering a deaf job applicant could get some idea of the strengths (many) and limitations (few) of the deaf by tuning in to the hearing-impaired.

Non-impaired users also gain insights. "A hearing person entering a relationship with a deaf person of the opposite sex could find some insights here as well. And anyone with any curiosity about the wonderful variety of human cultures will be fascinated." Among the hearing members of the section is Jim Dellon, senior producer/director in television production at Gallaudet University. His projects include *Deaf Mosaic,* a monthly magazine show for and about deaf people that is aired on the Discovery Channel. Also active is Tom Gallaudet III, whose family introduced sign language to the United States, founded the American School for the Deaf, and eventually launched what is now Gallaudet University, the only institution in the world devoted solely to the education of the deaf.

PERSONAL BUSINESS

"I've been accessing the Disabilities Forum for years to monitor areas of interest to the deaf community that might be of use on *Deaf Mosaic,*" says Dellon. "CompuServe makes story planning easier than the telephone since there's no phone tag, and there's a written record of pre-interview questions and answers and even directions to the field-production location."

Gallaudet sees participation in the section as a way he can continue his family's involvement with the deaf community. An expert in telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDDs), he fields questions about current and future products. He applauds any technology that results in broader communication and predicts fax machines and computers will replace TDDs.

"The more we communicate with other people, the more we learn," Gallaudet says. "Most of us exist within a 'community' of family, friends and co-workers that keeps our knowledge rather stagnant. Any time we can break out of our particular community, we grow from the input we get. CompuServe expands the community and provides input from people with views we may never have known about."

Interest in the non-hearing world has been heightened by the television program *Reasonable Doubts* starring Oscar-winning actress Marlee Matlin, who is deaf. Section members are divided on whether or not the deaf experience is portrayed accurately in the weekly drama.

"Someone recently pointed out that Matlin's co-star, Mark Harmon, at times speaks' with his back turned from Matlin. This is a no-no that hearing people may not

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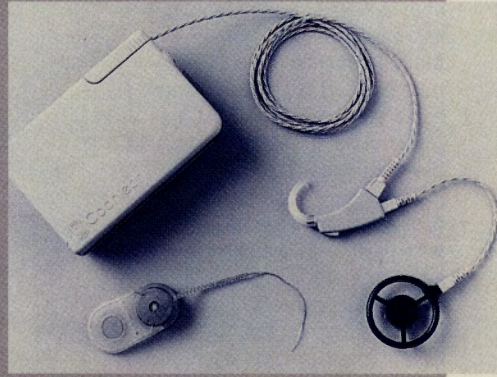
Sound Advice: Forum Files

Tutors? Interpreters? Note-takers? Therapists?

When a college-bound student went shopping for a school that offered support services for the deaf, she queried 140 admissions offices, distilled each reply to a sentence or two, and uploaded the report to Library 3, "Hearing Impairments," of the Disabilities Forum. Her research, in the file COLLGE.LST, is typical of the practical answers and sound advice contained in the forum's extensive files. Other nuts-and-bolts information includes:

- Can a computer "talk" with a telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD)? Beyond the "yes, but ..." response, file TDDCOM.TXT describes the equipment needed to make the two pieces of equipment—each with a different coding system—compatible.
- TDDs: What's the difference? Like the portable typewriters they resemble, TDDs vary in features and price. BUYTDD.TXT describes several available options, while TDDTTY.LST provides a guide to models produced by 19 manufacturers.
- How are television programs captioned? CAPTON.TXT details the process and costs (about $1,300 per half-hour show) of adding text to tape on TV broadcasts. CCVIDO.LST offers a list of home videos that are close-captioned for viewers with hearing impairments. Many of the shows are suitable for children; choices range from *Adventures in Babysitting* to *You're The Greatest, Charlie Brown.*
- How should a hearing-impaired job-seeker handle an interview? JOB.TXT offers words of advice and includes a list of organizations willing to assist candidates in the job market.
- What are cochlear implants and how successful are they? IMPLNT.TXT supplies basic information in quick-and-easy Q&A style. NEWCI.TXT is a message thread that recounts the experiences of a forum member as he progressed from implant candidate to implant recipient. CICI.TXT explains the role of the Cochlear Implant Club International.



Where hearing aids fail: Cochlear implant

be conscious of," says Orloff. "Also, some of our hearing lurkers have been amused to find out what Matlin is *really* signing, which at times, is decidedly different from what Harmon is translating for the hearing."

One of the first stereotypes that is dispelled by a visit to the section is that deaf persons view their deafness as a condition that somehow has to be overcome. Forum member Roselle Weiner take issue with the term "hearing impaired" and argues that deafness is not an illness that begs a cure.

"I do not see myself as an impaired person," she says. "Being deaf doesn't have to mean you try harder all your life to compete with hearing people; it doesn't have to mean you will be lonely most of your life because you can't find enough hearing people with the patience to share their time with you; it doesn't have to mean making concessions socially all the time. There is a life—different—for deaf people if you want it. A hearing person coming to this forum has the chance to eavesdrop on all of the things we deafies can do and are doing. Hearing members can be enlightened."

Dr. David Manning, manager of the Disabilities Forum, daily witnesses the benefits of this "community expansion" from a professional and personal standpoint. Director of the Mainstream Center at the Clarke School for the Deaf, he watches as his students learn to upload and download library files, conduct research for classes, and access such information as weather reports and news headlines. The importance of the computer in deaf education is underscored at home.

"My son is deaf, so I know what I'm talking about," he explains. "Before we had information services such as CompuServe, deaf people communicated with each other by getting into a car and driving to the other person's home. To communicate by phone, both parties had to have TDDs. Now, with computer technology, they can give and get so much information. It expands their lives. For a deaf person, who, by virtue of a hearing loss is starved for information, this is a doorway to the world."

Orloff agrees: "Here, the barriers are down, and we all play on a level playing field. The forum provides a unique arena in which the hearing and deaf can interact in a very human way."

Holly G. Miller is managing editor of Progressions *magazine of Lilly Endowment and travel editor of* The Saturday Evening Post. *Her CompuServe User ID number is 70007,2345.*

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

For additional *CompuServe Magazine/ Online Today* reviews published during the past two years and illustrations of reviewed products, refer to the key-word-searchable buyer's guides in Libraries 5 and 6 of the *OLT* Forum (GO OLTFORUM). Use Section 5 of the *OLT* Forum message board for discussion and questions about the reviews and related products.

Hardware

A Mouse Without the Cord

Super Mouse (Z-Nix Co.) for IBM computers uses infrared signals instead of a cord to communicate with the computer. It is packaged with a paint program called TelePaint. Reviewer Christy Brothers says the paint program is limited because of its inability to import or export graphics in any standard format. The mouse works well, she says, except for its tendency to send random movement and signals to the computer when it is not in use. This problem, she concludes, makes the mouse unsuitable for most users. *GO OLT-5505.*

Software

Faster Database Manager

FoxPro 2.0 (Fox Software Inc.) is a faster, improved version of the popular FoxPro database manager for IBM computers. Reviewer William J. Lynott says the new version runs up to twice as fast as the older program and up to 10 times faster than a major competitor. The new version also features smaller index files, an interactive query tool and new screen builder. Lynott concludes that this is an excellent database manager for developers and experienced database users. He cautions, however, that beginners may be intimidated by its many advanced features. For more information, visit the Fox Software Forum (GO FOXFORUM). *GO OLT-5515.*

Create Business Forms

PerForm Pro (Delrina Technology Inc.), a high-end business forms processor for Microsoft Windows, lets users create forms with a module similar to a desktop publishing program. A separate module can fill in forms from user input or disk-based data files. More than 100 pre-designed forms are included in the package. Reviewer Franklyn Jones says the program is easy to use despite its sophisticated functions. Its complete documentation, online help and font support make it an excellent choice for any office, he says. For more information, visit the Windows Third Party Applications B Forum (GO WINAPB). *GO OLT-5525.*

Integrated Applications for the Mac

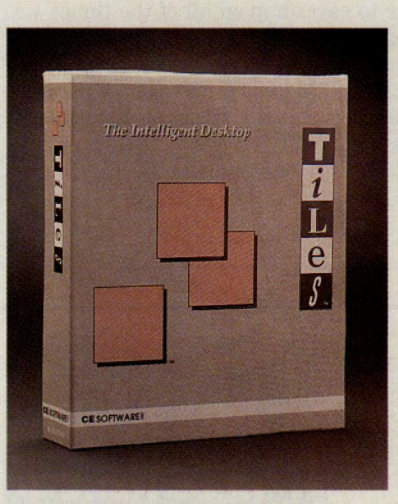
ClarisWorks 1.0 (Claris Corp.) combines a word processor, drawing program, spreadsheet, database manager and communications program into one program for Macintosh computers. It is System 7-savvy and has a 100,000-word spelling checker and 660,000-word thesaurus. Reviewer Anthony Watkins says ClarisWorks may be the best "works" program available for the Macintosh. He points out several limitations in the program, especially in its communications module and its inability to import files from different programs. But, he says, it is a combination of applications that will appeal to many novice users who don't need all the power of advanced, separate programs. For more information, visit the Macintosh A Vendor Forum (GO MACAVEN). *GO OLT-5535.*

Shareware Lost and Found

dtSearch 1.1 (DT Software Inc.), a shareware program for IBM computers, can index and find data spread across several files on your computer, search without an initial index and create multiple indexes that it stores in index libraries. It can work with text files created by a wide variety of word processors and text editors. Reviewer Christy Brothers calls this an excellent program for anyone who keeps a lot of text information on a hard disk. To download the program, visit the IBM Software Applications Forum (GO IBMAPP). *GO OLT-5545.*

Presentation Graphics for Windows

Persuasion 2.0 (Aldus Corp.), a presentation graphics program for Microsoft Windows, features templates and slide masters, multiple editing views and automatic generation of audience handouts. The program can create computer-based slide shows or create slides on a laser printer or desktop file recorder. Reviewer Harry Green says the program is easy to learn for users already familiar with Windows, and that, with its speed and features, the program will pay for itself the first time you use it. For more information, visit the Aldus Forum (GO ALDUS). *GO OLT-5555.*



Icons for the Macintosh

Tiles (CE Software Inc.) is a program for Macintosh computers that turns repetitive tasks into icons selected with the mouse. The tasks can be created manually, or the program can watch the computer's activities and create tiles automatically. Reviewer Anthony Watkins says the program's major drawback is its slow loading speed every time the computer is turned on. Other than that, he says, the program is excellent, especially for novice computer users. For more information, visit the Macintosh A Vendor Forum (GO MACAVEN). To read the review, *GO OLT-5565.*

Shareware Archive Manager

Stowaway 1.2 (Patri-Soft), a shareware program for IBM computers, archives files from hard disk onto any DOS-compatible medium and keeps information about the saved files in a database. The database makes Stowaway a true archive manager instead of a simple backup and restore utility. Reviewer Hardin Brothers found Stowaway easy to use and handy for those

who need to keep archives of software and data files. To download the program, visit the IBM Systems/Utilities Forum (GO IBMSYS). *GO OLT-5575.*

Advanced Time Management

Ascend (NewQuest Technologies Inc.), a professional time-management program that runs under Microsoft Windows, consists of 12 integrated modules that maintain a master and daily task list, schedule appointments, store addresses and phone numbers, and keep a journal. Reviewer Franklyn Jones says Ascend is a complete organizer that includes a printed manual and training tapes to help new users. But, he says, busy users, who will benefit most from Ascend, ironically will have to put aside several hours to learn to use all of the program's features. *GO OLT-5585.*

Keeping Personal Information

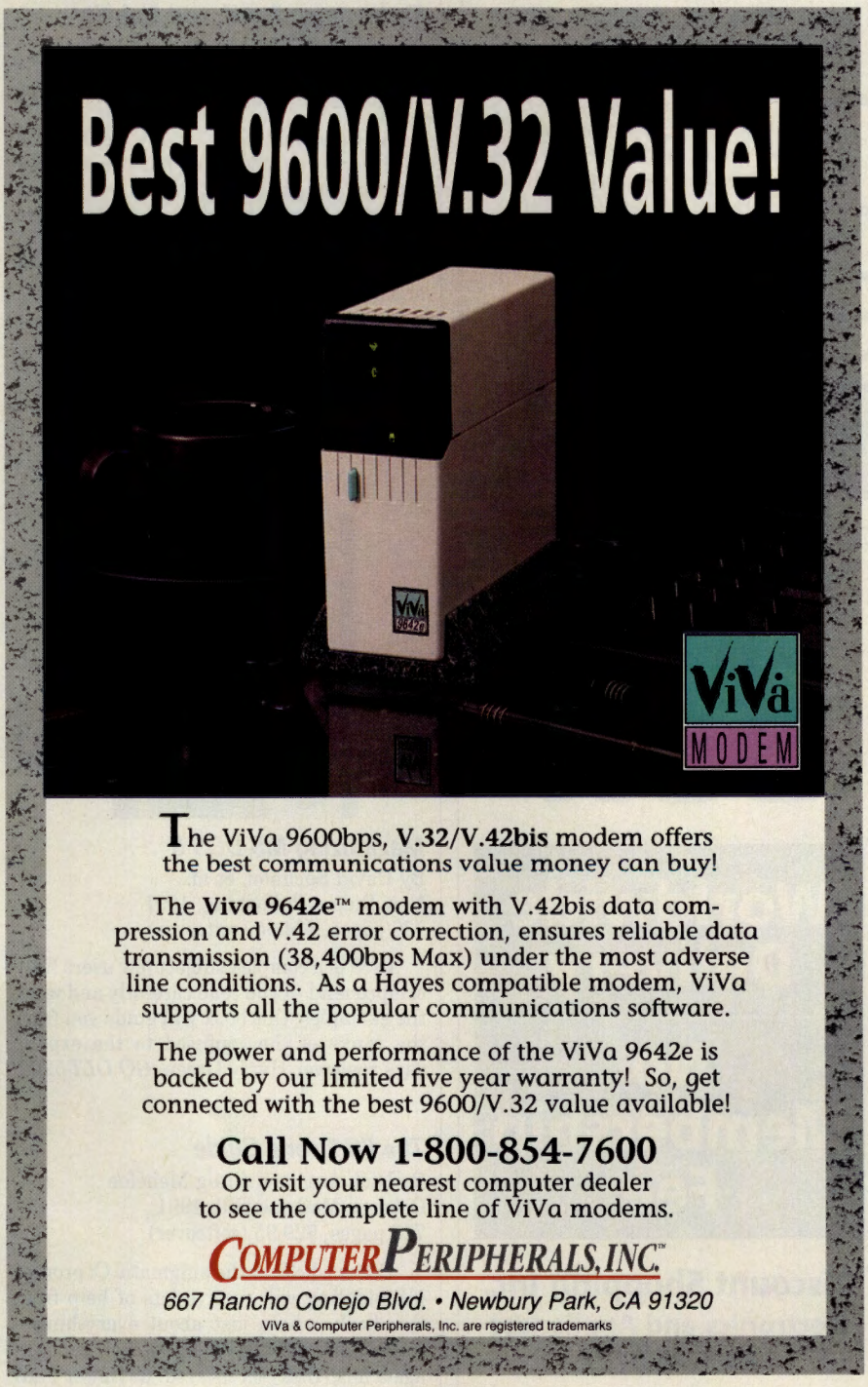
1stACT! (Contact Software International) is a simplified version of the popular ACT! contact management program for IBM computers. It features both fixed and user-defined data fields, a pop-up calendar, multiple schedules and a report generator. Reviewer William J. Lynott says the program is surprisingly complete. Although it lacks some sophisticated features of advanced programs, he says, it is the best entry-level contact management system on the market. *GO OLT-5595.*

Computerized MBA

MBAware (ValuSource) is a collection of nine programs that can automate business financial analyses on IBM computers. Reviewer Harry Green looked at three of the programs: Loan Express (reviewed separately last month) helps prepare loan applications. Value Express assists with business appraisals. Competitive Edge compares a company with competing firms. Green says these programs would be of most value to help train analysts. Knowledgeable analysts, he says, will probably prefer a word processor and a spreadsheet program, and the programs are too confining to satisfy most users for long. *GO OLT-5605.*

Remote Control

Carbon Copy Plus (Microcom Inc.) is a communications and remote-control program that can operate over a modem and phone line or through a local area network. It allows an operator at one location to run a remote computer while watching the data presented on the remote screen. The operator also can type messages that will appear on the remote screen. The program can be used for normal communications and protocol file transfers. Reviewer Franklyn Jones says the program is probably the best available for remote troubleshooting, but it requires the cooperation of users at each computer. He also says it is difficult to use as a general-purpose communications program. *GO OLT-5615.*



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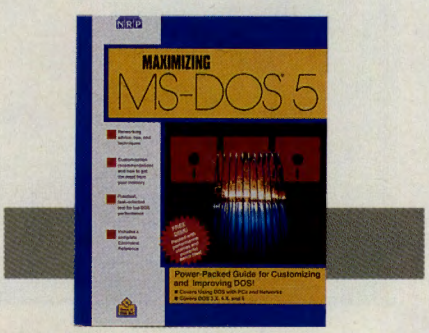
Book Reviews

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

The Law of Electronic Commerce—EDI, Fax and E-Mail: Technology, Proof, and Liability

By Benjamin Wright
Little, Brown and Co., 1991
432 pages, $95 (hardcover)

An important book for anyone involved with electronic media and must reading for attorneys and the business community, this text offers cogent analysis and insight into the developing and ever-changing field of electronic commerce, according to reviewer and attorney Sharon Kahn. *GO OLT-5210*



Maximizing MS-DOS 5

By David Solomon, et al.
New Riders Publishing, 1991
730 pages, $34.95 (softcover)

DOS is a complex subject few users fully comprehend. If you read carefully and work the examples, this book will guide you from the ranks of the confused to the expert, says reviewer Harry Green. *GO OLT-5220*

The PC User's Guide

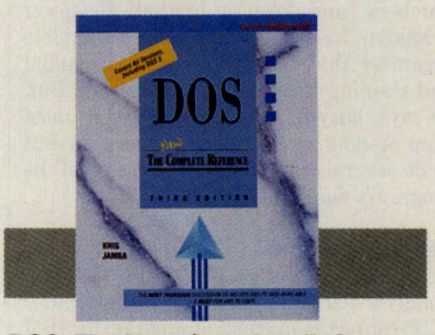
By Nick Anis and Craig Menefee
Osborne/McGraw-Hill, 1991
725 pages, $29.95 (softcover)

Users who find the enigmatic C: prompt intimidating will receive lots of help from this book, where just about everything—from which software to use to how to manage a hard disk—is covered. Reviewer Paul A. Gilster says it is a worthwhile purchase for any novice. *GO OLT-5230*

The Lotus Guide to 1-2-3, Release 2.3

By Daniel Gasteiger and Nicholas Delonas
Brady Books, 1991
520 pages, $24.95 (softcover)

Using a folksy writing style, the authors have created a book that is packed with advanced spreadsheet instruction, yet is fun to read and easy to understand. Reviewer William J. Lynott calls it a treasure of practical information. *GO OLT-5240*



DOS: The New Complete Reference (Third Edition)

By Kris Jamsa
Osborne/McGraw-Hill, 1991
1,124 pages, $29.95 (softcover)

The latest update of this best-selling book succinctly explains the complex intricacies of DOS, including the new DOS 5. Reviewer James Moran says the text is easy to read and understand. *GO OLT-5250*

PageMaker 4: An Easy Desk Reference

By Robin Williams
Peachpit Press, 1991
764 pages, $29.95 (softcover)

This easy-to-read, well-designed book is filled with information and humor. Reviewer Anthony Watkins says it is the first PageMaker book he would unhesitatingly recommend to novice and experienced desktop publishers alike. *GO OLT-5260*

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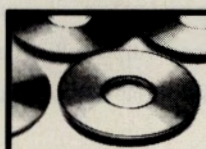

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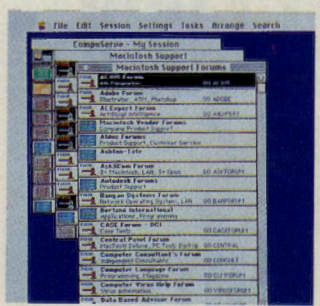
UPDATE

Viewer's Digest: The Best of GIF

PRC Inc., a leading database publisher, has organized a quarterly print publication which allows you to preview thousands of popular GIF images prior to downloading them. Called the *The Best of GO GRAPHICS*, it contains several hundred pages of digitized pictures found in the Graphics Forums on CompuServe. GO GRAPHICS and choose Option 1, "Introduction to Graphics," for more information.



Announcing the Newest Navigator

Version 3.1 of the CompuServe Navigator is now available. The Macintosh communications program gives users automated access to CompuServe Mail, forums and the Quick Quote financial database. New features include System 7 balloon help and "event" support, support for retrieving menus and articles, the ability to retrieve listings of keywords from forum libraries and more. For information on how to order or upgrade, access the connect-free Navigator Information Area. GO NAVIGATOR.

On March 2, many CompuServe menus will change to support CompuServe's flat-rate pricing plan of $7.95 per month for unlimited use of a group of basic services (Please read the wrap that enfolded this issue of *CompuServe Magazine* for details). Menus will change to clearly identify services included in basic services and those not included (extended services). Many menu choices will include a "+" symbol signifying that pay-as-you-go pricing begins with the screen that immediately follows. These new menus are designed to help members enrolled under the flat-rate pricing plan easily identify the two categories of services. Members not enrolled under the flat-rate plan will also see the new menus and + symbols, but the change will not affect their pay-as-you-go hourly connect-fee pricing. GO CHOICES for more information on flat-rate pricing for basic services.

CompuServe has simplified its hourly connect charges for members who pay for all usage on a pay-as-you-go basis and therefore pay a $2 per-month Membership Support Fee. Effective March 1, the 30 cents-per-hour CompuServe US/Canada network charge is included in hourly connect rates of $6.30 (300 baud), $12.80 (1200 and 2400 baud) and $22.80 (9600 baud). Consequently, services provided 'free' under the $2 monthly Membership Support Fee will now be totally free of CompuServe network charges. Charges for most networks other than CompuServe's will decrease by 30 cents per hour. Members using the CompuServe network in the UK pay no network charge in off-peak hours and $7.70/hr during peak hours. In Germany, the CompuServe network charges are $7.70/hr peak and $2.20/hr off-peak. GO RATES after March 2 to review the simplified rates.

Sports Forum Fantasy Baseball is accepting new owner applications for team franchises in the 1992 season. Applications will be accepted through March 29. For details on signup and rules, consult files FBBINF.92 and FBB92.RUL in the forum's Library 11, "Fantasy Baseball." GO FANS.

Use the new Biz*File and let your keyboard do the walking. Biz*File contains the name, address and phone number for more than 10 million US and Canadian businesses of all sizes, compiled from more than 5,000 Yellow Pages directories. You can look for business by name or phone number, or get a list of all local vendors of the product or service you are interested in. Biz*File has a $15/hour surcharge. GO BIZFILE.

Novell has created a new Library Forum exclusively for files to improve efficiency in the Novell A Forum's technical support. Members can download the latest public-domain and Novell-suppported patches, fixes, drivers and utilities for NetWare. GO NOVLIB.

NEXT MONTH • Painting on a Digital Canvas: Art Supercollides with the Computer Age • The LAN Rush: Considering Connectivity • Principal Membership: Pioneering Online Investment Clubs • When in Italy: Verona on Two Kids a Day • Quality Connect Time: Parents Commiserate in a Few Fora

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*CompuServe Mail is connect-time free. (InterNet is not free to read.) At the beginning of each month, you get an electronic mail allowance of $9, which entitles you to send up to the equivalent of 60 messages of 7,500 characters each (7,500 characters are about three typed double-spaced pages). Additional messages during the month are priced at only 15 cents for the first 7,500 characters and 5 cents for each additional 2,500 characters. (Sending the same message to two recipients counts as two messages, three recipients as three messages, and so on.) Your message allowance expires at the end of each billing month.

With Option #2, all of these services are free of connect-time charges. Plus, there are no communications surcharges, as long as you're using CompuServe's network in the U.S. and Canada. (If you're using supplemental networks such as TYMNET/Sprintnet or INFONET, surcharges still apply.)

Needless to say, all of our services, whether they're listed here or not, will still be available. If one of your favorites isn't on the basic list, it will still be part of our extended or premium services, which are subject to the same style of payment you're using today.

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We'll be offering our new member option as of March 1. To make it easier for you, a "+" will mark extended services, a "$" will mark premium (surcharged) services, and an "E" will mark Executive Service Option services on the menus starting March 1.

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