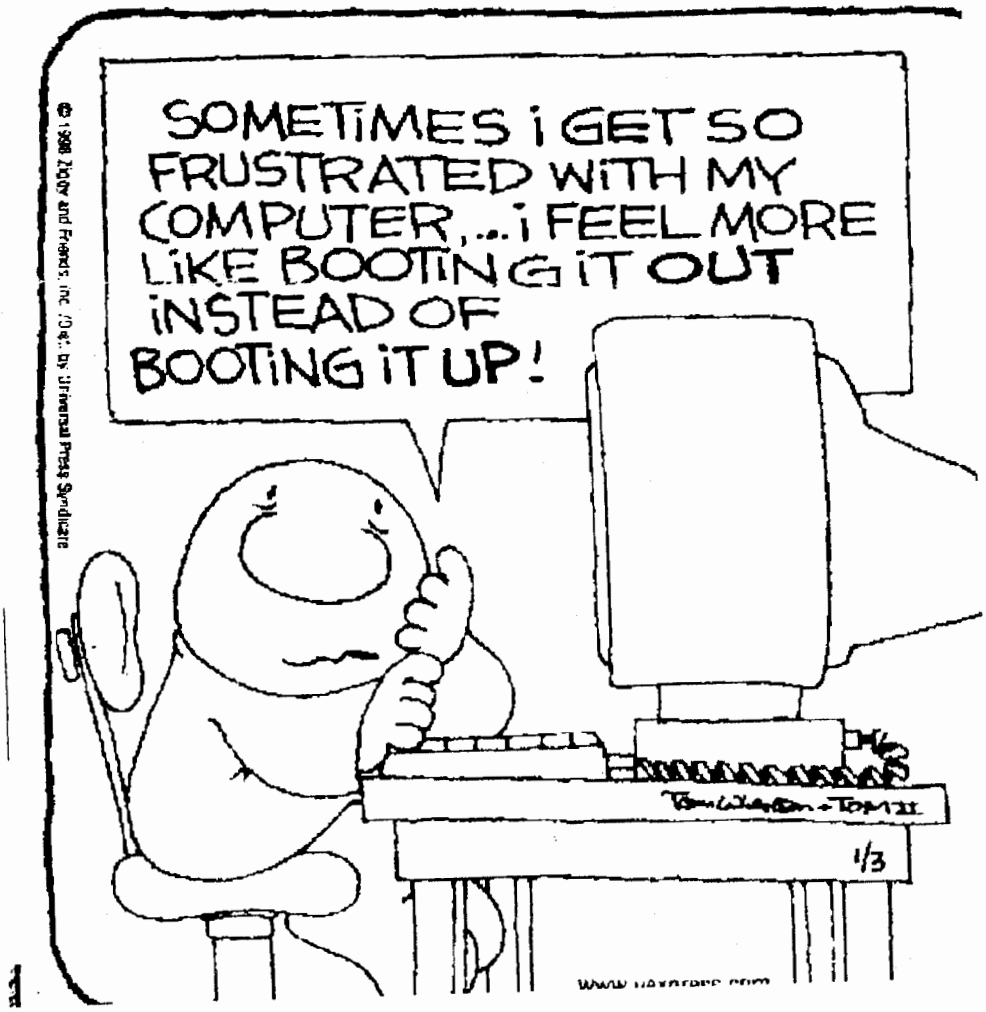
L.V.A.U.G. NEWS

MEMBER OF NEAR US

JAN-FEB-1998

ISSUE #1



NOVEMBER 1997
MEETING NOTES
11/6/97

Meeting called to order and opened in due form by President Art Paolini Jr.

Art had brought along a commerical spreadsheet program called VisiCalc for the Atari to demo for us and it is a very good spreadsheet and is considered to be what Lotus 1-2-3 is or was for the IBM. and it turned out to be a very capable spreadsheet program as Art demoed its many fine points for us.

Next month's club disk will be a disk with which to test the Atari computer for many thing such as RAM,ROM, and also a program to test 1050 disk drives. Jon Mordosky demoed these programs for us and they are very capable programs to test and check your equipment with.

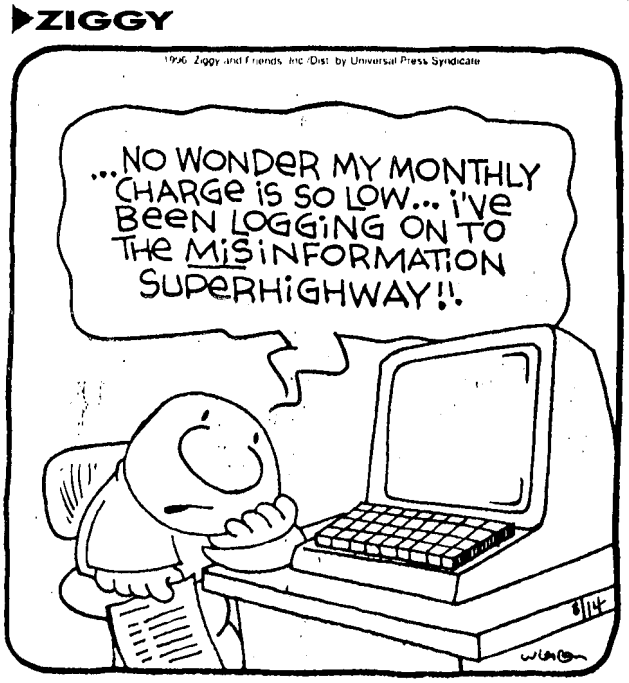
Art also demoed the German club disk and its' many fine features this club like the Ol'Hackers does their club newsletter on a disk and since we exchange newsletters with them we receive the benefit of their expertise and their disks are very enjoyable and very well done.

It was also reported that the Atari Navy was still in action with Art making a trip down the Palmerton Gorge and then a trip down the Tohickon over at Stover's Park when they had released water upstream the other weekend.

A former ABE member brought some of his Atari equipment in for VP Jon Mordosky to test for him as he wants to use it for his young children to learn about computers and he and Jon worked out a deal where he will have his equipment put in working order by Jon so he can get his youngsters into computing after the December meeting.

These meeting notes won't appear until the Jan-Feb 1998 newsletter as my daughter who prints up the newsletter for us has already printed up the Nov-Dec newsletter she will be going away on a business trip so we have published the newsletter earlier than we usually print it out, hope to bring it to the December meeting if the weather stays nice. Sure, wish some of you guys would give me an article to put in the newsletter once. That is all the meeting notes for tonite.

Larry Tischbein
Recording Secretary



DECENBER MEETING NOTES 12/4/97

Meeting called to order and opened in due form by President Art Paolini Jr.

The January 1998 meeting will be held on the second Thursday which is January 8, 1998. The first Thursday is January 1, 1998 New Year's Day that is the reason for the change.

Motion made and seconded that Art and Jon send out a Xmas letter to all the members and put the new meeting date in that letter and the motion authorized the spending of the funds necessary to write and mail the letters to the members.

The President donated a plastic portfolio to all the members which should be nice for carrying and storing papers and letters of importance, the club also gave each member a disk with a program to test your 1050 drive on one side and your 8-bit computers on the other side.

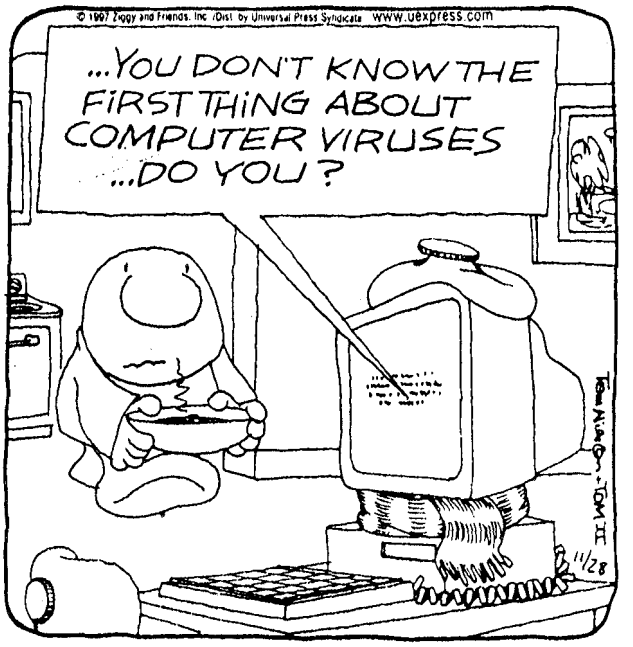
Eli Grim demoed a program called "Snowball" it is a 'text' adventure program involving a ship, he also demoed cartridges furnished by VP Jon Mordosky, one was a soccer game, one a kickback game similiar to soccer and a hockey game. Art had brought the first demo program which Eli demoed.

That my friends is about all the meeting notes for tonight and we close with best wishes to all for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Recording Secretary

Larry Tischbein

ZIGGY



HELLO WELCOME TO THE PHYSCHIATRIC HOTLINE

If you are obsessive-compulsive,press 1 again and again.

If you are co-dependent, get someone to press 2.

If you have multiple personalities, press 3,4,5,6,7 and 8.

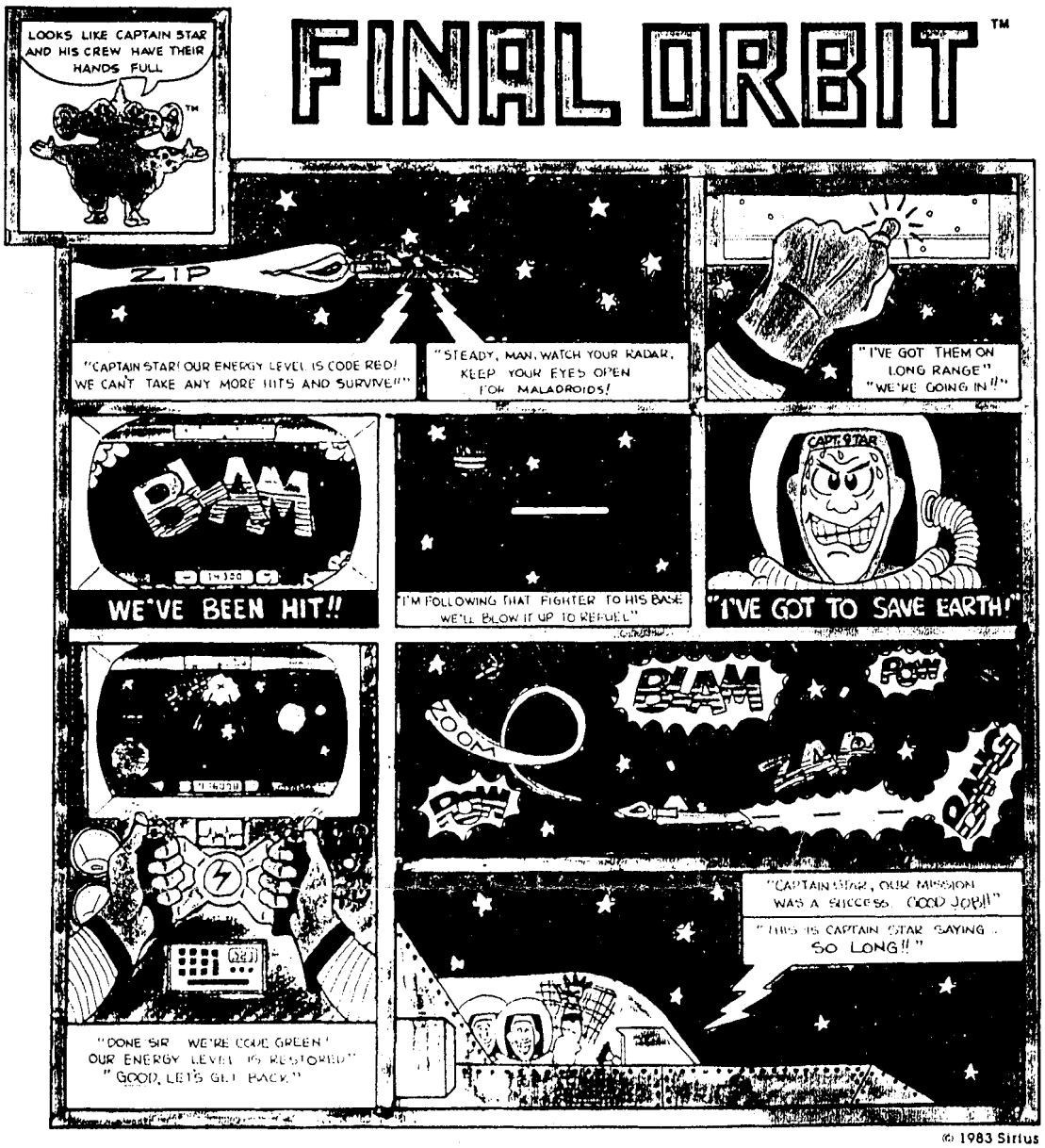
If you are a sadist,hang up and call again.

If you are paranoid-delusional, we know who you are. We traced this call. We're on our way.

If you are schizophrenic,listen carefully and a litle voice will tell you which number to press.

If you are manic-depressive, it doesn't matter. No one will answer.

Thank you for calling the Psychiatric Hotline.



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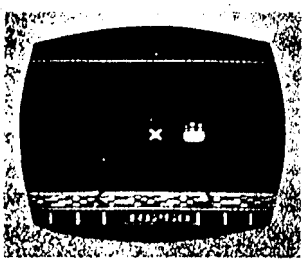
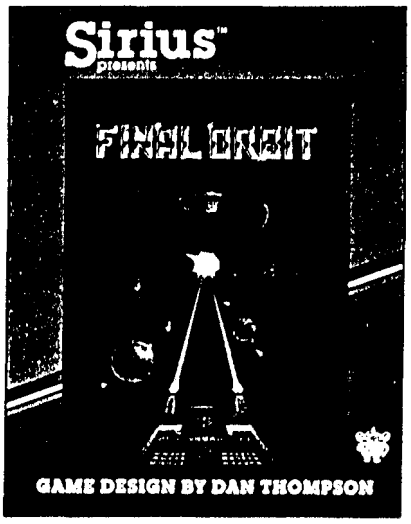


Atari 400, 800 & 1200 Cartridge

VIC-20 Cartridge



From "COMPUTE 1983"

TAX TIPS
Use your computer to make April 15th less taxing

I recently ran across the following list of www sites that could make your life less complicated between now and the middle of April:

Internal Revenue Service
http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/

H&R Block's refund calculator
hrrp://?www.hrblock.com/tax/refund/

1040.Com
http://www.1040.com/

Essential links to taxes
http://www.taxhelponline.com/

1040 Express tax search engine
http://www.ezone.com/taxman/

Tax prophet
http://www/taxprophet.com/

Tax wizard
http://www.taxwizard.com/

Tax sites directory
http://www.uni.edu/schmidt/tax/tax.html

I also heard this little story which I hope will put a grin on your face while you're struggling with an entire yer's receipts and all of those tax forms:

A businessman was fighting a tax case in court, acting as his own lawyer and not doing too well. In frustration he slammed his fist on the desk and said, " As God is my Judge, I don't owe these taxes." The Judge hearing the case replied, "He's not, I am, You Do."
--By Jean Brokaw

LVAUG Editor's notes: This article reproduced from: The March 1997 issue of "The Pacesetter", Pinellas Atari Computer Enthusiasts of Largo, Florida.

Money talks as much as ever, but what it says nowadays makes less cents.

Money may not buy happiness, but it certainly lets you look for it in a lot more places.

One nice thing about money--that color of green never clashes with any outfit you're wearing.

Money is something that things run into and people run out of.

Consider the postage stamp: its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing till it gets there.--Josh Billings.

He that complies against his will is of his own opinion still.--Samuel Butler.

Advice is like castor oil, easy enough to give but dreadful uneasy to take.--Josh Billings.

Advice is seldom welcome, and those who need it most, like it the least.--Lord Chesterfield.

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials.--Chinese Proverb.

Old age isn't so bad when you consider the alternative.--Maurice Chevalier.

Not failure, but low aim, is crime.--James Russell Lowell.

COMPUTERS AND
SOCIETY
David D. Thornburg,
Associate Editor
reproduced from
COMPUTE! July 1983

The Fifth
Generation

I can hardly resist the temptation to point out that Orwell's vision for 1984 is (thankfully) not going to come true. It is interesting to note that,as with many other futurists, Orwell overestimated the amount of social change that would occur by 1984, and seriously underestimated the amount of technological innovation that will have been developed by then. While it is true that office workers in Orwell's novel dictate their letters into a "speakwrite," an automated stenographer/printer, much of the remaining technology is neither advanced nor inspiring.

I was reminded of the impact of technological advances as I created the first draft of this month's column on my Brother EP-20 battery-operated electronic typewriter. This marvel of design is quite compact, fits on any airplane tray table, and is almost silent. Since it retails for about $200 and allows the user to correct up to 16 characters of text before it is printed, I would not be surprised to see this device open up whole new markets for typewriters. I never used a typewriter for a rough draft before simply because they were too bulky. Now this device has become my portable workstation(sadly missing the storage that would make it a terminal for my word processor), and I take it everywhere.

Is it sifnificent that this innovation was developed by a Japanese company? As we look at the computer industry, it is clear tht it is taking on a decidedly international flavor. And yet, so far the big names in personal computers are definitely American (TI, Commodore, Atari, Apple, IBM, etc.)

KIPS SUPER COMPUTER.
A recently published book, The Fifth Generation(Addison<Wesley, $15.95), suggests that we must be much more aware of Japanese advances in computer technology if we are to survive as a technological nation. Far from being a "scare" book designed to erect protectionist trade barriers,The Fifth Generation is more a call to arms. Its authors are Edward Feigenbaum, a pioneer in the field of artifical intelligence and Pamela McCorduck, a science writer who has written extensively on computers and intelligent behavior in machines. The authors say that Japan has embarked on a ten year crash program to develop a new type of super computer-a "fifth generation" machine tht is called a Knowledge Information Processing Systems (KIPS). The KIPS is expected to be markedly different in architecture from the computer in use today. Furthermore, it is expected that the users of KIPS will interact with it very differently from the way people use computers today.

What is a KIPS? While most of today's computers are used for data processing and with the exception of languages like LISP and Logo, most computer languages are geared towards data processing tasks, the KIPS is an optimized blend of hardware and software, tailored to perform genral symbol manipulation and symbolic inference. This shift in emphasis recognizes that most of our work involves reasoning, not calculating.

A REASONING MACHINE?

Can one build a "reasoning" mcahine? According to Feigenbaum and McCorduck, the Japanese lack our preoccupation with this question. From their prespective, it is sufficient to note that computer systems powerful enough to be fifth generation machines will function at a level far beyond that which we are presently familiar.

Modest projects in the development of systems that out perform human "experts" are an important result of research in artifical intelligence. For example, programs that perform certain types of medical diagnoses, analyze and propose synthetic pathways in the creation of new chemical compounds, and predict the location of geological deposits has already been implemented on existing commmerical computers using languages such as LISP. Such programs must operate with both a "knowledge base" and a set of "inference procedures." to read a map for, instance, one must have both maps and procedure for reading them.

INTUTIVE SOLUTIONS.

The fifth generation of KIPS will be built around the collection of vast amounts of data and the collection of problem-solving techinques that range from rigid deterministic methods to those that mimic the human ability to act on "hunches." You need not become embroiled in the machine intelligence controvesarsy to appreciate that such systems have the potential to completely redefine computers, their use, and their place in society.

In order to create the KIPS, advances are required in both computer hardware and software. The computers we are familiar with operate in serial fashion. Instructions are executed one at a time. This type of compute architecture was developed by John von Neumann, and speed limitaions in such computers are caused by the "von Neumann bottleneck"--processing instruction by instruction, byte by byte. In order to create faster computers, the fifth generation machines may favor a system using many processors in parallel.

A BILLION INFERENCES PER SECOND.

To appreciate the need for this approach, you should remember that the KIPS is to be used primarily for the linking of aknowledge base by symbolic representaions(e.g., a sparrow is a kind of bird), or for the representation of rules (e.g., if the temperature is over 400 degrees, then the boiler must be turned down). To be used effectively, a problem-solving problem program must scan its library of "IFs" to find one revelant to the problem at hand. Finding this needle in the knowledge-based haystack of the size anticipated by the Japanese will require much more computational horsepower than we have seen to date. For example, today's big computers are capable of executing no more than 100,000 logical inference per second (LIPS). (One logical inference corresponds to one IF/THEN statement.) A personal computer such as an Apple II might execute (depending on the language chosen) about 100 LIPS. The KIPS will be designed to execute up to a billion LIPS.

Such achievements are not the result of hardware alone. Interestingly, the language of present interest to the KIPS project leaders has already been developed by the Europeans--PROLOG.

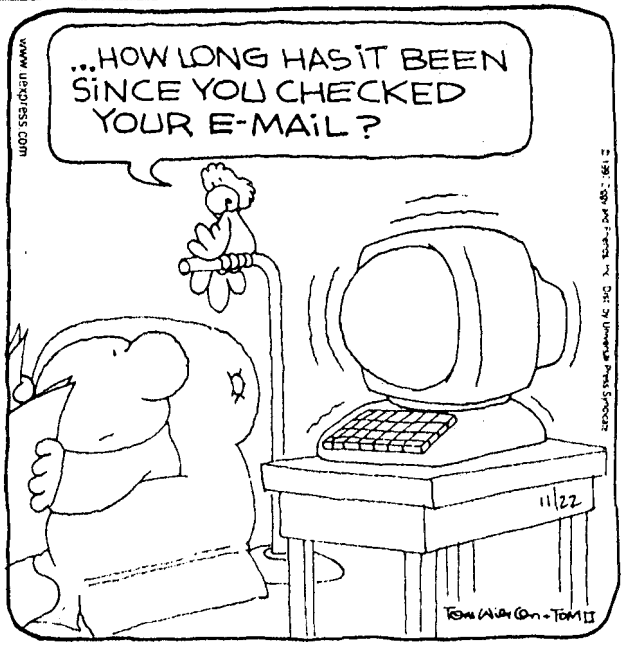
How feasible is this project? There is much diversity of opinion on this topic, but there is consensus that, even if the project goals are not

met in ten years, the intermim results will most certainly change the nature of computers and computing. As Feigenbaum and McCorduck say:

Word literacy has given us power to an opulent, soaring world of mind--an alteration of thought processes--that is denied the illiterate. Computing literacy, even in its present form, opens still another world, one that may eventually may enter as routinely as they enter the world of letter, and it will confer perhaps even more power than the mighty pen and press have already given us. This is not idle promotion.As human muscle power has been amplified by any special purpose machines, so human mind-power will be amplified. The computer will change not only what we thing but HOW.

(Your editor's note: 15 years later in 1998 stop and think about how much of this article has already happened and already taken place with our newer and more powerful computers.)

ZIGGY



NOT SO EASY

By Credic Adams

How quickly can you find out what's unusual about this paragraph? It looks so ordinary you'd think nothing was wrong with it at all; and, in fact, nothing is. But it is unusual. Why? Study it, think about it, and you will find out, but you must do it without coaching: I'm not going to assist you in anyway. No doubt, if you work at it for a bit, it will dawn on you. Who knows until you try? So hop to it. Try your skill and pray for luck. Par is about half an hour.
-submitted by Kathy Severance

VIRUS WARNING!

An E-mail borne virus that will automatically forward itself was recently discovered. If you receive an E-mail message titled "You have got to read this!" do not open the message. It contains an enclosure that is designed to infect your machine and send itself to three of your "Personal Address Book" friends.

(Your Editor's notes: the articles above have been reproduced from the April 1997 issue of the "PACESETTER" the Pineallas Atari Computer Enthusiasts in Largo FLA.)

Times have changed for Computer User Clubs

by John Moran
Of The Hartford Courant
Allentown Morning Call
12/2/97

This year, an estimated 80 million personal computers will be sold, many to people who have never before owned a PC.

New owners will be confronted with a complex instrument that can do many things--if you know which buttons to push and icons to click.

Under such circumstances, you would think volunteer, nonprofit organizations dedicated to informing computer owners about their machines would be flourishing.

Alas, you would be wrong.

Many computer groups--in essence clubs of people who share information about PCs--are struggling even as the sales boom puts computers into millions of American households.

The reason for this oddity is a tangled mix of changes in technology and changes in society.

The user-group movement traces its orgins back some 20 years to the earliest days of devices we now call personal computers. Crude and temperamental beasts, these machines demanded a lot from anyone who wanted to use them.

As much in self-defense as anything else, hardcore computer hobbyists banded together to share knowledge about what worked, what didn't and why. There was really nowhere else to turn.

In their heyday, groups like the Boston Computer Society had memberships that numbered in the tens of thousands.

But a lot has changed in the computer industry since then. Hardware and software makers have developed their own technical-support capabilities. Battalions of computer-oriented magazines have hit the shelves to answer the questions of novices.

The rise of the Internet also has been a factor. It not only offers ways to find basic information on running a PC, but it also provides ready access to the kind of shared software that user groups used to specialize in finding and distributing.

All of this has sapped strength from user groups. Some have faltered. Last year, the Boston Computer Society disbanded after nearly 20 years.

Still others remain healthy and vibrant--including the Business and Professional Microcomputer Users Group (BP-MUG).

BP-MUG has prospered inpart by shifting some of its emphasis from computer hardware and software to informing its members about the Internet, said longtime member Mort Fabricant.

"It's a precarious industry," Fabricant said. "But we've got funds in the organization and people to carry us over the humps. Hopefully we'll make into the 21st century.

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