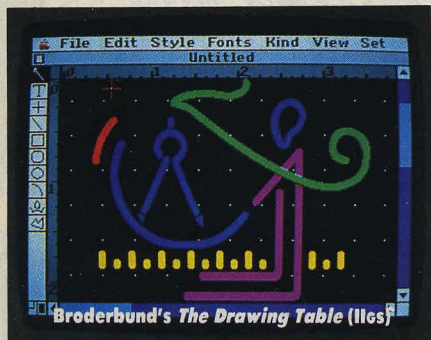


MACHINE SPECIFICS

APPLE

BY CHARLES H. GAJEWAY

Publication deadlines being what they are, 1987 has long begun for you, but still lies a bit away as I write this. It's a good time to take stock and see where we stand in the Apple world.



This is my seventh year of involvement with personal computers, and I am just as enthusiastic about their potential and power today as I was the very first time I booted *VisiCalc* on my Apple II Plus and felt horizons and limitations disappear. Since then, a seemingly endless stream of innovative and useful products has held my attention and allegiance firmly in the Apple world.

Life A.V. After *VisiCalc*, there was *VisiPlot*, then a series of better and better word processors, along with the 80-column screen display. Then came memory expansion with the introduction of Titan cards and RGB cards. Apple IIe followed with ProDOS, a big improvement, and later, *AppleWorks*. Products such as affordable hard-disk drives and the Apple 80-column color monitor keep coming for the II line. And, of course, the Macintosh came along to define the state of the art in computing, and to capture me.

In future columns, I'll try to pay heed to the three Apple lines—the old Apple II world (II Plus, IIe, and IIc), the new Apple II world (GS), and the Macintosh.

Apple II. The spotlight of late has been focused on the new IIGs. Its expanded memory, increased speed, superior graphics, and sound are exciting new sources of power for computer users. But as I have been exploring the GS and related new products, I can't help marveling at

how much of what is being done on the GS can be accomplished just as well on a II Plus, IIe, or IIc.

This is important, especially for II Plus and IIc owners who have no upgrade path to the GS and may be feeling a bit abandoned. There is plenty of life and power left untapped in Apple's older machines. If you want more speed, you can add an accelerator card. If you want more memory, you can add a memory expansion card. If you want RGB output or better sound, you can add the appropriate cards.

About the only thing you can't do with your old II that you can do with the new GS is get high-resolution color graphics. Color graphics are a bonus, but for routine, everyday tasks, you just don't need them.

Macintosh. Recently, a good deal of my corporate life has revolved around integrating the unique power and capability of the Macintosh into an environment that had elevated the letters IBM into an icon of near worship. The resulting excitement and accomplishment have been gratifying, especially in light of a slow and difficult start.

There are signs that excitement for the Mac is spreading across corporate America, welcome news to those who recognized the Macintosh as the true state of the art in personal computing, and have taken a lot of grief from those who followed a "safer" path. And there is more than a little humor involved, at the expense (finally!) of the IBM elitists.

I recently burst out laughing after reading through a popular IBM-oriented publication. Why? Because the entire magazine was devoted to telling its readers how to turn an IBM PC/AT into a Macintosh, and how productive it would be—all for the modest price tag of \$15,000! Good things truly do come in small, reasonably priced packages.

Speaking of price! Now that the Mac Plus is selling to corporations and Apple is about to introduce a new model of the Mac, prices on the old Fat Mac (with 512K and a disk drive) are falling into the \$1,000 range. That makes it less expensive than the new IIGs, and about the same price as the Atari 1040ST.

Genie's Gray Ghost. I just signed up with GE's bargain electronic information service, GENIE.

It's only \$5 per hour for 1200-baud use during non-prime time (nights and weekends). Those of you who have modems and subscribe to GENIE, please send mail (with questions, comments, and tips) and watch for Gray Ghost on the CB channel.

CHARLES H. GAJEWAY can be reached on GENIE (ID: C GAJEWAY) and *The Source* (ID: BBQ794).

ATARI

BY JOHN J. ANDERSON

First off, I'd like to thank all of you who have taken the time to contact me by mail or e-mail. I'm listening. One message is coming in loudly and clearly: how many of you long for more programming material. This month's column is for you.

8-bit Tips. Here are some tidbits for our 8-bit Atarians (tested under DOS 2.0): To determine which revision of Atari BASIC you have, type PRINT PEEK (43234). If the result is 162, you have revision A; if it is 96, you have revision B; if it is 234, you have revision C.

Need to format a disk from BASIC? You don't have to back out all the way to DOS. Do it with a one-line BASIC program: 1 XIO 254, #1, 0,0, "D:" Load this program and then don't forget to put in a new disk before you run it! Want to format a disk in the direct mode? Try typing X=USR(3352).

Have two files on disk with the same filename? This can be a nasty occurrence, but there is a way around it: Copy the loadable (first) file to another disk as a backup. From BASIC, type POKE 3118,0 (RETURN). Go to DOS, and rename the file (only the first file will be renamed). Go back to BASIC and type POKE 3118,184 (RETURN). You should now be able to access both disk files on your original disk.

Want to disable the BREAK key in your own programs? Insert the following after every GRAPHICS command: POKE 16,64:POKE 53774,112. Remember, once is not enough with this one. You've got to keep disabling the BREAK key after each of the commands listed above.

Want to disable the entire keyboard? POKE 16,255 will do that for you.

MACHINE SPECIFICS

Want to create a run-only file? Give this one a try: 32767 POKE PEEK (138)+256*PEEK(139)+2.0:SAVE "D:FILENAME.EXT":NEW. Insert this line into your program (make sure you save a normal version of the program first), and then type GOTO 32767 (RETURN). The resulting file can be run normally, but not listed.

Need a random number between 0 and 255? Sneak a PEEK at memory location 53770.

Want to create a MEMSAVE file from BASIC so you don't lose your program when you go to DOS? All you need to do is type A=USR(5947) (RETURN). (Owners of XL series computers will need to hit RESET after the disk stops spinning.)

Handy ST Tips. Before our 16-bit friends start to feel neglected, let's move on to some ST tips.

Tired of looking at the label FLOPPY DISK on disk icons? Select a disk icon with a point and click, so that it darkens. Then move the pointer to the OPTIONS MENU, and select INSTALL DISK DRIVE. Type in a new name of your choice. Then select INSTALL. If you now save the desktop, the name change will be recorded permanently.

Wish you could start an application by double-clicking on a data file? Easy. Let's say you always boot *ST-Writer*, and then open files from there. Try this: On the desktop, click once on the application program icon (in this case, *ST-Writer*), so that it darkens. Now go to the OPTIONS MENU and select INSTALL APPLICATION. In the field called "Document Type," enter the three-character extender for the file type associated with the application.

In this case it might be .DOC, but you can do the same with *Degas* files (.PI1, .PI2, or .PI3), or any other application data files with similar extenders. Next, save the desktop to make this a permanent capability. You can now double-click on any document file and open automatically to that file under the application it calls. Just like that fruity computer with the tiny black-and-white screen! (Note: *The application and the data files must reside on the same disk for this to work.*)

Tired of needing to close and reopen a window when you switch disks? When you pop a disk out of any ST drive and then stick in another, you still see the directory for the old disk. Instead of closing and reopening the window, just tap the

ESCAPE key. The new directory will read automatically. ESCAPE will also clear text from dialog windows. For example, pressing the ESCAPE key in the date field on the control panel will clear the field and set the cursor at the beginning, so you can enter a new date.

Want to give your mouse a rest? No problem. Did you know that by holding down the ALTERNATE key and pressing the cursor arrow keys, you can move the pointer all around the screen eight pixels at a time? If you press SHIFT-ALT and the cursor keys, you can move one pixel at a time. With the ALTERNATE key held down, the INSERT key can act as the left mouse button, while the CLR/HOME key acts as the right mouse button. This can be handy when you want to move the pointer but don't want to take your hands off the keyboard.

JOHN J. ANDERSON can be reached on CompuServe (ID: 76703.654).

COMMODORE

BY SHAY ADDAMS

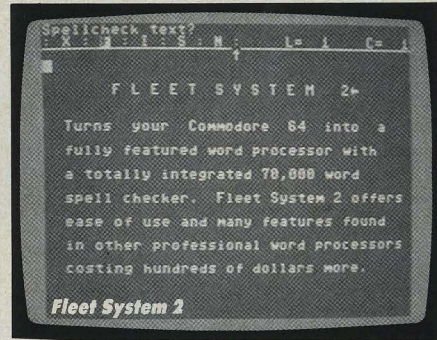
Word processors are a boon for writers—unless you decide to write about them and have to sort through scores of programs. I've just done that, and here are my notes. *Superscript 128* (Progressive Peripherals and Software, Inc.; [303] 825-4144; \$79.95) may be the best for overworked writers because its macro capability lets you automate any series of keyboard actions and execute them by hitting a key. And the word processor may be integrated into memory with *Superbase 128* (\$99.95), so you have instant access to your data base. (Remember, with C 128 word processors, you'll need an RGB monitor to use fancy features like on-screen italics.)

For producing newsletters, *WordPro with Turbo Load and Save* (*WordPro 64*) or *WordPro 128 with Filepro* (Spinnaker; [617] 494-1220; \$39.95 each) prints double columns at a single swipe. Hasty keyboarders will like the Undo feature that restores the most recently deleted text. *Word Writer's* pull-down menus make it very easy to use on the 64 or 128. Both are GEOS compatible and include spell-checkers.

With window-based menus and a spell-checker, *Better Working Word Processor with Spell Checker* (Spinnaker; \$49.95) is also friendly. If

you're on a budget, look for *The Critic* (Quantum Leap; [619] 297-1078; \$19 for the 64, \$39 for the 128).

PaperClip Elite. *Fleet System 4*, for the 128 (Professional Software; [800] 343-4074; \$79.95) has a built-in dictionary, thesaurus, spell-checker, and data base; *Fleet System 3*, also for the 128 (\$69.95), does not include the data base. *Fleet System 2* (64/128; \$59.95) lacks the



thesaurus and data base.

PaperClip Elite (Batteries Included; [416] 881-9816) includes integrated communications software; the Amiga version has multiple windows, an outline processor, spell-checker, and the ability to mix graphics and text. There was no price set at press time. *PaperClip II* for the 128 (\$79.95) is a word processor with a spell-checker and telecommunications built-in.

Two other practical Amiga programs are *Scribble!*, version 2.0 (Micro-Systems Software, Inc.; [800] 327-8724; \$99.95), which supports cut-and-paste text for up to four windows to show many different files; and *Textcraft* (Commodore; \$99.95), which has built-in forms for memos, business letters, and so on. Check with your local Amiga dealer for packages.

GEOS Update. The packaging doesn't mention it, but *geoDex* and *DeskPack 1*—two new utilities from Berkeley Softworks ([415] 644-0890; \$39.95)—also give you a new GEOS desktop (version 1.3) (\$59.95), plus updated versions of *geoWrite* and *geoPaint*. Keyboard shortcuts are now permitted on the desktop and in *geoWrite*, which even lets you use the cursor keys to move around a document. Also included on the flip side of both programs are 15 new printer drivers, input drivers for the Koalapad, a light pen, Commodore's proportional mouse, and upgraded versions of the photo and text managers. (Some of these goodies may be downloaded from QuantumLink.)

MACHINE SPECIFICS

GeoWrite users should definitely get the new version.

GeoDex looks like an on-screen Rolodex and will print mailing lists and even auto-dial the phone number listed on a geoDex card. With geoWrite and geoMerge (on the same disk), you can print form letters with the geoDex data.

Three of Deskpack 1's accessories—a calendar, icon editor, and a blackjack game—are just novelties. But the Graphics Grabber vastly increases the graphic capability of geoWrite and geoPaint by enabling you to import graphics from The Print Shop, The Newsroom and PrintMaster. (Epyx has launched a line of Graphics Scrapbooks, each containing 100 images of clip-art compatible with The Print Shop and Printmaster. The first subjects are Sports and Off-the-Wall-Graphics.)

Amiga Memory Expansion.

There are two new memory expansions for the Amiga: aMEGA and Alegra. The aMEGA Board (\$549.95) upgrades a 256K computer to 1 megabyte and comes with several useful utilities and an expansion port for extra boards, cards and other add-ons (C Ltd; [316] 267-6321). Or you can get a 512K memory boost with the slim Alegra, which goes for \$379 and can be upgraded to 2 megabytes (Access Associates; [408] 727-8520).

Q: What's the best color printer for use with a 64? Are any laser printers compatible with it?

A: The Okimate 20 is the most convenient color printer, since many programs already have drivers for it. But GEOS has printer drivers for the Apple Imagewriter II or the Epson JX-80. With GEOS software, you can also use laser printers from Apple, Hewlett Packard, or Okidata.

SHAY ADDAMS can be reached on Compu-Serve (ID: 72267.601) or QuantumLink (ID: JB CHALMER).

IBM/MS-DOS

BY HENRY BEECHHOLD

Did you know that a two-hour videotape can store 80 megabytes of computer data? So why let your VCR sit around most of the day doing nothing? The Videotrax tape backup system will dump your data in either VHS or Beta format. Backups made this way can be run from any com-

patible VCR. You cannot play the videotape, however; you must load the data back into the computer first. The cost is \$595 for the controller card, and \$1,395 for the controller card and VCR (manufactured by Alpha Micro; distributed by Priority One Electronics, 21622 Plummer St., Chatsworth, CA 91311; [800] 423-5922).

CGA Colors. A reader asked, "Why do game and other graphics-oriented programs fail to use more than four of the 16 available PC colors?" The fact is that a color/graphics adapter like the standard IBM Color Graphics Adapter (CGA) can handle only so much information. Color and graphics both demand lots of memory. The higher the resolution, the fewer colors can be shown with a given amount of memory. The CGA board can display four colors in medium resolution and 16 colors in low resolution. The Enhanced Graphics Adapter can display 16 colors in high resolution, but right now few game programs are written to work with the EGA adapter.

Prompt Attention. You're not necessarily stuck with that tired old MS-DOS screen prompt (>). With a color monitor, you can have a prompt that tells you what directory you're in—and does so in a different color than the text. (I'm partial to a cyan prompt and yellow-on-black text.) To do so, you must have the line DEVICE = ANSI.SYS in your CONFIG.SYS file.

For automatic installation of your custom prompt every time you boot up, you need to create an AUTOEXEC .BAT file or add the necessary information to the existing one.

You can create the file with any text editor or word processor, or with the COPY command, as follows: (Note: press ENTER after each line):

```
COPY CON AUTOEXEC.BAT
ECHO OFF
PROMPT SEI36:40MSP SQSQSGSEI33:40M
(Press CONTROL-Z or Function Key
6. Then press RETURN.)
```

The first line creates the files; ECHO OFF keeps DOS from printing the file on the screen while it's being run; CONTROL-Z marks the end of the file.

Here's what the numbers mean: 40 is black, 36 is cyan, and 33 is yellow (see your manual). The sp sqsqsg sequence results in an arrow prompt

that indicates the present drive and directory path in this fashion:

```
C:\WP\MYFILES ==>
```

Other prompt commands include SB (vertical bar), SD (date), SL (<). You can even include text if you wish, such as WHAT IS YOUR COMMAND MASTER? To return the prompt to its plain dull self, type PROMPT any time you are in DOS.

Fancy Printing Cheap. To really take advantage of your printer—at a modest cost—try PowerText Formatter (\$89.95, plus \$5 for shipping and handling). The program works with any ASCII-producing text editor and can, with relatively little tinkering on your part, produce handsome multicolumn newsletters, scripts and screenplays, customized form letters (using the built-in merge-printing routine), reports, memos, academic papers, and whatnot.

The program, which supports ordinary printers as well as lasers, makes tables of content, indices, and footnotes. The results with a laser printer are most impressive. Use the formatting files (templates) provided or use your own (Beaman Porter, Inc., 417 Halstead Ave., Harrison, NY 10528; [914] 835-3156).

Sick Computer? If you have access to a working PC while yours is on the blink, you might be able to diagnose and even cure your problem with ServTech, a program that tracks down the source of hardware malfunctions. It interprets system diagnostic messages, and through a series of questions helps you isolate the probable causes of trouble (Rylos Technologies; 10213 Heron Pond Terrace, Burke, VA 22015; \$44.94).

HENRY F. BEECHHOLD is author of The Brady Guide to Microcomputer Troubleshooting & Maintenance (Simon & Schuster, \$17.95).

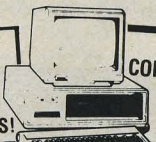
TANDY

BY STEVEN MILLER

Bob Rosen's Spectrum Projects, in Howard Beach, New York, specializes in products for the Color Computer. He recently sent a note—almost before the CoCo 3's were on the market—with some tips on using the new machine's extended BASIC commands. Here they are: 1) To use a monochrome monitor, type WIDTH 40: PALETTE 8,255: PALETTE 0,0:CLS9. 2) To get true lowercase in the 32 x 16

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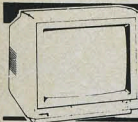
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MACHINE SPECIFICS

mode, type POKE &H95C9, &H7H:POKE &HFF22, &H10. 3) To get the inverted screen mode, do an additional POKE &HFF22, &H20. 4) Finally, for a real surprise, hold down the ALT and CTRL during power up! (I'll tell you non-CoCo owners what the surprise is next month.)

Display's the Thing. Tandy sells several monitors that take advantage of the CGA (color/graphics adapter) standard in MS-DOS machines—the CM-5 and CM-10. Tandy is now moving up to the EGA standard with the new EGM-1 monitor.

While I can't see all families spending the kind of money (nearly \$1,000 for the monitor and the EGA card to power it) necessary to get the EGA's high-resolution color displays, it sure is nice to see crisp, clear, colorful words and sharp graphics on the monitor. Heavy users should consider this enticing upgrade.

New CoCo 3 Software. Shortly after receiving these tips, I got the first of Spectrum Projects' new CoCo 3 software. In fact, it was the first third-party CoCo 3 software I had seen. *CIII Graphics* is a drawing program that takes advantage of the new colors available on the CoCo 3. It's a fairly sophisticated program, yet simple to use, with joystick control and self-generating standard shapes (circles and squares).

I didn't get very good results because my artistic ability is nil, but my son whipped up a nice picture of the solar system in about five minutes. *CIII Graphics* sells for \$19.95, plus \$3 shipping and handling.

The second Spectrum item we received is more useful to all CoCo 3 owners interested in doing their own programming. It's a booklet called *CoCo 3 Secrets Revealed*. While the folks at Tandy might disagree with Rosen's version of the history of the Color Computer, it was fascinating to see how someone who obviously loves the CoCo views its development.

Even if you don't care anything about the life story of the Color Computer, the book has plenty of tips about using it. "Secrets" should make a nice addition to the extended BASIC book that is supplied by Tandy. *CoCo 3 Secrets Revealed* supplies the why as well as the how of using the CoCo 3. The booklet is a bit expensive (\$16.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling) for 30-odd pages of information packaged not much

better than your average typewritten newsletter. But you're paying for the information, not the packaging. Incidentally, *CIII Graphics* and "Secrets" can be purchased together for \$29.95. For more information about Spectrum Projects' products, write to P.O. Box 264, Howard Beach, New York 11414; (718) 835-1344.

Cable Confusion. Several Tandy 1000 owners have written to ask about the unusual shielded printer cables supplied with their computers. Tandy advises that you use them—and not standard IBM-type cables. The concern from some owners is that if you plug in a standard cable, the computer will be damaged. Tandy assures me that no such thing will happen. The reason they are furnishing the shielded cables is to conform to FCC regulations on interference with other electrical devices.

Next month, I'll take a look at more new software for the CoCo 3.

STEVE MILLER is a freelance writer and computer consultant.

ORPHANS

BY PATRICK SPERA

What is a TIcoff? It's the Texas Instrument Computer Owners Fun Fair, scheduled for March 28, 1987. It will run from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Roselle Park High School, Roselle Park, New Jersey. The proceeds from the fair will benefit the Student Council Scholarship Fund.

In addition to displays, seminars, and a flea market, there will be a demonstration of the new TI 99/4A compatible, Myarc Gen'evé. At the time of this writing, it's still in pre-production. Keep your eyes glued to this page in months ahead and I'll try to keep you up-to-date on this machine.

For more information on TIcoff, please contact one of the following people or groups. On CompuServe, leave an Easyplex to TIcoff (ID: 73547.2014) or leave a message on TIFORUM. GENIE users can leave e-mail to TICOFF. You may also call the following telephone numbers: Central Westchester 99'ers, (914) 528-5402; Long Island 99'ers, (516) 938-1095; NEWJUG users, (201) 686-5619; New Jersey 99'ers, (201) 838-7637.

Timex/Sinclair Disk Drives.

One major thing that has driven Timex Sinclair owners crazy is a lack of disk drives. There is nothing more disheartening than to see a six-minute tapeload fail. Wouldn't it be grand to have a disk so you could see the load fail in seconds instead?

All kidding aside, you might want to consider the Aerco Disk Interface (FD-68) (Box 18093, Austin, TX 78760; [512] 451-5874). The TS 2068 version comes with the disk interface, an RGB interface, 64K of RAM (expandable to 256K with some rewiring), one disk drive, and a case and power supply (\$377). For \$25 more, you can purchase a user license for RPM, which is a CP/M upgrade.

RPM will run CP/M 2.2, which is the gateway to thousands of programs for Timex users. The RPM system disk is also crammed with utilities, so you will have a ready-to-use system. With the many CP/M users' groups around the country, a lack of programs might never be a complaint again.

An Aerco disk interface (FD-ZX) and drive is also available for the TS 1000/1500 (\$360), but it does not include the extra memory or RGB interface.

Adam Disk Drives. Adam users are lucky that Coleco released a disk drive for the Adam, which was originally sold with digital tape drives. The bad news is that the supply of disk drives is starting to dry up. But some retail stores on the East Coast still have them in stock, as do several Adam mail-order houses. Call the following dealers to find out which ones still have drives in stock: NIAD, (312) 961-3529; M.W. Ruth Co., (609) 667-2526; Alpha-One LTD, (718) 336-7612. Don't forget to tell them where you got their name! Yeah, it's a cheap plug, I admit.

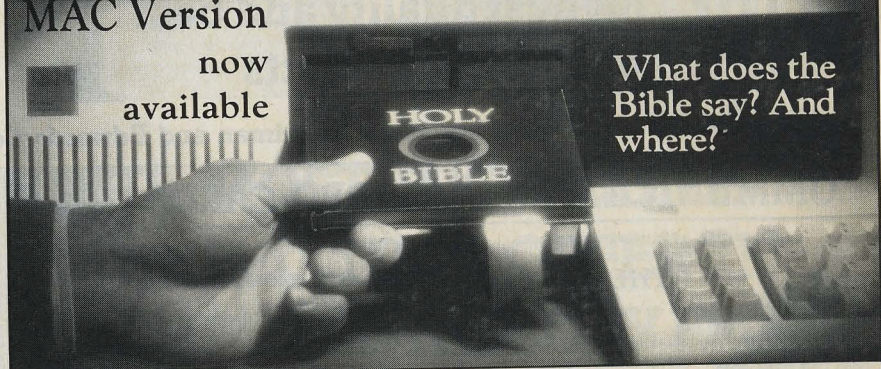
But what if you already have the Adam disk drive and it's acting up? Or you'd like to store more on every disk? Enter EVE Electronic Systems (320 Union St., Millis, MA 02054; [617] 376-4919). EVE repairs disk drives and will upgrade them. EVE pulls the guts from your current system and installs a double-sided drive in its place. This boosts your original 160K storage to 320K. (If you use CP/M 2.2, you can only access 270K.) The cost of this modification is \$150.

PATRICK SPERA can be reached on Compu-Serve (ID: 76703.4350).

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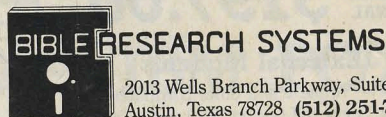
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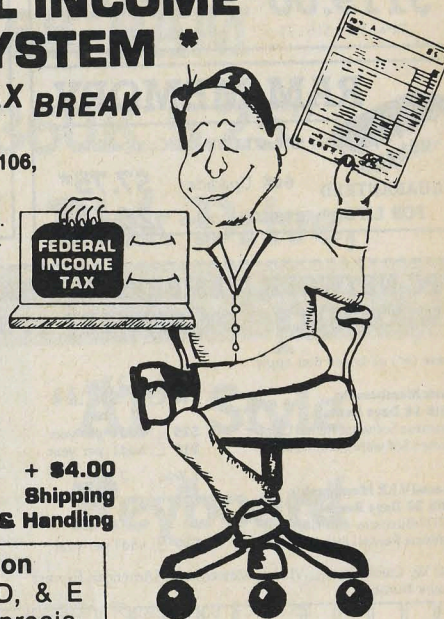
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MARCH 1987 35