CLASSIC COMPUT

THINGS

by Faye Deere

This column is composed of things I've heard, things I've read somewhere, and things I've learned from bitter experience. I thought it might be nice to share them with you.

Remember that much of the new software being produced for ADAM requires two drives. The ads for this software do not tell you this. One of our ECAUG club members bought a program to help pick lottery numbers. When the program arrived, he discovered you had to have two drives in any combination to run it, and he only had one! Needless to say, he quickly bought another drive!

CP/M 2.2 is an operating system similar to the operating system (EOS) that comes with your ADAM. When you pull the reset button and install CP/M 2.2, you have replaced the EOS with the CP/M system. This means that ADAM files cannot be read by CP/M and vice versa. The SmartWRITER files must be converted to be read by CP/M and the CP/M files must also be converted to be read by SmartWRITER. However, utilities are provided by CP/M to make this possible.

The CP/M manual tells you to make a backup copy of your CP/M tape before you do anything else. This is fine if you are making a copy from tape to tape, but if you want to make a copy of your tape to disk, you can't do it the way the manual tells you. You must use SYSGEN to put the CP/M system on your disk, then use PIP, COPY, or NSWP to copy the other files to your disk.

M. W. Ruth has a Limited Time Intro Special, $109.95 for a mouse with ADAMouse Port from the Thomas Electronics Company. This is a product that ADAMites have been eagerly waiting for! Now you can have a fully Proportional Analog Mouse, just like every other computer has. The ADAMouse Port is easily installed by the user in about 20 minutes with basic hand tools. This port will look as though it was installed at the factory, and will act as a second game port, allowing the use of a second superior controller while retaining the Coleco unit for game option selection.

There is an ADAMouse Card available for a limited time at $129.95 for those of you who do not wish to undertake the ADAMouse Port installation. However, this will not have the ability to act as a second game port. The company recommends that you purchase the ADAMouse Port and pay

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For those of you that would like a mouse, but feel that these prices are too high for your pocketbook right now, Howard Pines tells us that Oscar's has a non-proportional Analog Mouse for 69. To explain: When you draw a agonal line, a non-proportional mouse ll take the line up in steps, whereas

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a proportional mouse will draw it up in a smooth line without the steps. To find out about ordering a non proportional mouse, contact Howard at Oscar's Computers, 105 Beach Drive, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548; (904) 862-1007. This gives you at least three ways to go. At last! A Mouse!!

If you use Proofreader to spellcheck your files, don't use it on a tape/disk that contains more than 1K of catalog. If you do, Proofreader will list the first page of your catalog and then give you a series of the weirdest gibberish you ever saw, ending with a full screen pattern of exclamation marks! If you have stored the file you want to spellcheck

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on a tape/disk with more than a 1K catalog, you will have to transfer it to another tape/disk to be checked.

If you have ever wondered what a macro is, don't feel bad. I wondered for a long time. I finally decided it was time I found out. This is what I learned.

A macro is a keystroke, or combination of keystrokes, that takes the place of a long series of keystrokes used to accomplish a certain task, usually one that is done often. Example: you can program Madam7 to dial a certain frequently called number, just by pressing one of the SmartKEYS.

Some programs have built in macros, such as some word processing and spreadsheet programs. A word processing program might let you create and store macros in order to condense frequently used functions or words into one keystroke. For instance, if you write a lot of letters, all of which you end the same way, you could set up one keystroke to insert that line or series of lines. Also, you could store the format you use each time you set up a file or document. And some spreadsheets have macros you can program for functions that are used all the time.

I began using macros before I even knew what they were. I stored a file that held the format (margins, tab settings, etc.) and the first paragraph of a column I write every month for the ECAUG club newsletter. I also have a file that holds only the format with the center of the column marked. SmartFILER lets you store a macro for running off labels, various CP/M programs provide for the use of macros, and SpeedyWRITE uses them extensively. Sounds like fun, doesn't it? It certainly saves time!

PowerPAINT versions before serial #10300 have some bugs that have since been corrected. To find out if your program needs to be corrected, select Polygon Options, then select Draw Straight Line, then press Return twice. If the program freezes up, contact your place of purchase for an update.

I use Showoff II to format and print most of the articles I write for our club newsletter. When I first started using it, I pored through the documentation trying to find out how to indent the first line of a new paragraph. The usual indentation would not stay when the justify was used, and the Showoff II manual did not shed any light on the subject.

As I wanted to save as much space as possible, I didn't want to skip a line between each paragraph. I fooled around with the program for a while, and came up with a system that worked

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for me. I put a period in the first space of a new paragraph, skipped the spaces I wanted to indent, and started to write. Before the article was copied for the newsletter, I used whiteout to get rid of the periods at the beginning of each paragraph. It looked great, and no one knew the periods had been there. In some cases, I left the period. It was a good way to call attention to something special.

Others must have had the same problem, because there was an article in a St. Louis ADAM User Group newsletter about it. The Editor, Barry Wilson, had written to Solomon Swift, who wrote the Showoff II program, asking if there was a solution to the problem. Mr. Swift replied that there was. All you have to do is start the line to be indented with a backslash and follow it with one blank space. Then add as many blank spaces as you want to indent before you begin typing the text.

I tried it, and it does work. I find, however, that I have become very fond of my periods, and have gotten very used to typing them at the beginning of each paragraph. Being a creature of habit, it may take me a while to get used to typing the backslash instead. You know what they say about teaching an old dog new tricks.

If you don't have at least a 64K expansion board, you should consider getting one. Many of the programs being developed for the ADAM require the use of an expander. Also, an expander means that you don't have to close and re-open files as often when you are downloading from a BBS with your modem. This saves your phone bill if you are using an information service such as CompuServe.

Improvements in the EPROM chip used in your disk drive allows you to format disks at a much faster rate of speed. This makes formatting your disks much less time consuming than before. The new EPROM is available for Coleco's single sided disk drive, as well as the newer 5¼ inch double sided disk drives and the 3½ inch disk drives.

The double sided EPROM speeds up the format time for either the double sided drive or the single sided. In the double sided drive, it also allows faster reading and writing of longer programs.

It is very easy to upgrade your disk drive by replacing the EPROM. To replace the EPROM, it is necessary to remove the housing and unplug the drive mechanics, removing your screws to get to the controller board and EPROM. The EPROM is plugged into a socket in the front of the drive. Sounds easy enough! Currently, the price of the single sided EPROM is

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$14.95, and the double sided is $19.95. They are available at most of the major ADAM software outlets.

Orphanware has also introduced a new EPROM for the double sided 5¼ disk drive which gives you 360K of storage instead of 320K. The new format used on the 360K disks is not compatible with the 320K and 160K disks, however. You would need two disk drives to transfer information from the old to the new format. Maybe you could borrow one until you got everything transferred.

I understand that an Image Scanner (print head digitizer) for ADAM is all but finished. The device I heard about hooks to an Epson compatible dot matrix printer printhead with attached fiber optics to scan documents, pictures, or anything you can feed into your printer. It produces a high resolution picture that ADAM stores for later use and reprints with other software such as PowerPAINT of SwiftPRINT. No modifications are necessary. It is a simple attachment, and is easily removable. Such a product, along with GoDO which just came out, would put us i the big leagues. Isn't it great! ADA Lives!