September, 1984 $2.00

HOME COMPUTER™ DIGEST

News and Happenings in the Home Computer World

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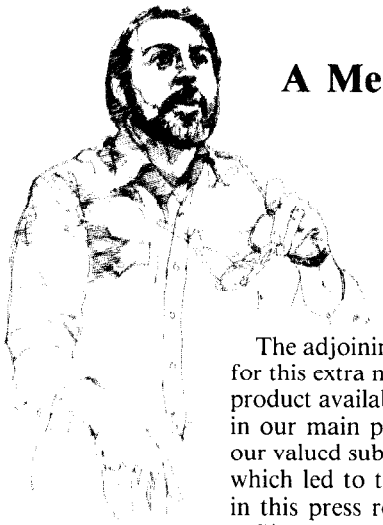

A Message from the Publisher

The publication you are now holding is a bonus for subscribers to *Home Computer Magazine*. It will be mailed to you approximately nine times per year. We hope you'll find it both enjoyable and useful.

The adjoining press release (on page 3) explains the reason for this extra magazine—keeping *you* informed of mail-order product availability while allowing *us* an ad-free environment in our main publication. I'd like to now share with you—our valued subscribers—some of the behind-the-scenes events which led to the unprecedented publishing move described in this press release.

First, as many of you know, a massive shake-out has been taking place in the computer industry. Hardware and software companies—and magazines—have been "biting the dust" at an alarming rate. In today's highly competitive marketplace, the number of firms who sell enough product to be able to pay for magazine advertising has rapidly been dwindling. What often appears to be a healthy dose of paid advertising in a computer magazine is often just an overextension of credit. Many of the advertisers have trouble paying; some are forced to go bankrupt and never do pay. In effect, *the thousands* of advertisers the computer magazine industry once had now numbers in the *hundreds*.

Fortunately, *Home Computer Magazine* is *not* dependent upon advertising sales to "stay alive." That's because unlike most other computer magazines, we (1) sell almost all the copies we place on the newsstands, (2) haven't spent huge sums of money on promotions to obtain subscribers, and (3) will be able to further amortize our magazine front-end costs over a new spin-off product line debuting this fall.

The rest of the industry will probably regard *Home Computer Magazine's* publisher as being slightly "mad" for turning away ad dollars, but "What, Me Worry?"—*MAD Magazine* has prospered for over 30 years without outside advertising! We too, are confident that this unorthodox move will actually assure our survivability and bring greater

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMPUTER MAGAZINE MAKES UNPRECEDENTED MOVE

Emerald Valley Publishing Co. announced today that beginning with its September 1984 issue, Home Computer Magazine will no longer carry outside advertising.

According to publisher Gary M. Kaplan, "We want Home Computer Magazine to stand out and be recognized as the best publication in its field. By removing the advertising content from the magazine, we have the editorial and artistic freedom to produce a truly unique publication that will set the standard for editorial quality, integrity, and readability for the entire industry."

The new magazine format will allow each article to be presented in its entirety without being interrupted by distracting advertising material. It will also prevent articles from being broken by intervening editorial material resulting from a less-than-flexible layout required to accommodate the needs of advertisers.

"We have thoroughly analyzed the financial considerations of this unprecedented move," Kaplan continued. "Our profitability projection has yielded very favorable results, and undoubtedly reflects the current magazine's uncommon strengths: its extremely high sell-through percentage on newsstands, its large, inexpensively acquired subscriber base, and its companion ON DISK Revue (tm), a spin-off software line recently introduced at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show and slated for retail distribution this fall."

Subscribers to Home Computer Magazine will also be kept abreast of additional product availability through a separately mailed, 32-page publication called Home Computer Digest (tm). This supplementary publication will be mailed approximately nine times per year and will contain mail-order advertising plus limited editorial material geared to readers who purchase products by mail.

# # #

financial success. The new "uncluttered" magazine format will allow us to further distinguish ourselves from the rest of the pack by giving both our present readers, and the hundreds of thousands more future readers, a computer magazine value unequaled anywhere. In the vernacular of the day, "more beef and less bun" nourishes profitable growth.

It might interest you to know that all the advertisers in this *Digest* have pre-paid their ads—thus giving us (and we hope, you too) some additional assurance of their viability as ongoing businesses. Because these advertisers are now only reaching our subscribers (and not our newsstand purchasers), we ask that you do them (and us) a favor by showing the *Digest* to others who would benefit from seeing it—and letting them know that they can get their own personal copies by subscribing to *Home Computer Magazine*.

Our staff here is very proud to be pioneers in the computer publishing industry—especially when others are retreating or falling by the wayside. Without you, our loyal subscribers, the successful journey we've had over the years wouldn't have been possible. I'd therefore like to once again thank each of you for your past, present, and future support.

Gary M. Kaplan
Publisher

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Comments From Our Happy Readers

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Warren Agee, Livonia, MI

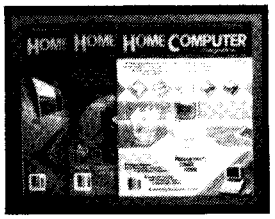
"Well it happened again. Your magazine arrived in the mail, and I'm completely delighted with it."
Chris L. Chaffin, Omaha, NE

"I just received your August issue. I ordered a 3 year subscription exactly 1 year ago, and I have seen it grow in size and quality. This latest issue, with the separate section of program listings, reaffirms my wise subscription investment."
Mike Oliver, Clarendon Hills, IL

"When I saw the new version of your magazine I was elated! Naturally I subscribed.
Doug Barker, Exeter, CA

"You have done a superb job of reaching other types of Home Computer enthusiasts and expanding your clientele while not depriving us 99'ers or leaving us by the wayside. The quality of the magazine is unsurpassed by any other, and I have looked at several different magazines! Hats off to you folks for your originality and continued endeavor to reach perfection."
John R. Stewart, Tucson, AZ

Thanks to your thoughtfulness. . .your friends, family, and associates can enjoy a gift that keeps on giving all year through! They'll enjoy



Dozens of top quality key-in-and-RUN programs for Apple, Commodore, IBM, and Texas Instruments home computers appear in each issue.

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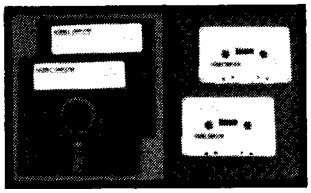

FREE software—ON TAPE™ or ON DISK™—the same high-quality programs published monthly in the magazine. This cassette tape or floppy disk program service—normally a $3.95 per month extra cost—is the convenient, accurate and affordable way to save hundreds of typing hours.

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AHOY THERE! WANNA BUY A COMPUTER?

by Thomas Grundy

Having overtaken your ship, a grubby pirate captain approaches, wearing—like a soiled halo—a red bandana. His black eyepatch argues against your hope for mercy, and his gold earrings seem mocking reminders that what was yours is yours no longer.

Most of us believe that those days of pirates' wanton plundering are gone, but not computer and software companies. They know that the pirate's looks have changed, but not the man. He's the same to them—instead of an eyepatch, he wears glasses; instead of a cutlass, he carries a calculator.

This mild-mannered new breed of pirate is costing the computer industry hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue annually. U.S. Customs officials estimate that at least 10 to 15 thousand counterfeit computers are imported into the U.S. every month. Multiply that by 12 months, then multiply that product by the cost of a computer, and that's quite a booty. One reason that the computers are allowed to slip into port and through customs is because nonsense chips are used in the illegitimate computers. Once through customs, these chips are replaced with copyrighted software and sold in the marketplace.

Semiconductor chips are another favorite target for pirates, because they are not copyright protected, and they can be "developed" for between one-tenth and one-fortieth the cost of the original design.

To combat the computer and semiconductor chip piracy, the computer industry is trying to get Congress to load its legislative cannons and blow the pirates out of the water. Suggestions by the House Commerce Investigations Subcommittee include: building up customs, both in personnel and authority; increasing diplomatic and economic pressure on those countries that allow the pirates their Tortugas; increasing monetary penalties; imposing jail terms; suspending foreign pirates' rights to export goods into the U.S.; and, for the receivers of those goods, "a 17-year ban on the use of the technology" that they pirated.

"U.S. Customs officials estimate that at least 10 to 15 thousand counterfeit computers are imported into the U.S. every month. Multiply that by 12 months, then multiply that product by the cost of a computer, and that's quite a booty."

Passage of Rep. Don Edwards' Semiconductor Chip Protection Act would make those guilty of chip piracy subject to the same penalties listed above. And Apple has been arguing for a "contributory copyright infringement" law to close the loophole that allows ROMless or nonsense chip computers to slip through customs.

For a while, things were looking

promising. The Supreme Court validated the "contributory infringement" concept in a video-recording case, and both Congress and the International Trade Commission agreed with Apple's claim that the nonsense-chip computers should be outlawed. But just when all looked well, somebody threw water onto the the gunpowder. The Treasury Department, who had itself been "detaining" many of the ROMless-chip computers, ruled that "copyright infringement" doesn't apply to these computers, and even if it did, held that the computers still don't violate "federal capitalized law."

Software is perhaps the most easily pirated computer commodity and offers its own set of challenges. Devices like East Side Software's Wild Card have made copying most software relatively easy, and have created a need (at least from much of industry's point of view) for more complicated and impregnable protection systems. Necessity being the mother of invention, old hands and new have scrambled onto deck brandishing new defenses to meet the industry's needs. Among them are Hoffman Computer Products, Vault Corporation, and Romlock.

Hoffman says that its "copy-protection formats protect software in a number of ways—from messages buried within a program that must be searched for, to actual changes of formats linking sections together."

Vault has developed what they call the PROLOK system for manufacturing diskettes. Designed to protect "against the casual software pilferer as well as the commercial pirate," the "system etches a fingerprint onto the surface of ordinary diskettes and uses that fingerprint to encrypt the program. The encrypted program can be copied by ordinary procedures, but can be operated only when the unique fingerprinted diskette is in the computer. Since the fingerprint is etched into the surface of the diskette, it cannot be duplicated by any procedure."

Romlock has developed a cartridge chip that will prevent software copying. The chip allows hardware manufacturers to initialize the cartridge for one computer only. Back-up copies can be made, but they will run only on the computer on which the program was initialized.

"So what does this all mean? Probably most important to the home computer user is the freedom to make backups for programs."

In addition to all this new technology, new legislation is being proposed at the state level to give more legal protection to software producers. Assemblyman Gary Davis of California is working on a bill to protect software under the trade secret and copyright laws, and a similar bill is underway in Louisiana.

Other ways to protect computer systems have also been developed. United Software Security, Inc. has developed LazarLock, a system which involves a LazarLock Decoder that can be used in conjunction with the LazarCode, their specialized security software. The electronic decoder is held up to the CRT screen when the computer asks for a security check. If the code matches, the user is given access; if not, he or she is shut out. The code changes after each check.

International Electronic Technology Corporation has created the Kaish Circuit Lockout System, which relies on a user-determined password to prevent the hardware from operating. The password can be changed at any time by the authorized user if the password has been compromised. The company explains that "The system relies on firmware in the product's microprocessor and cannot be elec-

cont. on pg. 27

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FROGGER Frogger's first challange is to cross a busy highway, reckless with hotrods and huge trucks. Beyond is the raging river, where the safety of a slippery log or diving turtle is all Frogger can count on to stay afloat.

NOTICE: Non-TI modules made by Parker Bros., Atarisoft, Funware, Romox, and Navarone may not operate on TI-99/4A units with a 1983 copyright notice appearing on the main title screen. A new accessory "The Grom Buster" is now available from TEX-COMP at $34.95 (postpaid)to overcome this problem

IMPORTANT JOYSTICK INFORMATION: The standard 8-way joysticks made by firms such as TI, WICO, ATARI and SUPER STIK do not work well with maze type games on the TI-99/4A. Diagonal joystick commands on many x-y axis TI games such as Munchman, Jawbreaker, Popeye, Pacman, and Parsec tend to slow down response or confuse the logic of the program causing a missed turn or the like. There is only one joystick available for the TI-99/4A that overcomes this problem. The SUPER JOYSTICK II developed by TEX-COMP and Newport Controls. This arcade quality professional joystick has a selector dial which allows the user to lock out diagonal positions when playing high speed maze and similar type of games resulting in much faster response and higher levels of play. The SUPER JOYSTICK II is available from TEX-COMP for $29.95 postpaid and has a five year warranty. It has been rated #1 by all TI Users Groups. A second unit (less adapter) is available for $24.95 .

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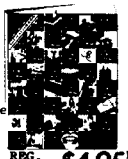

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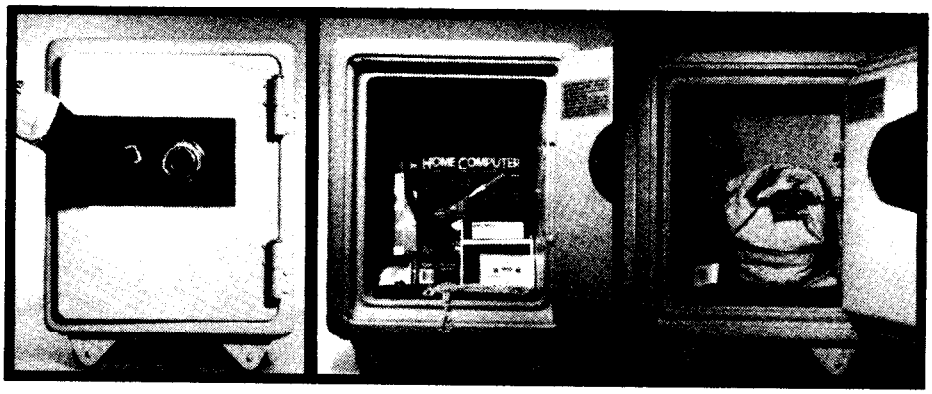

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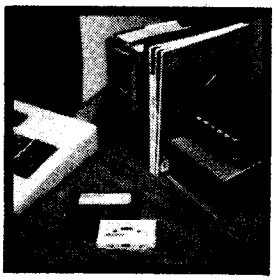

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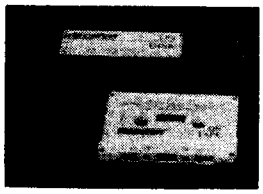

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INDUSTRY WATCH

FREE SOFTWARE FOR SCHOOLS

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GE PLANS TO AUTOMATE YOUR HOME

General Electric Co. plans to introduce a new product that can operate all electrical appliances in the home by remote control. The device, dubbed the HomeMinder, will be linked to a television set and can be used to turn appliances on and off, function as a timer, or remind people of dates and messages. Two versions of the HomeMinder will be offered, one that connects to your television set for under $500, and another built into a GE television set for about $1000.

MANUFACTURERS ANGLE FOR TI MARKET

As computer product marketing continues to become more fiercely competitive, some developers are discovering the benefits of being the only fish in a small pond—especially the neglected Texas Instruments pond. A case in point is Morning Star Software, which has started shipping its CP/M system made for the Texas Instruments home computer exclusively. Once installed, the user can use the TI-99/4A as a total CP/M system, or as the normal TI system. The Morning Star card allows TI disk drives to read any CP/M diskette that is compatible with the Osborne computer.

Unlike Morning Star, Personal Peripherals, Inc. and MicroMagic Software are fighting for attention in the big, competitive pond of popular computers as well as in the "easy sales" TI product pond. The Super Sketch graphics tablets by Personal Peripherals, available for Commodore, Apple, and IBM computers, is now being produced for the TI-99/4A, as is the LVM-99 Videodisc Interface by MicroMagic Software.

cont. on pg. 25

.....Texas Instruments TI-99/4A — COMPUTERS, COMPONENTS AND SOFTWARE.....

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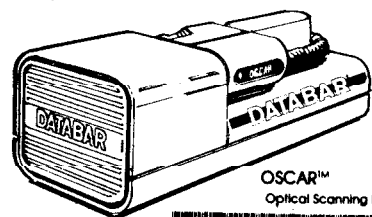

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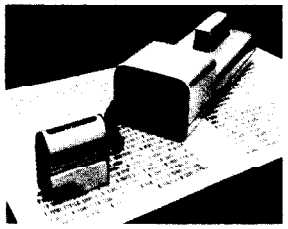

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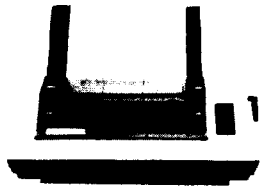

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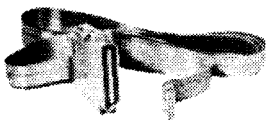
CABLES

for the TI-99/4A



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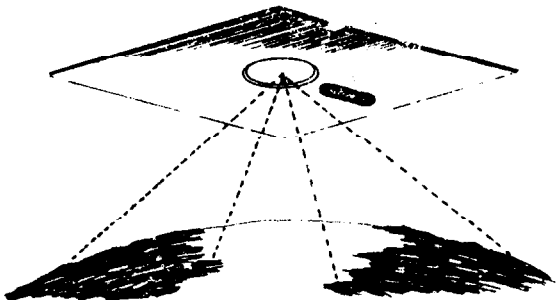

MORE SOFTWARE SALES ON THE HORIZON

by Thomas Grundy

With wave after wave of new software inundating retail stores, it is hardly surprising to find some debris littering the shelves after the prospective buyers, like beachcombers, have picked through the latest storm's offerings. To assist the retailers in keeping down the amount of debris, and to provide the home computer user with an ever greater selection to choose from, a new industry has set sail and promises to be in your port before the next storm. Will this new industry deliver? The answer is "yes," in more ways than one.

The new industry is "electronic distribution," and it promises to deliver software to your home or store by means of telephone, modem, cable, or airwaves. Press a few buttons, and presto—your software immediately arrives. Many new distributors are gradually appearing on the horizon, and established ones, loaded with similar offerings, are not far behind.

Some of these more established companies have embarked on joint ventures. AT&T has boarded with Coleco and will be transmitting games, probably via modem, directly to the home. Atari has joined with Activision and promises to deliver software to the home via airwaves—the user will have to rent or buy a special receiver. And another formidable union—IBM, Sears, and CBS—is also steering toward the home-delivery market with a videotex venture on the horizon.

". . .retailers are welcoming electronic distribution to their stores because this new delivery system provides their customers with a much larger selection of software at lower prices."

Retailers, as can be expected, are not pleased with the home-delivery systems because of the loss of revenue they represent (expected to reach $2.5 billion by the early 1990's). On the other hand, these same retailers are welcoming electronic distribution to their stores because this new delivery system provides their customers with a much larger selection of software at lower prices. Best of all, retailers don't have to risk losing money on unsold inventory.

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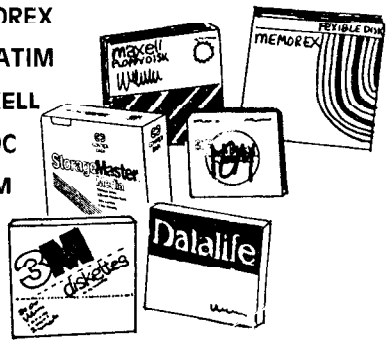

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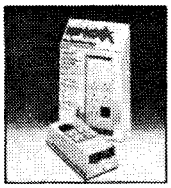

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Wire Tree Plus has unique and valuable features including separate switches for the CPU and peripherals, exclusive modem protection and a bracket for mounting under the front of the workstation and storing power cords neatly out of the way. Suggested retail price $99.95.

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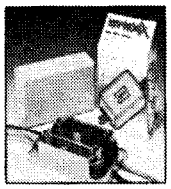

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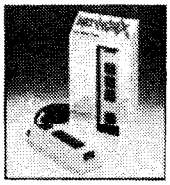

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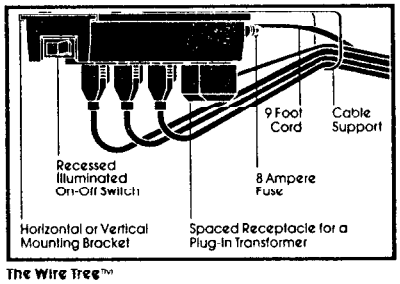

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Now Buy Retail At Wholesale Prices!

With the advantage of offering a larger, no-risk inventory, it will be surprising if electronic distribution doesn't catch on. However, some critics have their doubts, pointing to a number of potential problems, such as documentation—especially for larger, more complex programs. Customers who pay $500 and more for an expensive software package will demand a nicely bound and printed instruction manual, and beyond that, say the critics, it is still impossible to transmit more than abbreviated documentation for the more complex programs. Downloading these larger programs is another problem because it is too time-consuming, they add.

And what about piracy? The protective techniques of this new system are not as sophisticated as those built-in at the factory. Finally, brand-name packaging, something that software producers feel is essential to merchandising, would be lost to the new delivery systems.

In-store electronic distribution proponents are aware of these problems and are already signaling to their critics that they have the answers. Romox, the first to arrive in port, has been conducting tests of its new system in California convenience stores. Similar to other in-store delivery systems that rely on a host computer, the Romox system differs because it uses a terminal at the receiving end that is a true microprocessor. The programs are stored on 10-megabyte hard disks and the computer copies the programs onto reusable cartridges via a phone line download. The disks are updated about once a week. The delivery sytem is relatively slow (1200 baud), and documentation is contained in their catalogue.

Concerned about the theft of the hard disks, however, Xante and other companies have developed systems which rely on dumb terminals that serve as way stations for programs: each time a program is downloaded, at least part of it must come from the host computer. The Xante system stores 90% of each program at the store. The other 10% comes from the host computer each time a program is copied, thus eliminating the possibility of theft while providing an accurate record of each transaction. Xante is capable of downloading both cartridges and floppy disks, but the cartridges are not reusable. The Xante system uses a printer that is capable of providing about ten pages of documentation. For more complicated programs, the printer will provide abbreviated documentation, and the user will receive a complete manual by mail. By using modified phone lines, Xante hopes to increase its transmission speed to 56K baud.

"'Producers' concern over brand-name packaging may well give birth to a new member of the advertising family: mini-video and commercial-graphics advertisements built into catalogue entries . . ."

Softyme has developed a system that consists of the Softyme Express, an in-store catalogue stored on hard disk, and the Softyme Master, a receiving terminal for the electronically-transmitted software, which is sent at 9600 baud. The Softyme Master prints the programs on serialized disks, and is capable of printing mini instruction manuals.

PC Telemart offers an attractive shuttle service, called Telemart, which the company describes as "an on-line database containing information on more than 30,000 software packages, identifying their applications and publishers, with analysis and critical reviews on many of them." The user will be able to access the information at store locations or from the home by dial-

cont. on pg. 27

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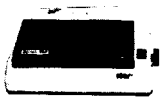

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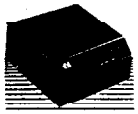

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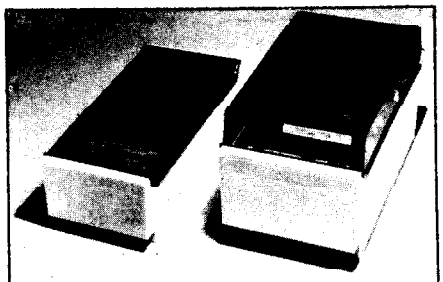

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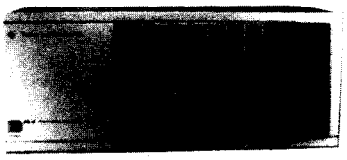

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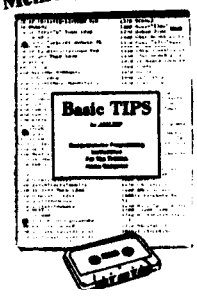

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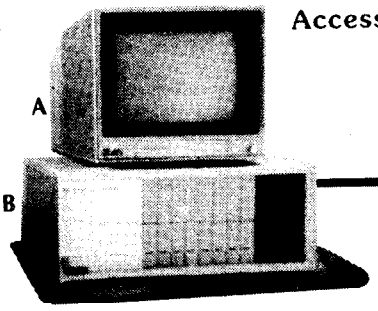

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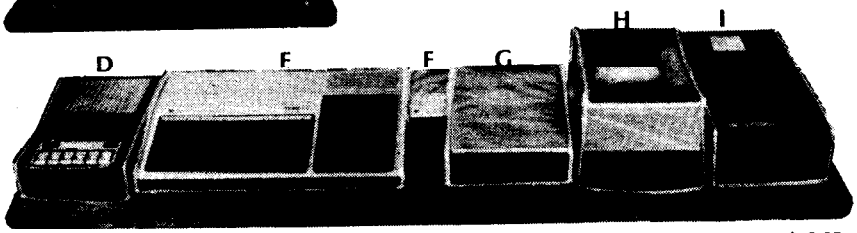

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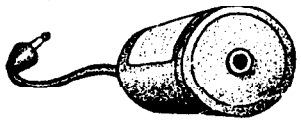

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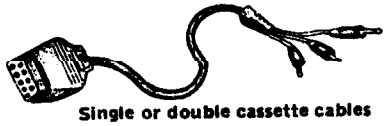

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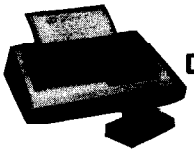

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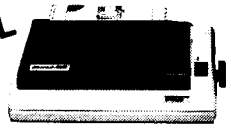

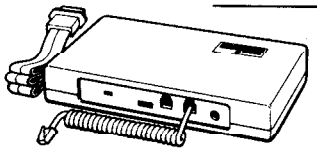

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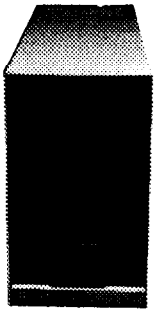

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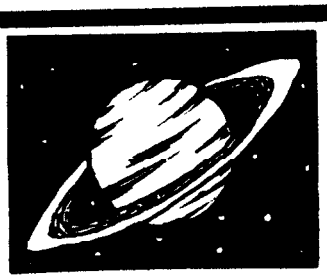

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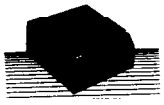

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K MART & WALDENBOOKS TO BECOME RETAILING DUO

Computer retailing takes yet another twist with the acquisition of Waldenbooks by discount store giant K Mart. Waldenbooks' venture into software merchandising—which began with its store-within-a-store concept—combined with K Mart's resources, constitute an interesting if not powerful union. Although K Mart officials say the 2,100 store chain only intends to use Waldenbooks' expertise to develop their own book departments, the possibility is great that self-standing computer stores may be in K Mart's future.

WHY READ BOOKS WHEN YOU CAN READ MINDS?

"What's on your mind?" may become a phrase of the past if a new software package from Human Edge Software, of Palo Alto, California, does what it says it does. Mind Prober will, according to the company, enable users to evaluate other people's hidden motivations, fantasies, likely reactions to stress, and other subconcious personality traits. Similar to standard psychological tests made up of a series of specially formulated questions, the program is designed to reveal the hidden characteristics not of the user, but of someone the user knows. Mind Prober includes a 150-page book that serves as a guide on how to "read" people. It is due on the market in September.

JOGGER'S DEATH STOPS MECA

Acclaimed runner/author Jim Fixx's (The Complete Book of Running) untimely death not only shocked the running world, but has also caused MECA (Micro Education Corp. of America) of Westport, Connecticut to suspend further marketing of their James F. Fixx Running Program. The personal running software product was scheduled to be in stores late this month. MECA is uncertain whether the software's credibility will be affected by Fixx's death—which occurred while he was jogging.

READERS DIGEST DISCONTINUES SOFTWARE

Readers Digest of Pleasantville, New York, has decided to discontinue its software line. The company, which has 10 learning game packages, is reportedly trying to negotiate a deal with another software firm to either license the products or buy them outright. The company will continue to market two math software packages through Random House.

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AHOY THERE!. . .cont. from pg. 6

tronically by-passed." If a series of incorrect passwords is entered into the computer, the microprocessor will "lock out entries for a predetermined length of time." The company says that it would take a mainframe firm some 34,000 years to break the microprocessor's instructions. Eventually, the Kaish System may be used to protect audio car systems and other electronic equipment.

So what does this all mean? Probably most important to the home computer user is the freedom to make backups for programs. It is likely that software companies will adopt a protective system like Romlock's that will allow users to make "legitimate" back-ups, but prevent them from passing on or selling copied programs to others. What about added cost? It probably won't be much, perhaps ten cents per cartridge, unless the cartridge is particularly expensive; even then, the home computer user shouldn't expect to pay much for the company's protection.

Pirated goods will probably always be available, but they will become harder to obtain, and they will be acquired at a greater risk—to both the seller and the buyer. It is likely, too, that a different type of pirate will flourish in the new hi-tech marketplace, a type more akin to the industrial spy. Wearing a trench coat instead of a tweed coat, his felt hat pulled down so that shadows hide his eyes, this new type of pirate may call to you as you pass: "Har, har, me Bucko, PROLOK prints for sale. Romlock master chips complete with blueprints. Kaish Microprocessor instructions. How about a skeleton decoder? Guaranteed to break any LazarLock system. Well, see you around, me Bucko. Smooth sailing."

HCD

MORE SOFTWARE. . .cont. from pg. 17

ing the store and paying the retailer a nominal connect charge. The system will be supported by a microcomputer software library.

Searchmart Corporation is also putting together a software library, and hopes to have 10,000 titles available by the end of this year. The corporation plans to make its services available to thousands of retailers throughout the country.

Although there are still some problems with electronic delivery of software, the computer industry has never sailed away from a challenge. Techniques to combat piracy and to download cartridges will be refined. Producers' concern over brand-name packaging may well give birth to a new member of the advertising family: mini-video and commercial-graphics advertisements built into catalogue entries in both system-specific and general-library catalogues of available software. And who knows, the attempt to overcome the documentation problem could lead to the development of a mini-printing press, complete with built-in binding and brand-name packaging apparati.

Because hundreds of new software packages are flowing into the marketplace each month, it is becoming increasingly difficult for retailers to keep their stores stocked with available goods. Electronic distribution, combined with the new software libraries, offers the retailer easy access to both the information and the goods, and removes the risk of stocking unpopular games and programs. It also offers the user access to a much larger selection of material, sometimes in the convenience of the home. It also means lower prices for both retailers and users. Indeed, one might say that the software distribution industry's ship has come in.

HCD

Home Computer Digest Classifieds

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TI-Cables $9.99, RS232 Cards $150.00, Zork $29.95, EX-BASIC $90.05, BMC Printer $358.00, Pascal Card $201.00, TI Pilot $10.00, Disk Controller Card $150.00, Axiom GP100-Printer $275.00, TI Computers $90.05, Wooden Disk File 96 Count $19.95. 102 N. Center, Bloomington, IL 61701 (309) 828-3251.

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Classifieds cont.

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