

West Coast Faire, continued...

magazine, another Color Computer magazine, and another Atari magazine are also on the way. And our parent company, Ziff-Davis introduced *PC Tech Journal*.

Of Special Interest

We can't possibly cover all the activities and new products of the 450 some odd exhibitors here, so we've elected to report on some products of special interest. Others will be showing up in our new products section in forthcoming issues.

In a hotel room, Quadram Corp. was previewing a board for the IBM PC that simulates an Apple computer. Everything is on the board—microprocessor, 48K of memory and I/O and display drivers. It uses the keyboard, disk drives, display, and power supply of the PC. Because everything is on the board, when it is installed, the PC can actually do processing of both Apple and IBM programs simultaneously. Since the Apple board does not use the IBM PC memory, data can only be interchanged by writing and reading from disk; software is provided to do this. Price \$680.

Three floors up in another hotel room, Osborne was previewing the Osborne Executive. The main external differences between it and the Osborne 1 are that it has a 7" 24-line x 80-character amber display, two compact disk drives mounted in the left side of the housing, a power switch on the front, two serial ports, an IEEE 488 port, and a standard RCA jack for an external monitor. Internally, it has 128K of memory and is able to run synchronous communications software so it can talk to IBM mainframes using 3271 emulation. Also promised is emulation for 3780, 2780, 3741, and several others.

In addition, it will be able to emulate a wide variety of standard terminals—Beehive, Televideo, Hazeltine, etc.

Upon powering up, the machine goes through an extensive self-test. It then allows you to configure it in any way that you wish with five cursor options, reversed display, key click feedback, 50 or 60 Hz power, 15 communications baud rates, logical and physical device protocols, and various character sets. Price \$2495.

In about six months Osborne will also introduce the Executive II which will have an 8088 co-processor, an additional 128K of memory independent from the 128K for the Z80, and an IBM PC compatible video graphics system. Osborne expects that over 80 percent of IBM PC software will run on it. No price yet.

Giving Osborne a good run is the Access Computer which is the first portable to include a full-size built-in printer and acoustic modem. The access is a compact 16" x 10" x 10-3/4" and weighs 33 pounds. It has a 7" amber display, two double density disk drives, Z80 mpu, 64K of memory, 80 cps dot matrix printer and

both an acoustic coupler and direct-connect modem built in. The keyboard is detachable and has 76 keys including numeric keypad and 15 function keys. In addition to the built-in printer, the Access has a parallel port, IEEE 488 port, and two RS-232C ports.

The manufacturer, Access Matrix Corp., bundles a software library in with the Access including CP/M, M Basic, C Basic, *Fancy Font* (Softcraft), and Perfect Software's integrated programs, *Perfect Writer*, *Speller*, *Calc*, and *Filer*. Price \$2495.

On the other end of the spectrum, a new low-end entry from Venture Micro Inc., the Humdinger, will provide some strong competition for the Timex Sinclair, Video Technology VZ200, Mattel Aquarius, and TI 99/2. The Humdinger has a Z80 mpu, 4K of memory (expandable to 64K), 8K Basic in ROM, cassette I/O, parallel and serial ports, high resolution video (256 x 192 pixels) in eight colors, 12 graphics display modes, and four sound voices (five-octave range). The keyboard has 58 Chiclet-style rubber keys. A full array of peripherals and software is listed



The Osborne Executive has a 7" screen, two compact disk drives, and improved housing.



The Access computer has a detachable keyboard, 7" screen, two disk drives and built-in 80-col. printer.



The Attache from Otrona Advanced Systems boasts bit mapped graphics, 7" screen, and a very compact design.

on the flyer and price list although we saw only the basic computer. Watch these pages for a complete review. Price \$129.95.

Megabyte was showing a universal disk controller for the Apple along with four drives. The universal controller runs standard Apple DOS, as well as CP/M, Pascal, SOS, and Apple III DOS emulation. The 5" dual drive is double density, and stores a whopping 2.4 megabytes per drive. A 3-1/2" Sony-type micro drive stores 560K per unit while an 8" drive allows the use of 8" disks from other systems.

Arrra, Inc. introduced Waldo, one of the most fascinating devices at the Faire.

Waldo is a board that plugs into an Apple and is a combination of voice recognition circuitry, real-time clock, home-control hardware, and sound and speech synthesizer. In effect, Waldo borrows your computer's "brain" and gives it hearing, speech, and the ability to control the world around it. We'll have a full review of Waldo coming up soon but, the cartoon below will give you some idea of its capabilities. Price \$599.

PhotoCaster from Commsoft, Inc. is another nifty device for the Apple. Howard Nurse showed us how it could capture and display an image from a TV camera (b & w or color), send and receive an image over telephone lines in eight



Megaflex dual 3" drive stores 0.5 megabytes for \$1490.



Howard Nurse, in the flesh, and via Commsoft's PhotoCaster system.

seconds using the dithering process developed at Bell Labs, enhance the image using a joystick for entry, and print an image on a dot matrix printer such as the Epson MX-80. Images have a resolution of 128 x 128 pixels with each pixel having 16 gray levels. Color photos are composed of one frame for each of the red, green, and blue primary color images.

Two speech synthesis boards were introduced for the Apple, the SSB from Multitech Electronics and the Mockingboard from Sweet Micro Systems. Both have remarkable speech, although with somewhat different characteristics. The SSB uses the Texas Instruments TMS5220 speech chip, has an on-board amplifier, and a 1200-word digitized dictionary on a floppy disk. It sounds like Speak 'N' Spell. Price \$195.

The Mockingboard comes in four flavors—sound effects only (\$99), sound in stereo (\$199), speech only (\$149), and sound effects/speech combination (\$299). Sound effects are produced with the General Instruments PSG which can produce the sounds of cannon fire, trains, weapons, and unearthly musical notes. Speech is produced with the Votrax SC-01, a phoneme type of chip with 64 phonic building blocks that can be combined to create any words you wish. It has the familiar Votrax Swedish accent.

