

# Oracle of Zeus

Newsletter of the Zorba Equipment Users Society

## All The News That Didn't Fit

See TRANSplant for feeble excuse no. 270 as to the extreme tardiness of this issue. The bad news is that Gemini has thrown in the towel on Zorba production (see LATENEWS for details and bargains available for a limited time). The good news is that the Oracle has a schedule for Volume 3. Just because no more Zorbans will be made doesn't mean we'll rush to junk our own. If a majority re-subscribe, O/Z will continue providing news and features that will make our computers useful for a long time to come. The next issues will come out: July, September, November and then January. (With hopefully a supplemental disk as we did last year's BIOS 1.8z.)

## Software News

Ron May has written the first complete graphics editor for the Zorba. **Video Editor** makes it easy to design and save graphic screens for use as logos, and displays. See OFFERS for info.

Randy Brook is still handling discount purchases of **NewsWord** and **Checks & Balances**. Even with the Oracle's hiatus, orders came dribbling in. With his descriptions this issue (see OFFERS), maybe his stock of disks will be depleted.

A new company in Novato, Cal. has begun distributing software for the often-overlooked "installed base" of CP/M computers. **Riva Software** mainly offers discontinued copies of Micropro programs (**WordStar**, **StarIndex**, etc.) but plans to distribute other CP/M software soon. For Zorba owners, the price of an upgrade to **WordStar 3.3** is still prohibitive (Riva's price: \$219). But they suggested an alternative. Micropro will upgrade anyone to **WS 3.3 Professional Pak** onto 8" disk format (price: \$60). It would mean finding someone who could download the 8" format to one of our Zorba disks. (The Pro Pak includes **WS**, **Spelstar**, **Mailmerge**, and **Starindex**.) Would anyone like to follow this up with Micropro? For info: Riva Software Distributors/448 Ignacio Boulevard/Suite 216/Novato, CA 94947/415-382-1080.

There's a disk cataloging program I use and can wholeheartedly recommend. **CATALOG**, by **SRX Systems**, uses a similar setup as the **MAST.CAT** public domain programs. That is, you number each disk from -.001 to -.255 (MCAT by Irv Hoff can go up to -.999). The advantage of **CATALOG** is the ability to include annotated comments for each file or disk in the catalog. And the built-in **FIND** command makes it a snap to lookup any file name or any comment. The limitation of 255 disks is not a major drawback. **SRX** just dropped the price to \$49.95. For info: **SRX Systems/2612 Westberry Drive/San Jose, CA 95132/408-926-9411**.

**PUNT**, the correspondence manager (reviewed in O/Z 2/2 in TRANSplant), has been completely revised and a 'comprehensive manual and modification guide' have been included. This is the Mailmerge-compatible program that builds a database of names/addresses and handles all types of office correspondence automatically. For more information: **The Pacific Foundation/2135 Renrock Road/Cleveland Heights, OH 44118**.

## From the Fort Fone File Folder:

**MODEM USERS!** The best in telecomputing programs is now available for YOUR computer! **MEX-PC** (for IBM and MSDOS compatibles) and **MEXPLUS** for CP/M machines are now available from **NightOwl Software**. **MEX** blows away the competition, and it's only \$59.95! You won't have to fight with MEX to make it work. Version 1.30 is a VAST superset of the public domain MEX, including the ability to write menu-driven shells, TRUE auto-login with string analysis, improved key-string support, self-loading overlays. **MEX-PC** and **MEXPLUS** are available from **NightOwl Software/Route 1/Box 7/Fort Atkinson, WI 53538/800-NITEOWL**.

## Other CP/M faithfuls:

**Xpert Software** offers several nifty utility programs that run on CP/M, specifically Zorba, computers. **XtraKey** is a powerful key redefinition program that takes some concentrated study to master but re-pays the effort with almost unlimited ability to have overlapping sets of definitions for each keyboard character. **XScreen** copies the screen display to a standard disk text file. **XtraTech** is a patching/debugging tool (similar to DDT, but menu driven.) **Xpert's** brochure says about CP/M: "...we won't abandon our first love." For catalog/price lists: **Xpert Software/8865 Pollard Avenue/San Diego, CA 92123/619-268-0112**.

**Kamasoft**, publishers of **KAMAS** (reviewed in OZ 2/2), have released a new, easier-to-use outline processor. **OUT-THINK** is an out-growth of **KAMAS**, without the complex programming language (which few people ever bothered to learn), and with some new features most requested by users. **OUT-THINK**, at less than 1/3 what **KAMAS** cost, but with all the outline processing features, is a bargain for anyone who uses outlines in writing. Price: \$49.95. Contact: **Kamasoft, Inc./2525 SW 224th Ave./P.O. Box 5549/Alaha, OR 97007. Phone: (503)-649-3765**.

## Starfleet BIOS

Zorba anecdote no. 501: It seems that one reason the Zorba has such a lightning-fast bios is because the original Telcon programmer who designed the operating system was a **Star Trek** fanatic. As he earned more and more **Starfleet** promotions, this **Trekkie** became frustrated at the slowness of the game. So, he tinkered and fine tuned the bios until the machine practically flew into warp factor-8 whenever the urge to take the helm overcame him. (This tale comes via **Tom Bongiovanni** who has a direct line into the **Modcomp** computer club.)

## It happens to the best of 'em:

**San Jose's** public library system recently installed a new computer to handle the circulation files. All was going well 'til an employee accidentally erased 16 days worth of records. When they went to get the backup file, none existed. A supervisor had neglected to make one. Sound familiar? 267,000 books were checked out at the time. They figure this simple mistake will cost \$80,000 to replace the 8000 volumes that will never make their way back to the library. Remember the three most important rules of computing: Backup, Backup, and Backup.

## From far away and many lands:

**Paul O'Nolan** and **Clare Lloyd** have settled into Scottish manor life after their move from Athens, Ohio. Paul reports he's currently working as a consultant to **British Petroleum**. "My job is in helping them get more oil out of the North Sea. Drilling is essentially drilling for more information and very expensive information too. Figuring out what's going on in an oil reservoir a few thousand feet under the North Sea is a hell of a job." Contact Paul at: **Paul & Clare O'Nolan/Greenford Farm/Drum of Wartle, Inverurie/Aberdeenshire AB5 9BA/Scotland, UK**.

## Turn On, Tune In, Press Return

**Tim Leary**, of "Tune In, Turn On, Drop Out" fame, has apparently traded mikes for bytes. (Hits for bits?) His software company, **Futique**, just announced their first commercial program. Called "Mind Mirror", the program is apparently a self-awareness tool. The pronouncements remind me of Mr. Leary's fantastic claims in the 60s on the benefits of ingesting a few hundred micrograms of LSD. Have computers become the drug for the 80s? (Mind Mirror is distributed by **Electronic Arts** in San Mateo, Cal. and runs on IBM and PC-compatibles.)

OZ 2/4 Supplement [May 1986]

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