

MicroByte

Software for the 2650

NEWSLETTER 2

Well here it is at last! The much heralded and long awaited second MicroByte newsletter. Two excuses come to mind as to why this has been so long in coming. The first is the unbelievable response that we received to our first newsletter from the word of mouth advertising of satisfied customers and the product information sheets distributed at Applied Technology and the departed Cottage Computers. Over two hundred names now reside on our revised mailing list, and many of you wrote to us more than once.

The second excuse is the amount of time which we have both put towards the final burnishing of our next program release - The MicroByte TEXT PROCESSOR. It is not quite ready for release yet, but in order to whet your appetite the juicy details are included here. Release date is November and we are only too happy to receive advance orders. It goes without saying that this newsletter was composed and formatted using the MicroByte TEXT PROCESSOR. (I hope there are no typos!)

The most significant problem associated with writing this newsletter is to decide what NOT to include. The Newsletter folder has been bulging with prospective content for ages now and it will not all fit, even on four pages and even with microscopic type. Enough of this indulgent diatribe, read on, enthuse and enjoy.

PRICES

Many of you have commented favourably about how reasonable the prices of our products have been. Unfortunately our prices have been altogether too reasonable when compared to the monetary cost and number of hours of work expended to run MicroByte. So, regrettably all prices will have to be increased. The new prices are listed elsewhere in this newsletter and will take effect from 1st November 1980.

The price charged for each MicroByte program is the minimum which will cover the production cost and still yield a moderate profit. In no way can the purchase price cover the enormous amount of time spent to develop the program, or to write the manual and neither does the price cover the cost of continually updating and maintaining our programs. So far we have been updating programs and answering technical queries as part of our general service, but unfortunately we just cannot afford to do this any longer.

PROGRAM UPDATES

In order to reduce the handling inherent in issuing program update sheets, these will be collected together and issued once every three months in October, January, April and July. Regrettably we are forced to charge \$5.00 per issue of COLLECTED PROGRAM UPDATES to cover the cost of printing, handling and postage. It is also with regret that we

introduce a charge to answer technical queries of \$5.00. We are sure that you will understand that we cannot continue to provide you with the first class service that you have been used to if it means that we lose money by doing so. That is the bad news - now for some good news.

SUPPORTED USERS

Rather than pay \$5.00 four times per year to request the COLLECTED PROGRAM UPDATES and also pay \$5.00 each time you make a technical query, why not become a SUPPORTED USER for a year for the same cost as the updates. The charge to become a SUPPORTED USER is \$20 per annum and as a SUPPORTED USER you will:

1. Automatically receive the COLLECTED PROGRAM UPDATES as they are issued, at no extra charge.
2. Be able to make technical inquiries and submit PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORTS and be guaranteed of a reply, also at no extra charge.

ALL users are encouraged to submit PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORTS if they consider that one of our products is not functioning as described. Although all reports will receive our attention, we can only reply individually to those reports received from SUPPORTED USERS. Of course we will continue to replace tapes which prove defective, or contain dumping errors as is now the case.

We recommend that if you purchase a MicroByte program you also become a SUPPORTED USER to ensure that you receive all relevant updates.

The OCTOBER 1980 COLLECTED PROGRAM UPDATES includes:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| ACOS 2.B | Use of LODZ,R0 instruction.
Corrections to manual.
Installing ACOS in the KT9500. |
| ASSEMBLER 1.0 | Inconsistent expansion of TABS.
X command deletes line being edited. |
| BASIC | Fix random number generator.
Some keyboards will not work correctly.
TAB function fix.
Prevent BASIC crashing.
'File error' after successful ACOS load.
ACOS version will not load source or data file.
Stack overflow error occurs on first run. |
| BINBUG 4.4 | Some keyboard characters not recognised.
Installing BINBUG in the KT9500. |
| SRCGEN 3.0 | Warm start causes program to crash.
Memory option causes program to hang up. |

USER REGISTRATION CARDS

This paragraph feels a little like saying, 'hands up all those who can't hear me' because it is a plea to all purchasers to return the user registration card which is enclosed with each program. Without these cards we cannot place your name on our mailing list, and hence you will not be reading this anyway, and you will not be informed of the existence of any program updates. An accurate list is kept of purchasers who deal directly with MicroByte, but if you have purchased a program from Applied Technology or the late Cottage Computers, unless you return the User Registration Card, we have no way of knowing who you are. Thank you to all of you who have so thoroughly completed and returned the cards. A summary of some of the information is presented elsewhere for your interest.

ACOS

Almost fifty 2650 users have purchased ACOS so far and reports reaching us have been very favourable, with the minor problems encountered being overcome eventually. We think that ACOS is great, but then we are biased! If you want an unbiased report, just ask anyone who has used ACOS. With a data transfer rate in excess of 3000 Baud, named files, exceptional reliability, motor control, requiring a minimal hardware interface, and now with almost 50 copies sold (even more if you count the complimentary copies), ACOS is fast heading towards becoming the 2650 program and data interchange standard for cassette. If you are tired of the uncertainty of 300 Baud Binary loading, or the agonising tedium of 110 Baud 'slowing', then you need ACOS.

MicroByte PRICES current 1st November 1980

ACOS v2.C	\$ 60
BASIC v1.6	\$ 35
BINBUG v3.6, v4.5, v5.3, v6.0	\$ 40
ASSEMBLER v1.1	\$ 45
SOURCE GENERATOR v3.1	\$ 45
TEXT PROCESSOR v1.0	\$ 75 *
SUPPORTED USER registration	\$ 20
Postage and Pack	
Surface mail within Australia	\$ 2
Airmail - Australia, Zone 1 & 2	\$ 5
- Anywhere else	\$ 10

Note * The TEXT PROCESSOR is due for release November 1980.

Programs are sold as complete packages and CANNOT be supplied in part only at a discount.

We cannot program user supplied EPROMS since we cannot guarantee their condition when received by us.

BASIC may be supplied on 2708 or 2716 EPROM to special order for the current program price plus \$17/K or part thereof.

All prices and terms are subject to change without notice.

RANDOM RUMOURS

I believe that an S-100 2650 processor board is in the making to be released by Applied Technology. From the preliminary specs., it looks as though it will do everything except make you coffee.

Ian Smith of META PROGRAMMING, Lodge Rd via NIMBIN, 2480, phone (066)891362 intimates that he is keen to promote a 2650 USERS group which is independent of any specific commercial venture and whose membership is open and available to all members, to foster a much more widespread intercommunication amongst 2650 enthusiasts. He would like to receive your name, address, details of system and areas of interest both software and hardware - what you would like and what you have to contribute. Ian would welcome any suggestions or expressions of support to the above address.

The 2650 made its mark when the B&S MINI MAP microcomputer was recommended along side the ubiquitous APPLE II as the microcomputer supported by the NSW Department of Education. The Mini-Map includes a version of MicroWorld BASIC which was specially adapted to provide graphics commands. If B&S can keep up the supply of this remarkable and very competitively priced machine, NSW schools will soon be turning out 2650 programmers by the score. My own experience as a teacher is that a significant number of top flight students will have the B&S MINI MAP programmed from top to bottom in very short order.

Ian Webster is the Computerworks Project man. His chief aim is to encourage computer awareness in the community and with a School's Commission innovations grant he is doing precisely that at 1/402 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest. His interests are wide ranging and not limited to the 2650 in the form of the B&S MINI MAP. Write to him at BOX 1040 Crows Nest 2065 if you would like to know more.

The following figures may be of interest.

MicroByte's mailing list now contains 219 names. These are all people who have written to us and to whom we have replied, so that is at least 219 letters sent out! Those who did not reply to the first newsletter have been removed from the mailing list, but there were not too many of you. The reply rate was in excess of 60%, an astounding return rate for an unsolicited mailing.

Of those 219, fifty three have made purchases from us, according to the rather incomplete user registration cards.

Roughly 35% of the purchasers are using KT9500's, another 35% using one of the EA designs, 15% have Eurocard systems and 15% are Home-brew and/or S-100.

COTTAGE COMPUTERS CLOSES

Cottage Computers, who distributed our products in Melbourne, have suffered under the current financial restrictions and ceased trading in mid-August. The proprietor, David Thomas, wishes to thank all MicroByte purchasers for their support and custom. Customers who previously dealt with Cottage Computers should correspond directly with MicroByte at our Canberra address.