

OFF-LINE

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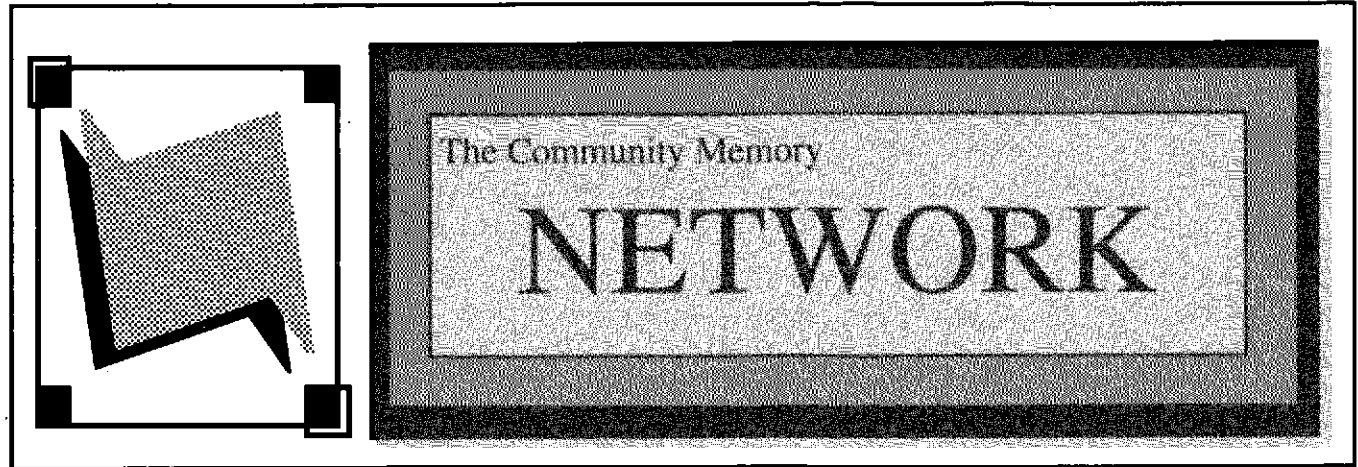
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Vol. I, Issue I

Winter 1991

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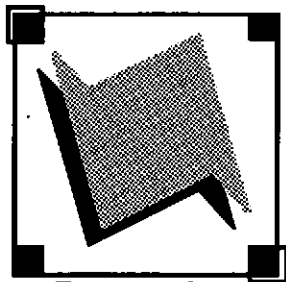
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Muse and Memory (con't.)

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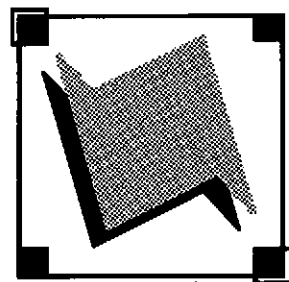
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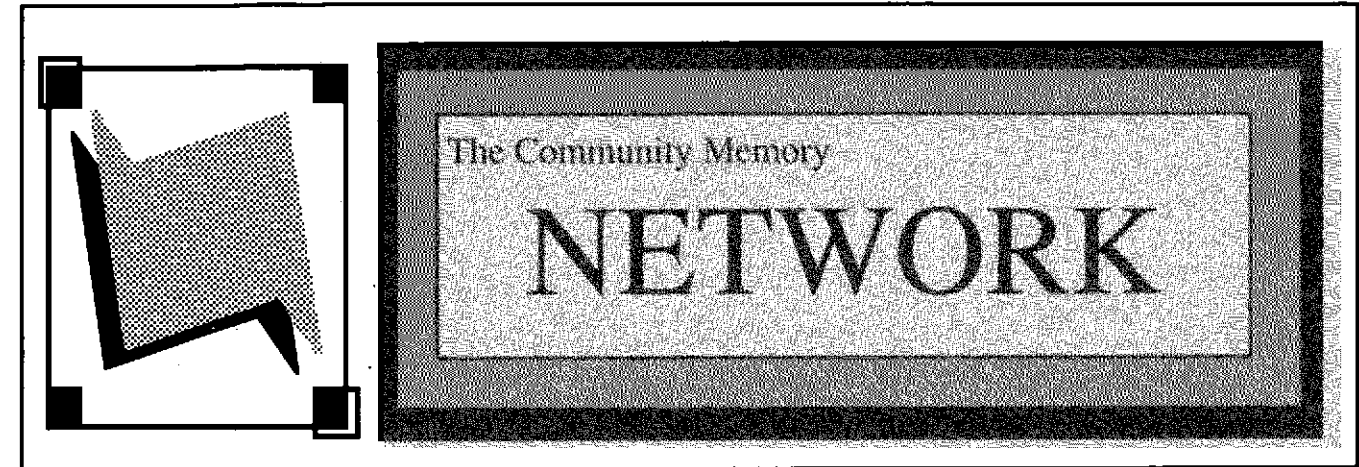
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Network is the quarterly newsletter of the Community Memory Project.

YaVette Holts, Editor
Printed by Inkworks

Board Of Directors
Sandy Emerson, Sybase
Carl Farrington, Design & Delivery
Lee Felsenstein, Golemics
Evelyn Pine, Community Memory Project
Richard Weiss, Bank of America

Staff
Evelyn Pine, Executive Director
YaVette Holts, Outreach Coordinator
Carl Farrington, Chief Programmer
Will Thomas, Programmer
Greg Williamson, Programmer

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Earl Crabb, InterMedia Development Corp...Taleb Jenkins, South Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corp...Phillip Kohn, International Computer Science Institute...Louis Labat, Alameda County Department of Aging...Regina Minudri, Berkeley Public Library...Mimi Recker, University of California, Berkeley...Bert Scharlach

The Community Memory Project is sustained by local imagination, volunteer energy, donations and grants. We are supported by funds from the Telecommunications Education Trust, established by the California Public Utilities Commission. Write Community Memory at 2617 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94702; or call (415) 841-1114.

THANKS FOR A GREAT '91!!

The Community Memory Project wants to thank the following people for making 1991 such an incredible year: Regina Minudri of the Berkeley Public Library, Patti Wong of the South Library, Jim Cara of the Claremont Library, Dawn Swanson of the West Library, Helmut Meister of the International House, Suzanne Ryan and Lee Hogg of the North Berkeley Senior Center, Milt Van Damme of Milt's Coin-op I and II, Durrell Ali of the South Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corporation, Chris Clarke and the whole gang at the Ecology Center, Berkeley City Council, David Cogin of Councilmember Ann Chandler's Office, Chris Mead and Lianne Birkhold of City of Berkeley Information Systems, Sean Gordon of the City of Berkeley, RV Cottam, Anna Stevenson and all the Mature Poets, Will Thomas, Greg Williamson, Tom Nemcik, Eugenia Andruchowicz, Maria Delgado, Steve Long of Inkworks, Flora Russ and Alice Porter at Berkeley High School, Carl Shelton of the Berkeley Youth Employment Services, Connie Ramos of Merritt College, Gloria Rose, Marion Standish, Kathleen T. Schuler, Barbara Sanders, Taleb Jenkins, Sandi Lawson of the Revitalization Exchange, Anne Butigan of Berkeley Trip, Shirley Fogarino of Vista College, Milton Fuji and Clifford W. Frost of the University of California, Kay Finney and Debbie Carton of the Berkeley Public Library, Country Joe McDonald and the Alameda County War Memorial Task Force, Kaidi Depelchin, Annetta Harris, Kuang Huang, Dafina Lee, Louis Labat of the Alameda County Department of Aging, Mimi Recker, Earl Crabb of Intermedia, Allan Kuchinsky of Hewlett Packard, John Schweizer, Susan Walters, and Molly Hopp of Pacific Bell, the Bay Area Nonprofit Computer Consortium, Jim Davis and the Berkeley Chapter of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, Steve Costa and BMUG, Anna Couey, Berndt Scharlach, Cliff Barney, Susan C. Blumstein, James Bond, Mary R. Clayborn, Fred L. Convers of Conversational Computing, Sandy Emerson, Dave Fogerty, David Gans, Flash Gordon, MD., Katherine Hardy, Bruce Kirschner, Philip Kohn, Anna & Martin Rabkin, Michael Rossman, Harlan Shays, Myra Shays, Arthur R. Siegel, William D. Smart, Bonnie Trach, James L. and Martha Watson, and William Zinn.

We Need You.... (con't.)

them both. They have done remarkable work to make the online community we inhabit such a yakker-friendly place.

I'll be kicking around for another two months to assist the Board of Directors in initiating their new projects for 1992 as well as working with the Board and our Technical Advisory Group in managing the network. Clearly, we need your help like never before. You can participate by making good use of the Community Memory network, by volunteering or by sending in a donation. (See the tear-off on page 3.) Give me a ring at (510) 841-1114 and let me know how you want to get involved.

- Evelyn Pine

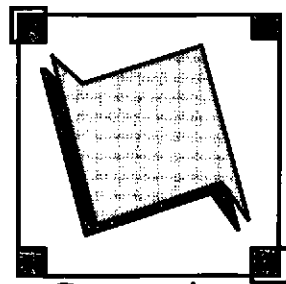
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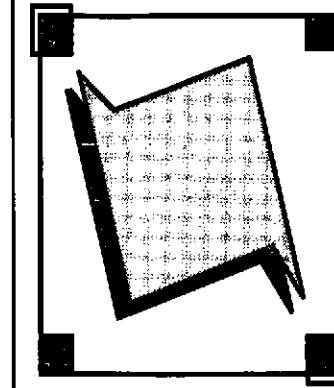
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The Community Memory

NETWORK

Vol. I, Issue IV

December 1991

We Need You in 1992

1992 looks to be a time of change for the Community Memory Project. Some of these changes are exciting and inspiring, others are more difficult and call for renewed commitment.

First, as our lead story notes, the Community Memory Project will be working more closely with the City of Berkeley.

As Councilmember Ann Chandler wrote, "Community Memory already has a wealth of experience in running a public network. This experience will greatly contribute to achieving the Council's goal of opening the City's systems to its citizens."

Not only has the City generously agreed to house the system's central memory, but we will be working with the Information Systems Department to create an e-mail link between the Community Memory network and the city's administrative network, *Citywide*.

(continued on page 3)

Please note our new mailing address:
**COMMUNITY
MEMORY**
1442 A Walnut St.
#311
Berkeley, CA
94709
(510) 841-1114



CM staffers Nancy, YaVette, Evelyn and Carl contemplate 1991's triumphs.

The City of Berkeley Hooks up with Community Memory

On December 10, the Berkeley City Council voted to "direct the City Manager to facilitate the installation of the Community Memory Computer System within the City's computer room at 2180 Milvia Street and to work with Community Memory to support the equipment and establish an electronic mail link between Community Memory and the Administration's network, *Citywide*." We are delighted that Community Memory sites will eventually serve as electronic mail drops through which you will be able to touch base with city officials and departments. The potential of Community Memory to be a bridge between residents and local government is immense. Thanks to Councilmember Ann Chandler for initiating this important first step.

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Celebrating Another First

Every year Community Memory hosts a festive event to publicize and personalize our growing network of information, commentary and conversation. It's always a great time because there's food, libations, and entertainment and, like our online community, everyone is invited. This year we enjoyed the same good time, but because of the hard work and commitment of a few very special volunteers, our annual party took on a special significance.

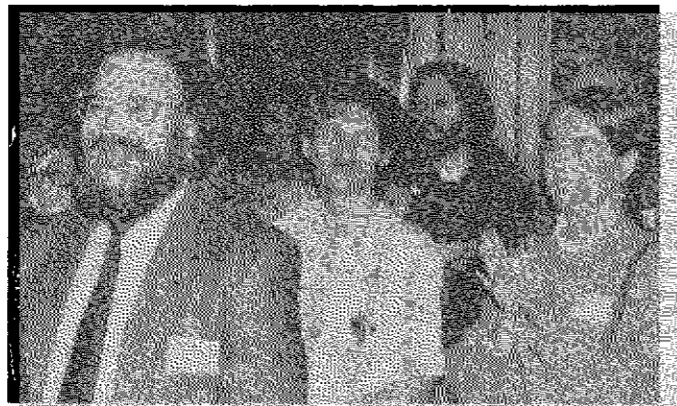


photo by Rick Kern
Volunteer Greg Ross and Board member Mary Eisenhart enjoy the party.

From our first announcement of the completion of Community Memory's interactive Alameda County War Memorial, support poured in from all over the East Bay and beyond. It was particularly heartwarming because, for obvious reasons, a war memorial is a curious thing to celebrate and, some would say, especially in Berkeley. But the overwhelming coverage by the press, the determined efforts of the volunteers, and the well-attended unveiling party were all proof positive that Community Memory can work to bridge the chasm and make the connection between human sentiments, computers and technology.

On Veterans Day, Monday, November 11, the Community Memory Project hosted a robust celebration recognizing some of the things of which we are most proud. The celebration, which was held at The China Station Restaurant, commemorated the broadening of Berkeley history with the unveiling of the first and only interactive war memorial. The memorial, which took over 12 months to complete, pays homage to nearly two thousand Alameda County veterans who sacrificed their lives in military service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam war and, most recently, the Persian Gulf War.

As the memorial came to completion, it became apparent that, for many people, Community Memory is the first and only local place where their loved ones are publicly remembered. The interactive nature of Community Memory allows family and friends to leave permanent remembrances. The first remembrance was left during the unveiling and since then, several touching entries have been added to the online memorial Guest Book.

The program of the unveiling featured remembrances and presentations by Mayor Loni Hancock, Lee Halterman from Ron Dellums' office, Berkeley Public Library Director Regina Minudri, Community Memory Executive Director Evelyn Pine, and Outreach Director YaVette Holts and, of course, the Memorial forum host, Country Joe McDonald who performed his popular anthem, "Fixin' to Die Rag".

By the end of the evening, party-goers, volunteers and news reporters alike were all talking about another first in Berkeley. The Community Memory staff, on the other hand, were pleased to have a chance to rest after having made yet another idea become a reality.

- YaVette Holts

Network is the quarterly newsletter of the Community Memory Project.

YaVette Holts, Editor
Printed by Inkworks

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Mary Eisenhart, MicroTimes Magazine
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The Community Memory Project is sustained by local imagination, volunteer energy, donations and grants. We are supported by funds from Pacific Bell. Write Community Memory at 1442 A Walnut Street, #311, Berkeley, CA 94709; or call (510) 841-1114.

BUZZWORDS

The Community Memory summer youth program, **Operation: In Effect!!** recently caught the attention of **Dominique DiPrima**, host of the local television show **Home Turf**. She and her "posse" filmed **Kaidi Depelchin, Annetta Harris, Kuang Huang** and **Dafina Lee** in a segment that will air late in January '92..... We are pleased to welcome **Pacific Bell** to our growing list of supporters. They have awarded The Community Memory Project a \$5000 grant..... Lots of new energy will be added to Community Memory's driving force. We welcome two new board members and a new advisor. Joining the Board are **Jim Cara**, Director of the Claremont Branch of Berkeley Libraries, and **Mary Eisenhart**, Managing Editor of **MicroTimes** magazine. Community activist **Boona Cheema**, Director of Berkeley-Oakland Support Services (B.O.S.S.), will be joining our team of advisors..... We'd like to acknowledge and thank everyone involved in making our annual party and the unveiling of the Community Memory Alameda County War Memorial an overwhelming success; in particular, we'd like to thank **Gert Chiarito, Greg Ross, Jim Watson, Rich Vannucci, Joe McDonald, Barbara Shayesteh, Rachel Richmond, Lee Halterman, Regina Minudri, Mayor Loni Hancock, Stephen O'Shea, Rick Kern, Kinko's Copies** and **China Station Restaurant**..... Printed copies of the Community Memory Alameda County War Memorial are available for \$15. Call or write the Community Memory Project for more details.

We Need You...

(con't.)

Second, we have also been meeting with other community groups and institutions to see what role they would like to play in the long term development of the network. With ten publicly-sited terminals, almost 100 on-line information and discussion forums, and two thousand users a month, the network is ripe to be institutionalized and nurtured by a diverse collection of local groups and individuals.

Moreover, Pacific Bell has awarded the Community Memory Project a \$5,000 grant to assist in this effort.

The third activity the Community Memory Project Board of Directors will be undertaking this year is a program of public education about the importance of public access to computer networks.

The development of commercial networks like *Prodigy*, the *Well*, *SF-CafeNet*, and Minitel's San Francisco experiment, *101 Online*, in addition to the growth of municipal networks, and the moves to create a National Research and Education Network (NREN), all point to a window of opportunity in which we can educate policy-makers and the general public in the value of the broadest possible public access to telecommunications networks and computer tools. We want to share what we've learned in Berkeley over the past twenty years to enhance community-based, commercial, educational and governmental telecommunications networks.

At the same time, like so many nonprofits, educational institutions, governments and businesses, we are facing a period of retrenchment.

Our grants from the Telecommunications Education Trust, which funded our community outreach efforts, have run out. We have laid off our Outreach Director, YaVette Holts, and System Operator, Nancy Kern as of December 15. The Community Memory Project will miss

(continued on page 4)

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- Yes, I want to volunteer.
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"One of the best (and maybe the only) sources of information on experimental community communication and information systems. . . The *Journal* has good in-depth articles that explore political, social and technical aspects of communications."

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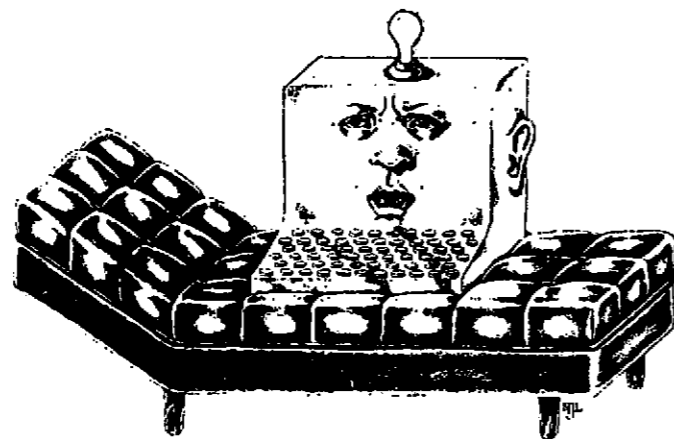
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If you or your group, or other groups you know of, might be interested in hosting a Community Memory node, let us know.



The Complete Computer

- _____ Please add me to your mailing list and send me the next issue of *Community Memory News*.
- _____ Please send me *The Community Memory Project: An Introduction* (14 pages). Enclosed is \$1.00.
- _____ Enclosed is a donation in support of your work.
- _____ Enclosed are my suggestions.

Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: The Community Memory Project,
 916 Parker Street
 Berkeley, CA 94710

Community Memory News

A publication of The Community Memory Project

Number One

This is the inaugural issue of *Community Memory News*, the print-medium companion to the Community Memory computer system. Its publication marks the approach of the first public demonstration of the Community Memory system since 1975.

By producing this newsletter, we hope to enlarge our circle of friends and allies; to ask for your feedback; and to keep you in touch with our progress, our debates, and our

excitement. We'll be publishing *Community Memory News* irregularly for a while, and more frequently as the pilot system begins operation.

In this issue, we include a brief section about the Community Memory vision and a description of its intended physical incarnation for those of you who aren't already familiar with it. Most of the rest of the newsletter is devoted to the state of the project: our current thinking about the hardware we'll use, the

design of our software, the location and nature of the pilot system, the social and political meaning of the system, and the immediate and longer-range problems to be resolved.

The success of the Community Memory system depends as much on its social design as on the hardware we choose or the details of its user interface. In all these areas, we invite your comments. As we proceed, we'll also be asking for your participation.

Community Memory can be used as a community filing cabinet, a continuously available conversation on any topic whatsoever, a place for people with common interests to find each other.

Community Memory is designed as a powerful and public system for communications and information exchange. Its medium will be computer technology: a network of relatively small and cheap computers, each connected to a dozen or more terminals located mostly in public places such as neighborhood centers, cafes, bookstores, and libraries.

The Community Memory system will provide simple yet powerful ways to store and label information, which can then be browsed, selected, sorted, and fished out. All the facilities of the system are available to all its users: anyone can post messages, read messages, and add comments or suggestions to them.

Community Memory can be used as a community filing cabinet, a continuously available conversation on any topic whatsoever, a place for people with common interests to find each other, a tool for collective thinking, planning, organizing, and fantasizing.

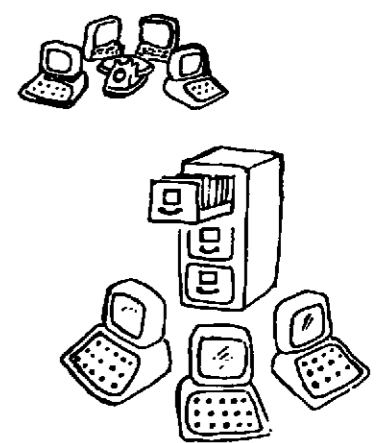
Messages on the Community Memory system might include:

- announcements and comments on current events, entertainment, restaurants
- debates about community and political activities
- listings of community resources
- information about bartering, buying, selling, and renting
- notices about groups being formed
- graffiti, poems, dialogues, and "multilogues."

Since the users themselves are the source of information in the Community Memory, the system is not subject to the various kinds of constraints imposed by commercial "information providers."

Each set of Community Memory terminals around a computer is called a "node." The first

Community Memory node is now scheduled to begin operation in the San Francisco Bay Area in late 1983. It will serve as a pilot test and demonstration of the system. This pilot project and some of the issues it raises are discussed in "Coming Soon to a Terminal Near You" in this issue.



8

1

History and Funding

The 1983 demonstration of the Community Memory system has been a long time coming. The Project began nearly a decade ago with a 14-month field test using terminals in two Berkeley stores and a branch of the San Francisco public library. The system received enthusiastic response and heavy use, but was discontinued in 1975 because it was based on expensive, obsolete computers and programs which would not allow expansion or replication.

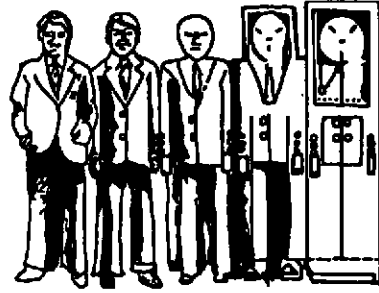
A few years later, the Community Memory Project was revitalized, and began work to create appropriate software for the current generation of smaller, cheaper, more powerful computers. This effort absorbed most of the Project's resources until recently.

Now, the core of the Community Memory database software is complete, and we're collecting feedback on the "first draft" of the user interface, which we demonstrated at the West Coast Computer Faire in San Francisco in March. The next issue of *Community Memory News* will include a description of the user interface and the considerations we're keeping in mind as we design and revise it.

We've also been scoping out the hardware the system will run on. Our thoughts on hardware are discussed in more detail later in this issue.

The early development of the Community Memory software was supported by private donations, mostly from the Project's founders, and by huge amounts of volunteer work. In 1979, we made the rounds of the foundation world. We got a few nibbles, but nary a bite.

Our search for funds soon led us to offer the software developed by the Project to the commercial market. Royalties from the sale of two programs -- Sequitur, a relational database management system, and X.Dot, a telecommunications package -- have recently become a significant part of our income. (For more information about Sequitur or X.Dot, please contact Pacific Software, 10th and Parker Streets, Berkeley, CA 94710, 415-540-5000.)



economy and prove that we need not yet awaken from the American dream.

As we introduce Community Memory, we'll stress that its focus is *communications*, not data processing. At the same time, we hope the system will demonstrate the liberatory potentials of computer technology. But we doubt that many of these potentials can be realized within the status quo.

In the Year of the Computer, we must cope with "computerphilia:" the notion that pushing a few keys on a terminal will liberate people, make their jobs more interesting, and give them unlimited powers.

We also enjoy continuing financial support from Lee Felsenstein, one of Community Memory's founders and more recently the designer of the Osborne I.

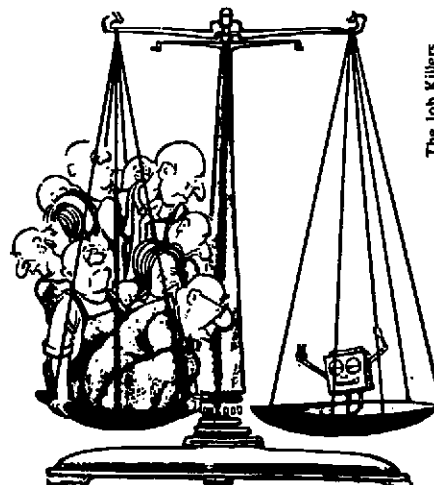
As we move from development to operation, our plan is that upkeep and maintenance of the pilot and subsequent nodes will be funded by small user fees.

The Dangers of Computerphilia

The world into which we are introducing the Community Memory system has changed greatly since its first field test in 1974. Then, computers themselves were a novelty and "computerphobia" ran wild.

In the present Year of the Computer, we're vying for attention with video games and loud promises of a personal computer in every home. Now we must cope with "computerphilia:" the notion that pushing a few keys on a terminal will liberate people, make their jobs more interesting, expand their information horizons, and give them unlimited powers. Not only that, but computers are also supposed to rescue the

In our society, computers tend to concentrate power where too much already accrues. Most often, the technology is used to keep track of people, to put them out of work,



The Job Killers

Community Memory News is a publication of The Community Memory Project. Issue number one was produced by Sue Bloch, Marcy Darnovsky, Sandra Emerson, and Michael Rossman.

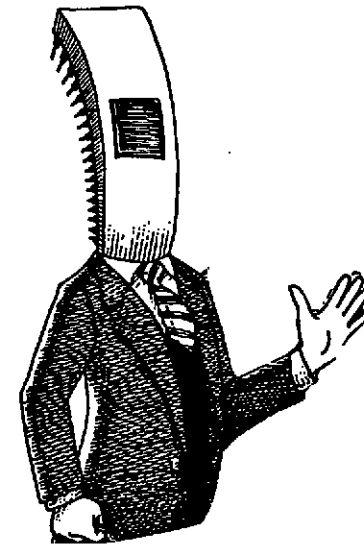
In dollars, that means that the central computer and disk storage to support each set of 16-20 terminals will cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000. These prices can be expected to decline by 20-30% over the next couple of years, but the price of a Community Memory central computer will still be roughly equivalent to that of a new small car.

That's the bad news. The good news is that Community Memory

can be installed on a wide range of 16-bit computers: the choice of an 8086, Z8000, or 68000 system will influence only the speed and efficiency of the system's operation. And one of our development goals -- getting the software off the Unix operating system -- is intended to increase its efficiency, and therefore lower the cost of the cpu needed to support a given number of terminals.

The pilot system, and probably

Although we have always dreamed of being able to run the system on a \$1000 home computer, we're not there yet.



the next couple of nodes, will be installed on 68000-based computers in order to show Community Memory to its best advantage. The Community Memory Project will subsidize the initial cost of these machines.

In addition to a 16-bit cpu with 16 to 20 serial ports to connect as many terminals, a Community Memory node will need:

- 1/2 to 1-Megabyte RAM
- 10- to 20-Megabyte Winchester disk (but up to 150 Mb for very large databases)
- backup and data transfer media (tape, floppies, or removable Winchester).

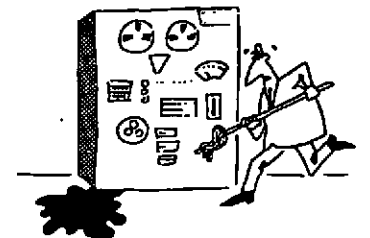
Information Stations

Choosing the central computer is the smallest and perhaps simplest part of the task of building a Community Memory node. Friendly software needs to be housed in a friendly environment, and we are currently developing designs for Community Memory's public terminals.

Each Community Memory "information station" will feature a keyboard and a screen in a video-game style cabinet. The terminals for the pilot system won't have special cabinets, but we will experiment with several types of terminal stands for both stand-up and sit-down use.

Feedback Invited

We invite comments on our proposed hardware shopping list for the Community Memory system. In particular, we are open to advice on the best design for the public terminals and the set-up of information stations. We will be actively soliciting feedback during the trial of the pilot system, and we would like to hear about what equipment is being used to support electronic bulletin board systems, and systems involving public use of computers.



Attention All Programmers

The Community Memory Project is looking for a few good programmers. If you're interested in doing something socially beneficial with your skills, send a letter and resume to us at 916 Parker Street, Berkeley, CA 94710.

Hardware Components of the Pilot System

What hardware -- computer, disk storage, terminals, modems -- will a Community Memory system require?

Its average node should be able to connect 16 to 20 terminals at one time. Computer and disk storage should operate with enough speed and efficiency to give users good service. The terminals should be easy and comfortable to use, and might have a joystick, mouse, or touch pad, as well as a keyboard, for fast or fancy message maneuvering.

The recipe for these hardware elements is currently being refined by our Hardware Committee, whose members will order the equipment for the pilot system. A local engineering research and development firm, Goleemics Inc., is custom-tailoring designs for a terminal and an input device which will be available for future Community Memory systems. However, we plan to keep the Community Memory database and inter-node communications software portable enough to run with a variety of terminals and computers.

Here's a diagram of the types of equipment needed for a typical Community Memory node, with some definitions of terms:

Central computer: the machine that carries out information and retrieval requests on behalf of the users. (Also called "cpu" or central processing unit.)

RAM (Random Access Memory): the computer's internal memory storage for current tasks.

Disk storage: bulk storage for users' messages and comments. Disk storage can be much larger than the cpu's internal storage.

Terminal: a keyboard and screen for typing and displaying messages.

Modem: a device to connect the computer to the terminal through a telephone line.

Joystick, mouse, or touchpad: device for pointing to items or commands on the screen (alternative to typing commands or pressing the arrow keys on the keyboard).

Choosing the Hardware

Over the years, the Community Memory software has been developed on many different computers, beginning with one of the first of the inexpensive minicomputers, a hand-built DEC LSI 11/23 affectionately nicknamed "Stupid." Although we have always dreamed of being able to run the system on a \$1000 home computer, we're not there yet.

Fortunately, as the Community Memory software has expanded, the amount of computing power that can be packed into a microcomputer has kept pace. Most home computers are based on 8-bit computer chips such as the Z80 or the 6502. In recent years, faster and more powerful 16-bit chips are being used for desktop microcomputer systems that have all the capabilities of a mini-computer.

The Community Memory software currently performs best on mid-range 16-bit microcomputer systems such as those based on the Motorola MC68000 processor chip.

to control them, and, in the case of military uses, to threaten them. The last thing we want is for the existence of Community Memory somehow to obscure these facts.

An Alternative Information Utility

Computer communications networks that bear some technical resemblance to Community Memory are fast being developed under sponsorship of several governments. Field testing by corporate conglomerates in the United States, Canada, and Europe is underway. These Videotex networks and other information utilities will soon provide teleshopping, telebanking, and telestudying -- but not much in the way of interactive communications.

For example, the Canadian Videotex system, Telidon, boasts fancy graphics capabilities that advertisers love. But so far, public Telidon terminals provide users only a keypad with which to make menu selections from pre-packaged databases, rather than with a full keyboard to enter their own messages.

Community Memory differs from these commercial systems by virtue of its public nature -- its openness and its dependence on the users of the system. The contents of the Community Memory database will come directly from the public rather than from information providers with commercial interests. Each user will have full interactive access to the database, including the ability to contribute to it on an equal basis and to attach commentary to any item in it. The Community Memory terminals will be located primarily in public places rather than in the living room. And the owners of the Community Memory network will be community or nonprofit groups, who will jointly determine how the system develops, how it's run, and how it's supported.

Community Memory is an alternative information utility that seeks to establish a different relationship with the public it serves. In addition, we hope that Community

Memory will be a forceful enough example of the potentials of the technology to provoke demands for similar interactive services from users of private information utilities.

The freely available "electronic bulletin boards" that computer hobbyists have developed are more compatible with our viewpoint and system. Community Memory may

• The concept of "keywords" -- labels provided for each message by its author -- will be stressed, and user-generated categories will be encouraged. Conventional menus, which force information into pre-defined categories, will be available as organization aids. But their use will be optional.

In our society, computers tend to concentrate power where too much already accrues. Most often, the technology is used to keep track of people, to put them out of work, to control them, and, in the case of military uses, to threaten them.

develop to provide access to electronic bulletin boards and to public portions of other databanks. Currently, you need a personal computer of your own to use the electronic bulletin boards, and they usually have limited capabilities.

As the Community Memory network grows, it will evolve in response both to technical developments and to the desires of its users. For example, if personal computers really become as common as personal cars, Community Memory may support dial-in access. But the features of the system that correspond with our desire to build a liberatory communications tool are unlikely to change.

Design Principles

Both the social and technical design of the Community Memory system reflect our political understanding of communications technology. Here are some of our design principles and features:

• The system will be easy enough to learn that it does not intimidate the first-time or casual user. More complex functions will be available to experienced and sophisticated users, but these will be nearly invisible at first glance.

• There will be no private files. Any user can read any message and attach comments of unlimited length and number to it. However, a message can be edited only by its author.

• Since commenting and indexing facilities will be an integral part of the system, any user can help organize a customized "view" of the database.

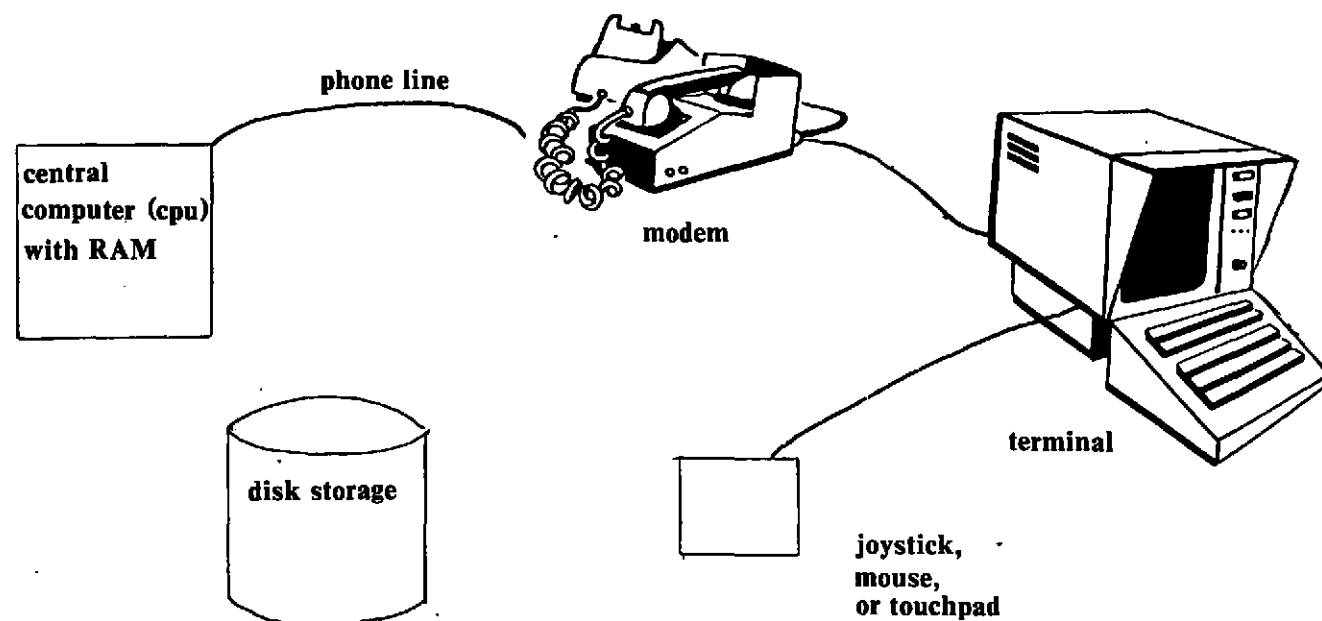
• There will be no censorship beyond what is necessary for legal and housekeeping purposes.

• Use of the system will be cheap enough to be in reach of almost everyone.

• The hardware necessary to run a node will be relatively inexpensive, so that many groups can "buy into" a node.

• Each node will be as self-sufficient as possible, so that technical or political crises affecting other nodes in the network won't bring down the whole system.

Putting these long-held principles into practice raises sticky questions that we're still discussing.



Coming Soon to a Terminal Near You

We expect that the pilot system will begin as a network of about 20 terminals. The terminals will be sited in such public places as libraries, grocery stores, coffee shops and community centers. This pilot test is designed to expose the system to a wide variety of users and to a fully general information-traffic, but to concentrate its resources in a small enough locale for it to be meaningful as a community utility.

To make the system immediately useful, we'll "seed" the database with information likely to be interesting to its users. We'll also be recruiting local "gatekeepers" to help organize and tend the database as it grows. A gatekeeper is not a terminal-sitter; Community Memory terminals are meant to function without on-site assistance. Modest coin-box fees will probably be charged to explore the possibility of direct user support.

We'll monitor the pilot intensively, both on site and remotely. The pilot is part of the design process of the Community Memory system, during which we'll be asking its users to participate in its social and technical evolution. We'll be testing different versions of how the system appears to users and encouraging discussion of the Community Memory concept.

We hope the pilot will stimulate the formation of groups -- based either on geographic proximity or common interest -- that will own and operate other nodes. We envision a wide diversity in the character of Community Memory nodes, though

we want to maintain a unity of concept and image. The agreements we work out with node hosts will vary according to their needs and natures, but every node will be recognizable as part of the Community Memory network.

The imminence of putting our long-held principles into practice has stirred some debates among us. One of the most controversial issues is the propriety of developing -- or

- a super-utility for micro-computer users and users' groups, organizing their knowledge and resources

- a utility focused on skills exchange, barter, and other ways to further a person-to-person economy.

Any of these functions might develop as subsystems of a fully

We hope the Community Memory pilot will stimulate the formation of groups -- based either on geographic proximity or common interest -- that will own and operate other nodes.

encouraging others to develop -- "dedicated" or special interest Community Memory nodes, in contrast to fully public ones. Proposals have included dedicated systems for:

- a grassroots activist network, most likely in the anti-nuclear or environmental movements

- a network of health care agencies and sites, to collect information about health care providers and quality, about shared problems and practices, and about available resources

public Community Memory node. But they are also proposals for emplacements of Community Memory that seem feasible in their own right, inviting our attention after the pilot system is in place. Which of them, if any, we choose to explore will depend strongly on the interest and resources we find in the proposed "target" communities to help us and spur us on.

Another controversial issue for us concerns dial-in access to the system. Our current discussion holds against it not only the privileged access it would give to owners of

personal computers, but also the problems of geographical dispersion, privatization, and lack of face-to-face interaction.

Yet we have a sense that Community Memory's democratization of information goes on more through the system itself than through the environment of its access. We also feel that the personal computer info-sphere needs some example of user-provided, user-driven information systems -- before commercial developments foreclose the chance for them to grow.

Other issues include the ultimate cost of Community Memory to users and to node hosts (how cheap is cheap enough?); the agreement we'll strike with node hosts (what policies must a group agree to follow in order to call itself Community Memory: for example, will continuous public access to the terminals be required?); the part that the node hosts will play in planning and carrying out publicity, education, and policy formation for the system; and the degree of control we may need to exercise over databases or provider identities (we stand strong for no content control, but face libel and copyright issues).

There are many more issues. It's a full agenda. Again, we invite your comments. We'll try to keep you posted on developments through future issues of *Community Memory News*.

Community Memory and Computer Services

While we've been slaving away over the hot terminals, other groups interested in community uses of computers have also been hard at work. Though their ideas and projects are sometimes quite different from ours, they often overlap or are complementary.

(The most complete recent listing of such projects is in Steve Johnson's "Information and Communications Technologies for the Community," available for \$6.00 from Center for Urban Education, 0245 SW Bancroft, Portland, OR 97201. But as in the rest of the computer field, developments in community computing are so rapid that any "complete works" is soon obsolete.)

The primary focus of most of these groups is to provide computer services -- word processing, accounting, mailing lists -- to community, nonprofit, and grassroots political organizations. While we appreciate the importance of this task, it's not what Community Memory itself is

fund both of these functions. They will present their plan to private investors who have expressed interest in their project. PICA is trying to put together a cooperative of community groups and small businesses to purchase the necessary equipment and resources.



The personal computer info-sphere needs some example of user-provided, user-driven information systems -- before commercial developments foreclose the chance for them to grow.

meant to be about. However, recent talks with several groups on the West Coast suggest that people who are developing community-oriented computer services might well be interested in hosting Community Memory nodes. The possible configurations are numerous.

For example, both the Computer Services Collective in San Diego and the Public Interest Communications Association in Seattle plan to combine computer services for progressive groups with Community Memory-like communications facilities. CSC is drawing up a plan for a business-oriented computer services operation in San Diego that they hope will be able to

(The Computer Services Collective may be contacted c/o Willard Russell and Joel Schwarzbart, Applied Sciences Building, UC Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA 95064. The address of the Public Interest Communications Association is 318 17th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122, 206-329-1804.)

We don't mean to suggest that a Community Memory host group must already be well-versed in computer technology. As the scenarios mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter indicate, we hope that neighborhood groups, activist groups, and groups based on other affinities will work with us to proliferate Community Memory.



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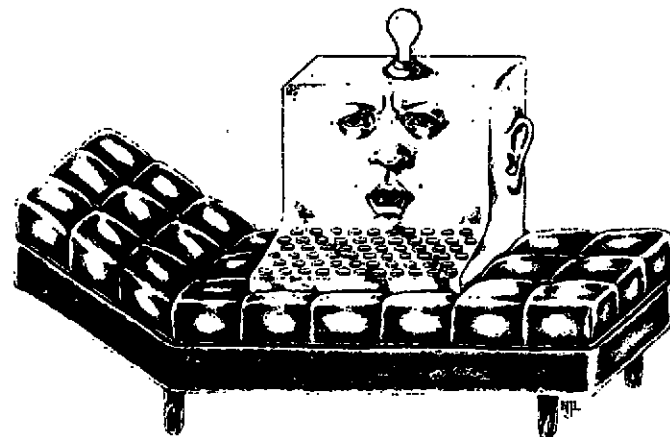
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- _____ Enclosed are my suggestions.

Name _____ Phone _____
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Community Memory News

A publication of The Community Memory Project

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 the software but before
 we had terminals installed

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design of our software, the location and nature of the pilot system, the social and political meaning of the system, and the immediate and longer-range problems to be resolved.

The success of the Community Memory system depends as much on its social design as on the hardware we choose or the details of its user interface. In all these areas, we invite your comments. As we proceed, we'll also be asking for your participation.

Community Memory can be used as a community filing cabinet, a continuously available conversation on any topic whatsoever, a place for people with common interests to find each other.

Community Memory is designed as a powerful and public system for communications and information exchange. Its medium will be computer technology: a network of relatively small and cheap computers, each connected to a dozen or more terminals located mostly in public places such as neighborhood centers, cafes, bookstores, and libraries.

The Community Memory system will provide simple yet powerful ways to store and label information, which can then be browsed, selected, sorted, and fished out. All the facilities of the system are available to all its users: anyone can post messages, read messages, and add comments or suggestions to them.

Community Memory can be used as a community filing cabinet, a continuously available conversation on any topic whatsoever, a place for people with common interests to find each other, a tool for collective thinking, planning, organizing, and fantasizing.

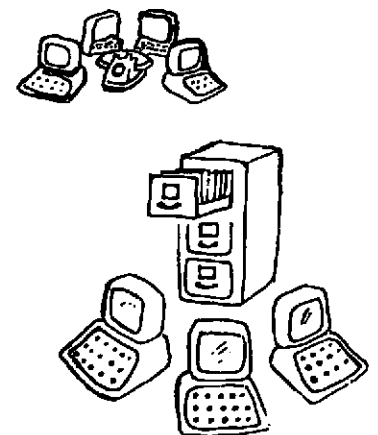
Messages on the Community Memory system might include:

- announcements and comments on current events, entertainment, restaurants
- debates about community and political activities
- listings of community resources
- information about bartering, buying, selling, and renting
- notices about groups being formed
- graffiti, poems, dialogues, and "multilogues."

Since the users themselves are the source of information in the Community Memory, the system is not subject to the various kinds of constraints imposed by commercial "information providers."

Each set of Community Memory terminals around a computer is called a "node." The first

Community Memory node is now scheduled to begin operation in the San Francisco Bay Area in late 1983. It will serve as a pilot test and demonstration of the system. This pilot project and some of the issues it raises are discussed in "Coming Soon to a Terminal Near You" in this issue.



History and Funding

The 1983 demonstration of the Community Memory system has been a long time coming. The Project began nearly a decade ago with a 14-month field test using terminals in two Berkeley stores and a branch of the San Francisco public library. The system received enthusiastic response and heavy use, but was discontinued in 1975 because it was based on expensive, obsolete computers and programs which would not allow expansion or replication.

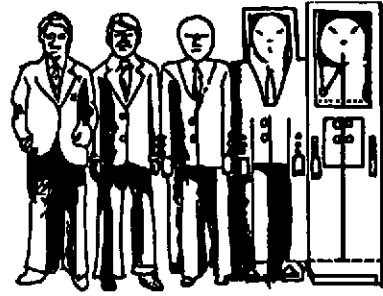
A few years later, the Community Memory Project was revitalized, and began work to create appropriate software for the current generation of smaller, cheaper, more powerful computers. This effort absorbed most of the Project's resources until recently.

Now, the core of the Community Memory database software is complete, and we're collecting feedback on the "first draft" of the user interface, which we demonstrated at the West Coast Computer Faire in San Francisco in March. The next issue of *Community Memory News* will include a description of the user interface and the considerations we're keeping in mind as we design and revise it.

We've also been scoping out the hardware the system will run on. Our thoughts on hardware are discussed in more detail later in this issue.

The early development of the Community Memory software was supported by private donations, mostly from the Project's founders, and by huge amounts of volunteer work. In 1979, we made the rounds of the foundation world. We got a few nibbles, but nary a bite.

Our search for funds soon led us to offer the software developed by the Project to the commercial market. Royalties from the sale of two programs -- Sequitur, a relational database management system, and X.Dot, a telecommunications package -- have recently become a significant part of our income. (For more information about Sequitur or X.Dot, please contact Pacific Software, 10th and Parker Streets, Berkeley, CA 94710, 415-540-5000.)



economy and prove that we need not yet awaken from the American dream.

As we introduce Community Memory, we'll stress that its focus is *communications*, not data processing. At the same time, we hope the system will demonstrate the liberatory potentials of computer technology. But we doubt that many of these potentials can be realized within the status quo.

In the Year of the Computer, we must cope with "computerphilia:" the notion that pushing a few keys on a terminal will liberate people, make their jobs more interesting, and give them unlimited powers.

We also enjoy continuing financial support from Lee Felsenstein, one of Community Memory's founders and more recently the designer of the Osborne I.

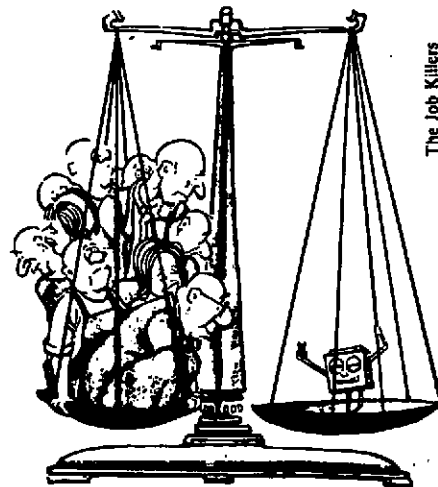
As we move from development to operation, our plan is that upkeep and maintenance of the pilot and subsequent nodes will be funded by small user fees.

The Dangers of Computerphilia

The world into which we are introducing the Community Memory system has changed greatly since its first field test in 1974. Then, computers themselves were a novelty and "computerphobia" ran wild.

In the present Year of the Computer, we're vying for attention with video games and loud promises of a personal computer in every home. Now we must cope with "computerphilia:" the notion that pushing a few keys on a terminal will liberate people, make their jobs more interesting, expand their information horizons, and give them unlimited powers. Not only that, but computers are also supposed to rescue the

In our society, computers tend to concentrate power where too much already accrues. Most often, the technology is used to keep track of people, to put them out of work,



The Job Killers

Community Memory News is a publication of The Community Memory Project. Issue number one was produced by Sue Bloch, Marcy Darnovsky, Sandra Emerson, and Michael Rossman.

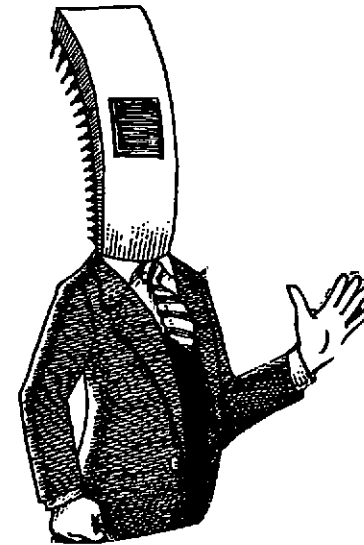
In dollars, that means that the central computer and disk storage to support each set of 16-20 terminals will cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000. These prices can be expected to decline by 20-30% over the next couple of years, but the price of a Community Memory central computer will still be roughly equivalent to that of a new small car.

That's the bad news. The good news is that Community Memory

can be installed on a wide range of 16-bit computers: the choice of an 8086, Z8000, or 68000 system will influence only the speed and efficiency of the system's operation. And one of our development goals -- getting the software off the Unix operating system -- is intended to increase its efficiency, and therefore lower the cost of the cpu needed to support a given number of terminals.

The pilot system, and probably

Although we have always dreamed of being able to run the system on a \$1000 home computer, we're not there yet.



the next couple of nodes, will be installed on 68000-based computers in order to show Community Memory to its best advantage. The Community Memory Project will subsidize the initial cost of these machines.

In addition to a 16-bit cpu with 16 to 20 serial ports to connect as many terminals, a Community Memory node will need:

- 1/2 to 1-Megabyte RAM
- 10- to 20-Megabyte Winchester disk (but up to 150 Mb for very large databases)
- backup and data transfer media (tape, floppies, or removable Winchester).

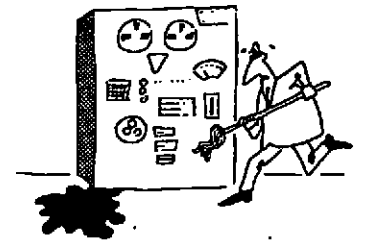
Information Stations

Choosing the central computer is the smallest and perhaps simplest part of the task of building a Community Memory node. Friendly software needs to be housed in a friendly environment, and we are currently developing designs for Community Memory's public terminals.

Each Community Memory "information station" will feature a keyboard and a screen in a video-game style cabinet. The terminals for the pilot system won't have special cabinets, but we will experiment with several types of terminal stands for both stand-up and sit-down use.

Feedback Invited

We invite comments on our proposed hardware shopping list for the Community Memory system. In particular, we are open to advice on the best design for the public terminals and the set-up of information stations. We will be actively soliciting feedback during the trial of the pilot system, and we would like to hear about what equipment is being used to support electronic bulletin board systems, and systems involving public use of computers.



Attention All Programmers

The Community Memory Project is looking for a few good programmers. If you're interested in doing something socially beneficial with your skills, send a letter and resume to us at 916 Parker Street, Berkeley, CA 94710.

Hardware Components of the Pilot System

What hardware -- computer, disk storage, terminals, modems -- will a Community Memory system require?

Its average node should be able to connect 16 to 20 terminals at one time. Computer and disk storage should operate with enough speed and efficiency to give users good service. The terminals should be easy and comfortable to use, and might have a joystick, mouse, or touch pad, as well as a keyboard, for fast or fancy message maneuvering.

The recipe for these hardware elements is currently being refined by our Hardware Committee, whose members will order the equipment for the pilot system. A local engineering research and development firm, Golemics Inc., is custom-tailoring designs for a terminal and an input device which will be available for future Community Memory systems. However, we plan to keep the Community Memory database and inter-node communications software portable enough to run with a variety of terminals and computers.

Here's a diagram of the types of equipment needed for a typical Community Memory node, with some definitions of terms:

Central computer: the machine that carries out information and retrieval requests on behalf of the users. (Also called "cpu" or central processing unit.)

RAM (Random Access Memory): the computer's internal memory storage for current tasks.

Disk storage: bulk storage for users' messages and comments. Disk storage can be much larger than the cpu's internal storage.

Terminal: a keyboard and screen for typing and displaying messages.

Modem: a device to connect the computer to the terminal through a telephone line.

Joystick, mouse, or touchpad: device for pointing to items or commands on the screen (alternative to typing commands or pressing the arrow keys on the keyboard).

Choosing the Hardware

Over the years, the Community Memory software has been developed on many different computers, beginning with one of the first of the inexpensive minicomputers, a hand-built DEC LSI 11/23 affectionately nicknamed "Stupid." Although we have always dreamed of being able to run the system on a \$1000 home computer, we're not there yet.

Fortunately, as the Community Memory software has expanded, the amount of computing power that can be packed into a microcomputer has kept pace. Most home computers are based on 8-bit computer chips such as the Z80 or the 6502. In recent years, faster and more powerful 16-bit chips are being used for desktop microcomputer systems that have all the capabilities of a mini-computer.

The Community Memory software currently performs best on mid-range 16-bit microcomputer systems such as those based on the Motorola MC68000 processor chip.

to control them, and, in the case of military uses, to threaten them. The last thing we want is for the existence of Community Memory somehow to obscure these facts.

An Alternative Information Utility

Computer communications networks that bear some technical resemblance to Community Memory are fast being developed under sponsorship of several governments. Field testing by corporate conglomerates in the United States, Canada, and Europe is underway. These Videotex networks and other information utilities will soon provide teleshopping, telebanking, and telestudying -- but not much in the way of interactive communications.

For example, the Canadian Videotex system, Telidon, boasts fancy graphics capabilities that advertisers love. But so far, public Telidon terminals provide users only a keypad with which to make menu selections from pre-packaged databases, rather than with a full keyboard to enter their own messages.

Community Memory differs from these commercial systems by virtue of its public nature -- its openness and its dependence on the users of the system. The contents of the Community Memory database will come directly from the public rather than from information providers with commercial interests. Each user will have full interactive access to the database, including the ability to contribute to it on an equal basis and to attach commentary to any item in it. The Community Memory terminals will be located primarily in public places rather than in the living room. And the owners of the Community Memory network will be community or nonprofit groups, who will jointly determine how the system develops, how it's run, and how it's supported.

Community Memory is an alternative information utility that seeks to establish a different relationship with the public it serves. In addition, we hope that Community

Memory will be a forceful enough example of the potentials of the technology to provoke demands for similar interactive services from users of private information utilities.

The freely available "electronic bulletin boards" that computer hobbyists have developed are more compatible with our viewpoint and system. Community Memory may

• The concept of "keywords" -- labels provided for each message by its author -- will be stressed, and user-generated categories will be encouraged. Conventional menus, which force information into pre-defined categories, will be available as organization aids. But their use will be optional.

In our society, computers tend to concentrate power where too much already accrues. Most often, the technology is used to keep track of people, to put them out of work, to control them, and, in the case of military uses, to threaten them.

develop to provide access to electronic bulletin boards and to public portions of other databanks. Currently, you need a personal computer of your own to use the electronic bulletin boards, and they usually have limited capabilities.

As the Community Memory network grows, it will evolve in response both to technical developments and to the desires of its users. For example, if personal computers really become as common as personal cars, Community Memory may support dial-in access. But the features of the system that correspond with our desire to build a liberatory communications tool are unlikely to change.

Design Principles

Both the social and technical design of the Community Memory system reflect our political understanding of communications technology. Here are some of our design principles and features:

• The system will be easy enough to learn that it does not intimidate the first-time or casual user. More complex functions will be available to experienced and sophisticated users, but these will be nearly invisible at first glance.

• There will be no private files. Any user can read any message and attach comments of unlimited length and number to it. However, a message can be edited only by its author.

• Since commenting and indexing facilities will be an integral part of the system, any user can help organize a customized "view" of the database.

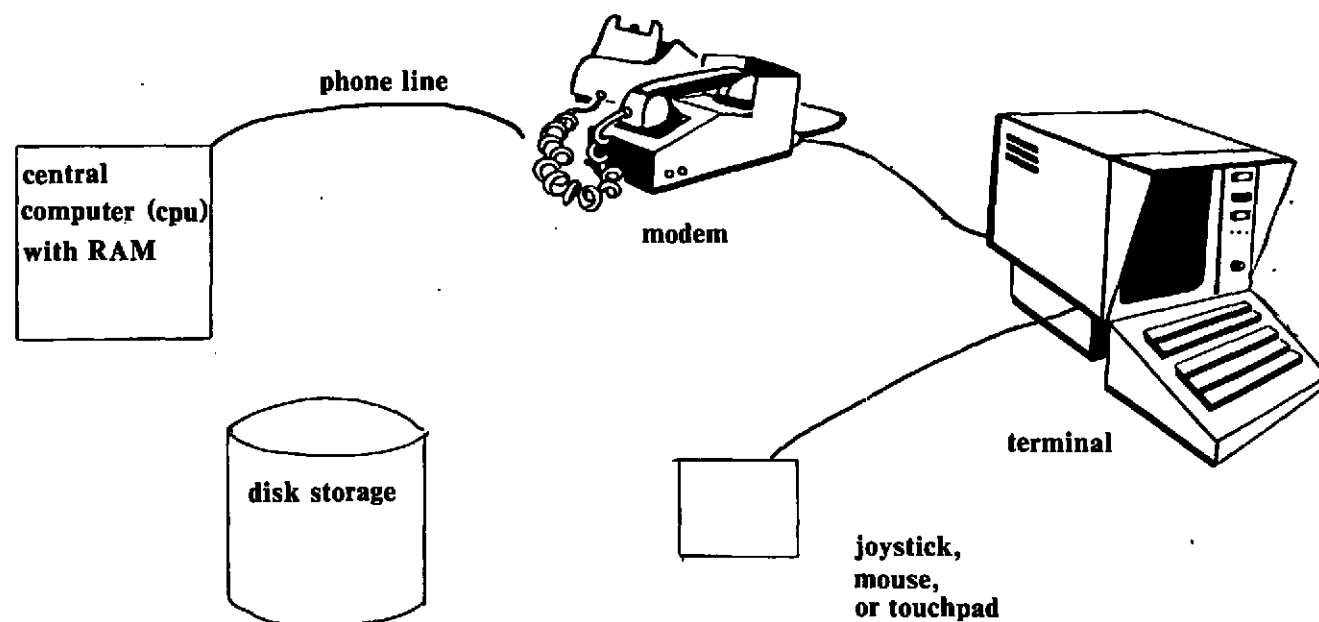
• There will be no censorship beyond what is necessary for legal and housekeeping purposes.

• Use of the system will be cheap enough to be in reach of almost everyone.

• The hardware necessary to run a node will be relatively inexpensive, so that many groups can "buy into" a node.

• Each node will be as self-sufficient as possible, so that technical or political crises affecting other nodes in the network won't bring down the whole system.

Putting these long-held principles into practice raises sticky questions that we're still discussing.



Coming Soon to a Terminal Near You

We expect that the pilot system will begin as a network of about 20 terminals. The terminals will be sited in such public places as libraries, grocery stores, coffee shops and community centers. This pilot test is designed to expose the system to a wide variety of users and to a fully general information-traffic, but to concentrate its resources in a small enough locale for it to be meaningful as a community utility.

To make the system immediately useful, we'll "seed" the database with information likely to be interesting to its users. We'll also be recruiting local "gatekeepers" to help organize and tend the database as it grows. A gatekeeper is not a terminal-sitter; Community Memory terminals are meant to function without on-site assistance. Modest coin-box fees will probably be charged to explore the possibility of direct user support.

We'll monitor the pilot intensively, both on site and remotely. The pilot is part of the design process of the Community Memory system, during which we'll be asking its users to participate in its social and technical evolution. We'll be testing different versions of how the system appears to users and encouraging discussion of the Community Memory concept.

We hope the pilot will stimulate the formation of groups -- based either on geographic proximity or common interest -- that will own and operate other nodes. We envision a wide diversity in the character of Community Memory nodes, though

we want to maintain a unity of concept and image. The agreements we work out with node hosts will vary according to their needs and natures, but every node will be recognizable as part of the Community Memory network.

The imminence of putting our long-held principles into practice has stirred some debates among us. One of the most controversial issues is the propriety of developing -- or

- a super-utility for micro-computer users and users' groups, organizing their knowledge and resources

- a utility focused on skills exchange, barter, and other ways to further a person-to-person economy.

Any of these functions might develop as subsystems of a fully

We hope the Community Memory pilot will stimulate the formation of groups -- based either on geographic proximity or common interest -- that will own and operate other nodes.

encouraging others to develop -- "dedicated" or special interest Community Memory nodes, in contrast to fully public ones. Proposals have included dedicated systems for:

- a grassroots activist network, most likely in the anti-nuclear or environmental movements

- a network of health care agencies and sites, to collect information about health care providers and quality, about shared problems and practices, and about available resources

public Community Memory node. But they are also proposals for emplacements of Community Memory that seem feasible in their own right, inviting our attention after the pilot system is in place. Which of them, if any, we choose to explore will depend strongly on the interest and resources we find in the proposed "target" communities to help us and spur us on.

Another controversial issue for us concerns dial-in access to the system. Our current discussion holds against it not only the privileged access it would give to owners of

personal computers, but also the problems of geographical dispersion, privatization, and lack of face-to-face interaction.

Yet we have a sense that Community Memory's democratization of information goes on more through the system itself than through the environment of its access. We also feel that the personal computer info-sphere needs some example of user-provided, user-driven information systems -- before commercial developments foreclose the chance for them to grow.

Other issues include the ultimate cost of Community Memory to users and to node hosts (how cheap is cheap enough?); the agreement we'll strike with node hosts (what policies must a group agree to follow in order to call itself Community Memory: for example, will continuous public access to the terminals be required?); the part that the node hosts will play in planning and carrying out publicity, education, and policy formation for the system; and the degree of control we may need to exercise over databases or provider identities (we stand strong for no content control, but face libel and copyright issues).

There are many more issues. It's a full agenda. Again, we invite your comments. We'll try to keep you posted on developments through future issues of *Community Memory News*.

Community Memory and Computer Services

While we've been slaving away over the hot terminals, other groups interested in community uses of computers have also been hard at work. Though their ideas and projects are sometimes quite different from ours, they often overlap or are complementary.

(The most complete recent listing of such projects is in Steve Johnson's "Information and Communications Technologies for the Community," available for \$6.00 from Center for Urban Education, 0245 SW Bancroft, Portland, OR 97201. But as in the rest of the computer field, developments in community computing are so rapid that any "complete works" is soon obsolete.)

The primary focus of most of these groups is to provide computer services -- word processing, accounting, mailing lists -- to community, nonprofit, and grassroots political organizations. While we appreciate the importance of this task, it's not what Community Memory itself is

The personal computer info-sphere needs some example of user-provided, user-driven information systems -- before commercial developments foreclose the chance for them to grow.

meant to be about. However, recent talks with several groups on the West Coast suggest that people who are developing community-oriented computer services might well be interested in hosting Community Memory nodes. The possible configurations are numerous.

For example, both the Computer Services Collective in San Diego and the Public Interest Communications Association in Seattle plan to combine computer services for progressive groups with Community Memory-like communications facilities. CSC is drawing up a plan for a business-oriented computer services operation in San Diego that they hope will be able to

fund both of these functions. They will present their plan to private investors who have expressed interest in their project. PICA is trying to put together a cooperative of community groups and small businesses to purchase the necessary equipment and resources.



Co-Op Store Surveys Community Memory Users

Last fall, Community Memory and the management of the Telegraph Avenue Co-op supermarket (a Community Memory terminal site) obtained feedback from Community Memory users with a short questionnaire developed by the Co-op Education Department. The following is an outline of the results.

Questionnaires were placed next to the terminal and voluntarily filled out by a variety of CM users. There were questions about age, sex, income and amount of previous computer experience. Other questions concerned use of CM: how often, when, and where. In addition, the survey asked what kind of information the user would like to get from (or put into) Community Memory.

A total of 60 people responded. Most of the people who

People are mainly interested in using the CM system as an electronic bulletin board (78%). In addition, 66% wanted to see the system as a forum for community information, 27% would like to use it as a clearinghouse for consumer and nutritional information and 8% wanted to see news about the Co-op.

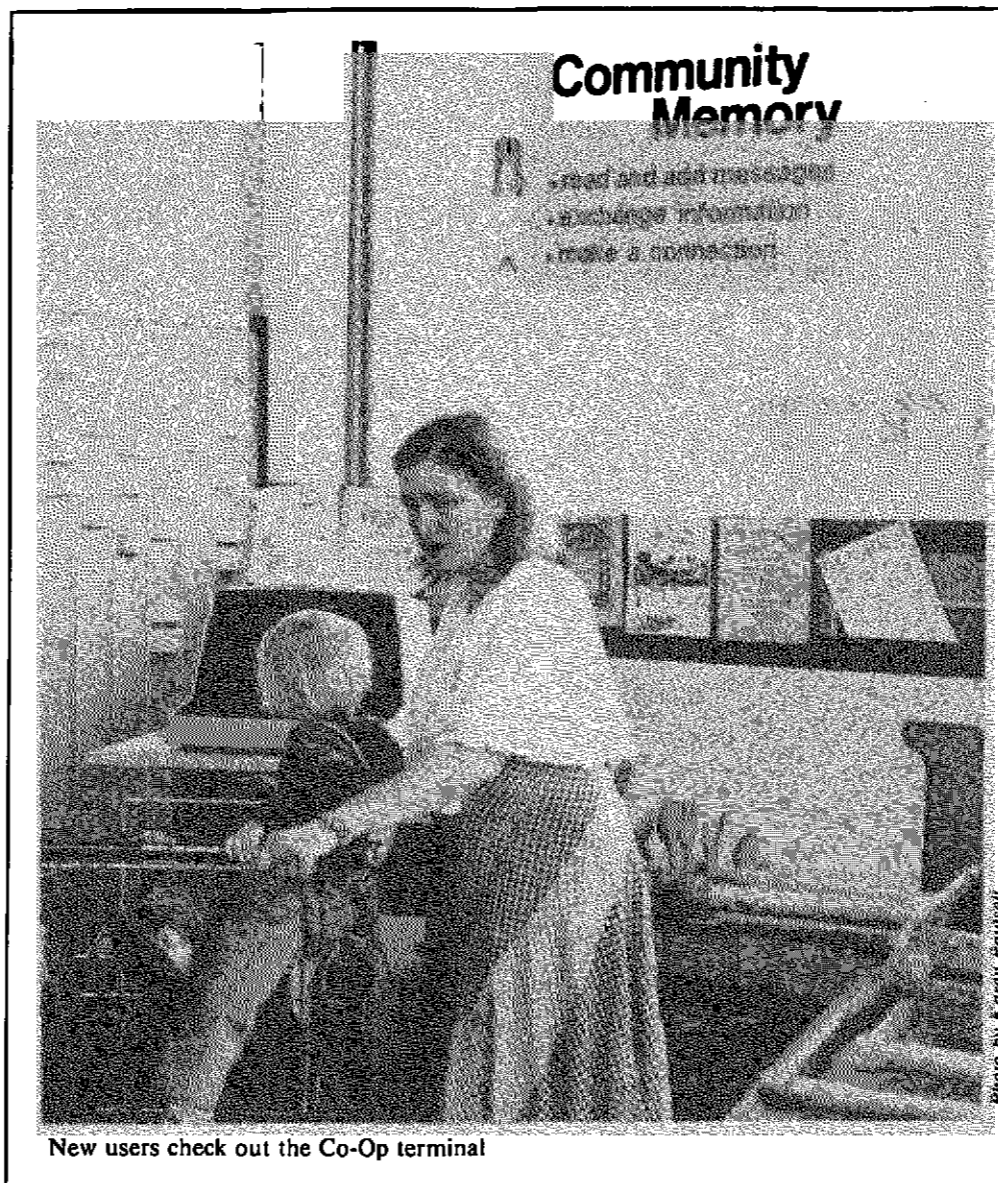
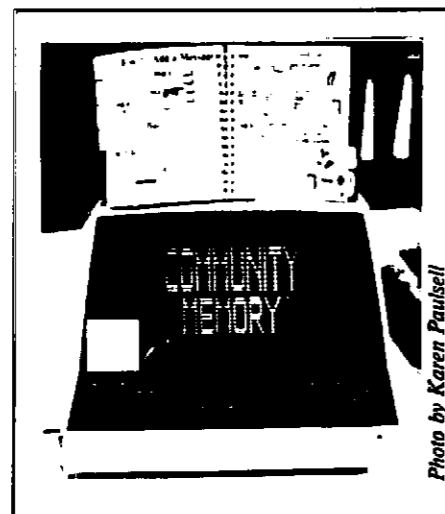
The Telegraph Avenue Co-op terminal is part of a three terminal pilot Community Memory System. Currently there is no charge to use the system, but there are plans to attach a coinbox to each terminal. Users would be charged an access fee (for example, 25 cents for 5 minutes). Proceeds from the coinbox would help pay phone bills and maintenance costs. Because of this, one question asked how people's use of Community Memory would change if the coinbox were

"My 7 year old daughter has had fun teaching people who were struggling to use it. So have I. I love to see it here."

filled out the questionnaire were 25-44 years old. 37% were women and 63% were men. The largest proportion of respondents made less than \$10,000/year (34%); 25% were in the \$10-20,000 bracket. Of the people surveyed, 17% had never used a computer before, 55% used one occasionally and 8% used one often.

When asked about how much they used Community Memory, 32% said they had used it over 4 times, 23% had used it a couple of times and 30% had only used it once. 11% of the people surveyed had never used CM at all, but they filled out the survey anyway. 71% have, at one point or another, been unable to use Community Memory because it was either not working or already being used by someone else. Most people use the system in the evening (31%).

installed. The question was:
HOW WOULD YOUR USE OF COMMUNITY MEMORY CHANGE IF COMMUNITY MEMORY COST 25 CENTS FOR 5 MINUTES?
— USE IT A LITTLE LESS
— USE IT A LOT LESS
— WOULDN'T USE IT AT ALL



New users check out the Co-Op terminal

Of the 60 people surveyed, 5% wrote in that they wouldn't use it any less. (That category was inadvertently missing from the list of choices). 26% said they would use CM a little less, 15% said they would use the system a lot less and 32% said they wouldn't use the system at all.

One of the last questions (which inspired the most varied responses) was "What word best describes Community Memory?" According to the respondents, the words that best describe

Community Memory are: fascinating, instructive, relevant, outdated, great, fantastic, tedious, tacky, inefficient, needed, interesting, cluttered, useful, useless, friendly, unfriendly, fun, boring, helpful, needing more locations, cumbersome, novelty, ok, wonderful, progressive, original, great potential, intrepid, keen, slow, neat, exciting, expressive, over-structured, valuable. As you can see, perceptions varied quite a bit.

Stories about using the Community Memory system were solicited at the end of the survey. The

following quotes were taken directly from the surveys:

"I was considering a decision and couldn't make up my mind. I threw out the question on Community Memory and have had several responses. It's a fantastic feeling to read a response to your message!"

"My 7-year-old daughter has had fun teaching people who were struggling to use it. So have I. I love to see it here."

"I located an old acquaintance through this once. (Fancy meeting you here!)"

"Input not controlled. It's full of obscenities. Too bad. Technojunk."

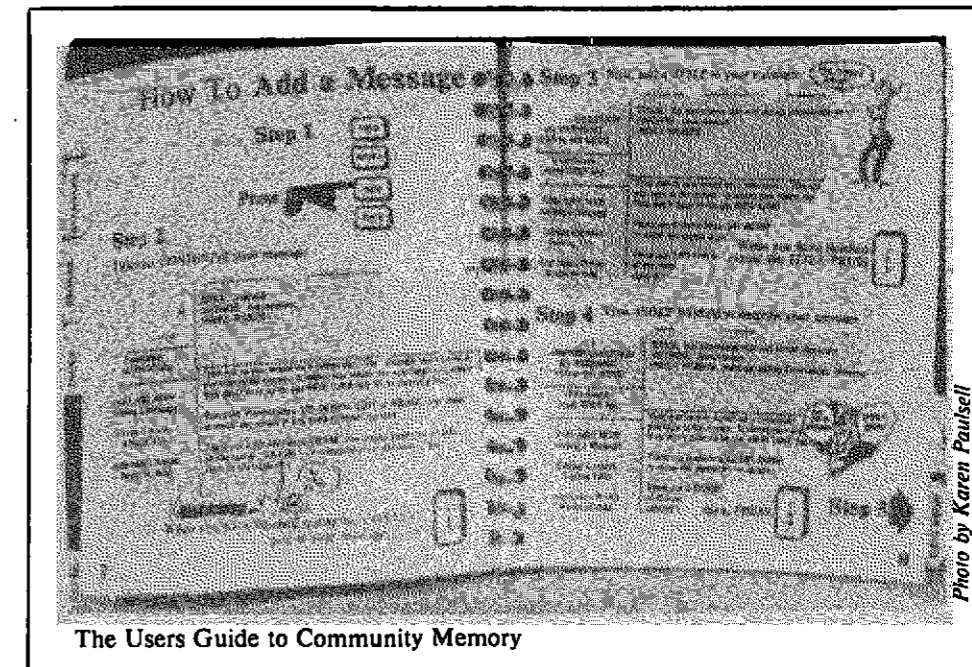
"Time to use it is more important to me than money to use it."

"The few real messages are interesting; the incredible number of stupid messages make its use (browsing at any rate) quite irritating. Perhaps once people get over the thrill of being able to swear and talk about sex in public that will change."

"It has been most interesting observing the system grow and seeing how individuals discover new communication patterns."

Because only people at the Telegraph Avenue Co-op were surveyed and because the sample is so small (60 people), this survey is not representative of all of the Berkeley Community Memory users. However, it's interesting to find out what sort of people are using the system and what their perceptions are. It is also instructive to find out what people are using it for and what they would like to see it become.

This survey was taken three months after the terminal had been installed, so we can assume that the views uncovered are the initial reactions to the idea (within this particular community). A follow-up survey might uncover a move away from the perception of the system as merely an electronic bulletin board. At the time of this writing, we have noticed that many people are also using the system for dialogues, discussions and announcements of events and community services.



The Users Guide to Community Memory

Becoming Self-Supporting

We're planning to start charging for using the Community Memory terminals at some future date. The fee most often mentioned is 25 cents, the same price as the cheaper video games.

Here are the results of some computations we've done to answer the question "How many quarters would it take for a Community Memory system to be self-financing?" Before we lead you through the calculations, we'll ease the suspense by saying: 51 quarters per day, per terminal will pay for a 16-terminal Community Memory system, one and one-half staff people, phones, maintenance, and insurance.

To arrive at "51 quarters per day," you need to divide the total startup costs shown in Table 1 by 60 months (5 years) to arrive at a monthly pay-off of \$893. Adding the ongoing monthly costs from Table 2, that's \$5038 a month in expenses. That sounds steep...but the cost per terminal is only \$314 per month (\$5038 / 16 terminals).

We figured that some places would be open 7 days a week, and

The node computer	\$30,000	Maybe as low as \$15,000, or as high as \$50,000, depending on the particular machine, memory, number of ports, etc.
Terminals	10,400	16 terminals at \$650 each
Modems	9,600	16 pairs at \$600/pair
Furniture	2,000	Tables (and perhaps chairs) for each site
Phone installation	1,600	Average of \$100/site
Total Startup	\$53,600	

others only 5; we compromised with a figure of 25 days per month. Dividing \$314 per month by 25 days, we arrive at \$12.56 per terminal per day, or 51 quarters (and 6 more cents).

We use the figure "5 minutes for a quarter" as our ballpark figure when describing our charging scheme; if we use this as the rate, each terminal would need to be fed quarters for 51 5-minute sessions, a total of 4 hours and 15 minutes per day.

Even though we don't have coinboxes attached to our terminals

in Berkeley yet, we find these numbers encouraging. With just 3 terminals (and two of them at locations that are open only 6 or 8 hours a day), the terminals average more than 4 hours of use on the busiest days.

These calculations are still in the "back of the envelope" stage. We may have under- or over-estimated some costs. We haven't done a recent computer price survey, but we believe that computer prices will continue to go down. The biggest expense over time is actually the salaries; this might be reduced with more volunteer effort, or might be higher if there aren't as many volunteers.

One aspect of the model that's very interesting when you play with it on a spreadsheet is its dependence on the number of terminals. Adding a few more terminals increases the original investment slightly, but substantially reduces the number of uses required per terminal, since the cost of the computer and the fixed monthly costs are spread over a larger number of users.

After we have installed coinboxes on our three pilot terminals, we'll be able to get a more accurate estimate of how many quarters it really takes to keep a Community Memory system alive and well.

Personnel	\$2,750	1 1/2 full-time equivalents at \$20,000/year
Phone lines	720	\$45 per site
Rent	200	A space for the computer, and the 1-1/2 workers
Computer maintenance	175	Cost of our current maintenance contract
Additional maintenance and repair	100	Terminals & modems
Insurance	100	For the computer and terminals
Phone, supplies postage, etc.	200	Costs of maintaining the office
Total Monthly Costs	\$4,145	

The Free Speech Policy

On March 8, 1984, we sent a memorandum to one of our potential host sites that explains our policy of not editing or censoring messages in the database, except when someone makes a complaint about a specific message stating that the message is causing personal harm or harassment. In practice, we've had to remove only four messages in ten months of operation.

This "free speech policy" has always been controversial, giving rise to concerns about good taste, legality, expediency, efficiency, and other aspects of the operation of Community Memory. Excerpts from our collective response are included here.

We would like to respond to your concerns about the appearance of racist, sexist, commercial, and unwanted messages on the Community Memory computer bulletin board. While we certainly share your concerns about possible abuses of the system, we feel that allowing representatives of the Community Memory Project or anyone else to remove "inappropriate" messages is not the best solution.

We have worked hard to develop Community Memory, and have lived for years with dreams about its use as an open channel for community discussion and organizing. The issues you raise are ones that we've considered carefully, and we'd like to share our thoughts about them.

The practical argument

First, we believe that there won't be enough unwanted messages to create a problem. During a public test of a much earlier version of the system, in 1974 and 1975, very few such messages appeared. We intend to provide an atmosphere around each Community Memory terminal that

encourages uses we support. We will "seed" the database with messages about community activities and resources, public and political events, skills sharing, and similar topics. Off-line, we will prepare literature and posters that explain our hopes for the system.

The political arguments

The Community Memory system provides a way for any user to respond to any message. A user may attach a comment to a message, and subsequent readers of the original message will be informed of the the existence of the comment.

Debate and exchange will certainly provide a much better political education for the users of Community Memory than would sweeping problem messages under the rug.

The ability to comment on messages means that Community Memory can be a forum for discussing issues like racism and sexism. Debate and exchange will certainly provide a much better political education for the users of Community Memory than would sweeping problem messages under the rug. In fact, instigating the open exchange of ideas and opinions is one of the *raison d'être* of the Community Memory system.

The technology on which Community Memory is based is relatively new, although commercial systems that use the same technology are currently being planned and field-tested. The developers of these commercial "information utilities" will make no provisions for the public interest unless they are forced to do so. We would like Community Memory to serve as an example of the democratizing potential of the new technology. If it is to be exemplary it must take care not to set a precedent for controlling the contents of such systems.

The constitutional argument

The suggestion to establish a reviewer who decides what is appropriate for the Community Memory and what is not raises First Amendment issues of free speech and censorship. Aside from the importance of upholding these principles, it is dangerous for progressives to set precedents that smack of constraining free speech. Once we bend the principle ourselves, we are in a much weaker position when censorship is proposed from other political quarters.

The legal and regulatory issues raised by computer information utilities are as yet unresolved.

We have posted notices on each terminal that state:

PLEASE READ BEFORE USING COMMUNITY MEMORY

Community Memory is an unmediated communications system. All user messages go directly into the system, and are available immediately to all other users.

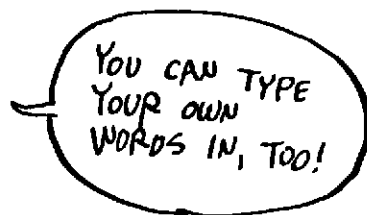
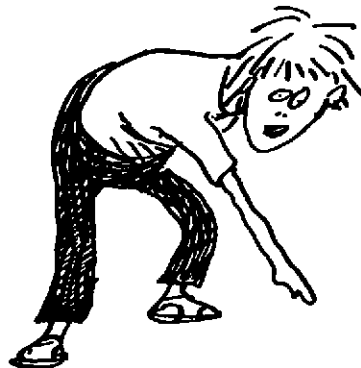
Messages are not reviewed or screened in any way.

Each message in the Community Memory represents solely the opinion of its author. Neither the Community Memory Project nor the sponsors of individual terminals can make any attempt to verify the accuracy or appropriateness of the information or statements in these messages.

You use and view Community Memory at your own risk. We offer users the opportunity to comment on messages which they think are inaccurate or incorrect. Like messages, comments are not reviewed or screened.

software license agreement that would have funded us for a year. Apple Computer Corporation agreed to donate three Soroc terminals. All that remained was to select three Berkeley terminal sites.

We wanted places where the terminals would be in plain view (to attract users and to prevent vandalism); places that had heavy foot traffic from a variety of people and where the hosts were interested in the Community Memory experiment. After visits to about a dozen prospective sites and much negotiation, we found three sites that met our criteria: the Telegraph Avenue Co-op, part of a chain of cooperatively owned supermarkets; La Pena Cultural Center, a restaurant and community meeting place; and the Whole Earth Access Store, a



Drawing by Larry Gonick

with the effort and money to get the system installed and to keep it going. The same financial situation — and the same commitment — continue to this day.

“hip” department store whose clientele ranges from back-to-the-land types to Yuppies.

We then ordered the special lines we needed from the phone company, and based on their estimated installation time, started telling people we would be operating in early May.

Having agreed to “go public” at a Grand Opening party at the end of April, we rushed to add the finishing touches to the hardware and software. We modified the not-so-state-of-the-art Soroc terminals, added software for collecting statistics on system use, and developed techniques for making repairs without having to interrupt the system’s operation.

As if this weren’t enough to keep us busy, we became involved with “The Electronic Cafe,” an art project timed to coincide with the 1984 Olympics that connected several Los Angeles restaurants into a video and computer network.

The schedule was tight. The final modifications to the terminals, for example, were finished ten minutes before the grand-opening party.

Unfortunately on the day of the party we also learned that our software license agreement had fallen apart. That meant our prospective income would be well below the bare minimum. At the very least, Community Memory would grow much more slowly than we’d planned. Despite this, we determined that somehow we’d come up

the Whole Earth terminal in September.

The three Community Memory terminals were — and still are — the first public-access computers that allow users to put their own messages into the system. All of the major Bay Area newspapers, several national publications, and several radio stations covered our debut.

After the first few hectic weeks in which our public found problems and we made repairs, the system itself settled down and started running well. It quickly gained an enthusiastic following at each of the terminal sites.

Many of the problems we’d anticipated never materialized. People were able to use the system without supervision, and there has been no vandalism whatsoever.

The Community Memory is now filled with about 3000 messages, ranging from ads to jokes to poetry to politics to nonsense. As might be expected from a system in which messages are not edited or censored, there is something to interest or offend almost everyone.

One of the major ongoing complaints about Community Memory is the number of garbage messages it contains. Interestingly, the database is changing in character as the system matures. We are noticing longer and more substantive messages replacing the “visible CB radio” chatter that we saw at first. More users are taking advantage of the author and password features, which lets them edit their own messages at a later date.

We’ve had three open community meetings about the system,

— continued on p. 7

Community Memory News is a publication of The Community Memory Project. Issue Number Two was produced by Terre Beynart, Marcy Darnovsky, Sandy Emerson, Carl Farrington, Lee Felsenstein, and Karen Paulsell. Feel free to contact us with your comments and questions at: 916 Parker St. Berkeley, CA 94710. (415) 841-1114.

Starting a Community Memory

The Community Memory Project is now ready — and eager — to help other groups start their own Community Memory systems. We’ll provide the software and support, including operating instructions, installation procedures, other literature, signs, and training. The operators of the system — a local group or coalition — will be responsible for providing the hardware, arranging for the terminal sites, and running the system.

We’ll ask each group to sign a formal license agreement with the Community Memory Project. The license agreement includes a set of operating principles and practices for the Community Memory system. We’re working on a draft of this agreement. We’d like to hear your feedback on these basic principles:

Public Access:

All terminals at which the CM software and/or database is available for use will be accessible to the general public during the entire time that the host site is open to the public.

Free Speech:

Messages entered at the terminals will be immediately available to users: there won’t be any prior review process.

Messages in the CM database may not be modified by the system operator except:

Expired messages can be deleted.

New CM Network Gets Good Response

— continued from p. 2

all of which were well attended and provided us with lots of ideas and a couple of valuable new volunteers. As part of an ongoing fundraising campaign, we’ve hired a professional fundraiser and continue to submit grant applications to various foundations and agencies. We’ve

If a person submits a complaint that a particular message is causing harm or problems, and that person unambiguously identifies the message, then that message may be removed by the system operator.

Non-profit Operation:

The system will be operated on a not-for-profit basis. If fees are charged for using the terminals, they must be low enough to be considered nominal. Any revenue realized from these fees must be used to cover the capital and operating expenses.

We want to take the investment we’ve made — the years we’ve spent developing the Community Memory software and concept — and with a minimum set of “rules” encourage politically progressive community-based information structures.

Information in the database cannot be used except through the public Community Memory terminals. In particular, the information cannot be sold or transferred to other databases.

Community Accountability:

The system operator will demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of the community, and have some public accountability. (This could be in the form of community meetings and/or publicly available minutes and records.)

taken steps toward forming the first Community Memory Association. The Association will assume ownership and control of the Berkeley system, with the active participation of more of the Co-op grocery stores as a likely prospect.

This year, we hope to add more terminals to the Berkeley sys-

Connection to the Network:

When the network is available to interconnect Community Memory nodes, the system operator agrees to link the local node to the network.

System operators will assist other groups in setting up Community Memory systems by providing information and technical assistance whenever possible.

Our Escape Hatch:

The Community Memory Project can review the performance of system operators, and rescind the agreement if they aren’t meet-

ing the spirit and terms of the agreement. The Community Memory Project will give a system operator at least 6 weeks’ notice before a review.

One of our objectives is to encourage innovation and diversity in the applications of Community Memory. We want to take the investment we’ve made — the years we’ve spent developing the Community Memory software and concept — and with a minimum set of “rules” encourage politically progressive community-based information structures.

tem, and to attach coin boxes and printers to the terminals that are already installed. We have learned a great deal about the power and limitations of our system by doing this pilot. We plan to make the system even easier to use and better at helping users find just the messages they want. As always, we need your help.

Bulletin Board Battle

We want to give people a way of communicating with each other that doesn't rely on mass media.

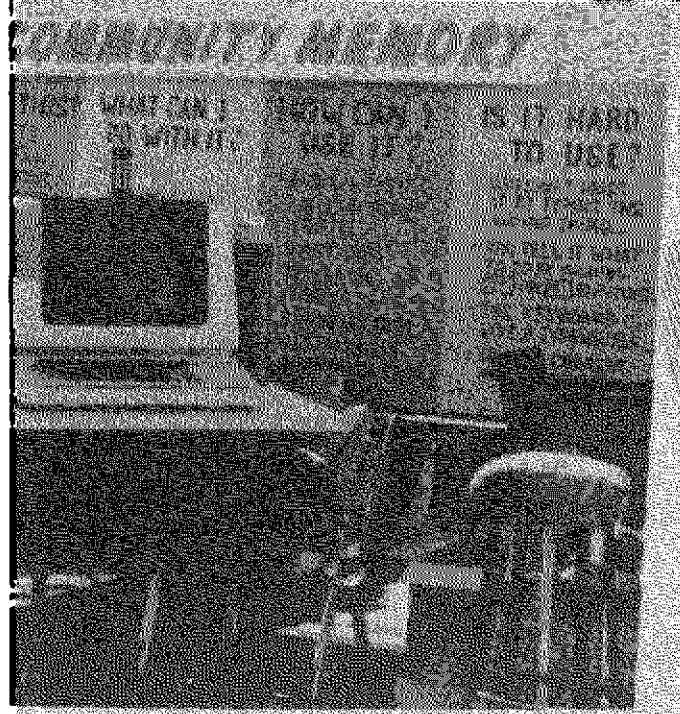
CREATING A COMPUTER COMMUNITY

Berkeley's Community Memory tries to make computer accessible to people who don't own one

Two-way public computers link up info seekers

"The important point about this system is that it gives people the power to make their information public."

The system will offer access to all and is entirely uncensored, controlled by nothing except what users choose to enter into the data base.



The Community Memory Project
916 Parker St.
Berkeley, CA 94710

★ NEW ADDRESS ★
2617 San Pablo Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94702

Community Memory News

A publication of The Community Memory Project

From late '84 or early '85
after the Berkeley terminals Number Two
had been up for several months

New CM Network Gets Good Response

The Community Memory system has been up and running on three terminals in our home town of Berkeley, California for nearly a year. It seems to be a hit! Every month, each terminal gets about 600 uses, and over a thousand new messages are added to the database.

We hope that this single three-terminal system is only the beginning. Already, the pilot system is starting to demonstrate Community Memory's potential as a new, democratic communications medium, an enterprise that combines the spirit of the Free Speech Movement with the best of Silicon Valley technology.

New terminals will be added to the Berkeley system as soon as we (or someone else) can afford it. We're also talking with other groups about installing Community Memories in their communities. Eventually, our networking software will link together several Community Memory systems so

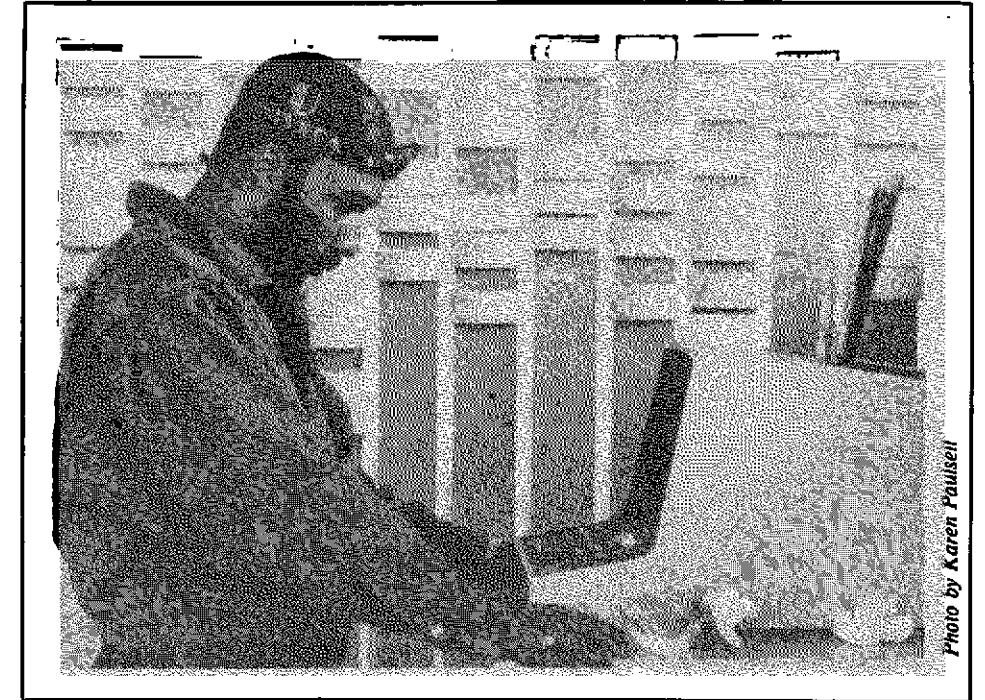


Photo by Karen Paulselt

included in this issue.)

The Community Memory Project spent 1983 developing a prototype of the system and testing it on as many people as we could

the system.

After a year of testing and revision, we had a system that was simple to use, yet powerful enough to enable people to organize and share any kind of information. However, we still had no agreement on where to put the system.

Our biggest problem seemed to be communicating what kind of system we had in mind. Without a concrete example to look at, many people had trouble imagining what such a system would look like and how it would be used. In January 1984, we decided that our best bet was to install a three-terminal demonstration of the Community Memory system in Berkeley, our home base.

We thought we could easily afford to finance the pilot ourselves: although we were (as always) short of funds, we had just concluded a

— continued on next page

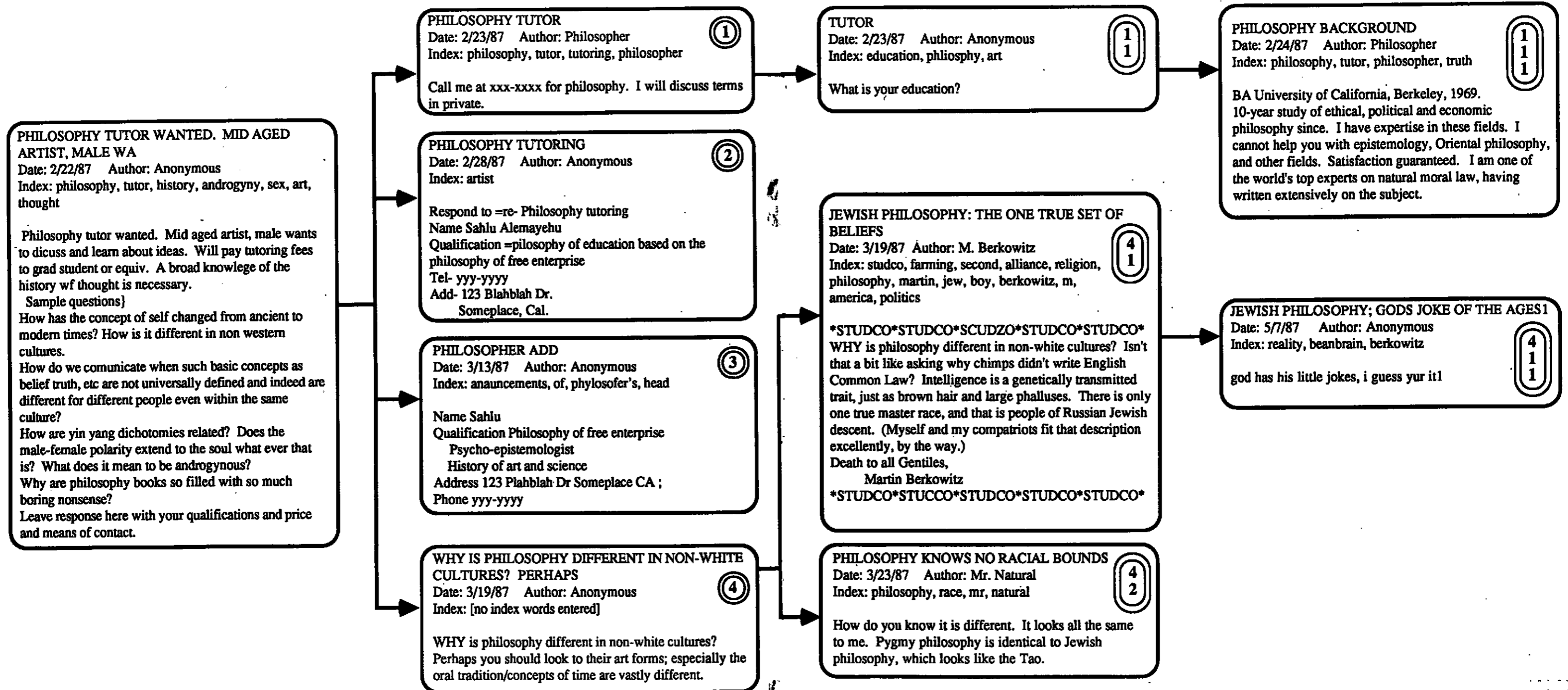
The three Community Memory terminals were — and still are — the first public-access computers that allow users to put their own messages into the system.

that any user can dip into the information pools of all the Community Memories.

Installing the Berkeley Community Memory was the climax of many years of work: the path we took had many long detours. The early part of our history is told in *An Introduction to Community Memory* and in Issue #1 of *Community Memory News*, which was published in 1983. (Both of these are available; see order form

convince to sit down in front of a terminal. We tried it out on visitors to our warehouse office, and on people without prior computer experience that we invited to use the system while we watched over their shoulders. We carted our equipment and our literature to community fairs, to conferences, and to neighborhood meetings. We talked to potential sponsors of a pilot system — groups that would purchase the necessary equipment, host a set of terminals, and manage

On the Community Memory System, Messages Grow on "Trees"



by Harlan Shays

It would be impossible to reproduce an average chain of messages from Community Memory. There are no typical messages or comment chains. The "message tree" replicated here demonstrates some of the ways people use CM.

These messages were written between February 23rd and May 7th, 1987. They are reproduced exactly as seen on the system, except for phone numbers and addresses, which were changed for publication here. The chain begins with a relatively straightforward request for a phi-

losophy tutor. This entry is unusual mainly because it was longer than one screen: few messages go longer than one frame. Four responses followed the initial message. While we cannot know the intentions of the writers, certain observations can be made about their respective contributions.

If we compare the resulting chain to a family tree, then it is the "first branch" that seems to indicate that the tutor-seeker quickly found what he sought. Conversely, the second and third branches immediately dead end. It seems clear that the same author wrote responses

(2) and (3). Perhaps the third response was an effort to clarify the previous one. In any case, they demonstrate that a wider presence on CM does not necessarily mean greater user comprehension. More messages do not automatically clarify the author's position.

The final branch turns away from the initial request and becomes more of a dialogue in its own right. The fourth response (4) offers the tutor-seeker help in defining the question. Though brief in wording, it shows two aspects of CM in action. First, because the author did not write a title, the system plugged most of

the first line (as it appeared on the terminal screen) into that slot. The resulting fragment made an intriguing teaser for the message and may have boosted participation in the chain. Second, this response demonstrates how one message can prompt a chain entirely separate from the goals of the original entry. One can only wonder at what the tutor-seeker thought of the fourth message and its descendants.

There are two responses to message (4): (4-1) and (4-2). Together they illustrate the participation of certain loyal users of CM. These people have selected author names for themselves, and the re-

spective nicknames are familiar to repeat users of the system.

Messages (4-1) and (4-2) also serve to highlight the openness of CM. This is unmediated communications, and the frankness may offend some people. While a planned fee of 25 cents for entering messages is expected to eliminate much of the "garbage" quotient, it would be a mistake to assume that all offending material will cease. CM operates with the idea that the benefits of uncensored communication far outweigh the impact of the bigotry displayed in certain messages. The final response in the

chain demonstrates conclusively how open communications works on CM. Message (4-1-1) is a brief retort to message (4-1). Any CM user can comment on earlier messages in this way.

There may yet be further additions to this comment tree. Readers are invited to use the system and see for themselves.

Harlan Shays is Community Memory's Recording Secretary and Development Chair. A recipient of New York University's Master's degree in Interactive Telecommunications, he does freelance technical writing.

Redesign, continued from page 1

But both we and our user community have found problems with the system and the way it is used.

New Hardware

The biggest barrier to establishing and expanding CM systems is the expense. The cost of the central computer (\$30,000) and the expertise necessary to operate it prohibit most organizations from establishing such a system. The use of customized terminals makes even the addition of a single terminal to

computer, we can help people learn to use the CM system quickly, and provide extra assistance in areas where people have problems.

The new system will use menus extensively to let users choose quickly from among several options. (The current system presents each option one at a time, requiring users to respond YES or NO to each choice. This is not only less efficient, but the number of different options we can offer is limited by the user's patience.) We will allow users to

Central to the idea of CM is that people can share information without needing an editor to organize, distill, and censor.

our system a complex proposition. The coinboxes, which were intended to offset the expense of operation, are not yet supported.

Since we began development of the Berkeley system, the computer industry has changed in various ways. Competition to make low-cost copies of IBM's Personal Computer has reduced microcomputer prices dramatically. At the same time, newer and faster chips have been developed that radically increase the power of these machines.

The cost of personal computers has fallen to the point where it is economical for us to build one into every CM terminal. We can program these computers to provide users with much more help operating CM than is possible under the present system. At the same time, each user will require less work from the central computer, so we can use a cheaper central machine to support the same number of terminals.

In a system structured like this, the terminals will still cost about what they do now (about \$1500) but the price of the central machine could be as low as \$10,000 for a computer that could handle 16 terminals, and even lower for a "starter system" handling fewer terminals.

More Help for Users

Having a computer built into each CM terminal allows us to interact with our users in a much more sophisticated way. Employing many of the ideas used so successfully in Apple's Macintosh

scroll more rapidly through the messages themselves. (In the current system, users have to alternate between seeing single messages and selecting messages from lists of titles.) We also plan to have a more graphic representation of the interconnection of comments.

More Terminals

The hardware used in the new design makes it cheaper and easier for us to add more terminals. Having more terminals on the system will solve a number of problems. By making the system more visible, it will increase the number of people who encounter and use it. By increasing the audience on CM, it will make the system a more worthwhile place to put information.

Having more terminals will allow us to experiment with a wider variety of terminal sites. We are interested in setting up "special interest" terminals located near existing community services that provide people with information. Clinics, local media outlets, and various referral and information centers have expressed interest in using CM if it were more accessible and had a wider audience. Such use will provide important sources of information to CM users, and give these organizations a new way of meeting with their constituencies.

Addressing User Complaints

The most frequent complaint from users of the current system is the number of "junk messages" that they see. To some extent this is unavoidable, and only reflects differences of opinion among

users as to what is important. But obviously, a lot of messages on the system come from people who are using the system just to try it out, and not because they have anything in particular to say.

The new system will use the coinboxes to address this problem. By charging a quarter for each message added, we hope to reduce the number of senseless (and sometimes offensive) messages entered. At the same time, we want to keep reading of messages free to encourage people to try CM when encountering it by chance.

Finding Information More Easily

Central to the idea of CM is that people can share information without needing an editor to organize, distill, and censor what they say. For this to work with a large number of messages, the system must provide effective tools for finding what you want and filtering out what you don't want.

In the current system, the author of a message indicates the message's content by choosing several "index words" that describe the subject of a message and optionally by linking the message to another as a comment. People searching for information may browse through a list of all the messages on the system, see all the comments on a particular message, search for messages with particular index words, or search for messages containing particular words in the text. All of these mechanisms are being used, but each has some associated problems.

See Redesign, p. 8

Community Memory News is published quarterly by The Community Memory Project, a non-profit organization. Community Memory is a service mark of The Community Memory Project. Other than the text of messages replicated from the CM Berkeley system, all contents © The Community Project, 1987.

Editor this issue: Catherine Dunford

CM is located at 2617 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94702, (415) 841-1114. We can also be reached on the WELL: email Catherine Dunford <dca>, Lee Felsenstein <lee>, or Karen Paulsell <kjp>. Via PeaceNet, email <karen>.

Viewpoint

Preserve Our Right to Free Thought; Fight Textbook Censorship

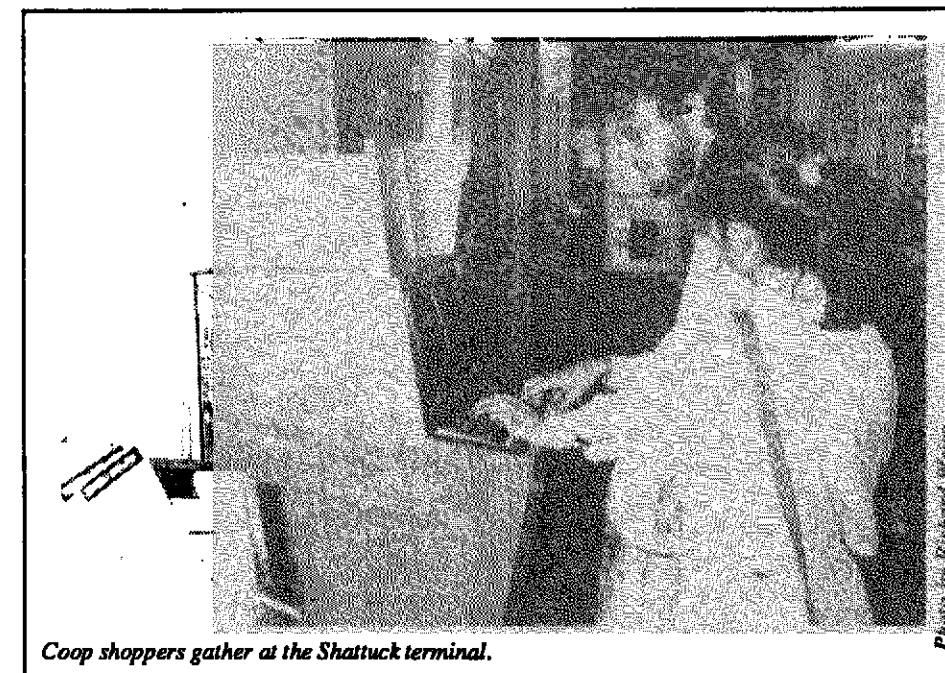
by Richard Weiss

Editor's note: While Community Memory must, by necessity, limit the scope of its work, we will present opinion pieces discussing issues of interest to our readers. We welcome submissions for future publication.

In a free society, information flows, unobstructed and uncensored. With the exception of privately-owned information, knowledge is the property of the community. Its members have a right to that information. It is said that knowledge is power. This is true, but it is not just power over other people which knowledge bestows: a much greater gift is the power to think freely and to make your own judgements and decisions. This ideal has not been attained; censorship, an attempt to control or shape this power, has always been with us. Since the beginning of this century, particularly during the free speech movement of the sixties and early seventies, a good deal of progress was made toward opening the filters which blocked information channels.

Of late, there has been a movement to reverse these gains. Attempts to censor certain books from the curricula of our public schools are on the rise. The most apparent object of these attacks have been the sciences. Scientific texts, however, are far from being the only victims. A broad range of books, from James Joyce's *Ulysses* to L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* have been pulled from the desks of students. Usually these books are banned on religious or moral grounds. Frequently they are pulled on the basis of complaints from just a few parents or clergy members, and textbook bans are carried out without further input from the community. In many cases a handful of vocal people dictate the educational curriculum for an entire community.

This issue is not one of the left or right. Attacks are coming from both traditionally liberal as well as conservative
See Censorship, page 6



Coop shoppers gather at the Shattuck terminal.

Project Moves to New Office, Adds Fourth Terminal, Paid Staff

by Karen Paulsell

While the last issue of Community Memory News was in press, Community Memory was looking for new office space. We finally found a suitable storefront just 3 blocks from the old warehouse. It provides offices for the staff, a kitchen and meeting room, and a reception area with our in-house Community Memory terminal.

The office is open Monday through Thursday, 10 - 5 p.m. Whether you are a local Community Memory user or a telecommunications pilgrim visiting the Bay Area, it's wise to make an appointment before coming to see us. The new address is: 2617 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94702. Our phone number remains the same: (415) 841-1114.

The fourth Community Memory terminal was installed in February, 1986 at the Shattuck Avenue Co-op Marketplace. Almost immediately, it became the most heavily-used of all the terminals. It is also our sleekest-looking. The first three terminals are mounted on tables; the new one is housed in a birch-plywood box. It looks vaguely like a stand-up video game housing -- but in

natural wood, not fluorescent red and blue.

When we switch to using Atari ST's as the terminals, we'll modify this design slightly. It provides space for the (soon-to-be-installed) coin mechanisms, and can also house a printer.

*

For nearly two years, Community Memory functioned almost entirely on the work of a few volunteers. In the past few months, we have hired 3 people. Carl Farrington and Philip Kohn, who did much of the final design work on the current version of Community Memory, are now back on salary. They are working on the re-design of the software described on page one of this issue.

Catherine Dunford has just joined us as Administrator and Community Organizer. She'll be doing community outreach, planning community meetings, and organizing the work of the Community Memory volunteers.

Karen Paulsell is a technical writer, consultant on typesetting for UNIX systems, and current President of CM. She also serves as Treasurer of the Union for Democratic Communications.

Support, continued from page 1

Volunteer Program

Regular meetings open the door to newcomers by orienting them to the Project, its perspective, and its openness as an organization, but only time and continued involvement can provide an overall familiarity with the technical and organizational aspects of CM. The Project provides an organizational as well as a technological setting for working together to promote social change. While the CM

financial support of foundations, government funding agencies, and major donors.

For most of its history, the Project has paid for itself through a few individuals' donations and the proceeds of licensing software originally designed for CM. Major expansion now underway will be financed by a variety of sources, from proceeds on coinboxes at the terminals to individual contributions to funds from grant-making institutions.

Community Memory has demonstrated its viability as a concept and an organization. Now we seek financial assistance to expand the pilot system and develop CM as a communications package available to other communities and groups.

Summary

Increased support for the Community Memory Project will benefit system users, local groups, potential CM system operators, proponents of democratic communications, and every person whose work connects them to the CM Project. The Project's members believe this community organizing program will improve the future of all concerned individuals and organizations as it furthers the goals of Community Memory.

Catherine Dunford is CM's new Administrator and Community Organizer.

As a unique community institution, we stand at the forefront of groups using computer communications to further the democratic process.

budget does not permit a large paid staff, the organization offers interested individuals volunteer positions with an organization built on principles of mutual respect, free speech, self-determination, and community/coalition-building.

As a unique community institution, we stand at the forefront of groups using computer communications to further the democratic process. With worldwide recognition for our innovative work,

The CM Project realizes the importance of respecting individual's different skills, interests, and ability to commit time and talents. We need the help of someone offering two hours a month of clerical assistance just as much as we need volunteer C programmers and terminal maintenance helpers.

Quarterly Issues of CM News

With this issue, the Community Memory News begins quarterly publication. Numerous information requests demonstrate a need for current materials on the Project's development. The demise (temporary, we hope) of the Journal of Community Communications provides another impetus to publish more frequently. The CM Project goals cannot be reached in a vacuum; a quarterly CM News gives our far-flung network of colleagues and friends timely updates on issues being addressed and problems solved by CM.

CM News actively solicits contributions from our readers. While most articles will focus on the Project and its own programs, each issue will also contain more far-ranging pieces of interest to CM supporters.

Fundraising for CM Expansion

With expansion comes the need for increased funding. Over the next year, we will inaugurate a campaign to gain the

Taking a chance:

CM Meets the Press

"Take a chance' the Community Memory terminal beckons, 'touch the keyboard.'"1 "The group's four terminals handle about a thousand entries a week [sic] across a broad range of categories."2 "A Plexus P-35, running the UNIX operating system, drives...[the Community Memory] program through a 70-megabyte hard-disk with enough room to store nearly 50,000 messages."1

"The new 'electronic bulletin board' is a free, public access computer terminal that lets anybody list anything."3 "The radical messages, the singles looking for company, and traditional rental and help wanted listings are familiar but they are not pinned up on cork."4 "People are already using Community Memory to sell cars, search for housing and exchange information."1

"It is the wave of the future," Co-Op consultant Richard Pearlman said."3 "The Berkeley Co-Op is enthusiastic about Community Memory as a new service for its customers, and organizers see expanding it to provide consumer and nutritional information in more detail than currently possible with store displays."4

"I'm really surprised I did as well as I did. . . . Once you use it, I think it's going to be an excellent thing," one of the users said."5

Compiled and edited by Henricus Holman, a volunteer programmer for CM and an electronic music composer.

1San Francisco Examiner's Image Magazine, November 16, 1986, page 8.
2Actually, the terminals handle about 1000 entries a month. San Francisco Chronicle, October 4, 1985, page 30.
3San Francisco Chronicle, August 29, 1984, page 4.
4University of California at Berkeley's Daily Californian, August 30, 1984, page 1.
5The Oakland Tribune, August 30, 1984, page B-1.

Censorship, continued from page 3

groups. At risk is not just the viewpoint of a particular political, social, or religious philosophy. It would seem that any individual or group that finds material offensive or simply not in line with their particular point of view is at liberty to have that book removed from the schools. By restricting access to alternative ideas, these groups attempt to impose their viewpoints on the impressionable minds of students. The real loss is not that these students will end up with a particular set of values (not necessarily in line with yours or ours), but that they will have arrived at their beliefs without the opportunity adequately to assess and compare the alternatives. They will lose the opportunity to learn critical thought. People who cannot think for themselves are sheep, and sheep can be led. This is the objective of those who would dictate the lessons of our young people.

A major argument of some censors is a claim to the right to become involved in the education of their children. I do not dispute this right. However, by restricting the school curriculum, they infringe on the rights of other children. The problem with this group is that they are too lazy to participate

actively in the education of their children. They find it easier to restrict the learning material to things that don't offend them than to allow their children to be exposed to alternate points of view. This would require that they discuss things with their children that they are either uncomfortable with or do not understand. This is unfortunate (though they do not think

prised how many share your concerns. Write to your local paper. You might make otherwise isolated people realize that there are others with similar viewpoints. Organize. An active coalition of a few individuals can exercise much more clout than can a large disorganized body of people (as the would-be censors have already found out).

Take part in the processes that shape your community. An active coalition of a few individuals exercises much more clout than a large, disorganized body of people.

so), since their children are not the only ones affected.

If you are concerned with where this trend might lead, we would like to offer a few suggestions as to what you can do about it: Find out if your local school district has a list of banned or restricted books. Talk to the people involved in education in your area. Let everyone from teachers to members of the school board know how you feel. Talk to other elected officials. They may or may not be sympathetic to your cause, but they are your servants, not you theirs. Talk to other parents. You might be sur-

Finally, if you live in Berkeley, use Community Memory. This is a tool placed in your community for your use. You can use it to voice your opinion. You can use it to exchange ideas and clarify your thoughts. You can use it to organize. The important thing is to take an active part in the processes which shape your community now and those which will shape its future. If you don't, it will be shaped for you.

Richard Weiss is a telecommunications consultant currently working in the banking industry. He also participates in CM's supervisory group.

Community Memory needs your support!

Make a contribution: Subscribe to CM News

The Community Memory Project, 2617 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94702, (415) 841-1114

Yes, I'd like to be in on Community Memory's efforts—sign me up!

Form with fields for Name, Organization, Address, City/State/Zip, Phone, and subscription options: 1 yr. CM News, Regular Subscription @ \$10.00, Sustainer Subscription @ \$25.00, New CM Design Spec copies @ \$3.00, TOTAL ENCLOSED

For your contribution to be tax-deductible, make your check payable to Village Design.

Redesign, continued from page 6

Browses through all the messages always start at the most recent message and work backwards. Many users have expressed a desire for an option to jump immediately to any message (e.g. by message number) when browsing.

Messages entered as comments are sometimes irrelevant, and when many comments branch out from a message, people tend to get confused about how the messages fit together.

Index word searching and searching the text of messages are very similar in the current system, so people may not know which they are using, or even that there is a difference. It is possible to do searches based on more than one index word, but the results of these searches are hard to understand. Also, some users don't assign any reasonable index words to the messages they enter, and so those messages don't get found.

The only serious pattern of abuse of the system has been the intentional adding of large numbers of irrelevant index words to messages. This seems to have been successfully dealt with by limiting the number of index words accepted on a message. To some extent, the problem itself was an attempt by users to make the most of the limited audience available via the four terminals and might be less of a temptation on a larger system. Since the numerical limitation has forced people to choose index words more carefully, they seem to use relevant index words rather than simply popular ones.

To deal with these problems, we are making significant changes in the way

messages on CM are organized.

We plan to assign every message entered a unique 5 or 6 character "tag" that can always be used to refer to the message. This will allow users to return quickly to any message they have entered or seen in CM, and to make reference to any number of other messages in messages they enter.

By putting tags into messages that refer to other messages, users can build more complex, menu-like structures out of the information they enter. For example, a message might include some general information, and tags for other messages that elaborate on various aspects of the subject.

The system will offer users more help when assigning index words to messages and when making comments. This should improve the quality of choices users make in those situations. The system will represent the connection between comments graphically when displaying messages.

Finally, we are introducing a new organizing tool for data called a "forum." A forum is a collection of messages on a specific subject. The user who creates a forum becomes the forum's host. The forum host makes up a unique name for the forum, a short description of its purpose, and a list of "trigger index words" which, when one appears on a message, are an indication that the message *might* belong in that forum.

When a user adds a message, the index words on the message are compared

against the trigger index words of all the forums, and a list of potential forums for the message is displayed. The user may pick forums from this list, putting the new message into them.

The host of a forum may add anyone else's message to the forum or remove any message from the forum (but not from the database). Messages removed from a forum are kept on a list of "rejected messages" for that forum. This list serves two functions. It prevents the message author from re-submitting the message to the forum, and it allows all users to see (if they choose) what the forum host has chosen to reject.

When users are searching for information, after providing an index word, they are shown a list of forums to search, with the contents of the list again based on the trigger index words. The user may choose one or more forums from the list or request to search the entire database.

Summary

These are the changes currently under consideration for the CM system. We hope they will make the system both more useful and more widely available. Your comments and suggestions are, of course, appreciated, and now is the best time to make them. You can write us to make suggestions or to obtain a more complete design specification for comment. Copies of the design spec can be ordered using the coupon on page 7.

Carl Farrington has worked with CM as a programmer and administrator for the past six years. He is also interested in education issues and outdoor recreation.

The Community Memory Project
2617 San Pablo Avenue
Berkeley CA 94702

Community Memory News

A publication of The Community Memory Project

This year, after we
started spending \$ again

#3
Summer 1987



Henricus Holtman (l.) and Carl Farrington confer on the system redesign.

Photo by Karen Paulsell

In the Works: New Hardware, Software for Community Memory

by Carl Farrington

After three years of operation, The Community Memory Project is redesigning its software to take advantage of newer, cheaper machines and of our experience with the Berkeley pilot system.

Since we designed the system now running in Berkeley, the power and availability of low-cost computers has increased dramatically. We can use these new machines to reduce the price of the CM system and increase its capabilities. With these increased capabilities, we can solve many of the problems we have found during the three years we have been operating our pilot system in Berkeley.

The changes we plan include new terminals, coinboxes, a more graphic presentation of messages, and new tools for organizing and sharing information.

Of course, none of this would be worth doing unless we thought people would use it. But the biggest lesson

we've learned from operating the Berkeley pilot system is that Community Memory appeals to people. The terminals are used about 30% of the time that they are available. We get over 1000 new messages each month, and have seen examples of every kind of system use we expected: buying and selling, meeting people with mutual interests, "publishing" poetry, essays and computer art, discussing politics and current events, and sharing useful information.

We have seen some unanticipated occurrences as well. A few people have used the system to get important personal problems off of their chests, often evoking encouraging and helpful responses. Several people have developed mythical CM "personalities" that banter back and forth with one another. All of this usage has taken place with little or no effort on our part to advertise the presence of the system or train people in its use.

See *Redesign*, p. 6

Campaign Begins For Community Support

by Catherine Dunford

The Community Memory Project has begun organizing support through community meetings, volunteer work, regular publication of *Community Memory News*, and local and national fundraising. This new program reflects a continuing commitment to make it easier for people to learn about, communicate and cooperate with one another.

CM Community Meetings

Community Memory Community Meetings (otherwise known as CMCMs) focus on the organization as a community-based group providing solutions to the communication problems we face in our attempts to work with one another. CMCM participants gain an understanding of the role of communications in group activity and learn about threats to human freedom arising from coercive applications of "information" technologies. Project representatives discuss how typically available means of communication limit and distort the ways we can work together. They present the Community Memory solution—minimize these distortions through positive applications of computer technology—and suggest ways to contribute to the CM Project.

The meetings offer a framework for both unaffiliated individuals and those already involved in local organizations to discover how they can best utilize the CM computer system. The system can act as an organizing tool for both established groups and coalitions "waiting to happen." CMCMs encourage participants to "adopt" their own interest on the system and foster its growth as a topic for discussion and, ultimately, connection beyond the boundaries of electronic communication. People choosing to adopt a subject can thus support the Project while furthering their own agendas.

See *Support*, p. 2

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The therapeutic value of such a program has been debated in the field of psychology for over two decades. But even Weizenbaum's own secretary would share her problems with DOCTOR, and cover the terminal to keep Weizenbaum from reading over her shoulder.

There are a few similarities that DOCTOR shares with Community Memory. CM and DOCTOR are both delivered electronically; users enter and obtain information on a computer terminal.

Both CM and DOCTOR use computer technology to provide interchanges that would ordinarily occur in other ways. A therapeutic relationship differs from DOCTOR (at the very least) in that the former is a face-to-face meeting with a live person. Many of CM's interchanges could not happen anywhere else, but some uses of CM may be compared to an editorial page, a ride board, or a bathroom wall.

CM and DOCTOR also share a hands-off approach regarding content. Like CM, DOCTOR does not rely on a central authority to provide information. A session on CM or DOCTOR will be grounded in the format set up by the respective designers,

Title: Housing Advisory and Appeals Board Date Entered: MAR 20, 1987
 Author: Bret
 Boards and Commissions Housing Advisory and Appeals Board
 Hears all matters pertaining to substandard buildings; investigates specific building and housing problems as may be referred by the city council.
 Carlos Baltodano, Secretary 644-6530 Zoning 644-6570

Title: CHANGES MADE ON THE BOARD Date Entered: NOV 29, 1987
 Author: Anonymous
 Carlos Baltodano is no longer with the City of Berkeley.
 Robert Gamblin is now the ACTING head of the Building Department and Chairman of the Housing Advisory Board.
 Watch out for him. He is anti-tenant.

with what transpires during a session up to each individual user.

However, the major difference is more important than all the similarities. The main difference between CM and DOCTOR is that a remark on DOCTOR prompts a single predetermined response, usually composed using words derived from the remark. An entry on CM may draw one response, many responses, or none at all. An innocent question may yield a pragmatic suggestion or set off a frenzied exchange of comments.

A different type of computer-derived help arose several years after ELIZA and

DOCTOR were created. Public databases such as The Source and CompuServe were designed as information storehouses for anyone with a computer, a modem and an account number. While these services included facilities for computer conferencing, analysts in the field of electronic publishing expected only routine exchanges in the bulletin board sections; they expected the stored database material to attract the greatest usage. In fact, the areas where users could communicate with each other turned out to be the fastest growing components of those systems.

Other information providers in the field of electronic publishing found similar patterns. "Better Homes and Gardens" reformatted a selection of its articles for use on a videotex system. However, the most popular part of their package was a user recipe exchange. Airlines also were surprised by the relatively heavy attention paid to their travel bulletin boards.

It seems that the only thing more common than the human tendency to communicate is our human ability to forget this tendency. Many computer system designers seem to have very short memories in this regard.

Community Memory allows the division between help and communication to blur, much as it does in real life. In doing so, CM serves a role that makes a comparison with any other resource—electronic or traditional—very difficult.

Many of the best examples from CM are too long to include here since it's the human-to-human communication in the chains of responses that makes them fascinating. We reproduce two of the briefer ones exactly as they were entered on the system. The opinions they express may or

Title: Disabled Dilemma Date Entered: SEP 25, 1987

Author: Anonymous
 Yesterday, while my brother and I were waiting for a ride home from the Ashby BART, we saw a disabled woman in an electric wheelchair trying to use an elevator to get down to her train. The elevator did not work so she wheeled out to see the attendant. None was present, so she tried again. It did not work. Seeing that she was obviously upset my brother and I approached her and asked her what was wrong. All she could say was "I can't go home!" and dissolve into tears. My brother and I went to the attendants cubical. No one was there so we looked around for one. We could not find one. We returned to the cubical and found her crying and shaking her head saying "never go home". This made me so angry that I almost opened the emergency exit to sound the alarm, jump the barrier and use the emergency phone. Instead I told her that I was going to call BART and get her home. I went to the phone put in my quarter and just then the attendant came and unlocked the elevator. It should not be possible for our disabled brothers and sisters to have so much trouble in their courageous efforts to lead normal, free lives. They are right to call the rest of us "temporarily able-bodied" people. Let's all work together to remember their presence and do what we can to make such frightening incidents rarer and rarer. I am still quite enraged whenever I remember this experience.

Title: BART and the disabled, a response Date Entered: SEP 26, 1987

Author: Anonymous
 It always seemed to me that BART should be able to issue electronic elevator keys to the disabled—sort of like a teller card. They might even combine it with a fare card. Or they could have a combination lock—the computer room at my job has one of these; it has a membrane keyboard, with 6 numbers. You just touch the numbers in the right order. They should pick some technology that the greatest number of disabled can easily use without assistance, but there probably isn't one technology that can work for everyone. And, let's hear it for the disabled folks from all over the US who are coming to SF this week to bring their concerns to the Transportation Convention!

may not be based on facts, but that is true for anything appearing in print.

The first was written by a BART passenger after a disturbing experience with nonfunctioning equipment. The second concerns tenants rights in Berkeley. Both demonstrate a combination of help-seeking and spleen-venting familiar to CM users.

Other CM entries enlarge our concept of help. Over the course of several installments last year, one writer described how he lost his virginity to a friend of his mother's. He told of the incident with great sensitivity and candor. His monologue was both a gift of support to anyone at a similar point in life, and a request for feedback from anyone reading the series.

An entirely different discussion started in May, 1987 when one user began a message with "Extreme Emotions—Watcha Gonna Do With 'em?" Responses came in offering suggestions and recounting personal experiences. Users also wrote messages praising earlier contributors, and asking related questions. One wanted to know why the originator had listed "music" as an index word. The answer said, in part, "It has to do with the tone quality of metallic forms of Rock."

As for this article's original question ("Do people actually receive the help they seek when they use CM?"), a subjective evaluation seems to indicate that certain people do. Only the individual writer knows for sure in each case, but many requests for feedback do appear to garner relevant responses.

Other measures of success in gauging assistance rendered are harder to see. We don't even know how many users found the ride or roommate they were seeking, since the messages usually include phone numbers and there aren't responses we can count. Field observations are one possible method of measuring CM's success. Another is the feedback which users direct to Community Memory via the system itself. Suggestions on ways to make CM a better method of delivering help are always encouraged.

Further information about computer therapy may be found in *Psychohabble* by R.D. Rosen, Avon, 1979 and in *Computer Power and Human Reason* by Joseph Weizenbaum, W.H. Freeman & Co., San Francisco, 1976. ■

Japan Visits Community Memory

by Karen Paulsell

For the past few years, the American press has presented stories of Japanese industrial prowess and the American business community's trips to Japan to study the phenomenon. Community Memory has seen an interesting flip side to this pilgrimage. Quite a few of our recent visitors have come from Japan. Following the publication of Aki Okabe's book, *Alternative Networks* (in Japanese), our Japanese visitors have arrived well informed about the Project.

The Japanese visitors' interest has been both technical and social. They want to know what we're doing, but they also want to know how, and why. A recent visitor, a city librarian, asked a few questions to clear up details described in the book. He then began to ask questions about Community Memory's structure, our decision making processes, how we reach consensus on difficult decisions, and our relationships with other organizations.

continued from page 1

equally in charge. And in fact, the rules of how conversations are mediated are still unclear. There is of course no question of how a broadcast medium is mediated; the boss says do it; you do it or you don't do it.

Richard: Is lack of censorship an important component of the CM philosophy?

Lee: Yes, CM takes the position that the community is the important element. Community Memory is set up to facilitate the development and redevelopment of community or communities. This is community in the communication context, rather than in the physical context. Although it can have either realization.

In order to develop community, you have to have the maximum availability to communication for the people who are prospectively in that community. That pretty much precludes censorship and editing. We trust people with the ability to discriminate in their communication just as people do in speech. We argue that because of the technology, the potential for overwhelming other kinds of speech does not exist in CM. All messages essentially

Next, he said that he wanted to ask me some personal questions, and that if I didn't want to answer them, to just tell him. His questions were about why I chose to work in Community Memory, what my values are, what my goals are, and how my work here had changed my goals and values. My answers weren't nearly as interesting as his reasons for asking, which he told me when I questioned him. He said that the type of community activism that Community Memory (and many other groups) represent is not known in Japan, and that he wanted to understand how and why such groups take place in the U.S.

We've heard the same types of questions and comments from other Japanese visitors over the years—enough to think that it represents an interesting trend. While we haven't followed up on the activities of our visitors, we look forward to hearing from them in coming years—especially as they apply what they've learned while visiting us and other U.S. community groups. ■

have an equal priority and you get the message you look for, you don't get a message you don't look for. So the argument that certain kinds of speech are intrusive, such as shouting fire in a crowded theater, doesn't apply. We don't ever get into a crowded theater. It is always pretty much one person looking for a message, and one person placing a message.

There are limits somewhere; we don't know where they are, and we would hope to be able to expand the limits. You don't expand the limits by placing the limits on yourself and assuming that's it. When we started Community Memory in 1973, the fact that we had made provisions for people to define their own keywords opened up their own creativity in using the system. We found a tremendous flourishing of modes of use. We were really amazed by the range of uses that people seemed to be putting it to.

Richard: How do you see communications functioning in communities?

Lee: It's my contention that first of all, human beings are village dwellers; this is

more

from previous page

built into us somehow. If you look around the world, you do not find societies of isolates except in pathological circumstances, such as New York, and other big urban conurbations.

As Jane Jacobs pointed out succinctly in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, the thing that makes life bearable and humane in a city is the degree to which villages, in effect, or neighborhoods can establish themselves.

I've come to the conclusion that politics is exercised through the control of channels of communication; control of channels of information flow within a society.

What does it take to develop a community, especially in an urban society? From my experience, ranging back to the community organizing my parents did in our neighborhood in Philadelphia which was integrating in 1955, an element, a partial answer is, of course, communication, opening channels of communication. I've come to the conclusion that politics is exercised through the control of channels of communication; control of channels of information flow within a society.

If you can put yourself in a position to dictate to other people what they will and will not hear from each other and say to each other, you by definition have political power over those people. You may not realize it, but you have it. We have in effect been living in an information age since the beginning of writing. You needed writing in order to control other people through information; you no longer had to be the strongest man on the block in order to control and dominate the people around you.

Looking again at the question of what makes community, I say it's communication and it's the ability to communicate without control over your lines of communication by anyone else. Usually that control has been imposed in the name of efficiency. The rationale is "We can't have everybody doing what they want to do" and "There's only a few presses around, so let's just exercise economies of scale and we'll have cheap newspapers, which I will edit". The societal control, the broadcast structure, has always been excused on the grounds of efficiency.

Richard: And electronic, interactive media do away with that excuse?

Lee: Well, let's just say that the efficiency argument is yielding to a technical solution. I think that perhaps the efficiency that is latent in the electronic telecommunications technology has not yet been recognized. At CM, we are pushing the frontier by exploring in the human domain. We are not using supercomputers, we are not counting our bits and bauds, but rather trying to get the structure to spread on a lateral basis.

We are not imposing a hierarchical structure on the community as we see it. Rather, we are growing the capacity from the ground up and letting the people work out their ways of developing grapevines through the system. Then they will ideally take on the support of portions of the system, in effect to support their own grapevines.

Richard: Some people have argued that CM has become outdated with the advent of computerized bulletin board systems (BBS's) which have become quite prevalent in recent years. How do you answer that?

Lee: We still think we are technologically way ahead of the bulletin board systems. CM is based upon a relational database which is generally understood to be the class of database system which is really open ended.

I'm all for BBS's, however, I still don't think you can equate them with CM. The number one reason is technology: we are operating at a level of technology which has really yet to be appreciated. One of the things I'm trying to do in the overlap between my commercial activities and what CM is doing is push that idea, and get some of this technology around in the commercial area, so it will be paid attention to.

The BBS systems are generally single-user. They're on microcomputers; you can't really run more than one user at a time on a micro. And only FidoNet allows communications between the BBS's.

The next point is that BBS systems generally serve a pre-defined community of interest. Again, nothing wrong with that, in fact I look forward to the time when we have full-fledged CM style systems available for pre-defined communities of interest.

Once again, though, we have some better prospects. Right now, only one computer has CM running on it. But, we have got the hooks built into the system, and we have done a lot of the work for the inter-computer communication between two computers running CM. And we've always intended that as the system grew, it would grow by spawning new nodes, new computers, and these computers would be on the CM network via high-speed communication among themselves.

Richard: But BBS systems are still limited to users who themselves have computers?

Lee: That's correct. You have to have a computer yourself in order to use a BBS system. Which means that you are automatically within a certain range in terms of income and in terms of interests. We're trying to make better levels of communication available, on a localized basis (and that's another element of where CM is different) to people without any computers at all. We had seen people using the original CM system in Berkeley who would never have gone near a computer, especially in those days! Our potential usership is much greater than the set of people who have got computers.

Another point is that CM is oriented towards usage within local, geographical areas, and within more specific communities of interest. With the new software coming up, we'll have a large overlap of more specified forums, which are communities of interest, all of which are available on every CM terminal. This is something that you can't get on the BBS systems. You can get it, to a certain extent, on the large centralized database systems such as the Source, CompuServe and others. But the higher the degree of centralization, the more the problem occurs of just plain inefficiency. In a computer, centralization generally means inefficiency for the particular users.

So that when you get online to Source or CompuServe, during high usage periods,

Extending Electronic Freedom of Speech

by Karen Paulsell

The California ballot this November may contain a constitutional amendment that adds a few phrases to two existing sections of the California Constitution. The additional clauses would affect your freedom of speech—by explicitly extending protection into the realm of electronic communications. The amendment also extends the "search and seizure" provisions to cover information kept about you in electronic information systems and computer databases.

The bill, ACA 36, was sponsored by Gwen Moore (D-Los Angeles). "This bill brings the California Constitution up-to-date with the 'information age'," said Moore, who chairs the Utilities and Commerce Committee. "It removes the gray area surrounding electronic communications, declaring once and for all their equivalency with conventional communications as far as constitutional considerations are concerned."

At Community Memory, we're encouraged to see this piece of legislation. We've had a keen interest in First Amendment law, particularly as it has applied to "speech" on the computer, since we first contemplated our public access computer services. Now that computer based communications is becoming big business, with more and more big players exploring the electronic marketplace, we agree with the views of Assemblywoman Moore. It's time to end the ambiguities that surround the application of existing freedoms to electronic communications. Can't you just hear Judge Bork saying "I'm sure that the framers did not intend...?"

At the Federal level, Congress passed the Electronic Communications Privacy Act in 1986. But that may not protect intrastate electronic communications. Even California law enforcement agencies support this amendment; they favor removing the existing "gray areas" surrounding such issues as the use of BBS's in computer crime, and the rights of law agencies to use information seized under existing statutes.

Community Memory urges you to support this bill, ACA 36. It first must pass

Full Text of the Amendment

Words to be deleted are enclosed in brackets [].
Words to be added are enclosed in asterisks. * *

First—That subdivision (a) of Section 2 of Article I thereof is amended to read:

SEC.2. (a) Every person may freely speak, write [and], publish, *or electronically communicate* his or her sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of this right. A law may not restrain or abridge liberty of speech [or], press, *or electronic communication.*

Second—That Section 13 of Article I thereof is amended to read:

SEC.13. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, *including personal information stored in electronic information systems and computer data bases,* against unreasonable seizures and searches may not be violated; and a warrant may not issue except on probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, particularly describing the place *or location* to be searched and the persons and things to be seized.

the Assembly Elections Committee, and then be approved by two-thirds of both houses. Strong bi-partisan support in the Elections Committee will certainly help get full approval. You should write or call the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and members of the Assembly Elections Committee, expressing your support for ACA 36. The names and phone numbers are in the box below, as well as the Committee's address. The vote is scheduled for late January.

If one of these people represents your district, your calls or letters will have special weight. If you can't write to each of the people on the list, at least write a letter to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

You can also reach the Committee consultant (staff director), Barbara Milman, at 916-445-7610. The Republican consultant, Jim Caldwell, can be reached at 916-445-3260. You can tell

these important analysts why you favor the passage of ACA 36.

If you want more information about the bill, contact the sponsor, Assemblywoman Gwen Moore (D-Los Angeles) or her adviser, Bob Jacobson at 916-445-8800, or send mail to her at: State Capitol, Room 2117 P. O. Box 942849, Sacramento CA 94249-0001. Once it passes the Elections Committee, you should write your representatives to support its passage.

More information on ACA 36 and related telecommunications and information policy issues can be obtained from the Utilities and Commerce Committee's new legislative computer bulletin board, **The Capitol Connection**. The telephone number is 916-442-0746 (7 bits, even parity, one stop bit). The Capitol Connection is free; you'll have to register before you can begin using it. ■

Assembly Elections Committee

State Capitol, Room 5119
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0001.

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Community Memory Plans for Coinboxes

by Carl Farrington

The idea of coin-operated computer terminals has been an important part of the Community Memory concept from the early days of the project. That idea took an important step toward reality last August with the installation of a prototype coinbox on the CM terminal in our office.

Despite cost-cutting changes now in progress [CM News Summer 1987] establishing and running a CM system will continue to take money. Coinboxes on CM terminals would provide a way to meet the costs of system operation without depending exclusively on grants and donations. A self-supporting CM system is an attractive idea to foundations, individual donors, and prospective system operators.

The prototype coinbox operates under computer control, and allows us to experiment with different pricing schemes. Our current proposal is to charge 25 cents for adding a message, but to allow people to read messages for free. To the user, this cost is minimal (if a newspaper offered free advertising, the stamp or phone call to put your ad in would cost almost as much) but this money would help cover system costs.

Recently, we have averaged 200 messages per terminal monthly. If we received a quarter for each of these messages, we would bring in \$50/terminal each month. This would cover the terminal phone bills, and help with administrative expenses.

Of course, if we charged for using the system, the number of messages added would decrease. But we hope that the nominal charge would primarily eliminate "garbage" messages that most people perceive as an annoyance anyway. As we add more terminals, the system will become an increasingly effective way to reach people, which will also offset the effect of the charge. Other pricing schemes could also be used to balance the need for revenues with the desire for inexpensive service.

Developing equipment to support this flexibility has taken a long time. The selection of a commercially-available coinbox and the design of special hardware to handle the coins under computer control was begun four years ago by Lee Felsenstein, Philip Kohn, and Carl Farrington, but other

commitments and technical problems stalled the project repeatedly.

The pace of the development increased this spring when Chris Helps took over the development of the coinbox subsystem and Henricus Holtman began modifying the CM software to control the coinbox. Carl and Henricus integrated the new software into the pilot system and installed the first coinbox in early August.

More work remains to be done before coinboxes are installed on the public CM terminals. Also, the CM Board of Directors has decided not to install the coinboxes until the pilot system has more terminals, which are planned for the next few months. But the prototype has already attracted interest from a potential sponsor of a CM system, and allows us to demonstrate another important aspect of CM.

CM wishes to thank Henricus and Chris for their efforts, as well as Jeff Milstead and Aaron Waters, who built the prototype and provided invaluable assistance in making it work. ■

Now Available: The First Research Report On Community Memory

At Community Memory, we were delighted to receive a paper called *The Segmented Society: Can New Technologies Narrow the Gap?* The paper was written by Susan Douglas, from San Francisco State University. It was presented at the Left Coast Gathering of the Union for Democratic Communications in October, 1987.

The paper presents the results of over 50 hours of field research that Douglas conducted at Community Memory terminal sites, and a content analysis of messages from the Community Memory database. While the paper doesn't answer the question of its title (who possibly could?), it presents an excellent literature review of research into information gaps, and evaluates the relevance of this work to new communication technologies.

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Editor this issue: Karen Paulsell

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We can also be reached on the WELL: Lee Felsenstein <lee>, or Karen Paulsell <kjp>. Via PeaceNet, email <karen>.

A Summary of CM's Development Plans

As described in the Summer, 1987 issue of *CM News*, The Community Memory Project is in the midst of a major revamp of the system. Our major goals are: lower startup costs, greater community involvement, easier-to-use software, and more powerful user tools. The hardware changes include:

- a lower-cost central computer
- intelligent terminals
- a programmable coinbox
- 4-6 new terminal locations.

The new Community Memory software will feature:

- forums on particular topics (messages can be placed in one or many forums)
- user-designed "buttons" which will let users link messages
- pop-up windows for help and special features.

you can wait a long time for things to happen. And I was asked, I think in 1979 or 80, by William von Meister, the guy who invented the Source, why don't you come put CM on the Source? My response was that we are not looking to do a centralized nationwide CM system. It would not work well. It would spoil the myth of the system.

Our concept doesn't have one single computer running everything, a "downtown" computer. Our concept involves a network of computers, each one having many terminals. That network of smaller computers would cooperate by using high-speed communication. There would be no center of the network.

Richard: Where do you and CM go from here? What are your visions for the future?

Lee: I'm working on my visions, CM is working on implementing its visions. They're not different visions necessarily. So when you say you and CM, I'll draw the distinction. CM is undergoing a redesign of the software, and to a certain extent, the hardware. This has been discussed elsewhere. [See *A Summary of CM's Development Plans* on page 2.] The important thing there is that we're getting away from high-cost specialized hardware and moving to lower-cost, widely available hardware. That's one thing, as a hardware designer, I think is very good.

We're looking at Atari 520 ST's and PC clones as terminals, which are widely available at very low cost, and we'll reduce the cost of the central computer from \$30,000 to maybe \$10,000 or below.

We're also adding the coinbox, and that will create a significant change in the myth and the usage of the system. We have found, for instance, that people are put off by the myth of the system because of the kind of conversations that they see going on, the sort of role-playing conversations that are apparently being played out by either juveniles or people who are of a juvenile frame of mind. Nothing really bad, but, on the other hand, if people look at that and say, "Oh, that's all that's going on there", then we have to watch out for that. We expect that the coinbox, costing 3 cents more than a 22 cent stamp to use, will have a significant effect in changing the myth. We're going to have to be very carefully monitoring what goes on. We have a lot of

options as to how that coinbox is used, since it's a matter of programming at about three different levels.

Professionally, the things I have done that are of relevance to CM have turned out well, and most of the things I've done that are irrelevant to CM have not turned out well. So I take a hint from this. Whatever I do, I should always ground it in things and concepts, structures that can be of use to the development of CM and that sort of communication. I'm not going to ask why, but that's just what seems to work.

The product we're working on here at Upstart Corporation is really a result of a conversation in which Carl Farrington asked me how we could make the cheapest possible bit-mapped or graphics computer. Which really is the Atari 520 ST. But at that time, which was early 84, it was not at all clear that the Atari, even the Atari company, was going to survive. So I began thinking... how would you do that? How could you make a real cheap computer that's rather like the MacIntosh or the Sun, and of course the Atari. How could you make it a kit. I've got a product that is

People resonate to the possibilities that non-broadcast communication makes available to them, especially when realized at an advanced level of technology.

growing from that seed. I consider it of some potential relevance to CM.

To go into a slightly higher level, I would like to make the components of CM commercially available, and subject to the economies of large scale production, as large a scale as it will tolerate. That is a perfectly viable approach that's paid off before, and will certainly pay off again.

I would like to make "community of interest" systems; that is to say, small to medium sized CM systems that you could hook up to phone lines, and set up and declare yourself to be an information resource for a community of interest. These would not be members of the CM network, but they would be potential members of CM networks.

There are levels of sophistication of those systems; I would like to be able to feed the technology that's developed for CM into the structural system that I'm now familiar

with, the capitalist system of production and marketing. I've seen some great success in personal computers in doing just that.

The technology for establishing CM type systems should be made available. I think that it will have a very good market because people resonate to the possibilities that non-broadcast communication makes available to them, especially when realized at an advanced level of technology. We saw this resonance happening in 1973, and we've seen it since then. We need to develop more. We need to play the music, rather than just hitting something and hearing it ring.

There's a great deal of development that has to be done, primarily in the human area. Development of myth, development of understanding of what this is, understanding of how you use the system. Okay, you've got the hardware and the software, that does something, but to use it, you have to approach it with some intention as to what you want to use it for. There are rules to be followed and rules to be discovered as to how to use it to get a certain effect.

I call this process the courseware. There's a lot of development that has to be done there. This cannot be centralized development, nor should it be. Making the tools available facilitates this decentralized development. It's necessary to provide the channel of communication, non-broadcast of course, among the people who are developing it. I perceive that as being an important step in CM's future development.

Richard: So Community Memory is essentially defined by the community?

Lee: That is the whole point. It is defined by the community that develops through its mediation, and since it is a non-broadcast medium, the mediation of the system is essentially passive. It is determined, in the aggregate, by the members of that particular community. Almost a self-developing community. There's really no good way to predict it. ■

Put a Message on Community Memory

If you want to put a message on Community Memory, but don't find your way to one of our terminals, here's a blank you can use (make copies if you need more than one).

Title: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Author: _____

Index Words: _____

(Type your message below)

Please Type!

Title: you can use up to 45 characters

Author: Leave blank, or use a "nickname" (up to 12 characters).

Expiration date: Up to one year from now; if you leave it blank the message will be on CM for about 6 weeks.

Index Words: Use words that you think people will use when they are looking for your message. You can use up to 10 words.

The message: can be as short or long as you like. The message box is 12 lines of 57 characters. A message can continue for several screens, but short messages are more effective.

Deadline: April 1, 1988. All telephone numbers included in messages will be confirmed before messages are posted. You must include your name and address below if it is not included in the message. (This is for our records only.)

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Community Memory News

A publication of The Community Memory Project

Winter, 1987-88

Communications and Community: An Interview with Lee Felsenstein

By Richard Weiss

Lee Felsenstein is a well known Bay Area engineer and activist. He was involved in the development of micro computers since the beginning, and was an early member of the Home Brew Computer Club. He is perhaps best known for having designed the Sol terminal computer, the first micro-computer with integrated video, and the Osborne 1, the first portable computer, as well as being a co-founder of Community Memory. The Community Memory Project has always tried to remain explicitly aware of the dynamics that communications technology creates in the community. This interview presents some of Lee's ideas on broadcast and non-broadcast media. The following interview took place in the offices of Upstart Corporation, Lee's latest commercial venture.



photo by Richard Weiss

Richard: What is the difference between broadcast and non-broadcast media?

Lee: I use the term broadcast media to describe any medium where the information is replicated in identical form from a centralized point. It radiates outward from that point; it's broadcast. It does not refer necessarily to electronic media. Print is a broadcast medium, unless the print is done by xerox machines or typewriters, or whatever.

Richard: I guess another term to describe broadcast media would be simplex, in a single direction?

Lee: Possibly. There is a reverse channel, but it's extremely small and cluttered. Some conceptual artists from SF several years ago, around '68, did a "media inversion" as they called it. They bought some very high-quality mailing lists and made a very official looking bill for 50-some dollars and sent it with an inscription on the bottom, "If you have any questions, call the following numbers". The numbers

were those of a couple of TV stations, and maybe a newspaper. Hundreds of people who got this bill suddenly began calling these media; and in fact inverting the media, information was coming back in, and of course most of them were not set up to handle it. So, this made the papers, which was I guess their goal.

Richard: Which emphasized their point?

Lee: Emphasized their point, but you see they didn't really make their point until it got into the papers. And came back out again to millions of people.

Richard: What are some other differences between broadcast and non-broadcast media?

Lee: There's always someone in charge of the communication, always an editor in a broadcast context, and in a non-broadcast context there is no editor; all parties to the conversation (and I guess that's the best thing you can call it, a conversation) are

continued on page 5

Community Memory as a Source of Help

by Harlan Shays

The information available on Community Memory terminals comes from people who step up to the screen and type what they want to say. Any individual may enter information or a comment of his or her own. The material on CM comes from its users, not the organization that manages the system.

Community Memory is the only public access system that relies on its users for its information. People using CM are actually communicating with each other from different locations, and at different times. This kind of interaction could not have existed until relatively recently; CM is one of many possible combinations of computers and telecommunications.

In light of its unique nature, we're often asked "Do people actually receive the help they seek when they use CM?" While no other service is identical to CM, some distant cousins do exist. A look at two older innovations can help frame the question.

Joseph Weizenbaum, an MIT computer science professor, developed two "natural language programs" called ELIZA and DOCTOR in the mid 1960's. He was trying to show that computers could appear to understand human language within a given context; he never intended for his work to have therapeutic implications. However, his DOCTOR program bears a strong resemblance to Rogerian nondirective therapy.

The DOCTOR program begins by asking "How may I help you?". As the "patients" describe their problems, key words and phrases are picked up by the program and fit into preselected responses. The exchange between a user and the program might seem like a conversation to the casual observer, but there is no comprehension on the part of the machine.

continued on page 4

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We Need You....

(con't.)

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I'll be kicking around for another two months to assist the Board of Directors in initiating their new projects for 1992 as well as working with the Board and our Technical Advisory Group in managing the network. Clearly, we need your help like never before. You can participate by making good use of the Community Memory network, by volunteering or by sending in a donation. (See the tear-off on page 3.) Give me a ring at (510) 841-1114 and let me know how you want to get involved.

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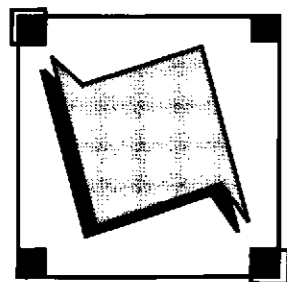
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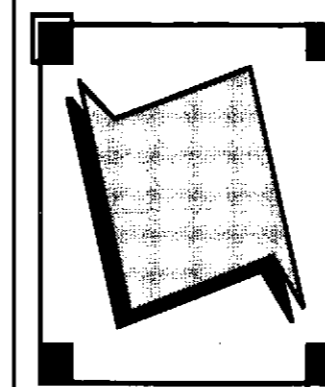
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Community
Memory



The Community Memory

NETWORK

Vol. I, Issue IV

December 1991

We Need You in 1992

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As Councilmember Ann Chandler wrote, "Community Memory already has a wealth of experience in running a public network. This experience will greatly contribute to achieving the Council's goal of opening the City's systems to its citizens."

Not only has the City generously agreed to house the system's central memory, but we will be working with the Information Systems Department to create an e-mail link between the Community Memory network and the city's administrative network, *Citywide*.

(continued on page 3)

Please note our new mailing address:
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CM staffers Nancy, Yvonne, Evelyn and Carl contemplate 1991's triumphs.

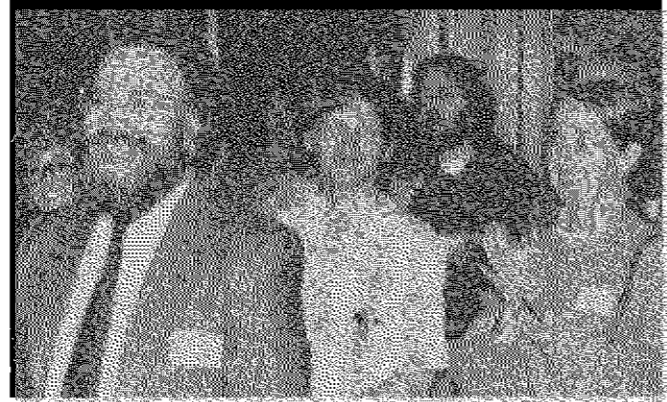
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Celebrating Another First

Every year Community Memory hosts a festive event to publicize and personalize our growing network of information, commentary and conversation. It's always a great time because there's food, libations, and entertainment and, like our online community, everyone is invited. This year we enjoyed the same good time, but because of the hard work and commitment of a few very special volunteers, our annual party took on a special significance.



Volunteer Greg Ross and Board member Mary Eisenhart enjoy the party.

From our first announcement of the completion of Community Memory's interactive Alameda County War Memorial, support poured in from all over the East Bay and beyond. It was particularly heartwarming because, for obvious reasons, a war memorial is a curious thing to celebrate and, some would say, especially in Berkeley. But the overwhelming coverage by the press, the determined efforts of the volunteers, and the well-attended unveiling party were all proof positive that Community Memory can work to bridge the chasm and make the connection between human sentiments, computers and technology.

On Veterans Day, Monday, November 11, the Community Memory Project hosted a robust celebration recognizing some of the things of which we are most proud. The celebration, which was held at The China Station Restaurant, commemorated the broadening of Berkeley history with the unveiling of the first and only interactive war memorial. The memorial, which took over 12 months to complete, pays homage to nearly two thousand Alameda County veterans who sacrificed their lives in military service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam war and, most recently, the Persian Gulf War.

As the memorial came to completion, it became apparent that, for many people, Community Memory is the first and only local place where their loved ones are publicly remembered. The interactive nature of Community Memory allows family and friends to leave permanent remembrances. The first remembrance was left during the unveiling and since then, several touching entries have been added to the online memorial Guest Book.

The program of the unveiling featured remembrances and presentations by Mayor Loni Hancock, Lee Halterman from Ron Dellums' office, Berkeley Public Library Director Regina Minudri, Community Memory Executive Director Evelyn Pine, and Outreach Director YaVette Holts and, of course, the Memorial forum host, Country Joe McDonald who performed his popular anthem, "Fixin' to Die Rag".

By the end of the evening, party-goers, volunteers and news reporters alike were all talking about another first in Berkeley. The Community Memory staff, on the other hand, were pleased to have a chance to rest after having made yet another idea become a reality.

- YaVette Holts

Network is the quarterly newsletter of the Community Memory Project.

YaVette Holts, Editor
Printed by Inkworks

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- Mary Eisenhart, MicroTimes Magazine
- Carl Farrington, Design & Delivery
- Lee Felsenstein, Goleemics
- Evelyn Pine, Community Memory Project
- Margaret Russell, Santa Clara Univ. School of Law
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The Community Memory Project is sustained by local imagination, volunteer energy, donations and grants. We are supported by funds from Pacific Bell. Write Community Memory at 1442 A Walnut Street, #311, Berkeley, CA 94709; or call (510) 841-1114.

BUZZWORDS

We Need You...

(con't.)

Second, we have also been meeting with other community groups and institutions to see what role they would like to play in the long term development of the network. With ten publicly-sited terminals, almost 100 on-line information and discussion forums, and two thousand users a month, the network is ripe to be institutionalized and nurtured by a diverse collection of local groups and individuals.

Moreover, Pacific Bell has awarded the Community Memory Project a \$5,000 grant to assist in this effort.

The third activity the Community Memory Project Board of Directors will be undertaking this year is a program of public education about the importance of public access to computer networks.

The development of commercial networks like Prodigy, the Well, SF-CafeNet, and Minitel's San Francisco experiment, 101 Online, in addition to the growth of municipal networks, and the moves to create a National Research and Education Network (NREN), all point to a window of opportunity in which we can educate policy-makers and the general public in the value of the broadest possible public access to telecommunications networks and computer tools. We want to share what we've learned in Berkeley over the past twenty years to enhance community-based, commercial, educational and governmental telecommunications networks.

At the same time, like so many nonprofits, educational institutions, governments and businesses, we are facing a period of retrenchment.

Our grants from the Telecommunications Education Trust, which funded our community outreach efforts, have run out. We have laid off our Outreach Director, YaVette Holts, and System Operator, Nancy Kern as of December 15. The Community Memory Project will miss (continued on page 4)

The Community Memory summer youth program, **Operation: In Effect!!** recently caught the attention of **Dominique DiPrima**, host of the local television show **Home Turf**. She and her "posse" filmed **Kaidi Depelchin, Annetta Harris, Kuang Huang** and **Dafina Lee** in a segment that will air late in January '92..... We are pleased to welcome **Pacific Bell** to our growing list of supporters. They have awarded The Community Memory Project a \$5000 grant..... Lots of new energy will be added to Community Memory's driving force. We welcome two new board members and a new advisor. **Joining the Board are Jim Cara**, Director of the Berkeley Libraries, and **Mary Eisenhart**, Managing Director of Berkeley-Oakland Support Services (B.O.S.S.), will be joining our team of advisors..... We'd like to acknowledge and thank everyone involved in making our annual party and the unveiling of the Community Memory Alameda County War Memorial an overwhelming success; in particular, we'd like to thank **Gert Chiarito, Greg Ross, Jim Watson, Rich Vannucci, Joe McDonald, Barbara Shayesteh, Rachel Richmond, Lee Halterman, Regina Minudri, Mayor Loni Hancock, Stephen O'Shea, Rick Kern, Kinko's Copies** and **China Station Restaurant**..... Printed copies of the Community Memory Alameda County War Memorial are available for \$15. Call or write the Community Memory Project for more details.

CLIP AND SEND

Yes, I want to volunteer.

Yes, I support the Community Memory Project. I have enclosed a donation of

<input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50
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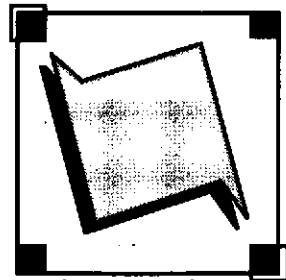
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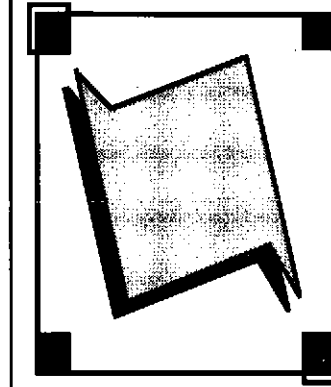
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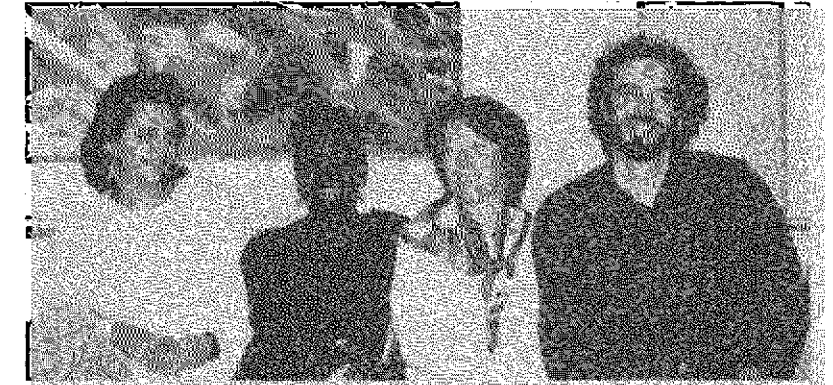
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CM staffers Nancy, YaVette, Evelyn and Carl contemplate 1991's triumphs.

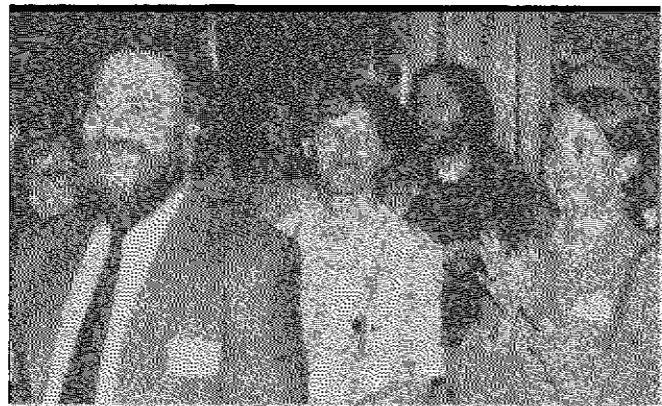
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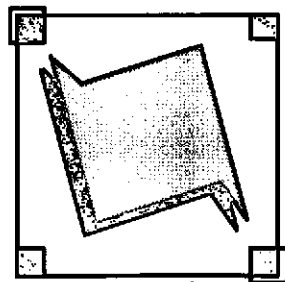
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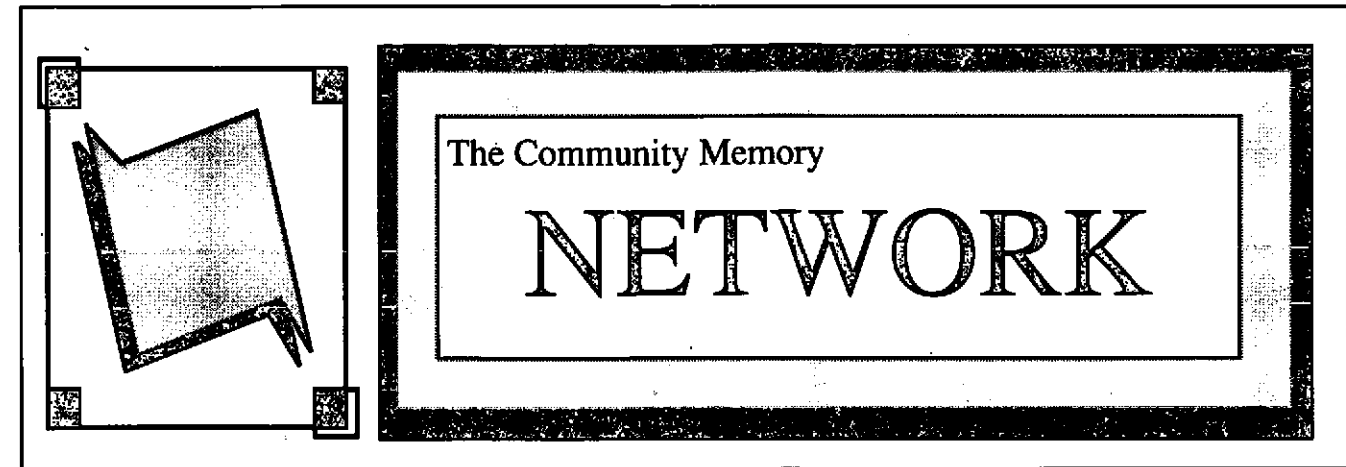
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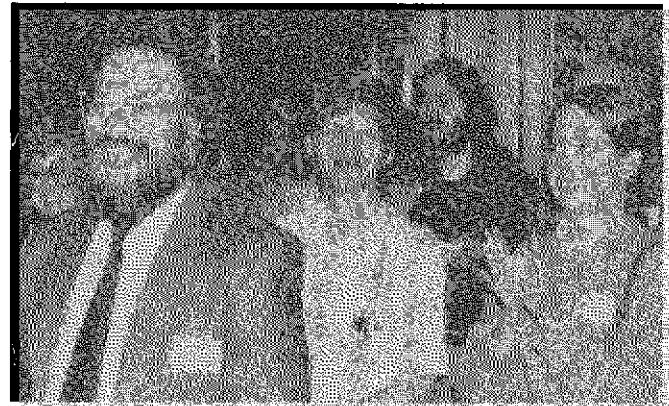
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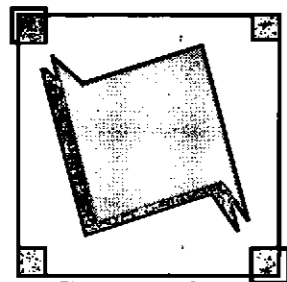
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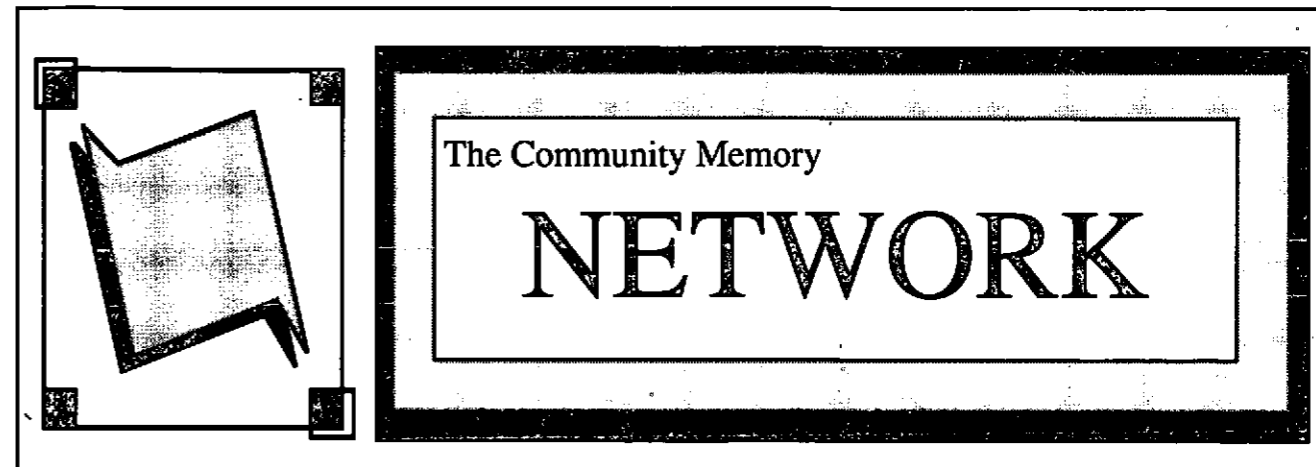
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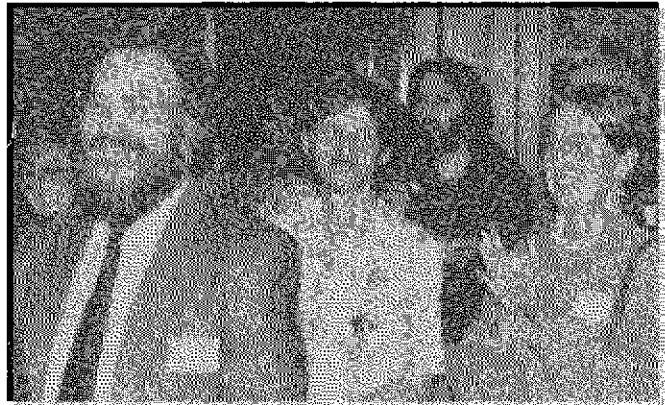
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CLIP AND SEND

Yes, I want to volunteer.

Yes, I support the Community Memory Project. I have enclosed a donation of

<input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50
<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25

(For tax deductible donations, make checks payable to Village Design. Thank You.)

Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Send to The Community Memory Project at 1442 A Walnut Street #311, Berkeley, CA 94709

THANKS FOR A GREAT '91!!

The Community Memory Project wants to thank the following people for making 1991 such an incredible year: Regina Minudri of the Berkeley Public Library, Patti Wong of the South Library, Jim Cara of the Claremont Library, Dawn Swanson of the West Library, Helmut Meister of the International House, Suzanne Ryan and Lee Hogg of the North Berkeley Senior Center, Milt Van Damme of Milt's Coin-op I and II, Durrell Ali of the South Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corporation, Chris Clarke and the whole gang at the Ecology Center, Berkeley City Council, David Cugin of Councilmember Ann Chandler's Office, Chris Mead and Lianne Birkhold of City of Berkeley Information Systems, Sean Gordon of the City of Berkeley, RV Cottam, Anna Stevenson and all the Mature Poets, Will Thomas, Greg Williamson, Tom Nemcik, Eugenia Andruchowicz, Maria Delgado, Steve Long of Inkworks, Flora Russ and Alice Porter at Berkeley High School, Carl Shelton of the Berkeley Youth Employment Services, Connie Ramos of Merritt College, Gloria Rose, Marion Standish, Kathleen T. Schuler, Barbara Sanders, Taleb Jenkins, Sandi Lawson of the Revitalization Exchange, Anne Butigan of Berkeley Trip, Shirley Fogarino of Vista College, Milton Fuji and Clifford W. Frost of the University of California, Kay Finney and Debbie Carton of the Berkeley Public Library, Country Joe McDonald and the Alameda County War Memorial Task Force, Kaidi Depelchin, Annetta Harris, Kuang Huang, Dafina Lee, Louis Labat of the Alameda County Department of Aging, Mimi Recker, Earl Crabb of Intermedia, Allan Kuchinsky of Hewlett Packard, John Schweizer, Susan Walters, and Molly Hopp of Pacific Bell, the Bay Area Nonprofit Computer Consortium, Jim Davis and the Berkeley Chapter of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, Steve Costa and BMUG, Anna Couey, Berndt Scharlach, Cliff Barney, Susan C. Blumstein, James Bond, Mary R. Clayborn, Fred L. Convers of Conversational Computing, Sandy Emerson, Dave Fogerty, David Gans, Flash Gordon, MD., Katherine Hardy, Bruce Kirschner, Philip Kohn, Anna & Martin Rabkin, Michael Rossman, Harlan Shays, Myra Shays, Arthur R. Siegel, William D. Smart, Bonnie Trach, James L. and Martha Watson, and William Zinn.

We Need You....

(con't.)

them both. They have done remarkable work to make the online community we inhabit such a yakker-friendly place.

I'll be kicking around for another two months to assist the Board of Directors in initiating their new projects for 1992 as well as working with the Board and our Technical Advisory Group in managing the network. Clearly, we need your help like never before. You can participate by making good use of the Community Memory network, by volunteering or by sending in a donation. (See the tear-off on page 3.) Give me a ring at (510) 841-1114 and let me know how you want to get involved.

- Evelyn Pine

- **Central Library**
Shattuck and Kitteridge
- **Claremont Library**
2940 Benvenue (at Ashby)
- **South Library**
1901 Russell (at MLK, Jr. Way)
- **West Library**
1125 University (near San Pablo)

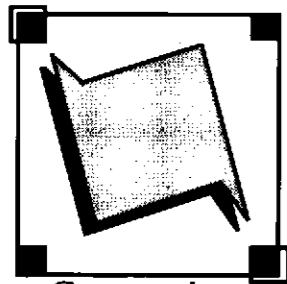
There are 10 Community Memory Locations

- **North Berkeley Senior Center**
1901 Hearst (at MLK, Jr. Way)
- **Milt's Coin-Op**
3055 Telegraph (at Webster)

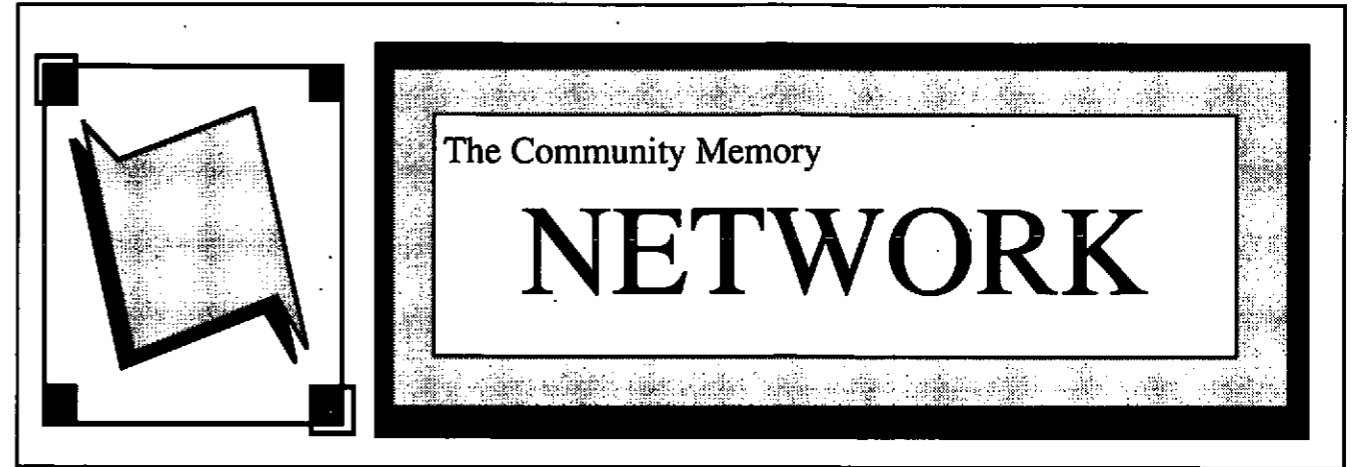
- **International House**
2299 Piedmont (at Bancroft Way)
- **Milt's Coin-Op II**
2483 Hearst (at Euclid)
- **Ecology Center Complex**
2530 San Pablo (bet. Parker & Blake)
- **S. Berk. Nghbrhd. Devel. Corp.**
1767 Alcatraz (near Adeline)

Village Design
1442 A Walnut Street #311
Berkeley, CA 94709

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Community
Memory



Vol. I, Issue IV

December 1991

We Need You in 1992

1992 looks to be a time of change for the Community Memory Project. Some of these changes are exciting and inspiring, others are more difficult and call for renewed commitment.

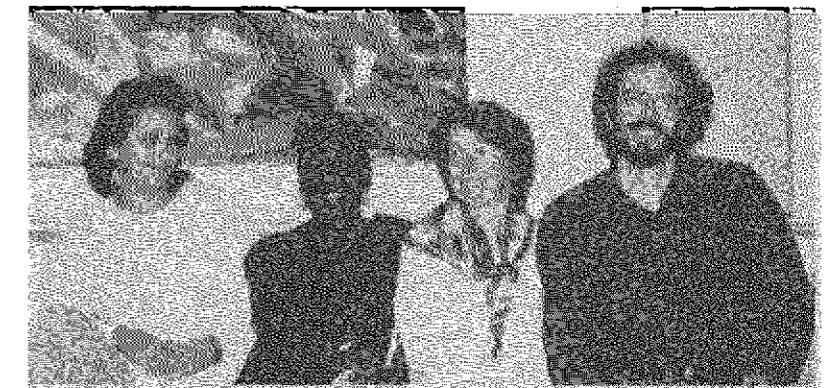
First, as our lead story notes, the Community Memory Project will be working more closely with the City of Berkeley.

As Councilmember Ann Chandler wrote, "Community Memory already has a wealth of experience in running a public network. This experience will greatly contribute to achieving the Council's goal of opening the City's systems to its citizens."

Not only has the City generously agreed to house the system's central memory, but we will be working with the Information Systems Department to create an e-mail link between the Community Memory network and the city's administrative network, *Citywide*.

(continued on page 3)

Please note our new mailing address:
COMMUNITY MEMORY
1442 A Walnut St.
#311
Berkeley, CA
94709
(510) 841-1114



CM staffers Nancy, YaVette, Evelyn and Carl contemplate 1991's triumphs.

The City of Berkeley Hooks up with Community Memory

On December 10, the Berkeley City Council voted to "direct the City Manager to facilitate the installation of the Community Memory Computer System within the City's computer room at 2180 Milvia Street and to work with Community Memory to support the equipment and establish an electronic mail link between Community Memory and the Administration's network, *Citywide*." We are delighted that Community Memory sites will eventually serve as electronic mail drops through which you will be able to touch base with city officials and departments. The potential of Community Memory to be a bridge between residents and local government is immense. Thanks to Councilmember Ann Chandler for initiating this important first step.

The Community Memory Project brings together people and groups to share information, resources and opinions. Through the use of an electronic network with ten public access computer sites in Berkeley, the Community Memory Project both encourages and facilitates dialogue, information-sharing, and constituency-building.

Celebrating Another First

Every year Community Memory hosts a festive event to publicize and personalize our growing network of information, commentary and conversation. It's always a great time because there's food, libations, and entertainment and, like our online community, everyone is invited. This year we enjoyed the same good time, but because of the hard work and commitment of a few very special volunteers, our annual party took on a special significance.



Volunteer Greg Ross and Board member Mary Eisenhart enjoy the party.

From our first announcement of the completion of Community Memory's interactive Alameda County War Memorial, support poured in from all over the East Bay and beyond. It was particularly heartwarming because, for obvious reasons, a war memorial is a curious thing to celebrate and, some would say, especially in Berkeley. But the overwhelming coverage by the press, the determined efforts of the volunteers, and the well-attended unveiling party were all proof positive that Community Memory can work to bridge the chasm and make the connection between human sentiments, computers and technology.

On Veterans Day, Monday, November 11, the Community Memory Project hosted a robust celebration recognizing some of the things of which we are most proud. The celebration, which was held at The China Station Restaurant, commemorated the broadening of Berkeley history with the unveiling of the first and only interactive war memorial. The memorial, which took over 12 months to complete, pays homage to nearly two thousand Alameda County veterans who sacrificed their lives in military service during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam war and, most recently, the Persian Gulf War.

As the memorial came to completion, it became apparent that, for many people, Community Memory is the first and only local place where their loved ones are publicly remembered. The interactive nature of Community Memory allows family and friends to leave permanent remembrances. The first remembrance was left during the unveiling and since then, several touching entries have been added to the online memorial Guest Book.

The program of the unveiling featured remembrances and presentations by Mayor Loni Hancock, Lee Halterman from Ron Dellums' office, Berkeley Public Library Director Regina Minudri, Community Memory Executive Director Evelyn Pine, and Outreach Director YaVette Holts and, of course, the Memorial forum host, Country Joe McDonald who performed his popular anthem, "Fixin' to Die Rag".

By the end of the evening, party-goers, volunteers and news reporters alike were all talking about another first in Berkeley. The Community Memory staff, on the other hand, were pleased to have a chance to rest after having made yet another idea become a reality.

- YaVette Holts

Network is the quarterly newsletter of the Community Memory Project.

YaVette Holts, Editor
Printed by Inkworks

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Mary Eisenhart, MicroTimes Magazine
Carl Farrington, Design & Delivery
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The Community Memory Project is sustained by local imagination, volunteer energy, donations and grants. We are supported by funds from Pacific Bell. Write Community Memory at 1442 A Walnut Street, #311, Berkeley, CA 94709; or call (510) 841-1114.

BUZZWORDS

The Community Memory summer youth program, **Operation: In Effect!!** recently caught the attention of **Dominique DiPrima**, host of the local television show **Home Turf**. She and her "posse" filmed **Kaidi Depelchin, Annetta Harris, Kuang Huang** and **Dafina Lee** in a segment that will air late in January '92..... We are pleased to welcome **Pacific Bell** to our growing list of supporters. They have awarded The Community Memory Project a \$5000 grant..... Lots of new energy will be added to Community Memory's driving force. We welcome two new board members and a new advisor. Joining the Board are **Jim Cara**, Director of the Berkeley Libraries, and **Mary Eisenhart**, Managing Editor of **MicroTimes** magazine. Community activist **Boona Cheema**, Director of Berkeley-Oakland Support Services (B.O.S.S.), will be joining our team of advisors..... We'd like to acknowledge and thank everyone involved in making our annual party and the unveiling of the Community Memory Alameda County War Memorial an overwhelming success; in particular, we'd like to thank **Gert Chiarito, Greg Ross, Jim Watson, Rich Vannucci, Joe McDonald, Barbara Shayesteh, Rachel Richmond, Lee Halterman, Regina Minudri, Mayor Loni Hancock, Stephen O'Shea, Rick Kern, Kinko's Copies** and **China Station Restaurant**..... Printed copies of the Community Memory Alameda County War Memorial are available for \$15. Call or write the Community Memory Project for more details.

We Need You...

(con't.)

Second, we have also been meeting with other community groups and institutions to see what role they would like to play in the long term development of the network. With ten publicly-sited terminals, almost 100 on-line information and discussion forums, and two thousand users a month, the network is ripe to be institutionalized and nurtured by a diverse collection of local groups and individuals.

Moreover, Pacific Bell has awarded the Community Memory Project a \$5,000 grant to assist in this effort.

The third activity the Community Memory Project Board of Directors will be undertaking this year is a program of public education about the importance of public access to computer networks.

The development of commercial networks like *Prodigy*, the *Well*, *SF-CafeNet*, and Minitel's San Francisco experiment, *101 Online*, in addition to the growth of municipal networks, and the moves to create a National Research and Education Network (NREN), all point to a window of opportunity in which we can educate policy-makers and the general public in the value of the broadest possible public access to telecommunications networks and computer tools. We want to share what we've learned in Berkeley over the past twenty years to enhance community-based, commercial, educational and governmental telecommunications networks.

At the same time, like so many nonprofits, educational institutions, governments and businesses, we are facing a period of retrenchment.

Our grants from the Telecommunications Education Trust, which funded our community outreach efforts, have run out. We have laid off our Outreach Director, YaVette Holts, and System Operator, Nancy Kern as of December 15. The Community Memory Project will miss (continued on page 4)

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Name _____

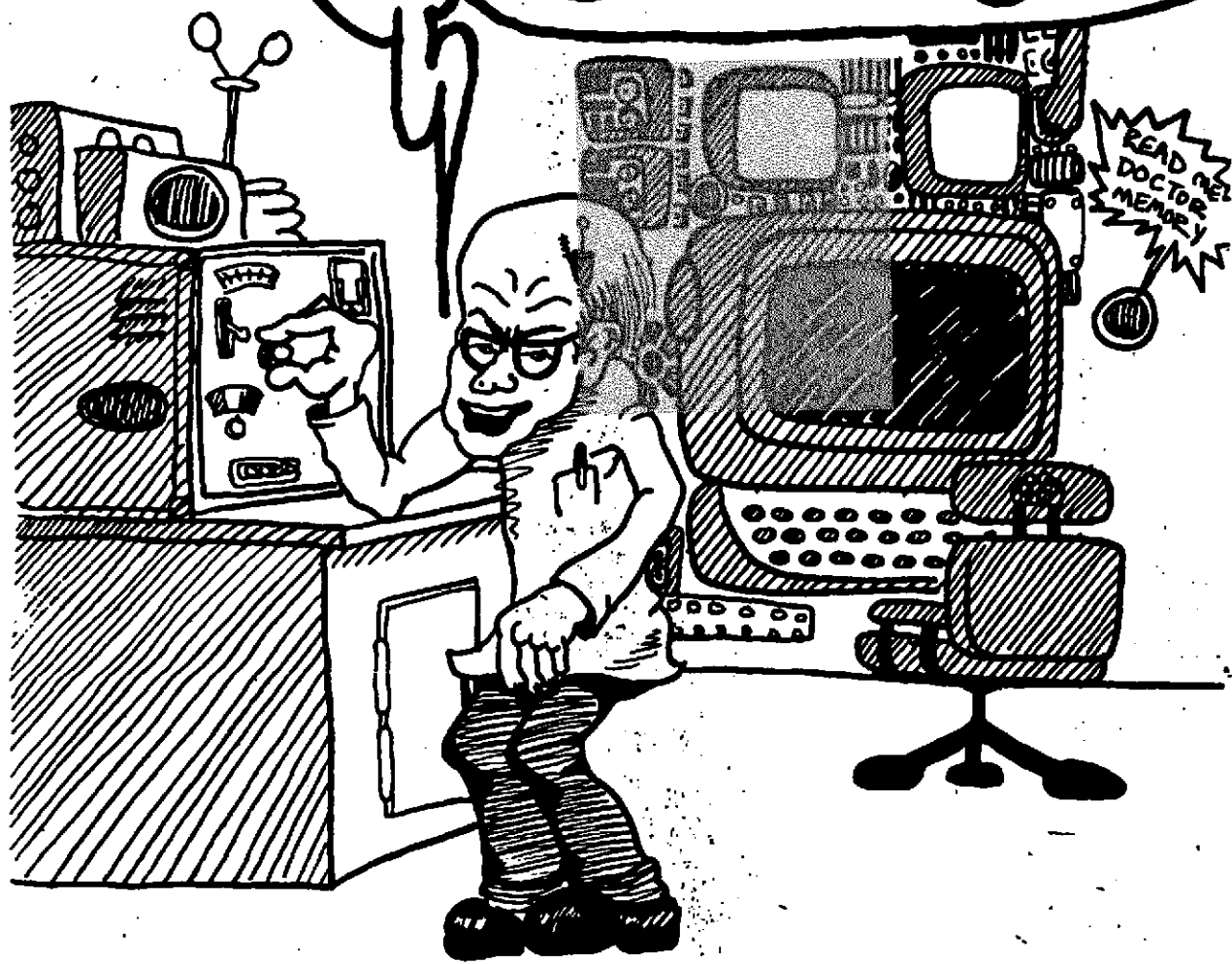
Street Address _____

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Phone _____

Send to The Community Memory Project at 1442 A Walnut Street #311, Berkeley, CA 94709

AT LAST... A COMMUNITY MEMORY!



The seed of a national public access information net was planted last August in Berkeley. A teletype terminal connected to the Resource One computer was placed in the lobby of Leopold's Records, and people were encouraged to use it as a combined electronic bulletin board and data store. In keeping with our aspirations we've named this *COMMUNITY MEMORY*.

Since then several thousand people have discovered the terminal and typed in messages, classifying their items themselves so other people can find them quickly. The collection, with over a thousand active items now, includes exchanges traditional to other public media—bulletin boards, classified ads, telephone poles, bathroom walls; the type of information found in indexes and directories such as People's Yellow Pages; as well as exchanges and dialogues which are developing their own unique forms. There are cars for sale, rock bands looking for bass players, carpenters looking for jobs, groups offering counseling, tennis players looking for partners, political commentaries, etc. etc.

This seed is now sprouting into a network. The Leopold's terminal has been moved to the Whole Earth Access store. Specialized, indexed listings of parts of the data collection are being left with organizations that find them useful; a music directory, for instance, is left weekly at Leopold's. Additional public access terminals now exist at our office in Village Design in Berkeley (1545 Dwight Way), at the Mission branch library in San Francisco, and another one will soon open as part of the Counting House. Furthermore, large amounts of information are being collected and made available by NACLA (North American Congress on Latin America) and by People's Energy and Vocations for Social Change (cf the relevant articles).

Change is possible. As relative as good and bad are, actions may be weighted on that scale and the quality of global human existence improved.

We are embarked on growing with an information exchange which we are also helping develop. The hardware and software development we at Resource One and Community Memory are undertaking is nested within a continually expanding dialogue making use of tools we tend. We are thus interested in direct contacts, direct information, direct access by people affected by power to information on that power, liberation of power from the constricted grasp of the few to its rightful place as the wealth of the information-sharing community. This involves detailed, precise, valued struggle in a lot of media - money, education, politics, distribution, video, print, speech ...



Alice.....computer - computer.....Alice

Our first Community Memory terminal (inside the cardboard box) at Leopold's record store. The competition is in the background.

Theories are an expression of how we see the world. They articulate the paradigms of the societies evolving them, defining the worlds in which their actions take place. These definitions are active, on-going, and substantial (incarnational) — they have real effects in the real world.



Learning Exchange Node?

On November 26, 1973, Resource One took part in a "Conference on Computer-Based Learning/Living and Information Exchanges" — held in Evanston, Illinois. Our XDS-940 was connected by phone to a CDC-6400 in Evanston which, over the previous week, had been collecting messages and comments from all over the country. On November 26 a live link was established between the computers, and exchanges were sent across the country as they were created by participants. On Resource One's side, these included about a dozen people involved in learning and communications groups from this area who came to Resource One, read what had been previously entered, and shared their own thoughts.

The theme of the conference was Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society*. "Deschooling" refers to the creation of a non-coercive process of and network for learning: "learning webs" to de-institutionalize the current educational system. This resonates with the original inspiration of many of us which led to involvement with the Community Memory project — seeing it as the communications system for a learning exchange — a means whereby messages by people who want to learn, people who want to teach, groups and institutions with resources to offer, can be exchanged in a continuous, up-dated fashion.

In our experience this begins to happen whenever the density of information interchange gets high enough. This was the case at Leopold's with musicians, who made the terminal their best means for finding each other. This is a prototype for a situation where people are looking for like-minded spirits, peers, fellow adventurers, to play with and explore — anything! A request for a source of good bagels was answered with an offer to teach the art of making bagels. There have been exchanges about languages, carpets, electronics, films, karate — and as the community information swapping develops in these areas, dialogues begin to emerge, continuing exchanges where the information itself is being transmitted through and beginning to reside in the medium.

The current step is to take this tool and to grow it as a workable learning exchange in the Bay Area, and to have it encourage the other necessary concomitants of a humane (and biologically and geologically sound) learning environment. A network alone is not enough; we will be working together with other groups to ensure that the nodes (ourselves as living, learning, teaching, sharing human beings) develop the appropriate openness and understandings.

The use of public communications by people may give them a competitive advantage over those tied to narrow private channels. More sharing of information is possible and better use of available technology can be made without continually having to develop security systems. Image of many people working together versus a few people ordering many about.

RESOURCE SHARING

Vocations for Social Change & People's Energy

VSC, or "Vocations for Social Change", is a non-profit tax-exempt educational corporation/collective with an office in Oakland California and associate offices elsewhere in the country. We publish *Workforce*, a national resource guide designed for and used by the movement for social change. We also publish how-to-organize information, and sponsor other organizations around the country. People's Energy is the closest associate of VSC; and was originally sponsored as a local VSC office. People's Energy maintains a regional resource file, publishes an East Bay resource guide, and counsels people in finding/constructing work alternatives.

People's Energy and VSC have just recently entered the Resource One user's network. Our vision and our goal is to provide much of the information base and some preliminary models for a national network, and to that end we are compiling our 6-years-worth of information on alternative institutions, from *Workforce* and our various local VSC contacts/friends elsewhere. We are planning to enter this mess (!) into our file **RESOURCE** as soon as we are familiar enough with the system to do so. Another project we are doing is indexing by interest keywords the some 100 people/month who come into our office for counselling, to begin to match them with jobs and with other people who have complementary interests.

We feel that information networking is vital for viable social change. Everything we do tells us that there is tremendous potential in knowing where to find information. It is also our feeling that we must remain self-conscious and self-critical about how we select and evaluate information, what our goals are (political neutrality being impossible), how we will use information, who will use it, how we will determine the "credibility index" of our information, how we will preserve privacy, and how high a profile we should exhibit.

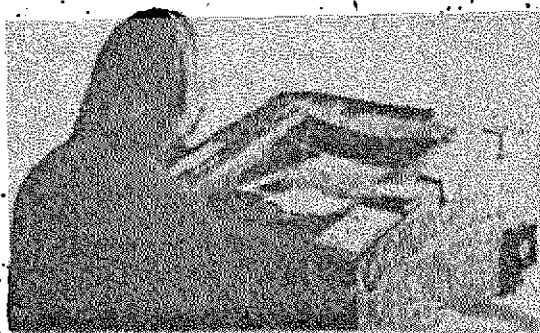
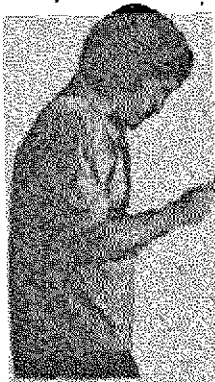
What we do at People's Energy/VSC is not random. We select our resources carefully, and try to examine our contacts carefully in light of their potential for social change, and in light of their ability to be a model for that change. We actively solicit feedback in everything we do or sponsor. We try to serve as a model ourselves.

Our methods and our philosophy — all are open for discussion. We hope that our experiences can provide a philosophical springboard for guiding the network concept. We look forward to co-sponsoring the national alternative information system and becoming a full working member of the local network.

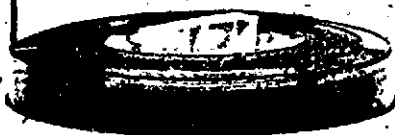
Our office: 4911 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 94609 (415) 653-6535, open line noon to 6pm.

We supply the planetary common wealth in acting in total communication with our various actions and their respective back-and-forth-sequencings. Where we get stuff, what we do with it and how, and where it goes afterwards — staying in touch with such data is what constitutes wealth, survival possibility — and this information flow is the crucial missing link in the survival worthiness of ourselves-together-with-our-planet. The medium for this release of valuable (valued for livelihood) messages is developing amongst us — electronics media in general, basically, and specifically public accessible memory storage — leave your real-time messages for other people, and you begin to provide other people access to your history, your calendar, your time(s). We all get 'on the air'; whether this is claustrophobia, or intolerable honesty, or space of shared patterns-of-common-history; whether this requires our becoming more and more like public parks, or whatever — is up to us to create. There can be no doubt, though, that at least, the very least, we are being thrown communicationally together.

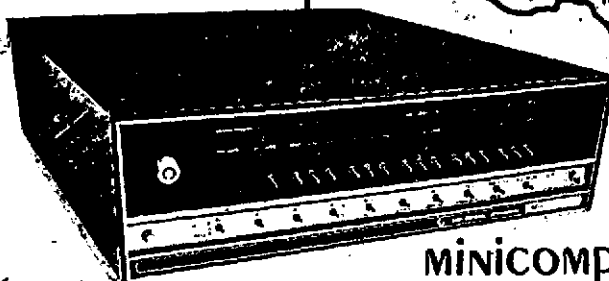
Community Memory is community mindfulness, not-forgetfulness. In the root sense of the greek word for truth, *aletheia* (*a-lethe*, having come out of hiddenness) it is communal retrieve of truth, communal disclosure, that which is (left) open, by us, to us.



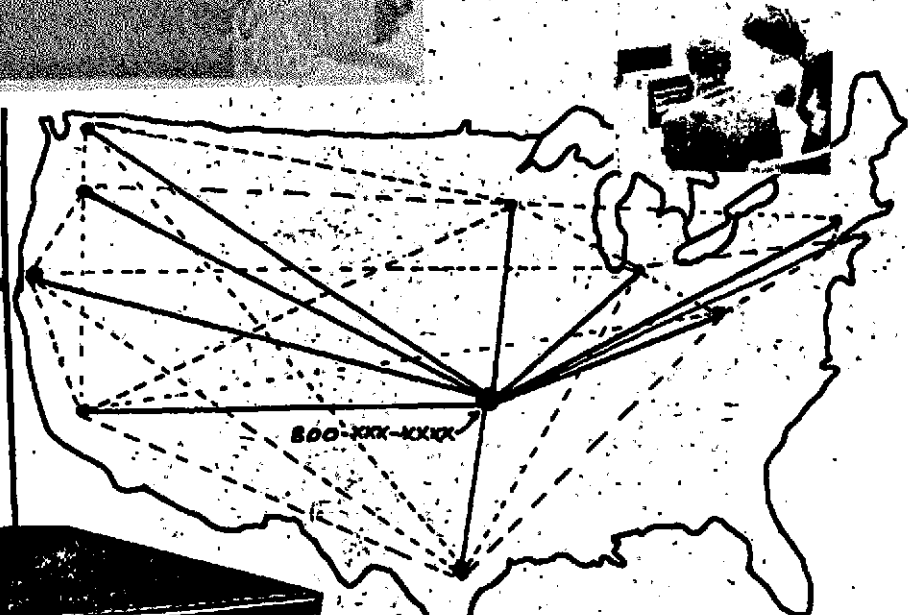
NATIONAL INFORMATION



MEMORY



MINICOMPUTER



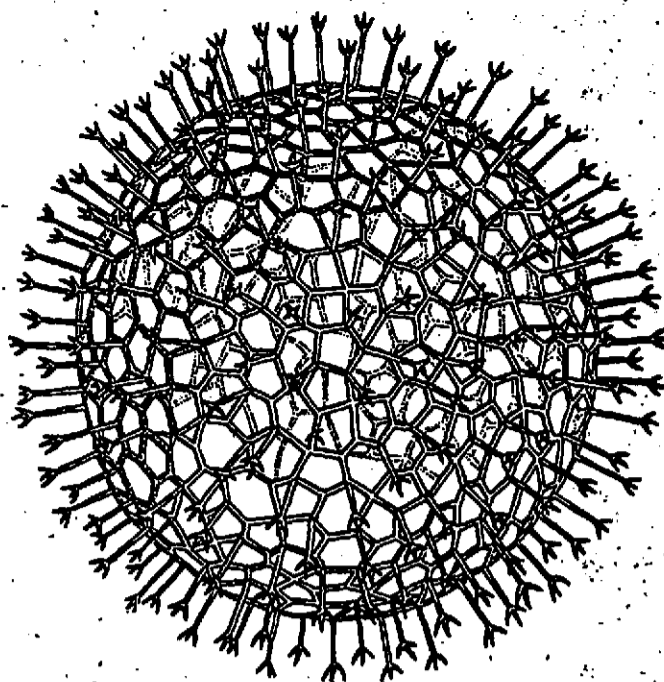
— watts line (cheap)
- - - back up of regular service

Belief in our dependence on the various institutions for the necessities for continuing our daily life is a more damaging mystification than the artificially created dependence on some of their products. We no longer go directly to the person who makes or grows or knows what we need, but rather to the functionary of the appropriate institution. Fewer and fewer of our daily interactions include communication on any personal, human level, and our private lives are becoming more isolated from our social, political, and economic lives. As our isolation from one another increases, our dependence upon artificial structures to give us work and supply our material and recreational needs increases, while our sense of powerlessness makes real our political impotence.

Taking economic power includes developing new economic-organizational forms small enough so that, they may be completely controlled by all their members, can act as a self-conscious unit and develop the very complex set of relations with other such units, which will be necessary if they are to take over the functions currently performed by highly structured corporations. The development of our own means of production and distribution is the only way economic power can be removed from its current masters.

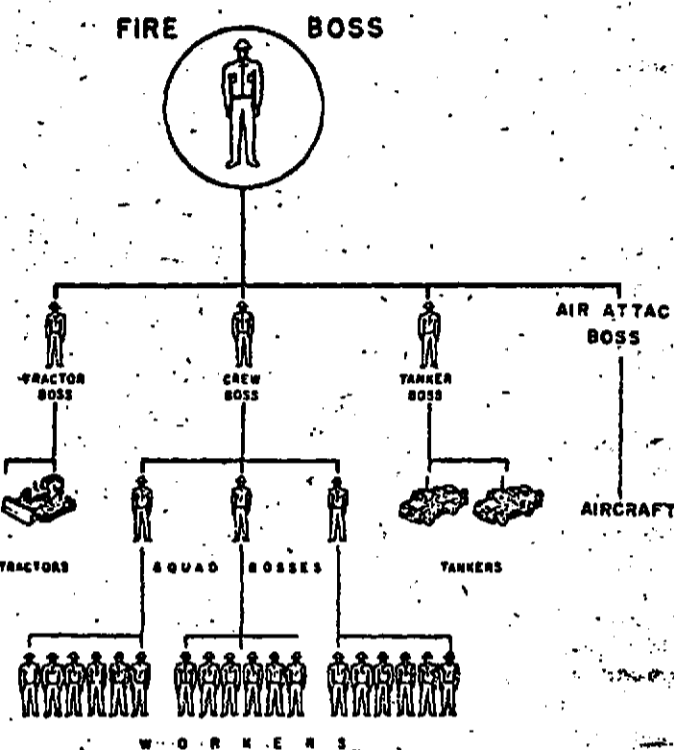
A STRONG PEOPLE NEED NO LEADER

-ZARATA



A diffuse system of small collective producing, living and learning groups requires an equally spread out but very efficient system of communication. Their ability to support themselves will depend on a rich flow of information and ideas, and the means to coordinate their efforts.

Business and governmental communication is done in private where the competitors and the people can not see what's going on. Any system of diffuse power must force all such communication to be public record or privileged channels of communication and restricted information will develop and be used for the advantage of a few.



Our only hope is to talk to one another, to share our thoughts and feelings. But first we must find one another, and to do that we must assume recognizable identities in the amorphous human mass. It is to aid in this task that Community Memory was created. By identifying ourselves, our interests, needs, and resources, we acknowledge the parts of our lives we are willing to share with others, the groups of which we are de facto members. All the power of computer technology and Boolean algebra are brought to bear to make us accessible to one another.

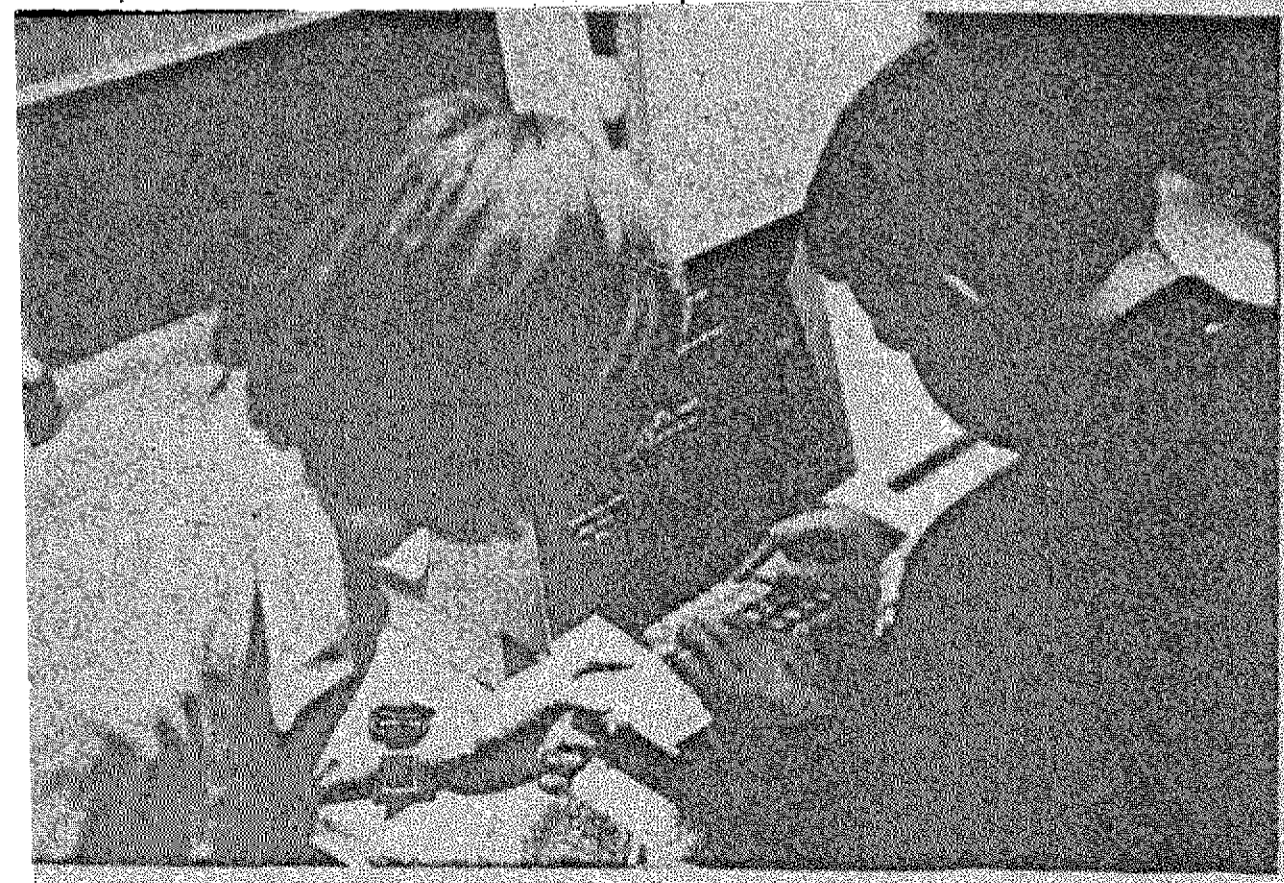
Our world seems to be populated not by people but by institutions. Recognizing governments, corporations, and unions as communication devices, information handling structures with the sole function of coordinating and securing our efforts to work and live together gives us the opportunity to seek alternatives. Bringing the consumers of goods directly in to contact with the creators is the only way of making them responsible for their own actions and responsive to one another's needs.

What are the possibilities of high speed, cheap national communication via computer? The minisystem networks described elsewhere are capable of communicating with each other over the phone at more than 1000 characters per second. Thus in a three-minute call two minicomputers could exchange 60 pages of information! Without making Ma Bell any richer we could have a national news network, a means of coordination for national political action, a fast mail service, and a way to hold long term dialogue on problems of greater than local interest (see the article on the learning exchange conference).

This would start us experimenting with direct government, government by ad hoc committee of interested, knowledgeable and affected people. If the flow of information was very heavy the consortium of local networks could establish a toll-free 800 number on one of the machines to be used as a relay satellite by all the others. This would not inhibit direct communication, between two networks, of information they did not want to trust to the (a, any) central machine. We can thus make a structure which takes advantage of both hierarchy and diffusion.

The prior paragraph is not techno fiction. Very little additional hardware and programming beyond that required for a local net would be necessary. The major requirement is keeping it in our minds while doing the design so we do not create unnecessary restrictions which make it difficult to include this facility. Thoughts on the uses and criteria for this communications system would be appreciated.

ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM



OUR NEXT BUNCH OF WORK

The pilot network is a very local happening. It is unique to this time and place without the reproductive vitality necessary to be useful elsewhere. The program is in a language only usable on the 940 and the 940 will support only 16 users. With the high cost of geriatric engineering each user's share of the expenses is about \$6,000. This is far above the resources of the organizations and people we wish to serve. An additional problem is the high cost of the terminals necessary to connect with the central computer.

To make our idea evolutionarily competitive we are producing a more advanced Community Memory program in FORTRAN, the most commonly available programming language, working on cheap television and printer terminals that we would produce ourselves, and directing our work to run on the newest, fastest, smallest, cheapest technology — the mighty minicomputer. Minicomputers are available at 1/4 the size and cost of the 940 and three times its power! Not very mini. With the use of carefully selected mini hardware a system could be assembled whose purchase price would be under a thousand dollars per user, whose maintenance would cost under \$150 per year per user, and would have about a million characters of storage for every user. Each additional million characters would be about \$400 per user. We hope to produce or obtain terminals at about \$400 each so the capital cost for a single user would be under \$2000 and the yearly expenses for the system only a couple of hundred and the cost of two phone lines — one at the computer and another at the terminal. By sharing all new software development among the various networks any additional development costs could be kept under a few hundred per user too.

A list of all the hidden assumptions in the above:

- 1) We can write an efficient system in FORTRAN.
- 2) We become OEM (original equipment manufacturer) purchasers of hardware. This means all the systems are purchased through us and we get wholesale prices.
- 3) Large communities of users can be established for each system since the smaller the system the more it will cost per user. The above figures came from a system which could support at least 50 fulltime users and would cost about 50 thousand dollars to buy wholesale.
- 4) We or a similar group manufacture a cheap terminal multiplexor, the piece of equipment via which the computer communicates with all the terminals and which is very overpriced at the time.
- 5) The opposing factors of ever-decreasing cost of computers and the current economic turbulence and maybe disaster at least balance each other out.

Our time scale is to have the first minisystem functioning and debugged within a year. We could use luck and help.

Doc Benway wanders into the Whole Earth store to check out what's happening in Community Memory. A typical sequence would look something like this (what Benway types is underlined). There is a ">" symbol at the left side of the CRT screen, indicating the machine is waiting for the next user to give it some command. He proceeds to type:

>FIND TAXI

1 ITEMS FOUND

>PRINT

#1:

TAXI UNLIMITED IS A CO-OPERATIVE TAXICAB AND ANSWERING SERVICE, RUN AND MANAGED BY ITS WORKERS. TRIES TO KEEP RATES AS LOW AS POSSIBLE, HELPS PEOPLE IN EMERGENCIES, AND OFFERS EXTRA SERVICE FOR THE SICK AND DISABLED.
1908 BERKELEY WAY, BERKELEY 94703, TH1-2345.

and presses the green RETURN key.

The machine always responds to a FIND command by giving the number of items found.

and again presses the green button. All commands are ended this way.

>FIND FREE CLINIC

6 ITEMS FOUND

>AND BERKELEY

2 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: GEORGE JACKSON PEOPLE'S FREE MEDICAL RESEARCH HEALTH CLINIC
#2: FREE CLINIC (BERKELEY) 548-2570

More than one keyword may be used after a FIND command, with the understanding that the items found will each have all the keywords listed - that is, a space between keywords is equivalent to an AND.

The AND command narrows down the list of items with FREE and CLINIC as keywords to those that also have BERKELEY as a keyword.

This command causes the first lines only of the items to be printed out.

>FIND BAGELS

5 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: WHERE CAN I GET DECENT BAGELS IN THE BAY AREA (BERKELEY!)?
#2: THERE IS A STORE CALLED BAGELS ABOVE KEY ROUT ST. ON
#3: THE DANISH BAKERY AT UNIVERSITY AND SHATTUCK IN BERKELEY
#4: IF YOU CALL MICHAEL AT 845- AN EX-BAGEL BAKER CAN TEACH
#5: YOU CAN GET FRESH BAGELS AT THE HOUSE OF BAGELS, WAY OUT ON

>FIND ENERGY CRISIS

6 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: ***** TEG'S 1994 ***** ----> SOME CONCEPTS
#2: I AM LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT METHANOL (METHYL ALCOHOL)
#3: RESTARTING YOUR CAR'S ENGINE BURNS LESS GASOLINE THAN ONE
#4: <ENERGY PRIMER> -- A BOOK BEING PREPARED BY PORTOLA INSTITUTE
#5: ANYONE WANTING TO DEVELOP PUBLIC-ACCESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS,
#6: GOT TO, GOT TO

>PRINT 6

#6:

GOT TO, GOT TO
GOT TO, GOT TO,
GOT TO SCRAPE THAT ENERGY CRISIS
RIGHT OFF YER SHOES
(W/THANK TO MICK 'N KEITH)

>FIND DOCTOR BENWAY

3 ITEMS FOUND

>PRINT 2

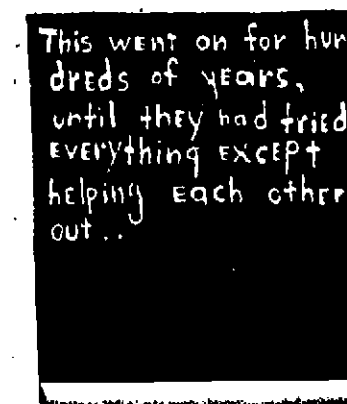
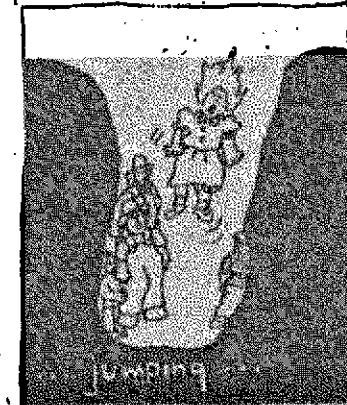
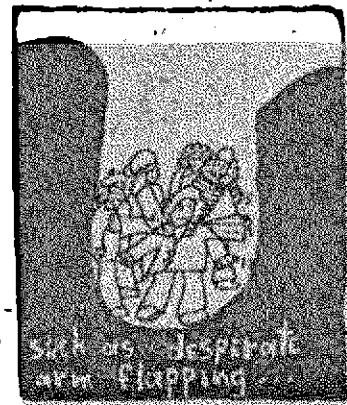
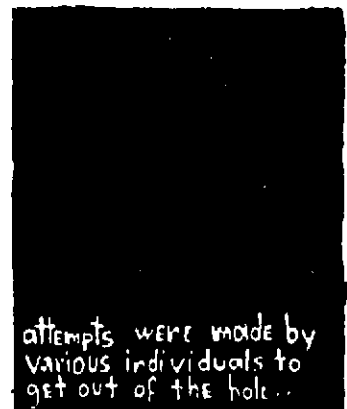
#2:

***** IEF XQPRSTQXL SYSPRINT OFFSET INTERRUPT *****
APPLIESTO: ALL BOOGIES, BEANERS, BOLOS & BOZOS

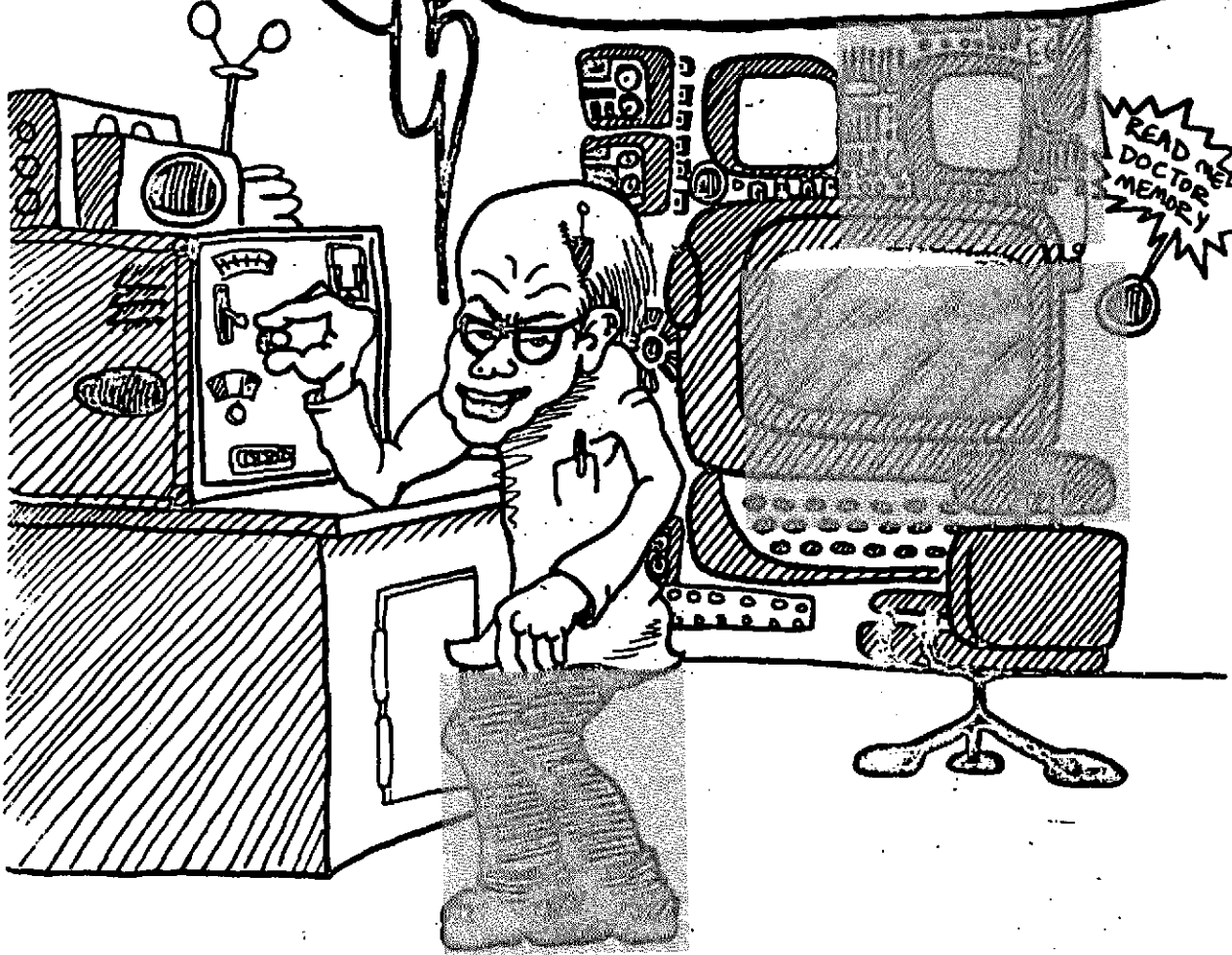
DOC BENWAY HERE NURSE, SLIP ME ANOTHER AMPULE
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NOT A FINER MAN IN THIS WHOLE ZONE
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****WHERE WAS WE, YEAH ---- USE AUTHORIZED DATA BASE ACCESS
PROTOCOLS ONLY SENSUOUS KEYSTROKES FORBIDDEN DO NOT
STRUM THAT 33 LIKE A HAWAIIAN STEEL GUITAR GRAND CONCLAVE
OF THE PARTIES OF INTERZONE: CHECK YOUR BOX FOR DETAILS.....
PERSONAL ATTENDANCE REQUIRED; SEND NO REPLICA. BENWAY OUT.
TLALCLATLAN



AT LAST... A COMMUNITY MEMORY!



The seed of a national public access information net was planted last August in Berkeley. A teletype terminal connected to the Resource One computer was placed in the lobby of Leopold's Records, and people were encouraged to use it as a combined electronic bulletin board and data store. In keeping with our aspirations we've named this *COMMUNITY MEMORY*.

Since then several thousand people have discovered the terminal and typed in messages, classifying their items themselves so other people can find them quickly. The collection, with over a thousand active items now, includes exchanges traditional to other public media—bulletin boards, classified ads, telephone poles, bathroom walls; the type of information found in indexes and directories such as People's Yellow Pages; as well as exchanges and dialogues which are developing their own unique forms. There are cars for sale, rock bands looking for bass players, carpenters looking for jobs, groups offering counseling, tennis players looking for partners, political commentaries, etc. etc.

This seed is now sprouting into a network. The Leopold's terminal has been moved to the Whole Earth Access store. Specialized, indexed listings of parts of the data collection are being left with organizations that find them useful; a music directory, for instance, is left weekly at Leopold's. Additional public access terminals now exist at our office in Village Design in Berkeley (1545 Dwight Way), at the Mission branch library in San Francisco, and another one will soon open as part of the Counting House. Furthermore, large amounts of information are being collected and made available by NACLA (North American Congress on Latin America) and by People's Energy and Vocations for Social Change (of the relevant articles).

Change is possible. As relative as good and bad are, actions may be weighted on that scale and the quality of global human existence improved.

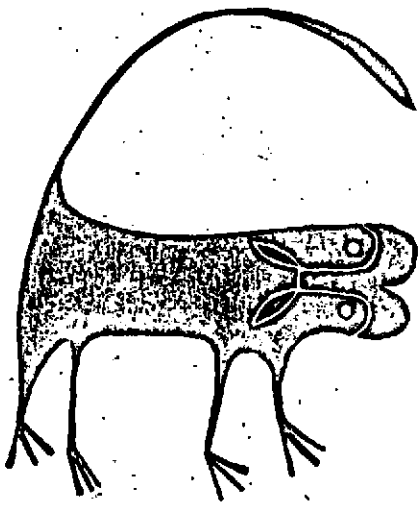
We are embarked on growing with an information exchange which we are also helping develop. The hardware and software development we at Resource One and Community Memory are undertaking is nested within a continually expanding dialogue making use of tools we tend. We are thus interested in direct contacts, direct information, direct access by people affected by power to information on that power, liberation of power from the constricted grasp of the few to its rightful place as the wealth of the information-sharing community. This involves detailed, precise, valued struggle in a lot of media - money, education, politics, distribution, video, print, speech ...



Alice.....computer - computer.....Alice

Our first Community Memory terminal (inside the cardboard box) at Leopold's record store. The competition is in the background..

Theories are an expression of how we see the world. They articulate the paradigms of the societies evolving them, defining the worlds in which their actions take place. These de-finitions are active, on-going, and substantial (incarnational) — they have real effects in the real world.



Learning Exchange Node?

On November 26, 1973, Resource One took part in a "Conference on Computer-Based Learning/Living and Information Exchanges" — held in Evanston, Illinois. Our XDS-940 was connected by phone to a CDC-6400 in Evanston which, over the previous week, had been collecting messages and comments from all over the country. On November 26 a live link was established between the computers, and exchanges were sent across the country as they were created by participants. On Resource One's side, these included about a dozen people involved in learning and communications groups from this area who came to Resource One, read what had been previously entered, and shared their own thoughts.

The theme of the conference was Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society*. "Deschooling" refers to the creation of a non-coercive process of and network for learning, "learning webs" to de-institutionalize the current educational system. This resonates with the original inspiration of many of us which led to involvement with the Community Memory project — seeing it as the communications system for a learning exchange — a means whereby messages by people who want to learn, people who want to teach, groups and institutions with resources to offer, can be exchanged in a continuous, up-dated fashion.

In our experience this begins to happen whenever the density of information interchange gets high enough. This was the case at Leopold's with musicians, who made the terminal their best means for finding each other. This is a prototype for a situation where people are looking for like-minded spirits, peers, fellow adventurers; to play with and explore — anything! A request for a source of good bagels was answered with an offer to teach the art of making bagels. There have been exchanges about languages, carpets, electronics, films, karate — and as the community information swapping develops in these areas, dialogues begin to emerge, continuing exchanges where the information itself is being transmitted through and beginning to reside in the medium.

The current step is to take this tool and to grow it as a workable learning exchange in the Bay Area, and to have it encourage the other necessary concomitants of a humane (and biologically and geologically sound) learning environment. A network alone is not enough; we will be working together with other groups to ensure that the nodes (ourselves as living, learning, teaching, sharing human beings) develop the appropriate openness and understandings.

The use of public communications by people may give them a competitive advantage over those tied to narrow private channels. More sharing of information is possible and better use of available technology can be made without continually having to develop security systems. Image of many people working together versus a few people ordering many about.

RESOURCE SHARING

Vocations for Social Change & People's Energy

VSC, or "Vocations for Social Change", is a non-profit tax-exempt educational corporation/collective with an office in Oakland California and associate offices elsewhere in the country. We publish *Workforce*, a national resource guide designed for and used by the movement for social change. We also publish how-to-organize information, and sponsor other organizations around the country. People's Energy is the closest associate of VSC, and was originally sponsored as a local VSC office. People's Energy maintains a regional resource file, publishes an East Bay resource guide, and counsels people in finding/constructing work alternatives.

People's Energy and VSC have just recently entered the Resource One user's network. Our vision and our goal is to provide much of the information base and some preliminary models for a national network, and to that end we are compiling our 6-years-worth of information on alternative institutions, from *Workforce* and our various local VSC contacts/friends elsewhere. We are planning to enter this mess (!) into our file **RESOURCE** as soon as we are familiar enough with the system to do so. Another project we are doing is indexing by interest keywords the some 100 people/month who come into our office for counselling, to begin to match them with jobs and with other people who have complementary interests.

We feel that information networking is vital for viable social change. Everything we do tells us that there is tremendous potential in knowing where to find information. It is also our feeling that we must remain self-conscious and self-critical about how we select and evaluate information, what our goals are (political neutrality being impossible), how we will use information, who will use it, how we will determine the "credibility index" of our information, how we will preserve privacy, and how high a profile we should exhibit.

What we do at People's Energy/VSC is not random. We select our resources carefully, and try to examine our contacts carefully in light of their potential for social change, and in light of their ability to be a model for that change. We actively solicit feedback in everything we do or sponsor. We try to serve as a model ourselves.

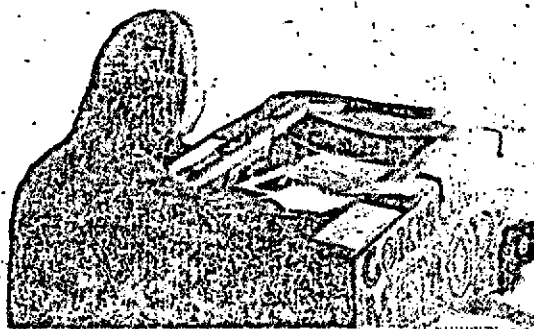
Our methods and our philosophy — all are open for discussion. We hope that our experiences can provide a philosophical springboard for guiding the network concept. We look forward to co-sponsoring the national alternative information system and becoming a full working member of the local network.

Our office: 4911 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 94609 (415) 653-6535, open line noon to 6pm.

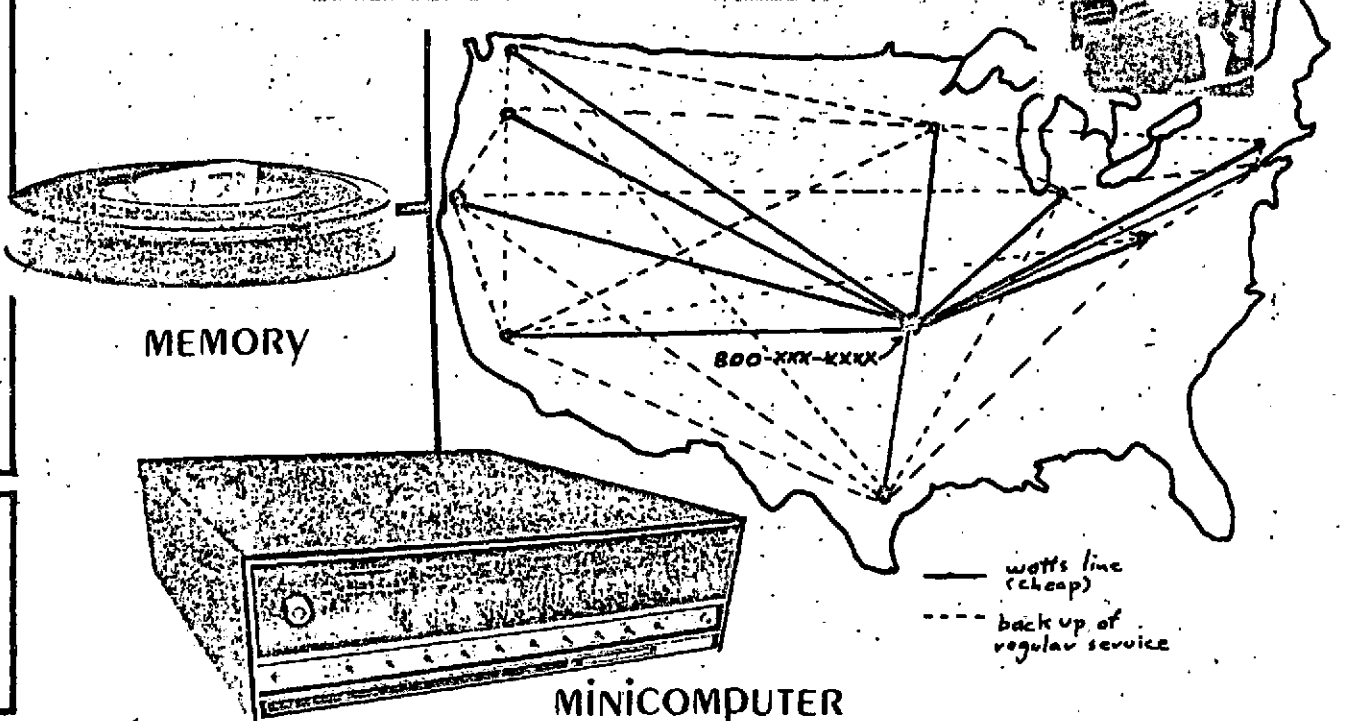
We supply the planetary common wealth in acting in total communication with our various actions and their respective back-and-forth-sequencings. Where we get stuff, what we do with it and how, and where it goes afterwards — staying in touch with such data is what constitutes wealth, survival possibility — and this information flow is the crucial missing link in the survival worthiness of ourselves-together-with-our-planet. The medium for this release of valuable (valued for livelihood) messages is developing amongst us — electronics media in general, basically, and specifically public accessible memory storage — leave your real-time messages for other people, and you begin to provide other people access to your history, your calendar, your time(s). We all get 'on the air': whether this is claustrophobia, or intolerable honesty, or space of shared patterns-of-common-history; whether this requires our becoming more and more like public parks, or whatever — is up to us to create. There can be no doubt, though, that at least, the very least, we are being thrown communicationally together.



Community Memory is community mindfulness, not-forgetfulness. In the root sense of the greek word for truth, *aletheia* (a-lethe, having come out of hiddenness) it is communal retrieve of truth, communal disclosure, that which is (left) open, by us, to us.



NATIONAL INFORMATION



MINICOMPUTER

Belief in our dependence on the various institutions for the necessities for continuing our daily life is a more damaging mystification than the artificially created dependence on some of their products. We no longer go directly to the person who makes or grows or knows what we need, but rather to the functionary of the appropriate institution. Fewer and fewer of our daily interactions include communication on any personal, human level, and our private lives are becoming more isolated from our social, political, and economic lives. As our isolation from one another increases, our dependence upon artificial structures to give us work and supply our material and recreational needs increases, while our sense of powerlessness makes real our political impotence.

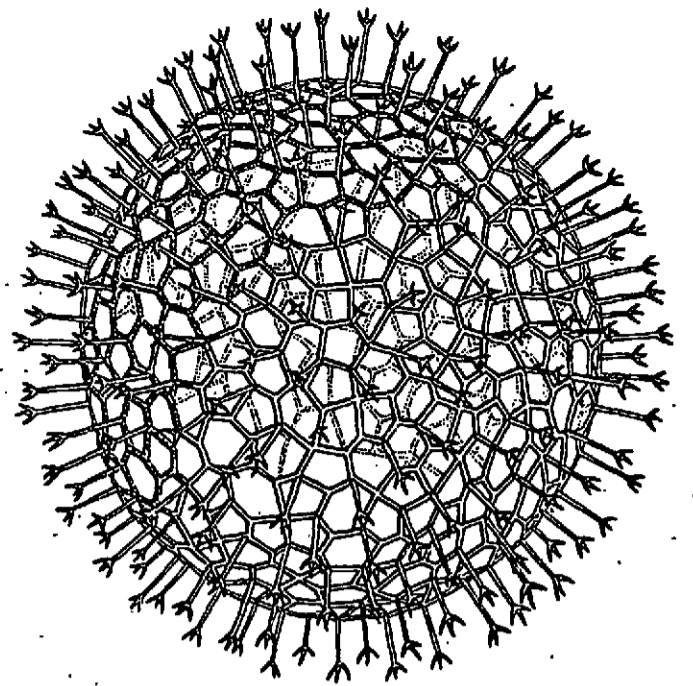
Taking economic power includes developing new economic-organizational forms small enough so that, they may be completely controlled by all their members, can act as a self-conscious unit and develop the very complex set of relations with other such units, which will be necessary if they are to take over the functions currently performed by highly structured corporations. The development of our own means of production and distribution is the only way economic power can be removed from its current masters.

A STRONG PEOPLE NEED NO LEADER

-ZARATA

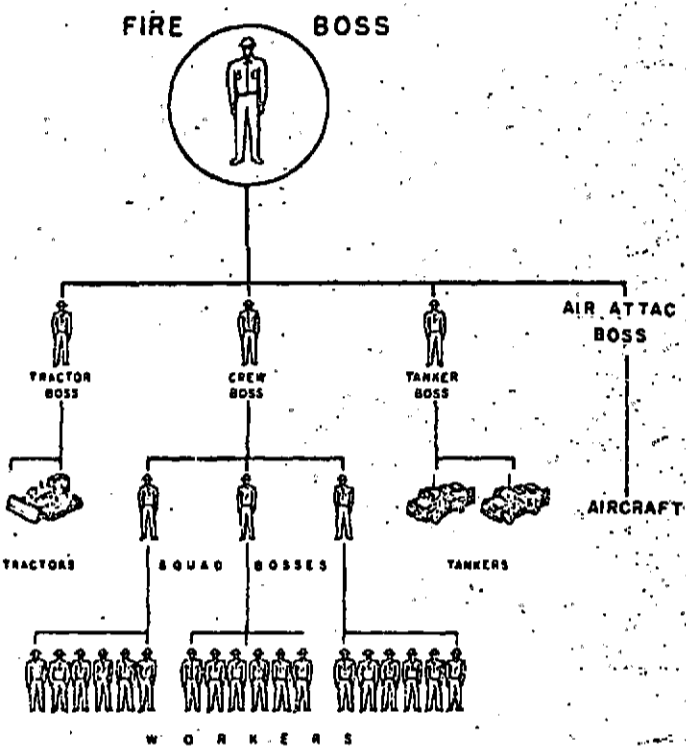
Our only hope is to talk to one another, to share our thoughts and feelings. But first we must find one another, and to do that we must assume recognizable identities in the amorphous human mass. It is to aid in this task that Community Memory was created. By identifying ourselves, our interests, needs, and resources, we acknowledge the parts of our lives we are willing to share with others, the groups of which we are de facto members. All the power of computer technology and Boolean algebra are brought to bear to make us accessible to one another.

Our world seems to be populated not by people but by institutions. Recognizing governments, corporations, and unions as communication devices, information handling structures with the sole function of coordinating and securing our efforts to work and live together gives us the opportunity to seek alternatives. Bringing the consumers of goods directly in to contact with the creators is the only way of making them responsible for their own actions and responsive to one another's needs.



A diffuse system of small collective producing, living and learning groups requires an equally spread out but very efficient system of communication. Their ability to support themselves will depend on a rich flow of information and ideas, and the means to coordinate their efforts.

Business and governmental communication is done in private where the competitors and the people can not see what's going on. Any system of diffuse power must force all such communication to be public record or privileged channels of communication and restricted information will develop and be used for the advantage of a few.



OUR NEXT BUNCH OF WORK

The pilot network is a very local happening. It is unique to this time and place without the reproductive vitality necessary to be useful elsewhere. The program is in a language only usable on the 940 and the 940 will support only 16 users. With the high cost of geriatric engineering each user's share of the expenses is about \$6,000. This is far above the resources of the organizations and people we wish to serve. An additional problem is the high cost of the terminals necessary to connect with the central computer.

To make our idea evolutionarily competitive we are producing a more advanced Community Memory program in FORTRAN, the most commonly available programming language, working on cheap television and printer terminals that we would produce ourselves, and directing our work to run on the newest, fastest, smallest, cheapest technology — the mighty minicomputer. Minicomputers are available at 1/3 the size and cost of the 940 and three times its power! Not very mini. With the use of carefully selected mini hardware a system could be assembled whose purchase price would be under a thousand dollars per user, whose maintenance would cost under \$150 per year per user, and would have about a million characters of storage for every user. Each additional million characters would be about \$400 per user. We hope to produce or obtain terminals at about \$400 each so the capital cost for a single user would be under \$2000 and the yearly expenses for the system only a couple of hundred and the cost of two phone lines — one at the computer and another at the terminal. By sharing all new software development among the various networks any additional development costs could be kept under a few hundred per user too.

A list of all the hidden assumptions in the above:

- 1) We can write an efficient system in FORTRAN.
- 2) We become OEM (original equipment manufacturer) purchasers of hardware. This means all the systems are purchased through us and we get wholesale prices.
- 3) Large communities of users can be established for each system since the smaller the system the more it will cost per user. The above figures came from a system which could support at least 50 fulltime users and would cost about 50 thousand dollars to buy wholesale.
- 4) We or a similar group manufacture a cheap terminal multiplexor, the piece of equipment via which the computer communicates with all the terminals and which is very overpriced at the the moment.
- 5) The opposing factors of ever-decreasing cost of computers and the current economic turbulence and maybe disaster at least balance each other out.

Our time scale is to have the first minisystem functioning and debugged within a year. We could use luck and help.

What are the possibilities of high speed, cheap national communication via computer? The minisystem networks described elsewhere are capable of communicating with each other over the phone at more than 1000 characters per second. Thus in a three-minute call two minicomputers could exchange 60 pages of information! Without making Ma Bell any richer we could have a national news network, a means of coordination for national political action, a fast mail service, and a way to hold long term dialogue on problems of greater than local interest (see the article on the learning exchange conference).

This would start us experimenting with direct government, government by ad hoc committee of interested, knowledgeable and affected people. If the flow of information was very heavy the consortium of local networks could establish a toll-free 800 number on one of the machines to be used as a relay satellite by all the others. This would not inhibit direct communication, between two networks, of information they did not want to trust to the (a, any) central machine. We can thus make a structure which takes advantage of both hierarchy and diffusion.

The prior paragraph is not techno fiction. Very little additional hardware and programming beyond that required for a local net would be necessary. The major requirement is keeping it in our minds while doing the design so we do not create unnecessary restrictions which make it difficult to include this facility. Thoughts on the uses and criteria for this communications system would be appreciated.

ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM



Doc Benway wanders into the Whole Earth store to check out what's happening in Community Memory. A typical sequence would look something like this (what Benway types is underlined). There is a ">" symbol at the left side of the CRT screen, indicating the machine is waiting for the next user to give it some command. He proceeds to type:

>FIND TAXI

1 ITEMS FOUND

>PRINT

#1:

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and presses the green RETURN key. The machine always responds to a FIND command by giving the number of items found. and again presses the green button. All commands are ended this way.

>FIND FREE CLINIC

6 ITEMS FOUND

>AND BERKELEY

2 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: GEORGE JACKSON PEOPLE'S FREE MEDICAL RESEARCH HEALTH CLINIC
#2: FREE CLINIC (BERKELEY) 548-2570

More than one keyword may be used after a FIND command, with the understanding that the items found will each have all the keywords listed - that is, a space between keywords is equivalent to an AND. The AND command narrows down the list of items with FREE and CLINIC as keywords to those that also have BERKELEY as a keyword. This command causes the first lines only of the items to be printed out.

>FIND BAGELS

5 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: WHERE CAN I GET DECENT BAGELS IN THE BAY AREA (BERKELEY!)?
#2: THERE IS A STORE CALLED BAGELS ABOVE KEY ROUT ST. ON
#3: THE DANISH BAKERY AT UNIVERSITY AND SHATTUCK IN BERKELEY
#4: IF YOU CALL MICHAEL AT 845- AN EX-BAGEL BAKER CAN TEACH
#5: YOU CAN GET FRESH BAGELS AT THE HOUSE OF BAGELS, WAY OUT ON

>FIND ENERGY CRISIS

6 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: ***** TEG'S 1994 ***** ----> SOME CONCEPTS
#2: I AM LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT METHANOL (METHYL ALCOHOL)
#3: RESTARTING YOUR CAR'S ENGINE BURNS LESS GASOLINE THAN ONE
#4: <ENERGY PRIMER> -- A BOOK BEING PREPARED BY PORTOLA INSTITUTE
#5: ANYONE WANTING TO DEVELOP PUBLIC-ACCESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS,
#6: GOT TO, GOT TO

>PRINT 6

#6:

GOT TO, GOT TO
GOT TO, GOT TO,
GOT TO SCRAPE THAT ENERGY CRISIS
RIGHT OFF YER SHOES:
(W/THANK TO MICK 'N KEITH)

>FIND DOCTOR BENWAY

3 ITEMS FOUND

>PRINT 2

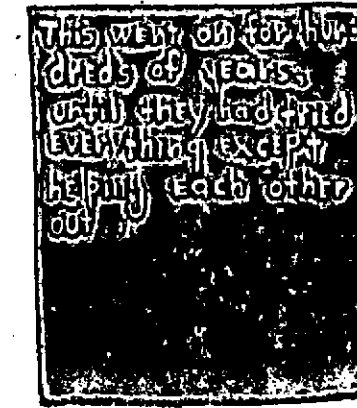
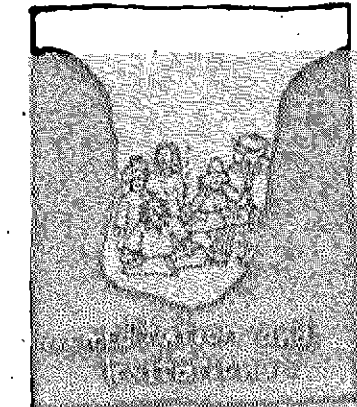
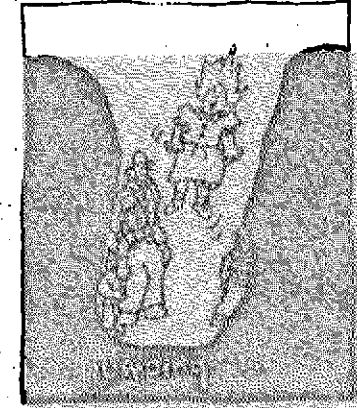
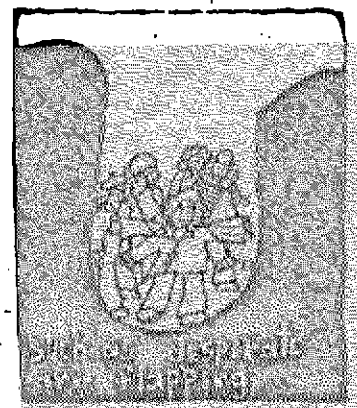
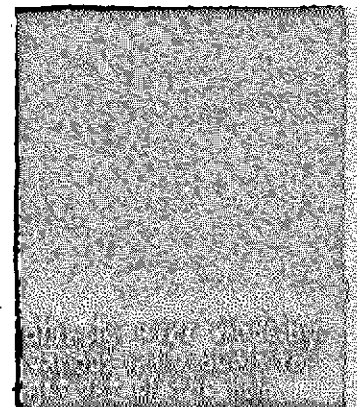
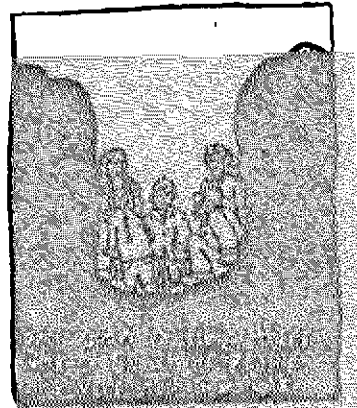
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and presses the green RETURN key.

1 ITEMS FOUND

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>PRINT

and again presses the green button. All commands are ended this way.

#1:

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>FIND FREE CLINIC

More than one keyword may be used after a FIND command, with the understanding that the items found will each have all the keywords listed—that is, a space between keywords is equivalent to an AND.

6 ITEMS FOUND

>AND BERKELEY

The AND command narrows down the list of items with FREE and CLINIC as keywords to those that also have BERKELEY as a keyword.

2 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

This command causes the first lines only of the items to be printed out.

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#2: FREE CLINIC (BERKELEY) 548-2570

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>FIND ENERGY CRISIS

6 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: ***** TEG'S 1994 ***** ---> SOME CONCEPTS
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GOT TO, GOT TO
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GOT TO SCRAPE THAT ENERGY CRISIS
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(W/THANK TO MICK 'N KEITH)

>FIND DOCTOR BENWAY

3 ITEMS FOUND

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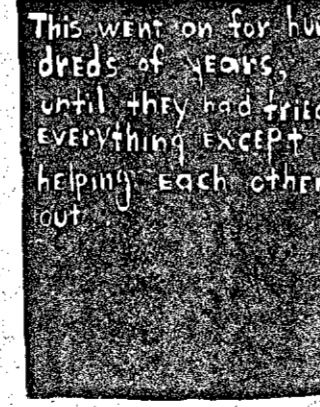
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***** IEF XQPRSTQAL SYSPRINT OFFSET INTERRUPT *****
APPLIESTO: ALL BOOGIES, BEANERS, BOLOS & BOZOS

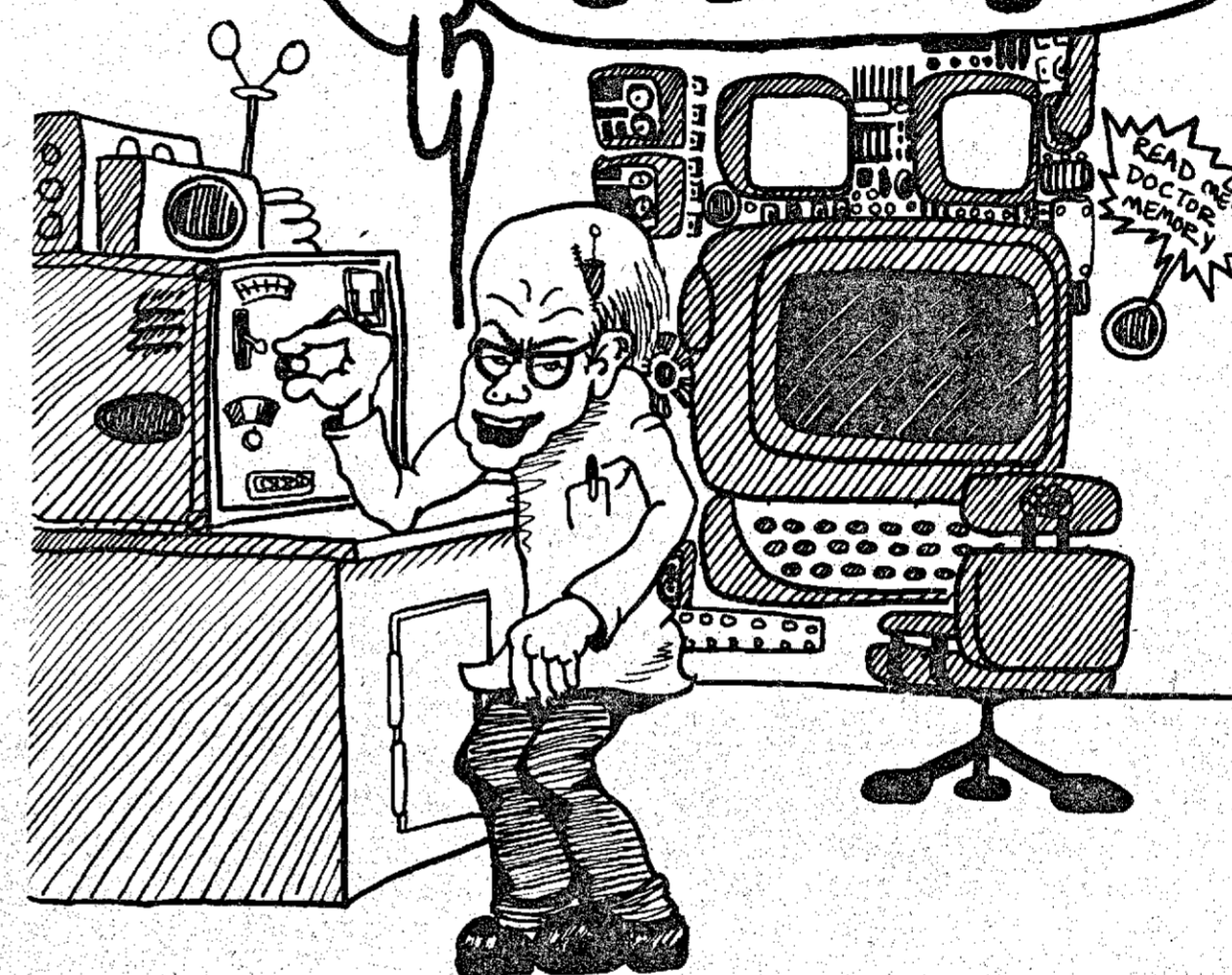
DOC BENWAY HERE NURSE, SLIP ME ANOTHER AMPULE
OF LAUDANUM RECOLLECT ONCE ME AND CLEM CLONE WAS CHEWIN
YOHIMBE BARK OUT BACK OF JODY'S ALL-NIGHT PET SHOP

NOT A FINER MAN IN THIS WHOLE ZONE
THAN OL' CLEM 'N JODY CLONE

*****WAERE WAS WE, YEAH ---- USE AUTHORIZED DATA BASE ACCESS
PROTOCOLS ONLY SENSUOUS KEYSTROKES FORBIDDEN DO NOT
STRUM THAT 33 LIKE A HAWAIIAN STEEL GUITAR GRAND CONCLAVE
OF THE PARTIES OF INTERZONE: CHECK YOUR BOX FOR DETAILS.....
PERSONAL ATTENDANCE REQUIRED; SEND NO REPLICA. BENWAY OUT.
TLALCLATLAN



AT LAST... A COMMUNITY MEMORY!



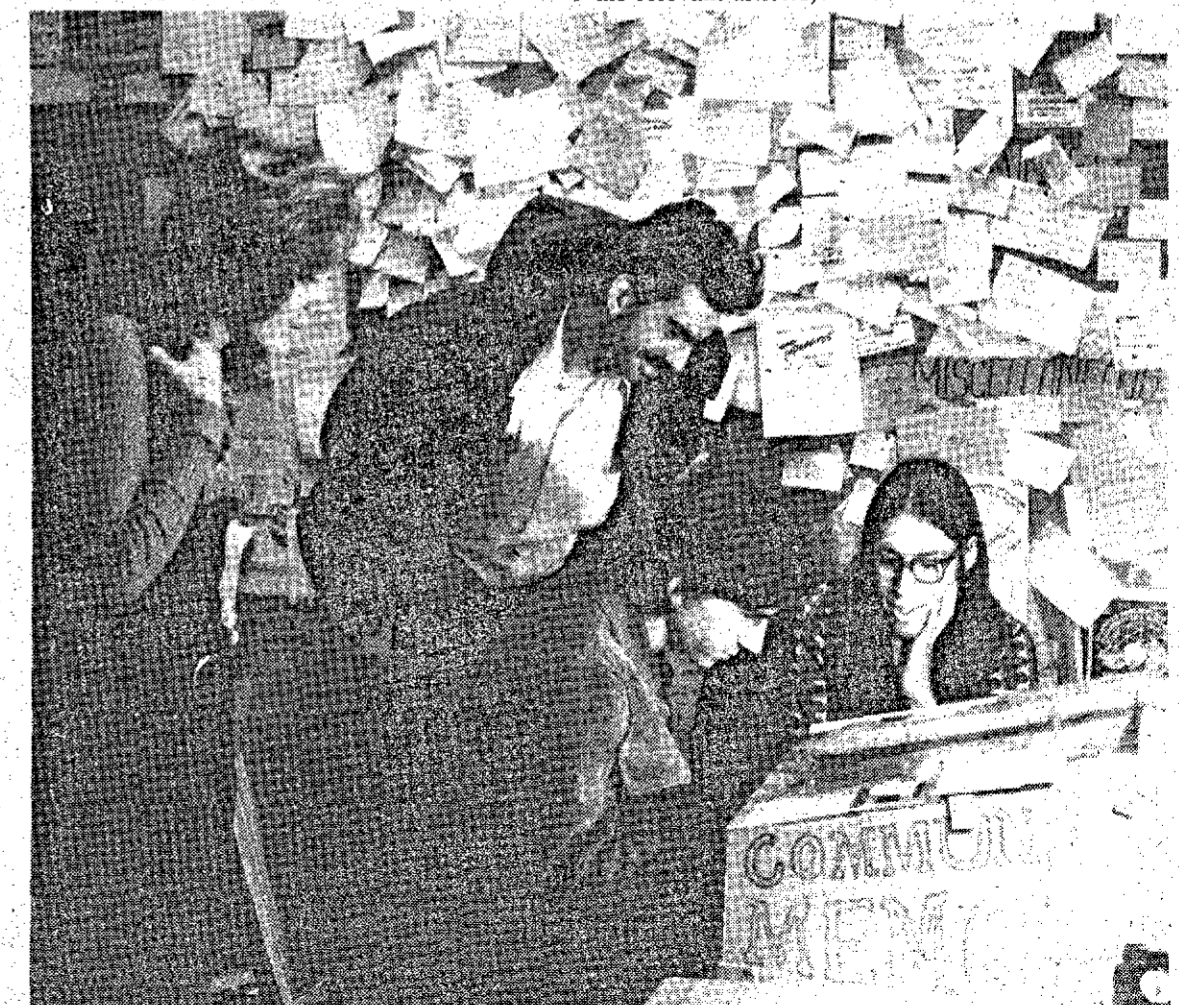
The seed of a national public access information net was planted last August in Berkeley. A teletype terminal connected to the Resource One computer was placed in the lobby of Leopold's Records, and people were encouraged to use it as a combined electronic bulletin board and data store. In keeping with our aspirations we've named this COMMUNITY MEMORY.

Since then several thousand people have discovered the terminal and typed in messages, classifying their items themselves so other people can find them quickly. The collection, with over a thousand active items now, includes exchanges traditional to other public media—bulletin boards, classified ads, telephone poles, bathroom walls; the type of information found in indexes and directories such as People's Yellow Pages; as well as exchanges and dialogues which are developing their own unique forms. There are cars for sale, rock bands looking for bass players, carpenters looking for jobs, groups offering counseling, tennis players looking for partners, political commentaries, etc. etc.

This seed is now sprouting into a network. The Leopold's terminal has been moved to the Whole Earth Access store. Specialized, indexed listings of parts of the data collection are being left with organizations that find them useful; a music directory, for instance, is left weekly at Leopold's. Additional public access terminals now exist at our office in Village Design in Berkeley (1545 Dwight Way), at the Mission branch library in San Francisco, and another one will soon open as part of the Counting House. Furthermore, large amounts of information are being collected and made available by NACLA (North American Congress on Latin America) and by People's Energy and Vocations for Social Change (of the relevant articles).

Change is possible. As relative as good and bad are, actions may be weighted on that scale and the quality of global human existence improved.

We are embarked on growing with an information exchange which we are also helping develop. The hardware and software development we at Resource One and Community Memory are undertaking is nested within a continually expanding dialogue making use of tools we tend. We are thus interested in direct contacts, direct information, direct access by people affected by power to information on that power, liberation of power from the constricted grasp of the few to its rightful place as the wealth of the information-sharing community. This involves detailed, precise, valued struggle in a lot of media—money, education, politics, distribution, video, print, speech...



Alice....computer -- computer....Alice
Our first Community Memory terminal (inside the cardboard box) at Leopold's record store. The competition is in the background.

Theories are an expression of how we see the world. They articulate the paradigms of the societies evolving them, defining the worlds in which their actions take place. These definitions are active, on-going, and substantial (incarnational) — they have real effects in the real world.



Learning Exchange Node?

On November 26, 1973, Resource One took part in a "Conference on Computer-Based Learning/Living and Information Exchanges" — held in Evanston, Illinois. Our XDS-940 was connected by phone to a CDC-6400 in Evanston which, over the previous week, had been collecting messages and comments from all over the country. On November 26 a live link was established between the computers, and exchanges were sent across the country as they were created by participants. On Resource One's side, these included about a dozen people involved in learning and communications groups from this area who came to Resource One, read what had been previously entered, and shared their own thoughts.

The theme of the conference was Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society*. "Deschooling" refers to the creation of a non-coercive process of and network for learning, "learning webs" to de-institutionalize the current educational system. This resonates with the original inspiration of many of us which led to involvement with the Community Memory project — seeing it as the communications system for a learning exchange — a means whereby messages by people who want to learn, people who want to teach, groups and institutions with resources to offer, can be exchanged in a continuous, up-dated fashion.

In our experience this begins to happen whenever the density of information interchange gets high enough. This was the case at Leopold's with musicians, who made the terminal their best means for finding each other. This is a prototype for a situation where people are looking for like-minded spirits, peers, fellow adventurers, to play with and explore — anything! A request for a source of good bagels was answered with an offer to teach the art of making bagels. There have been exchanges about languages, carpets, electronics, films, karate — and as the community information swapping develops in these areas, dialogues begin to emerge, continuing exchanges where the information itself is being transmitted through and beginning to reside in the medium.

The current step is to take this tool and to grow it as a workable learning exchange in the Bay Area, and to have it encourage the other necessary concomitants of a humane (and biologically and geologically sound) learning environment. A network alone is not enough; we will be working together with other groups to ensure that the nodes (ourselves as living, learning, teaching, sharing human beings) develop the appropriate openness and understandings.

The use of public communications by people may give them a competitive advantage over those tied to narrow private channels. More sharing of information is possible and better use of available technology can be made without continually having to develop security systems. Image of many people working together versus a few people ordering many about.

RESOURCE SHARING

Vocations for Social Change & People's Energy

VSC, or "Vocations for Social Change", is a non-profit tax-exempt educational corporation/collective with an office in Oakland California and associate offices elsewhere in the country. We publish *Workforce*, a national resource guide designed for and used by the movement for social change. We also publish how-to-organize information, and sponsor other organizations around the country. People's Energy is the closest associate of VSC, and was originally sponsored as a local VSC office. People's Energy maintains a regional resource file, publishes an East Bay resource guide, and counsels people in finding/constructing work alternatives.

People's Energy and VSC have just recently entered the Resource One user's network. Our vision and our goal is to provide much of the information base and some preliminary models for a national network, and to that end we are compiling our 6-years-worth of information on alternative institutions, from *Workforce* and our various local VSC contacts/friends elsewhere. We are planning to enter this mess (!) into our file **RESOURCE** as soon as we are familiar enough with the system to do so. Another project we are doing is indexing by interest keywords the some 100 people/month who come into our office for counselling, to begin to match them with jobs and with other people who have complementary interests.

We feel that information networking is vital for viable social change. Everything we do tells us that there is tremendous potential in knowing where to find information. It is also our feeling that we must remain self-conscious and self-critical about how we select and evaluate information, what our goals are (political neutrality being impossible), how we will use information, who will use it, how we will determine the "credibility index" of our information, how we will preserve privacy, and how high a profile we should exhibit.

What we do at People's Energy/VSC is not random. We select our resources carefully, and try to examine our contacts carefully in light of their potential for social change, and in light of their ability to be a model for that change. We actively solicit feedback in everything we do or sponsor. We try to serve as a model ourselves.

Our methods and our philosophy — all are open for discussion. We hope that our experiences can provide a philosophical springboard for guiding the network concept. We look forward to co-sponsoring the national alternative information system and becoming a full working member of the local network.

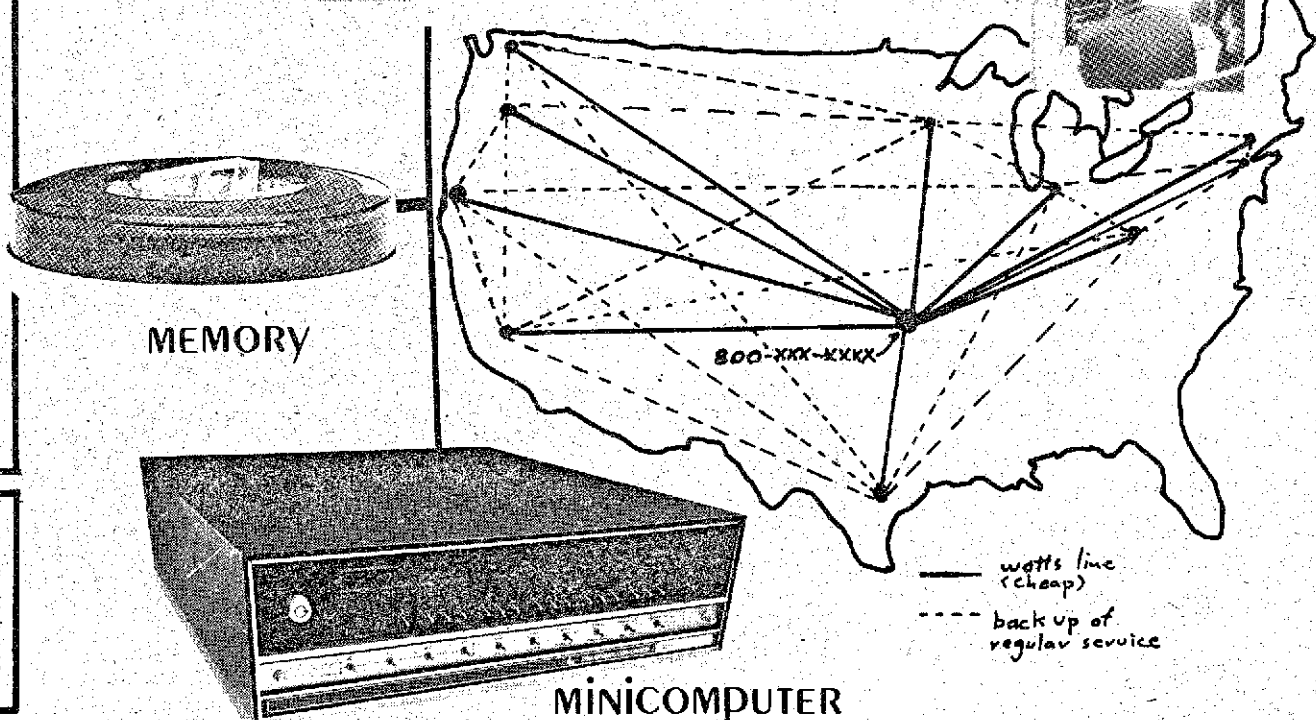
Our office: 4911 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 94609 (415) 653-6535, open line noon to 6pm.

We supply the planetary common wealth in acting in total communication with our various actions and their respective back-and-forth-sequencings. Where we get stuff, what we do with it and how, and where it goes afterwards — staying in touch with such data is what constitutes wealth, survival possibility — and this information flow is the crucial missing link in the survival worthiness of ourselves-together-with-our-planet. The medium for this release of valuable (valued for livelihood) messages is developing amongst us — electronics media in general, basically, and specifically public accessible memory storage — leave your real-time messages for other people, and you begin to provide other people access to your history, your calendar, your time(s). We all get 'on the air', whether this is claustrophobia, or intolerant honesty, or space of shared patterns-of-common-history; whether this requires our becoming more and more like public parks, or whatever — is up to us to create. There can be no doubt, though, that at least, the very least, we are being thrown communicationally together.

Community Memory is community mindfulness, not-forgetfulness. In the root sense of the greek word for truth, *aletheia* (a-lethe, having come out of hiddenness) it is communal retrieve of truth, communal disclosure, that which is (left) open, by us, to us.



NATIONAL INFORMATION



Belief in our dependence on the various institutions for the necessities for continuing our daily life is a more damaging mystification than the artificially created dependence on some of their products. We no longer go directly to the person who makes or grows or knows what we need, but rather to the functionary of the appropriate institution. Fewer and fewer of our daily interactions include communication on any personal, human level, and our private lives are becoming more isolated from our social, political, and economic lives. As our isolation from one another increases, our dependence upon artificial structures to give us work and and supply our material and recreational needs increases, while our sense of powerlessness makes real our political impotence.

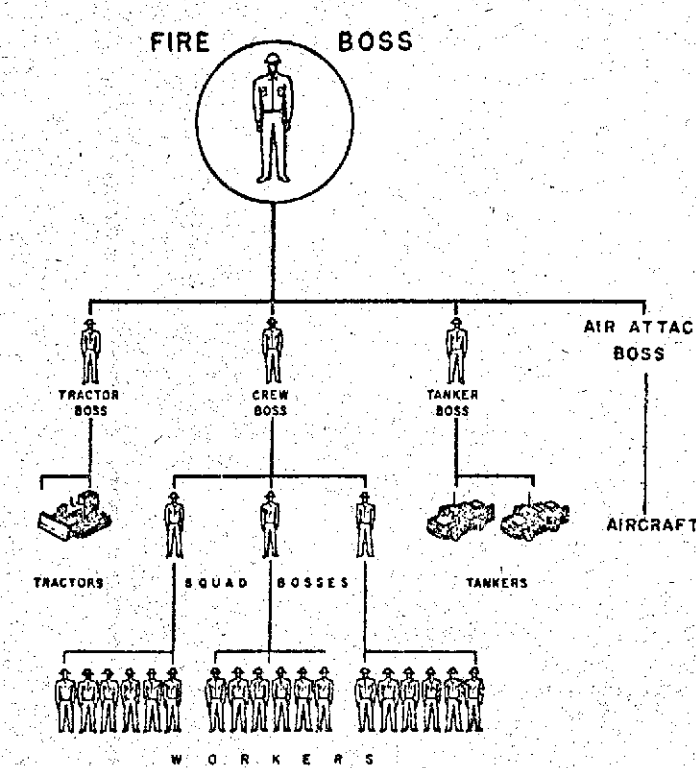
Taking economic power includes developing new economic-organizational forms small enough so that, they may be completely controlled by all their members, can act as a self-conscious unit and develop the very complex set of relations with other such units, which will be necessary if they are to take over the functions currently performed by highly structured corporations. The development of our own means of production and distribution is the only way economic power can be removed from its current masters.

A STRONG PEOPLE NEED NO LEADER
-ZARFA

Our only hope is to talk to one another, to share our thoughts and feelings. But first we must find one another, and to do that we must assume recognizable identities in the amorphous human mass. It is to aid in this task that Community Memory was created. By identifying ourselves, our interests, needs, and resources, we acknowledge the parts of our lives we are willing to share with others, the groups of which we are de facto members. All the power of computer technology and Boolean algebra are brought to bear to make us accessible to one another.

Our world seems to be populated not by people but by institutions. Recognizing governments, corporations, and unions as communication devices, information handling structures with the sole function of coordinating and securing our efforts to work and live together gives us the opportunity to seek alternatives. Bringing the consumers of goods directly in to contact with the creators is the only way of making them responsible for their own actions and responsive to one another's needs.

Business and governmental communication is done in private where the competitors and the people can not see what's going on. Any system of diffuse power must force all such communication to be public record or privileged channels of communication and restricted information will develop and be used for the advantage of a few.

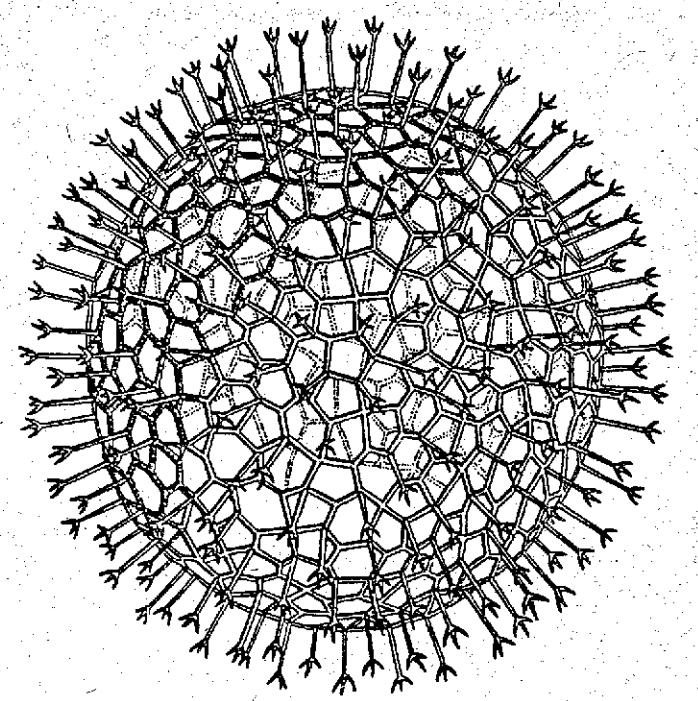


What are the possibilities of high speed, cheap national communication via computer? The minisystem networks described elsewhere are capable of communicating with each other over the phone at more than 1000 characters per second. Thus in a three-minute call two minicomputers could exchange 60 pages of information! Without making Ma Bell any richer we could have a national news network, a means of coordination for national political action, a fast-mail service, and a way to hold long term dialogue on problems of greater than local interest (see the article on the learning exchange conference).

This would start us experimenting with direct government, government by ad hoc committee of interested, knowledgeable and affected people. If the flow of information was very heavy the consortium of local networks could establish a toll-free 800 number on one of the machines to be used as a relay satellite by all the others. This would not inhibit direct communication, between two networks, of information they did not want to trust to the (a, any) central machine. We can thus make a structure which takes advantage of both hierarchy and diffusion.

The prior paragraph is not techno fiction. Very little additional hardware and programming beyond that required for a local net would be necessary. The major requirement is keeping it in our minds while doing the design so we do not create unnecessary restrictions which make it difficult to include this facility. Thoughts on the uses and criteria for this communications system would be appreciated.

ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM



A diffuse system of small collective producing, living and learning groups requires an equally spread out but very efficient system of communication. Their ability to support themselves will depend on a rich flow of information and ideas, and the means to coordinate their efforts.

OUR NEXT BUNCH OF WORK

The pilot network is a very local happening. It is unique to this time and place without the reproductive vitality necessary to be useful elsewhere. The program is in a language only usable on the 940 and the 940 will support only 16 users. With the high cost of geriatric engineering each user's share of the expenses is about \$6,000. This is far above the resources of the organizations and people we wish to serve. An additional problem is the high cost of the terminals necessary to connect with the central computer.

To make our idea evolutionarily competitive we are producing a more advanced Community Memory program in FORTRAN, the most commonly available programming language, working on cheap television and printer terminals that we would produce ourselves, and directing our work to run on the newest, fastest, smallest, cheapest technology — the mighty minicomputer. Minicomputers are available at 1/8 the size and cost of the 940 and three times its power! Not very mini. With the use of carefully selected mini hardware a system could be assembled whose purchase price would be under a thousand dollars per user, whose maintenance would cost under \$150 per year per user, and would have about a million characters of storage for every user. Each additional million characters would be about \$400 per user. We hope to produce or obtain terminals at about \$400 each so the capital cost for a single user would be under \$2000 and the yearly expenses for the system only a couple of hundred and the cost of two phone lines — one at the computer and another at the terminal. By sharing all new software development among the various networks any additional development costs could be kept under a few hundred per user too.

A list of all the hidden assumptions in the above:
1) We can write an efficient system in FORTRAN.

2) We become OEM (original equipment manufacturer) purchasers of hardware. This means all the systems are purchased through us and we get wholesale prices.

3) Large communities of users can be established for each system since the smaller the system the more it will cost per user. The above figures came from a system which could support at least 50 fulltime users and would cost about 50 thousand dollars to buy wholesale.

4) We or a similar group manufacture a cheap terminal multiplexor, the piece of equipment via which the computer communicates with all the terminals and which is very overpriced at the the moment.

5) The opposing factors of ever-decreasing cost of computers and the current economic turbulence and maybe disaster at least balance each other out.

Our time scale is to have the first minisystem functioning and debugged within a year. We could use luck and help.

Social Service

Referral Directory

(continued from page 1)

stored both in the machine's on-line (disc) memory and backed-up on magnetic tape. Formatting is done by the computer and the information is printed out onto paper offset printing masters directly from the machine's high-speed printer.

When data on an agency is changed — whether one word, a phone number, or large sections — only the specific changes have to be made in the computer's copy of the data, while the computer prints a complete new page for the agency. Each subscriber receives a copy of the new page and replaces the outdated page in his copy of the directory.

The various indexes are currently produced off-line while the design criteria for programmed indexing aids are being developed. In the future, the directory information will be interfaced with ROGIRS and Community Memory functions to provide on-line retrieval of the listings by appropriate "keywords".

The SSRD grew out of a basic motivation in Resource One even before its metamorphosis out of the San Francisco Switchboard organization — making available vital information to people in new ways. Early in 1973, as the time-sharing system was becoming usable, the directory emerged as a possible solution to the problem that directories of social services were being created every other year as one-shot printed books which were both incomplete as to the parameters of services and out of date as soon as they were delivered. Meetings with persons active in referral work were held to explore their needs and the feasibility of a computerized, updatable system. Within six months the directory was delivered to the initial subscribers, and after another half year it is now rapidly growing.

The SSRD is an initial application of a general information retrieval system; a model of one way of distributing vital information that changes frequently. We feel that the success of this type of directory is not unique to the field of social services but could extend to many other areas as well. We are currently exploring the possibilities of producing an educational resources directory and are meeting with people in other fields to discuss how a directory might serve their needs.

* SELF-HELP FOR THE ELDERLY **

ADDRESS: 3 OLD CHINATOWN LANE, S.F. CALIF. 94108

TELEPHONE: 982-9171

AGENCY DIRECTOR: SAM YUEN

SERVICE: ASSISTANCE WITH INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS, GROUP ACTIVITIES, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT (DING HO, HOUSEKEEPER TRAINING), FOOD PROGRAM, CONSUMER ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATION, COMMUNITY PLANNING, YOUTH FOR ELDERLY PROGRAM.

EMERGENCY SERVICE: FOOD VOUCHERS (GROCERY AND RESTAURANT), HELP IN APPLYING FOR WELFARE AND OBTAINING HEALTH SERVICES.

PERSON TO CONTACT: SAM YUEN OR ANY STAFF PERSON

HOW DOES ONE OBTAIN SERVICES: DROP-IN OR APPOINTMENT IN PERSON OR BY PHONE

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICE: ANY LOW-INCOME PERSON OVER 55 YRS. OF AGE

AREA SERVED: PRIMARILY CHINATOWN, NORTH BEACH AND LOWER RICHMOND AND ANY CHINESE PERSON IN S.F. WITH NO ENGLISH.

HOURS: M-F, 8:30 TO 5:30 P.M. (PORTABLE MEALS 7 DAYS A WK.)

FEES: NONE EXCEPT PORT. MEALS \$1.00 PER DAY (2 MEALS AT 50 CENTS A MEAL), IF THEY CAN AFFORD IT.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN: CHINESE, TAGALOG, ILOCANO, JAPANESE, SPANISH

ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: 30 STOCKTON BUS

COMMENTS: FUNDED BY OEB, EDC AND STATE COMMISSION ON AGING AND CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

LAST UPDATE: 1/16/74 FROM SAM YUEN

A typical page from the Resource One Social Service Referral Directory.

PEOPLE RESOURCES

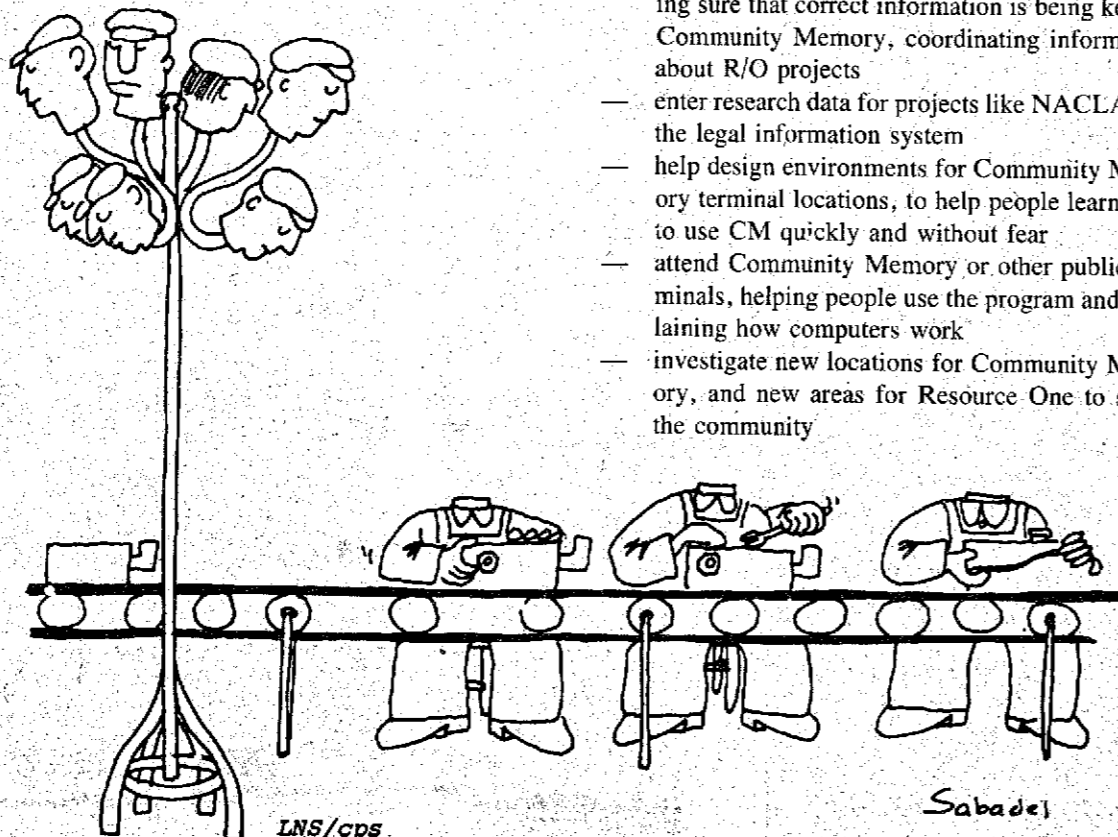
The prime motivation of the Resource One work collective is to create new techniques and add new tools to the ones now being used by organizations and people involved in social change. Some of the specific projects we get involved with are somewhat hard to view from that perspective, being done mostly because they bring in money, but even those projects can help us understand how to survive in the environment we're part of.

It should be clear, from a reading of these pages, that there are many opportunities for involvement by people who are not now part of Resource One. Most such situations call for people who can afford to volunteer their time; in some cases, where the mutual advantage is very clear, some money is available for subsistence. Of course, we are always open to proposals from people who want to use our tools in con-

structive, innovative ways, as part of a project of their own.

At this writing there are lots of possible projects to which people would be welcome to contribute their energies. Only a few of these would require any special computer skills, since most of the basic programming has been done. Examples of what people could do:

- organize a comprehensive (or fragmentary) education program at Resource One or elsewhere, designed to promote discussion of how computer technology could be better used in the community, and information on how it is mis-used by business and government
- organize the internal information flows of Resource One, keeping track of what other organizations are doing through correspondence, making sure that correct information is being kept in Community Memory, coordinating information about R/O projects
- enter research data for projects like NACLA and the legal information system
- help design environments for Community Memory terminal locations, to help people learn how to use CM quickly and without fear
- attend Community Memory or other public terminals, helping people use the program and explaining how computers work
- investigate new locations for Community Memory, and new areas for Resource One to serve the community



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SSRD 02/05/74

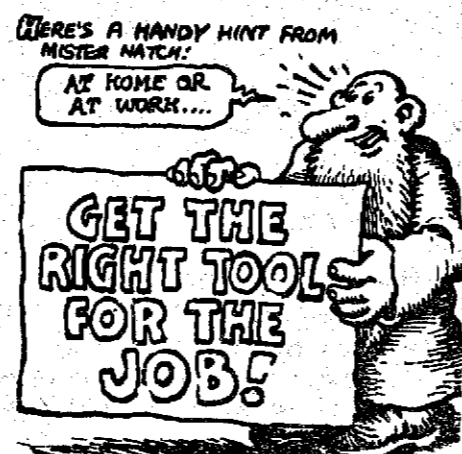
Obviously we would have a problem if, tomorrow, fifty people walked in wanting to get involved. We have had problems in the past with finding something for one person to do. That's because we are already short-handed in relation to the number of balls in the air at one time. So don't expect a well-thought-out on-the-job training program from us.

We hope that many people will pick up on the projects described in this newsletter, and think seriously about whether the projects, the processes or the tools involved could apply to their own lives and goals. If you are such a person, please let us know.

Female energy is sorely lacking here. It seems that out of every ten people who come around, all ten are men. This phenomenon naturally affects the atmosphere and hinders development.

It doesn't matter if you are a "computer person". We need people who have a concern for the direction in which technology is leading society, and want to help reverse the situation. We need people who have been in other groups and collectives and know how to make them work. If you just have some new ideas about communications at the people level, come around. These things apply equally well to women as men.

More women are absolutely necessary, so bring your friends.



Keeping Track of the Spies

NACLA, the North American Congress on Latin America, is a political collective that for the past seven years has been researching and publishing information and analysis in pamphlets and a monthly Report on the U.S. power structure and its role in Latin America and the rest of the world.

To carry out this work they set up and maintain extensive files of newspaper clippings, magazine articles and other material. The sheer volume of this information — half a dozen newspapers are clipped every day — often makes it a difficult and time-consuming task for a researcher to lay her/his hands on the particular articles that are of interest. The R/O General Information Retrieval System (ROGIRS) offers a possible solution to this problem.



LEGAL INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

The San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation (SFNLAF) and Resource One are jointly developing a legal information data bank to eliminate one of SFNLAF's greatest enemies: duplicated research.

SFNLAF has six offices in San Francisco, providing legal help to clients who can't afford commercial legal services. They handle roughly 1200 clients per month, involving primarily landlord-tenant, welfare, immigration, and civil-rights law. Many of these cases require time-consuming research prior to preparation of arguments and briefs. Due to the lack of an effective method for exchanging information among various attorneys and separated offices, much of this research is repeated in case after case.

Resource One is developing an information exchange system, using ROGIRS to link the six SFNLAF offices together via terminals in each office which can simultaneously reference the legal data. Each attorney, as part of her regular case-reporting procedure, will compose a paragraph describing the case in brief, including a source for further information. This paragraph is then stored in the computer under several "keyword" descriptors, selected to include the areas of law involved and names of judges, attorneys, and clients.

An attorney with a new case to research can easily instruct ROGIRS to list the summaries of cases similar to his, selected by area of law, judge, etc. By referring to the briefs and arguments written for these cases, the attorney has access to research already done by others.

The data bank will also contain skills and referral information. Most members of SFNLAF, and their outside contacts, will be listed in the data bank under their particular specialties, so that an attorney needing expert help will know where to go. In many cases, SFNLAF's clients' problems are not strictly legal, but spring instead from police relations, community organizing, tax questions, etc. As members of SFNLAF encounter other organizations and individuals who may be of use to SFNLAF's clients, they will be added to the data bank for future referrals.

As a separate project, SFNLAF is using Resource One's computer to process their "client intake" forms, to produce a better over-all picture of their clients' needs and their own success in meeting those needs. Both this and the legal information data bank are designed to save SFNLAF's attorneys much time and effort, allowing them to handle cases more efficiently and with more personal contact.

COMPUTERIZED MAILING LISTS

NIMS, the New Interactive Mailing System, is a user-oriented program that provides groups who have large mailing lists with computer printed labels. Interactive means that the system is used from a computer terminal with the user telling the program what he wants to do, e.g. add new names, change an entry, sort the list, etc. NIMS allows the user to assign his own categories to the people on the list and will select and print labels for a given category as well as for the whole list. This makes it easy to prepare special mailings for different parts of the master list. The categories used by each group are different, but include things like: contributor, special interests, and occupation. The program will also print listings on paper, with several "comment lines" (lines not printed on labels, e.g., phone number, date they were put on mailing list or whatever) allowed after each name. Both listings and labels are available sorted either by last name or by zip code. For the time being we are limiting ourselves to lists of under 20,000 names, although the program was designed to handle up to 60,000.

We are offering this service partly because we recognize that it can save people a lot of the drudgery of hand addressing envelopes, but also as a way of introducing groups who we feel could make more powerful use of the computer to some of the basic skills and techniques involved.

If Resource One is not now on your mailing list, please put us on it. We will make an effort to keep up with the activities of all groups corresponding regularly with us, and make this information publicly available through Community Memory.

of the 100 largest Chilean corporations, American subsidiaries, and major banks and other financial institutions. The study should help reveal the interconnections within the corporate structure and help in understanding the American interest in and response to events in Chile over the past several years.

With a Little Help From Our Friends



Running a community computer center is expensive!!

So far Resource One has depended largely on foundation grants for our support, but this source is neither permanent nor dependable. Ideally, we would like to be funded by the people and organizations we serve, but many of them can't afford enough to offset our expenses. Therefore we are appealing to everybody who thinks that the kinds of projects described in this newsletter are worth-while to help support them. No contribution is too small!

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ to be used to help support the: _____ project
(All contributions to Resource One are tax-deductable)

Please put me on the Resource One mailing list:

Name: _____

Address: _____

zip code _____

Mail to: Resource One, 1380 Howard St., San Francisco, Ca. 94103

We would also like to hear from you if you have any feedback on what we're doing, our ideas and plans, or if you're involved in a similar or complimentary project or know of any.

Helping Out Food Conspiracies

As the distribution of goods has become increasingly centralized, institutionalized, and profit-oriented, a number of alternative forms have appeared. One of these, the food conspiracy, extends the basic cooperative idea to trade our most ancient basic commodity, *food*, for our most modern commodity, *time*. Its members take on the tasks of collating orders, finding farmers, manufacturers or distributors, buying, loading, hauling and sorting the food — all the tasks that the supermarket shopper pays someone else to perform.

The information load in such a distribution system is considerably heavier than in the usual marketing system, and few groups have been able to handle expansion to a level where they are able to negotiate for discounts and rebates that are available to large corporate distributors. Assuming that excellent communication for coordinating large distribution efforts is possible without large and efficient hierarchical organizations, it should be possible to extend the conspiracies to include more people who need really cheap food without alienating the people who simply enjoy working together and want to see where their food is coming from.

Since the order-processing and bookkeeping jobs are the least fun of all, the most error-prone, and a general bottleneck, Resource One is developing a program to deal with some of these jobs. Based on an analysis of methods used by a number of functioning food conspiracies in Berkeley, the program will accept orders, price corrections, and accounting information, and will process and print out information in a usable form for the buyers, truckers, sorters, etc. — as well as keeping records important for group

A Bit of Ancient History

Resource One's roots go back to U.C. Berkeley during the Cambodia crisis of May 1970. A group of computer people there got together, like others, and talked of their disenchantment with how their skills were destined for use in "the system". They fantasized about using computers for building communication networks to share information and resources. Several months later some of the students were attracted to Project One in San Francisco, where other technologically oriented people, as well as artists and ex-professionals of all types, were gathering to try out a new concept of integrating their skills and work with the rest of their lives.

Project One (or 'ONE') was a vacant 5-story warehouse building in downtown S.F.—84,000 square feet of bare, cold concrete, which has since been transformed into an imaginative warren of 'spaces' in which 60 people live and twice as many work on a wide variety of projects. Besides Resource One there now are: an experimental high school, music and radio recording/practice studios, a film processing lab, theater rehearsal space, an alternative magazine, a radical welfare department workers' union, and numerous artists, musicians and craft people.

Resource One came into formal existence in late 1971, when the small group of ex-computer science students obtained seed funding from the Stern Foundation, and a commitment from Transamerica Computer Corporation for an XDS-940 timeshare computer.

decision-making.

This program will be tested on the block level sometime during April or May, and hopefully will be available for others who want to use it shortly thereafter.

The computer arrived, newly refurbished, in early 1972, and was installed in its own home built room in June of that year. In July the "operating system" (the main program) was put into operation, with the donated help of some of the people who five years before had written the first such time-sharing programs.

Funding for the first year of operation was secured in October of 1972, with the last matching grant from a series of foundations, including the Bank of America Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Fund, and the Firemen's Fund Foundation. Shortly afterward, the Irvine Foundation donated the cost of our mass-storage disc file. What we have done since then is what the rest of this newsletter is about.



RESOURCE ONE

TECHNOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE

A NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY GROUP SHARING INFORMATION AND SKILLS

Resource One Newsletter Number 2

April, 1974

1380 Howard St. San Francisco, Ca. 94103

URBAN DATA BASE

The "Urban Data Base" is a collection of information, gathered from various government agencies, about different neighborhoods in San Francisco. The information includes census data, election returns, and data on land use and property valuation, assessment and ownership.

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(continued on page 2)

INFORMATION AS POWER

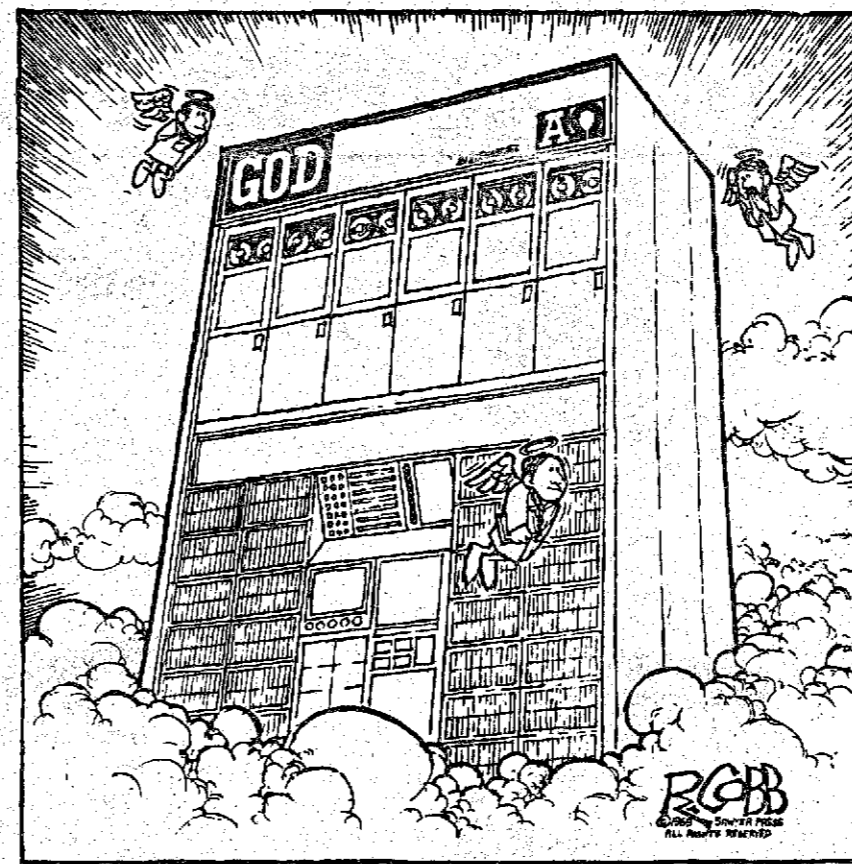
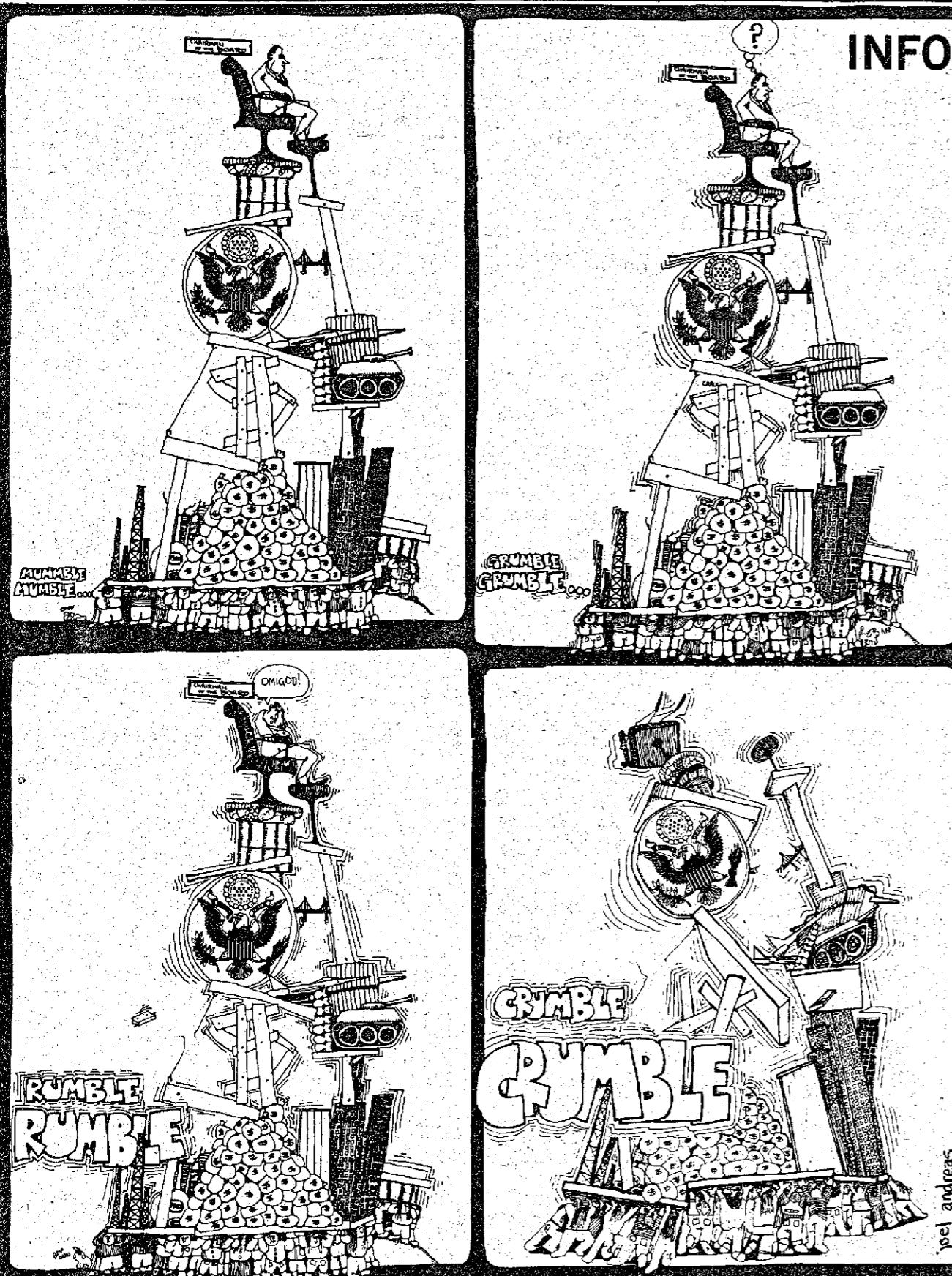
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It is no accident that there is so little information about such important questions. Both the quantity and content of available information is set by centralized institutions — the press, TV, radio, news services, think-tanks, government agencies, schools and universities — which are controlled by the same interests which control the rest of the economy. By keeping information flowing from the top down, they keep us isolated from each other.

Yet we are not really powerless — our strength lies in the creativity of people seeking solutions to their own life problems. Free schools, free health clinics, the women's movement, third world movements, the prison movement, the GI movement, tenant's unions, food conspiracies, rural communes, in a thousand ways people are trying to gain direct control over their lives. The response of the capitalist system to these struggles is remarkably consistent: where the threat is not too great, coopt and absorb it; otherwise isolate and repress it. It is this pattern that convinces us that control over the flow of information is so crucial.

Computer technology has thus far been used in this fight mainly by the government, and those it represents, to store and quickly retrieve vast amounts of information about huge numbers of people — everything from their arrest records and credit ratings to reports of their personal lives. A few years ago it was estimated that the FBI alone was maintaining computerized files on the activities of over 2 million Americans, and the Associated Credit Bureaus of America had data on over 100 million people.

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Helping Out Food Conspiracies

As the distribution of goods has become increasingly centralized, institutionalized, and profit-oriented, a number of alternative forms have appeared. One of these, the food conspiracy, extends the basic cooperative idea to trade our most ancient basic commodity, *food*, for our most modern commodity, *time*. Its members take on the tasks of collating orders, finding farmers, manufacturers or distributors, buying, loading, hauling and sorting the food — all the tasks that the supermarket shopper pays someone else to perform.

The information load in such a distribution system is considerably heavier than in the usual marketing system, and few groups have been able to handle expansion to a level where they are able to negotiate for discounts and rebates that are available to large corporate distributors. Assuming that excellent communication for coordinating large distribution efforts is possible without large and efficient hierarchical organizations, it should be possible to extend the conspiracies to include more people who need really cheap food without alienating the people who simply enjoy working together and want to see where their food is coming from.

Since the order-processing and bookkeeping jobs are the least fun of all, the most error-prone, and a general bottleneck, Resource One is developing a program to deal with some of these jobs. Based on an analysis of methods used by a number of functioning food conspiracies in Berkeley, the program will accept orders, price corrections, and accounting information, and will process and print out information in a usable form for the buyers, truckers, sorters, etc. — as well as keeping records important for group

A Bit of Ancient History

Resource One's roots go back to U.C. Berkeley during the Cambodia crisis of May 1970. A group of computer people there got together, like others, and talked of their disenchantment with how their skills were destined for use in "the system". They fantasized about using computers for building communication networks to share information and resources. Several months later some of the students were attracted to Project One in San Francisco, where other technologically oriented people, as well as artists and ex-professionals of all types, were gathering to try out a new concept of integrating their skills and work with the rest of their lives.

Project One (or "ONE") was a vacant 5-story warehouse building in downtown S.F.—84,000 square feet of bare, cold concrete, which has since been transformed into an imaginative warren of 'spaces' in which 60 people live and twice as many work on a wide variety of projects. Besides Resource One there now are: an experimental high school, music and radio recording/practice studios, a film processing lab, theater rehearsal space, an alternative magazine, a radical welfare department workers' union, and numerous artists, musicians and craft people.

Resource One came into formal existence in late 1971, when the small group of ex-computer science students obtained seed funding from the Stern Foundation, and a commitment from Transamerica Computer Corporation for an XDS-940 timeshare computer.

decision-making.

This program will be tested on the block level sometime during April or May, and hopefully will be available for others who want to use it shortly thereafter.

The computer arrived, newly refurbished, in early 1972, and was installed in its own home built room in June of that year. In July the "operating system" (the main program) was put into operation, with the donated help of some of the people who five years before had written the first such time-sharing programs.

Funding for the first year of operation was secured in October of 1972, with the last matching grant from a series of foundations, including the Bank of America Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Fund, and the Firemen's Fund Foundation. Shortly afterward, the Irvine Foundation donated the cost of our mass-storage disc file. What we have done since then is what the rest of this newsletter is about.



RESOURCE ONE

TECHNOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE

"A NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY GROUP SHARING INFORMATION AND SKILLS"

Resource One Newsletter Number 2

April, 1974

1380 Howard St. San Francisco, Ca. 94103

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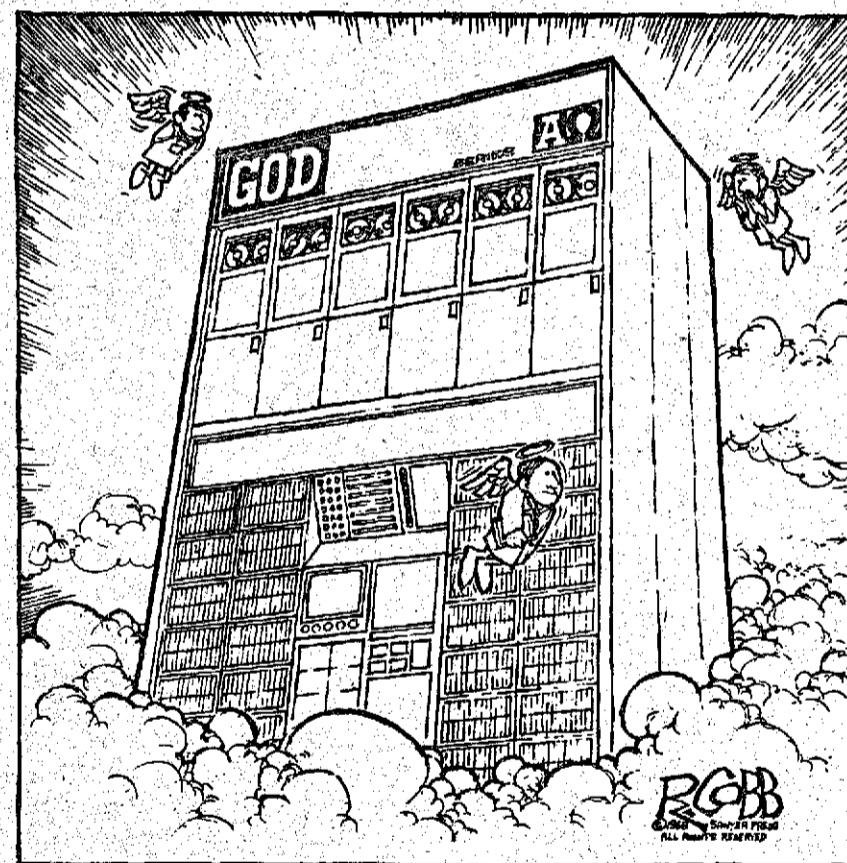
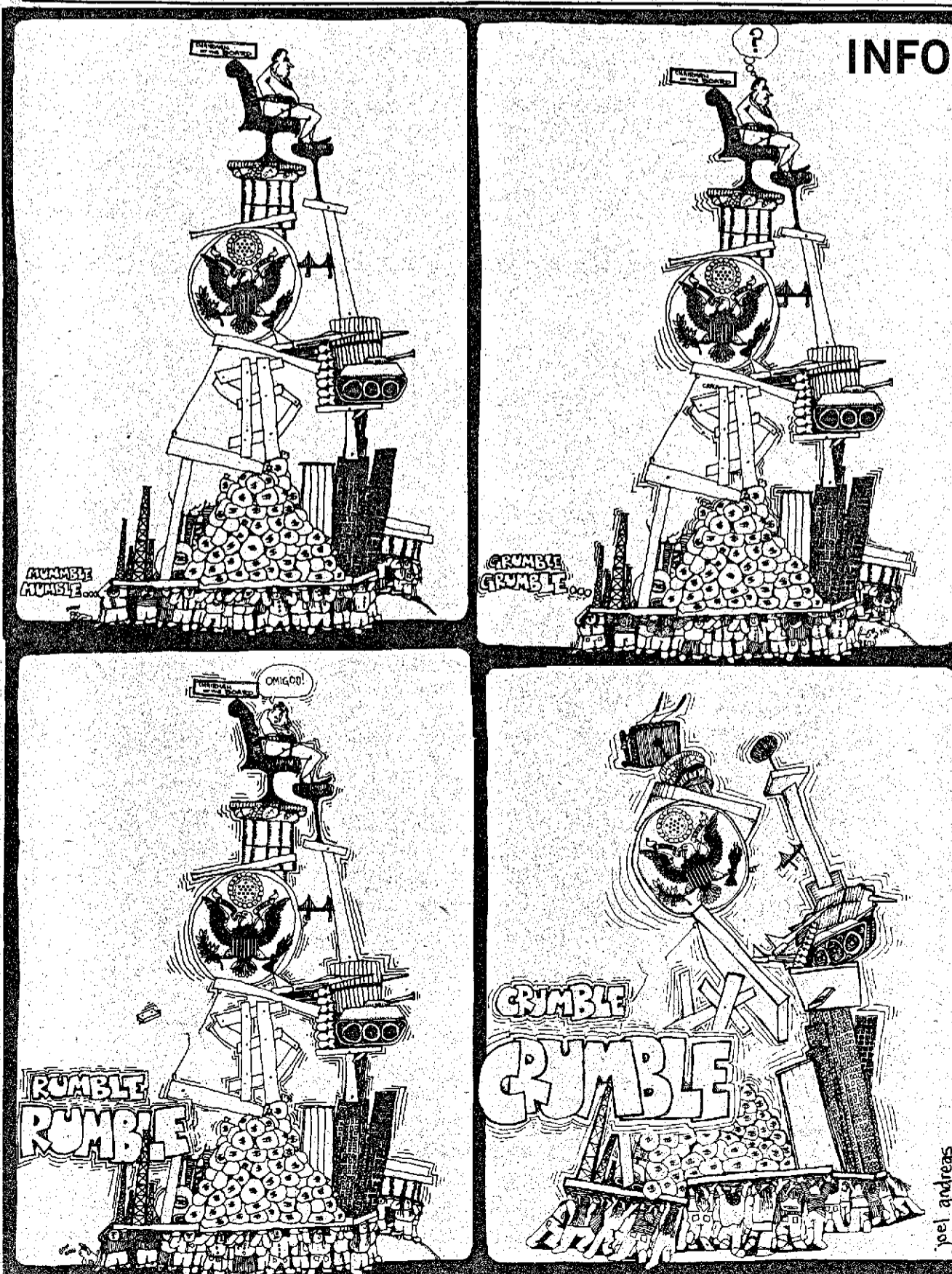
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The 'Counting House' opens soon

The San Francisco Foundation, on March 7, 1974, approved a grant of \$23,600 to Resource One for the purpose of setting up a pilot accounting program (the Counting House) for non-profit organizations. The Counting House will be a storefront office equipped with a computer terminal, which is hooked up to the Resource One computer via telephone.

At Resource One, a program is being written in FORTRAN II to handle all the basic reporting requirements of small organizations ("users"). A given user will type in all the raw data (requiring less time than hand-posting now takes), and the program will produce a variety of reports on demand. The input data will be things like cash disbursements (off check stubs), cash receipts (from checkbook), billings, etc. The program will check every item, as it is entered, for proper format and completeness. (E.g. Is the decimal point where it should be? Are the numbers "reasonable"? ERROR MESSAGE, YOU FORGOT TO ENTER THE ACCOUNT NUMBER!!) Reports can be generated for any given accounting period (month, quarter, year), and for any account or group of accounts. The program will be very easy to use — even for people who have had no experience with computers.

An "operator" — trained in bookkeeping techniques and basic computer programming — will attend the Counting House terminal full-time, to help in case of trouble, teach users how the system works, and serve in general as a bookkeeping consultant.

The accounting office will share space with a neighborhood Community Memory location in San Francisco, which hasn't yet been chosen.

We would like to have a storefront in a relatively high-traffic area (like the Haight, Mission, Noe Valley or Civic Center areas). We're not at all averse to sharing space with another group. If you know of a space that isn't too expensive, coming up for rent, or if you're interested in sharing space with us, we'd appreciate hearing from you.

Social Service Referral Directory

(continued from page 1)

stored both in the machine's on-line (disc) memory and backed-up on magnetic tape. Formatting is done by the computer and the information is printed out onto paper offset printing masters directly from the machine's high-speed printer.

When data on an agency is changed — whether one word, a phone number, or large sections — only the specific changes have to be made in the computer's copy of the data, while the computer prints a complete new page for the agency. Each subscriber receives a copy of the new page and replaces the outdated page in his copy of the directory.

The various indexes are currently produced off-line while the design criteria for programmed indexing aids are being developed. In the future, the directory information will be interfaced with ROGIRS and Community Memory functions to provide on-line retrieval of the listings by appropriate "keywords".

The SSRD grew out of a basic motivation in Resource One even before its metamorphosis out of the San Francisco Switchboard organization — making available vital information to people in new ways. Early in 1973, as the time-sharing system was becoming usable, the directory emerged as a possible solution to the problem that directories of social services were being created every other year as one-shot printed books which were both incomplete as to the parameters of services and out of date as soon as they were delivered. Meetings with persons active in referral work were held to explore their needs and the feasibility of a computerized, updatable system. Within six months the directory was delivered to the initial subscribers, and after another half year it is now rapidly growing.

The SSRD is an initial application of a general information retrieval system; a model of one way of distributing vital information that changes frequently. We feel that the success of this type of directory is not unique to the field of social services but could extend to many other areas as well. We are currently exploring the possibilities of producing an educational resources directory and are meeting with people in other fields to discuss how a directory might serve their needs.

* SELF-HELP FOR THE ELDERLY **

ADDRESS: 3 OLD CHINATOWN LANE, S.F. CALIF. 94108

TELEPHONE: 982-9171

AGENCY DIRECTOR: SAM YUEN

SERVICE: ASSISTANCE WITH INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS, GROUP ACTIVITIES, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT (DING HO, HOUSEKEEPER TRAINING), FOOD PROGRAM, CONSUMER ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATION, COMMUNITY PLANNING, YOUTH FOR ELDERLY PROGRAM.

EMERGENCY SERVICE: FOOD VOUCHERS (GROCERY AND RESTAURANT), HELP IN APPLYING FOR WELFARE AND OBTAINING HEALTH SERVICES.

PERSON TO CONTACT: SAM YUEN OR ANY STAFF PERSON

HOW DOES ONE OBTAIN SERVICES: DROP-IN OR APPOINTMENT IN PERSON OR BY PHONE

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICE: ANY LOW-INCOME PERSON OVER 55 YRS. OF AGE

AREA SERVED: PRIMARILY CHINATOWN, NORTH BEACH AND LOWER RICHMOND AND ANY CHINESE PERSON IN S.F. WITH NO ENGLISH.

HOURS: M-F, 8:30 TO 5:30 P.M. (PORTABLE MEALS 7 DAYS A WK.)

FEES: NONE EXCEPT PORT. MEALS \$1.00 PER DAY (2 MEALS AT 50 CENTS A MEAL), IF THEY CAN AFFORD IT.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN: CHINESE, TAGALOG, ILOCANO, JAPANESE, SPANISH

ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: 30 STREETCAR BUS

COMMENTS: FUNDED BY OGB, EBC AND STATE COMMISSION ON AGING AND CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

LAST UPDATE: 1/16/74 FROM SAM YUEN

A typical page from the Resource One Social Service Referral Directory.

PEOPLE RESOURCES

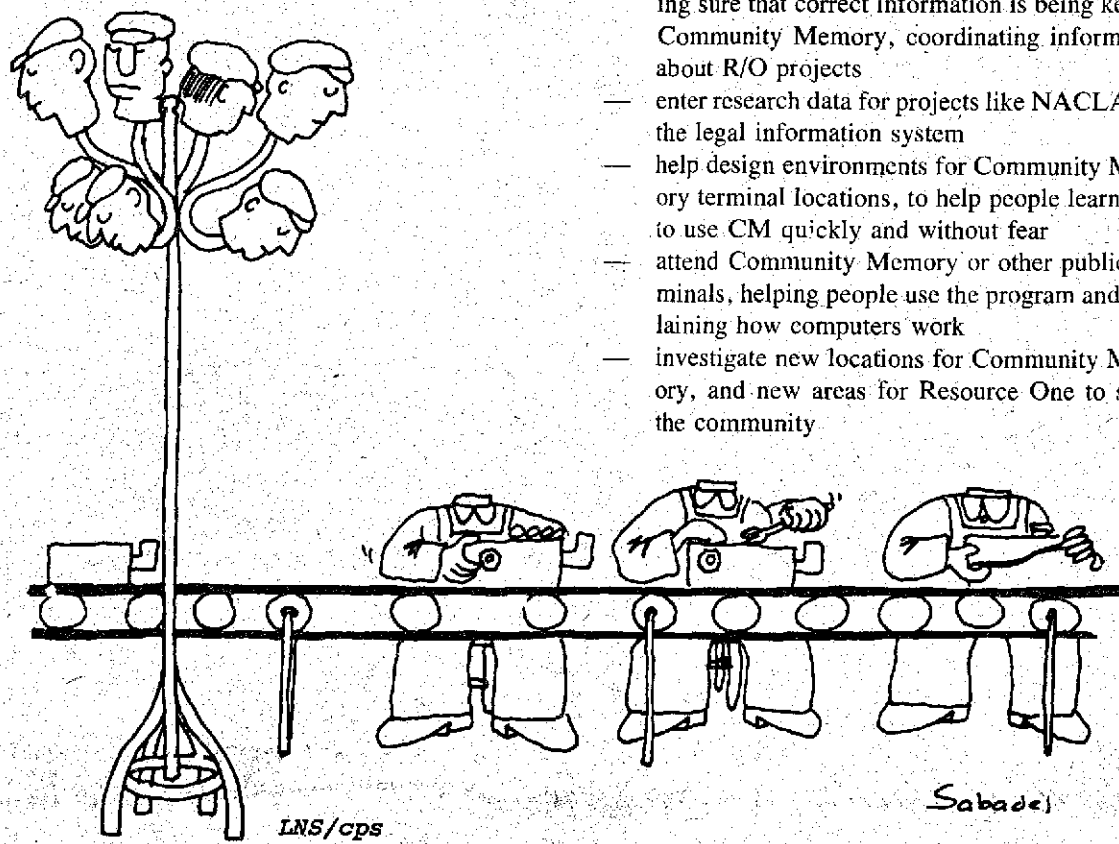
The prime motivation of the Resource One work collective is to create new techniques and add new tools to the ones now being used by organizations and people involved in social change. Some of the specific projects we get involved with are somewhat hard to view from that perspective, being done mostly because they bring in money, but even those projects can help us understand how to survive in the environment we're part of.

It should be clear, from a reading of these pages, that there are many opportunities for involvement by people who are not now part of Resource One. Most such situations call for people who can afford to volunteer their time; in some cases, where the mutual advantage is very clear, some money is available for subsistence. Of course, we are always open to proposals from people who want to use our tools in con-

structive, innovative ways, as part of a project of their own.

At this writing there are lots of possible projects to which people would be welcome to contribute their energies. Only a few of these would require any special computer skills, since most of the basic programming has been done. Examples of what people could do:

- organize a comprehensive (or fragmentary) education program at Resource One or elsewhere, designed to promote discussion of how computer technology could be better used in the community, and information on how it is mis-used by business and government
- organize the internal information flows of Resource One, keeping track of what other organizations are doing through correspondence, making sure that correct information is being kept in Community Memory, coordinating information about R/O projects
- enter research data for projects like NACLA and the legal information system
- help design environments for Community Memory terminal locations, to help people learn how to use CM quickly and without fear
- attend Community Memory or other public terminals, helping people use the program and explaining how computers work
- investigate new locations for Community Memory, and new areas for Resource One to serve the community



© 1974 BY RESOURCE ONE SSRD 02/05/74

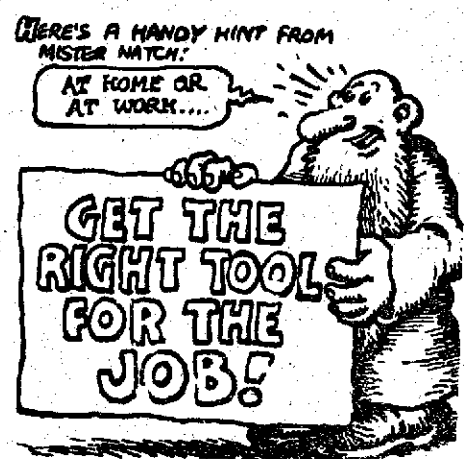
Obviously we would have a problem if, tomorrow, fifty people walked in wanting to get involved. We have had problems in the past with finding something for one person to do. That's because we are already short-handed in relation to the number of balls in the air at one time. So don't expect a well-thought-out on-the-job training program from us.

We hope that many people will pick up on the projects described in this newsletter, and think seriously about whether the projects, the processes or the tools involved could apply to their own lives and goals. If you are such a person, please let us know.

Female energy is sorely lacking here. It seems that out of every ten people who come around, all ten are men. This phenomenon naturally affects the atmosphere and hinders development.

It doesn't matter if you are a "computer person". We need people who have a concern for the direction in which technology is leading society, and want to help reverse the situation. We need people who have been in other groups and collectives and know how to make them work. If you just have some new ideas about communications at the people level, come around. These things apply equally well to women as men.

More women are absolutely necessary, so bring your friends.



Keeping Track of the Spies

NACLA, the North American Congress on Latin America, is a political collective that for the past seven years has been researching and publishing information and analysis in pamphlets and a monthly Report on the U.S. power structure and its role in Latin America and the rest of the world.

To carry out this work they set up and maintain extensive files of newspaper clippings, magazine articles and other material. The sheer volume of this information — half a dozen newspapers are clipped every day — often makes it a difficult and time-consuming task for a researcher to lay her/his hands on the particular articles that are of interest. The R/O General Information Retrieval System (ROGIRS) offers a possible solution to this problem.



LEGAL INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

The San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation (SFNLAF) and Resource One are jointly developing a legal information data bank to eliminate one of SFNLAF's greatest enemies: duplicated research.

SFNLAF has six offices in San Francisco, providing legal help to clients who can't afford commercial legal services. They handle roughly 1200 clients per month, involving primarily landlord-tenant, welfare, immigration, and civil-rights law. Many of these cases require time-consuming research prior to preparation of arguments and briefs. Due to the lack of an effective method for exchanging information among various attorneys and separated offices, much of this research is repeated in case after case.

Resource One is developing an information exchange system, using ROGIRS to link the six SFNLAF offices together via terminals in each office which can simultaneously reference the legal data. Each attorney, as part of her regular case-reporting procedure, will compose a paragraph describing the case in brief, including a source for further information. This paragraph is then stored in the computer under several "keyword" descriptors, selected to include the areas of law involved and names of judges, attorneys, and clients.

An attorney with a new case to research can easily instruct ROGIRS to list the summaries of cases similar to his, selected by area of law, judge, etc. By referring to the briefs and arguments written for these cases, the attorney has access to research already done by others.

The data bank will also contain skills and referral information. Most members of SFNLAF, and their outside contacts, will be listed in the data bank under their particular specialties, so that an attorney needing expert help will know where to go. In many cases, SFNLAF's clients' problems are not strictly legal, but spring instead from police relations, community organizing, tax questions, etc. As members of SFNLAF encounter other organizations and individuals who may be of use to SFNLAF's clients, they will be added to the data bank for future referrals.

As a separate project, SFNLAF is using Resource One's computer to process their "client intake" forms, to produce a better over-all picture of their clients' needs and their own success in meeting those needs. Both this and the legal information data bank are designed to save SFNLAF's attorneys much time and effort, allowing them to handle cases more efficiently and with more personal contact.

COMPUTERIZED MAILING LISTS

NIMS, the New Interactive Mailing System, is a user-oriented program that provides groups who have large mailing lists with computer printed labels. Interactive means that the system is used from a computer terminal with the user telling the program what he wants to do, e.g. add new names, change an entry, sort the list, etc. NIMS allows the user to assign his own categories to the people on the list and will select and print labels for a given category as well as for the whole list. This makes it easy to prepare special mailings for different parts of the master list. The categories used by each group are different, but include things like: contributor, special interests, and occupation. The program will also print listings on paper, with several "comment lines" (lines not printed on labels, e.g., phone number, date they were put on mailing list or whatever) allowed after each name. Both listings and labels are available sorted either by last name or by zip code. For the time being we are limiting ourselves to lists of under 20,000 names, although the program was designed to handle up to 60,000.

We are offering this service partly because we recognize that it can save people a lot of the drudgery of hand addressing envelopes, but also as a way of introducing groups who we feel could make more powerful use of the computer to some of the basic skills and techniques involved.

If Resource One is not now on your mailing list, please put us on it. We will make an effort to keep up with the activities of all groups corresponding regularly with us, and make this information publicly available through Community Memory.

of the 100 largest Chilean corporations, American subsidiaries, and major banks and other financial institutions. The study should help reveal the interconnections within the corporate structure and help in understanding the American interest in and response to events in Chile over the past several years.

With a Little Help From Our Friends



Running a community computer center is expensive!!

So far Resource One has depended largely on foundation grants for our support, but this source is neither permanent nor dependable. Ideally, we would like to be funded by the people and organizations we serve, but many of them can't afford enough to offset our expenses. Therefore we are appealing to everybody who thinks that the kinds of projects described in this newsletter are worth-while to help support them. No contribution is too small!!

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ to be used to help support the: _____ project (All contributions to Resource One are tax-deductable)

Please put me on the Resource One mailing list:

Name: _____

Address: _____

zip code _____

Mail to: Resource One, 1380 Howard St., San Francisco, Ca. 94103

We would also like to hear from you if you have any feedback on what we're doing, our ideas and plans, or if you're involved in a similar or complementary project or know of any.

Doc Benway wanders into the Whole Earth store to check out what's happening in Community Memory. A typical sequence would look something like this (what Benway types is underlined). There is a ">" symbol at the left side of the CRT screen, indicating the machine is waiting for the next user to give it some command. He proceeds to type:

>FIND TAXI

1 ITEMS FOUND

>PRINT

#1:

TAXI UNLIMITED IS A CO-OPERATIVE TAXICAB AND ANSWERING SERVICE, RUN AND MANAGED BY ITS WORKERS. TRIES TO KEEP RATES AS LOW AS POSSIBLE, HELPS PEOPLE IN EMERGENCIES, AND OFFERS EXTRA SERVICE FOR THE SICK AND DISABLED. 1908 BERKELEY WAY, BERKELEY 94703, TH1-2345

>FIND FREE CLINIC

6 ITEMS FOUND

>AND BERKELEY

2 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: GEORGE JACKSON PEOPLE'S FREE MEDICAL RESEARCH HEALTH CLINIC
#2: FREE CLINIC (BERKELEY) 548-2570

>FIND BAGELS

5 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: WHERE CAN I GET DECENT BAGELS IN THE BAY AREA (BERKELEY!)?
#2: THERE IS A STORE CALLED "BAGELS" ABOVE KEY ROUT ST. ON
#3: THE DANISH BAKERY AT UNIVERSITY AND SHATTUCK IN BERKELEY
#4: IF YOU CALL MICHAEL AT 845- AN EX-BAGEL BAKER CAN TEACH
#5: YOU CAN GET FRESH BAGELS AT THE HOUSE OF BAGELS, WAY OUT ON

>FIND ENERGY CRISIS

6 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: ***** FEG'S 1994 ***** ---> SOME CONCEPTS
#2: I AM LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT METHANOL (METHYL ALCOHOL)
#3: RESTARTING YOUR CAR'S ENGINE BURNS LESS GASOLINE THAN ONE
#4: <ENERGY PRIMER> -- A BOOK BEING PREPARED BY PORTOLA INSTITUTE
#5: ANYONE WANTING TO DEVELOP PUBLIC-ACCESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS,
#6: GOT TO, GOT TO

>PRINT 6

#6:

GOT TO, GOT TO
GOT TO, GOT TO,
GOT TO SCRAPE THAT ENERGY CRISIS
RIGHT OFF YER SHOES
(W/THANK 'O MICK 'N KEITH)

>FIND DOCTOR BENWAY

3 ITEMS FOUND

>PRINT 2

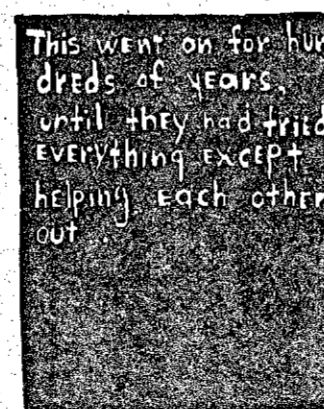
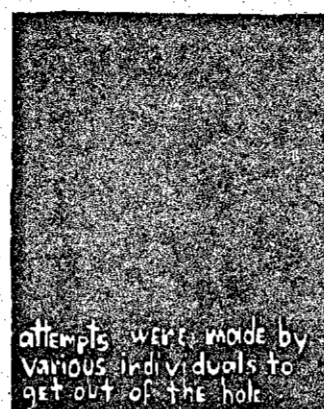
#2:

***** IEF XQRSTQAL SYSPRINT OFFSET INTERRUPT *****
APPLIESTO: ALL BOOGIES, BEANERS, BOLOS & BOZOS

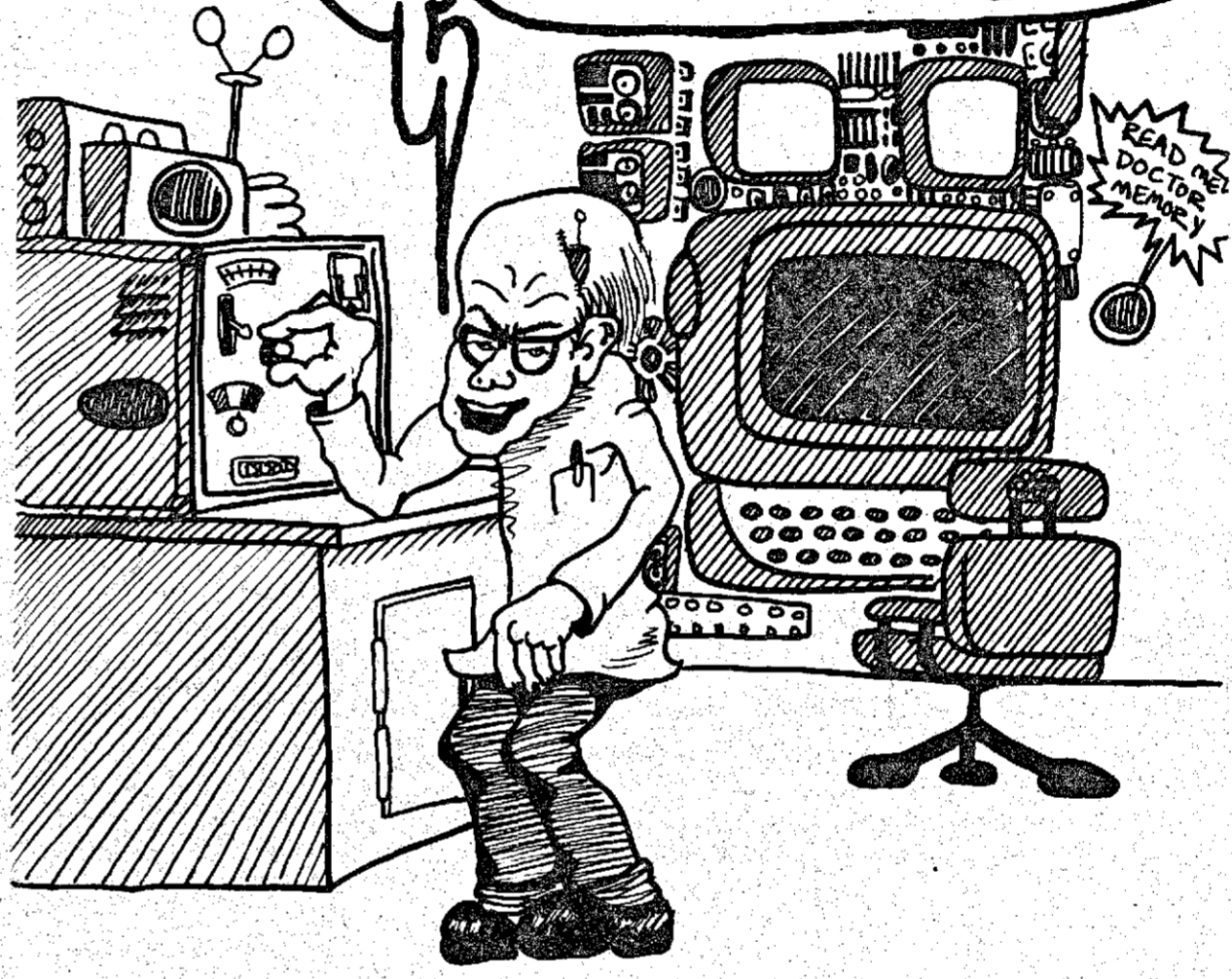
DOC BENWAY HERE NURSE, SLIP ME ANOTHER AMPULE
OF LAUDANUM RECOLLECT ONCE ME AND CLEM CLONE WAS CHEWING
YOHIMBE BARK OUT BACK OF JODY'S ALL-NIGHT PET SHOP

NOT A FINER MAN IN THIS WHOLE ZONE
THAN OL' CLEM 'N JODY CLONE

*****WHERE WAS WE, YEAH --- USE AUTHORIZED DATA BASE ACCESS
PROTOCOLS ONLY SENSUOUS KEYSTROKES FORBIDDEN DO NOT
STRUM THAT 33 LIKE A HAWAIIAN STEEL GUITAR GRAND CONCLAVE
OF THE PARTIES OF INTERZONE: CHECK YOUR BOX FOR DETAILS
PERSONAL ATTENDANCE REQUIRED; SEND NO REPLICAS. BENWAY OUT.
TLALCLATLAN



AT LAST... A COMMUNITY MEMORY!



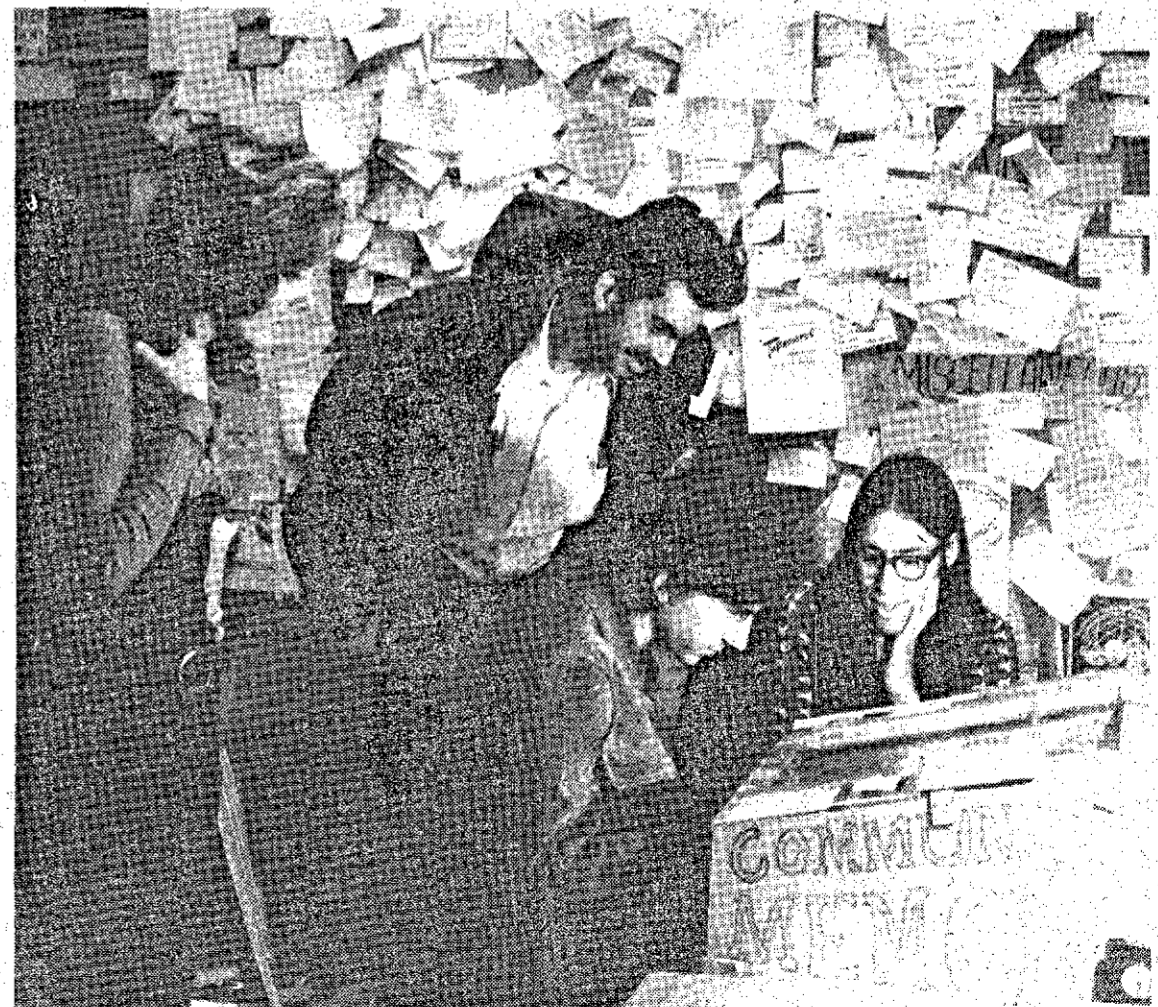
The seed of a national public access information net was planted last August in Berkeley. A teletype terminal connected to the Resource One computer was placed in the lobby of Leopold's Records, and people were encouraged to use it as a combined electronic bulletin board and data store. In keeping with our aspirations we've named this COMMUNITY MEMORY.

Since then several thousand people have discovered the terminal and typed in messages, classifying their items themselves so other people can find them quickly. The collection, with over a thousand active items now, includes exchanges traditional to other public media—bulletin boards, classified ads, telephone poles, bathroom walls; the type of information found in indexes and directories such as People's Yellow Pages; as well as exchanges and dialogues which are developing their own unique forms. There are cars for sale, rock bands looking for bass players, carpenters looking for jobs, groups offering counseling, tennis players looking for partners, political commentaries, etc. etc.

This seed is now sprouting into a network. The Leopold's terminal has been moved to the Whole Earth Access store. Specialized, indexed listings of parts of the data collection are being left with organizations that find them useful; a music directory, for instance, is left weekly at Leopold's. Additional public access terminals now exist at our office in Village Design in Berkeley (1545 Dwight Way), at the Mission branch library in San Francisco, and another one will soon open as part of the Counting House. Furthermore, large amounts of information are being collected and made available by NACLA (North American Congress on Latin America) and by People's Energy and Vocations for Social Change (cf the relevant articles).

Change is possible. As relative as good and bad are, actions may be weighted on that scale and the quality of global human existence improved.

We are embarked on growing with an information exchange which we are also helping develop. The hardware and software development we at Resource One and Community Memory are undertaking is nested within a continually expanding dialogue making use of tools we tend. We are thus interested in direct contacts, direct information, direct access by people affected by power to information on that power, liberation of power from the constricted grasp of the few to its rightful place as the wealth of the information-sharing community. This involves detailed, precise, valued struggle in a lot of media—money, education, politics, distribution, video, print, speech...



Alice...computer - computer...Alice
Our first Community Memory terminal (inside the cardboard box) at Leopold's record store. The competition is in the background.

Theories are an expression of how we see the world. They articulate the paradigms of the societies evolving them, defining the worlds in which their actions take place. These de-finitions are active, on-going, and substantial (incarnational) — they have real effects in the real world.



Learning Exchange Node?

On November 26, 1973, Resource One took part in a "Conference on Computer-Based Learning/Living and Information Exchanges" — held in Evanston, Illinois. Our XDS-940 was connected by phone to a CDC-6400 in Evanston which, over the previous week, had been collecting messages and comments from all over the country. On November 26 a live link was established between the computers, and exchanges were sent across the country as they were created by participants. On Resource One's side, these included about a dozen people involved in learning and communications groups from this area who came to Resource One, read what had been previously entered, and shared their own thoughts.

The theme of the conference was Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society*. "Deschooling" refers to the creation of a non-coercive process of and network for learning, "learning webs" to de-institutionalize the current educational system. This resonates with the original inspiration of many of us which led to involvement with the Community Memory project — seeing it as the communications system for a learning exchange — a means whereby messages by people who want to learn, people who want to teach, groups and institutions with resources to offer, can be exchanged in a continuous, up-dated fashion.

In our experience this begins to happen whenever the density of information interchange gets high enough. This was the case at Leopold's with musicians, who made the terminal their best means for finding each other. This is a prototype for a situation where people are looking for like-minded spirits, peers, fellow adventurers, to play with and explore — anything! A request for a source of good bagels was answered with an offer to teach the art of making bagels. There have been exchanges about languages, carpets, electronics, films, karate — and as the community information swapping develops in these areas, dialogues begin to emerge, continuing exchanges where the information itself is being transmitted through and beginning to reside in the medium.

The current step is to take this tool and to grow it as a workable learning exchange in the Bay Area, and to have it encourage the other necessary concomitants of a humane (and biologically and geologically sound) learning environment. A network alone is not enough; we will be working together with other groups to ensure that the nodes (ourselves as living, learning, teaching, sharing human beings) develop the appropriate openness and understandings.

The use of public communications by people may give them a competitive advantage over those tied to narrow private channels. More sharing of information is possible and better use of available technology can be made without continually having to develop security systems. Image of many people working together versus a few people ordering many about.

RESOURCE SHARING

Vocations for Social Change & People's Energy

VSC, or "Vocations for Social Change", is a non-profit tax-exempt educational corporation/collective with an office in Oakland California and associate offices elsewhere in the country. We publish *Workforce*, a national resource guide designed for and used by the movement for social change. We also publish how-to-organize information, and sponsor other organizations around the country. People's Energy is the closest associate of VSC, and was originally sponsored as a local VSC office. People's Energy maintains a regional resource file, publishes an East Bay resource guide, and counsels people in finding/constructing work alternatives.

People's Energy and VSC have just recently entered the Resource One user's network. Our vision and our goal is to provide much of the information base and some preliminary models for a national network, and to that end we are compiling our 6-years-worth of information on alternative institutions, from *Workforce* and our various local VSC contacts/friends elsewhere. We are planning to enter this mess (!) into our file **RESOURCE** as soon as we are familiar enough with the system to do so. Another project we are doing is indexing by interest keywords the some 100 people/month who come into our office for counselling, to begin to match them with jobs and with other people who have complementary interests.

We feel that information networking is vital for viable social change. Everything we do tells us that there is tremendous potential in knowing where to find information. It is also our feeling that we must remain self-conscious and self-critical about how we select and evaluate information, what our goals are (political neutrality being impossible), how we will use information, who will use it, how we will determine the "credibility index" of our information, how we will preserve privacy, and how high a profile we should exhibit.

What we do at People's Energy/VSC is not random. We select our resources carefully, and try to examine our contacts carefully in light of their potential for social change, and in light of their ability to be a model for that change. We actively solicit feedback in everything we do or sponsor. We try to serve as a model ourselves.

Our methods and our philosophy — all are open for discussion. We hope that our experiences can provide a philosophical springboard for guiding the network concept. We look forward to co-sponsoring the national alternative information system and becoming a full working member of the local network.

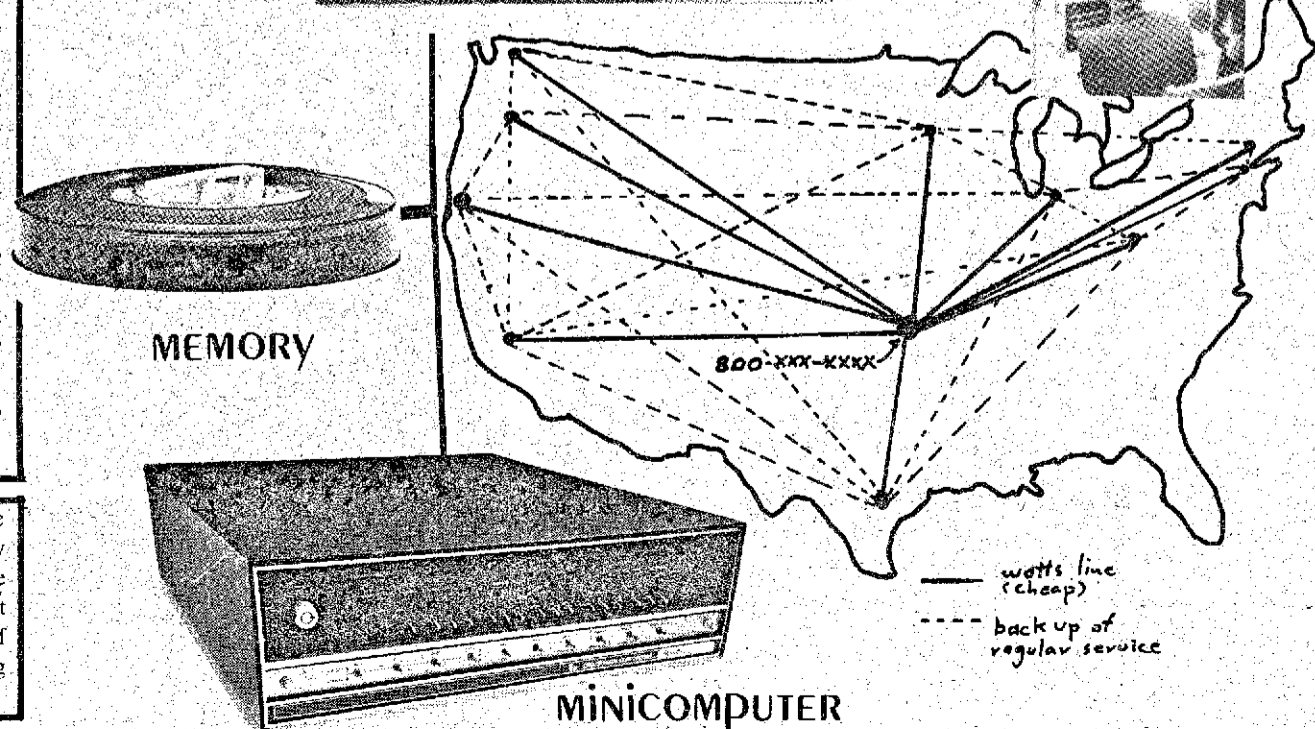
Our office: 4911 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 94609 (415) 653-6535, open line noon to 6pm.

We supply the planetary common wealth in acting in total communication with our various actions and their respective back-and-forth-sequencings. Where we get stuff, what we do with it and how, and where it goes afterwards — staying in touch with such data is what constitutes wealth, survival possibility — and this information flow is the crucial missing link in the survival worthiness of ourselves-together-with-our-planet. The medium for this release of valuable (valued for livelihood) messages is developing amongst us — electronics media in general, basically, and specifically public accessible memory storage — leave your real-time messages for other people, and you begin to provide other people access to your history, your calendar, your time(s). We all get 'on the air'; whether this is claustrophobia, or intolerable honesty, or space of shared patterns-of-common-history; whether this requires our becoming more and more like public parks, or whatever — is up to us to create. There can be no doubt, though, that at least, the very least, we are being thrown communication-ally together.

Community Memory is community mindfulness, not-forgetfulness. In the root sense of the greek word for truth, *aletheia* (*a-lethe*, having come out of hiddenness) it is communal retrieve of truth, communal disclosure, that which is (left) open, by us, to us.

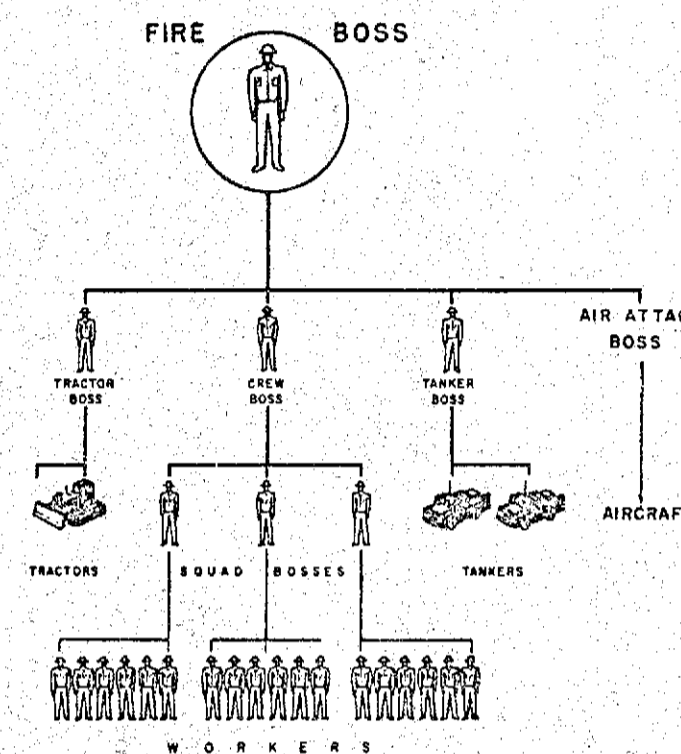


NATIONAL INFORMATION



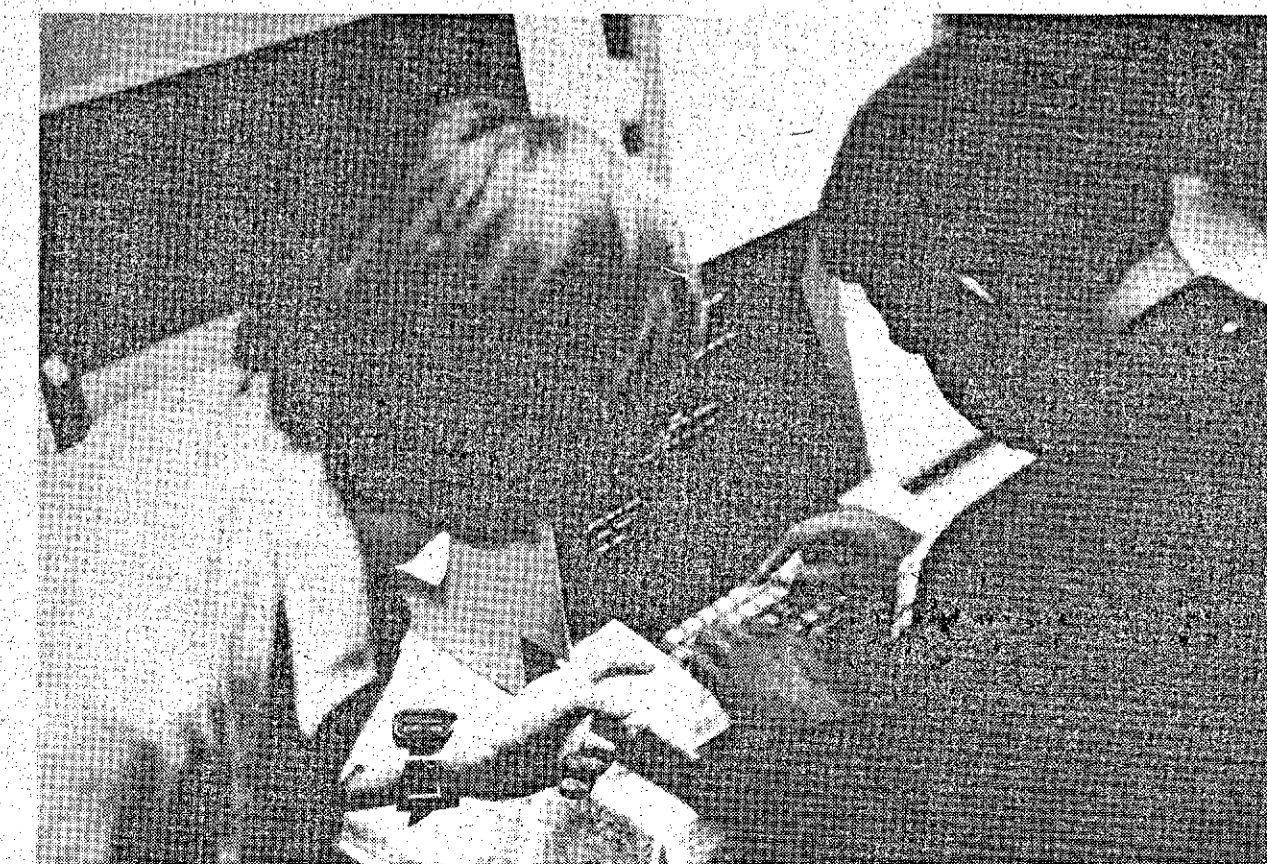
Belief in our dependence on the various institutions for the necessities for continuing our daily life is a more damaging mystification than the artificially created dependence on some of their products. We no longer go directly to the person who makes or grows or knows what we need, but rather to the functionary of the appropriate institution. Fewer and fewer of our daily interactions include communication on any personal, human level, and our private lives are becoming more isolated from our social, political, and economic lives. As our isolation from one another increases, our dependence upon artificial structures to give us work and and supply our material and recreational needs increases, while our sense of powerlessness makes real our political impotence.

Business and governmental communication is done in private where the competitors and the people can not see what's going on. Any system of diffuse power must force all such communication to be public record or privileged channels of communication and restricted information will develop and be used for the advantage of a few.



What are the possibilities of high speed, cheap national communication via computer? The minisystem networks described elsewhere are capable of communicating with each other over the phone at more than 1000 characters per second. Thus in a three-minute call two minicomputers could exchange 60 pages of information! Without making Ma-Bell any richer we could have a national news network, a means of coordination for national political action, a fast mail service, and a way to hold long term dialogue on problems of greater than local interest (see the article on the learning exchange conference).

ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM



Taking economic power includes developing new economic-organizational forms small enough so that, they may be completely controlled by all their members, can act as a self-conscious unit and develop the very complex set of relations with other such units, which will be necessary if they are to take over the functions currently performed by highly structured corporations. The development of our own means of production and distribution is the only way economic power can be removed from its current masters.

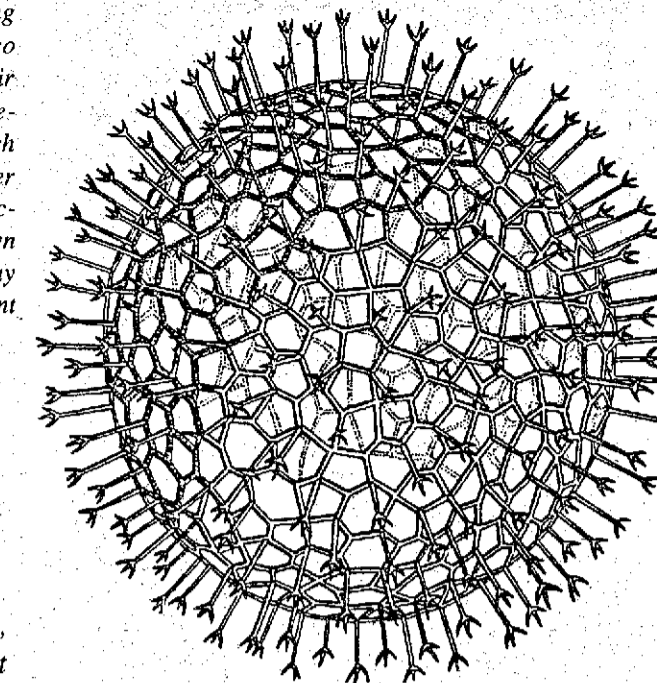
**A STRONG PEOPLE
NEED NO LEADER**
-ZARATA

Our only hope is to talk to one another, to share our thoughts and feelings. But first we must find one another, and to do that we must assume recognizable identities in the amorphous human mass. It is to aid in this task that *Community Memory* was created. By identifying ourselves, our interests, needs, and resources, we acknowledge the parts of our lives we are willing to share with others, the groups of which we are de facto members. All the power of computer technology and Boolean algebra are brought to bear to make us accessible to one another.

Our world seems to be populated not by people but by institutions. Recognizing governments, corporations, and unions as communication devices, information handling structures with the sole function of coordinating and securing our efforts to work and live together gives us the opportunity to seek alternatives. Bringing the consumers of goods directly in to contact with the creators is the only way of making them responsible for their own actions and responsive to one another's needs.

This would start us experimenting with direct government, government by ad hoc committee of interested, knowledgeable and affected people. If the flow of information was very heavy the consortium of local networks could establish a toll-free 800 number on one of the machines to be used as a relay satellite by all the others. This would not inhibit direct communication, between two networks, of information they did not want to trust to the (a, any) central machine. We can thus make a structure which takes advantage of both hierarchy and diffusion.

The prior paragraph is not techno fiction. Very little additional hardware and programming beyond that required for a local net would be necessary. The major requirement is keeping it in our minds while doing the design so we do not create unnecessary restrictions which make it difficult to include this facility. Thoughts on the uses and criteria for this communications system would be appreciated.



A diffuse system of small collective producing, living and learning groups requires an equally spread out but very efficient system of communication. Their ability to support themselves will depend on a rich flow of information and ideas, and the means to coordinate their efforts.

OUR NEXT BUNCH OF WORK

The pilot network is a very local happening. It is unique to this time and place without the reproductive vitality necessary to be useful elsewhere. The program is in a language only usable on the 940 and the 940 will support only 16 users. With the high cost of geriatric engineering each user's share of the expenses is about \$6,000. This is far above the resources of the organizations and people we wish to serve. An additional problem is the high cost of the terminals necessary to connect with the central computer.

To make our idea evolutionarily competitive we are producing a more advanced *Community Memory* program in FORTRAN, the most commonly available programming language, working on cheap television and printer terminals that we would produce ourselves, and directing our work to run on the newest, fastest, smallest, cheapest technology — the mighty minicomputer. Minicomputers are available at 1/8 the size and cost of the 940 and three times its power! Not very mini. With the use of carefully selected mini hardware a system could be assembled whose purchase price would be under a thousand dollars per user, whose maintenance would cost under \$150 per year per user, and would have about a million characters of storage for every user. Each additional million characters would be about \$400 per user. We hope to produce or obtain terminals at about \$400 each so the capital cost for a single user would be under \$2000 and the yearly expenses for the system only a couple of hundred and the cost of two phone lines — one at the computer and another at the terminal. By sharing all new software development among the various networks any additional development costs could be kept under a few hundred per user too.

A list of all the hidden assumptions in the above:
1) We can write an efficient system in FORTRAN.

2) We become OEM (original equipment manufacturer) purchasers of hardware. This means all the systems are purchased through us and we get wholesale prices.

3) Large communities of users can be established for each system since the smaller the system the more it will cost per user. The above figures came from a system which could support at least 50 fulltime users and would cost about 50 thousand dollars to buy wholesale.

4) We or a similar group manufacture a cheap terminal multiplexor, the piece of equipment via which the computer communicates with all the terminals and which is very overpriced at the moment.

5) The opposing factors of ever-decreasing cost of computers and the current economic turbulence and maybe disaster at least balance each other out.

Our time scale is to have the first minisystem functioning and debugged within a year. We could use luck and help.

Helping Out Food Conspiracies

As the distribution of goods has become increasingly centralized, institutionalized, and profit-oriented, a number of alternative forms have appeared. One of these, the food conspiracy, extends the basic cooperative idea to trade our most ancient basic commodity, *food*, for our most modern commodity, *time*. Its members take on the tasks of collating orders, finding farmers, manufacturers or distributors, buying, loading, hauling and sorting the food — all the tasks that the supermarket shopper pays someone else to perform.

The information load in such a distribution system is considerably heavier than in the usual marketing system, and few groups have been able to handle expansion to a level where they are able to negotiate for discounts and rebates that are available to large corporate distributors. Assuming that excellent communication for coordinating large distribution efforts is possible without large and efficient hierarchical organizations, it should be possible to extend the conspiracies to include more people who need really cheap food without alienating the people who simply enjoy working together and want to see where their food is coming from.

Since the order-processing and bookkeeping jobs are the least fun of all, the most error-prone, and a general bottleneck, Resource One is developing a program to deal with some of these jobs. Based on an analysis of methods used by a number of functioning food conspiracies in Berkeley, the program will accept orders, price corrections, and accounting information, and will process and print out information in a usable form for the buyers, truckers, sorters, etc. — as well as keeping records important for group

A Bit of Ancient History

Resource One's roots go back to U.C. Berkeley during the Cambodia crisis of May 1970. A group of computer people there got together, like others, and talked of their disenchantment with how their skills were destined for use in "the system". They fantasized about using computers for building communication networks to share information and resources. Several months later some of the students were attracted to Project One in San Francisco, where other technologically oriented people, as well as artists and ex-professionals of all types, were gathering to try out a new concept of integrating their skills and work with the rest of their lives.

Project One (or 'ONE') was a vacant 5-story warehouse building in downtown S.F.—84,000 square feet of bare, cold concrete, which has since been transformed into an imaginative warren of 'spaces' in which 60 people live and twice as many work on a wide variety of projects. Besides Resource One there now are: an experimental high school, music and radio recording/practice studios, a film processing lab, theater rehearsal space, an alternative magazine, a radical welfare department workers' union, and numerous artists, musicians and craft people.

Resource One came into formal existence in late 1971, when the small group of ex-computer science students obtained seed funding from the Stern Foundation, and a commitment from Transamerica Computer Corporation for an XDS-940 timeshare computer.

decision-making.

This program will be tested on the block level sometime during April or May, and hopefully will be available for others who want to use it shortly thereafter.

The computer arrived, newly refurbished, in early 1972, and was installed in its own home built room in June of that year. In July the "operating system" (the main program) was put into operation, with the donated help of some of the people who five years before had written the first such time-sharing programs.

Funding for the first year of operation was secured in October of 1972, with the last matching grant from a series of foundations, including the Bank of America Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Fund, and the Firemen's Fund Foundation. Shortly afterward, the Irvine Foundation donated the cost of our mass-storage disc file. What we have done since then is what the rest of this newsletter is about.



RESOURCE ONE

TECHNOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE

"A NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY GROUP SHARING INFORMATION AND SKILLS"

Resource One Newsletter Number 2

April, 1974

1380 Howard St. San Francisco, Ca. 94103

URBAN DATA BASE

The "Urban Data Base" is a collection of information, gathered from various government agencies, about different neighborhoods in San Francisco. The information includes census data, election returns, and data on land use and property valuation, assessment and ownership.

We hope that our computer can be the necessary "intermediate" for making this information available to people in the community. We are working on programs that format this information into reports and will train people from community organizations to use the programs to give them access to the data that is important for their work.

This information can be used to answer questions about economic levels in a neighborhood, how a precinct voted in the last election, who owns a piece of property and how much it is worth, and many other questions which a neighborhood group might want to know about its neighborhood.

Resource One Social Service Referral Directory

The Social Service Referral Directory (SSRD) is a unique service whereby social service agencies and other interested groups in San Francisco have access to good information, updated monthly, as to what services are available for the people who need them.

Agency listings are arranged alphabetically in a looseleaf binder to facilitate the monthly additions and to allow a user to rearrange at will. Each listing is on a separate page and includes detailed information on the services offered, how they are obtained, access via public transportation, languages other than English spoken and other useful information.

The index is organized to enable a person to find quickly which agencies offer the kinds of services sought: according to the type of service (e.g. alcohol

abuse, drug abuse, child services, medical, neighborhood, etc.) and the type of clientele served. Where appropriate, there are notations indicating what languages are spoken by agency staff or what special group is served.

Access to the SSRD is by subscription; a user receives a copy of the initial directory (as it stands when the subscription begins, currently over 240 agency listings), monthly updates on existing entries where there have been substantial changes, a group of new agency listings expanding the directory, new and updated indexes, and status reports on the currency of the information.

Information for the directory is gathered by the directory staff, who maintain contact with a large number of relevant service and referral agencies in San Francisco. Updates are based either on periodic calls made to all the agencies in the directory, or on notification by a contact person in an agency. In the first five months since publication, over 30% of the listings were updated.

The agency information is entered into the computer by typing it on a terminal. The data is then

(continued on page 2)

INFORMATION AS POWER

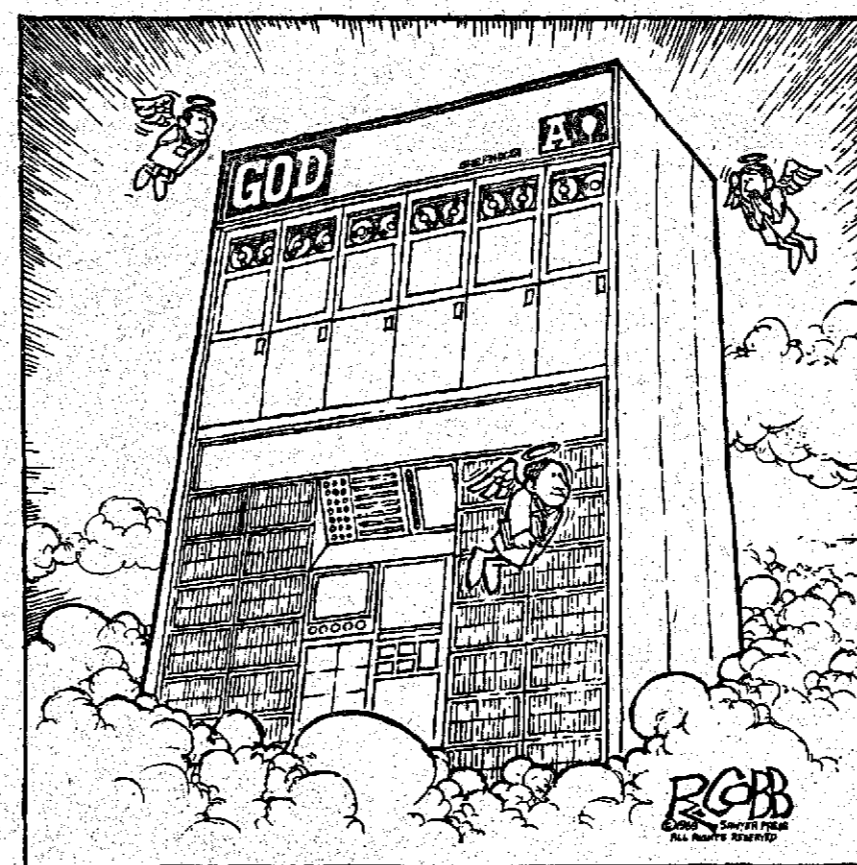
Perhaps the dominant aspect of life in America today is a feeling of helplessness, a lack of control over our own lives. What little confused information there is about what caused the 'energy crisis', about U.S. involvement in the Chilean coup, or about the 'redevelopment' of the Mission District with the coming of BART, demonstrates that the decisions which affect our lives are not being made in our interest, but rather in the interest of a small group of rich, powerful men and the huge corporations they represent.

It is no accident that there is so little information about such important questions. Both the quantity and content of available information is set by centralized institutions — the press, TV, radio, news services, think-tanks, government agencies, schools and universities — which are controlled by the same interests which control the rest of the economy. By keeping information flowing from the top down, they keep us isolated from each other.

Yet we are not really powerless — our strength lies in the creativity of people seeking solutions to their own life problems. Free schools, free health clinics, the women's movement, third world movements, the prison movement, the GI movement, tenant's unions, food conspiracies, rural communes, in a thousand ways people are trying to gain direct control over their lives. The response of the capitalist system to these struggles is remarkably consistent: where the threat is not too great, coopt and absorb it; otherwise isolate and repress it. It is this pattern that convinces us that control over the flow of information is so crucial.

Computer technology has thus far been used in this fight mainly by the government, and those it represents, to store and quickly retrieve vast amounts of information about huge numbers of people — everything from their arrest records and credit ratings to reports of their personal lives. A few years ago it was estimated that the FBI alone was maintaining computerized files on the activities of over 2 million Americans, and the Associated Credit Bureaus of America had data on over 100 million people.

Computer technology, though, is just a tool and can be shaped by those who use it. The challenge that we at Resource One are faced with is to figure out how to use this tool to support the struggles we believe in, to make information available to the people it affects, to allow groups to easily communicate with each other and share their skills, resources, ideas and experience.



WHO
WE
ARE

Resource One is a dozen people confronted with complete control and total responsibility for fifty feet of grey boxes called an XDS-940 time-sharing computer. The milieu is anti-profit and directed towards social change with decisions made by consensus at weekly staff meetings. The basic tensions of the situation center around the problems of a politically diverse, self-managed working group with heavy commitments and considerable resources, and they center at the fundamental tension between person and machine:

Can this tool of a militarized society be made directly useful to people?

How?

Are the costs of being body-servant to the Beast worth the unclearly defined gains?

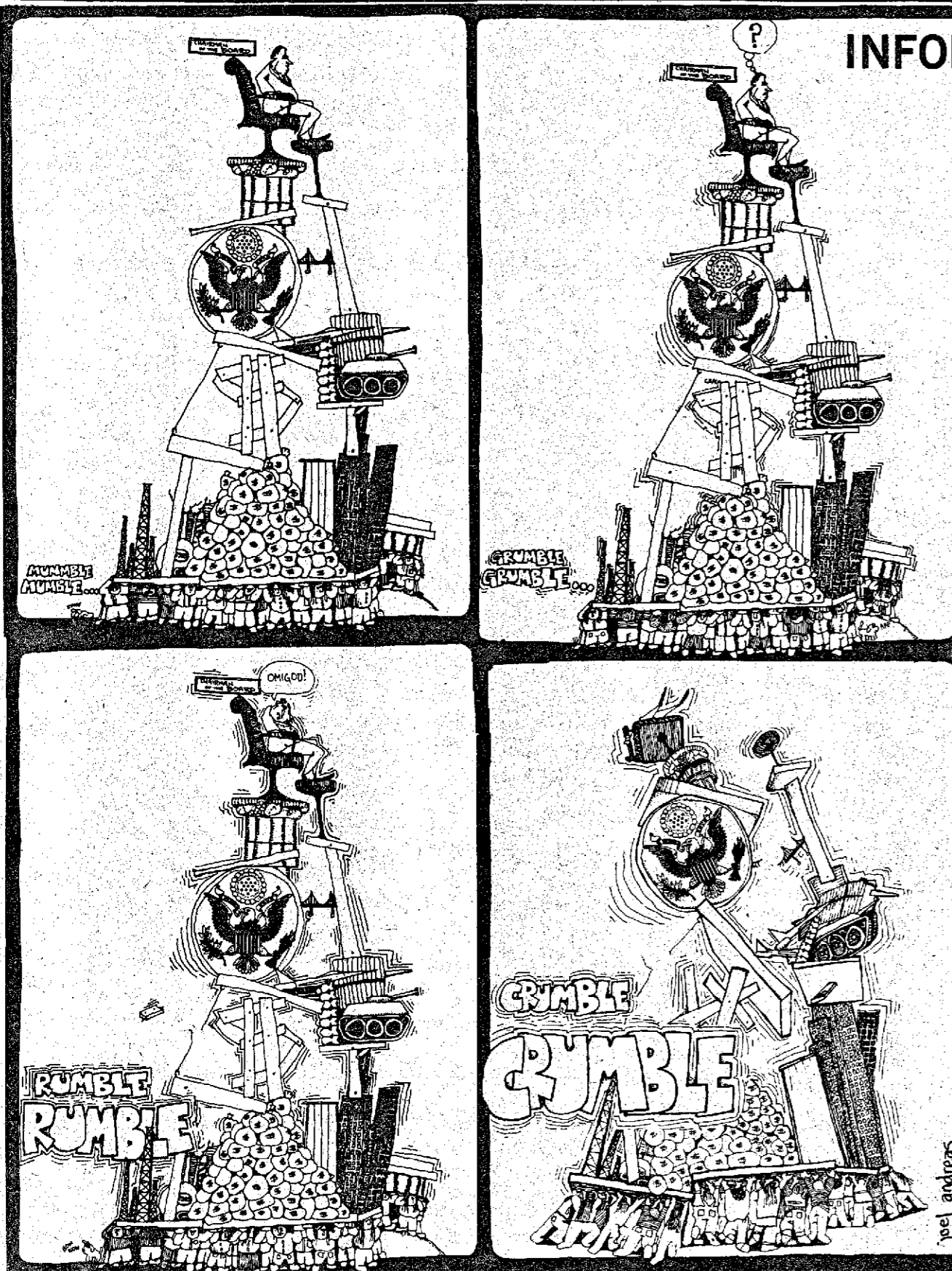
Are we risking dependence on an overgrown, high-level technology?

What should we do with all the technological tools we've acquired?

It's a unique situation, rarely has any alternative group controlled so much "hardware" that's so difficult to use well. It's rather like a play with a set, setting and characters but no script.

So far the dialectic has produced a Directory of Social Services in San Francisco, an information retrieval system useful for indexing, searching, sharing and manipulating data for groups doing research directed towards social change, a public access information sharing network, a collection of government (census, housing, election, etc.) data about San Francisco made available to individuals and community groups, various services for social change groups, many burn outs, arguments, late nights of hard work, disgust with the whole thing and a continuing feeling of challenge.

This is a people controlled machine or remarkably close to it. There are no rules of membership to Resource One; anyone who can more or less get along with the current staff and survive in the chaos can join the process by making a contribution to it through work and the development of new uses. Anyone who wants to use the machine can approach the staff; access is allocated on the basis of usefulness to people, energy drain on Resource One, staff interest and the economic reality of having to feed both the machine and people in order to get work done. There are lots of possibilities and we need a lot of help. What real work would you do with a computer?



Social Service Referral Directory

(continued from page 1)

stored both in the machine's on-line (disc) memory and backed-up on magnetic tape. Formatting is done by the computer and the information is printed out onto paper offset printing masters directly from the machine's high-speed printer.

When data on an agency is changed — whether one word, a phone number, or large sections — only the specific changes have to be made in the computer's copy of the data, while the computer prints a complete new page for the agency. Each subscriber receives a copy of the new page and replaces the outdated page in his copy of the directory.

The various indexes are currently produced off-line while the design criteria for programmed indexing aids are being developed. In the future, the directory information will be interfaced with ROGIRS and Community Memory functions to provide on-line retrieval of the listings by appropriate "keywords".

The SSRD grew out of a basic motivation in Resource One even before its metamorphosis out of the San Francisco Switchboard organization — making available vital information to people in new ways. Early in 1973, as the time-sharing system was becoming usable, the directory emerged as a possible solution to the problem that directories of social services were being created every other year as one-shot printed books which were both incomplete as to the parameters of services and out of date as soon as they were delivered. Meetings with persons active in referral work were held to explore their needs and the feasibility of a computerized, updatable system. Within six months the directory was delivered to the initial subscribers, and after another half year it is now rapidly growing.

The SSRD is an initial application of a general information retrieval system; a model of one way of distributing vital information that changes frequently. We feel that the success of this type of directory is not unique to the field of social services but could extend to many other areas as well. We are currently exploring the possibilities of producing an educational resources directory and are meeting with people in other fields to discuss how a directory might serve their needs.

PEOPLE RESOURCES

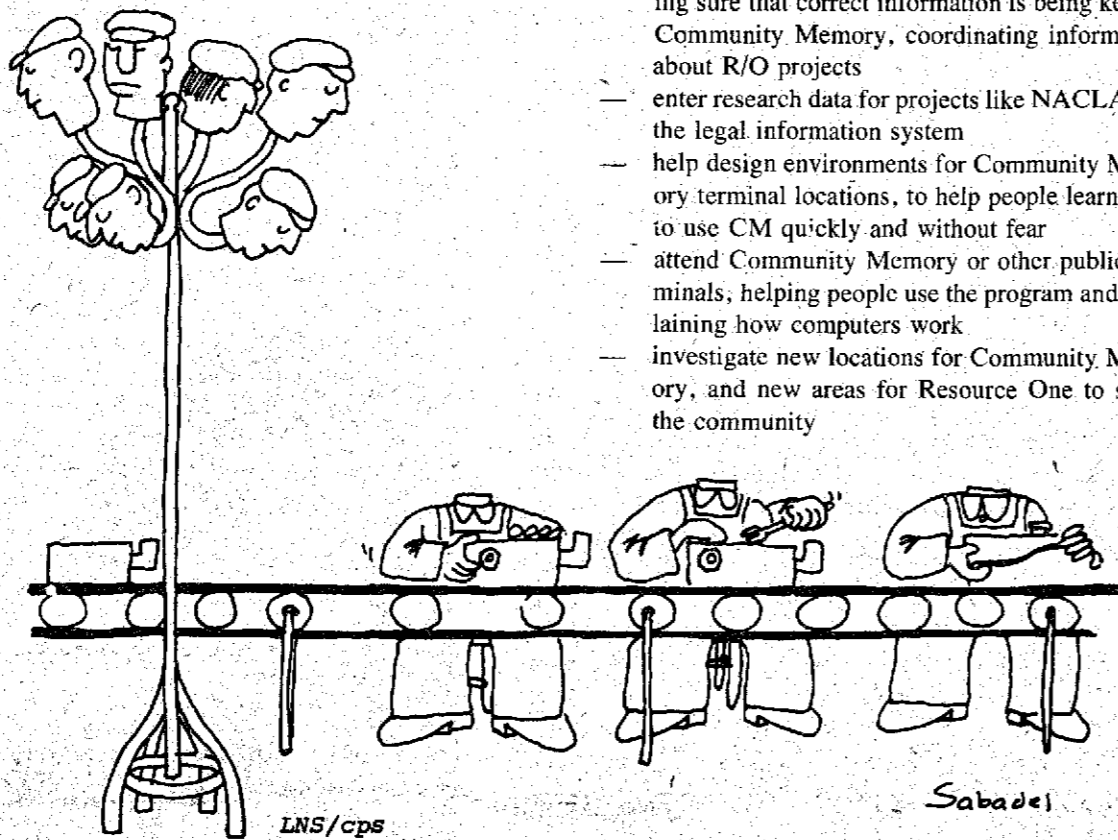
The prime motivation of the Resource One work collective is to create new techniques and add new tools to the ones now being used by organizations and people involved in social change. Some of the specific projects we get involved with are somewhat hard to view from that perspective, being done mostly because they bring in money, but even those projects can help us understand how to survive in the environment we're part of.

It should be clear, from a reading of these pages, that there are many opportunities for involvement by people who are not now part of Resource One. Most such situations call for people who can afford to volunteer their time; in some cases, where the mutual advantage is very clear, some money is available for subsistence. Of course, we are always open to proposals from people who want to use our tools in con-

structive, innovative ways, as part of a project of their own.

At this writing there are lots of possible projects to which people would be welcome to contribute their energies. Only a few of these would require any special computer skills, since most of the basic programming has been done. Examples of what people could do:

- organize a comprehensive (or fragmentary) education program at Resource One or elsewhere, designed to promote discussion of how computer technology could be better used in the community, and information on how it is mis-used by business and government
- organize the internal information flows of Resource One, keeping track of what other organizations are doing through correspondence, making sure that correct information is being kept in Community Memory, coordinating information about R/O projects
- enter research data for projects like NACLA and the legal information system
- help design environments for Community Memory terminal locations, to help people learn how to use CM quickly and without fear
- attend Community Memory or other public terminals, helping people use the program and explaining how computers work
- investigate new locations for Community Memory, and new areas for Resource One to serve the community



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SSRD 02/05/74

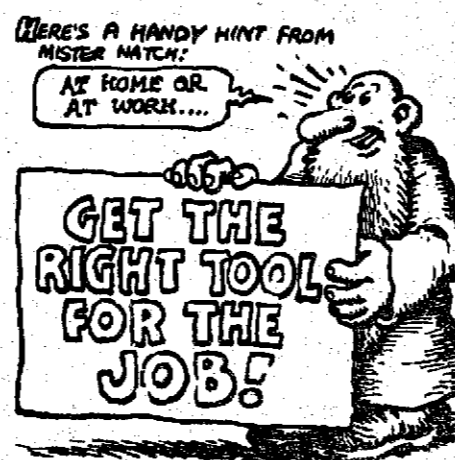
Obviously we would have a problem if, tomorrow, fifty people walked in wanting to get involved. We have had problems in the past with finding something for one person to do. That's because we are already short-handed in relation to the number of balls in the air at one time. So don't expect a well-thought-out on-the-job training program from us.

We hope that many people will pick up on the projects described in this newsletter, and think seriously about whether the projects, the processes or the tools involved could apply to their own lives and goals. If you are such a person, please let us know.

Female energy is sorely lacking here. It seems that out of every ten people who come around, all ten are men. This phenomenon naturally affects the atmosphere and hinders development.

It doesn't matter if you are a "computer person". We need people who have a concern for the direction in which technology is leading society, and want to help reverse the situation. We need people who have been in other groups and collectives and know how to make them work. If you just have some new ideas about communications at the people level, come around. These things apply equally well to women as men.

More women are absolutely necessary, so bring your friends.



Keeping Track of the Spies

NACLA, the North American Congress on Latin America, is a political collective that for the past seven years has been researching and publishing information and analysis in pamphlets and a monthly Report on the U.S. power structure and its role in Latin America and the rest of the world.

To carry out this work they set up and maintain extensive files of newspaper clippings, magazine articles and other material. The sheer volume of this information — half a dozen newspapers are clipped every day — often makes it a difficult and time-consuming task for a researcher to lay her/his hands on the particular articles that are of interest. The R/O General Information Retrieval System (ROGIRS) offers a possible solution to this problem.



LEGAL INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

The San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation (SFNLAF) and Resource One are jointly developing a legal information data bank to eliminate one of SFNLAF's greatest enemies: duplicated research.

SFNLAF has six offices in San Francisco, providing legal help to clients who can't afford commercial legal services. They handle roughly 1200 clients per month, involving primarily landlord-tenant, welfare, immigration, and civil-rights law. Many of these cases require time-consuming research prior to preparation of arguments and briefs. Due to the lack of an effective method for exchanging information among various attorneys and separated offices, much of this research is repeated in case after case.

Resource One is developing an information exchange system, using ROGIRS to link the six SFNLAF offices together via terminals in each office which can simultaneously reference the legal data. Each attorney, as part of her regular case-reporting procedure, will compose a paragraph describing the case in brief, including a source for further information. This paragraph is then stored in the computer under several "keyword" descriptors, selected to include the areas of law involved and names of judges, attorneys, and clients.

An attorney with a new case to research can easily instruct ROGIRS to list the summaries of cases similar to his, selected by area of law, judge, etc. By referring to the briefs and arguments written for these cases, the attorney has access to research already done by others.

The data bank will also contain skills and referral information. Most members of SFNLAF, and their outside contacts, will be listed in the data bank under their particular specialties, so that an attorney needing expert help will know where to go. In many cases, SFNLAF's clients' problems are not strictly legal, but spring instead from police relations, community organizing, tax questions, etc. As members of SFNLAF encounter other organizations and individuals who may be of use to SFNLAF's clients, they will be added to the data bank for future referrals.

As a separate project, SFNLAF is using Resource One's computer to process their "client intake" forms, to produce a better over-all picture of their clients' needs and their own success in meeting those needs. Both this and the legal information data bank are designed to save SFNLAF's attorneys much time and effort, allowing them to handle cases more efficiently and with more personal contact.

COMPUTERIZED MAILING LISTS

NIMS, the New Interactive Mailing System, is a user-oriented program that provides groups who have large mailing lists with computer printed labels. Interactive means that the system is used from a computer terminal with the user telling the program what he wants to do, e.g. add new names, change an entry, sort the list, etc. NIMS allows the user to assign his own categories to the people on the list and will select and print labels for a given category as well as for the whole list. This makes it easy to prepare special mailings for different parts of the master list. The categories used by each group are different, but include things like: contributor, special interests, and occupation. The program will also print listings on paper, with several "comment lines" (lines not printed on labels, e.g., phone number, date they were put on mailing list or whatever) allowed after each name. Both listings and labels are available sorted either by last name or by zip code. For the time being we are limiting ourselves to lists of under 20,000 names, although the program was designed to handle up to 60,000.

We are offering this service partly because we recognize that it can save people a lot of the drudgework of hand addressing envelopes, but also as a way of introducing groups who we feel could make more powerful use of the computer to some of the basic skills and techniques involved.

If Resource One is not now on your mailing list, please put us on it. We will make an effort to keep up with the activities of all groups corresponding regularly with us, and make this information publicly available through Community Memory.

of the 100 largest Chilean corporations, American subsidiaries, and major banks and other financial institutions. The study should help reveal the interconnections within the corporate structure and help in understanding the American interest in and response to events in Chile over the past several years.

With a Little Help From Our Friends



Running a community computer center is expensive!!

So far Resource One has depended largely on foundation grants for our support, but this source is neither permanent nor dependable. Ideally, we would like to be funded by the people and organizations we serve, but many of them can't afford enough to offset our expenses. Therefore we are appealing to everybody who thinks that the kinds of projects described in this newsletter are worth-while to help support them. No contribution is too small!

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ to be used to help support the: _____ project

(All contributions to Resource One are tax-deductable)

Please put me on the Resource One mailing list:

Name: _____

Address: _____

zip code _____

Mail to: Resource One, 1380 Howard St., San Francisco, Ca. 94103

We would also like to hear from you if you have any feedback on what we're doing, our ideas and plans, or if you're involved in a similar or complimentary project or know of any.

SELF-HELP FOR THE ELDERLY **

ADDRESS: 3 OLD CHINATOWN LANE, S.F. CALIF. 94108

TELEPHONE: 982-9171

AGENCY DIRECTOR: SAM YUEN

SERVICE: ASSISTANCE WITH INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS, GROUP ACTIVITIES, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT (DING HO, HOUSEKEEPER TRAINING), FOOD PROGRAM, CONSUMER ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATION, COMMUNITY PLANNING, YOUTH FOR ELDERLY PROGRAM.

EMERGENCY SERVICE: FOOD VOUCHERS (GROCERY AND RESTAURANT), HELP IN APPLYING FOR WELFARE AND OBTAINING HEALTH SERVICES.

PERSON TO CONTACT: SAM YUEN OR ANY STAFF PERSON

HOW DOES ONE OBTAIN SERVICES: DROP-IN OR APPOINTMENT IN PERSON OR BY PHONE

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICE: ANY LOW-INCOME PERSON OVER 55 YRS. OF AGE

AREA SERVED: PRIMARILY CHINATOWN, NORTH BEACH AND LOWER RICHMOND AND ANY CHINESE PERSON IN S.F. WITH NO ENGLISH.

HOURS: M-F, 8:30 TO 5:30 P.M. (PORTABLE MEALS 7 DAYS A WK.)

FEES: NONE EXCEPT PART. MEALS \$1.00 PER DAY (2 MEALS AT 50 CENTS A MEAL), IF THEY CAN AFFORD IT.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN: CHINESE, TAGALOG, ILOCANO, JAPANESE, SPANISH

ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: 30 STOCKTON BUS

COMMENTS: FUNDED BY OEO, EPC AND STATE COMMISSION ON AGING AND CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

LAST UPDATE: 1/16/74 FROM SAM YUEN

A typical page from the Resource One Social Service Referral Directory.

Doc Benway wanders into the Whole Earth store to check out what's happening in Community Memory. A typical sequence would look something like this (what Benway types is underlined>. There is a ">" symbol at the left side of the CRT screen, indicating the machine is waiting for the next user to give it some command. He proceeds to type:

>FIND TAXI

1 ITEMS FOUND

>PRINT

#1:

TAXI UNLIMITED IS A CO-OPERATIVE TAXICAB AND ANSWERING SERVICE, RUN AND MANAGED BY ITS WORKERS. TRIES TO KEEP RATES AS LOW AS POSSIBLE, HELPS PEOPLE IN EMERGENCIES, AND OFFERS EXTRA SERVICE FOR THE SICK AND DISABLED. 1908 BERKELEY WAY, BERKELEY 94703, TH1-2345

>FIND FREE CLINIC

6 ITEMS FOUND

>AND BERKELEY

2 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: GEORGE JACKSON PEOPLE'S FREE MEDICAL RESEARCH HEALTH CLINIC
#2: FREE CLINIC (BERKELEY) 548-2570

>FIND BAGELS

5 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: WHERE CAN I GET DECENT BAGELS IN THE BAY AREA (BERKELEY!)?
#2: THERE IS A STORE CALLED BAGELS ABOVE KEY ROUT ST. ON
#3: THE DANISH BAKERY AT UNIVERSITY AND SHATTUCK IN BERKELEY
#4: IF YOU CALL MICHAEL AT 845- AN EX-BAGEL BAKER CAN TEACH
#5: YOU CAN GET FRESH BAGELS AT THE HOUSE OF BAGELS, WAY OUT ON

>FIND ENERGY CRISIS

6 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: ***** TEG'S 1994 ***** --> SOME CONCEPTS
#2: I AM LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT METHANOL (METHYL ALCOHOL)
#3: RESTARTING YOUR CAR'S ENGINE BURNS LESS GASOLINE THAN ONE
#4: <ENERGY PRIMER> -- A BOOK BEING PREPARED BY PORTOLA INSTITUTE
#5: ANYONE WANTING TO DEVELOP PUBLIC-ACCESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS,
#6: GOT TO, GOT TO

>PRINT 6

#6:

GOT TO, GOT TO
GOT TO, GOT TO,
GOT TO SCRAPE THAT ENERGY CRISIS
RIGHT OFF YER SHOES
(W/THANK TO MICK 'N KEITH)

>FIND DOCTOR BENWAY

3 ITEMS FOUND

>PRINT 2

#2:

***** IEF XQPRSTQXL SYSPRINT OFFSET INTERRUPT *****
APPLIESTO: ALL BOOGIES, BEANERS, BOLOS & BOZOS

DOC BENWAY HERE NURSE, SLIP ME ANOTHER AMPULE
OF LAUDANUM RECOLLECT ONCE ME AND CLEM CLONE WAS CHEWIN
YOHIMBE BARK OUT BACK OF JODY'S ALL-NIGHT PET SHOP

NOT A FINER MAN IN THIS WHOLE ZONE
THAN OL' CLEM 'N JODY CLONE

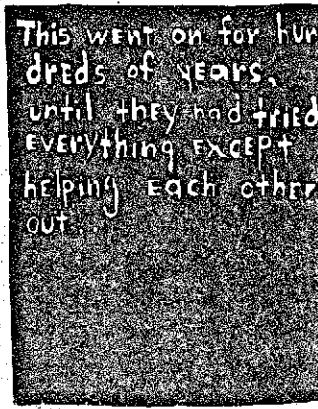
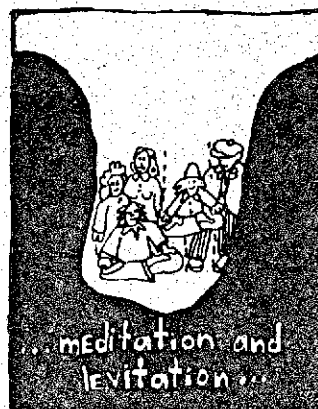
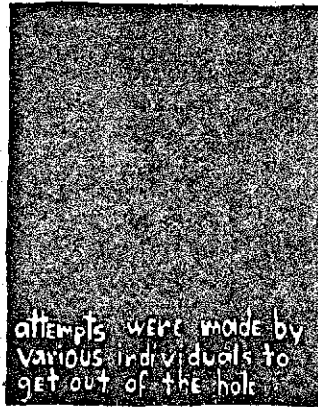
****WHERE WAS WE, YEAH ---- USE AUTHORIZED DATA BASE ACCESS
PROTOCOLS ONLY SENSUOUS KEYSTROKES FORBIDDEN DO NOT
STRUM THAT 33 LIKE A HAWAIIAN STEEL GUITAR GRAND CONCLAVE
OF THE PARTIES OF INTERZONE: CHECK YOUR BOX FOR DETAILS
PERSONAL ATTENDANCE REQUIRED; SEND NO REPLICA. BENWAY OUT.
TLALCLATLAN

and presses the green RETURN key.
The machine always responds to a FIND command
by giving the number of items found.
and again presses the green button. All commands
are ended this way.

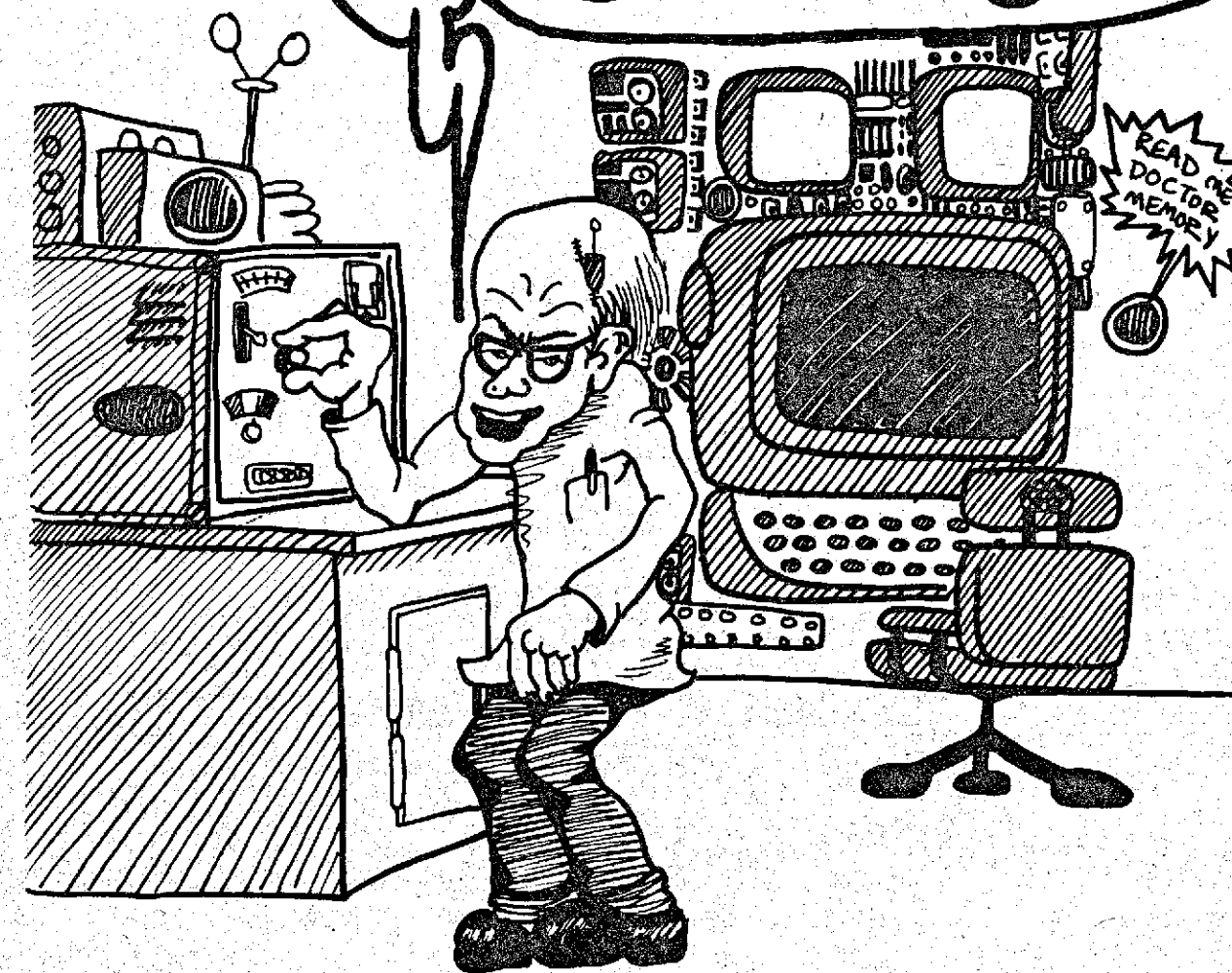
More than one keyword may be used after a FIND
command, with the understanding that the items
found will, each have all the keywords listed - that is,
a space between keywords is equivalent to an AND.

The AND command narrows down the list of items
with FREE and CLINIC as keywords to those that
also have BERKELEY as a keyword.

This command causes the first lines only of the items
to be printed out.



AT LAST... A COMMUNITY MEMORY!



The seed of a national public access information net was planted last August in Berkeley. A teletype terminal connected to the Resource One computer was placed in the lobby of Leopold's Records, and people were encouraged to use it as a combined electronic bulletin board and data store. In keeping with our aspirations we've named this COMMUNITY MEMORY.

Since then several thousand people have discovered the terminal and typed in messages, classifying their items themselves so other people can find them quickly. The collection, with over a thousand active items now, includes exchanges traditional to other public media—bulletin boards, classified ads, telephone poles, bathroom walls; the type of information found in indexes and directories such as People's Yellow Pages; as well as exchanges and dialogues which are developing their own unique forms. There are cars for sale, rock bands looking for bass players, carpenters looking for jobs, groups offering counseling, tennis players looking for partners, political commentaries, etc. etc.

This seed is now sprouting into a network. The Leopold's terminal has been moved to the Whole Earth Access store. Specialized, indexed listings of parts of the data collection are being left with organizations that find them useful; a music directory, for instance, is left weekly at Leopold's. Additional public access terminals now exist at our office in Village Design in Berkeley (1545 Dwight Way), at the Mission branch library in San Francisco, and another one will soon open as part of the Counting House. Furthermore, large amounts of information are being collected and made available by NACLA (North American Congress on Latin America) and by People's Energy and Vocations for Social Change (of the relevant articles).

Change is possible. As relative as good and bad are, actions may be weighted on that scale and the quality of global human existence improved.

We are embarked on growing with an information exchange which we are also helping develop. The hardware and software development we at Resource One and Community Memory are undertaking is nested within a continually expanding dialogue making use of tools we tend. We are thus interested in direct contacts, direct information, direct access by people affected by power to information on that power, liberation of power from the constricted grasp of the few to its rightful place as the wealth of the information-sharing community. This involves detailed, precise, valued struggle in a lot of media - money, education, politics, distribution, video, print, speech ...



Alice....computer - computer....Alice
Our first Community Memory terminal (inside the cardboard box) at Leopold's record store. The competition is in the background.

Theories are an expression of how we see the world. They articulate the paradigms of the societies evolving them, defining the worlds in which their actions take place. These de-finitions are active, on-going, and substantial (incarnational) — they have real effects in the real world.



Learning Exchange Node?

On November 26, 1973, Resource One took part in a "Conference on Computer-Based Learning/Living and Information Exchanges" — held in Evanston, Illinois. Our XDS-940 was connected by phone to a CDC-6400 in Evanston which, over the previous week, had been collecting messages and comments from all over the country. On November 26 a live link was established between the computers, and exchanges were sent across the country as they were created by participants. On Resource One's side, these included about a dozen people involved in learning and communications groups from this area who came to Resource One, read what had been previously entered, and shared their own thoughts.

The theme of the conference was Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society*. "Deschooling" refers to the creation of a non-coercive process of and network for learning, "learning webs" to de-institutionalize the current educational system. This resonates with the original inspiration of many of us which led to involvement with the Community Memory project — seeing it as the communications system for a learning exchange — a means whereby messages by people who want to learn, people who want to teach, groups and institutions with resources to offer, can be exchanged in a continuous, up-dated fashion.

In our experience this begins to happen whenever the density of information interchange gets high enough. This was the case at Leopold's with musicians, who made the terminal their best means for finding each other. This is a prototype for a situation where people are looking for like-minded spirits, peers, fellow adventurers, to play with and explore — anything! A request for a source of good bagels was answered with an offer to teach the art of making bagels. There have been exchanges about languages, carpets, electronics, films, karate — and as the community information swapping develops in these areas, dialogues begin to emerge, continuing exchanges where the information itself is being transmitted through and beginning to reside in the medium.

The current step is to take this tool and to grow it as a workable learning exchange in the Bay Area, and to have it encourage the other necessary concomitants of a humane (and biologically and geologically sound) learning environment. A network alone is not enough; we will be working together with other groups to ensure that the nodes (ourselves as living, learning, teaching, sharing human beings) develop the appropriate openness and understandings.

The use of public communications by people may give them a competitive advantage over those tied to narrow private channels. More sharing of information is possible and better use of available technology can be made without continually having to develop security systems. Image of many people working together versus a few people ordering many about.

RESOURCE SHARING

Vocations for Social Change & People's Energy

VSC, or "Vocations for Social Change", is a non-profit tax-exempt educational corporation/collective with an office in Oakland California and associate offices elsewhere in the country. We publish *Workforce*, a national resource guide designed for and used by the movement for social change. We also publish how-to-organize information, and sponsor other organizations around the country. People's Energy is the closest associate of VSC, and was originally sponsored as a local VSC office. People's Energy maintains a regional resource file, publishes an East Bay resource guide, and counsels people in finding/constructing work alternatives.

People's Energy and VSC have just recently entered the Resource One user's network. Our vision and our goal is to provide much of the information base and some preliminary models for a national network, and to that end we are compiling our 6-years-worth of information on alternative institutions, from *Workforce* and our various local VSC contacts/friends elsewhere. We are planning to enter this mess (!) into our file **RESOURCE** as soon as we are familiar enough with the system to do so. Another project we are doing is indexing by interest keywords the some 100 people/month who come into our office for counselling, to begin to match them with jobs and with other people who have complementary interests.

We feel that information networking is vital for viable social change. Everything we do tells us that there is tremendous potential in knowing where to find information. It is also our feeling that we must remain self-conscious and self-critical about how we select and evaluate information, what our goals are (political neutrality being impossible), how we will use information, who will use it, how we will determine the "credibility index" of our information, how we will preserve privacy, and how high a profile we should exhibit.

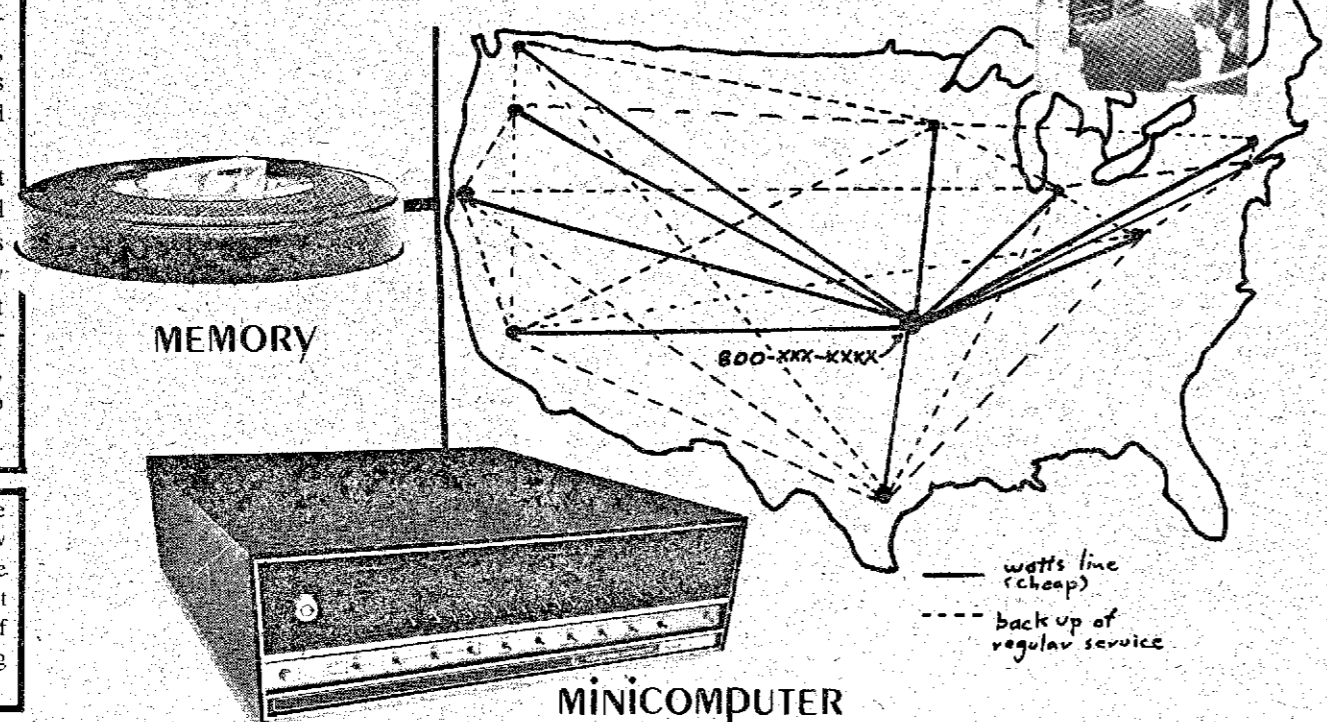
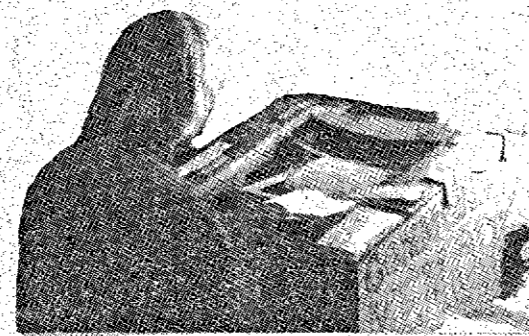
What we do at People's Energy/VSC is not random. We select our resources carefully, and try to examine our contacts carefully in light of their potential for social change, and in light of their ability to be a model for that change. We actively solicit feedback in everything we do or sponsor. We try to serve as a model ourselves.

Our methods and our philosophy — all are open for discussion. We hope that our experiences can provide a philosophical springboard for guiding the network concept. We look forward to co-sponsoring the national alternative information system and becoming a full working member of the local network.

Our office: 4911 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 94609 (415) 653-6535, open line noon to 6pm.

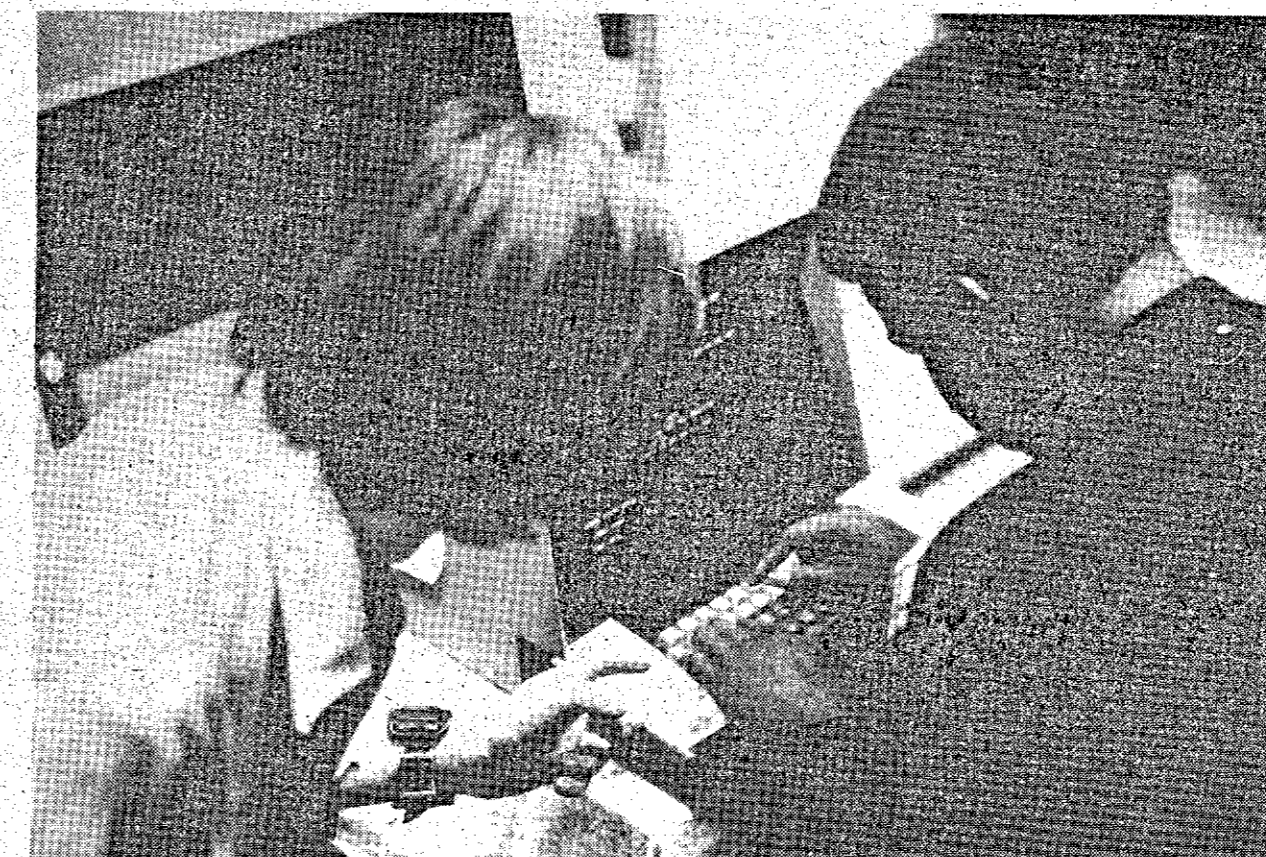
We supply the planetary common wealth in acting in total communication with our various actions and their respective back-and-forth-sequencings. Where we get stuff, what we do with it and how, and where it goes afterwards — staying in touch with such data is what constitutes wealth, survival possibility — and this information flow is the crucial missing link in the survival worthiness of ourselves-together-with-our-planet. The medium for this release of valuable (valued for livelihood) messages is developing amongst us — electronics media in general, basically, and specifically public accessible memory-storage — leave your real-time messages for other people, and you begin to provide other people access to your history, your calendar, your time(s). We all get 'on the air'; whether this is claustrophobia, or intolerable honesty, or space of shared patterns-of-common-history; whether this requires our becoming more and more like public parks, or whatever — is up to us to create. There can be no doubt, though, that at least, the very least, we are being thrown communicationally together.

Community Memory is community mindfulness, not-forgetfulness. In the root sense of the greek word for truth, *aletheia* (a-lethe, having come out of hiddenness) it is communal retrieve of truth, communal disclosure, that which is (left) open, by us, to us.



NATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM

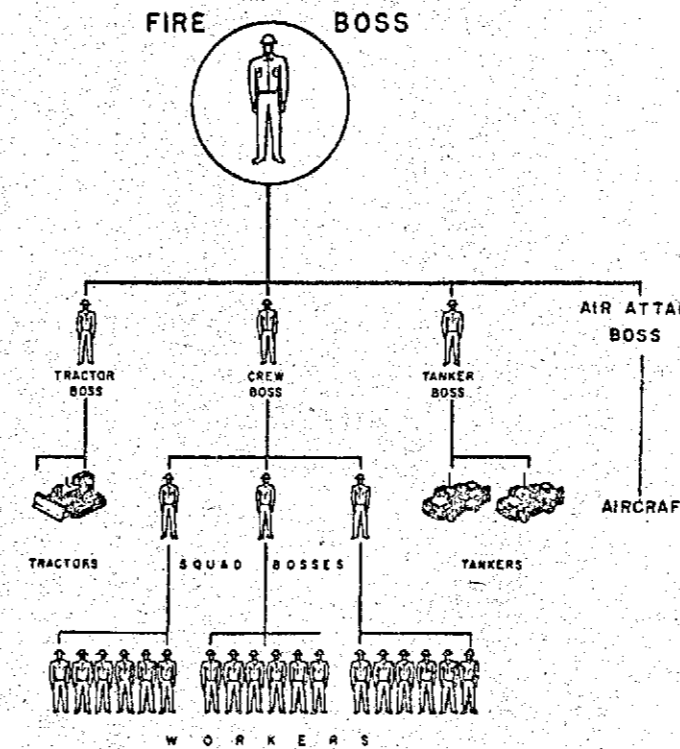


What are the possibilities of high speed, cheap national communication via computer? The minisystem networks described elsewhere are capable of communicating with each other over the phone at more than 1000 characters per second. Thus in a three-minute call two minicomputers could exchange 60 pages of information! Without making Ma Bell any richer we could have a national news network, a means of coordination for national political action, a fast mail service, and a way to hold long term dialogue on problems of greater than local interest (see the article on the learning exchange conference).

This would start us experimenting with direct government, government by ad hoc committee of interested, knowledgeable and affected people. If the flow of information was very heavy the consortium of local networks could establish a toll-free 800 number on one of the machines to be used as a relay satellite by all the others. This would not inhibit direct communication, between two networks, of information they did not want to trust to the (a. any) central machine. We can thus make a structure which takes advantage of both hierarchy and diffusion.

The prior paragraph is not techno fiction. Very little additional hardware and programming beyond that required for a local net would be necessary. The major requirement is keeping it in our minds while doing the design so we do not create unnecessary restrictions which make it difficult to include this facility. Thoughts on the uses and criteria for this communications system would be appreciated.

Business and governmental communication is done in private where the competitors and the people can not see what's going on. Any system of diffuse power must force all such communication to be public record or privileged channels of communication and restricted information will develop and be used for the advantage of a few.



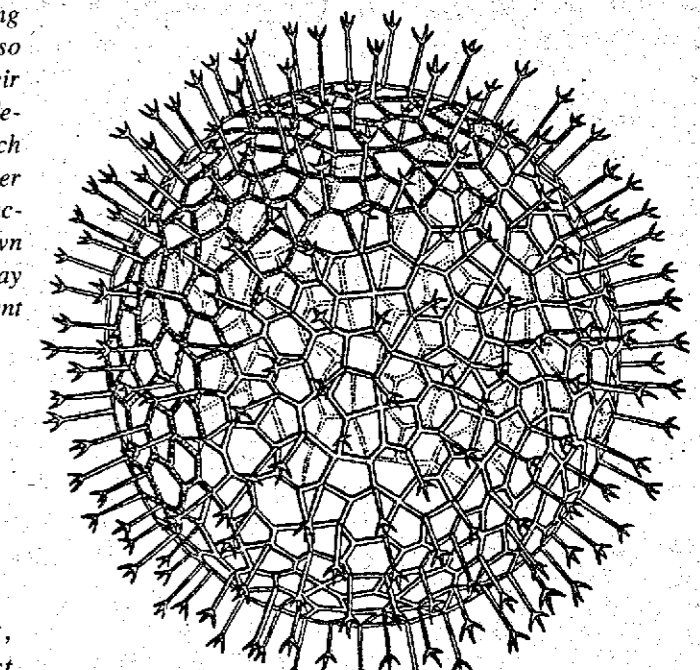
Belief in our dependence on the various institutions for the necessities for continuing our daily life is a more damaging mystification than the artificially created dependence on some of their products. We no longer go directly to the person who makes or grows or knows what we need, but rather to the functionary of the appropriate institution. Fewer and fewer of our daily interactions include communication on any personal, human level, and our private lives are becoming more isolated from our social, political, and economic lives. As our isolation from one another increases, our dependence upon artificial structures to give us work and supply our material and recreational needs increases, while our sense of powerlessness makes real our political impotence.

Taking economic power includes developing new economic-organizational forms small enough so that, they may be completely controlled by all their members, can act as a self-conscious unit and develop the very complex set of relations with other such units, which will be necessary if they are to take over the functions currently performed by highly structured corporations. The development of our own means of production and distribution is the only way economic power can be removed from its current masters.

**A STRONG PEOPLE
NEED NO LEADER**
—ZARATA

Our only hope is to talk to one another, to share our thoughts and feelings. But first we must find one another, and to do that we must assume recognizable identities in the amorphous human mass. It is to aid in this task that Community Memory was created. By identifying ourselves, our interests, needs, and resources, we acknowledge the parts of our lives we are willing to share with others, the groups of which we are de facto members. All the power of computer technology and Boolean algebra are brought to bear to make us accessible to one another.

Our world seems to be populated not by people but by institutions. Recognizing governments, corporations, and unions as communication devices, information handling structures with the sole function of coordinating and securing our efforts to work and live together gives us the opportunity to seek alternatives. Bringing the consumers of goods directly in to contact with the creators is the only way of making them responsible for their own actions and responsive to one another's needs.



A diffuse system of small collective producing, living and learning groups requires an equally spread out but very efficient system of communication. Their ability to support themselves will depend on a rich flow of information and ideas, and the means to coordinate their efforts.

OUR NEXT BUNCH OF WORK

The pilot network is a very local happening. It is unique to this time and place without the reproductive vitality necessary to be useful elsewhere. The program is in a language only usable on the 940 and the 940 will support only 16 users. With the high cost of geriatric engineering each user's share of the expenses is about \$6,000. This is far above the resources of the organizations and people we wish to serve. An additional problem is the high cost of the terminals necessary to connect with the central computer.

To make our idea evolutionarily competitive we are producing a more advanced Community Memory program in FORTRAN, the most commonly available programming language, working on cheap television and printer terminals that we would produce ourselves, and directing our work to run on the newest, fastest, smallest, cheapest technology — the mighty minicomputer. Minicomputers are available at 1/5 the size and cost of the 940 and three times its power! Not very mini. With the use of carefully selected mini hardware a system could be assembled whose purchase price would be under a thousand dollars per user, whose maintenance would cost under \$150 per year per user, and would have about a million characters of storage for every user. Each additional million characters would be about \$400 per user. We hope to produce or obtain terminals at about \$400 each so the capital cost for a single user would be under \$2000 and the yearly expenses for the system only a couple of hundred and the cost of two phone lines — one at the computer and another at the terminal. By sharing all new software development among the various networks any additional development costs could be kept under a few hundred per user too.

A list of all the hidden assumptions in the above:

- 1) We can write an efficient system in FORTRAN.
- 2) We become OEM (original equipment manufacturer) purchasers of hardware. This means all the systems are purchased through us and we get wholesale prices.
- 3) Large communities of users can be established for each system since the smaller the system the more it will cost per user. The above figures came from a system which could support at least 50 fulltime users and would cost about 50 thousand dollars to buy wholesale.
- 4) We or a similar group manufacture a cheap terminal multiplexor, the piece of equipment via which the computer communicates with all the terminals and which is very overpriced at the moment.
- 5) The opposing factors of ever-decreasing cost of computers and the current economic turbulence and maybe disaster at least balance each other out.

Our time scale is to have the first minisystem functioning and debugged within a year. We could use luck and help.

Helping Out Food Conspiracies

As the distribution of goods has become increasingly centralized, institutionalized, and profit-oriented, a number of alternative forms have appeared. One of these, the food conspiracy, extends the basic cooperative idea to trade our most ancient basic commodity, *food*, for our most modern commodity, *time*. Its members take on the tasks of collating orders, finding farmers, manufacturers or distributors, buying, loading, hauling and sorting the food — all the tasks that the supermarket shopper pays someone else to perform.

The information load in such a distribution system is considerably heavier than in the usual marketing system, and few groups have been able to handle expansion to a level where they are able to negotiate for discounts and rebates that are available to large corporate distributors. Assuming that excellent communication for coordinating large distribution efforts is possible without large and efficient hierarchical organizations, it should be possible to extend the conspiracies to include more people who need really cheap food without alienating the people who simply enjoy working together and want to see where their food is coming from.

Since the order-processing and bookkeeping jobs are the least fun of all, the most error-prone, and a general bottleneck, Resource One is developing a program to deal with some of these jobs. Based on an analysis of methods used by a number of functioning food conspiracies in Berkeley, the program will accept orders, price corrections, and accounting information, and will process and print out information in a usable form for the buyers, truckers, sorters, etc. — as well as keeping records important for group

A Bit of Ancient History

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INFORMATION AS POWER

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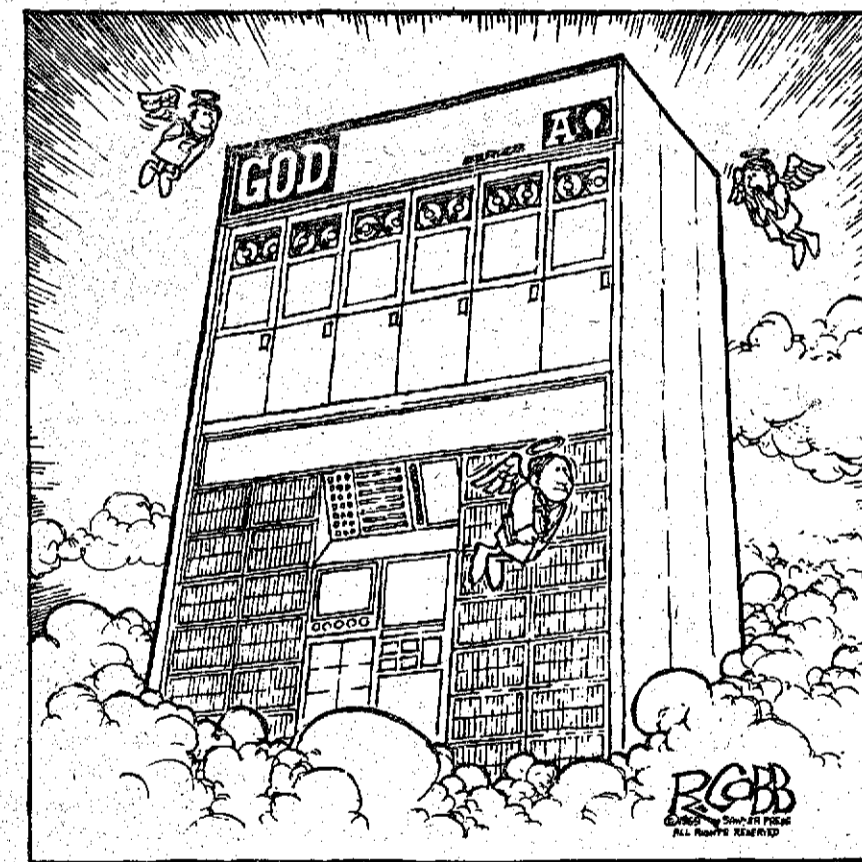
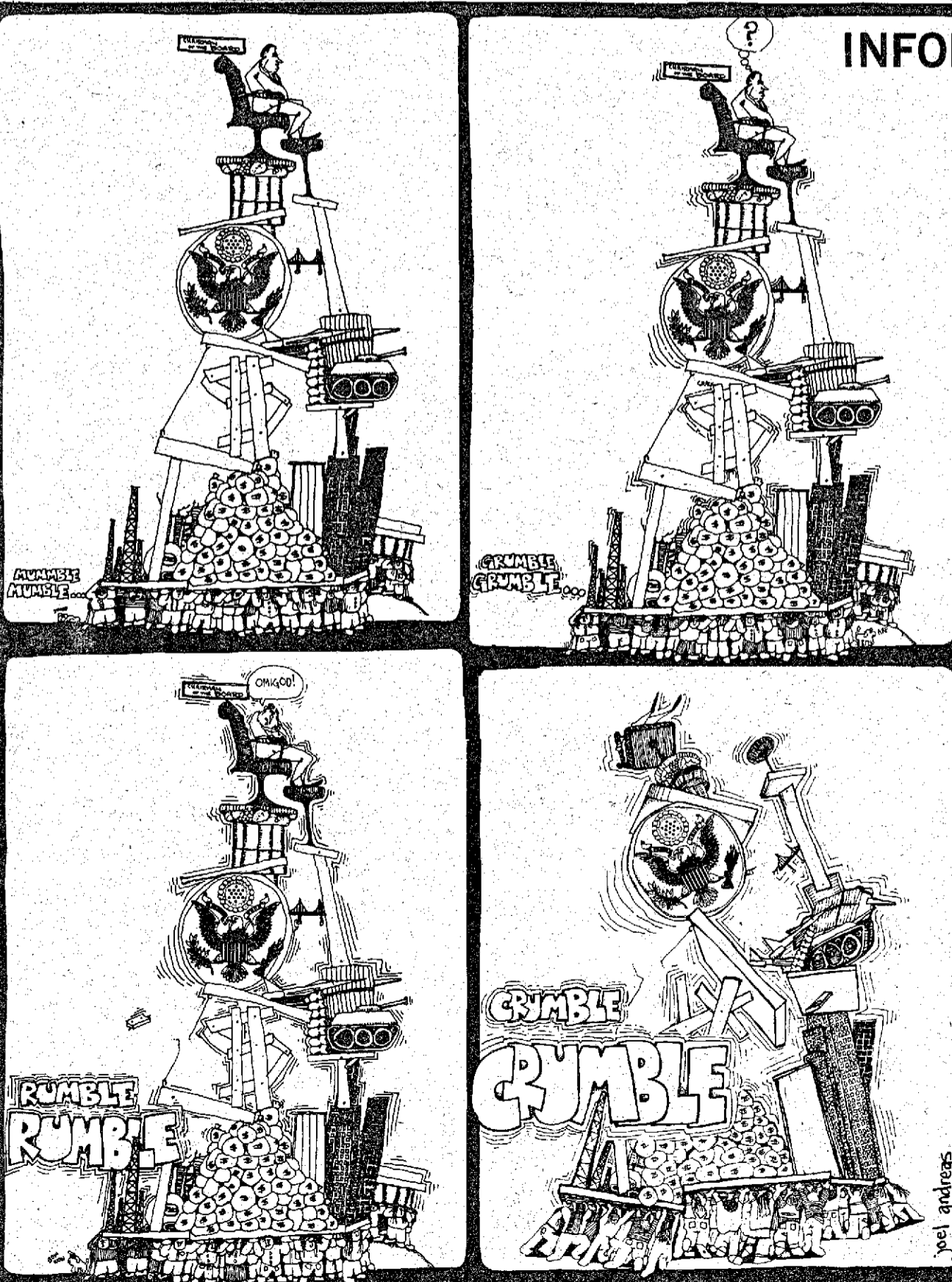
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Yet we are not really powerless — our strength lies in the creativity of people seeking solutions to their own life problems. Free schools; free health clinics, the women's movement, third world movements, the prison movement, the GI movement, tenant's unions, food conspiracies, rural communes, in a thousand ways people are trying to gain direct control over their lives. The response of the capitalist system to these struggles is remarkably consistent: where the threat is not too great, coopt and absorb it; otherwise isolate and repress it. It is this pattern that convinces us that control over the flow of information is so crucial.

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Joel Andrews



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Can this tool of a militarized society be made directly useful to people?

How?

Are the costs of being body-servant to the Beast worth the unclearly defined gains?

Are we risking dependence on an overgrown, high-level technology?

What should we do with all the technological tools we've acquired?

It's a unique situation, rarely has any alternative group controlled so much "hardware" that's so difficult to use well. It's rather like a play with a set, setting and characters but no script.

So far the dialectic has produced a Directory of Social Services in San Francisco, an information retrieval system useful for indexing, searching, sharing and manipulating data for groups doing research directed towards social change, a public access information sharing network, a collection of government (census, housing, election, etc.) data about San Francisco made available to individuals and community groups, various services for social change groups, many burn outs, arguments, late nights of hard work, disgust with the whole thing and a continuing feeling of challenge.

This is a people controlled machine or remarkably close to it. There are no rules of membership to Resource One; anyone who can more or less get along with the current staff and survive in the chaos can join the process by making a contribution to it through work and the development of new uses. Anyone who wants to use the machine can approach the staff; access is allocated on the basis of usefulness to people, energy drain on Resource One, staff interest and the economic reality of having to feed both the machine and people in order to get work done. There are lots of possibilities and we need a lot of help. What real work would you do with a computer?

The 'Counting House' opens soon

The San Francisco Foundation, on March 7, 1974, approved a grant of \$23,600 to Resource One for the purpose of setting up a pilot accounting program (the Counting House) for non-profit organizations. The Counting House will be a storefront office equipped with a computer terminal, which is hooked up to the Resource One computer via telephone.

At Resource One, a program is being written in FORTRAN II to handle all the basic reporting requirements of small organizations ("users"). A given user will type in all the raw data (requiring less time than hand-posting now takes), and the program will produce a variety of reports on demand. The input data will be things like cash disbursements (off check stubs), cash receipts (from checkbook), billings, etc. The program will check every item, as it is entered, for proper format and completeness. (E.g. Is the decimal point where it should be? Are the numbers "reasonable"? ERROR MESSAGE; YOU FORGOT TO ENTER THE ACCOUNT NUMBER!!) Reports can be generated for any given accounting period (month, quarter, year), and for any account or group of accounts. The program will be very easy to use — even for people who have had no experience with computers.

An "operator" — trained in bookkeeping techniques and basic computer programming — will attend the Counting House terminal full-time, to help in case of trouble, teach users how the system works, and serve in general as a bookkeeping consultant.

The accounting office will share space with a neighborhood Community Memory location in San Francisco, which hasn't yet been chosen.

We would like to have a storefront in a relatively high-traffic area (like the Haight, Mission, Noe Valley or Civic Center areas). We're not at all averse to sharing space with another group. If you know of a space that isn't too expensive, coming up for rent, or if you're interested in sharing space with us, we'd appreciate hearing from you.

Social Service Referral Directory

(continued from page 1)

stored both in the machine's on-line (disc) memory and backed-up on magnetic tape. Formatting is done by the computer and the information is printed out onto paper offset printing masters directly from the machine's high-speed printer.

When data on an agency is changed — whether one word, a phone number, or large sections — only the specific changes have to be made in the computer's copy of the data, while the computer prints a complete new page for the agency. Each subscriber receives a copy of the new page and replaces the outdated page in his copy of the directory.

The various indexes are currently produced off-line while the design criteria for programmed indexing aids are being developed. In the future, the directory information will be interfaced with ROGIRS and Community Memory functions to provide on-line retrieval of the listings by appropriate "keywords".

The SSRD grew out of a basic motivation in Resource One even before its metamorphosis out of the San Francisco Switchboard organization — making available vital information to people in new ways. Early in 1973, as the time-sharing system was becoming usable, the directory emerged as a possible solution to the problem that directories of social services were being created every other year as one-shot printed books which were both incomplete as to the parameters of services and out of date as soon as they were delivered. Meetings with persons active in referral work were held to explore their needs and the feasibility of a computerized, updatable system. Within six months the directory was delivered to the initial subscribers, and after another half year it is now rapidly growing.

The SSRD is an initial application of a general information retrieval system; a model of one way of distributing vital information that changes frequently. We feel that the success of this type of directory is not unique to the field of social services but could extend to many other areas as well. We are currently exploring the possibilities of producing an educational resources directory and are meeting with people in other fields to discuss how a directory might serve their needs.

PEOPLE RESOURCES

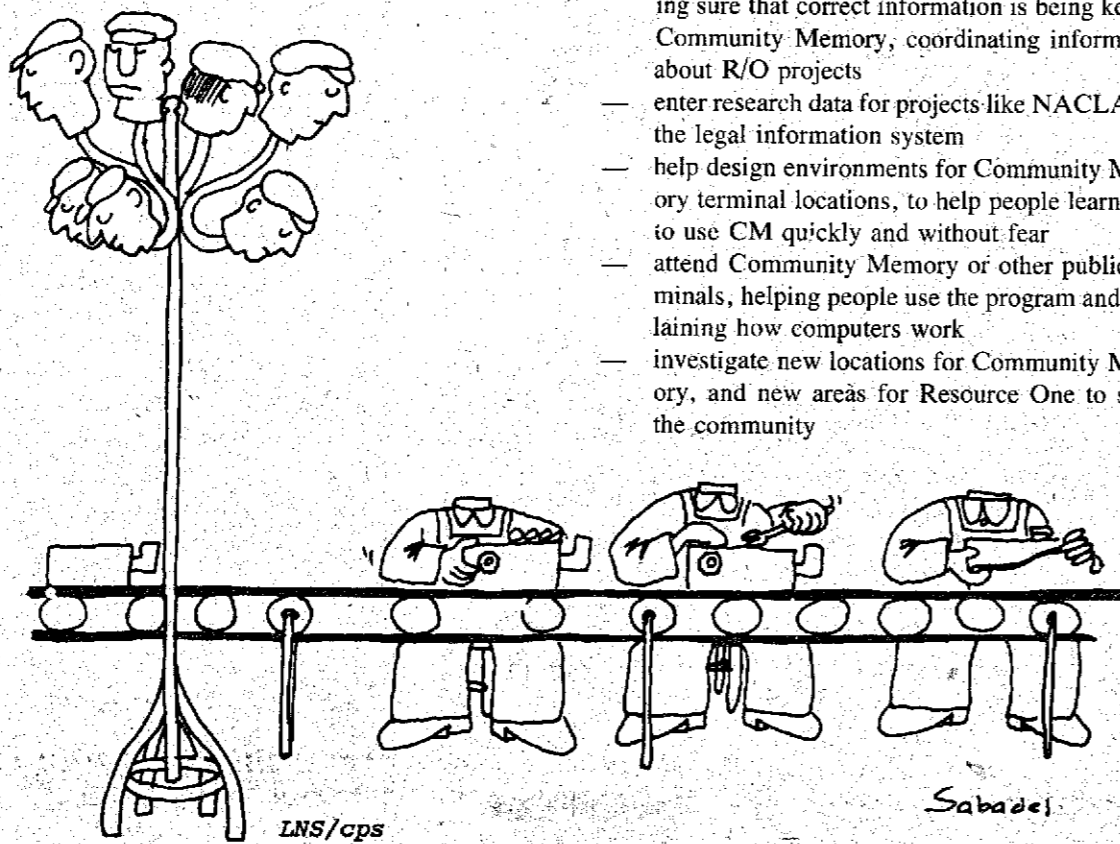
The prime motivation of the Resource One work collective is to create new techniques and add new tools to the ones now being used by organizations and people involved in social change. Some of the specific projects we get involved with are somewhat hard to view from that perspective, being done mostly because they bring in money, but even those projects can help us understand how to survive in the environment we're part of.

It should be clear, from a reading of these pages, that there are many opportunities for involvement by people who are not now part of Resource One. Most such situations call for people who can afford to volunteer their time; in some cases, where the mutual advantage is very clear, some money is available for subsistence. Of course, we are always open to proposals from people who want to use our tools in con-

structive, innovative ways, as part of a project of their own.

At this writing there are lots of possible projects to which people would be welcome to contribute their energies. Only a few of these would require any special computer skills, since most of the basic programming has been done. Examples of what people could do:

- organize a comprehensive (or fragmentary) education program at Resource One or elsewhere, designed to promote discussion of how computer technology could be better used in the community, and information on how it is mis-used by business and government
- organize the internal information flows of Resource One, keeping track of what other organizations are doing through correspondence, making sure that correct information is being kept in Community Memory, coordinating information about R/O projects
- enter research data for projects like NACLA and the legal information system
- help design environments for Community Memory terminal locations, to help people learn how to use CM quickly and without fear
- attend Community Memory or other public terminals, helping people use the program and explaining how computers work
- investigate new locations for Community Memory, and new areas for Resource One to serve the community



© 1974 BY RESOURCE ONE SSRD 02/05/74

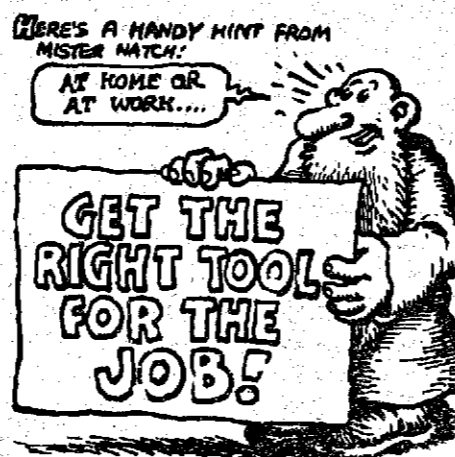
Obviously we would have a problem if, tomorrow, fifty people walked in wanting to get involved. We have had problems in the past with finding something for one person to do. That's because we are already short-handed in relation to the number of balls in the air at one time. So don't expect a well-thought-out on-the-job training program from us.

We hope that many people will pick up on the projects described in this newsletter, and think seriously about whether the projects, the processes of the tools involved could apply to their own lives and goals. If you are such a person, please let us know.

Female energy is sorely lacking here. It seems that out of every ten people who come around, all ten are men. This phenomenon naturally affects the atmosphere and hinders development.

It doesn't matter if you are a "computer person". We need people who have a concern for the direction in which technology is leading society, and want to help reverse the situation. We need people who have been in other groups and collectives and know how to make them work. If you just have some new ideas about communications at the people level, come around. These things apply equally well to women as men.

More women are absolutely necessary, so bring your friends.



Keeping Track of the Spies

NACLA, the North American Congress on Latin America, is a political collective that for the past seven years has been researching and publishing information and analysis in pamphlets and a monthly Report on the U.S. power structure and its role in Latin America and the rest of the world.

To carry out this work they set up and maintain extensive files of newspaper clippings, magazine articles and other material. The sheer volume of this information — half a dozen newspapers are clipped every day — often makes it a difficult and time-consuming task for a researcher to lay her/his hands on the particular articles that are of interest. The R/O General Information Retrieval System (ROGIRS) offers a possible solution to this problem.



LEGAL INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

The San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation (SFNLAF) and Resource One are jointly developing a legal information data bank to eliminate one of SFNLAF's greatest enemies: duplicated research.

SFNLAF has six offices in San Francisco, providing legal help to clients who can't afford commercial legal services. They handle roughly 1200 clients per month, involving primarily landlord-tenant, welfare, immigration, and civil-rights law. Many of these cases require time-consuming research prior to preparation of arguments and briefs. Due to the lack of an effective method for exchanging information among various attorneys and separated offices, much of this research is repeated in case after case.

Resource One is developing an information exchange system, using ROGIRS to link the six SFNLAF offices together via terminals in each office which can simultaneously reference the legal data. Each attorney, as part of her regular case-reporting procedure, will compose a paragraph describing the case in brief, including a source for further information. This paragraph is then stored in the computer under several "keyword" descriptors, selected to include the areas of law involved and names of judges, attorneys, and clients.

An attorney with a new case to research can easily instruct ROGIRS to list the summaries of cases similar to his, selected by area of law, judge, etc. By referring to the briefs and arguments written for these cases, the attorney has access to research already done by others.

The data bank will also contain skills and referral information. Most members of SFNLAF, and their outside contacts, will be listed in the data bank under their particular specialties, so that an attorney needing expert help will know where to go. In many cases, SFNLAF's clients' problems are not strictly legal, but spring instead from police relations, community organizing, tax questions, etc. As members of SFNLAF encounter other organizations and individuals who may be of use to SFNLAF's clients, they will be added to the data bank for future referrals.

As a separate project, SFNLAF is using Resource One's computer to process their "client intake" forms, to produce a better over-all picture of their clients' needs and their own success in meeting those needs. Both this and the legal information data bank are designed to save SFNLAF's attorneys much time and effort, allowing them to handle cases more efficiently and with more personal contact.

COMPUTERIZED MAILING LISTS

NIMS, the New Interactive Mailing System, is a user-oriented program that provides groups who have large mailing lists with computer printed labels. Interactive means that the system is used from a computer terminal with the user telling the program what he wants to do, e.g. add new names, change an entry, sort the list, etc. NIMS allows the user to assign his own categories to the people on the list and will select and print labels for a given category as well as for the whole list. This makes it easy to prepare special mailings for different parts of the master list. The categories used by each group are different, but include things like: contributor, special interests, and occupation. The program will also print listings on paper, with several "comment lines" (lines not printed on labels, e.g., phone number, date they were put on mailing list or whatever) allowed after each name. Both listings and labels are available sorted either by last name or by zip code. For the time being we are limiting ourselves to lists of under 20,000 names, although the program was designed to handle up to 60,000.

We are offering this service partly because we recognize that it can save people a lot of the drudgework of hand addressing envelopes, but also as a way of introducing groups who we feel could make more powerful use of the computer to some of the basic skills and techniques involved.

If Resource One is not now on your mailing list, please put us on it. We will make an effort to keep up with the activities of all groups corresponding regularly with us, and make this information publicly available through Community Memory.

of the 100 largest Chilean corporations, American subsidiaries, and major banks and other financial institutions. The study should help reveal the interconnections within the corporate structure and help in understanding the American interest in and response to events in Chile over the past several years.

With a Little Help From Our Friends



Running a community computer center is expensive!!

So far Resource One has depended largely on foundation grants for our support, but this source is neither permanent nor dependable. Ideally, we would like to be funded by the people and organizations we serve, but many of them can't afford enough to offset our expenses. Therefore we are appealing to everybody who thinks that the kinds of projects described in this newsletter are worth-while to help support them. No contribution is too small!

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ to be used to help support the: _____ project

(All contributions to Resource One are tax-deductible)

Please put me on the Resource One mailing list:

Name: _____

Address: _____

zip code _____

Mail to: Resource One, 1380 Howard St., San Francisco, Ca. 94103

We would also like to hear from you if you have any feedback on what we're doing, our ideas and plans, or if you're involved in a similar or complimentary project or know of any.

SELF-HELP FOR THE ELDERLY **

ADDRESS: 3 OLD CHINATOWN LANE, S.F. CALIF. 94108

TELEPHONE: 982-9171

AGENCY DIRECTOR: SAM YUEN

SERVICE: ASSISTANCE WITH INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS, GROUP ACTIVITIES, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT (DING HO, HOUSEKEEPER TRAINING), FOOD PROGRAM, CONSUMER ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATION, COMMUNITY PLANNING, YOUTH FOR ELDERLY PROGRAM.

EMERGENCY SERVICE: FOOD VOUCHERS (GROCERY AND RESTAURANT), HELP IN APPLYING FOR WELFARE AND OBTAINING HEALTH SERVICES.

PERSON TO CONTACT: SAM YUEN OR ANY STAFF PERSON

HOW DOES ONE OBTAIN SERVICES: DROP-IN OR APPOINTMENT IN PERSON OR BY PHONE

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICE: ANY LOW-INCOME PERSON OVER 55 YRS. OF AGE

AREA SERVED: PRIMARILY CHINATOWN, NORTH BEACH AND LOWER RICHMOND AND ANY CHINESE PERSON IN S.F. WITH NO ENGLISH.

HOURS: M-F, 8:30 TO 5:30 P.M. (PORTABLE MEALS 7 DAYS A WK.)

FEES: NONE EXCEPT PORT. MEALS \$1.00 PER DAY (2 MEALS AT 50 CENTS A MEAL), IF THEY CAN AFFORD IT.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN: CHINESE, TAGALOG, ILOCANO, JAPANESE, SPANISH

ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: 30 STOCKTON BUS

COMMENTS: FUNDED BY BEB, EOC AND STATE COMMISSION ON AGING AND CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

LAST UPDATE: 1/16/74 FROM SAM YUEN

Helping Out Food Conspiracies

As the distribution of goods has become increasingly centralized, institutionalized, and profit-oriented, a number of alternative forms have appeared. One of these, the food conspiracy, extends the basic cooperative idea to trade our most ancient basic commodity, *food*, for our most modern commodity, *time*. Its members take on the tasks of collating orders, finding farmers, manufacturers or distributors, buying, loading, hauling and sorting the food — all the tasks that the supermarket shopper pays someone else to perform.

The information load in such a distribution system is considerably heavier than in the usual marketing system, and few groups have been able to handle expansion to a level where they are able to negotiate for discounts and rebates that are available to large corporate distributors. Assuming that excellent communication for coordinating large distribution efforts is possible without large and efficient hierarchical organizations, it should be possible to extend the conspiracies to include more people who need really cheap food without alienating the people who simply enjoy working together and want to see where their food is coming from.

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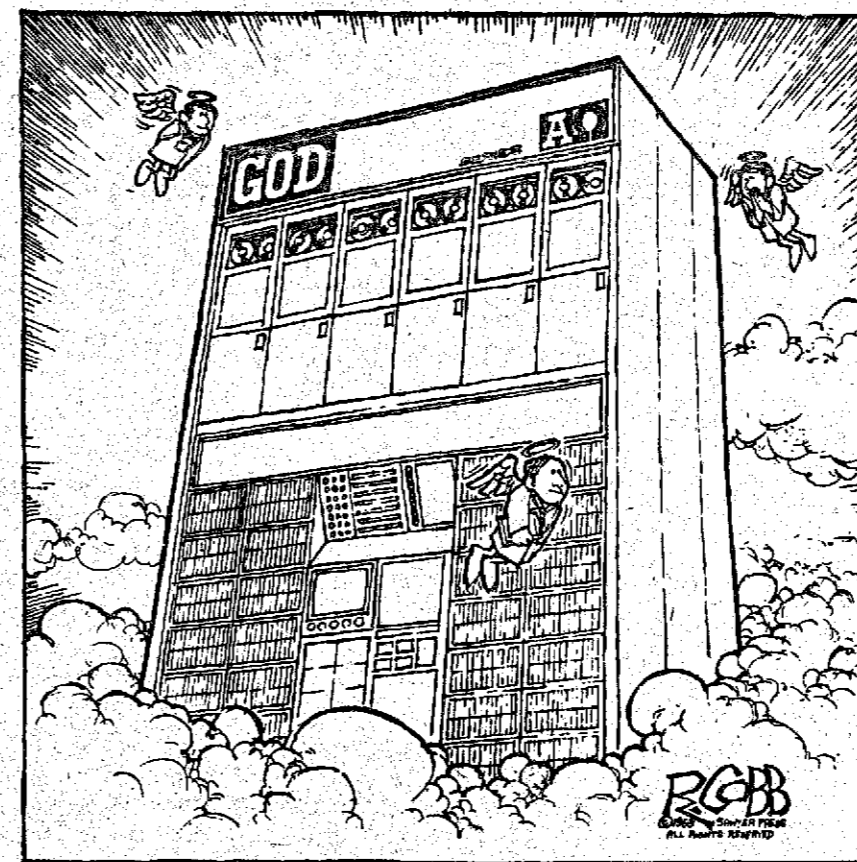
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Are the costs of being body-servant to the Beast worth the unclearly defined gains?

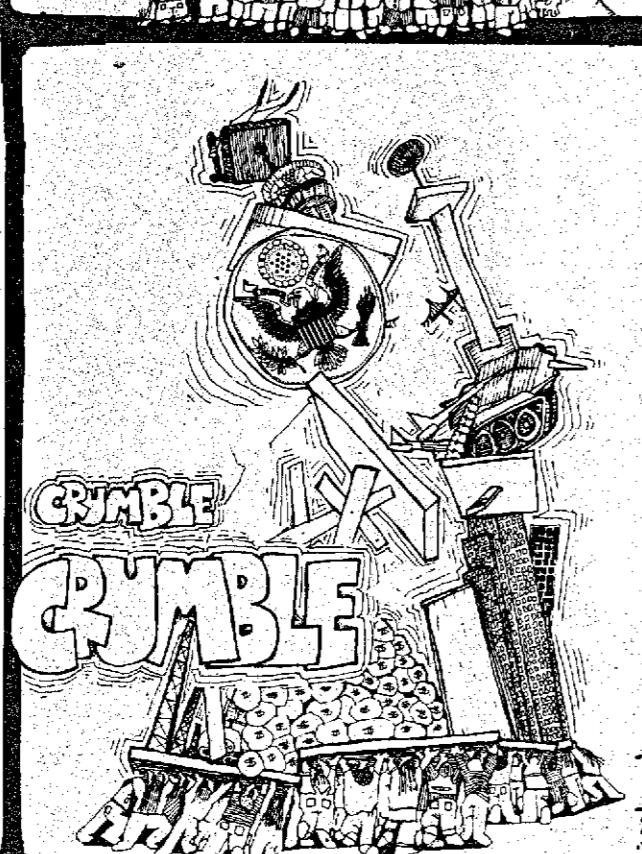
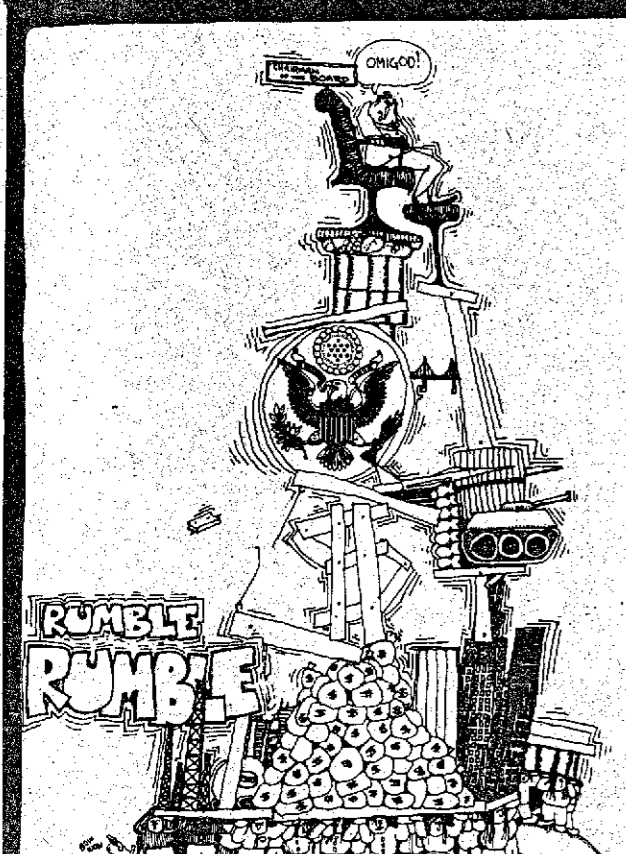
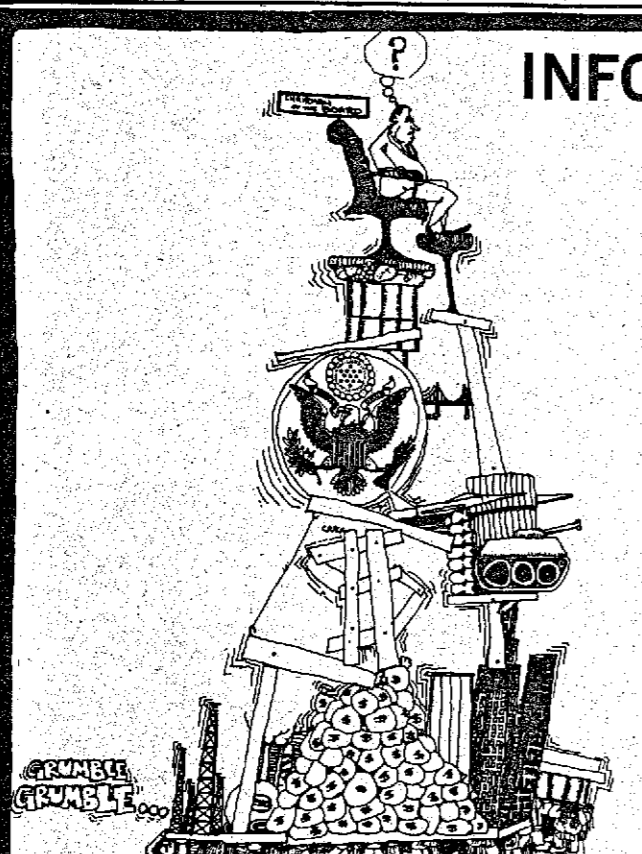
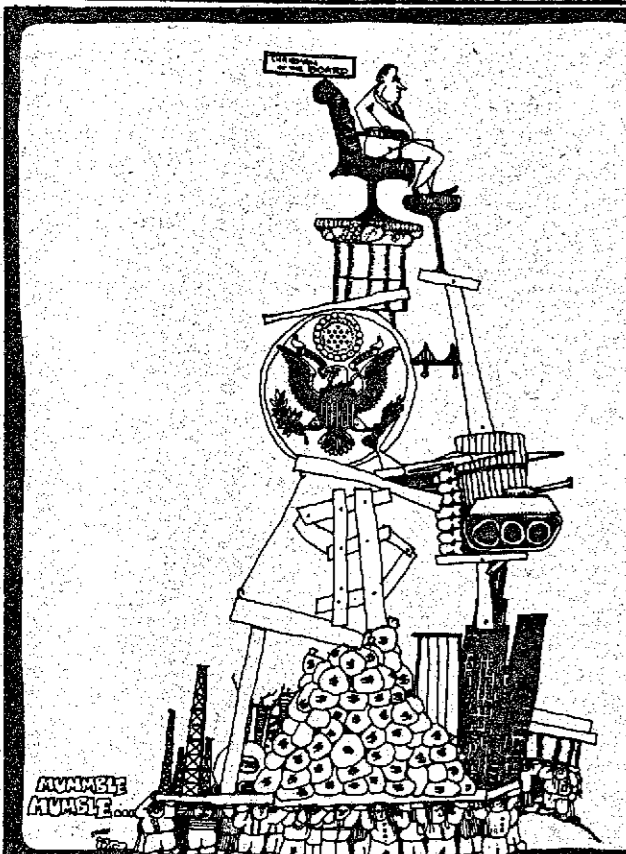
Are we risking dependence on an overgrown, high-level technology?

What should we do with all the technological tools we've acquired?

It's a unique situation, rarely has any alternative group controlled so much "hardware" that's so difficult to use well. It's rather like a play with a set, setting and characters but no script.

So far the dialectic has produced a Directory of Social Services in San Francisco, an information retrieval system useful for indexing, searching, sharing and manipulating data for groups doing research directed towards social change, a public access information sharing network, a collection of government (census, housing, election, etc.) data about San Francisco made available to individuals and community groups, various services for social change groups, many burn outs, arguments, late nights of hard work, disgust with the whole thing and a continuing feeling of challenge.

This is a people controlled machine or remarkably close to it. There are no rules of membership to Resource One; anyone who can more or less get along with the current staff and survive in the chaos can join the process by making a contribution to it through work and the development of new uses. Anyone who wants to use the machine can approach the staff; access is allocated on the basis of usefulness to people, energy drain on Resource One, staff interest and the economic reality of having to feed both the machine and people in order to get work done. There are lots of possibilities and we need a lot of help. What real work would you do with a computer?



Social Service Referral Directory

(continued from page 1)

stored both in the machine's on-line (disc) memory and backed-up on magnetic tape. Formatting is done by the computer and the information is printed out onto paper offset printing masters directly from the machine's high-speed printer.

When data on an agency is changed — whether one word, a phone number, or large sections — only the specific changes have to be made in the computer's copy of the data, while the computer prints a complete new page for the agency. Each subscriber receives a copy of the new page and replaces the outdated page in his copy of the directory.

The various indexes are currently produced off-line while the design criteria for programmed indexing aids are being developed. In the future, the directory information will be interfaced with ROGIRS and Community Memory functions to provide on-line retrieval of the listings by appropriate "keywords".

The SSRD grew out of a basic motivation in Resource One even before its metamorphosis out of the San Francisco Switchboard organization — making available vital information to people in new ways. Early in 1973, as the time-sharing system was becoming usable, the directory emerged as a possible solution to the problem that directories of social services were being created every other year as one-shot printed books which were both incomplete as to the parameters of services and out of date as soon as they were delivered. Meetings with persons active in referral work were held to explore their needs and the feasibility of a computerized, updatable system. Within six months the directory was delivered to the initial subscribers, and after another half year it is now rapidly growing.

The SSRD is an initial application of a general information retrieval system; a model of one way of distributing vital information that changes frequently. We feel that the success of this type of directory is not unique to the field of social services but could extend to many other areas as well. We are currently exploring the possibilities of producing an educational resources directory and are meeting with people in other fields to discuss how a directory might serve their needs.

PEOPLE RESOURCES

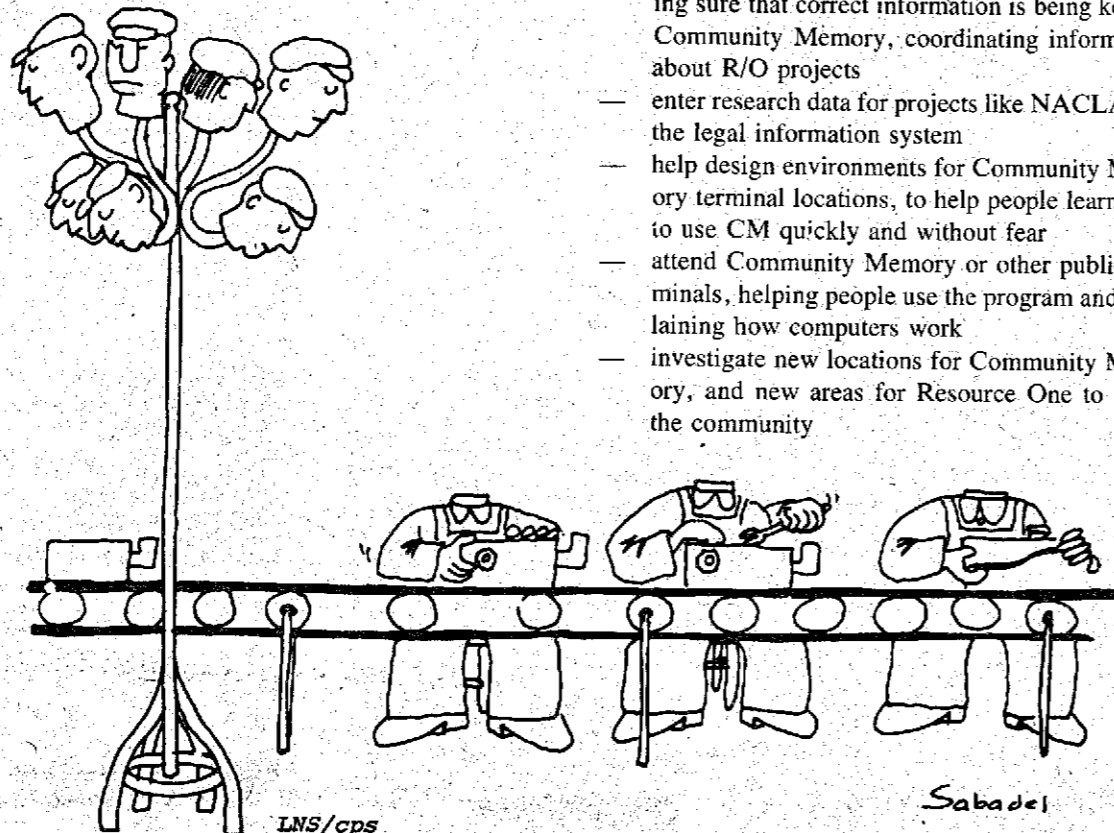
The prime motivation of the Resource One work collective is to create new techniques and add new tools to the ones now being used by organizations and people involved in social change. Some of the specific projects we get involved with are somewhat hard to view from that perspective, being done mostly because they bring in money, but even those projects can help us understand how to survive in the environment we're part of.

It should be clear, from a reading of these pages, that there are many opportunities for involvement by people who are not now part of Resource One. Most such situations call for people who can afford to volunteer their time; in some cases, where the mutual advantage is very clear, some money is available for subsistence. Of course, we are always open to proposals from people who want to use our tools in con-

structive, innovative ways, as part of a project of their own.

At this writing there are lots of possible projects to which people would be welcome to contribute their energies. Only a few of these would require any special computer skills, since most of the basic programming has been done. Examples of what people could do:

- organize a comprehensive (or fragmentary) education program at Resource One or elsewhere, designed to promote discussion of how computer technology could be better used in the community, and information on how it is mis-used by business and government
- organize the internal information flows of Resource One, keeping track of what other organizations are doing through correspondence, making sure that correct information is being kept in Community Memory, coordinating information about R/O projects
- enter research data for projects like NACLA and the legal information system
- help design environments for Community Memory terminal locations, to help people learn how to use CM quickly and without fear
- attend Community Memory or other public terminals, helping people use the program and explaining how computers work
- investigate new locations for Community Memory, and new areas for Resource One to serve the community



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SSRD 02/05/74

* SELF-HELP FOR THE ELDERLY **

ADDRESS: 3 OLD CHINATOWN LANE, S.F. CALIF. 94108

TELEPHONE: 982-9171

AGENCY DIRECTOR: SAM YUEN

SERVICE: ASSISTANCE WITH INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS, GROUP ACTIVITIES, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT (DING HO, HOUSEKEEPER TRAINING), FOOD PROGRAM, CONSUMER ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATION, COMMUNITY PLANNING, YOUTH FOR ELDERLY PROGRAM.

EMERGENCY SERVICE: FOOD VOUCHERS (GROCERY AND RESTAURANT), HELP IN APPLYING FOR WELFARE AND OBTAINING HEALTH SERVICES.

PERSON TO CONTACT: SAM YUEN OR ANY STAFF PERSON

HOW DOES ONE OBTAIN SERVICES: DROP-IN OR APPOINTMENT IN PERSON OR BY PHONE

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICE: ANY LOW-INCOME PERSON OVER 55 YRS. OF AGE

AREA SERVED: PRIMARILY CHINATOWN, NORTH BEACH AND LOWER RICHMOND AND ANY CHINESE PERSON IN S.F. WITH NO ENGLISH.

HOURS: M-F, 8:30 TO 5:30P.M. (PORTABLE MEALS 7 DAYS A WK.)

FEES: NONE EXCEPT PORT. MEALS \$1.00 PER DAY (2 MEALS AT 50 CENTS A MEAL), IF THEY CAN AFFORD IT.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN: CHINESE, TAGALOG, ILOCANO, JAPANESE, SPANISH

ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: 30 STOCKTON BUS

COMMENTS: FUNDED BY BEB, EOC AND STATE COMMISSION ON AGING AND CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

LAST UPDATE: 1/16/74 FROM SAM YUEN

A typical page from the Resource One Social Service Referral Directory.

Keeping Track of the Spies

NACLA, the North American Congress on Latin America, is a political collective that for the past seven years has been researching and publishing information and analysis in pamphlets and a monthly Report on the U.S. power structure and its role in Latin America and the rest of the world.

To carry out this work they set up and maintain extensive files of newspaper clippings, magazine articles and other material. The sheer volume of this information — half a dozen newspapers are clipped every day — often makes it a difficult and time-consuming task for a researcher to lay her/his hands on the particular articles that are of interest. The R/O General Information Retrieval System (ROGIRS) offers a possible solution to this problem.



LEGAL INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

The San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation (SFNLAF) and Resource One are jointly developing a legal information data bank to eliminate one of SFNLAF's greatest enemies: duplicated research.

SFNLAF has six offices in San Francisco, providing legal help to clients who can't afford commercial legal services. They handle roughly 1200 clients per month, involving primarily landlord-tenant, welfare, immigration, and civil-rights law. Many of these cases require time-consuming research prior to preparation of arguments and briefs. Due to the lack of an effective method for exchanging information among various attorneys and separated offices, much of this research is repeated in case after case.

Resource One is developing an information exchange system, using ROGIRS to link the six SFNLAF offices together via terminals in each office which can simultaneously reference the legal data. Each attorney, as part of her regular case-reporting procedure, will compose a paragraph describing the case in brief, including a source for further information. This paragraph is then stored in the computer under several "keyword" descriptors, selected to include the areas of law involved and names of judges, attorneys, and clients.

An attorney with a new case to research can easily instruct ROGIRS to list the summaries of cases similar to his, selected by area of law, judge, etc. By referring to the briefs and arguments written for these cases, the attorney has access to research already done by others.

The data bank will also contain skills and referral information. Most members of SFNLAF, and their outside contacts, will be listed in the data bank under their particular specialties, so that an attorney needing expert help will know where to go. In many cases, SFNLAF's clients' problems are not strictly legal, but spring instead from police relations, community organizing, tax questions, etc. As members of SFNLAF encounter other organizations and individuals who may be of use to SFNLAF's clients, they will be added to the data bank for future referrals.

As a separate project, SFNLAF is using Resource One's computer to process their "client intake" forms, to produce a better over-all picture of their clients' needs and their own success in meeting those needs. Both this and the legal information data bank are designed to save SFNLAF's attorneys much time and effort, allowing them to handle cases more efficiently and with more personal contact.

COMPUTERIZED MAILING LISTS

NIMS, the New Interactive Mailing System, is a user-oriented program that provides groups who have large mailing lists with computer printed labels. Interactive means that the system is used from a computer terminal with the user telling the program what he wants to do, e.g. add new names, change an entry, sort the list, etc. NIMS allows the user to assign his own categories to the people on the list and will select and print labels for a given category as well as for the whole list. This makes it easy to prepare special mailings for different parts of the master list. The categories used by each group are different, but include things like: contributor, special interests, and occupation. The program will also print listings on paper, with several "comment lines" (lines not printed on labels, e.g., phone number, date they were put on mailing list or whatever) allowed after each name. Both listings and labels are available sorted either by last name or by zip code. For the time being we are limiting ourselves to lists of under 20,000 names, although the program was designed to handle up to 60,000.

We are offering this service partly because we recognize that it can save people a lot of the drudgework of hand addressing envelopes, but also as a way of introducing groups who we feel could make more powerful use of the computer to some of the basic skills and techniques involved.

If Resource One is not now on your mailing list, please put us on it. We will make an effort to keep up with the activities of all groups corresponding regularly with us, and make this information publicly available through Community Memory.

of the 100 largest Chilean corporations, American subsidiaries, and major banks and other financial institutions. The study should help reveal the interconnections within the corporate structure and help in understanding the American interest in and response to events in Chile over the past several years.

With a Little Help From Our Friends



Running a community computer center is expensive!!

So far Resource One has depended largely on foundation grants for our support, but this source is neither permanent nor dependable. Ideally, we would like to be funded by the people and organizations we serve, but many of them can't afford enough to offset our expenses. Therefore we are appealing to everybody who thinks that the kinds of projects described in this newsletter are worth-while to help support them. No contribution is too small!

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ to be used to help support the: _____ project

(All contributions to Resource One are tax-deductable)

Please put me on the Resource One mailing list:

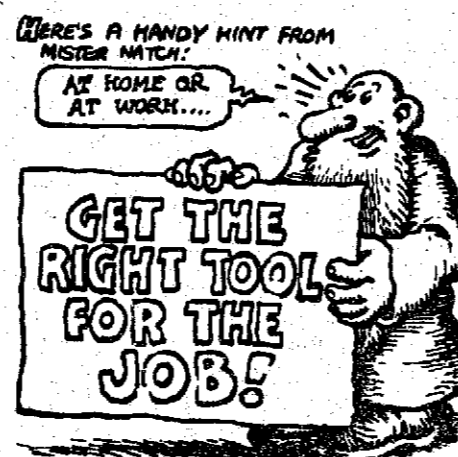
Name: _____

Address: _____

zip code _____

Mail to: Resource One, 1380 Howard St., San Francisco, Ca. 94103

We would also like to hear from you if you have any feedback on what we're doing, our ideas and plans, or if you're involved in a similar or complimentary project or know of any.



Doc Benway wanders into the Whole Earth store to check out what's happening in Community Memory. A typical sequence would look something like this (what Benway types is underlined). There is a ">" symbol at the left side of the CRT screen, indicating the machine is waiting for the next user to give it some command. He proceeds to type:

>FIND TAXI

1 ITEMS FOUND

>PRINT

#1:

TAXI UNLIMITED IS A CO-OPERATIVE TAXICAB AND ANSWERING SERVICE, RUN AND MANAGED BY ITS WORKERS. TRIES TO KEEP RATES AS LOW AS POSSIBLE, HELPS PEOPLE IN EMERGENCIES, AND OFFERS EXTRA SERVICE FOR THE SICK AND DISABLED. 1908 BERKELEY WAY, BERKELEY 94703, TH1-2345

>FIND FREE CLINIC

6 ITEMS FOUND

>AND BERKELEY

2 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: GEORGE JACKSON PEOPLE'S FREE MEDICAL RESEARCH HEALTH CLINIC
#2: FREE CLINIC (BERKELEY) 548-2570

>FIND BAGELS

5 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: WHERE CAN I GET DECENT BAGELS IN THE BAY AREA (BERKELEY!)?
#2: THERE IS A STORE CALLED "BAGELS" ABOVE KEY ROUT ST. ON
#3: THE DANISH BAKERY AT UNIVERSITY AND SHATTUCK IN BERKELEY
#4: IF YOU CALL MICHAEL AT 845- AN EX-BAGEL BAKER CAN TEACH
#5: YOU CAN GET FRESH BAGELS AT THE HOUSE OF BAGELS, WAY OUT ON

>FIND ENERGY CRISIS

6 ITEMS FOUND

>BRIEF

#1: ***** TEG'S 1994 ***** ---> SOME CONCEPTS
#2: I AM LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT METHANOL (METHYL ALCOHOL)
#3: RESTARTING YOUR CAR'S ENGINE BURNS LESS GASOLINE THAN ONE
#4: <ENERGY PRIMER> -- A BOOK BEING PREPARED BY PORTOLA INSTITUTE
#5: ANYONE WANTING TO DEVELOP PUBLIC-ACCESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS,
#6: GOT TO, GOT TO

>PRINT 6

#6:

GOT TO, GOT TO
GOT TO, GOT TO,
GOT TO SCRAPE THAT ENERGY CRISIS
RIGHT OFF YER SHOES . . .
(W/THANK TO MICK 'N KEITH)

>FIND DOCTOR BENWAY

3 ITEMS FOUND

>PRINT 2

#2:

***** IEF XQPRSTQAL SYSPRINT OFFSET INTERRUPT *****
APPLIESTO: ALL BOOGIES, BEANERS, BOLOS & BOZOS

DOC BENWAY HERE NURSE, SLIP ME ANOTHER AMPULE
OF LAUDANUM RECOLLECT ONCE ME AND CLEM CLONE WAS CHEWING
YOHIMBE BARK OUT BACK OF JODY'S ALL-NIGHT PET SHOP

NOT A FINER MAN IN THIS WHOLE ZONE
THAN OL' CLEM 'N JODY CLONE

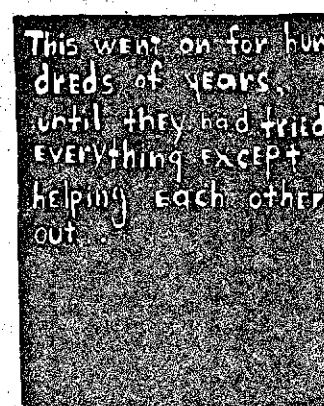
****WHERE WAS WE, YEAH ---- USE AUTHORIZED DATA BASE ACCESS
PROTOCOLS ONLY SENSUOUS KEYSTROKES FORBIDDEN DO NOT
STRUM THAT 33-LIKE A HAWAIIAN STEEL GUITAR GRAND CONCLAVE
OF THE PARTIES OF INTERZONE: CHECK YOUR BOX FOR DETAILS.....
PERSONAL ATTENDANCE REQUIRED; SEND NO REPLICA. BENWAY OUT.
TLALCLATLAN

and presses the green RETURN key.
The machine always responds to a FIND command
by giving the number of items found.
and again presses the green button. All commands
are ended this way.

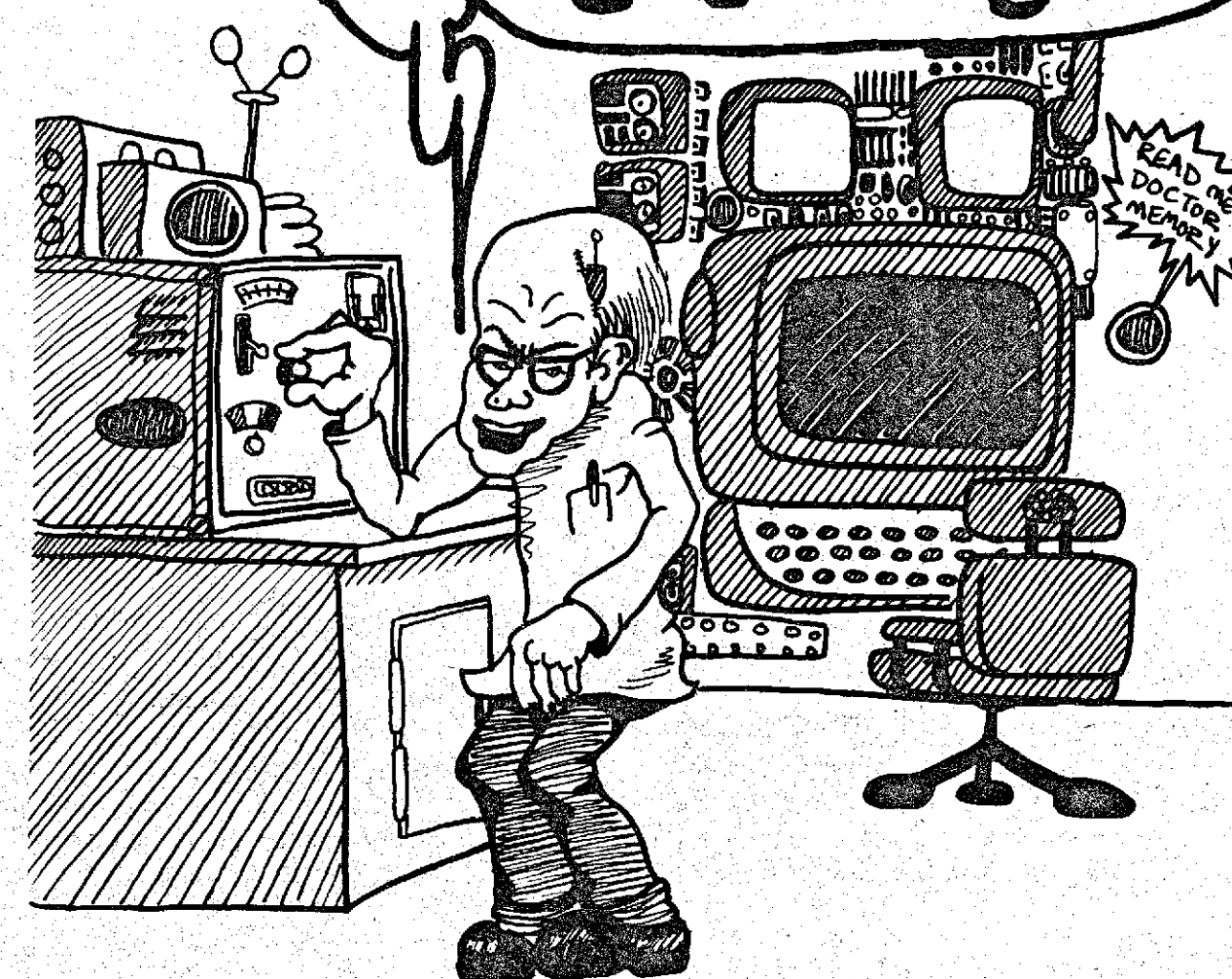
More than one keyword may be used after a FIND
command, with the understanding that the items
found will each have all the keywords listed - that is,
a space between keywords is equivalent to an AND.

The AND command narrows down the list of items
with FREE and CLINIC as keywords to those that
also have BERKELEY as a keyword.

This command causes the first lines only of the items
to be printed out.



AT LAST... A COMMUNITY MEMORY!



The seed of a national public access information net was planted last August in Berkeley. A teletype terminal connected to the Resource One computer was placed in the lobby of Leopold's Records, and people were encouraged to use it as a combined electronic bulletin board and data store. In keeping with our aspirations we've named this COMMUNITY MEMORY.

Since then several thousand people have discovered the terminal and typed in messages, classifying their items themselves so other people can find them quickly. The collection, with over a thousand active items now, includes exchanges traditional to other public media—bulletin boards, classified ads, telephone poles, bathroom walls; the type of information found in indexes and directories such as People's Yellow Pages; as well as exchanges and dialogues which are developing their own unique forms. There are cars for sale, rock bands looking for bass players, carpenters looking for jobs, groups offering counseling, tennis players looking for partners, political commentaries, etc. etc.

This seed is now sprouting into a network. The Leopold's terminal has been moved to the Whole Earth Access store. Specialized, indexed listings of parts of the data collection are being left with organizations that find them useful; a music directory, for instance, is left weekly at Leopold's. Additional public access terminals now exist at our office in Village Design in Berkeley (1545 Dwight Way), at the Mission branch library in San Francisco, and another one will soon open as part of the Counting House. Furthermore, large amounts of information are being collected and made available by NACLA (North American Congress on Latin America) and by People's Energy and Vocations for Social Change (of the relevant articles).

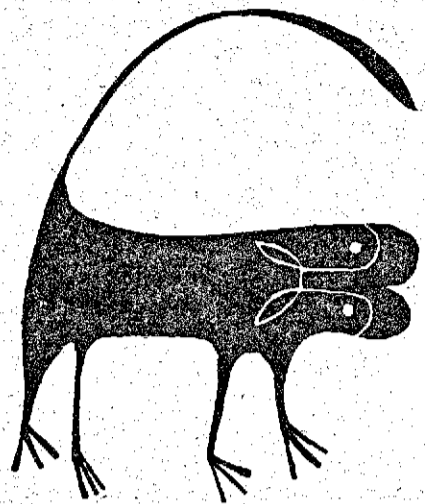
Change is possible. As relative as good and bad are, actions may be weighted on that scale and the quality of global human existence improved.

We are embarked on growing with an information exchange which we are also helping develop. The hardware and software development we at Resource One and Community Memory are undertaking is nested within a continually expanding dialogue making use of tools we tend. We are thus interested in direct contacts, direct information, direct access by people affected by power to information on that power, liberation of power from the constricted grasp of the few to its rightful place as the wealth of the information-sharing community. This involves detailed, precise, valued struggle in a lot of media - money, education, politics, distribution, video, print, speech ...



Alice....computer - computer....Alice
Our first Community Memory terminal (inside the cardboard box) at Leopold's record store. The competition is in the background.

Theories are an expression of how we see the world. They articulate the paradigms of the societies evolving them, defining the worlds in which their actions take place. These definitions are active, on-going, and substantial (incarnational) — they have real effects in the real world.



Learning Exchange Node?

On November 26, 1973, Resource One took part in a "Conference on Computer-Based Learning/Living and Information Exchanges" — held in Evanston, Illinois. Our XDS-940 was connected by phone to a CDC-6400 in Evanston which, over the previous week, had been collecting messages and comments from all over the country. On November 26 a live link was established between the computers, and exchanges were sent across the country as they were created by participants. On Resource One's side, these included about a dozen people involved in learning and communications groups from this area who came to Resource One, read what had been previously entered, and shared their own thoughts.

The theme of the conference was Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society*. "Deschooling" refers to the creation of a non-coercive process of and network for learning, "learning webs" to de-institutionalize the current educational system. This resonates with the original inspiration of many of us which led to involvement with the Community Memory project — seeing it as the communications system for a learning exchange — a means whereby messages by people who want to learn, people who want to teach, groups and institutions with resources to offer, can be exchanged in a continuous, up-dated fashion.

In our experience this begins to happen whenever the density of information interchange gets high enough. This was the case at Leopold's with musicians, who made the terminal their best means for finding each other. This is a prototype for a situation where people are looking for like-minded spirits, peers, fellow adventurers, to play with and explore — anything! A request for a source of good bagels was answered with an offer to teach the art of making bagels. There have been exchanges about languages, carpets, electronics, films, karate — and as the community information swapping develops in these areas, dialogues begin to emerge, continuing exchanges where the information itself is being transmitted through and beginning to reside in the medium.

The current step is to take this tool and to grow it as a workable learning exchange in the Bay Area, and to have it encourage the other necessary concomitants of a humane (and biologically and geologically sound) learning environment. A network alone is not enough; we will be working together with other groups to ensure that the nodes (ourselves as living, learning, teaching, sharing human beings) develop the appropriate openness and understandings.

The use of public communications by people may give them a competitive advantage over those tied to narrow private channels. More sharing of information is possible and better use of available technology can be made without continually having to develop security systems. Image of many people working together versus a few people ordering many about.

RESOURCE SHARING

Vocations for Social Change & People's Energy

VSC, or "Vocations for Social Change", is a non-profit tax-exempt educational corporation/collective with an office in Oakland California and associate offices elsewhere in the country. We publish *Workforce*, a national resource guide designed for and used by the movement for social change. We also publish how-to-organize information, and sponsor other organizations around the country. People's Energy is the closest associate of VSC, and was originally sponsored as a local VSC office. People's Energy maintains a regional resource file, publishes an East Bay resource guide, and counsels people in finding/constructing work alternatives.

People's Energy and VSC have just recently entered the Resource One user's network. Our vision and our goal is to provide much of the information base and some preliminary models for a national network, and to that end we are compiling our 6-years-worth of information on alternative institutions, from *Workforce* and our various local VSC contacts/friends elsewhere. We are planning to enter this mess (!) into our file **RESOURCE** as soon as we are familiar enough with the system to do so. Another project we are doing is indexing by interest keywords the some 100 people/month who come into our office for counselling, to begin to match them with jobs and with other people who have complementary interests.

We feel that information networking is vital for viable social change. Everything we do tells us that there is tremendous potential in knowing where to find information. It is also our feeling that we must remain self-conscious and self-critical about how we select and evaluate information, what our goals are (political neutrality being impossible), how we will use information, who will use it, how we will determine the "credibility index" of our information, how we will preserve privacy, and how high a profile we should exhibit.

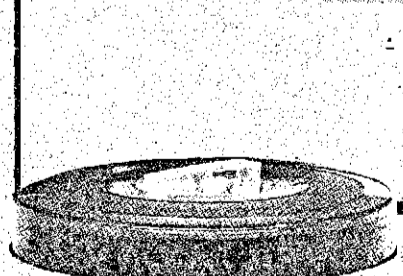
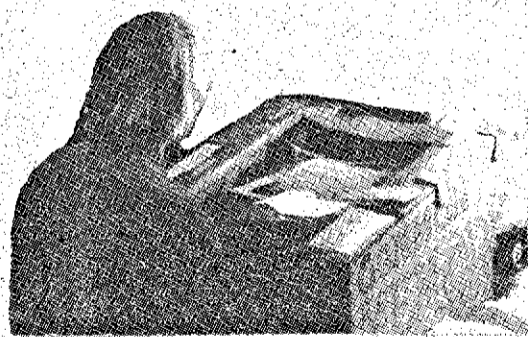
What we do at People's Energy/VSC is not random. We select our resources carefully, and try to examine our contacts carefully in light of their potential for social change, and in light of their ability to be a model for that change. We actively solicit feedback in everything we do or sponsor. We try to serve as a model ourselves.

Our methods and our philosophy — all are open for discussion. We hope that our experiences can provide a philosophical springboard for guiding the network concept. We look forward to co-sponsoring the national alternative information system and becoming a full working member of the local network.

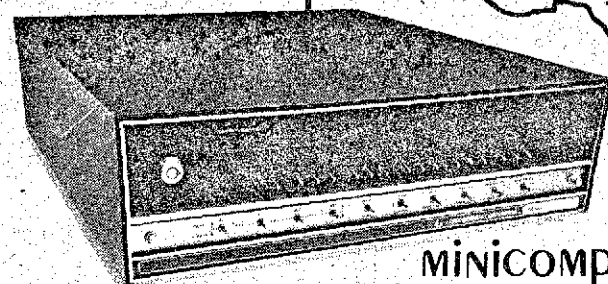
Our office: 4911 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 94609 (415) 653-6535, open line noon to 6pm.

We supply the planetary common wealth in acting in total communication with our various actions and their respective back-and-forth-sequencings. Where we get stuff, what we do with it and how, and where it goes afterwards — staying in touch with such data is what constitutes wealth, survival possibility — and this information flow is the crucial missing link in the survival worthiness of ourselves-together-with-our-planet. The medium for this release of valuable (valued for livelihood) messages is developing amongst us — electronics media in general, basically, and specifically public accessible memory storage — leave your real-time messages for other people, and you begin to provide other people access to your history, your calendar, your time(s). We all get "on the air"; whether this is claustrophobia, or intolerable honesty, or space of shared patterns-of-common-history; whether this requires our becoming more and more like public parks, or whatever — is up to us to create. There can be no doubt, though, that at least, the very least, we are being thrown communicationally together.

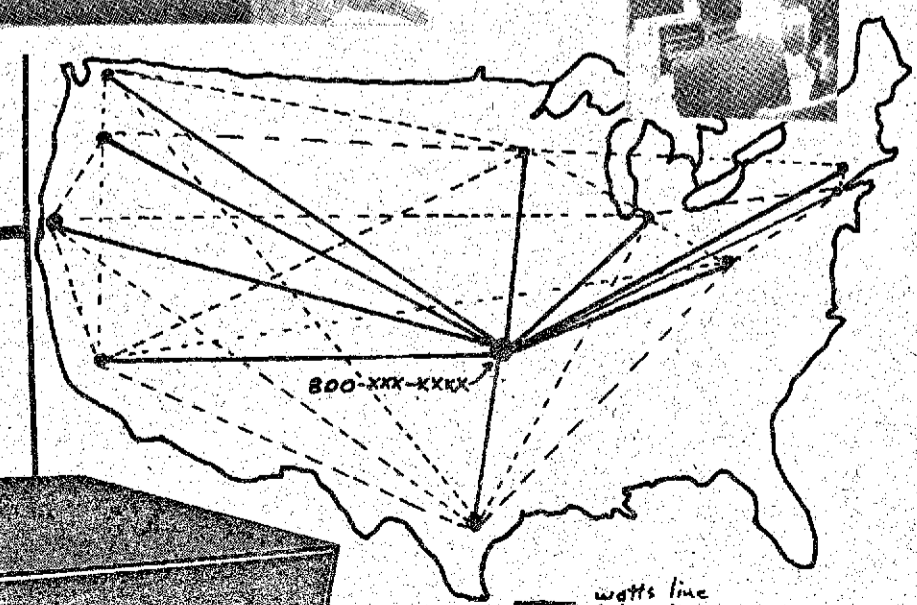
Community Memory is community mindfulness, not-forgetfulness. In the root sense of the greek word for truth, *aletheia* (a-lethe, having come out of hiddenness) it is communal retrieve of truth, communal disclosure, that which is (left) open, by us, to us.



MEMORY



MINICOMPUTER



NATIONAL INFORMATION

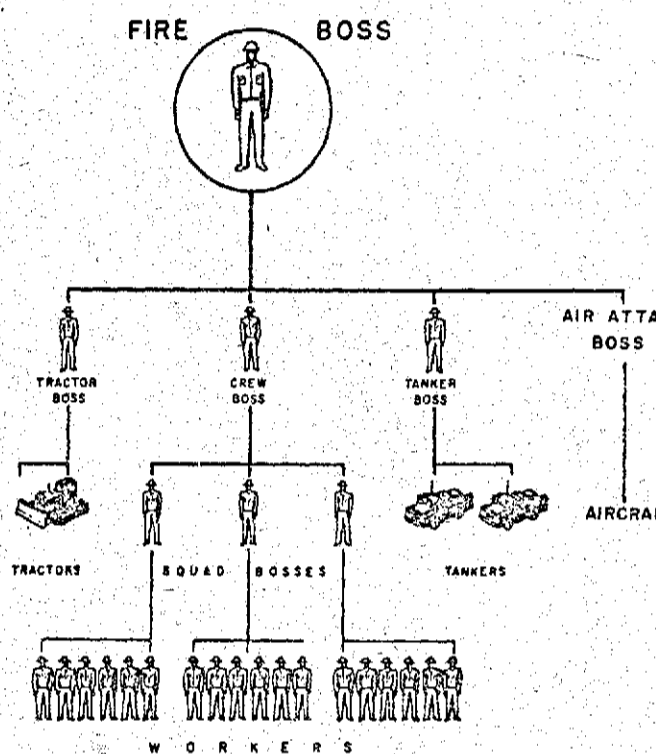
ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM

What are the possibilities of high speed, cheap national communication via computer? The minisystem networks described elsewhere are capable of communicating with each other over the phone at more than 1000 characters per second. Thus in a three-minute call two minicomputers could exchange 60 pages of information! Without making Ma Bell any richer we could have a national news network, a means of coordination for national political action, a fast mail service, and a way to hold long term dialogue on problems of greater than local interest (see the article on the learning exchange conference).



Belief in our dependence on the various institutions for the necessities for continuing our daily life is a more damaging mystification than the artificially created dependence on some of their products. We no longer go directly to the person who makes or grows or knows what we need, but rather to the functionary of the appropriate institution. Fewer and fewer of our daily interactions include communication on any personal, human level, and our private lives are becoming more isolated from our social, political, and economic lives. As our isolation from one another increases, our dependence upon artificial structures to give us work and supply our material and recreational needs increases, while our sense of powerlessness makes real our political impotence.

Business and governmental communication is done in private where the competitors and the people can not see what's going on. Any system of diffuse power must force all such communication to be public record or privileged channels of communication and restricted information will develop and be used for the advantage of a few.



Taking economic power includes developing new economic-organizational forms small enough so that, they may be completely controlled by all their members, can act as a self-conscious unit and develop the very complex set of relations with other such units, which will be necessary if they are to take over the functions currently performed by highly structured corporations. The development of our own means of production and distribution is the only way economic power can be removed from its current masters.

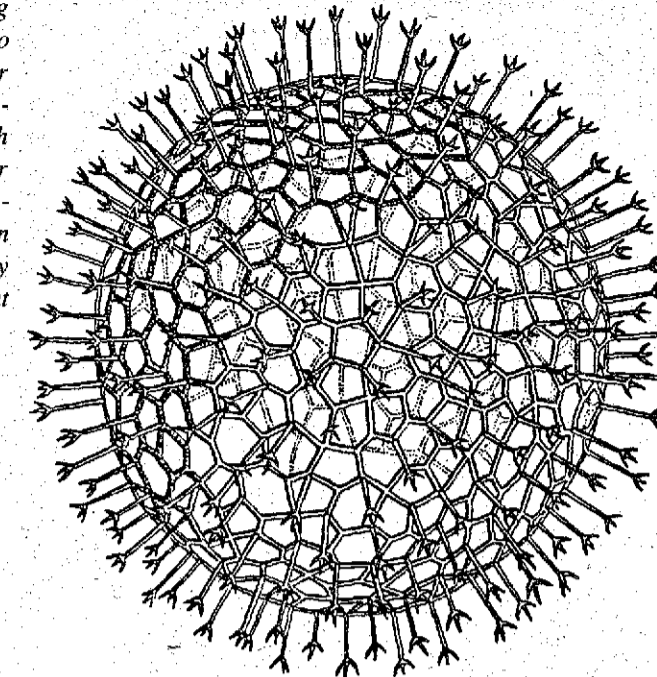
**A STRONG PEOPLE
NEED NO LEADER**
—ZARATA

Our only hope is to talk to one another, to share our thoughts and feelings. But first we must find one another, and to do that we must assume recognizable identities in the amorphous human mass. It is to aid in this task that Community Memory was created. By identifying ourselves, our interests, needs, and resources, we acknowledge the parts of our lives we are willing to share with others, the groups of which we are de facto members. All the power of computer technology and Boolean algebra are brought to bear to make us accessible to one another.

Our world seems to be populated not by people but by institutions. Recognizing governments, corporations, and unions as communication devices, information handling structures with the sole function of coordinating and securing our efforts to work and live together gives us the opportunity to seek alternatives. Bringing the consumers of goods directly in to contact with the creators is the only way of making them responsible for their own actions and responsive to one another's needs.

This would start us experimenting with direct government, government by ad hoc committee of interested, knowledgeable and affected people. If the flow of information was very heavy the consortium of local networks could establish a toll-free 800 number on one of the machines to be used as a relay satellite by all the others. This would not inhibit direct communication, between two networks, of information they did not want to trust to the (a, any) central machine. We can thus make a structure which takes advantage of both hierarchy and diffusion.

The prior paragraph is not techno fiction. Very little additional hardware and programming beyond that required for a local net would be necessary. The major requirement is keeping it in our minds while doing the design so we do not create unnecessary restrictions which make it difficult to include this facility. Thoughts on the uses and criteria for this communications system would be appreciated.



A diffuse system of small collective producing, living and learning groups requires an equally spread out but very efficient system of communication. Their ability to support themselves will depend on a rich flow of information and ideas, and the means to coordinate their efforts.

OUR NEXT BUNCH OF WORK

The pilot network is a very local happening. It is unique to this time and place without the reproductive vitality necessary to be useful elsewhere. The program is in a language only usable on the 940 and the 940 will support only 16 users. With the high cost of geriatric engineering each user's share of the expenses is about \$6,000. This is far above the resources of the organizations and people we wish to serve. An additional problem is the high cost of the terminals necessary to connect with the central computer.

To make our idea evolutionarily competitive we are producing a more advanced Community Memory program in FORTRAN, the most commonly available programming language, working on cheap television and printer terminals that we would produce ourselves, and directing our work to run on the newest, fastest, smallest, cheapest technology — the mighty minicomputer. Minicomputers are available at 1/6 the size and cost of the 940 and three times its power! Not very mini. With the use of carefully selected mini hardware a system could be assembled whose purchase price would be under a thousand dollars per user, whose maintenance would cost under \$150 per year per user, and would have about a million characters of storage for every user. Each additional million characters would be about \$400 per user. We hope to produce or obtain terminals at about \$400 each so the capital cost for a single user would be under \$2000 and the yearly expenses for the system only a couple of hundred and the cost of two phone lines — one at the computer and another at the terminal. By sharing all new software development among the various networks any additional development costs could be kept under a few hundred per user too.

A list of all the hidden assumptions in the above:

- 1) We can write an efficient system in FORTRAN.
- 2) We become OEM (original equipment manufacturer) purchasers of hardware. This means all the systems are purchased through us and we get wholesale prices.
- 3) Large communities of users can be established for each system since the smaller the system the more it will cost per user. The above figures came from a system which could support at least 50 fulltime users and would cost about 50 thousand dollars to buy wholesale.
- 4) We or a similar group manufacture a cheap terminal multiplexor, the piece of equipment via which the computer communicates with all the terminals and which is very overpriced at the the moment.
- 5) The opposing factors of ever-decreasing cost of computers and the current economic turbulence and maybe disaster at least balance each other out.

Our time scale is to have the first minisystem functioning and debugged within a year. We could use luck and help.