

# In Business

## Rindge Couple Leads Way In Computer-Assisted Learning

By DAWN CARADONNA

When Margaret Morabito received her master's degree, she was living alone in a cabin in the woods in West Keene. She supported herself by making moccasins and selling them to "Country Artisans" in Keene. She lived a simple life: studying English and education, working with her hands, and going without electricity.

Today she lives with her husband and two children in a house in Rindge. She started Computer-Assisted Learning Center three years ago, is editor and publisher of the CALC Newsletter, and is director of the "online" Community College. She has 10 computers in her home.

After she received her degree, Mrs. Morabito became an officer in the Navy and taught at the Naval Prep School at Fort Devens. She worked in the Education Center and was director of the Computer Learning Center. It was this experience that would later provide the foundation for her dual career in computers and education.

In 1983 she took a job at *RUN* magazine as head of the technical department on the editorial staff. *RUN* is a magazine for Commodore users and Mrs. Morabito became a Commodore expert. While working for *RUN*, she wrote a monthly column called "Resource Center: Us-

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ing Computers For Education." She found the response to this column amazing. People wanted this kind of information and no one else was providing it. But the column wasn't enough. She needed more space.

She wrote her last column in December 1981. In January 1988, she published her first issue of the "CALC Newsletter." *RUN* announced her new venture. Presently, she estimates that 500 to 1,000 people read her newsletter. Most subscribers are schools or educators. The newsletter is read nationwide, as well as in Japan, Germany and Canada.

The "CALC Newsletter" is literally produced "in-house." Her husband, Michael, is an attorney in Rindge, as well as business manager and editor of the newsletter. They use a Commodore 64 for the text, a DECMATE for the titles, and a laser printer to print the newsletter.

They have logos done professionally by a printer in Jaffrey, and cut and paste these into the newsletter. When everything is ready, Mr. Morabito runs off copies on their Canon MP 210 Copier.

As part of CALC, Mrs. Morabito runs a software division. Through CALC, people donate education programs to the public domain. She reviews each program and then compiles several programs onto one disk. Educators use her as a resource; if they need a certain program, they call and ask her for a recommendation. Then they can buy a disk for \$10 and make as many copies as they need.

Mrs. Morabito is also director of an "online" Community College, which has a staff of 35 certified elementary, high school, and college teachers. All students work at home on their own computers, which are connected through the Quantum Network. Teachers and students log on to their computers at the same time and then have live interactive "discussions." The classes are small (about 12 to 15 students per class), so each student receives individual attention.

The charge for the course includes a \$15 registration fee, which goes to the teachers, and a \$4.80 per hour connection fee, which goes directly to the network. Most of the teachers don't do it for the money; they do it because they enjoy teaching and want to experience teaching online classes.

Each course lasts about two months. Students who complete a course receive a certificate and some online connection time.