By MARGARET MORABITO

Our readers write in with information, questions and comments.

This month I'm passing along a couple of updates to past articles, an offer to share software and answers to some reader's questions.

Parent Volunteer Computer Lab

Last July I wrote about volunteers Bonnie Nebel and Susan Copp from New Berlin, Wisconsin, who started a computer lab in their local school. The lab is partly staffed by parent volunteers who set up the computers before classes arrive, load the software so teachers don't have to do it and help students with questions during the lab periods.

Nebel and Copp have received many requests for additional information on starting such a program. In answer to these requests, they've made up guidelines in an easy-to-use outline form that they've donated to *RUN* for publication. You'll find it in Table 1.

As part of the parent-volunteer program, Nebel and Copp have developed a training course for teachers and volunteers. Called Hands-On Computer Training, this course is tailored to the needs of both the teachers and volunteers and the students they'll be working with. There are two versions, one for class situations and one for self-teaching.

For more information on this tutorial software, or on the parent-volunteer program itself, you should write to Hands-On Computer Training, 19975 W. Julius Heil Drive, New Berlin, WI 53151.

Education Dealer

In the June 1986 Resource Center, *RUN* published a list of authorized Commodore education dealers. I've recently received an addition to the list—a store that was newly designated about that time. It is The Working Computer, 1320 Stony Brook Road, Coventry Commons, Suite #9, Stony Brook, NY 11790.

Physical Fitness Software

If you're involved in teaching physical fitness, nutrition or exercise physiology, you'll be interested in some C-64 programs that reader Barry Brown has created. The list includes Personalized Exercise Prescription, Nutritional Analysis, Assessment of Body Composition, Daily Energy Expenditure and Evaluation of Maximal and Submaximal Aerobic Level.

Brown wrote the software for undergraduate physical education majors, but it's also been used in high school science classes and in hospital and community wellness programs. He'll be happy to share the programs and a description of the test protocol with you. For more information, write to Barry Brown, 2431 Magnolia Drive, Fayetteville, AR 72703.

Questions and Answers

Q. Our daughter will be taking the SATs soon, and she'd like to use our C-64 to help prepare for them. Is there any SAT preparation software available for the C-64?

Stephen Bacon
Austin, TX

A. Yes, there are quite a few SAT practice packages available for the C-64. You'll find a list of some of them in Table 2. *RUN* published a review of several of these packages in the September 1985 issue.

Q. My son devotes almost all his time to his computer. He's not interested in games, but in programming and BBSs. All this is fine, except his studies have suffered. I have often thought that if software related to his schoolwork were available, he'd be an A student. Can you suggest any such software?

Linda Kosier
Palm Beach Gardens, FL

A. Your son is already a step ahead of his classmates by knowing something about programming and telecommunications. For other subject areas, there are hundreds of tutorial programs on the market. Contact your son's teachers to find out where he needs extra help, and then write away for educational software catalogs. Get a number of them, so you can choose programs that will best fit your son's needs.

RUN published a detailed list of sources for educational software catalogs in the December 1986 Resource Center. To get going immediately, write for the Hammett Microcomputer Catalog, Hammett Micro. Division, PO Box 545, Braintree, MA 02184.

Q. I'm looking for programs to use with the Muppet Learning Keys developed by Koala Technologies. I called Koala, but they told

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me the product had been sold to Sunburst. When I called Sunburst, they said they do offer such programs, but the price they quoted is high for me. Are there any public domain programs that work with the Muppet Learning Keys? If not, is there information available that will help me write my own programs?

**George Pardi
Medford, MA**

A. I'm not aware of any public domain programs made for the Muppet Learning Keys. However, I recently received information from Sunburst about software that will let you program that keyboard tool yourself. Called Muppet Learning Keys Tool Kit and priced at $35, it provides routines you can add to your programs so they'll work with Muppet Learning Keys. The package includes documentation for teachers on how to incorporate the software into an elementary curriculum.

You have to know Basic to use the Tool Kit. For more information, call Sunburst at 800-431-1934.

Q. *Last January's issue of* Electronic Learning *included an article that said Commodore is dropping out of the educational market, that third-party software companies are providing less educational support, and that people should therefore be reluctant to buy Commodores for edu-* cational use. I've written letters to Bill Rothenbach and Nigel Shepherd of Commodore about this, but the only response I get is a denial that it's true. I'm wondering if the Commodore cutback is because of the company's financial woes. Can you get more information from Commodore? Those of us in education who want to continue using the best small computer in town need corporate support, and lots of it.

**Jim Aspin
Flint, MI**

A. First of all, Commodore isn't dropping out of the educational computing market. I don't think it could, even if it wanted to, because of user demand. I see why someone would spread that rumor, though.

Commodore quite definitely went through a financially shaky period that affected all levels of the company. While Apple, IBM and Tandy have major educational marketing and support teams, Commodore has had only one person manning that job at their Pennsylvania headquarters.

From my recent contact with Commodore, things look stable. Although I haven't heard of any new educational projects and support, the company is retaining its educational dealers and putting some marketing effort into promoting education.

There are new educational prod- ucts from other manufacturers arriving at *RUN*'s editorial offices, which certainly indicates continued interest in the C-64 on the part of third-party producers.

Over the years, much of the support for educators using Commodore products has come from grass-roots efforts like The Resource Center and the thousands of teachers, like yourself, who take the time to share information and advice. I expect that this grass-roots effort will continue as the primary support mechanism for Commodore educational users in the United States.■

If you're using Commodore computers for educational purposes (at home or in school) and would like to share your experiences through The Resource Center, write me a letter detailing the equipment you're using, subject areas you teach, grade level or age of your students, software you're using and any other information you feel like including.

Also, if you'd like to donate public domain educational programs to The Resource Center for sharing with other educators or parents, please send along a disk with a brief description of the program. Send correspondence and disks to:

*Margaret Morabito
The Resource Center
c/o RUN Magazine
80 Elm St.
Peterborough, NH 03458*

Table 1. *Steps in developing a parent volunteer computer lab.*

1. The coordinator
   a. Find someone knowledgeable about computers, or at least willing to learn.
   b. Have coordinator arrange training sessions for teachers and volunteers and schedule volunteer time in the lab.

2. Volunteers
   a. Recruiting
      1. Talk with parents.
      2. Place notice in school newsletter.
      3. Send a special notice home.
      4. Teachers to recommend volunteers.
      5. Offer training.
      6. Take any offer of time, whether it's once a week or once a month.
   b. Duties
      1. Load machines with software.
      2. Help teacher oversee computer use.
      3. Help the teacher answer questions.
      4. Turn off the equipment and put away the software.
      5. Try out new software and make recommendations to teachers.

c. Training
   1. If possible, give each volunteer her own computer to train on.
   2. If possible, give volunteers a week between lessons to practice.
   3. Hold sessions to two hours.
   4. Give the self-tutoring version of the Hands-On course to those who want to work on their own.

3. Getting money for equipment
   a. Ask administration to budget funds.
   b. Ask your school's parent organization to help with fundraising.
   c. Ask school librarian to contribute from the library budget or for advice on getting donations from elsewhere.

4. School software catalog
   a. List programs available for various grade levels and subject areas.
   b. Schedule software sampling sessions to familiarize teachers and volunteers with new software acquisitions.

Table 2.

A sampling of SAT programs for the C-64.

Mastering the SAT
CBS Software
One Fawcett Place
Greenwich, CT 06836

The Perfect Score
Mindscape, Inc.
3444 Dundee Road
Northbrook, IL 60062

The Computer Study Program for the SAT
Barron's Educational Series
113 Crossways Park Drive
Woodbury, NY 11797

College Board SAT Exam Preparation Series
Krell Software Corp.
1320 Stony Brook Road
Stony Brook, NY 11790