

## On Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth



**W**ould you build your entire math curriculum around an abacus because someone donated one (or more)? Would you buy a 48-star flag for your flagpole because it would save the school money? Would you vote to install manual typewriters for typing class because the schools in the conference could get a group maintenance plan that would reduce everyone's overall repair costs?

Computer purchase decisions are made every year based on even-  
less logic.

With high-pressure salesmen pitching high volume disk and core memory, true 16- and 32-bit microcomputers, liquid crystal screens and buffered printers, it's no wonder that final decisions are being made on cost, color, and group compatibility.

What choices are being made in other school systems? Apple has taken 46.8 percent of the market so far this year, according to Quality Education Data, Inc., a Denver-based market-research firm. Radio Shack came in second with 21.7 percent. Commodore was next with 10.3 percent, followed by IBM with 6.9 percent, Atari with 5.1 percent, Texas Instruments with 4.3 percent, and Franklin with 3 percent.

The average number of micro-

computers per school rose from 4 to 8.3, and the number of students per microcomputer was reduced from 170 to 83.

However, none of these statistics tells you why others bought a particular model or how you can determine what's best for your situation.

Beyond the standard advice of dealing with a company that will still be around three years from now, a few observations might be in order.

1. Computers do only what software programs tell them to do. The most technically advanced system is but a paperweight (albeit an expensive one) if you don't have the software to make it do the things you want it to do.

2. One of Murphy's Laws states that "The maximum completion status for any software program under development is 97 percent." If you interpret that to mean that the program may *never* be finished, you and Murphy are in agreement on that point. This caution also applies to due dates for software advertised by manufacturers. Some software vendors use speculative ads: "If we get more than a hundred orders, we'll write the program."

3. Programming may look easy, but it isn't. Although that silver-tongued salesman tells you you can program the system yourself, he does not mention how much time you will have to spend with an incomprehensible computer manual to become oriented to the language and the machine so you can pro-

gram the specific applications you need.

Therefore, when you shop for a computer, *first* choose existing, demonstrable, easy-to-use software packages that fulfill your needs. *Then* find out which systems they run on (this should narrow the field considerably).

This doesn't mean that you can't create your own software, but *don't* expect the success of computers in your classrooms to hinge on software that is not yet in existence or that you plan to write or have written for your system.

Once you have selected the computer with software to meet your needs, if you have the ability, inclination, and time, by all means (and it might take all means) write on! However, too many schools get stuck with one-of-a-kind systems or outdated computers because of well-meaning donors or glib salesmen. Schools that thought it would be hard to acquire their first system will find it even harder to acquire their second to replace the first one they had to junk.

So, what do you do if Rube Goldberg offers you his bench model? See if you can sell it and invest the proceeds in a computer that will do what you want it to do *now*.

If the school board is pushing for a particular model primarily because they think it is a bargain, use your Carnegie communicative skills to direct the discussion to goals that can be met with existing software.

Forty-eight-star flags do have a historical value, as does the gigantic ENIAC computer—but they have no place in contemporary schools.—Dave Ruskjer. □

The author is publisher of *The Journal of the AMCA (Adventist Microcomputer Concepts and Applications)*.

## A Column of Reader Opinion

### Wants Reprint

I really appreciate the facts found in the article "Making the Grade" by Sheila Moore (October-November, 1984, issue) which I would like to keep in my files. I am the mother of two boys. I plan to follow Ellen White's counsel and not enter them in school at the traditional age of five and six. It is very encouraging to find facts in the field of education and child development that support this unpopular view.

May I have a reprint of the article?

Cathy Law  
Coos Bay, Oregon

• *Note: Readers wishing reprints of articles in the JOURNAL may obtain them by sending ten cents a page plus appropriate postage.—Eds.*

### No Coincidence

To me it is not a matter of coincidence that your fine editorial in the October-November, 1984, issue of the JOURNAL had as its caption "In Focus" and dealt quite interestingly with the word *disorientation*. I find that you did not specifically restrict it only to that which is taking place in the vocational lives of many Christians.

It appears to me that we are facing in our spiritual lives a type of disorientation which has its impact on the way we relate to the structure of the church.

Again, accept my commendation for a very well articulated editorial, and may God bless you.

A. T. Westney  
Associate Director  
Department of Education  
Columbia Union Conference  
of SDA  
Columbia, Maryland

### SLA Staff Responds

Ron Knott's article "Turning a School Around" (October-November, 1984, JOURNAL), described how one school faced and successfully overcame the problems of a declining

enrollment, rising inflation, and increased cost of living, coupled with the challenge to maintain academic excellence.

While we appreciate the opportunity to share our solution to a common problem, Mr. Knott failed to report with any degree of accuracy many of the facts relevant to the crisis and its resolution. So that the reader might better understand how this "turning around" was accomplished, the faculty and staff of South Lancaster Academy felt a response was necessary.

- The constituency expressed confidence and support for the ability of the school and board management to resolve the financial slide. It is important to realize that three of the five constituent churches were concurrently involved in strenuous building projects requiring financial commitments of immense proportions. Due to this, accounts receivable at the academy and elementary school were mounting.

- The "elaborate elective system" was merely an enumeration of the content of the traditional courses offered to create interest and variety. Instead of a blanket course title, i.e., English IV, each quarter's offering was listed separately: Creative Writing, Ethnic Literature, Women in Literature, Biblical Literature. Eight different courses may have been listed in industrial arts, but they certainly were not taught at the same time.

- The student-teacher ratio obviously could vary due to student interest or need. However, the final result was well within the denominational code requirement. This approach to modular scheduling has not changed significantly today. It does not require an "exceptionally large staff." Of the 53 courses taught that year, some were offered as nine-week courses, some as semester courses. Of the 13 academy teachers, only seven were full time.

- Financial restructuring to reduce nine full-time equivalents in both the academy and elementary school re-

sulted from the replacement of several full-time personnel by part-time employees or retired volunteers; elimination of one principal by using only a single administrator for K-12; having janitorial service done by students; and assigning additional duties to teachers, such as those formerly cared for by a librarian and teacher aides. No reductions were made in the academy teaching staff, although adjustments were made in individual teacher loads.

Paul Kryger  
John M. Knowles  
Edelweiss Onfray  
Enid C. Schmidt  
Alfred Aastrup, Principal  
F. Moses

Staff Members  
South Lancaster Academy  
South Lancaster, Mass.

The author responds: It is unfortunate that the principal and some staff members at South Lancaster Academy find my recent article so unsatisfactory.

In the interest of fairness, it is necessary to point out that I submitted the article to a number of people more than a year before its publication. These included the school board chairman, the union director of education, the college church pastor, two board members, and Mr. Aastrup, the academy principal. I specifically asked to be made aware of any errors in fact or misrepresentation of events or opinions. I received no response from Mr. Aastrup and am puzzled that he should raise some concerns at this time.—Ronald Knott.

*Editor's Note: Some weeks before the article was printed, all of the persons quoted, including the academy principal, received photocopies of the material from our office and were asked to respond to the facts related therein. Mr. Aastrup did not comment on any of the assertions of the article at that time.* □

## WHAT CHILDREN NEED

Drescher, John M. *Seven Things Children Need*. Scottsdale, Penna.: Herald Press, 1976. 152 pages, \$2.95.

In these days of increasing difficulty with child raising, this book offers a short, concise, and well-documented discussion of the most basic needs of children. The author places these needs in seven categories—significance, security, acceptance, love, praise, discipline, and God.

Although this book is basically written for parents, the sharing role of teachers in meeting the needs of young people makes it paramount that they also be aware of children's needs and ways to meet them.

The child is seen as part of a total picture—part of a family and all humanity. He or she is seen as having individual needs, aims, and desires that are not to be subjugated to or elevated above those of others, but are to fit harmoniously within the context of his or her time and place in life.

The format of the book—relatively short chapters sprinkled with appropriate anecdotal material, followed by introspective questions for the parent and then discussion material—makes it very useful for meetings with parent groups. The book is informative, precise, and a pleasure to read.

The appendix provides a chart for understanding age growth patterns from ages five through 18. This chart is divided into physical, spiritual, social, and sexual areas. The appendix also includes a quiz to determine how permissive the reader, as an adult, is in the training of children.

I see this book as presenting ideas that take 60 minutes to read, a lifetime to practice, and an eternity in which to reap the benefits.—Shirley Goodridge.

The author teaches third and fourth grade at Kailua Mission School, Kailua, Hawaii.

## BOOSTING YOUR MEMORY

Finkel, Robert W. *The Brainbooster: Your Guide to Rapid Learning and Remembering*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1983. 198 pages. Paper, \$6.95.

In *Brainbooster*, Finkel does, as his subtitle indicates, emphasize learning rather than merely offering a few superficial memory gimmicks. He has crammed a great deal of useful information, with a solid basis in learning theory, into a nonthreatening paperback well-suited to college students, forgetful adults, and

even advanced high school seniors. Since most of the techniques presented are uncomplicated, teachers could certainly explain them to much younger students, although the vocabulary level of the book makes it unlikely that many younger pupils will be comfortable reading it on their own.

The major strategies presented are visualization, organization, and association, with numerous and varied applications of each. For example, Finkel explains how to link a chain of images for learning lists or vocabulary, how to telescope complex equations into manageable units, and how to follow a procedure for turning word problems into symbols. He reviews the time-honored use of association for learning names and also introduces mapping as a means of improving reading comprehension and recall.

Other specific applications include remembering numbers, foreign languages, chemistry structures, and equations; writing, speech making, listening, and viewing. The book also has a useful chapter on using the major techniques to teach.

The author provides frequent drills for each learning technique. These drills, together with the clear, uncomplicated explanation of memorization strategies, are two reasons this book rates high marks.

Although some of the strategies may be familiar to readers, so many applications are given that there will be something new here for everyone. There is a great deal for students at all levels, who are rarely taught *how* to learn, while teachers will find it an excellent source of learning strategies to share with their students.—Carolyn and Gail Kujawa.

Carolyn Kujawa is the director of the Counseling and Learning Center, Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland. Gail Kujawa is a systems analyst for the Department of Defense, U.S. Government.

## GROWING TOGETHER

Linda Hunt, Marianne Frase, and Doris Liebert, *Celebrate the Seasons*. Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1983. 168 pages. Paper, \$6.95.

*Celebrate the Seasons* is a "growing together" gardening book guaranteed to acquaint any prospective green thumb, child or adult, with the magic of gardening.

The major section deals with the where, what, when, and how to plant and care for gardens. Simple recipes provide ways to use the produce. Flowers and other garden products can be used in making gifts, with directions given for such items as flower pres-

ents, Christmas tree trimming, and potato print wrap.

This book appears to be hand-printed and has tasteful childlike crayon and water-color illustrations.

With its creative ideas, *Celebrate the Seasons* is a perfect way to introduce a child to the delights of gardening.—Blossom Engen.

---

Blossom Engen taught elementary school for a number of years, and recently served as assistant editor of the primary levels of the SDA Reading Textbook Series. She and her students had many "growing together" projects.

### COMPUTERS IN CLASSROOMS

Jack A. Chambers and Jerry W. Sprecher, *Computer-Assisted Instruction, Its Use in the Classroom*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983. 232 pages. Paper, \$12.95.

*Computer-Assisted Instruction* is a handbook addressed to both teachers and administrators at all levels of experience. Those with little understanding of computers will appreciate the historical information regarding the microcomputer-based CAI field and experimental developments. The glossary and nontechnical explanations describe basic computer hardware, software, and minimum computer lab requirements. Experienced computer users and others with advanced understanding will benefit from the sections that suggest strategies for optimal implementation and evaluation of computer usage in school settings.

Mechanics of setting up systems in various educational situations, integrating CAI into the curriculum, and recommendations regarding availability of equipment to students and faculty are covered quite extensively. The book includes comparisons of features for the most popular microcomputers and guidelines for purchasing software.

Chapters highlighting theories of learning, instructional strategies, and artificial intelligence provide a background for courseware design and development. The most helpful features are the forms for CAI Conceptual Design and Detailed Coursework Design, which can be reproduced in a fill-in-the-blanks format, thus facilitating creation of original software that meets specific learning objectives in an exceptionally organized manner.

Administrators will particularly appreciate Part 4, which predicts CAI impact on traditional education in the future and provides resource listings of software sources and organizations. The book stresses

needs assessment and evaluation to ensure maximum efficiency. It is not an anecdotal book of experiences, nor is it designed to be a complete reference for developing original programs. A list of books and journals to fill those needs is given in the "Reading" section.

Overall, I feel administrators will find that this book saves time, improves faculty knowledge, encourages team participation, and presents an organized approach to integrating microcomputers into education.—Chris Tucker.

---

The author is president of Creative Data, Inc., a Collegedale, Tennessee, firm that specializes in software for educational applications.

### ART APPRECIATION FOR CHILDREN

Wolf, Aline D. *Mommy, It's a Renoir*. Altoona, Penna.: Parent Child Press, 1984. 96 pages. Paper, \$10.95.

If you feel inadequate about dealing with fine arts or communicating a love for and understanding of it to your elementary students, here is an excellent aid to help you remedy the problem.

Beginning with a foreword and preface that present valid reasons for such a book on inculcating art appreciation, the author (who is an art professional herself) proceeds to outline an excellent and workable plan that begins with preschoolers.

The book is divided into three parts: Part I, entitled "Art and Young Children," includes such subheadings as "How Young Children Learn," "Cultivating Taste," and "Displaying Art Prints." Part II sets up the eight steps for using art postcards, such as collecting, mounting, storing, and arranging them in sets if you do not order the ready-made ones available from the publishers, whose address is listed in the book.

The eight steps begin with simple matching of identical paintings, then increase in difficulty to pairing two, then four paintings by the same artist. Activities for older children include a study of such different schools of art as Dutch, French Impressionism, Abstract Painting, et cetera. Step 8 introduces "Time Lines of Art."

Each step has detailed instructions for the preparation and use of the cards, including three levels of difficulty—Easiest, Intermediate, and Advanced. In addition, many other uses for the packets of postcards are suggested. This would be an excellent activity for a classroom learning center.

Part III, a convenient reference section, includes a

(To page 36)

# Coming Events

**FEBRUARY-JULY, 1985**

Association of American Colleges (Washington, D.C.)	<b>February 10-13</b>
NAD Science-Health Steering Committee (Loma Linda, California)	<b>February 13-19</b>
Christian Home Week	<b>February 16-23</b>
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (Denver, Colorado)	<b>February 27-March 2</b>
American Association of School Administrators (Dallas, Texas)	<b>March 8-11</b>
Association of SDA Higher Education Administrators (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan)	<b>March 15-17</b>
Adventist Youth Week	<b>March 16-23</b>
American Association for Higher Education (Chicago, Illinois)	<b>March 17-20</b>
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (Chicago, Illinois)	<b>March 23-26</b>
National Association of Elementary School Principals (Denver, Colorado)	<b>March 30-April 3</b>
G.C. Spring Meeting (Washington, D.C.)	<b>April 3-4</b>
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (Cincinnati, Ohio)	<b>April 14-19</b>
Reading/Science In-Service Meeting (Washington, D.C.)	<b>April 15-18</b>
Educational Day-Elementary School Offering	<b>April 27</b>
NAD Curriculum Committee (Washington, D.C.)	<b>May 5-9</b>
International Reading Association Convention (New Orleans, Louisiana)	<b>May 5-9</b>
NAD Commission on Secondary Education	<b>May 13-15</b>
NAD Certification Study Committee (Washington, D.C.)	<b>May 13-15</b>
Reading/Science In-Service Meeting (Memphis, Tennessee)	<b>May 20-23</b>
Reading/Science In-Service Meeting (Thousand Oaks, California)	<b>May 27-30</b>
Reading/Science In-Service Meeting (Toronto, Ontario, Canada)	<b>June 10-13</b>
General Conference Session (New Orleans, Louisiana)	<b>June 27-July 6</b>
Bible Materials-Grades 7-8 Workshop (Loma Linda University, La Sierra, California)	<b>July 8-August 2</b>
Association of SDA Librarians Conference (Berrien Springs, Michigan)	<b>July 9-13</b>
NADCC Computer Education Workshop (Portland, Oregon)	<b>July 10-31</b>

ask of them and given supportive conditions, they can produce far beyond what might be expected,' she said."—*Education U.S.A.*, November 7, 1983. Reprinted by permission from *Education U.S.A.* Copyright 1983, National School Public Relations Association.

### Good Ideas

• "Got a spare room in your school? . . . Here's an idea that became an instant success in Taft Elementary School in the Wyoming (Mich.) Public Schools. . . .

"It's called The Parent Room, and it was created with the knowledge that where parents become involved in a child's education, the child becomes more successful in school. It serves as a resource center for parents both of public and private school students who want:

Books and pamphlets about raising children.

Books to take home to read to their children.

Games they can make to play at home with their children.

Materials to take home for their children to practice skills not mastered in school.

Videotapes to view on topics such as death, divorce, cheating, lying, etc.

Recipes and information about nutritious food and treats.

A place to meet and talk with other parents.

"The Parent Room is open every day from 8:30 to 3:15—less 45 minutes for lunch—and evenings by appointment."—*It Starts in the Classroom*, December, 1981. Reprinted by permission.

• *Fingerprinting children.* "It's something people don't like to think about, but it happens. Children do disappear. And to help find missing children, the Quaker-town (Pa.) School District sponsored a program of fingerprinting its elementary school pupils. The program, suggested by the teachers association, is voluntary. State police do the fingerprinting without charge, and the fingerprints become the parents' property."—*Ibid.*, May, 1983.

• *Courtesy cards.* "As a means of boosting pride, a 'Cougar Courtesy Card' system was launched at Cascade Elementary School, Kennewick, Wash. Every child is issued a card to take home with the instruction to do a favor for the family or for a friend. It has to be a job for which *they do not get paid*. The card is mailed back to the school by the recipient of the favor, and is placed in the Courtesy Card box. A primary and intermediate card is drawn once each month at the Citizen of the Week Assembly. The two students

are then treated to lunch by the principal."—*Ibid.* □

## UNCLE SAM AND YOUR SCHOOL

By Gary M. Ross

**T**he "Dids" and "Didn'ts" of the 98th U.S. Congress session on Capitol Hill may now be history, but they will have a significant effect on administrators, teachers, and students.

### Congress approved:

- A budget for the Department of Education;
- One billion dollars over two years to improve mathematics and science education in public schools;
- Voluntary religious meetings in public schools under very narrowly drawn circumstances;
- Federal aid to vocational education, with incentives for providing improved access to groups poorly served in the past;
- A national summit meeting on school improvement;

The author is Associate Director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the General Conference of SDA, and serves as the church's liaison with the U.S. Congress.

## Between the Book Ends

(Continued from page 32)

shopping list and how-to instructions for making your own card sets. A fairly complete section follows on "Schools of Art in History" for those who feel shaky in this area, including drawings of typical paintings from various schools or periods.

Together with a list of suggested art books for children, the book concludes with a useful index of painters that includes a pronunciation guide, dates of birth and death, country or school. This aid will help alleviate any lingering feelings of insecurity teachers

might feel about starting an art appreciation course for children.

The ready-made postcards for each step cost \$6.00 for a set of 12; \$12.00 for 24. It is not necessary to buy all sets at once. It would be less expensive to make up your own, but this would limit you to those postcards you could obtain locally or as you visit art museums.

*Mommy, It's a Renoir* is an exciting book—the best I've seen yet on this topic.—Lucille Mathewson. □

The author teaches art at Sligo Adventist School, Takoma Park, Maryland.