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Low-Cost WORD PROCESSING
S100-BUS Computer User Notes
S50-BUS Computer User Notes

April 18, 1978

Robert Fabris
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Robert:

First Class

Enclosed, Word Processing 1:3, in which on page 3 I indicate some of my interest in Bally.

We would be very happy to do a publication just for Bally owners, since I anticipate it will be a major force in computing.

When I say 24 pages, I simply reflect on past experience. I scrunch up the type, keep everything tight as possible, and keep going until I reach a limit. That has been the 1-oz first-class mail 13¢ barrier. We can work around that: I plan to get a Second Class permit for S100, with the upcoming issue, and one for Word Processing with the next issue. That gives us 1st Class delivery, at Third Class (actually lower) rates.

Or, if you wish, I would be glad to make it a department in one of the other publications, with option of it growing into its own publication, or of taking over the other publication.

We're trying very hard to set up something here that could support a number of publications. Reason being that, although nonprofit (Nat'l Geographic is too), I work full time at it. Started with the S100 publication supporting the Central Data 2650. I was starving. The Central Data publication, Word Processing, and 6-mo of unemployment brought in \$5,000 last year. Correction, there were over \$1000 in borrowings also in that. So I've had to gain a little marketing sense (very little), and reach out for publications that would generate a little cash flow. But I refuse to be a "me too" publication, to pay any attention to games (but subscribers can contribute those, and I put them in), to take in advertising, or to pay any attention to anything product that does not appear to be cost effective. That latter hurts me, since the majority of computerists today take publications in order to locate products on which they can blow their money.

The Bally looks like the most cost effective thing on the horizon.

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Funny, I turned down a publication on the Alpha Microsystem 16-bit machine. There was the money crowd, and perhaps I could have done quite well. But I didn't feel I could ever afford an Alpha system, and I felt I could never really accept the Alpha as anything but an expensive kluge put together to impress people who didn't know anything about it.

How would we fill 24 pages at this stage of the game? Couldn't, unless we made it a department of \$50, or something. First 2650 was 12 pages, was late and thus had lots of contributions ~~for~~ from subscribers, which then numbered about 100. In nine months, we only got about 300 2650 people signed up, but got excellent support from them.

I'm nuts for getting into things like this. There is so much work! But by getting deeper into it, I can get people in to work on the mailing, and I can send the printing out to be done. But I quite sincerely try to discourage others from starting user newsletters. Central Data didn't know when they were well off, and after I had brought out three issues (but not mailed the last one) announced that they would have their own π 2650 newsletter. At first that ticked me off something awful, but I realized it was my opportunity to turn ~~it~~ my publication into something that could be marketed (but it hasn't started selling). So I turned it into \$100, since the Central Data interfaces to that. Now Central Data ~~is~~ struggles with trying to sell something they can't make any money off of, keeping track of 1000 or so prospects, then a hundred or two subscribers, trying to fill space and get it out occasionally. They have to make it look better than what I was doing, so they have to have headlines, etc. They are real fools, but that is their problem.

I will do for the Bally what I've done for the past year: show an interest in the system, and channel my thoughts towards real uses. Subscribers would respond to that, but also come in with some games and stuff. I'd try to get Bally support and participation.

We're working out of a 24x60' mobile home. I plan to expand this by getting rid of some big equipment not needed, but in the way. I can quite easily add a 9' x 34' room on one side, and 11' x 20' or so on the back. So this thing is quite feasible, and I think we could do a lot of good.

Sincerely,

