

Ahs:

Number 1
Spring 1994

ISSN pending

The delights, surprises, and pains of using computers.

Ahs: is the quarterly newsletter of ICON: The International Computer Owners Network

Kansasfest becomes ICONference - be there!

Welcome to the **premier issue of Ahs**, the quarterly newsletter for members of the International Computer Owners Network. Here's why you should come to our *sixth annual conference*.

Sixth annual? Yes! ICON has inherited the widely acclaimed Kansasfest from Resource Central and we're lowering the price and turning it into our own **ICONference**.

As an ICON member, you should be there. Let me explain it this way — some people are interested in fishing. They gather a gang of friends and drive umpteen hours to some canoe camp where they stay up all night swatting mosquitoes and telling fish stories. *The ICONference has all that without the mosquitoes.*

Some people like to ski. They drive umpteen hours to some ski lodge in the mountains where they break bones and fall asleep with thin-air exhaustion at 9 p.m. telling ski stories to strangers. *The ICONference has all that without the early bed times.*

Some people like to go on cruises. They fly to Miami, where the locals use tourists for target practice, they

stand in long lines waiting to gain weight in the dining room, they lose lots of sleep playing silly games, and they end up having to tip the room steward. *The ICONference has all that except the room steward.*

Some people like computers. They'll be coming to Kansas City on Wednesday, July 20. They'll find their way to Avila College (complete directions supplied upon registration), where we take over the dorms and the cafeteria and set up a computer lab deep underground in the dance studio. During the day on Thursday and Friday (July 21-22) we have sessions and seminars about computers. We learn about, see, and play with lots of neat stuff! (For example, this year we're already talking to a company that wants to introduce a new computer at our conference.) Lunch is in the cafeteria, where the staff of *GS+ Magazine* entertains us with skits and serious silliness.

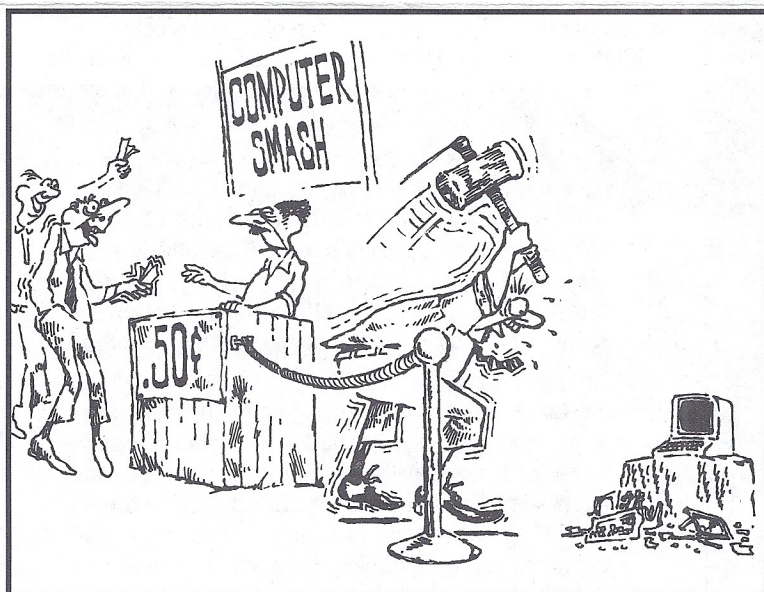
There will also be a banquet, an unstructured day, and plenty of opportunities to savor the fine restaurants of Kansas City (we don't have any mountains or oceans here, so what we locals do for entertainment mostly is

In this issue of Ahs

Summertime, Going to Kansas City, and other hit tunes evoke the fun of our summer conference. In our lead article this month, we tell why. But attend and you'll *know* why.

Next, we cry and blather and play tiny violins trying to get your support! We explain what user groups are all about so you'll sign up six friends today.

Finally, **News from the front lines** fills you in on what you've been missing if you're not getting our monthly disks (are you nuts?)



eat). Once again this year, Saturday will be an unstructured day. Begun last year by popular request, the unstructured day gives attendees a daylight opportunity to just hang out around the glowing monitors and swap tall tales (of course, lots of this tall tale stuff goes on at night, too). We'll also provide tables on Saturday where conference attendees can display computer goodies they'd like to swap or sell. There will be some great bargains, but you won't be able to take advantage of them if you're not there.

So make plans now to come. Come alone or bring your friends. But don't miss the first **ICONference**. The best is getting better.

Here's how to register. On the back page of this issue of *Ahs* you'll find our photocopyable *Double-Click This ICON!* form. Fill out the conference registration section now and mail or fax it to us (prices go up on May 15; when you register early you not only save yourself money, ICON saves because planning is easier.) Rooms at Avila are limited and are assigned in the order registrations are received. Attendees may also stay in nearby hotels (prices vary widely, we can provide a list of recommendations). An information packet with complete directions to Avila, a preliminary session schedule, and other information will be mailed around July 1 to those who have registered.

Some people spend their money hunting pheasants, some racing sports cars, and some playing golf. But people who like computers get together every summer at the **ICONference**.

We need a larger ICON

Being born with the inheritance of Resource Central's subscribers, ICON is already larger than most user groups. However, ICON is different from most user groups and it's not yet large enough to be fully self-supporting. Here's why.

User groups are all about users helping users. As *individuals*, we often find ourselves frustrated and confused by computer problems, shortcomings, and information inadequacies. However, as a *group*, we have members who have probably already solved our problem for themselves. The role of the user group is to form a community of users and to provide ways for individual members of the community to ask questions of and provide answers to other members of the group. Obviously, the larger the group, the more experience and wisdom the group will be able to draw on and the better the education each of us will receive.

ICON is a unique kind of group, designed to avoid the hidden weaknesses of typical user groups. Most of the groups in existence today fall into three basic categories.

- **The local, all-volunteer group.** This is the most common type of user group. Its strength is its ability to provide easy face-to-face access to other computer users. Weaknesses are its relatively small size, which limits the depth of the group's knowledge, and its reliance on volunteer participation, which leads to the burnout of group leaders.
- **The large, staffed group.** A few major cities have large user groups with nationwide membership. These groups often have paid staff members and many strengths. Unfortunately, the chance to control one of these groups is a big-enough plum that members end up spending massive amounts of time and effort on political issues. The people who do get

control of these groups are usually better at political maneuvering than at creating an atmosphere for solving computer problems.

- **The commercial enterprise masquerading as a user group.** The best user groups aren't actually "user groups" at all. They have thousands of members, they have the expertise of a paid staff, and they have the stability of business-like control. The only problem is that most members of these groups think they belong to and are volunteers for a non-profit organization, but they are actually doing volunteer work for a private business. There is a fundamental ethical problem with this type of group.

ICON has all the advantages of the commercial "user groups" without the ethical problems. The International Computer Owners Network is organized as a non-profit Kansas corporation. ICON is run with the stability of a business. It has a small salaried staff. However, ICON has no owners or shareholders. If ICON ever disbands, its assets have to be distributed to a similar type of non-profit organization.

ICON also has all the advantages of the large staffed groups, but without the political problems — ICON is managed by a self-perpetuating board of dictators, er... directors.

ICON's staff is now preparing a 501(c)(3) application for the Internal Revenue Service (according to the Paperwork Reduction Act notice at the beginning of the form, it will require over 124 hours of work to complete). If our application is granted, ICON will be exempt from taxes and will be able to accept tax-deductible contributions.

It's a pretty vision, but for all the pieces to fall together we need more members. ICON's financial stability currently comes from three sources — membership fees, conference fees, and subscriptions to our monthly disks. Even though our monthly disks are *priced* like any other user group's disks, unlike most groups we actually pay our editors and featured contributors something for their work. (We're not making them rich, but we are keeping them interested.) This makes our disks better and enhances the benefits of belonging to the group.

To be able to afford this (and the rent and the insurance and the postage and the thousand needs an organization like this has) we need more subscribers to our monthly and special interest disks. These provide the bulk of our income.

How you can help. You can help ICON to live long and prosper in two ways. If you're not already subscribing to one of our disk publications, help ICON *and help yourself* by using the *Double-Click This ICON!* form on the back of this newsletter to pick up a subscription. There's no better or cheaper way to take advantage of what the ICON community has to offer than receiving ICON's monthly and special interest disks.

The other way you can help is to make some photocopies of the *Double-Click This ICON!* form (or of this entire newsletter, we don't care) and pass them out to the computer junkies you know. Fax them, post them, mail them, hand them out at computer superstores.

The world is full of people who would enjoy and benefit from being a part of the ICON community. And we'd enjoy and benefit from their participation. Bring them on, sign them up, and let's roll!

News from the front lines

Apple II

A2-Central is now the exclusive home of Steve Weyhrich's *A2 News Digest*. Weyhrich is a family physician in Omaha who has been an Apple II user and subscriber to **A2-Central** for years. He has written a history of the Apple II that has been published one chapter at a time in many user group newsletters. His news digest began as a project for the Omaha Apple user group newsletter. Later Steve began uploading the news column to GEnie, where it caught our attention.

After learning about ICON, Steve decided to support our group by making **A2-Central** the exclusive home of his news digest. It's the best monthly Apple II news summary you'll find anywhere!

Apple II news during the last few months has been dominated by the release of AppleWorks 4. Doug Cuff wrote a major review of the product for the January **A2-Central** and our March issue included a version 4.02 updater written by the lead programmer on AppleWorks 4, Randy Brandt. **TimeOut-Central**, our AppleWorks special-interest disk (edited by Brandt himself) also has published the updater as well as oodles of information about the product.

But AppleWorks isn't the whole story. Doug Cuff's March article, "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner," expresses the feelings of many Apple II users about the long-term stability of the Apple II and has been highly praised by readers. In addition to the main features, the January issue had 10 classic and 16 IIGs freeware/shareware items, February had 6 and 13, and March had 7 and 11. All this for less than \$5 a disk! Is this great or what?

The big news for our HyperCard IIGs group is that Apple has released the program to online services. This means you can now get the complete program online. Some user groups are also distributing it, although the program hasn't appeared on the user group license list yet. ICON distributes it (6 disks, \$18) under Resource Central's APDA license. If you're a fan of the Apple IIGs but you've never visited the **Script-Central** building, you're missing a real treat.

Studio City, the focus of our HyperStudio special interest group, continues to amaze all under the leadership of editor Bill Lynn. The Logo programming language is now available for HyperStudio, and **Studio City** is on top of it.

Request for Proposals

If you'd like to make a presentation at this year's **ICONference**, we need your proposal by May 1. Send an outline of your topic, intended audience, and equipment and other requirements. *Presenters earn a \$100 discount on conference fees!* Sessions should be geared for a one-hour time frame.

Macintosh

Macrocosm, ICON's monthly disk for Macintosh users, is a hit! Readers say they love the wit, news, and file selections made by the disk's editor, "Hangtime" Caplin. Hang's greatest discovery, however, has been Mark Roberts, a writer and consultant (computers and music to the entertainment and performing arts industry) living in Dallas.

Mark's think pieces "What Color Was Your Wagon" (February) and "The Virtual Village" (March) take you out of your own computer room into the big picture of the information revolution quietly reshaping our world. Is the information superhighway going to be an industry that is controlled by a few railroad-like magnates or is going to be a toll-free interstate highway? Those decisions are being made now. Interested? Read Mark's articles!

Our Studio City for the Macintosh special interest group is growing! Roger Wagner Publishing is releasing v2.0 of HyperStudio for the Macintosh now and it is good.

MS-DOS

Is MS-DOS dying? We've been talking about a monthly disk for MS-DOS, **Config.sys**, for a couple of months already, but so far all the interest has been in our Windows publication. We're still developing **Config.sys**, but if our members don't express some real interest soon, we may abandon this.

Windows

Solid Windows is under way! The first issue was dated April 1994 and has been mailed to charter subscribers. **Solid Windows** uses the Windows HELP software to display itself. All Windows users have this software, which supports hypertext links and embedded graphics. The first issue includes a complete Basic runtime library for your Windows directory, which is needed to use most freeware/shareware programs, and lots of other stunning stuff. Editor John Peters and his team of Windows users want to help you get the most out of Windows. But they can't do a thing for you until you start getting their disk. Just do it.

Ahs:

© Copyright 1994 by

International Computer Owners Network

P.O. Box 11250

Overland Park, KS 66207 USA

ISSN pending

Printed in the U.S.A.

Phone: 913-469-6502

Internet: ICON@GEnie.geis.com

Fax: 913-469-6507

The International Computer Owners Network is a non-profit corporation formed in January 1994 with the mission of educating the public about computers and related technologies. **LIMITATION OF LIABILITY.** ICON'S LIABILITY FOR ERRORS AND OMISSIONS IS LIMITED TO ITS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE. In no case shall the group, its directors, its members, its editors, or its contributors be liable for any incidental or consequential damages, nor for ANY damages in excess of the fees paid by a member.

Pages 1 through 4 inclusive or page 4 itself may be photocopied or distributed by fax. All other rights reserved.

Double-Click this ICON!

This ICON is...

the **International Computer Owners Network**, a non-profit computer user group with world-wide membership.

By joining a user group you connect yourself with a large community of users who face the same computer problems and frustrations that you do. *The group provides ways for individuals to connect to and engage in the educational activities and problem-solving abilities of the group.*

ICON activities include:

- a **quarterly newsletter, *Ahs***, devoted to orchestrating the group's activities
- **inexpensive monthly disks** for Apple II, Macintosh, MS-DOS, and Windows users that educate by means of tutorials, feature articles, news summaries, tips and tricks, and access to the best freeware and shareware
- **special interest group disks** for members with specific interests
- **online forums** on GEnie that include active bulletin boards, packed software libraries, and frequent real-time conferences
- **ICONference**, a members-only summer conference
- **Help ICON**, a members-helping-members volunteer program.

ICON
PO Box 11250
Overland Park, KS 66207
USA



913-469-6502



913-469-6507



ICON@genie.geis.com



Yes, sign me up!

My Particulars

name: _____

address: _____

phone: _____

fax: _____

email: _____

Payment: You may pay with a check made out to **ICON** (U.S. banks and U.S. funds only!). We also accept Visa, MasterCard, related international credit cards, and School Purchase Orders.

check MasterCard Visa PO

- -
 card number

-
 exp date signature _____

Membership Only

ICON membership only (You must be a member to attend our conference. Membership is included with disk subscriptions.) \$8.00

ICONference Registration

	before May 15	after May 15
3-day registration & lunches	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250

Private room, 2 meals \$45/night \$50/night

Double room, 2 meals \$35/night \$40/night

Wed Thur Fri Sat Female Male
 roommate preference?: _____ Smoker Sleeper

Monthly Disks

	auto * renewal	manual renewal
A2-Central (Apple II) 12 Issues, 1-800K disk/issue	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49.95	<input type="checkbox"/> \$59.95
Config.sys (MS-DOS) 12 Issues, 1-1.4M disk/issue	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49.95	<input type="checkbox"/> \$59.95
Macrocosm (Macintosh) 12 Issues, 1-1.4M disk/issue	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49.95	<input type="checkbox"/> \$59.95
Solid Windows (Windows) 12 Issues, 1-1.4M disk/issue	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49.95	<input type="checkbox"/> \$59.95

Special-Interest Disks

	auto * renewal	manual renewal
Script-Central (HyperCard IIgs) 6 Issues, 2-800K disks/issue	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39.95	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49.95
Studio City IIgs (HyperStudio) 6 Issues, 2-800K disks/issue	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39.95	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49.95
Studio City Mac (HyperStudio) 6 Issues, 1-1.4M disk/issue	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39.95	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49.95
TimeOut-Central (AppleWorks) 6 Issues, 1-800K disk/issue	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39.95	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49.95

* **About Auto-renewal:** A few days before we send the last issue of your subscription, we'll charge a renewal to your credit card automatically. You have no renewal hassles. You can cancel at any time and get a refund on outstanding issues. **However, you must pay by credit card to obtain the auto-renewal rate!**