

Number of users more than doubles

Computers up by 40 percent

By BRANDON BERRY
Reporter

What do income taxes, electrical engineering, and Space Invaders have in common? How about term papers and critical-path analysis?

They can all be done on a micro-computer.

The number of micro-computers on the Texas A&M campus has grown by more than 40 percent in the past year. The number of people using these computers has more than doubled in the past two years.

Hal Hall, director of the Special Formats Division of the Sterling C. Evans Library, said the growth epitomizes the definite place of micro-computers in the future of Texas A&M.

"We are interested in promoting computing literacy — the ability to get from point A to point B," Hall said. "The possibilities of using computers in education are endless and exciting."

The micro-computer facility in the library is located on the sixth

floor in the Learning Resources Department.

The computers are open to all Texas A&M students and faculty by reservation. Classes, ranging from Biology to English literature, also use the LRD regularly.

The facility contains computers from Texas Instruments and Balcones, as well as TRS-80's, Apples, IBM personal computers, and an assortment of program disks.

The disks contain programs for tax preparation, critical-path analysis, word processing, the programming of individual programs, and many more.

And even though the LRD does not offer computing literacy classes, video cassettes are available which show the beginner some of the uses of the computers in the facility. An educational facility is available in the Academic Computing Center, on the first floor of the Blocker Building.

The ACC offers micro-computers

originally designed for business analysis classes and business majors.

However, ACC System Manager Larry Bowles said the system is not just for business majors anymore.

"While we ask that the people in BANA classes have priorities when necessary, our computers are open to anyone," he said.

The ACC also has TI's and an IBM personal computer, as well as Ataris, Apples, and Commodores.

However, what makes the ACC different than any other computer facility at Texas A&M isn't hardware, software, or program disks. The ACC plays soft music, has houseplants, and provides a generally more aesthetic atmosphere than that found in the typical technical facility.

"These things are my idea," Bowles said. "I paid for them out of my own pocket. The plants and the other stuff not only make it nicer for the students, but for me as well. I

have to work here."

Bowles said he sees the entire computer industry escaping from its traditional, regimented image.

"The era of the plain terminal is gone," he said. "Telecommunications is the new direction of the market."

There are also many more computers available than just those in the ACC and LRD.

Most departments of the University have access to some kind of computer system, be it the individual terminals in the offices of graduate students or the vast VAX network available to some engineering students.

So why don't more people use the many micro-computer services available?

"I think more people are becoming aware of the system and its advantages," Hall said. "Eventually, when people overcome their fear of computers, the use of computers will be quite common."

50,000 Army, Air Force, Marine troops ward off invaders in war maneuvers

United Press International

EL PASO — B-52 bombers from the Strategic Air Command roared out of Biggs Army Air Field, Fort Bliss Wednesday as part of the Gallant Eagle war maneuvers involving 50,000 Army, Air Force and Marine troops.

The combat exercises simulate the invasion of a small country by a Soviet-backed foreign power, with the United States intervening in behalf of the beleaguered ally.

Gallant Eagle is being conducted

in California, Nevada and Utah. Five KC-135 tankers and 14 B-52 bombers are flying missions out of Biggs, Fort Bliss daily, Capt. Pam Fenner, a SAC public affairs officer said.

The object of the exercises will be to simulate U.S. assistance to a fictitious "Country of Purple," officials said. Purple has been invaded by the "Country of Orange," and the United States has been asked to help ward off the invaders.

The pilots of the bombers at Biggs are waiting for orders to bomb the Orange strongholds in Utah and Ne-

vada, hoping the Army and Marines can halt the attack on Purple City (San Bernardino, Calif.), Fenner said.

The five tankers, which are Boeing 707 jets modified for military purposes, left Biggs Wednesday. The fuel planes were to refuel fighter planes over the Mojave desert as part of the plan to halt the Orange faction, Fenner said.

Fenner said the exercise is designed to simulate a war in the Iran-Iraq deserts.

Part of the exercise was to train the Air Force personnel in the estab-

lishment of an emergency command post near the front lines, she said.

The Air Force support personnel set up the modular buildings in the desert north of Biggs Field, Fenner said. The buildings are housing 1,400 support personnel.

Fenner said part of the Gallant Eagle exercise is to test the ability of the B-52s to fight a conventional war. Sequences in the war games have been controlled by a computer which tells both sides in the simulated conflict what moves to make, Fenner said.

Two gas pipelines explode, waking county

United Press International

FALLS CITY — Two natural gas pipelines exploded Wednesday, shooting an orange fireball 500 feet in the air and awakening residents in communities 20 miles away, officials said.

"We had a little explosion this morning," said Karnes County sheriff's dispatcher Sylvia Marabal, "and it woke up everybody in the county." Valero Energy Corp. spokesman

Mike Long said the explosion occurred at about 2:45 a.m. Wednesday at the Valero-Hobson regulating plant near Falls City, about 40 miles southeast of San Antonio.

There were no injuries and no interruption of gas service, he said. Valero technicians closed the pipelines at about 4 a.m., but the fire continued burning until sunrise, consuming gas still in the lines.

Long said damages were limited

to sections of a 24-inch pipeline, a 20-inch pipeline — both of which supplied gas to San Antonio — several valves, cleaning facilities and meter sheds.

Witnesses said the explosion sent an orange fireball into the air, produced flames that reached 500 feet and started several brush fires that were quickly extinguished. The concussion was felt throughout Karnes County.

"It sounded like a big truck going through your home. You could read a newspaper outside, it was so bright," said Lynn Frazier, who lives only a half mile from the blast scene.

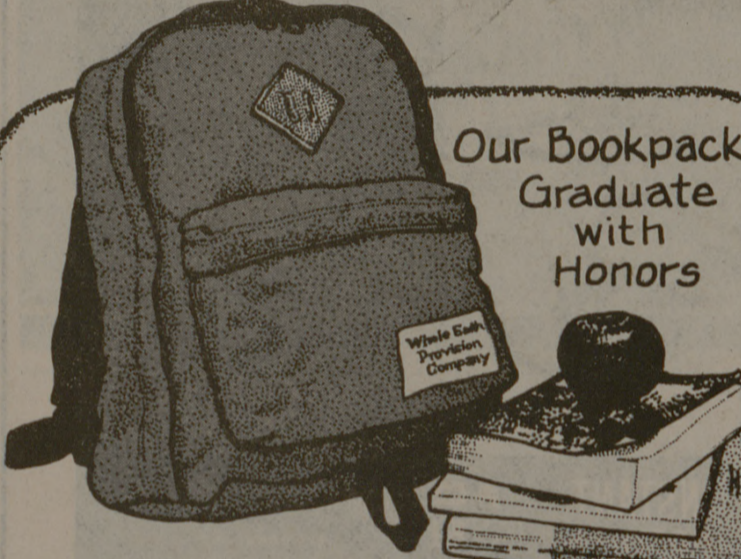
Falls City Fire Marshal Gerald Sekula said the intense heat initially kept firefighters a quarter-mile from the scene. The pipeline fire was monitored by firefighters from Karnes and Wilson counties.



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