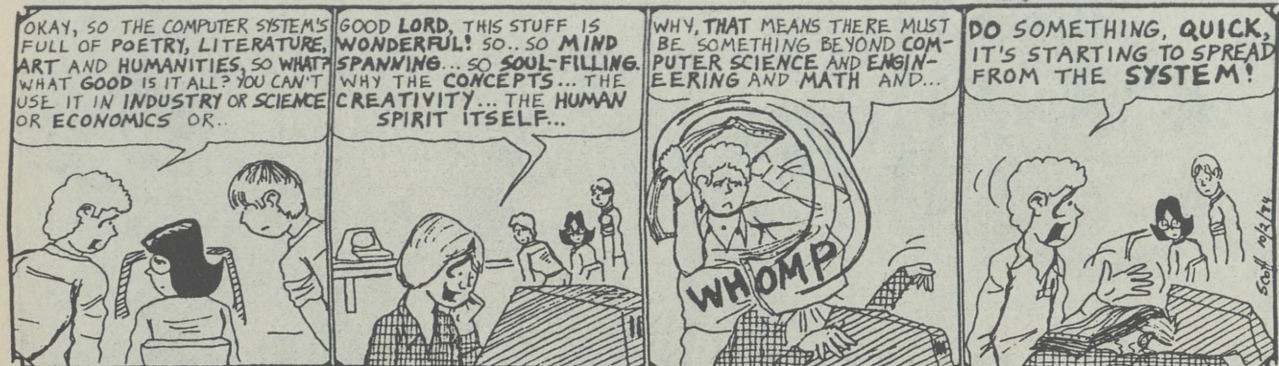


Warped

by Scott McCullar



SHOE

Jeff MacNelly



Saved
Old computers get new waterfront home

United Press International

BOSTON — Remember when computers were bigger than we were? When their massive consoles and data banks resembled the war room of "Dr. Strangelove," and not the mutant typewriters seen in today's television commercials?

Progress, it seems, has robbed computers of much of their romance.

Word processing machines are hardly more threatening than a telephone, and adolescents have grown as dextrous with home computers as they are with skateboards.

Even the granddaddy of civil defense systems — the four-story SAGE computer buried underground near Booth Bay, Canada — was switched off last year after 25 years of surveying North American skies. Its replacement is smaller than a refrigerator.

Until recently, an obsolete computer like the SAGE, the largest vacuum tube computer ever built, would have been dismantled — its parts sold off or left to rust.

But thanks to a group of dedicated computer buffs, the ancestors of today's machines can be found at The Computer Museum in Boston, the only institution of its kind in the world.

"It's to preserve the history of computers, so a hundred years from now an industrial archeologist can see what has been before," said Gwen Bell, the museum's director.

"The technology of the computer is really inexplicable to many people. They don't understand what's in that black box and how it got there."

Explaining how a computer works is one of the museum's tasks when it reopens Nov. 14 at its new location in a renovated waterfront warehouse.

Guidelines can cut worker legal action

United Press International

SAN FRANCISCO — The growing number of lawsuits filed by workers fired from their jobs or upset about working conditions could be reduced if companies would take some simple legal advice.

"We believe the first step you can take toward reducing your vulnerability to claims by ex-employees is to have a carefully drafted employment contract," said George Weickhardt, a partner in a San Francisco law firm.

Weickhardt said employers face a number of potential liabilities due to increasing numbers of mergers and

acquisitions, growing emphasis on job productivity and a labor pool comprised of more women and older workers.

In the absence of a formal contract, the best thing to do is get company policies down in writing and make workers aware of the guidelines, Weickhardt said.

"So many of these lawsuits by employees today are based on what they say they were told by their employers," Weickhardt said.

"We recommend that every employer also have a written policy on sexual harassment that instructs employees to report all such instances

to management and assures them that offenses will be investigated and dealt with appropriately."

Weickhardt explained that in many cases ex-employees argue in court that they didn't know their employers were dissatisfied with them.

"Suddenly, they said, 'You're fired. Your performance is inadequate.' That's the typical pattern," Weickhardt said. "The longer the guy is on the payroll, the more basis he has for his lawsuit. They wouldn't have kept him on for so long unless he was doing a basic, satisfactory job."

County sheriff's department offers three-part handgun safety course

By TRENT LEOPOLD

Staff Writer

People who know little about handguns but want to learn can attend a firearms safety program beginning tonight at the Brazos Center.

The program, sponsored by the Brazos County Sheriff's Department, will be held in three parts — the first from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. tonight; the second from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Wednesday; and the last from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday.

Sheriff's Deputy Christopher Kirk said the course is designed for anyone who is interested in learning the proper use of a handgun.

"The program is designed to teach people the basics of using a handgun," Kirk said. "We welcome anyone who is interested in learning about handguns in general, (but) the class is actually designed to instruct people who have little or no knowledge about guns."

Kirk said the course is being sponsored in conjunction with the National Rifle Association and will cover topics from how a handgun works to how to avoid criminal attacks.

Kirk said anyone who is at least 12 years old may sign up for the class. A \$7 registration fee, which covers the cost of hand outs and the rent of the building, is required, he said.

Students will go to the Indian Lakes firing range Saturday to practice with their weapons, he said.

"We go out to the range where students (will) fire about 60 rounds of ammunition under close supervision by instructors," Kirk said. "Students have to pay for their own ammunition."

Though the sheriff's department will supply handguns for the class, Kirk said, people owning their own gun should bring it.

"We will supply various handguns at the classes for those wishing to use

them," Kirk said. "But if people have their own we would prefer they bring it, since the idea is to educate people about proper usage of their own gun."

When all phases of the class have been completed, students will be given a certificate of completion. With the certificate students can receive a discount on annual membership rates at a local firing range, Kirk said.

"The certificate of completion in no way authorizes people to carry a handgun except under the current Texas penal code provisions," Kirk said. "The only benefits of having a certificate are the discount and knowledge gained in the course."

Persons attending the class will be required to sign a document releasing Sheriff Bobby Yeager and the Brazos County Sheriff's Department from any liability in case of injury, Kirk said.

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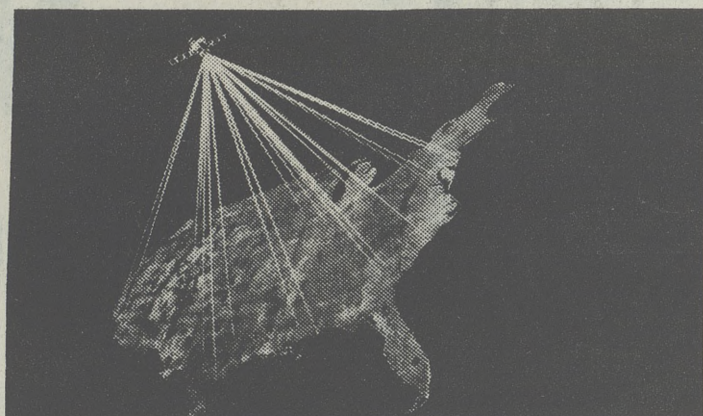
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