U-NEWS

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NEWS FROM UNIFORUM

January's UniForum joint conference in Washington DC provided quite a few surprises. The first and biggest surprise was the turnout. The organizers had hopefully predicted that total attendance might exceed 2,000; as things turned out, preregistration alone was more than 5,000, and the estimated total turnout was more than 8,000.

This report focuses on new developments from the vendor community. I've recapped the news from the big-name vendors briefly, then covered the large class of medium and small vendors whose new developments aren't automatically reported in the trade press.

IBM announced and demonstrated its long-awaited Unix for its PC. It's called PC/IX, short for Personal Computer Interactive Executive, and it was done for IBM by Interactive systems of Santa Monica. PC/IX is a rather complete implementation of System III, even including troff, which is far too sophisticated for any PC output device that IBM offers. There are also a few enhancements, mainly Interactive's INed screen editor and some kernel modifications that allow PC/IX to coexist with PC DOS. PC/IX requires a hard disk plus a floppy drive and 256k of memory. The quoted price for the software alone is $900, and delivery is scheduled for April.

This is IBM's first Unix offering for a major product line - the Series 1 was never a key product. It's increasingly obvious that it won't be the last, though. IBM engineers, who have long been willing to talk about whether Unix for the mainframe line would be a good idea, have suddenly clammed up on this topic. Experienced IBM watchers know this behavior as a very good sign that a product announcement is just around the corner.

DEC, after years of cautious toe-dipping in the Unix market, finally took the plunge. Ultrix-32 is full Unix with lots of Berkeley (vi, csh, FranzLisp) and runs in native mode. Despite the name, it's promised for DEC's full line of systems, 16 bit as well as 32 bit. (Although DEC seems to be hedging its bets here; the Pro 350 in their booth was running the Venix implementation of Unix from VenturCom.) Most important, DEC is actively promoting Unix now, even in posters, in place of their previous "Well, you can have it if you really want it" attitude.

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS, the last holdout against Unix among mini- and micro-computer makers, finally joined the bandwagon with the introduction of their Nu Machine. The Nu Machine offers Unix on a system evidently positioned against Sun and HP 9000: 68010 CPU, 4k of 45 nanosecond cache, 800 x 1024 bit-mapped display with multifont characters and a 474 megabyte Winchester are all offered. The most interesting feature is the proprietary NuBus, a 37.5 megabyte/second that supposedly can handle single or multiple processors of any architecture and even handle 32 bit data and address words. One of

things you can hook to the NuBus is a high-bandwidth translator to a Multibus. The Nu Machine is pricey as its competitors, though. An OEM buying a simple system (84k Winchester, ½k Ram and ¼" cartridge tape, display & keyboard) in quantity 25 will have to pay over $36,000 each. Texas Instruments Inc., Data Systems Group, P. O. Box 402430, Dallas, TX 75240; phone 800-527-3500.

IMAGEN was demonstrating their new 480 x 480 dot-per-inch laserprinter system. The extra resolution does wonders for type quality, as you can see from the actual sample of

This Sample printed on the IMAGEN 5/480

TEX & IMAGEN

TEX• is a composition program designed by Dr. Donald E. Knuth of Stanford University. TEX allows the author complete freedom in the design of a page while using a reasonably simple user interface.

TEX beautifully typesets pages of text. It can create boxes like the one we are in and can use many different *types* of *fonts*. Furthermore, TEX is outstanding in its treatment of mathematics.

output reproduced above. The Imagen 5/480 produces 5 pages per minute, 8½ x 11 size, and has all the fonts and graphics features of Imagen laserprinters generally. Imagen Corp., 2660 Marine Way, Mountain View, CA 94043; phone 415-960-0714.

LATTICE previewed version 2 of its C compiler for 8086 and 8088 systems with MS DOS or its variant PC DOS. The new version allows efficiency-conscious programmers to set maximum program and data spaces, separately, at either 64k or 1 meg; the smaller limit does not use indirect addressing. The associated function library has been revised to fully support the latest releases of MS DOS and PC DOS. Both compiler and library are available now, at $500 each. Lattice, Inc., P. O. Box 3072, Glen Ellyn, IL 60138; phone 312-858-7950.

ORACLE has transported their RDBMS to System V. Not that this was any great trick; they designed Oracle to bypass the host-OS file system entirely, which made almost 98% of the code OS-independent, and simplified record locking and simultaneous multi-user access to boot. Oracle Corp., 2710 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025; phone 415-854-7350; Telex 171437.

CATALYTIX offered tech lit and detailed explanations on their Safe C compiler, which puts run-time diagnostics into a compiler that otherwise works like the standard Unix C compiler, cc. Chief explainer was Alan R. Feuer, author of the Safe C compiler, and of the renowned C Puzzle Book. The Safe C compiler, sc, knows about a large number of run-time error situations, and you can select the ones it will recognize, separately for each module you compile. Modules compiled on sc and on other C compilers can be linked and run together, and when a program is debugged, it can be recompiled on an ordinary C compiler, to avoid the possibility of frightening end users with an occasional cryptic (to them) diagnostic message. In case you grow weary of watching sc tell you that your code is full of potential errors, the purchase price ($400 to $6000, depending on the number of users on your system) includes credit toward C programming courses at the Institute for Advanced Professional Studies, Catalytix' parent corporation. Demos

are available over your phone modem. Catalytix Corp., 55 Wheeler Street, Cambridge, MA 02138; phone 617-497-2160; TWX 7103201382 ABT CAM.

MT XINU announced that they've arranged to handle the bug list for 4.2BSD. Through an arrangement with the University of California at Berkeley's Computer Systems Research Group, Mt Xinu will be collecting bug reports, condensing out the duplication, and distributing the result (in print and over the net) to anyone interested, all at no charge. They'll also be collecting contributed bug fixes and distributing them, for a charge that will cover the costs of verifying recipient's 4.2 source licenses, and any mag tape used to send machine-readable code. Some thought is being given to preparing a modified 4.2 source tape that would have the bug fixes installed, in the indefinite future. Mt Xinu, 739 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA 94710; phone 415-644-0146; Usenet ucbvax!mtxinu!mtxinu.

MARI and its U.S. distributor touted their commercial, supported release of The Newcastle Connection, a software product that fits between the shell and the kernel to make a network of Unix systems look exactly like one big Unix machine to both applications programs and interactive users. It interfaces to various local area networks, and can machines from different manufacturers running different versions of Unix or even Unix-workalikes that have system-call compatibility. Portable Software Inc., Suite 204, 650 Bair Island Road, Redwood City, CA 94063; telephone 415-367-6264. Mari Advanced Microelectronics Ltd., Mari House, 20/22 Jesmond Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PQ, England; phone 0632-817861.

RYAN-McFARLAND presented their new Fortran 77 compiler for microsystems running Unix. It's a complete, Ansi-standard Fortran 77, plus a few extensions and optimization. If you've tried to work with the Fortran 77 that comes with Unix, you know how slow it is; Mike Saccomano, General Manager at RM, proudly assured me that's been taken care of. The first targets are 68000 systems (Apple Lisa and Radio Shack versions are ready now) and 8086 versions are scheduled for later in 1984. Ryan-McFarland Corp., 609 Deep Valley Drive, Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274; phone 213-541-4828; TWX 910-344-6353 RMC ROHE.

PROPER SOFTWARE, a new, ultra-small company, demonstrated their visual equivalent to pwd and cd, for naive users wh can't quite follow the notion of a directory tree. It will do its dynamic diagramming on an ordinary alphanumeric terminal, but will also use graphics capabilities if the terminal has them; the user moves around the file system by using the cursor-control keys. Driver, as it's called, is intended for OEMs; Paul Hoffman, president of Proper Software, was talking about licensing Driver to large customers for $500 to $1000 one-time, plus a dollar a copy. Proper Software, Suite 1024, 2000 Center Street, Berkeley, CA 94704; phone 415-540-5958.

CCA announced a fairly complete version of the Emacs screen editor, plus extensions, to run on 4.1 & 4.2BSD, and on Systems III & V. Source-code licenses cost $350 to $2400. Steve Zimmerman assures me that CCA still offers Vax timesharing, so you should be able to try at length before you buy. Computer Corp. of America, 4 Cambridge Center, Cambridge, MA 02142; phone 617-492-8860; Usenet decvax!cca!z or linus!cca!z.

SRITEK were showing off their 10 megahertz 68000 with Unix for the IBM PC. It plugs into the backplane (1 slot on the PC, 2 on the XT) and acts as a coprocessor with its own 512k of dual-ported memory. I used to wonder why anyone would engage in the moral equivalent of stuffing an Oldsmobile V8 into a VW bug, until I talked to a fellow who produced hardware/software packages for agriculture. He told me that anything with an IBM nameplate was so much easier to sell to computer-naive people that he didn't want to monkey with anything else. When I told him that Sritek could put the

CPU power his new software needed in a box that would still say IBM on the outside, he couldn't wait to get them on the phone. Sritek Inc., 6615 Snowville Road, Cleveland, OH 44141; phone 216-526-9433; Telex 298-215.

ABSOLUT SOFTWARE had business accounting packages - written (from scratch) in C to run on Unix. Their stuff is strong on inventory control. In addition to general modules for AR, AP and GL, there are vertical packages for multi-store retailers, manufacturers, wholesale distributors, importers and mail-order houses. Absolut is energetic on dealer recruitment, and intends (subject to SEC approval) to offer the most interesting dealer sales incentive I've seen lately: stock options in Absolut itself. Absolut Software, 2001 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02146; phone 617-277-0610.

IBC demonstrated their British-made supermicro, the Ensign. Its specs are overwhelming, starting with up to 8 megabytes of double-bit ECC dynamic Ram. The 68000 CPU is relieved of mundane responsibilities by a slave for memory management, another for disk I/O (handling up to a gigabyte of SMD hard disk and 4 meg of floppy), and two slaves plus a 16k buffer for terminal I/O. Other niceties include a pair of parallel printer ports and battery backup for the real-time clock. They expect to start shipping in February with Unix as the OS. IBC/Distribution, Suite 212, 1140 36th Street, Ogden, UT 84403; phone 801-621-2294.

NUVATEC was talking about its latest series of crossassemblers, which go from DEC and 16-bit-micro systems running Unix to a huge variety of smaller micros - packages are ready now for the i8042 & i8049, Z8, 65C02, GI1650 & GI1670. Uniware division of Nuvatec Inc., 261 Eisenhower Lane South, Lombard, IL 60148; phone 312-620-4830.

SPHINX took a booth primarily to keep up with the latest Unix developments from North America. Their principal business is supporting Unix users in Europe, with products as well as information. Sphinx Ltd., 43-53 Moorbridge Road, Maidenhead, Berks., SL6 8PL, England; phone 0628-75343; Telex 849812.

UNIQ introduced its new DEC-based micro with System III Unix. It utilizes DEC's LSI-11/73 single-board (not single-IC) CPU and the Q-bus. Uníq is talking about PDP-11/44 performance for much less money - with a meg of memory and 42 meg of hard disk (10 meg rmovable), 4 ports and an SIII license, the price will be under $23,000. The system name is Uníqorn; the shipping date was not set. Uníq Digital Technologies, Inc., 28 South Water Street, Batavia, IL 60510; phone 312-879-1566.

RHODNIUS had its own announce-only entry: Mistress/32. This is their Mistress RDBMS with significant enhancements, mainly in arithmetic capabilities, query complexity and security. Rhodnius Inc., 10 Saint Mary Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 1P9, Canada; phone 416-922-1743; Telex 06-986766 TOR.

STSC showed its APL*Plus/Unix on an IBM PC XT. This is an APL interpreter written in C to run on Unix Systems III and V. STSC is one of the big two companies in APL timesharing and development, and APL buffs will be pleased to know that APL*Plus/Unix includes such recent developments as nested arrays and gigabyte workspaces. Delivery is planned for mid-1984. Small System Sales, STSC, Inc., 2115 East Jefferson Street, Rockville, MD 20852; phone 301-984-5123.

VENTURCOM had a booth full of machines running their Venix implementation of Unix: IBM PCs and XTs, PC workalikes and DEC's Pro 350. They were also running /rdb, Rod Manis' RDBMS, which VenturCom has adopted under the name Vbase. Rod tells me /rdb is fully relational, by the standards proclaimed by the grand old men of relational

databasing, E. F. Codd and C. J. Date. He also says that although /rdb runs nicely on IBM PCs, it is not inherently a small-system program. He tells me that Lucasfilm uses /rdb to store every single frame of their Star Wars films, and that /rdb will run on the upcoming Cray 2 supercomputer. Finally, Evan Schaffer used one of the PCs there to show me his brand-new user interface to /rdb. It combines a data entry/revision language that looks very much like a subset of vi with a query language that is very much like awk with named columns. No decision yet as to when or where Evan's product will be sold. VenturCom, Inc., 215 First Street, Cambridge, MA 02142; phone 617-661-1230. Robinson, Schaffer & Wright, 711 California Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

YATES VENTURES displayed dummy copies of their Unix Encyclopedia. This will be an all-purpose compendium of Unix resources: software, hardware, support services, publications, etcetera. They're doing it in glossy magazine style, with four-color printing and fancy graphics - for example, the symbols to the right are two of those used to pictorially indicate what field a software package fits into; those two represent graphics and the construction industry, respectively. At present it seems the finished book will run about 300 pages, paperbound. Distribution via mass-market channels such as computer stores and newsstands will supplement direct sales. Price and publication date were not definite. Yates Ventures, Suite 111, 4962 El Camino Real, Los Altos, CA 94022; phone 415-964-0130.

CIFER was demonstrating its British parent's interesting line of desktop Unix systems. These are small enough to be almost portable, with a readable 10" display (green or orange), with a 68000 CPU, several Z80A auxilliaries, and a choice of Unisoft's Uniplus+ (System III with Berkeley enhancements) or Whitesmith's Idris (a V6 workalike). A high resolution display (1024 x 300) and a Tektronix-4010-compatible graphics processor are optional. Without going outside the case, it's possible to have a megabyte of Ram, 21 meg Winchester and an 800k floppy drive; addressing limits are a good deal higher, for anyone who really wants to hang external storage on a trim desktop system. Prices are attractive, too; with 256k Ram, 10 meg of Winchester, an 800k floppy and Uniplus+ Unix the U.S. list price is just $7,800. This is the Club Executive, Cifer's smallest integrated system, which can even be mounted on an optional tilt/swivel stand. They also displayed larger desktop units and a free-standing (no display or keyboard) system more suited to mltiple users. All of Cifer's systems can also accomodate an extra Z80A board to run CP/M. Cifer Inc., Suite 302, 375 North Broadway, Jericho, NY 11753; phone 516-935-8490 or 516-757-6541. Cifer Plc., Avro Way, Bowerhill, Melksham, Wilts., SN12 6TP, England; phone 0225-706361; Telex 449872.

ISIS stands for Independent Software Information Standard (although its founders insist "The acronym ISIS comes from the name of the goddess charged by ancient Greek mythologists with raising civilization to a higher level, . . . "). Whatever the roots of the name, it describes a consortium of software developers who announced that they intend to define a common interface for transfer of data between applications programs running on Unix systems. What they have in mind appears to be a little more complex than named pipes, and because it will be new to Unix, and presumably is intended to spread to other operating systems, it should not be in conflict with the /usr/group standard, nor even within the scope of that standard. The founding members of Isis are Access Technology, Quadratron, Software Express and Unify. Other members are invited; Isis "will be open to all third-party Unix software producers who wish to participate, and who agree to maintain compatibility with the standard interface as it evolves over the coming months." As a contact, try Bill Adams of Software Express at 800-231-0062.

[Our UniForum report will conclude in the February issue.]

BOOK REVIEW

A Practical Guide to the UNIX System, by Mark G. Sobell

The Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Company, Inc, Menlo Park, 1984

ISBN 0-8053-8910-5, paperbound, $21.95

It's not easy on first inspection to tell just where this book is aimed. There is nothing in it about the author and his background, he's not known to the general Unix community, and his only clearcut statement on purpose is "This book is for people with some computer experience but little or no experience with the UNIX system". Nonetheless, this book has a very definite, narrow slant, as you'll see further along in my review, and that slant is key to judging the book's worth.

A brief look-through shows only one big difference between this and a dozen other intro-to-Unix books: about a third of this volume is devoted to manual pages for various Unix utilities. Although they resemble the format used in Bell Labs' Unix Programmers Manual, the style is more readable here, the coverage is less comprehensive, and there are examples included for all 45 of the utilities covered. The rest of the book looks a lot like most of the other recent volumes on how to start using Unix - it's not devoted to any one version, and the list of topics is familiar: history and uses of Unix; communicating with the system; using the shell; a few fundamental utilities; ex & vi; nroff & the -ms macro package; the file system; Bourne versus C shell.

A close reading of the first seven chapters changed my boredom to perplexity. Sobell's ability to explain things is a variable quantity. His detailed explanation of how nroff and -ms decide and calculate things is lucid, and at least as interesting as most on this dry topic. The diagrams showing what cursor-movement commands in vi actually do are the best I've yet seen. But he explains the newline character solely by giving its ASCII value, palms off line-address arithmetic in one cursory sentence, and when he clearly intends to say "move forward one line in the text", it comes out as "increment current line counter". These are just a few examples, chosen arbitrarily from the book's 6½ pages on the ex editor, but they're enough to show that the tone of this book will not strike a responsive chord in a typical Unix neophyte.

At least as big a detraction is the large number of errors about Unix. In those same 6½ pages on ed, Sobell assures us that shell commands cannot be executed from within ed; that the working copy (buffer) of a file being edited is stored in main memory; that using q! to quit after ed has rejected plain q discards all file changes since the editing session began; that the default address for every ed command is the current line; and that an implied p command cannot take a double (multi-line) address. He implies that an argument to a w command tells which file is to be written out; and that the c does not put the user into text-insertion mode. This sort of nonsense damns the book as a guide for ordinary beginners, who get into enough trouble just trying to understand the meaning of accurate instruction. Sobell does get some of these points correct in other places in his book, but this merely adds the vice of carelessness to the fault of ignorance. (For the benefit of new users reading this review, the true facts are: a shell command can be executed from ed's command level at any time, simply by starting the command line with the ! character; the buffer is stored in a special place on disk, which makes it possible to edit files many times larger than available memory; q! discards only changes made since the last w command; default address varies with the command, and many commands take the last line or the whole file as default; an implied p command can take any address that an expressed p command can; a w command always writes out all or part of the text being edited at the time - an argument tells ed which filename

is to be created or overwritten in the file system to hold the output; and the c command puts you in text-insertion mode as surely as a or i does.)

But turning to the last two chapters makes this book explicable. The first of these is called simply "The Bourne Shell" in the brief table of contents, but actually it teaches programming in that shell. Teaches it well, too - far better than in any other beginning Unix book I've seen, explaining much of the inner workings of the shell in the process, with a far lower mistake quotient than those previous chapters. The following chapter is a very technical comparison of the C and Bourne shells, as interactive tools and as programming systems. Neither chapter would be at all understandable to most new Unix users, and the earlier parts of this book do little to prepare the reader for these last chapters. The second page of "The Bourne Shell" assumes that the reader knows what variables are and what it means to declare and initialize them, and the rest of the book is no less demanding.

In sum, this book was written - whether consciously or not - as a casual introduction to Unix for veteran programmers. The coverage of any topic, and the degree of care used, are proportional to to that topic's interest to programmers, either because it's needed in programming on Unix systems, or because it's an interesting technical exercise (as with the nroff details). And in this light, the book is actually not too bad. The obscure explanations I complained of earlier will be clear enough to programmers. The numerous errors won't bother them too much, because they traditionally regard documentation errors as one of life's little challenges. And the emphasis on shell programming will bring them up to writing powerful programs on Unix systems the quickest way possible. So, as an introduction to Unix for end users, this book rates a clear thumbs-down. But for programmers who need to use Unix systems occasionally, or who want to get a feel for Unix before deciding whether to commit to it, this book might well be a good choice.

UNIX AS A TRAVELING CARNIVAL

This month's UniForum convention marked a sharp turn in the path of national Unix-user conventions. When I first got into the Unix field, a little over three years ago, a semi-annual gathering consisted of about 800 people, with perhaps a dozen vendors displaying their wares off in a corner, and the regular attendees all knew each other, at least by reputation. As late as last fall, little had changed except that the numbers had slowly climbed to to perhaps 1500 attendees and three or four dozen vendors. (I still recall the San Diego show a year ago, where four of us sat on the floor in an aisle of the exhibit area for five hours, discussing the state of Unix, without disturbing anyone.) Then came the UniForum surprise - the numbers suddely jumped by almost an order of magnitude - and even the show's sponsors were caught unawares.

For those of you new to Unix, the original conferences were sponsored semiannually by Usenix, the original Unix users group, which was formed largely by university Unix sites and turned a very jaundiced eye on anyone who sold things for money. The atmosphere was rather sedate and the talks were rather theoretical, but there was no lack of camaraderie. As the eighties dawned, other groups started holding their own conventions to serve their own needs: first /usr/group for vendors, then Uni-Ops for commercial users, then EUUG for European Unix users. But they all stayed small and low key. Now that may all be in the past.

The principal sponsors of UniForum, Usenix and /usr/group, are pleased with the jump in Unix interest but not at all happy at hosting a mob-scene convention. Still, they have no idea what might be done to improve the situation (other than one board member's

last-minute advice to another who was about to make a speech announcing next winter's joint convention - "can't you change 'bigger and better' to just 'better'?"). EUUG also has been riding along with their attendance increases, because they can't see any remedy but to tell the newcomers "You aren't allowed because you aren't part of our Ancient & Established Group", which hardly anyone there (or here) wants to do. Even Uni-Ops, my own group, has done nothing more imaginative than book its 1984 conference in the same hotel that wasn't quite big enough to hold our 1983 get-together.

Now comes the non-surprise. Two independent convention-organizers who saw UniForum balloon this month have already committed to holding their own unaffiliated Unix trade shows this fall. Both outfits are big time and well-heeled; both plan a full batch of confernce sessions, tutorials and vendor booths. Although neither has announced its show yet, one of them is already predicting 25,000 attendance. Between them, they might well monopolize the new users, and let the existing user-group conventions become little more than the old-timers sitting around the cracker barrel, telling each other how things were in the good old days, while everyone else puts up with a mini-version of NCC or Comdex because they don't fit in with the old-timers.

But there is hope! The way to avoid the hectic, anonymous atmosphere of huge trade shows is to avoid their achilles heel: a single, centralized management. The difference between a monolithic event like NCC and a number of independent organizations in the same field doing their separate things at the same time and place is like the difference between a dreary suburban shopping mall and the excitement of a city shopping street.

And it's not impossible, or even outrageously difficult, for such a collaboration to happen because the various entrants in the Unix-get-together field really want to do different, non-competing things. The big show promoters I mentioned are in the booth-rental and promotion businesses. Any seminars or tutorials they put on are just to get people into the exhibit area. The user groups do meetings first and foremost for the conference sessions and the casual conversations that spring up around them. (Even the C Users' Group, which has never sponsored a convention, would probably agree with this notion.) As for tutorials, there are more than a dozen companies that do them in various locations across the country right now. Most of them would be eager to do one or more at a big gathering point, and most of them have developed some specialty areas where they have little real competition from the others.

Putting aside petty rivalries, the real stumbling block to this approach is control. The professional trade-show promoters, as the ones who would do most of the advertising and probably handle space rental and put up the cash in advance, look very likely to climb into the driver's seat pretty quickly, and none of the rest of us want them there. The solution is to form a guild. The user group directors all know each other, and they know most of the Unix education companies, too. If these groups all got together and bargained jointly with the various exposition companies who'd like to get into this business, they could easily hold the upper hand. Not that this would be easy to do, given every group's steadfast independent stance so far. (Even the limited, gingerly co-operation on some conventions between Usenix and /usr/group has come close to blowing up more than once.) But there is no other known way to keep trade-show promoters from almost automatically wresting control of the Unix movement from a gaggle of users' groups that, frankly, are very weakly organized.

Will this sort of collaboration come to pass? Don't hold your breath. But the vision is is such a fine one that it's worth pursuing nonetheless.

COMING CONVENTIONS

After all that editorializing on the future of large-scale gatherings of Unix users, it seems appropriate to tell you what conventions are coming up, when and where, what to expect, and where to go for more details.

JUNE 12th to 15th - SALT LAKE CITY Summer 1984 Usenix Conference, Hotel Utah (conference sessions) and Salt Palace Center (exhibits). This is the heavily-academic user group that was the lead sponsor of this months's UniForum. This time they're doing one without /usr/group participation, which may make it smaller and will certainly make it less commercial. They're seeking very technical papers and talks for conference sessions (there will be proceedings, available on opening day) and pointedly warning that "product anouncement genre" presentations will not be tolerated. As innovations this time, they plan to mix some panel discussions in with the papers, and to schedule separately some special-interest gatherings that are described as a hybrid of workshops and birds-of-a-feather sessions. The Software Tools Users Group, which deals with a family of Unix-like overlays for other operating systems, mostly written in Ratfor or Pascal and in the public domain, will be meeting jointly with them, as usual. Despite the academic orientation, Usenix meetings are still the standard meeting place for Unix people from every field. For a registration packet, contact Usenix Conference Office, P. O. Box 385, Sunset Beach, CA 90742; phone 213-592-3243. For exhibitor information, contact Mr. Chuck Bierley, Industrial Presentations West, Inc.; phone 303-696-6100. Regarding a paper or panel for the Usenix sessions (abstracts due March 26th), contact Jay Lepreau or Spencer Thomas, Computer Science Dept., University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112; phone 801-582-7214 or 801-581-3095 or 801-581-4285; Usenet {harpo,hplabs}!utah-cs!usenix or usenix@utah-cs.ARPA. Regarding a presentation for the Software Tools sessions (abstracts due March 23rd) contact Barbara Chase, 9619 Belford Avenue #3, Los Angeles, CA 90045; phone 213-647-0272 or 213-641-5434; Usenet chase@lbl-csam.

JULY 30th to AUGUST 3rd - SAN FRANCISCO Uni-Ops Conference Week, Westin Miyako Hotel. This will be the most compact (it's all in a 208 room hotel) and most personal of the conventions coming up. First three days will offer half-day tutorials, with several running at once and each one repeated to offer maximum enrollment flexiblity. Last two days will have conference sessions and a vendor exhibit (the latter for applications software and support services exclusively). Uni-Ops conferences are aimed at people who use Unix, rather than selling it or developing software for it. Conference session presentations may be talks, panels or demonstrations; the only product presentations allowed are analyses or comparisons by independent experts. Most presentations are by invitation. Contact Uni-Ops, P. O. Box 27097, Concord, CA 94527-0097; phone phone Eveline Rhodes at 415-689-4382 about registration or exhibiting; phone Walter Zintz at 415-945-0448 about making a conference-session presentation.

SEPTEMBER 11th to 14th - LOS ANGELES Unix Systems Expo/84, Los Angeles Convention Center. This is one of the brand-new ones, sponsored by the organization that does San Francisco's famous Computer Faires (but minus Jim Warren - he recently sold the company to Prentice-Hall). The focus is to be on "users and resellers". Initially they'll work on renting their several hundred available exhibit spaces, with discounts for new ventures. Conference and seminar plans "will come a little later". Expect this one to be heavily advertised and heavily attended. Contact Computer Faire Inc., 611 Veterans Blvd., Redwood City, CA 94063 or 181 Wells Ave., Newton, MA 02159; phone Nels Anderson at 415-364-4294, or Bill Littlefield or Dave Sudkin at 617-965-8350.

OCTOBER 16th to 18th - NEW YORK CITY no title yet, Sheraton Centre Hotel (conference sessions) and Hudson Marina Complex (exhibits). The other new one, sponsored

by a company whose business is doing independent trade shows across the country, and co-sponsored by Unix Review magazine. In this case, the conference/seminar program is being developed at the same pace as the vendor exhibit. Again, expect heavy promotion and heavy attendance. Contact Bob Birkfeld, National Expositions, 14 West 40th Street, New York, NY 10018; phone 212-391-9111.

SPRING & FALL - EUROPE The European Unix Systems Users Group sponsors a conference in Europe every spring and every fall. But they send their newsletter to me by sea mail (I send mine to them by air, and three copies to their one) so I don't have any specific dates or places. In general, EUUG conventions include product exhibits, are less commercial and more academically oriented, and alternate between the British Isles and northwestern continental Europe. They have more of both courtesy and camaraderie than most U.S. Unix conventions do; nonetheless, people at them are more outspoken on likes and dislikes in the Unix field. Contact Mrs. Helen Gibbons, Secretary, EUUG, Owles Hall, Buntingford, Herts. SG9 9PL, England; phone 0763-73039 or 0763-71209.
[Last minute flash - info on the spring conference has arrived. It will be held April 16th to 18th at the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands.]

NEW UNI-OPS LOGO

As part of our campaign to revitalize Uni-Ops, Eveline Rhodes has been working on designs for a more impressive Uni-Ops logo. Any comments on this sketch?

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