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H8SCOOP

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BITS & PIECES

THE TALKING H8 IS HERE

I am asked quite frequently if I am on SOURCE or MICRONET. The answer is no. I have sold my MODEM stuff. It turned out that both SOURCE and MICRONET and all the other bulletin boards are all long distance, as are all other H8ers with MODEMS. Because of long distance phone costs, which is something I can do without for the time being, I decided not to get involved with the bulletins. Room is already gone in this issue, I am not going to neglect the MODEM info I promised last month, only put it off until I find room, hopefully next month.

The new release of Microsoft BASIC should be available very soon for all registered owners of Microsoft BASIC.

ON DISK HEAD CLEANING

I have received some feedback on disk head cleaning as requested in last month's H8SCOOP. Charles Ballinger writes he is using the 3M product called 7440 head cleaning diskettes kit, which contain two special diskettes and a bottle of cleaning fluid. The disks are good for 15 uses each before they should be replaced. Normally he cleans his heads about every month or so as the soft error rate on the disks start rising.

The kit is about \$30 from your nearest 3M dealer.

On the same question, George Duke Jr. writes he had Heath order from Siemens (they won't sell direct) an operation and maintenance manual for the drives. George says it is larger and thicker than the one supplied with the drives, and Heath charged him \$10.50. He says "while it has lots of maintenance and adjustment info along with exploded views and schematics, it does not say anything about cleaning or demagnetizing.

So there you have it--nothing definite. I have been running dual drives since they first came out, and step at 6-8ms depending, and usually have 0-5 soft errors out of about a thousand reads and writes. When this goes up, I usually check my disk spin which usually needs a little resetting, and all is back to normal. I suppose that after these 3 years or so, it's time to clean the heads.

I heard it with my own ears on the phone, and then on a tape which was sent to me! An H8 talking! Ted Benglen II, 822 E County Rd. 30, Ft. Collins, CO 80525 (303) 669-4116 has successfully completed his pet project. Ted tells me "It's a true voice synthesizer capable of continuous speech in several languages. The unit also has voice input circuitry for voice command and recognition. It can be programmed in BASIC, MBASIC, or Assembly Language and will operate with cassette or disk systems. The synthesizer connects directly to any available H-8-2 parallel port, no other modifications being required."

If there are enough H8 owners interested in VOICE Ted will have circuit boards made, put together a complete package and enclose it in a cabinet to match the H8 system. Since best circuit board prices can be obtained in lots of 100 and up, Ted will have to receive that much interest to start production, and then the price could be around \$400. His prototype cost him \$650.

If anyone wants a cassette voice sample along with a photo of the prototype and interface description, write to Ted and send along \$5 for the mentioned material, which includes shipping and handling.

I'll have more on this project as it develops.

TED MIESKE UPDATE

Ted Mieske now has permanently located in California at 2095 El Prado, Lemon Grove, CA 92045, (714) 460-0347. His company, TBT DIGITAL will be coming out with products for the H8 and H89 in the future. Watch for announcements in H8SCOOP.

PERTEC FD250 DRIVE FOR H8

Robert Hatfield, 1681-B Elm St., Fort Dix, NJ 08640 has installed the Pertec FD250 5 1/4 inch floppy drive in the H8. He says it is compatible with the SIEMENS FDD-100, the only difference being pins 4 and 32, which does not make any difference.

Robert says to be sure to follow page 20 of the PERTEC manual, "Etch DC on the component side of PCBA must be cut to enable operation of the select switch". The drive he says is a 35 track drive, but can be modified to access 40 tracks.

Robert is presently working on the modification to get side two to operate as SY2:. He has the DOS controller board working and the drive starting and stopping as SY2: however, because of the rotation direction of the disc for side 2, he has not been able to initialize side two of the disks. If anyone has any idea on how to correct this, please get in touch with Robert. If you would like more information on what Robert has done, write him.

MICROSOFT BASIC BOOK BY KEN KNECHT

Merl Miller of Dilithium Press, POB 92, Forest Grove, OR 97116 called to tell me my readers have been calling in for the book by Ken Knecht using all sorts of names to describe it. To clarify this matter, the book, as was printed in the JULY H8SCOOP is titled MICROSOFT BASIC, and the price is now \$10.95.

Merl also told me a book is coming out published by Dilithium on H8 Machine Language programming. He will keep in touch with me on interesting and good computer related books, especially as applicable to the H8, and I will in turn let you know as the info becomes available.

NEW STUFF

To be coming from Heath in the future will be a roll top table for computers. It seems Heath is going into the furniture business. Anyway, this has a projected selling price of \$450 kit and \$1800 assembled, so you can imagine the work involved to build it up right.

Also rumored is Heath will be breaking the weather computer into modules for easier interface to computers.

Projected for next spring, and this one sounds hard to believe, is a robot that recognizes voice, and will do such things as insert in plugs into outlets, vacuum floors and general robot tasks. That's all I have on this one.

D-G ELECTRONICS PRODUCTS

D-G ELECTRONIC DEVELOPMENTS CO., is introducing several new products for the H8 computer in addition to what they already have out. Most of these new products should be coming out by the time you read this newsletter.

D-G introduced a Z80 CPU card for the H8 awhile back as reported in past issues of H8SCOOP. The problem was you could not use the faster 4MHz speed with the disk controller because of timing problems. This has now been solved, and for \$19.95 you can order DG-ADP4 4MHz PLUG-IN Adapter for the H8 which will allow you to run the CPU at the faster 4MHz rate. It modifies the H17 timing and plugs into

IC sockets on the H17 disk controller board. To utilize this you must have the DG-80 CPU card of course, and the DG-FP8 Z80 hardware/firmware support package. Looks like now you can really speed things up, and take full advantage of the faster CPU!

And what's the new DG-FP8 Monitor? It is to be used with the DG-80 Z80 CPU card and gives the user full scope of the present PAM-8 panel monitor, including single-step, plus added features to make full use of the DG-80. HEX or OCTAL display and entry are possible, along with auto set-up of program counter to boot disk on power-up. The features are too numerous to mention here, you'll have to contact DG for more info. The price is \$69.95.

64K RAM for the H8 is available from DG now with a low 8W power requirement for \$529, fully populated, assembled, tested, and burned in. Again this board has many features like 4MHz operation with no wait states, hardware bank selectable in 8K increments, software bank selectable in 16K increments and one of the neatest--up to 8 DG-64D boards controllable through one I/O port, which allows page mode operation.

And one many have been waiting for--STANDARD CP/M for the H8. D-G will now be offering standard CP/M version 2.2 for the H8 computer, which will allow users of the H8 computers to utilize all CP/M compatible software available on Heath formatted disks. To use this CP/M you must have the DG-80 Z80 board, and the DG-FP8 hardware/firmware monitor package. The price? \$130. You will of course still be able to run standard HDOS. Other sources informed me this is the same CP/M Magnolia has for the H89 with their 0 org mod.

If you buy DG-FP8 and DG-ADP4 together you save \$10. The combined price is \$79.95. They also have 4116 16K dynamic RAM chips for \$49/set. Their address is 1827 South Armstrong, Denison, TX 75020. (214) 465-7805.

TRIONYX NEW INFO

Bill Perry of TRIONYX ELECTRONICS, POB 5131, Santa Ana, CA 92704 writes to tell me because of memory chip prices decreasing they have lowered the prices on all their memory products accordingly. Bill tells me this memory will work with a Z80 CPU with minor modifications, and can be made to start at the Zero address boundary with a second modification, enabling the entire 64K address range. These modification instructions are now available from TRIONYX upon request.

They will also be offering their own Z80 CPU board by the end of the year, which will have a number of additional circuits and special features which may be more valuable to many users than the Z80 itself, Bill tells me.

The new memory prices are as follows:

64K ASSM--\$500	PARTS KIT--\$415
48K	440 360
32K	380 305
16K	320 250
0K	300 225

The assembled memory does not include IC sockets except for the one with no memory chips. They are also offering for \$60 an expansion memory chip set which includes 8 4116 selected and tested memory chips, 8-high quality IC sockets, and 8 filter capacitors. Single replacement 4116 memory chips go for \$6.50. The bare printed circuit board only with documentation but no parts sells for \$50.

Contact TRIONYX for more information on their memory products. I have not heard one bad thing about TRIONYX. Refer to reports in past H8SCOOPS for opinions on them and their products.

From Del Stanton, the STRETCH-8 man, POB 1120, Burbank CA 91507, (213) 849-2721 also comes a mailing list software package for use on H8 or H89, running with Microsoft BASIC. These programs are internally documented making modification easy. The \$15 price includes a 6 page instruction sheet with the disk, which includes 9 fundamental programs. This mailing list package was written for use on a one disk drive system.

There is too much for me to write here about the programs, if you have any interest, or wish to order, contact Del.

REAL ESTATE PACKAGE

Harold Dykens, 4025 E. 32nd, Des Moines, IA 50317 (515) 266-2382 has developed a Real Estate Multiple Listing Software Package for H89 users, using Selector-IV. I don't know the adaptability to the H8, you'll have to contact Harold.

For the Real Estate Businessman this is a first of its kind, practice business software for the Heath computer. The Package includes:

- Rent vs Buy
- Return on Investment
- Reverse Amortization
- Ballon Payment
- Missing Variable Mortgage
- Amortization Schedule
- Sales Activity Reports
- Assumable houses
- Buyer Qualification

Income/Expense projection
Portfolio
Appraisal
Cost
Comparative
--14 Selective Keys

The Software's list price is \$1400, with a user guide selling for \$35. The source code is \$2100. Contact Harold for more information.

REQUESTS

Ralph Stoltz, 728 East Elm St., Wauseon, OH 43567 is interested in converting his H19 keyboard from standard QWERTY to the American Simplified Keyboard (ASK) format. This is supposedly a more efficient keyboard pattern. Ralph wants to know if someone out there may be working in this field.

Basically, the keytops on the H19 can be removed and rearranged, but the ASCII signals must end up to correspond with the "new" keytop positions. I thought this may be possible in the keyboard associated ROM, but I was not sure. Anybody got any other ideas, write to Ralph. If you're interested in this more efficient keyboard, and would like to investigate this area, again, write to Ralph. He has been using an ASK keyboard typewriter for quite some time.

WHO'S WHO

Don Woodruff wants me to throw this idea out to you. He suggests a swap column for software in H8SCOOP so readers can benefit by obtaining more software while buying less, by swapping with others. One of his main areas of interest are the HUG software disks.

Don says there is nothing in the manuals against copying the disks. The question comes up about ethics. Is this kosher since HUG programs are actually a library for members? This way the H8er could have all HUG disks without purchasing them all.

Send me your comments. Since I also have Heath on my mailing list, it will be interesting to get the responses. If anyone has noticed, there actually has been a column like this, but with a different name. WHO'S WHO has already carried items on individuals and what they have and what they are willing to trade with others. REQUESTS have also covered some of this.

The major problem I see on creating a new column is there has not been enough room in the newsletter to carry every column each month already, and this would be yet another.

TECHNICAL FORUM

MORE HDOS GOODIES

It appears that SEPTEMBER H8SCOOP's TECHNICAL FORUM has generated questions from readers on using the DUMP type programs to change disk tracks and sectors. My fault! HDOS terminology labels tracks as 0-39 and sectors as 0-9. I have the original version of SUPRDUMP and it labels sectors as 1-10. Some of you also have this, but most do not.

If you have had a hard time finding the contents of the specified address locations and haven't figured it out by now, simply subtract 1 from the given sector and this should solve the problem. For example, the first patch is printed for track 2, sector 1--should be track 2, sector 0.

Now for another one. Presently the HDOS directory takes up 18 sectors on the disk. If you would like some more disk space, this can be patched resulting in a directory taking up 4 sectors which will hold up to 40 files. This will give you 14 additional sectors on a disk. These changes must be made AFTER initialization of a disk and BEFORE SYSGEN or placing files on the disk. For HDOS version 1.6. The disk changed must be in drive SY0: when changing!

ON TRACK 23 SECTOR 8 (0-9)

ADDRESS	FROM	TO
6B	6C	6E
71	6E	00

ON TRACK 22 SECTOR 7 (0-9)

DD	75	71
FE	DC	00

These are all in HEX. Here are two methods for patching the system so you do not have to type the spaces when booting up to determine BAUD rate. The first assumes 9600 BAUD, with the second you can patch for the baud rate you want. Both for 1.6 version.

METHOD 1

ON TRACK 0 SECTOR 4 (0-9)

ADDRESS	FROM	TO
0054H	3A	21
0055H	08	0C
0056H	20	00
0057H	F5	C9

METHOD 2

ON TRACK 0 SECTOR 0 (0-9)

10	CD	C3
11	2D	22
12	25	23
A2	CD	C3
A3	2D	2A
A4	25	23

ON TRACK 0 SECTOR 4 (0-9)

72	76	**
A0	DB	C3
A1	ED	54
A2	1F	27

At address 72 enter at ** to select BAUD

BAUD	**
600	7E
4800	86
9600	7A
19200	82

The last method was sent in by Charles Ballinger.

And one more. To skip the need to hit RETURN to boot, this patch will cause the system to go right in the BOOT when GO on the front panel is pressed.

ON TRACK 0 SECTOR 0 (0-9)

ADDRESS	FROM	TO
0010H	CD	C3
0011H	2D	22
0012H	25	23

With all these patches installed, plus the ones mentioned last month, plus the PAM-8 GO chip you will have a very automatic simplified system. You don't have to sit there hitting space bars and returns, everything happens automatically.

From Alden Finley, here is a PROLOGUE to automatically set the disk spin clock to about 5 seconds thus reducing disk coast time. Assemble this program as SPIN1.ABS and then rename it to PROLOGUE.SYS. Then whenever you boot, the PROLOGUE is looked for and executed. If you use PROLOGUE for other purposes then just add these lines of code to your program.

ORG	USERFWA
START EQU	*
MVI	A,10Q
STA	040110A
XRA	A

SCALL 000
END START

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE--3 8K Heath Memory boards for \$75 each. One 16K board for \$220. One H8-5 serial I/O and Cassette interface for \$70. H-9 Video Terminal for \$150. This H9 is mainly in unassembled form. No PC boards have been worked on. ART PETKOSEK 4705 Tanglewood Pl. Lorain, OH 44053 (216) 282-4790.

FOR SALE--Four Silent 700 TI portable terminals for \$800 each. Harold Dykens, 4025 E. 32nd. St., Des Moines, IA 50317 (515) 266-2382.

FOR SALE--3 Heath 8K static RAM boards with DIP switch addressing. All in excellent condition. \$75 each, or all 3 for \$210. J. R. Scheip, 6487 Silver Ridge Circle, Alexandria, VA 22310 (703) 971-7619.

EDITORS MAILBOX

I am publishing this question sent in by Alden Finley because it is a general question that pops up from time to time and deserves an answer.

"I have written to the other newsletters from time to time and have received varying responses. It is hard for a reader to know just what an editor is looking for and how much time he has for correspondence. I suggested that Jim Blake spell out the policy in his REMARK. I would suggest that you do the same.

OK. It's hard to spell out just what I am looking for. By noting the contents in H8SCOOP one may pretty well know the type of information I am after and will print. I like to print the kind of information which will help make the H8 a more useful computer to all who use it. Programming hints and goodies in BASIC, MBASIC, and Assembly language seem to be popular. Items that make use of the H8 front panel are welcome, since that makes the H8 unique over many others. Since the majority of users have or will be getting HDOS with the disk system, information on making the disk system more efficient and easier to use.

Any unique projects or ideas like Don Long's Clock circuit for the H8? If you review past H8SCOOPS you'll find samples of all I mentioned. Anything you feel would make the H8 a better computer or H8SCOOP a better newsletter, send in. The worse I can do is not print it.

If you don't find the item you sent printed in the following H8SCOOP, relax. I print information as I feel space and time is available, and much information sits in my files months before finally getting printed.

As far as time for correspondence, my readers are my sources of information as well as my bread and butter, and I try to treat them accordingly. I make it a point to take time to answer all my mail. If I receive a short letter which requires a short answer, I generally answer it the same day. If it gets very long and requires lot of time in answering, I set it aside until I get the time. Just remember what I said earlier, if you want an answer, at least send along a SASE.

I receive some mail each month asking for more information on items available as printed in NEW STUFF column. What I print is what I know. For more info, write to the vendor, not to myself. I usually do not have more information, or I would have printed it to start with. Other times I will get letters asking about features of a product I have mentioned in NEW STUFF. Again, write to the vendor and ask him, I probably don't know, and it's not my job to sell his product anyway. If I were in the position to support all items mentioned in NEW STUFF, that would mean I had to own it all, which would mean I'm a millionaire. No!

REPORT

STRETCH-8

Henry Beechhold, 13 Perry Drive, W. Trenton, NJ 08628 writes in about STRETCH-8 saying "STRETCH-8 finally arrived and it was worth the wait. It's a super "toy." Following is his review on STRETCH-8.

Now that the H8ers seem to be retiring their 8K boards in wholesale quantities in favor of denser (if not necessarily better) memory boards, lots of the good old 8K's are available for cheap. Unfortunately, if you've got a serial board, disk-controller board, and who-knows-what-else, you certainly can't put anywhere near of full complement of memory into your H8 using 8K boards--right? WRONG! For \$200 and a couple of evenings' work, you can stretch your H8 to a capacity of 15 boards, IN ADDITION to the front.

STRETCH-8 (by Del Stanton, Box 1120 Burbank, CA 91507; (213) 849-2721, is the ingenious albeit humungus solution to

your H8 capacity problems. I say humungus because the stretched computer ends up being a shade over 30 inches deep (including the rear-mounted auxiliary power supply, although there are no other dimensional changes.

What you get for your \$200 is (1) an 8-slot auxiliary motherboard, (2) an auxiliary 7.5A power supply, (3) a pair of nicely finished solid oak side panels, (4) a black anodized perforated aluminum top-panel extension, (5) a perforated aluminum bottom-panel extension, (6) a nice quality 10-inch long rattail file--needed for one small operation, (7) all the little parts you'll need--in a sturdy, lidded, compartmented plastic box, (8) a packet of wire, and (9) an instruction manual. All the parts are industrial quality, right down to the heat-shrink tubing.

A few obscurities in the manual (which is being revised!) slowed me down once or twice, but overall I'd have to give the project high marks for ease of construction. Of course, the tedium of soldering a jillion Heath-type male connectors to the new mother board is enough to make mad the guilty and apall the free! But, as Jane Ace used to say, "you have to take the bitter with the batter. (Anyone out there remember "Easy Aces"? Aha! You gave your age away--along with me.)

When you've finished the job, you are looking at a very long H8 with very handsome side panels. Inside, you have jumpered the two mother boards with the standard Heath-type connectors. Incidentally, you have to "build" the female connectors by soldering the spring clips--or whatever they're called--onto two sets of 25 wires each. The connectors are then plugged to the old mother board at the position that the front panel connectors originally went.

Now we have two motherboard areas inside, separated by about 2 inches. The joint between the two top panels (now connected) will reach into the back motherboard area into the slot you filed in the motherboard with the rattail file. The auxiliary power supply is attached to the outside of the rear panel in the area where all those little blue stickers are usually placed. Nothing is discarded from the "old" H8 but the original foam side panels.

The auxiliary power supply is wired in parallel with the resident supply providing a total of 17.5A, more than enough to run a "packed" system without a whimper. I'm using 5-8K cards, 1-16K card, H8-4, H8-5 and the disk controller card. Not only does the system run as

cool as you please (cooler than the unstretched H8, which had less in it), but it runs flawlessly--and I love that little reminder that comes up when I boot the machine: SYSTEM HAS 56K OF RAM --whee!

Originally I had some concern that stretching the bus to 17 slots (grand total) would cause noise problems (and ??), for no buffering or termination of any kind is provided. The fact of the matter is that the system runs not a whit differently from before--except that it's cooler. I suppose it is good to do as I have, namely, replace all 74S240's with 74LS240's. I did it ahead of time and can't offer any comparative results. The rule is, IF IT WORKS LET IT ALONE.

I should mention, too, that I have CP/M and a run through my CP/M disks showed the same happy result--no effective change. Of course, I quickly reconfigured my disks to 56K.

Not everyone can find room for a computer as long as STRETCH-8, nor does everyone need the extra slots; but for hardware hackers and experimenters, the cavernous interior is a delight--and those oak panels are really classy! All in all, I have found this to be a most satisfying and worthwhile project. I must add that my system is now running on DG Electronics DG-80 (280 CPU board). There certainly is no longer much reason for us Heath H8 faithfuls to complain about being left in the backwaters of computerdom! Including the Heath FORTRAN I have on order, I have no less than 6 different languages running on my computer--including Walt Bilofsky's very fine C/80 and LISP/80.

EDITORS NOTE: The H8 is a very fine designed machine, with an excellent bus structure, and exceptional buffering on data and address lines. Due to the tri-state buffers on these lines, they are effectively removed from the buss when they are not in use, hence loading of address and data lines should not cause any problems.

If the unbuffered lines such as reset, I/O READ, I/O WRITE, MEMORY READ, MEMORY WRITE, and the ϕ 2 clock get too heavy loading, this may pose a problem because they are not additionally buffered nor isolated from the buss. Chances are, however, that many boards placed in the STRETCH H8 will not use all these non tri-stated lines, so the effective loading may be less than the 10 TTL load limit, thus no problem may ever arise.

From Stanley Weiss "Del Stanton, the builder of STRETCH-8 is a nice gentleman to do business with--responds to phone

calls and even has a recorder to take your message when he's out--and returns your calls quickly. Highly recommend his new product."

For ordering, contact DEL STANTON, STRETCH-8, POB 1120, Burbank CA 91507, or phone (213) 849-2721. To recap, STRETCH-8 gives you 15 slots after the CPU and Front panel boards are in place, and provides an additional 7.5A 8V power supply. Cost is \$200.

DIFFERENT VIEWS TOWARD HEATH

The following letters I include as completely opposite views on Heath's service. The first one sent me from Ellen Craner, office manager of ARCAN's INC, dated March 27, 1980 to D. Nurse of Heath Company, Benton Harbor MI.

Dear Mr. Nurse:

I am writing to you today to draw your attention to some problems we have been experiencing with your company.

It first started when we required repair on our H-8 computer. We brought it in on January 22, 1980 and we're without it for two weeks. That's not so bad, but when we picked it up and brought it back it turned out that it wasn't even our unit. Needless to say, we immediately placed a call to the service center. A very embarrassed technician reluctantly told us that he was unable to locate our unit and would require further checking. After much checking and a day later, our unit had been found. That meant another trip back to Heath.

We decided to upgrade the system and ordered a H-19 video terminal on February 8. We were told that if we paid for it in advance, we could get one right away. We sent over a check and no H19's! We were sick. We desperately wanted this screen as it is much nicer and much more quicker than our H-9. What to do? We left the check figuring that if you had our money in your hand we would get delivery sooner. Ha! Glad I didn't hold my breath. I wouldn't be needing the new screen if I had. Acknowledgement of our order dated February 13 (5 days after we placed it at the store) gave an expected shipping date of March 21. We called to get a better delivery date as promised before, but to no avail. On March 14, I placed a call to be sure the unit would arrive on the projected date. The answer: it should, but they would look into it. On March 20, I finally get a call saying that the printout just came in and it would be April 11 now. However, we might be able

to obtain one through one of the Heathkit Centers in Detroit. but it was doubtful. I was told that you were so back-logged on them that any that got to the center stores would undoubtedly be already spoken for or sold out before they arrived. A call placed the next day got a shipping date of April 4. Mr. Arcan was upset to say the least. You had been working on our money for almost two months.

We purchased our entire system from Mr. Walt Gillespie of Minit-Man Printing in Otsego, Mich. He has been a great help to us in areas of programming, debugging and minor repair. Being as anxious as we are, he asked this morning if we had gotten our terminal as yet. We explained the circumstances to him. Thanks to Walt, we will have our terminal tomorrow. He had picked up the phone and must have said the magic words, for he called us back to say that the store had seven, yes that's right, seven, of them in stock. So why was I told that the store was sold out or not called back when they had been restocked? This had been one mad runaround.

I've enclosed a clipping from your current catalog. I don't find you living up to your policy. Notably, the immediate delivery and expert service. In capital letters yet!

It also took forever for Microsoft Basic to reach us and after all we have purchased on a cash basis, Heath is still hesitant about letting us open a charge account or to bill us on open invoice. We are a mid size business and we have been around for over 30 years. What do we have to do? We didn't give you the runaround when you ordered from us.

We think you have a very fine system, but are very discouraged by the service and customer relations. Mr. Arcan was also interested in your computerized weather station, but has turned thumbs down. We want to continue using your products and look forward to 8" floppy disk someday, but I'm not sure that I can persuade Mr. Arcan to change his mind.

I hope that this letter will help others in the future and find that customer relations are improving.

In contrast to this, is a letter to Bob Ellerton, Manager of Heath's Service department in Benton Harbor from Lloyd Dinkins, 4218 Chickasaw Road, Memphis TN 38117, dated August 4, 1980.

Dear Mr. Ellerton:

I am writing just to thank you for your help and such good service.

I shipped three of my H8 circuit boards and the drive unit from my H-17 on July 25 for a general checkout to see why I couldn't boot up the HDOS.

Exactly one week later, I had them all back and everything worked perfectly. Your service personnel found a double-under pin on an IC socket on the 16K memory board.

You and Heath's reputation for service are the reasons I chose the H8 and associated equipment--but this is surely service above and beyond even Heath's reputation. I sincerely believe Heathkit computers will soon be the industry standard for personal and/or home machines, thanks to you and many others in the company who are really going all out to help the customer.

In the last 20 years, I have build about 15 Heathkit products and I've been satisfied with all of them. This is only the second time I've had to ship something back--the first was the HW-2021 handheld 2M transceiver, which just needed expert alignment, really.

Please know that your good work and service are paying off for Heath. Those of us who have gone with your products are going to keep telling others until they get the message!

I'm sending a few copies of this letter to others who should know what a great job you and your crew are doing. Thanks very much!

And that's the way it is. Keep in mind though that these letters represent two totally unrelated problems and areas.

Now my two cents worth. As far as the problems on not delivering, listen to my story, for it's sad indeed. Fortunately, it does not involve computers or related accessories.

On June 18th I placed an order to Heath for an overseas friend of mine for a H-17 and a IO-4235 (scope). I promptly received the disk drive, but received the invoice saying the scope shipping date would not be June 24, but June 27. Big deal, I thought, a 3 day delay.

On July 1 I receive a card telling me my order for the scope would not ship until July 11. Well, another two weeks, I can put up with that. Well, July 11 never came, instead on July 9 I received another card saying my order was to ship on July 25. By this time, I'm getting upset, the third delay notice, and from my past experience with Heath, I was getting afraid this was to continue.

Well it did! On August 8 I received a card I must sign and send back which either tells Heath it's OK, keep my money or forget the whole thing. This time the delay notice said it would ship August 19. Since I don't have great communications with my overseas friend, I figured, I'd hold in there, since he had waited so long already. We're now talking about an order which should have been in stock, a two month delay, and my fourth delay card. I knew this could not go on forever.

I WAS WRONG, for on September 3 I received my FIFTH delay card, again one I must sign and return. This time they put the date to October 3rd, going on 4 months. That was it. You hate to tell them to shove it and get your money back, because you figure after 3 months, something has to break. I decided to call them.

I was informed about all kinds of problems on getting parts from manufactures for the scope. I understand the last few delays were due to defective front panels from the manufacture for the kit. Fine, it's nice to know Heath will not ship out parts not up to their high standards, but it sounds like that manufacturer should have been dumped long ago. I was also told Heath waits until their stock is down to about a 2 week supply before they re-order, which in my opinion is cutting it too close! In this inflationary time, where quality is a thing of the past, and nobody wants to stock anything, I feel you have to think farther ahead than 2 weeks.

I rest my case. I just wanted to publish two readers views on Heath's service and throw in my own.

END

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