
NEWSLETTER FOR PC USERS IN THE GOVERNMENT OF FIJI

Edition 3; December 1988

1. EDITORIAL

Dear Reader

We again have to apologize for the delay with our newsletter, but we wanted to give you real and fresh news, and good news too.

Firstly, we now have more than 200 subscribers in Fiji and overseas. Secondly, we are pleased to introduce you to our new staff members, all United States Peace Corps Volunteers:

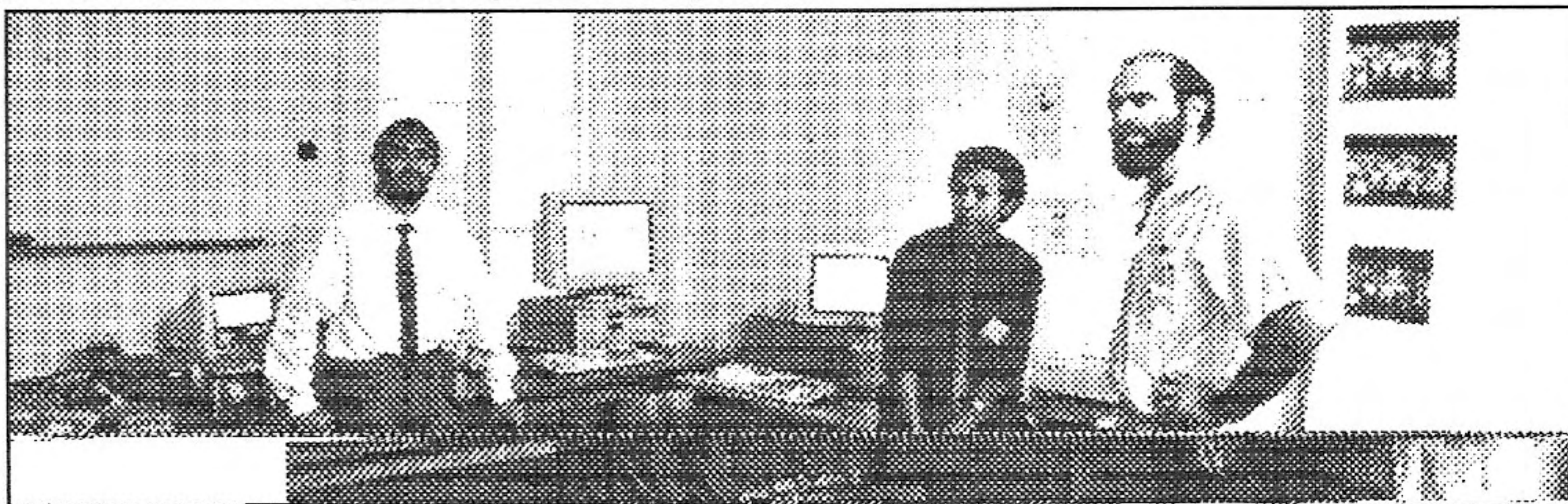
Yolanda Floor: Currently improving our internal documentation systems, preparing further training documentation, and involved in project consulting

Sheri Tibbs: Presently responsible for network solutions, project consulting, and data base applications

Panos Koutsoyannis: Starting with restructuring our Technical Section and monitoring certain PC projects

Our team has grown with 3 students (Raijeli Tamani, Roshni Kumar, and Abduhl Naushad) from the Computer Training Centre Nasinu, who will have the opportunity during the next three month to gain more practical PC experience.

8th November was our **big day**, called the E.D.P. Open Day. About 450 people took the opportunity to have a closer look at what computer services we can provide.



Our team during the E.D.P. Open Day

The Open Day gave our team of the PC Information Centre the opportunity to present policies, strategies, and current problems to senior officers, Heads of Departments, and even Permanent Secretaries.

On a Saturday, one week later, another historical event took place: the first Personal Computer User Meeting (see page 3 of this newsletter).

Of course, not all our goals for 1988 have been achieved. It is always easy to find an excuse for anything.

But still - and here we can quote even the PC users - a big step has been made, and we hope in the right direction.

1989 will be a challenge for us. Not only are we expecting more equipment for technical support and training on Personal Computers, but also the growing demand for our services will force us to restructure our unit, to decentralize our knowledge, and to recruit and train more internal staff.

To master this challenge, we need the support of you, the PC user. If you don't tell us what we have to change or to improve - who will ?

So, please let us know what you expect from us, and keep in mind that even if sometimes we can't help you out, we are trying to give our best -- and that's the fact!

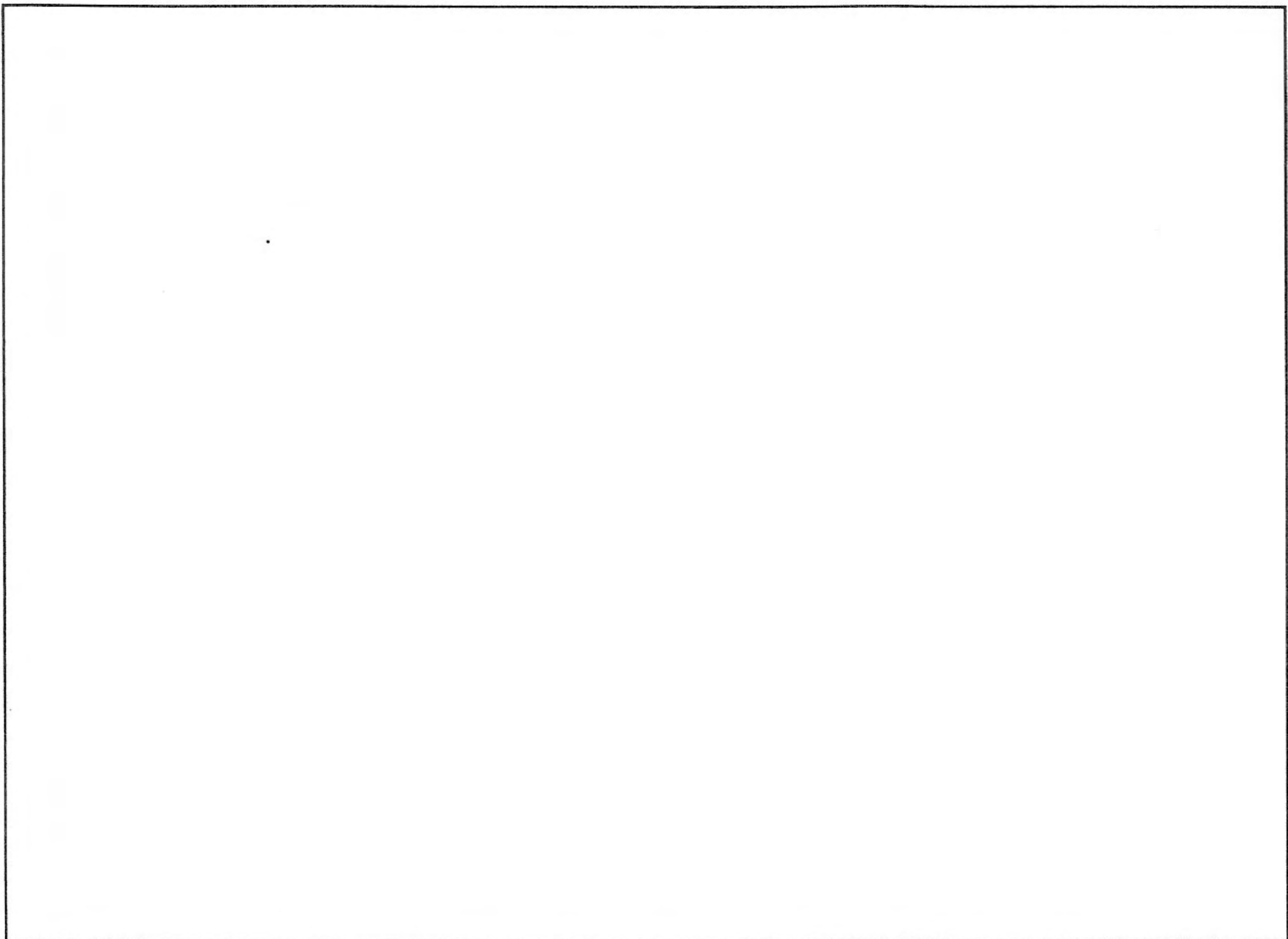
We wish all of you a good start in both your private and professional life.

Happy New Year !!!

Dani Zender, Consultant
for all the team of the PC Information Centre, E.D.P. Services, Box 784, Suva, Phone 211204

PS: Again we have produced our newsletter "just" with WordPerfect 5.0. Although we received a Hewlett-Packard Laserjet II (a laser printer), a Microtek image scanner (all photos you can see in this newsletter have been scanned with it), and PageMaker version 3.0 (a desktop publishing software package), we are still not able to make full usage of this latest technology. Maybe in the next newsletter...???

2. PC INVENTORY



according our PC inventory (November 1988)

As you can see in this chart, last month (because some people just recently received new PCs) we had 141 'E.D.P.-registered' PCs in the Government.

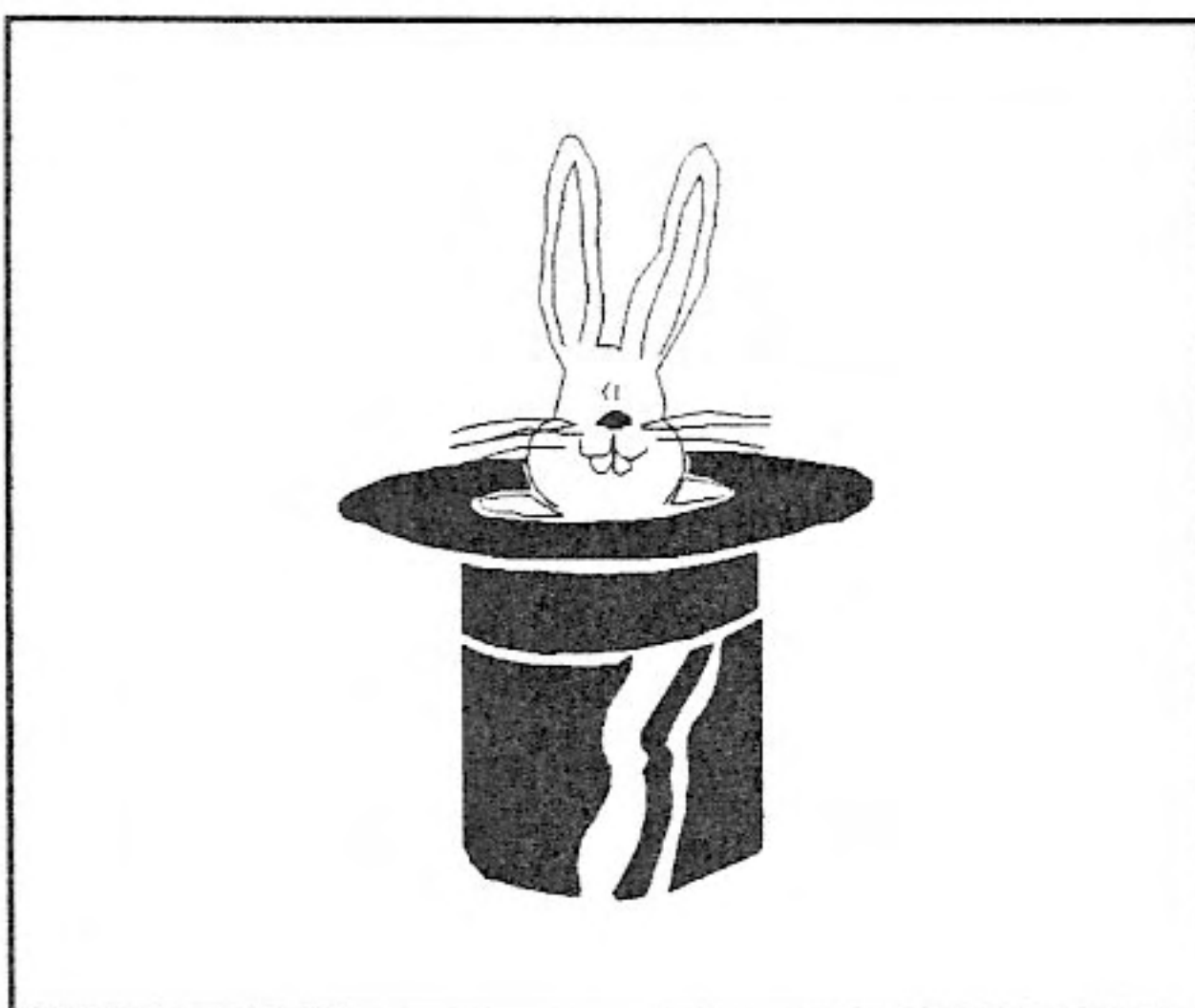
But we know that in 1988 some Personal Computers were bought or be given by foreign institutions. For all these systems (e.g. Prime Minister's Office, Customs & Excise) we don't have a record.

We would be grateful, if you - after receiving a PC system from another source than us - could let us know:

- Actual configuration incl. printer and peripherals
- Software in use
- Responsible person for that PC

Only with such mentioned information can we provide support for Computer systems not registered in our PC inventory. Your support in this matter will be appreciated.

3. USER GROUP



On Saturday, 19th November 1988, a **historical event** took place. Yes, for the first time in the history of Fiji there was a meeting of PC users within our Government.

We were a bit surprised that about 25 people joined the session which was held in China Club.

Apart from our computerized slide show presentation (which we have created for the E.D.P. Open Day) and the explanation of our policies and problems, we had time to demonstrate some of our latest packages, e.g. WordPerfect 5.0.

Some people asked us to arrange a second meeting, and there was a wish for forming a constant user group - mainly because a group has more power (e.g. pushing for increased training, money etc.) than individuals.

We are sure that this meeting was the right step in the right direction. As soon as further news are available, we will let you know.

It would be of great help for us, if you can give us any suggestions or topics in which you are interested. This is for both our meetings and the user group. We are also looking for PC user who would like to make short presentation about their daily work, departmental PC solutions, new software,

4. TRAINING CENTRE

4.1. Current situation

6 PCs (all XT compatibles) are already installed in our PC Training Centre - only the hard disks are missing at the moment, but we hope to receive them very soon.

However, we will start with our training courses in **February 1989**. Every Ministry and Department which has already PCs will be invited to send one or two qualified persons. Unfortunately, we can only accommodate 12 students per course. But since all our courses are repetitive each interested PC user should once have the opportunity to attend training.

Please note that it is up to the Head of Department/Section to make any reservations and choose **which person(s) can attend which course(s)**. We don't have any influence on that decision. Furthermore, it is of little help if after a course a trainee cannot use the newly acquired PC skills. We can only hope that the "right" PC users will attend.

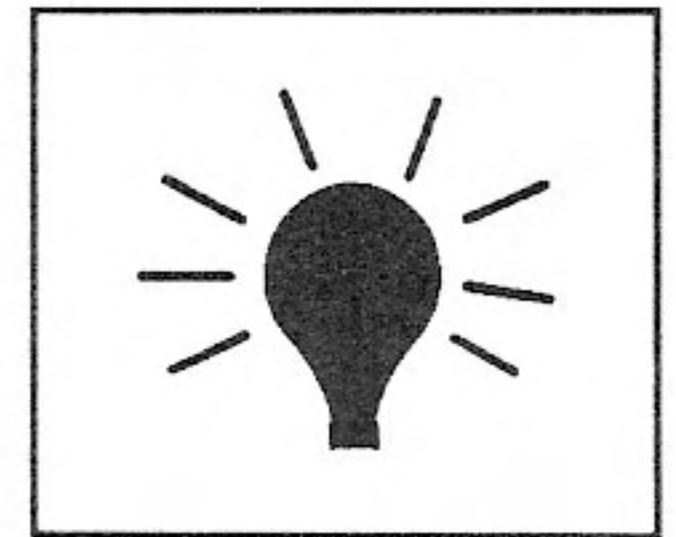
For the following course modules we have already created training documentation:

- Introduction in Personal Computers (1/2 day course)
Goal: The trainee will receive a basic knowledge of the workings of a Personal Computer works, about the components and peripherals, and basic PC care and diagnostics.
- Introduction in MS-DOS (1/2 day course)
Goal: To understand the importance of the MS-DOS operating system environment and its role in executing other software packages.
- MS-DOS commands (1 day course)
Goal: To be able to use the most common MS-DOS command, to interpret error messages, and to customize the PC to specific needs.
- Software overview (1/2 day course)
Goal: For the trainee to understand the names, functions, pro's, con's, and price of various well-known software packages.
- Hardware overview (1/2 day course)
Goal: To gain a deeper understanding of which hardware, its associated cost, and basic competence in setup and configuring of printers and computers.

Other courses such as:

- WordPerfect
- Lotus 1-2-3
- R:Base

have yet to be designed. If possible we will get both the master and the students training documentation from specialized companies in USA.



4.2 Training Scheduler 1st quarter 1989

27/2 - 3/3/89	Modules (together total 2 1/2 days) - Introduction in Personal Computing - Introduction in MS-DOS - MS-DOS commands - Software overview
13/3 - 15/3/89	Introduction in WordPerfect 5.0 (2 1/2 days)
15/3 - 17/3/89	Introduction in WordPerfect 5.0 (2 1/2 days)
27/3 - 31/3/89	Modules (together total 2 1/2 days) - Introduction in Personal Computing - Introduction in MS-DOS - MS-DOS commands - Software overview
10/4 - 12/4/89	Introduction in WordPerfect 5.0 (2 1/2 days)
12/4 - 14/4/89	Modules (together total 2 1/2 days) - Introduction in Personal Computing - Introduction in MS-DOS - MS-DOS commands - Software overview
26/4 - 28/4/89	Introduction in Lotus 1-2-3 (3 days)

15/5 - 17/5/89 Advanced WordPerfect 5.0 (2 1/2 days)

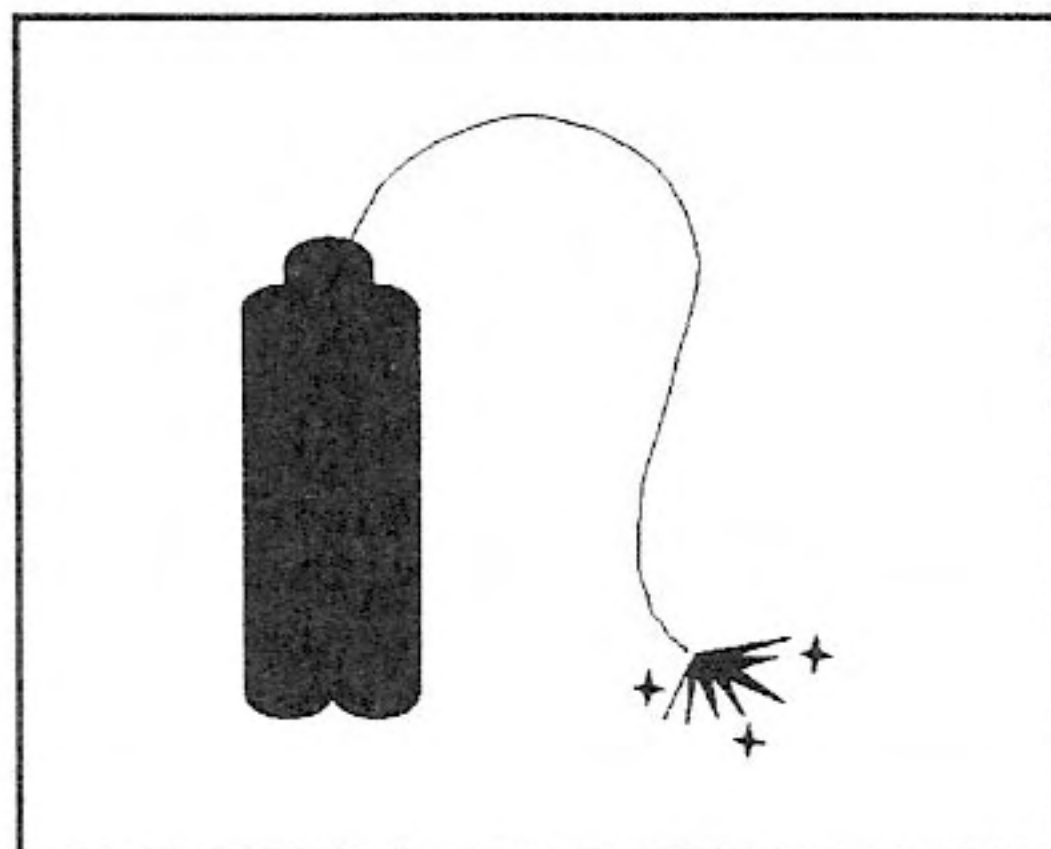
17/5 - 19/5/89 Introduction in R:Base for DOS (2 1/2 days)

5. SOFTWARE LIBRARY

5.1. Situation

A few of you already know our problems with software delivery (and, naturally, hardware as well) It can take a long, long time between ordering computer parts with a Departmental Warrant (DW) and physically receiving the items.

Several reasons are possible for delays (and already have occurred):



- a) The Minor Tender Board at COGS has postponed its meeting
- b) Ministry of Finance didn't approve prepayment (nobody in Singapore, New Zealand or USA is selling computer items with normal invoices) in time
- c) The wrong amendments in the Letter of Credit (L/C) have been made
- d) Our supplier does not have the items in stock
- e) The supplier is sending the wrong product
- f) The goods have arrived in Fiji, but the carton contains 'timber chips' (people told us that is not unusual)
- g) The goods never arrive in Fiji (this is called 'short-landed')
- h) The order and the prepayment have left Fiji in registered mail, but never arrived at our suppliers

We are fully aware of these problems. To blame somebody specifically doesn't solve the problems either.

That's why we plan to have the most common software packages (i.e. MS-DOS 3.3, WordPerfect 5.0, Lotus 1-2-3, R:Base for DOS) on stock at E.D.P. Services.

This will enable us to "sell" the requirement software faster than before. However, for more "exotic" packages, we will have to go the old, time-consuming way - and we can tell you, it also frustrates us sometimes.

So, please let us know in advance, which packages you plan to buy during 1989. Through planned purchasing we are sure that we can speed up the delivery process.

5.2. Software at the PC Information Centre

Presently, we have purchased (for evaluation, internal or external use) the following packages:

MS-DOS 3.3	the disk operating system for any PC XT or PC AT
WordPerfect 4.2	a word processing software for dual floppy users
WordPerfect 5.0	the latest word processing software (hard disk!)
WordPerfect Library	helpful utilities for WordPerfect
Lotus 1-2-3 Rel. 2.01	for calculations/spreadsheet
Lotus HAL	the 1-2-3 companion
R:Base for DOS	our data base management standard
R:Base Extended Report Writer	for comprehensive data base reports
MS-Windows 2.03	the desktop environment for other software packages
PageMaker 3.0	a desktop publishing software (ought to be used for this newsletter)
Eyestar Plus	software for scanning pictures
ReadRight	software for scanning text (also called OCR ¹)
Precursor	a menu-driven hard disk management software with an easy and friendly user interface
Disk Optimizer	used for unfragmenting hard disks
MACE utilities	hard disk utilities
H-Test/H-Format	hard disk utilities
dB Graphics	creating graphics from R:Base and DBase III+ files
Harvard Graphics	business graphics presentation (incl. slide show)
Tornado	an information processor for random data
Carousel	switch (nearly) instantly between up to 10 programs
FOCUS on Business Series	accounting modules (Fund accounting, Debtors, Creditors)
Learning DOS	a self-learning tutorial for MS-DOS
Teach yourself Lotus 1-2-3	a self-learning tutorial
Teach yourself WordPerfect 5.0	a self-learning tutorial

Naturally, we didn't have enough manpower and time to test and learn all above packages. But if you are interested in further information about a software we can provide, and in some cases, even demonstrate it.

¹ stands for Optical Character Recognition. With OCR scanning it is possible to use the scanned text (e.g. from a newspaper or letter) in a word processing software for further manipulation.

Special offer (only for "Power users"!)

We have 1 spare hard disk utility software (H-TEST/H-FORMAT from Paul Mace) in stock. Quite nice tool! We be sold against DW or cheque for F\$.110.00

6. Hardware shop

6.1. Situation

Our hardware shop seems to have a big success. Plenty Departments and Ministries, but also Statutory Bodies, have taken the opportunity in buying directly through us.

The advantages are clear: better consulting (which model with which configuration), cheaper prices, and faster repair service (our technical staff tries to give the best with limited tools and no spare parts!).

However, due to the current international purchasing procedure (all our suppliers insist on prepayment), the delivery took up to 10 weeks after receiving cheque or DW.

We fully agree that this is too much, and unpleasant for us (somebody has to monitor the whole purchasing process) and specially for the ordering institution.

From next year on we will create a **PC Shop**, where we will constantly store 2 PC XT's (with 20 MB hard disk and monochrome monitor), 2 PC AT's (with 40 MB hard disk and EGA color monitor), and 4 fast EPSON printers with single cut sheet feeder.

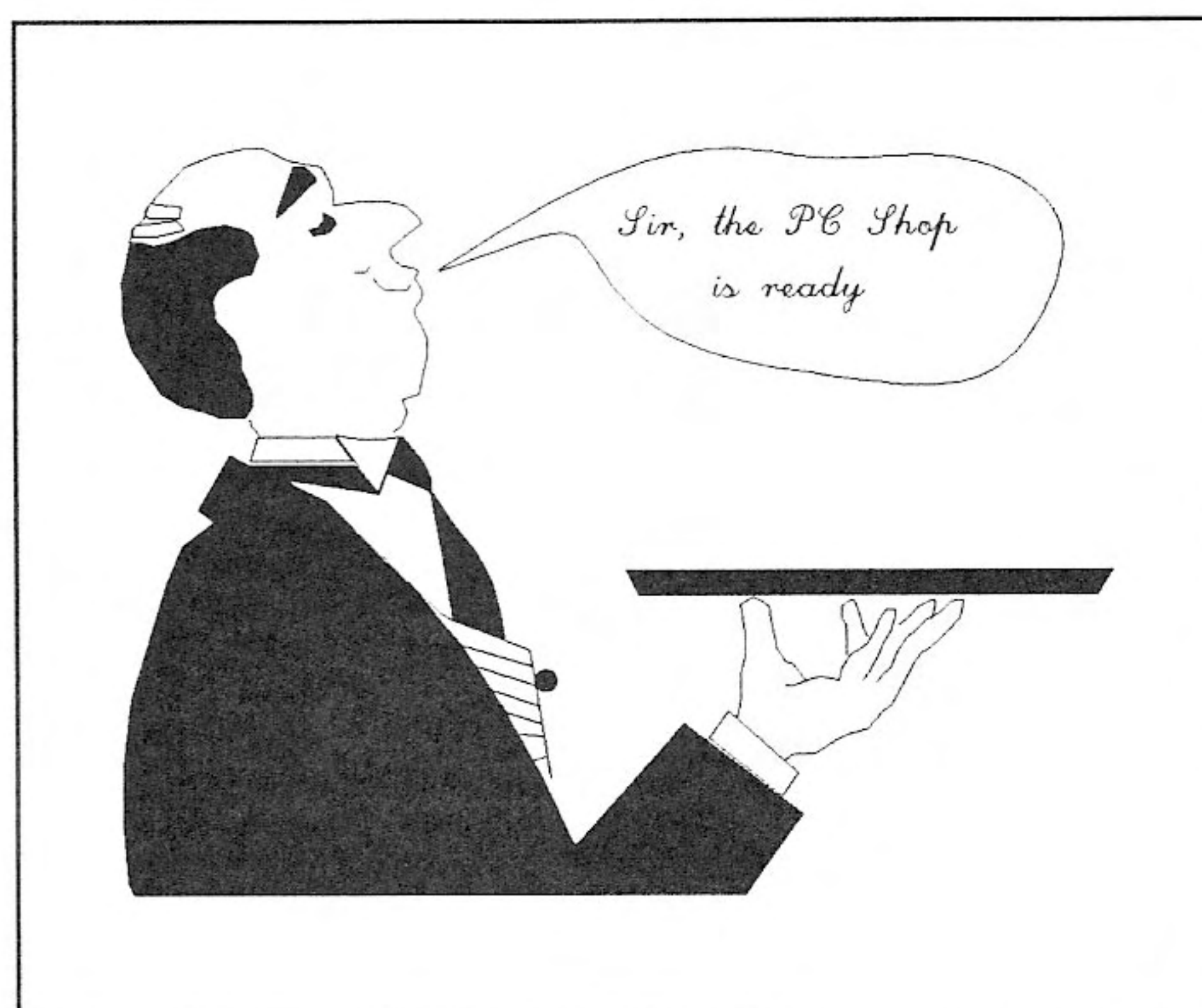
That means if somebody urgently wants to buy a PC, we can instantly deliver a system with any of mentioned models. We, on the other side, will use that money to buy the respective replacement. But if an "exotic" configuration (bigger hard disk, better screen etc.) is required, we still have to use the ordinary purchase procedure.

We hope that our PC Shop will help in not only selecting and testing the future equipment, but also in providing the necessary good service which you should expect from any 'sales organization'.

Power Conditioners are - as far as our own experience is concerned - a **must** for every Personal Computer with a hard disk drive. Spikes, surges, and other occurrences on our local lines can damage your hard disk. For that reason, IDL Ltd., Suva (phone 313 844), offers special conditions for PC users in the Government:

Sola Power Conditioner 200 Watt F\$ 450.00 (for 1 PC XT/AT)

Sola Power Conditioner 500 Watt F\$ 600.00 (for 2 PC XT/AT)



IDL is also selling uninterruptable power supplies, floppy disks, software and general hardware. Please ask IDL for a quote.

7. ENVIRONMENT

After offering floppy disks in our last newsletter, we received an immense reply: plenty people ordered cheap diskettes with a DW. Soon we were out of stock.

After that experience we asked COGS to sent a form to all Ministries asking for their floppy, paper and printer ribbons requirements for 1989. Unfortunately, only a few forms were sent back to COGS.

This is a pity since we could even buy locally at a very cheap price (if a "bulk" order is issued). But give us a ring before buying floppy disks - maybe we have some on sock and can help you out.

Quite a few times our Technical Section is called by users which are having floppy disk problems. What our 'technician' normally do is cleaning the head of the floppy disk drive. Mostly it is totally rusted.

The reason for this rust: users still work with floppy disks they have purchased years ago. Humidity, the Fiji sea air, and unproper storing (not in dust cover and box) can dirten any floppy. Therefore, if you have valuable data (files and programs) on your floppies, please buy new diskettes and make copies (2 are better than 1) of your old floppy disks.

PS: Recently a Peace Corps Volunteer from Tuvalu came with his unreadable floppy disks to us. Although we have some utilities to "repair" damaged files, we couldn't help him. But the worst was that even the backup copy of his Lotus spreadsheet was defective. Our conclusion: never trust your hard disk, never trust your floppies!

You wouldn't believe how many dirty PCs and printers you can find in the Government. System units fully covered with dust, screens with oily dirt, keyboards with nearly-black keys, printers "decorated" with traces from changing ribbons (sometimes even with mouse shit inside) etc.

Since every Personal Computer system represents an investment and a value of several thousand Dollars, we kindly ask those users to take better care of their machine. Here some tips:

- Clean every 2 month your keyboard, your system unit, your monitor and printer with a soft cloth and very little alcohol. Dry later with another cloth.
- Dust covers, floppy drive cleaning kits, floppy disk cases etc. are sold by many local companies. A longer life of your PC system might be worth an additional expense.
- For smokers: keep attention that your ashes don't fall onto floppies or the keyboard.
- For hungry people: don't eat when working with a PC. Have your break elsewhere.

8. Marketplace/User to user

Question: Recently, my Department has received a new IBM AT compatible PC. Somebody told me that while I can read 360 KB formatted floppies in my AT floppy drive, I will not be able to write to my "old" floppies (from my former XT compatible system). Is that right?

Answer: *It is correct that you can read both 360 KB (double-side/double density) or 1.2 MB (double-side/high density) formatted floppies in your new AT compatible PC which has a high-capacity floppy disk drive. But if you use the following switch in the FORMAT command:*

FORMAT A:/4

you can format even a double-side/double density floppy disk which after can be written on perfectly. If you are using a single- or double-sided floppy drive, you may not be able to reliably read disks formatted with this switch.

PS: People who use our backup/restore software FULLBAK need to set the tracks parameter to 48! Moreover, they have to know that FULLBAK formats floppies in a different way, i.e. DOS will not be able to read FULLBAK floppies (a error message "Sector not found error reading drive A:" or "General Failure error reading drive A:" will appear on the screen).

Question: I always wondered what Lotus or 1-2-3 is? Somebody told me it is a software for calculations. Another said it is mainly used for data bases and graphics. Which is correct?

Answer: *Both. Although you can use Lotus 1-2-3 for (rather limited) data base applications and simple graphics, its main power lies in calculations. The working area for these calculations is called a 'spreadsheet'. It looks like a table consisting of columns and rows. Each 'cell' in this table can either have a numeric or an alphanumeric value. Powerful financial, statistical and arithmetical formulas for comprehensive calculations can also be stored in cells. Lotus 1-2-3 includes a comprehensive macro language for comprehensive data manipulation (e.g. is used in Ministry of Primary Industries for their accounting). Unfortunately this software package is copy-protected (which is annoying when working with a hard disk {Backup/Restore!}). However, if somebody buys a legal package, we will install a copy of 1-2-3 with removed copy-protection.*

Question: Can you explain me what a computer virus is?

Answer: *A computer virus is a program that has either the final goal to:*

- *multiply itself until all the system resources are utilized for the virus program(s) [A few month ago, a 23-year old student of an American university loaded (via communication lines) this kind of virus in several mainframe computers. His virus even got into big international networks connecting 10000's of computers all over the world. The only cure was to 'power off' the infected system. The student apologized in public for his "mistake", but will face legal action]. or*

- slowly "infect" other programs so that they won't run correctly at given times. **or**
- destroy or manipulate data stored in BIOS chips, controllers and other hardware (hard disks are nice targets).

While some of the virus programmers may have bad intentions, some of them only want to experiment. The easiest way to 'distribute' a virus is in a so-called 'shareware software' which can be purchased (against a minimal fee of a few Dollars) from PC user clubs, software-pirating companies (mainly Far-East) or directly from the developer.

The best way to avoid virus problems: don't pirate. If you want to use 'shareware' programs, use a so-called 'vaccine', a software specially written against virus infections (e.g. available from USA).

Everything you always wanted to know about Switzerland - but were afraid to ask

Sometimes people here in Fiji ask me: "Where do you come from?". I always give the same answer: "From Switzerland". "Oh, from Switzerland" is normally the response.

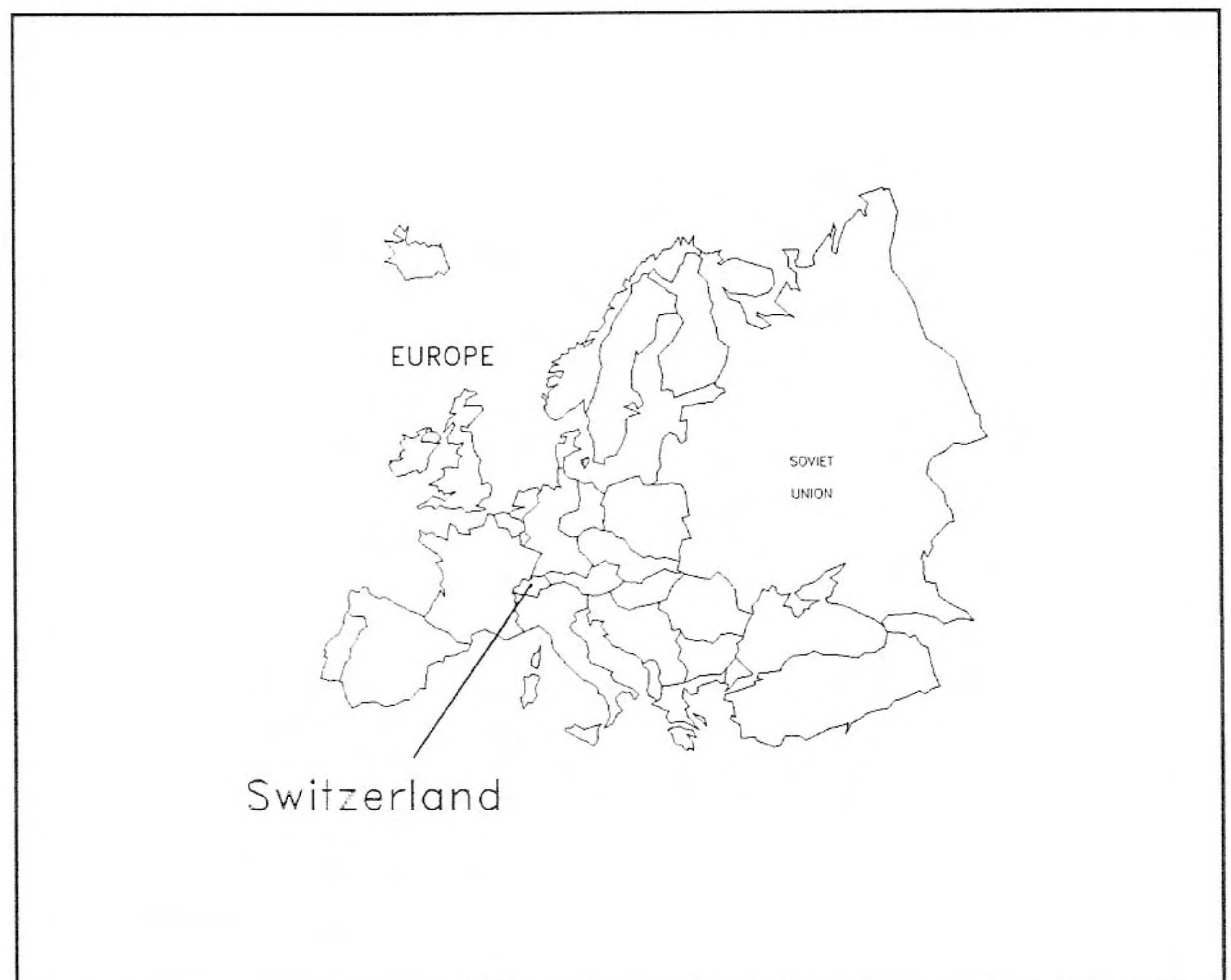
Then, after talking a few minutes, I hear: "Is it a cold country, Sweden?" "Yes, but Switzerland is not Sweden", I have to reply.

Considering these 'illusions' and regarding the number of goods which you can buy here (Ovaltine, Nestle, Maggi, Swiss watches, army knives etc.) and which have been manufactured by Swiss owned companies, it is time that some more people should receive a basic knowledge about this country.

It was in the year 1291 when four small cantons decided to found the first Swiss confederation. Before the whole area was occupied and governed by foreign countries, Kings and Dukes from Germany and Austria ("Habsburg"). Between 1291 and 1815, another 22 cantons joined the confederation. The main reason for the break with the nobility was the gulf between the very rich and the poor people.

In 1848 a new constitution was created which is still valid today, although changes have been made. There are two chambers (2 "Staenderat" seats for each canton; "Nationalrat" seats according to the population in each canton) which form together the National Assembly (i.e. Parliament). All these politicians are elected directly by the citizens. Only the executive, which includes 7 members, is selected by the National Assembly.

To avoid tensions between different parties (ranging from communists to ultra-racist parties), races and languages, there is neither a President nor a Prime Minister. All decisions are made within the team. Each year another minister will act as the interim President. But one of this seven ministers is the interim President (res inter pares).



The whole area of Switzerland covers 41,293 km², which is equal about 4 times Viti Levu. Totally inside of Europe, this country borders on France, West Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Italy. A third of the Swiss region is covered either with icy mountains (highest is the Monte Rosa, 4634 meters above sea level) or lakes. Although it can be very, very cold in the winter (November - March), temperatures in summer can reach more than 35° Celsius.

There are three major languages: Swiss German (with dozens of dialects), French, and Italian. The forth language, Romansch, is spoken only by a small minority. The population in 1986 was 6,484,834 inhabitants. More than a 10th of which are expatriates or refugees.

While Bern is the capital, Geneva is famous for being the headquarters of the International Red Cross (which uses the inverted version of the Swiss flag, a white cross on red ground) and various United Nations organizations. Zurich is the biggest city (351,500 citizens), internationally well-known for its stock exchange and as the main centre of Swiss and foreign banks.

The primary sector, agriculture, cannot offer the products the people need: the country is not self-contained; many goods have to be imported. While the success of the rather small secondary sector, the industry, is built on good quality and high-tech standards, the commercial services and tourism produce the biggest part of the GNP (gross national product); governmental budget surplus in 1987 was 1.22 billion F\$).

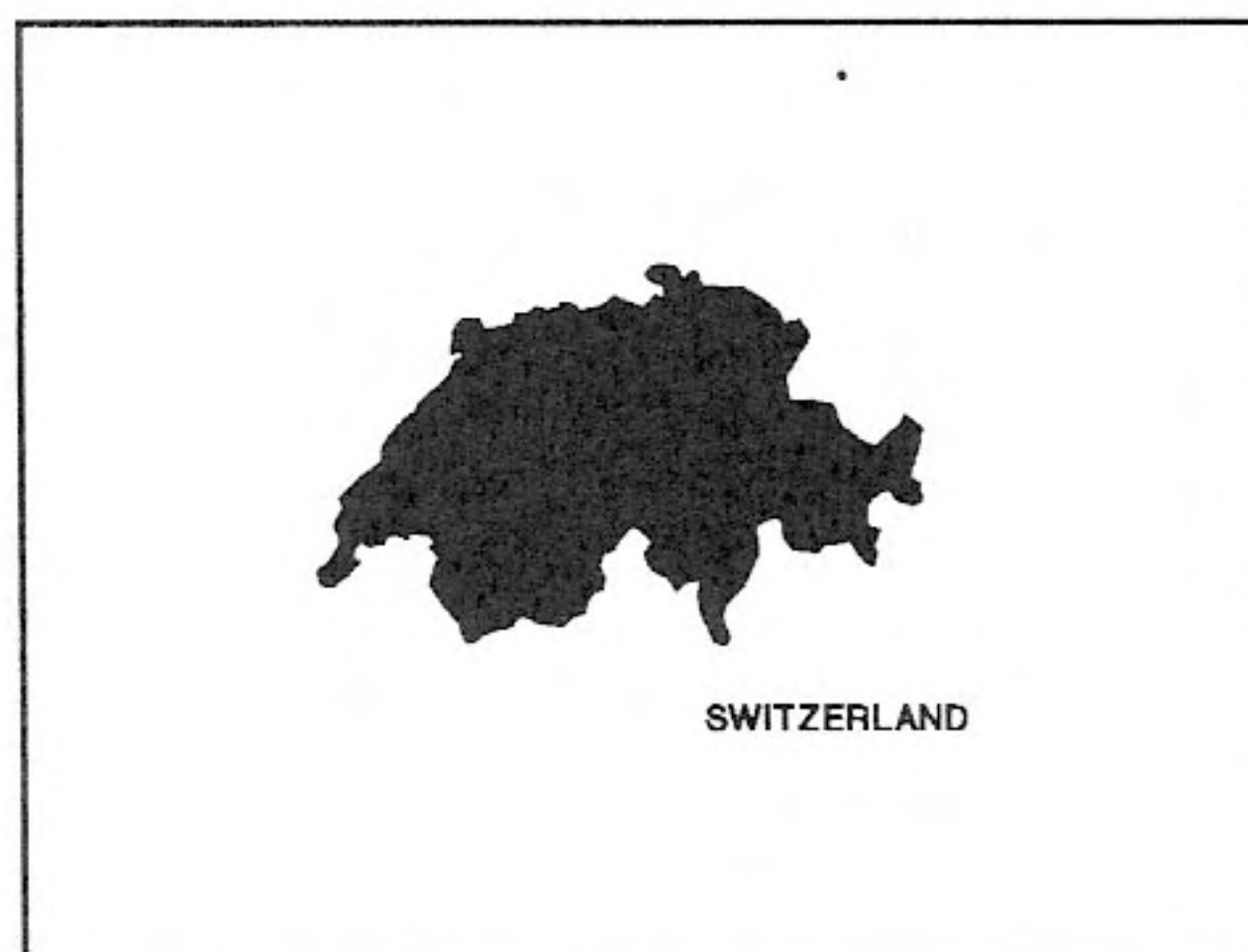
Switzerland is still one of the richest countries in the world (rated by national income per head).

Why?

There are several factors which favored the development of this country. Firstly, the education system is well-grounded, and the rate of people

without work nowadays is less than 1 %. Secondly, employers and workers associations always find 'gentlemen's agreements' in strategic important questions. Thirdly, every citizen can not only vote for the politicians but also for laws, communal, cantonal, and federal budgets.

Another reason for the high standard of living were the events in the Second World War. Switzerland, totally neutral (still not a UN or EEC member), was -apart from the United Kingdom -the only country in Europe which has never been occupied by foreign powers. Some say this is due to the Swiss Army system. Every citizen between 20 and 50 years has to render military service. That kind of militia service results a powerful army and prevents of military intervention in political matters.



But Switzerland has also its dark sides. Environment pollution (does anyone in Fiji know about this word?), international manufacturing concurrence, limited rural and urban space (land and real estate speculations!), alcohol and drug problems, racial conflicts, decline of active voters etc. And not to forget the "dirty" money of sacked politicians like Marcos and Duvalier, or criminal organizations, which all have immense accounts in Swiss banks.

All these unsolved problems will have to be remembered by the citizens of this country when they will celebrate the 900 years anniversary on the 1st August 1991.

But considering the achievements of the past and given the highest level of democratic responsibility to the citizens, one might think the latter will keep certain values which made Switzerland what it is today: quite a peaceful country; rather tolerant to differently minded people; politically stabilized and with a strong economy.

Now you can't tell me anymore that you never heard about this country! (D.Z.)

!!! COMPETITION !!!

Win a free software package (dbGraphics from Microrim, value F\$ 375.00). All you have to do is to create either a logo (graphic design) or a name for our PC Newsletter.

Send us your ideas! We then select the best which will win this competition.

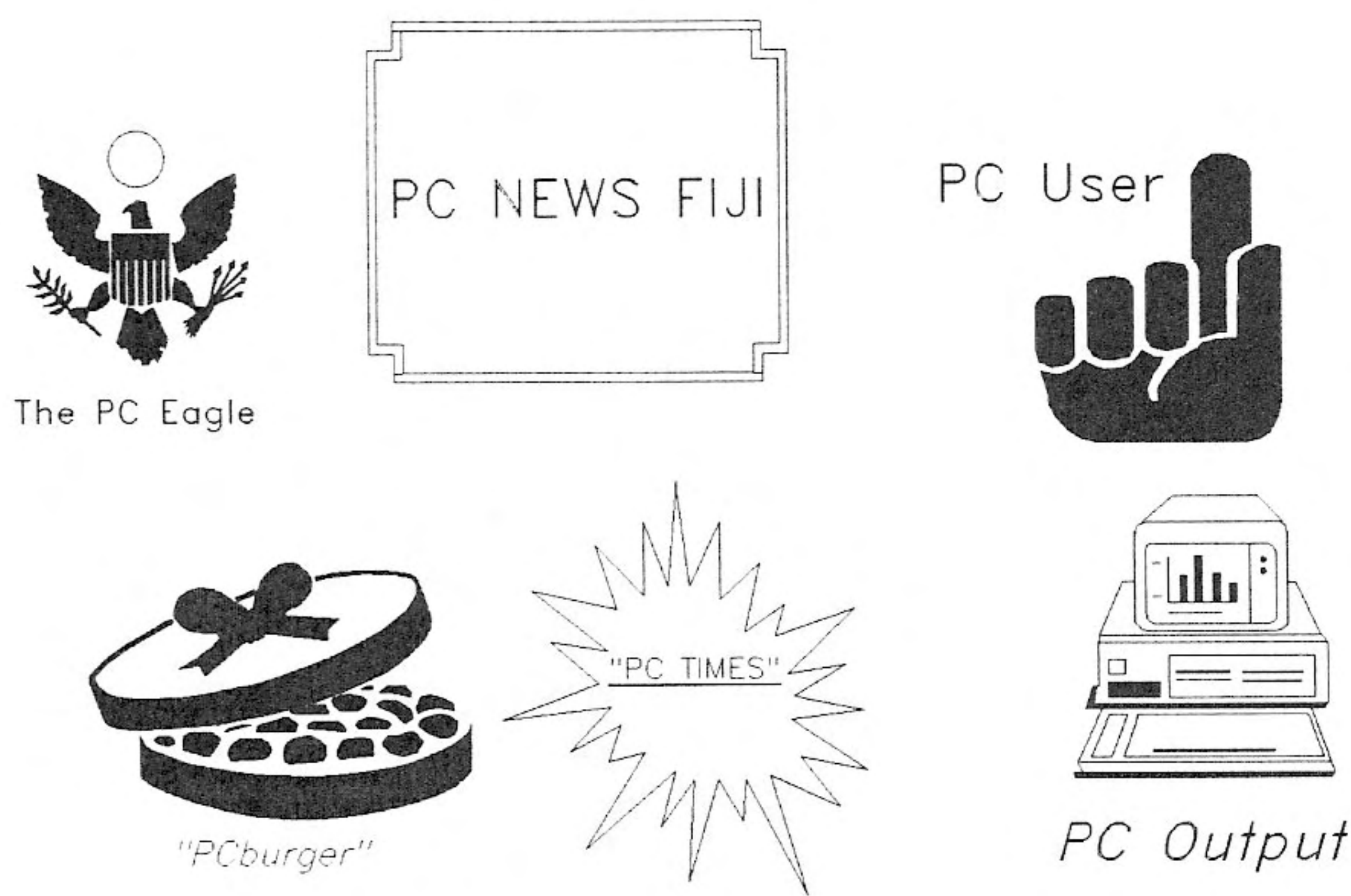
Please note that the dead-line for the next edition of this newsletter is **15th February 1989 !!!**

9. Beginner's page

Here some more information about do's and don'ts:

1. If you have a PC with a hard disk (normally then you only have 1 floppy drive) and you turned the power off, always wait 30 seconds before turning the power on again. The reason is that some (mainly older) hard disks don't stop that fast. The disk is still spinning around (you can even hear it in certain cases). Only after the disk stands still - which means the heads are also parked - you should turn the power on.
2. Always make backup's of your documents (and programs if necessarily). For single files/documents you can use the COPY command of MS-DOS. One solution of this command is:
COPY [file name] [drive name]
e.g. **COPY MYTEXT.DOC B:**

Examples of logos and names



(this would copy the file MYTEXT.DOC from your current drive (e.g. A or C) to the drive B. The filename of the new copied file will still be the same.

If you want to backup a whole floppy disk, use the DISKCOPY command of MS-DOS:

e.g. **DISKCOPY A: B:**

(the contents of the floppy disk in drive A will be entirely copied onto the floppy disk in drive B. All filenames of the new copy are still the same.)

If you have a hard disk and you want to backup a certain directory², you can use the BACKUP command of MS-DOS:

e.g. **BACKUP C:\LOTUS*. * A:**

(all files in drive C and in the directory LOTUS will be backed up onto one or more floppies (depending how many files you have). Note that you must use the RESTORE command if you want to load the files back from your floppy/floppies to your hard disk)

10. Power user

HARVARD GRAPHICS users: If you use the option 'Organization Charts' you will find that you are limited to a certain amount of levels. The reason is that you cannot change the size of the characters in the chart boxes. Use 'Draw/Annotate' for making big organization charts.

Harvard Graphics includes in release 2.0 a nice export facility for graphs. If you intend to put a graph into WordPerfect 5.0, use the 'HPGL' export option (filename extension *.PLT), because the Postscript option won't work in WordPerfect. If you can't print in color, configure 'Setup' with the monochrome option.

WORDPERFECT 5.0 users: WordPerfect Corporation shipped us a new version of printer device drivers. The old ones had some 'bugs' in it. But we suspect that even some of the new printer drivers (e.g. the one for HP Laserjet II) still have some bugs in it. The good news: we have successfully tested the integration of graphics from PAINT (included in MS-WINDOWS), HARVARD GRAPHICS and PC PAINTBRUSH. The soft fonts from Bitstream will work as well.

LOTUS 1-2-3 users: If you use an Epson printer, set it first to 'compressed' mode before printing a wide spreadsheet. Otherwise it won't fit on one page.

Also remember that if you have a EGA or even a multisync monitor, you first have to run INSTALL to select the appropriate graphics adaptor card. If your graphics card came with a floppy, you will have to load the screen drivers (filename extension *.DRV) into your LOTUS directory. In INSTALL then use the 'Add new drivers to library' option. After that chose 'Modify current driver set', make your new settings and 'Save changes'.

General MS-DOS: If you have a 40 MB or a 80 MB hard disk and you need to re-format it, you need the DISK MANAGER software supplied with every Seagate disk. It will physically format the disk, then create the DOS partition(s), then logically format the disk. We have tried other disk utility programs but none of them could break the DOS barrier of 32 MB. Give us a call if you like to have your own copy.

A hard disk never lasts forever. The heads do crash every time the power is turned off and the platters begin to slow; they grind the platter again at power-on. If your disk has a PARK command, use it. It will park the heads in a safe place, away from the area dedicated to Boot, FAT and Directory information, and if possible, data as well.

11. PC News

- A Ministry has recently ordered the first MAC-386 Tower, a 80386-processor based PC running at 20 Mhz. They will have the fastest PC ever installed in the Government, its power is badly required for extensive calculations.
- We recently installed so-called math coprocessors (Intel 8087 and 80287) in some PCs. According to Intel's own installation manual, a coprocessor will not greatly speed up normal calculations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division). But it can drastically increase complex arithmetic operations like standard deviation, exponents, and floating point calculations. Can the normal PC user really work with those functions ?
- A US company is offering a card, which after being installed in a PC will act as a telephone answering machine. Unfortunately, only a computerized male voice is supported. Approximate price in F\$: 500.
- Our 19-inch monitor from Taxan Corporation (possible resolution of 1280 x 960 pixels!!!) is not working properly. We suspect that it is due to a faulty device driver for MS-Windows. What we want to say - the latest technology is not always the best.
- As you can see in our newsletter, the Microtek Image Scanner is working. However, we still have problems with the Eyestar Plus software (a product for scanning pictures). We didn't had time to test the OCR software ("ReadRight") at all.
- Framework III from Ashton Tate has arrived! We don't know what the latest release of this well-known integrated package (word processing, spreadsheet, data base, graphics, electronic mail) is offering, but anybody interested in a **German** copy of Framework II can contact us.
- IBM has announced a new system in the PS/2 line. It is called Model 70-A21, includes a 80386 chip running at 25 Mhz, 2 MB RAM and a 120 MB hard disk. Don't ask for the price in Fiji dollars (it already costs US\$ 11,295.00)!
- If IBM announces a fast PC, other companies are already offering faster and cheaper systems. Take the example of the ALR FlexCache 25386. Including a 150 MB disk, VGA adaptor and 2 MB RAM, it sells for only US\$ 9,449.00.

- A few weeks ago we bought a memory expansion board (fitted with 1 MB, expandable to 2) for our PC AT. Some applications run okay while others have problems with this board (configured as 'expanded memory' and with emulation software for LIM 3.2 and 4.0 specification. If you would like to have more memory, never buy a 'no name' brand. Insist either on a Intel Above Board or the AST Rampage. We are sure that with those board you won't face problems.
- Networking PCs or not? A big question. And big problems. Plenty companies are offering different networking solutions (including different cabling systems, protocols, software etc.). Should we go for the DEC solution (because the mainframe at E.D.P. Services is from that company)? Has ICL a better approach? Is 3COM the best decision? Or shall we go with the 'standard' NOVELL? We still haven't made a final decision (i.e. we are still evaluating). But we only know that the biggest local Novell network experienced a lot of troubles (or shall we say it is "down"). At the moment the most important question for us is: "How good is the **support** from the company which installed the network?" Maybe we can tell you more in the next newsletter.
- If you have a PC which could run IBM's new operating system OS/2, you will need a lot of RAM memory for switching to OS/2. Experts say that a minimum of 2.5 MB RAM is required, but more "would be highly appreciated" by OS/2.
- The first erasable optical mass storage system has arrived! The Discus Rewritable (from Advanced Graphic Applications, USA) can store 650 MB of data on one disk. The system is priced at ca. F\$ 8,000.00, and each disk sells for only F\$ 400.00.
- The "chips war" between Japan and USA has incredibly increased memory (RAM) cost. For 1 MB of RAM you now have to budget nearly F\$ 600.00.
- We have tested the Microsoft Bus mouse bundled with EasyCAD. The later seems to be a quite nice CAD (Computer Aided Design) package, offering all the basic features you expect from a technical drawing software. It will be installed in the Town & Country Planning Department.
- According to "PC Magazine" (Volume 7, number 18, October 1988, page 114) a lawsuit has been filed against Okidata and Ricoh. The topic will be malfunctions in the Okidata Laserline 6. One of our suppliers, PC Connection (USA), was even forced to stop selling this printer because of too many user complaints. We are wondering what the local company which sells the Okidata laser printer will do?
- Plenty users in Fiji now have color monitors. But what to do with that nice colored graphics? What to do if your printer only understands "black"? A possible approach is the color option kit for our 'best-seller', the Epson LQ2500+. It is available through E.D.P. for F\$ 121.00. But don't forget to order color ribbons as well. And be aware that the normal copier only understands "black".
- A better solution is the one-page-per-minute printer from QMS, called ColorScript 100. You will need a big purse - the price tag is F\$ 38,000.00.