

# BREAKPOINTS

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## **SYSGEN READIES FULL SCSI DISK/TAPE CONTROLLER BOARD**

Evaluation units of the model SI-536 controller will be shipped this month by Sysgen Inc. of Fremont, Calif. Priced at around \$400 and offering complete implementation of the small computer systems interface command set, including disconnect/reconnect with arbitration, the board can handle both rigid disk drives and quarter-inch tape. In order to achieve commonality of system commands, the controller translates standard disk commands to work with the tape system.—*Carl Warren*

## **VCRs FIND A NEW ROLE—MICRO DATA STORAGE**

Alpha Micro Systems claims that video cassette recorders (VCRs) are used to back up data on 90 percent of its installed base of multiuser systems. Beginning this month, the Santa Ana, Calif., company wants to try that idea on another installed base—IBM Corp.'s PC/AT and XT and compatible microcomputers. For \$795, Alpha Micro will provide a controller and software to convert digital data to analog for backup on VCRs with Beta, VHS or European formats. Backup can be either by disk image or file-by-file. Alpha Micro claims the system is less expensive and slightly faster than streaming tape.—*Mike Seither*

## **DATAMART OPENS FOR BUSINESS IN SAN FRANCISCO**

Datamart, the nation's second major all-in-one computer market, opens in San Francisco this month, hoping to offer the computer industry an alternative way of reaching customers by leasing part of its 175,000 square feet of flashy showroom space to manufacturers. Like Infomart, which opened in January in Dallas, DataMart will sponsor seminars, conferences and shows. Its promoters hope that value-added resellers will set up shop there, too. What's Datamart's VAR pitch? A stream of potential buyers, like the ones expected at a two-day conference on computers in finance beginning Sept. 16.—*Mike Seither*

## **JVC TO DEBUT COMPACT OPTICAL DISK**

A 5¼-inch, compact optical disk designed specifically for data storage is expected shortly from JVC Electronics Ltd. of Tokyo. The CD ROM reportedly has a capacity of 700M bytes and will incorporate an embedded small computer systems interface with full arbitration. Data delivery will be 10M bits per second.—*Carl Warren*

## **MOTOROLA FOUR-PHASE RESHAPES UNIX INTERFACE**

Motorola Inc. Four-Phase Systems, Cupertino, Calif., has replaced UNIX commands with a set of menus to run integrated office software on its Series 2000 and 6000 multiuser systems. The Business Assistant UNIX umbrella covers word processing, database management, spreadsheet calculation, electronic mail and calendaring. Configured with those

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applications, the software is priced at about \$5,200 per CPU. Other available modules include graphics, information retrieval and project management. Value-added resellers can choose the software modules they need or add their own applications built around the menu system.—*Mike Seither*

### **SUN WORKSTATIONS CONNECT WITH IBM'S SNA**

Sun Microsystems Inc., Sunnyvale, Calif., has entered IBM Corp.'s Systems Network Architecture (SNA) world with a gateway that allows Sun workstations to run IBM mainframe applications. The \$2,000 SunLink SNA 3270 Gateway software runs on either a standard Sun workstation or one equipped with a Sun communications coprocessor. The gateway connects with remote IBM 3705 or 3725 front-end communications processors by dial-up or leased lines. The workstation then emulates IBM 3278 terminals. Another software package, the \$1,500 SunLink BSC RJE, lets Sun machines, acting as IBM 2780 or 3780 terminals, exchange files and execute remote programs with IBM's Binary Synchronous Communications and Remote Job Entry environments.—*Mike Seither*

### **OREGON SOFTWARE'S PASCAL COMPILER MEETS ISO STANDARD**

Portland-based Oregon Software Inc.'s Pascal-2 development system is the first Pascal compiler produced in the United States to be validated as conforming to the International Standards Organization Level 1 and ANSI/IEEE standard Pascal. The validation—which requires a compiler to correctly process a suite of 740 test programs—was performed by the Federal Software Testing Center with assistance by the British Standards Institute.—*Carl Warren*

### **START-UP ZVERT CORP. OFFERS LASER PRINTER PROTOCOL EMULATORS**

Up to three users can take advantage of the Hewlett-Packard Co. Laserjet printer with Zvert Corp.'s new ZVT series of laser printer protocol converters/sharers, which also provide Diablo Systems Inc. 630 and Epson America Inc. FX printer emulation. The Los Angeles company offers the standalone ZVT-100 3-port sharing unit for \$299; 630 and XT emulation is available for \$100 each on the model ZVT-800. Each port supports from 9,600 baud to 19.2K baud and X-on/X-off and DTR flow control.

—*Carl Warren*

### **DEC PACKAGE LENDS A HAND TO OFFICE USERS**

A comprehensive portfolio of integrated hardware and decision-support software, VAX Information Center from Digital Equipment Corp. has been designed to help information system departments facilitate end-user computing. Components of the package include VAX Toolbox, personal computing interconnection products, connection between DECnet and IBM Corp.'s Systems Network Architecture, training and seminars.—*Lynn Haber*