

SUPERLETTER

Serving SuperBrain® Owners and Users Around the World Feb. 1981

Welcome to Superletter! It's my pleasure to introduce you to the first international newsletter conceived and published exclusively for owners and operators of the Intertec SuperBrain computer.

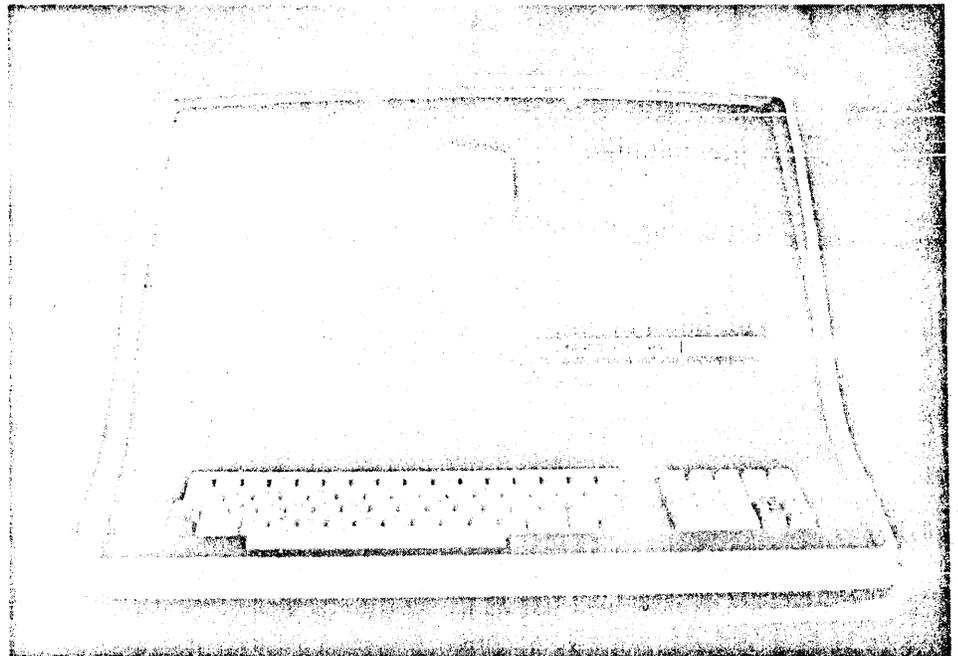
We are going to endeavor to provide you with an exciting monthly forum in which to share valuable information, like programming tips and technical problems, with thousands of other SuperBrain users around the world.

Your letters, your feedback and your creative ideas will eventually determine the success of this venture. We promise to search out the most timely facts and news regarding the use of the SuperBrain and present them to you quickly in a convenient and readable form.

We know from your letters and phone calls that many of you have experienced frustration and problems in dealing with Intertec Data Systems in the past. This failure of the factory to communicate properly with its customers is probably the reason for the overwhelming response we've received since we announced our intent to publish.

However, it is our belief that now a positive and constructive relationship can be formed between you, our readers, and the people at Intertec. This welcome dialog can be, and should be, a creative two-way street.

If you'll take the time to communicate with us, we'll provide you news of the latest in SuperBrain compatible CP/M software,



technical accessories, hardware modifications and repair suggestions. Let us know how you use your computer. What adaptations have you made? What software have you written? What suggestions for improvements would you like the factory to consider?

When you write us remember that many of our readers do not speak or understand technical jargon. If you'll keep your articles and letters simply written and easy to read, you'll reach a more appreciative audience and make a bigger impact.

However, what you can communicate in easy-to-follow programming terms, for example, is fine. The same goes for step-by-step maintenance or modification procedures. The choice of subjects is yours.

The pleasure in sharing them with others is ours.

And one more thing:

Our advertisers will welcome your patronage. By mentioning that "you saw it in Superletter", you'll provide them important customer feedback and encourage their continued support. Ads provide us all with excellent information as well as vital buying opportunities for the software we need.

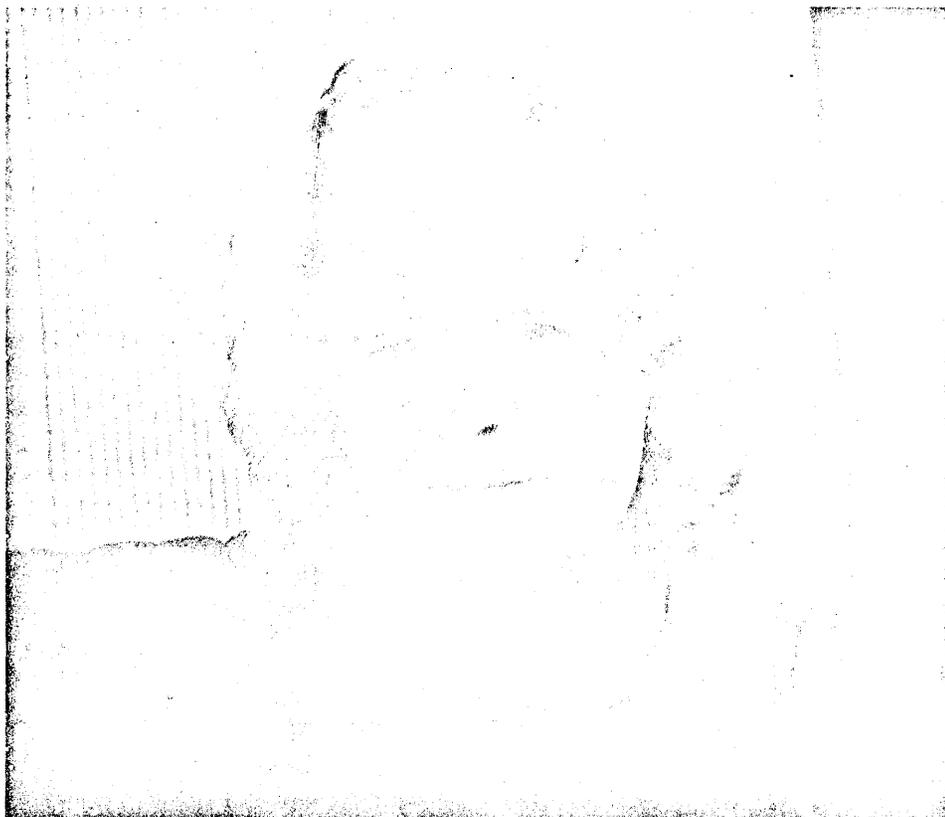
So, read on and enjoy this charter issue of what we hope will become for you an integral part of your computer world . . . Superletter!

Albert Abrams
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD
EDITOR

2101

Superletter is published, once a month, 12 issues per year by Abrams Creative Services. Mailing address: P.O. Box 3121, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Phone: (213) 277-2410. Copyright © 1981 by Abrams Creative Services. All Rights Reserved. No part of this newsletter can be copied by any means without prior written permission from the publisher. Editor: Albert Abrams. Advertising & Subscription: Linda Patchell. Production: Marquiss Adv. Design.

(SuperBrain® is a registered trademark of Intertec Data Systems, Inc. CP/M® is a registered trademark of Digital Research, Inc.)



Guest Interview

Dr. Vidal,

(Superletter this month talks with Dr. Jacques Vidal, a SuperBrain owner and Professor of Computer Science at U.C.L.A.)

Q: How long have you been using a SuperBrain?

A: For about a year now. It's a Model 2, using the CP/M 2.0 system.

Q: Do you plan to update it?

A: Yes, basically because I would like to be able to exchange some non-proprietary software with other users who are mostly working with the Model 3 with CP/M 2.2.

Also, I'm considering using Pascal and some of the text-editors like Magic Wand, Word Star and some business software packages that are available.

Q: How are you currently using your SuperBrain?

A: My main computing at UCLA is done on a PDP-Vax 11 and a PDP-1145, both of which operate on the UNIX System.

I wanted a compact computer that would act as an intelligent terminal and stand alone for separate text-editing with the diskettes used for off-line storage of UNIX files.

Q: Have you been successful?

A: There have been some difficulties. Not necessarily with the SuperBrain, but with the way UNIX takes interactive I/O. I've had to do some tricks, a lot of programming gymnastics. We had to use the PIP program, but we did succeed in transferring some files from the UNIX system to the SuperBrain.

Q: What would you say are the good points of the SuperBrain?

A: The packaging. The price. It's an entire computer with two drives I can put it in the trunk of my car. It's open-ended with the S-100 bus adaptor. I see it as a system I can grow with, adapt to future use, even possibly as a process controller if I want.

Q: And its faults?

A: I'm concerned about the back-up from the factory. It seems every owner I've talked to has some horror story or another about the service or the lack of it.

The documentation you get with the computer is skimpy. One problem we've had despite the fact that we bought the modification package to actuate the auxiliary port is that it still hasn't worked.

Then there is the way that the mother board is attached to the frame. It's poorly supported. Some bad design there. And I've found that the system definitely does not meet certain FCC standards for emitted radiation. The TV interference the computer creates is quite obvious.

But, to overcome that problem you can buy a plug-on filter which seems to do the trick.

I also would have preferred a removable power cord. It would have cost them nothing to make it that way.

The S-100 bus connector is a good idea except that they should have made a better way to make external connections. As it stands, you have to make a change in the cabinet itself. You can see the difficulty if you wanted an extra parallel connection.

Q: Do you think the factory has a problem in dealing with its customers?

A: It's surprising that Intertec doesn't take advantage of the fact that they've got thousands of customers out there. I filled out the warranty card and even purchased their schematics and I've never heard from them once.

You would think the factory would bombard you with helpful information about new software offerings and technical changes. But they don't.

That's why your monthly newsletter is such a good idea.

Q: What kind of enhancements would you like to see?

A: There could be software in

WORLD-WIDE SUPER DISCOUNTS!

Nobody, but nobody can beat our prices on factory-fresh printers and terminals!

PRINTERS:

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Base 2 (Model ST) | \$535.90 |
| Base 2 (w/tractors!) | 625.60 |
| Centronics 730 (w/cable!) | 678.50 |
| Centronics 737 (w/cable!) | 811.90 |
| Centronics 779 (w/tractors) | 851.00 |
| Diablo 1640 (RO) | 2,799.95 |
| Diablo 1640 (KSR) | 2,995.00 |
| Diablo 1650 (RO) | 2,950.00 |
| Diablo 1650 (KSR) | 3,199.95 |
| QUME 5/45 (RO) | 2,495.00 |
| QUME 5/45 (KSR) | 2,850.00 |
| QUME 5/55 (RO) | 2,595.00 |
| QUME 5/55 (KSR) | 2,999.95 |
| TI-810 Basic | 1,595.00 |

TERMINALS:

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Soroc IQ 120 | 695.00 |
| Televideo 912-C | 725.00 |
| Televideo 920-C | 795.00 |
| Lear 3-A | 789.00 |

WARRANTY:

All products come with complete factory warranties.

TO ORDER:

Use VISA or Master Charge, Money order, or check. (Personal or company checks need 2 weeks to clear.)

SHIPPING:

We ship FREIGHT COLLECT via UPS or Motor Freight, or we can advise you of the cost and you may include it with your payment.

**WORLD-WIDE
COMPUTER SALES**
P.O. Box 67735
Los Angeles, CA 90067
(213) 551-2990

order to use the computer with some kind of "escape" to a local facility. It's clear that this machine looks like a terminal. We should be able to use it like a terminal.

We should be able to establish a connection between the keyboard and a host but be able to decide on an escape character, presumably one that the host wouldn't recognize, so you wouldn't affect the host connection, but an escape sequence that would let you reload other programs into CP/M.

Maybe that program shouldn't run at location 100, but somewhere down in the memory, so that you would be able to run programs and jump back when you finish.

For example, suppose that I wanted to transfer a file from one disk to another. I would like to be able to use the PIP program but maintain my host connection at the same time. This software should be a simple thing to create and make available.

The terminal features in the SuperBrain are very primitive. There are not many terminal features available, although they worked it out for the Intertube. There is no reason why there can't be an emulator program running on the SuperBrain which would let you have a decent terminal.

There's only a few basic terminal features that are built into the screen interface and that's all you get. So that's something I think Intertec should be providing.

Q: Do you have any use in the future for the S-100 bus card slot?

A: Yes. I would like to be able to use an exterior unit with an 8-inch diskette and make it a 4 disk CP/M. Eventually I was contemplating using the SuperBrain as a computer monitor at the house, but I think it would be better to use some other dedicated system for that. But I would like to expand it and put it on the S-100 bus. However, I don't want to use the adaptor that Intertec offers because that's only one card that you can put inside.

Q: Do you have anything to say in summary?

A: The SuperBrain is a standard CP/M system that works. It does what it's suppose to do in terms of being a basic 64K CP/M system.

But I'd like to stress again that although Intertec, as a company, is obviously interested in selling terminals, if they can offer the Intertube with multiple emulation version, why can't they make a version of that for the SuperBrain?

It would be immensely useful, but they haven't done that. There's no reason why you couldn't have reverse video and various features like "Form" on the SuperBrain, if you had the proper software.

Calendar

THINGS TO COME!

Here are two shows and a conference that readers of the Superletter might want to take note of:

Feb. 18-20, Houston, TX. BUSINESS AND PERSONAL COMPUTER SALES AND EXPOSITION AND HOUSTON BUSINESS SHOW. Houston Civic Center, Capitol Avenue and Bagby St.

Feb. 23-26, St. Louis, MO. ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) COMPUTER SCIENCE CONFERENCE. Stouffer's Riverfront Towers Hotel. For more information, contact: Mr. Orrin Taulbee, (412) 624-6475.

March 11-13, New York, NY. BUSINESS AND PERSONAL COMPUTER SALES AND EXPOSITION AND NEW YORK BUSINESS SHOW. Madison Square Garden. (For more info on both the New York and Houston shows contact: Produx 2000, Inc., (215) 457-2300, P.O. Box 2000, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004.)

Do you have any news on upcoming computer shows, seminars, or conferences that will be of interest to Superletter readers? Let us know and we'll spread the word!



NOW THAT'S A REAL SUPERBRAIN!

"You might even conceive of biological components in computers. It is quite obvious that computers so far are just bad imitations of our brains. Once we learn more about how the brain acts, I would be surprised if we could not construct a sort of biological computer. Such a computer might have electronic components modeled after biological components in the real brain."

Alvin Toffler
"Future Shock"

(But will there be a decent warranty? Ed.)

NAME SOUND FAMILIAR?

This quote caught our eye from a recent Wall Street Journal article detailing the upcoming invasion of new Japanese microcomputers.

"As a matter of course," predicts Mr. Toyohito Akutsu, "within less than one year, the American market will be flooded with Japanese products because Japan is No. 1 and superior in terms of production management and quality control."

"That may sound a bit hyperbolic, but Mr. Akutsu speaks from personal experience. He manages a personal computer store in Tokyo called Super Brain. Until last year, he says, 'almost 100% of our sales were American products'. Since Nippon Electric Co., one of Japan's largest computer makers began marketing personal computers in Japan, today almost 100% of Super Brain's sales are Japanese products."

Letters to the Editor

SUPERLETTER FORUM

We are considering setting up a SuperBrain with a hard disk but the information is limited. Are there any Superletter readers that can help us?

DARRELL BUSHNELL
Passaic, NJ

We have recently purchased an Intertec SuperBrain. Among the projects we plan to "bring up" on the computer are the Museum's membership, the Museum Shop's inventory, as well as developmental office files.

One of our long range goals is to have the artifact collection inventory on the SuperBrain and be able to answer a number of research questions based on our holdings.

LINDA BETH
Museum of the
American Indian
New York, NY

You don't know how long I've been waiting for a SuperBrain newsletter.

Thanks for providing this much-needed service!

RICHARD SIMS
Brookline, MA

SuperClassifieds

At last! A poster-size buyer's chart that compares in detail every feature of every printer and terminal on the market today. It's the only chart of its kind and it can save you hundreds of dollars and hours of time. The price? Only \$7.50! Just send a check or money order to: "Buyers' Comparison Chart", P.O. Box 67735, Los Angeles, CA. 90067.

Wow! A ten-megabyte hard disc system that attaches to your SuperBrain with only a five minute easy installation. These are factory-fresh Intertec units. Only \$3,890! A great savings on a great hard disc unit. Call direct: 1-800-426-2963. Ask for Jerry Jones.

SuperClassified rates are:

\$4.00 per line
15 line minimum — 5 words per line.
(Please note: Publication of all SuperClassifieds are dependent on dates of receipt of copy and payment and space availability.)

Mail to: SuperClassifieds
P.O. Box 3121
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

Technical Corner

MINI-FLOPPIES GROWING IN FAVOR!

Of all the flexible-drives made, the 5.25-inch floppy is rapidly becoming the favorite, according to a new report by James N. Porter, entitled, "1980 Disk/Trend".

Five million drives are expected to be shipped in 1983, and 3 million of these are predicted to be of the 5.25-inch variety. The over-all growth for these mini-floppies during 1980-83 is pegged to be a staggering 124%!

The two-sided 5.25-inch drives are now the fastest-growing group. According to the report, these two-sided drives will mostly have 96-tracks-per-inch, double the normal track density.

IS THERE A SPINWRITER IN YOUR FUTURE?

If you're considering buying an NEC 5510 Spinwriter as a serial printer for your SuperBrain, be prepared to make some important pin changes in the RS-232 cable connector going to the computer's auxiliary port.

This is the pin configuration you'll need:

First, "swap" pins 19 and 20. (What you want is for the male pin "19" from the NEC to be able to go into pin "20" on the SuperBrain auxiliary port.

Then, "jumper" pins 4, 5, 6, 8 and 20 in the connector.

Finally, insure that 2 goes to 2, 3 to 3, and 7 to 7.

What kind of printer do you use? If you have any important technical tips for our Superletter readers, let us hear from you.

Advertisers please note:

Display advertising rates are available upon request.

Write:

SUPERLETTER Advertising
P.O. Box 3121
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

Call: (213) 277-2410

Contact: Linda Patchell

SUPERBRAIN SPECIALISTS

ORDER CALL (206) 455-9777



Intertec
10mb Hard Disc... \$3890

SUPERBRAIN

32K List \$2995. Dual discs and two R5232 parts. Complete with CPM. **\$2495**

64K Single-sided, double density. Retail \$3345. **\$2595**

QD Double-sided, double density, 720k bytes storage. 64k RAM. Retail \$3995. **\$3245**

LOOK AT OUR PRINTERS & PRICES!

MPI 88G

1K buffer. Dual tractor pressure feed, forms control, graphics. 2 k buffer available. Retail \$749.

ONLY \$600

EPSON MX-80

Parallel, multi-column, 80 cps. disposable print head. Retail \$645.

RS 232 PARALLEL
\$625 \$555

C. ITOH

Daisy wheel starwriter, 25 cps one year warranty. Retail \$2195.

CMC Price **\$1795**

We won't be undersold by any advertised price. List \$2795
45 cps \$2025

DOT MATRIX

All printers with RS 232

PAPER TIGER 440

w/graphics & 2k Buffer **\$985**

TI 810 Reg. \$1895 **\$1650**

TI 810 w/full ASCII Reg. \$2155 **\$1950**

DAISY WHEEL or THIMBLE

XYMEC Reg. \$2875 **\$2530**

QUME 5/45RO Reg. \$3073 **\$2695**

KSR Reg. \$3537 **\$3145**

With tractor Reg. \$3787 **\$3350**

ANADIX DP 9500 or 9501 **\$3999**

TERMINALS

Intertec

EMULATOR

List \$895 **\$745**

Intertec

INTERTUBE III

List \$895 **\$745**

WORD PROCESSING

Magic Wand Reg. \$400 **\$325**

VTS-80 Reg. \$549 **\$469**

WORD STAR Reg. \$495 **\$400**

WORD STAR/MAIL MERGE **\$515**

LINK 80 COMMUNICATIONS **\$89**

CAT Novation Modem **\$169**

LANGUAGE

C Basic Your Cost **\$125**

M Basic **\$325**

Fortran **\$450**

Cobol **\$650**

Pascal (UCSD) Reg. \$400 **\$325**

EPROM Reg. \$125 **\$120**

Cuts access time in half. Allows serial number of machine and all software.

SOFTWARE

Osborne - TCS - Graham • Dorian - CMC

| | CBasic | MBasic | Reg | Cost |
|--------------------|--------|--------|-------|--------------|
| Account Receivable | x | x | \$750 | \$350 |
| Accounts Payable | x | x | \$750 | \$350 |
| General Ledger | x | x | \$750 | \$350 |
| Payroll | x | x | \$750 | \$350 |
| Inventory | x | x | \$750 | \$350 |
| Equipment Control | x | | \$750 | \$350 |
| Job Costing | x | | \$750 | \$350 |
| | x | | \$750 | \$350 |

PEACHTREE SOFTWARE

| | List | Cost |
|---------------------|--------|--------------|
| General Ledger | \$995 | \$595 |
| Accounts Receivable | \$995 | \$595 |
| Accounts Payable | \$995 | \$595 |
| Inventory | \$995 | \$595 |
| Property Management | \$1595 | \$995 |

INQUIRIES INVITED

ORDER CALL (206) 455-9777



Computer Marketing Corp.

11000 Bellevue, WA 98004

TELEX 152556



SUPERLETTER
 P.O. Box 3121
 Beverly Hills, CA 90212

Factory News

OWN A SUPERTERM?

Don't fret. There's still hope. Intertec can supply owners of the Superterm with ribbons and spare parts even though the printer is no longer in production.

The part number for the ribbon is 1190100 and they come in six-packs for \$30.

Either the order-processing or the customer-service department at Intertec can take care of a customer's Superterm needs.

One reminder: Intertec requires a minimum \$50 order for parts.

A POSSIBLE CURE FOR GROWING PAINS

If you're considering moving up to a multi-user, shared disk micro-computer system, you might want to take a look at Intertec's CompaStar.

It's a network of video-display terminals each with its own individual microprocessors and dynamic RAM, tied together by a single Winchester, or similar hard disk device. In this way, CompaStar allows the system to share disk drives while allowing individual users to maintain restricted data bases.

The network architecture is based around one of three disk storage systems: a 10-megabyte Shugart-type Winchester 8-inch drive, or a 32- or 96-megabyte cartridge module drive. The multi-user system can accept up to 225 video terminals in a single network.

Each system consists of the hard disk device, complete with power supply, and a disk controller and multiplexor circuitry to tie the user stations into a common disk system.

For more information and prices contact Intertec directly or your dealer.

Book Review

A VERY STICKY SUBJECT!

Read a good book lately? If not, consider this one: "THE PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY GUIDE TO COMPUTERS", by Jerry Willis.

This 215 page book, like the sandwich evoked in the title, is a simple and easy-to-digest guide to selecting, owning and operating a micro-computer.

Written on the author's home word processor, the book surveys equipment, systems, and languages; provides consumer tips on buying hardware; and deals with recreational, educational, home and business applications.

Willis supplies technical material only when it is helpful and understandable, and leads the reader gently.