

## Micro-computers: classroom aid of the future

BY LORI MERRYMAN

The blue figures 7 plus 3 brightly appeared on a 10-inch screen as the teacher depressed the commands on a key board below.

When the answer 11 was incorrectly entered, a red frowning face and a buzzing noise indicated the wrong response was given. Next, 10 was entered as the answer. A pleasant beep sounded and a blue smiling face appeared on the screen.

This same screen later gave instructions how to type. It can perform endless duties such as simulating a disaster, keeping records, plotting graphs or even functioning as a music keyboard.

This was not a scene from the "Jetsons" or a venture into science fiction, but a look at an educational tool of the future.

The screen, that of a micro-computer, is part of a much talked about, fast growing technology in educators' circles. The idea and successes of micro-computers are expanding so rapidly, more and more school districts are making plans to purchase them or already have them in use. Parents are now buying micro-computers as a learning tool at home.

Dr. Dorothy Jo Stevens of Teachers College is teaching an introductory course on micro-computers in the classroom for teachers during the first five-week session.

Micro-computers are small computers that don't have to be hooked up to a large computer system to operate. They resemble a television set with a typewriter keyboard attached.

They first were used in 1975 and have become popular in the past two years, she said.

The computers can serve various functions for teachers. Some use them to keep records in order, record grades and compute grade point averages. By using the computer simply as a complex filing system, instructors can spend less time filing and more time teaching, Stevens said.

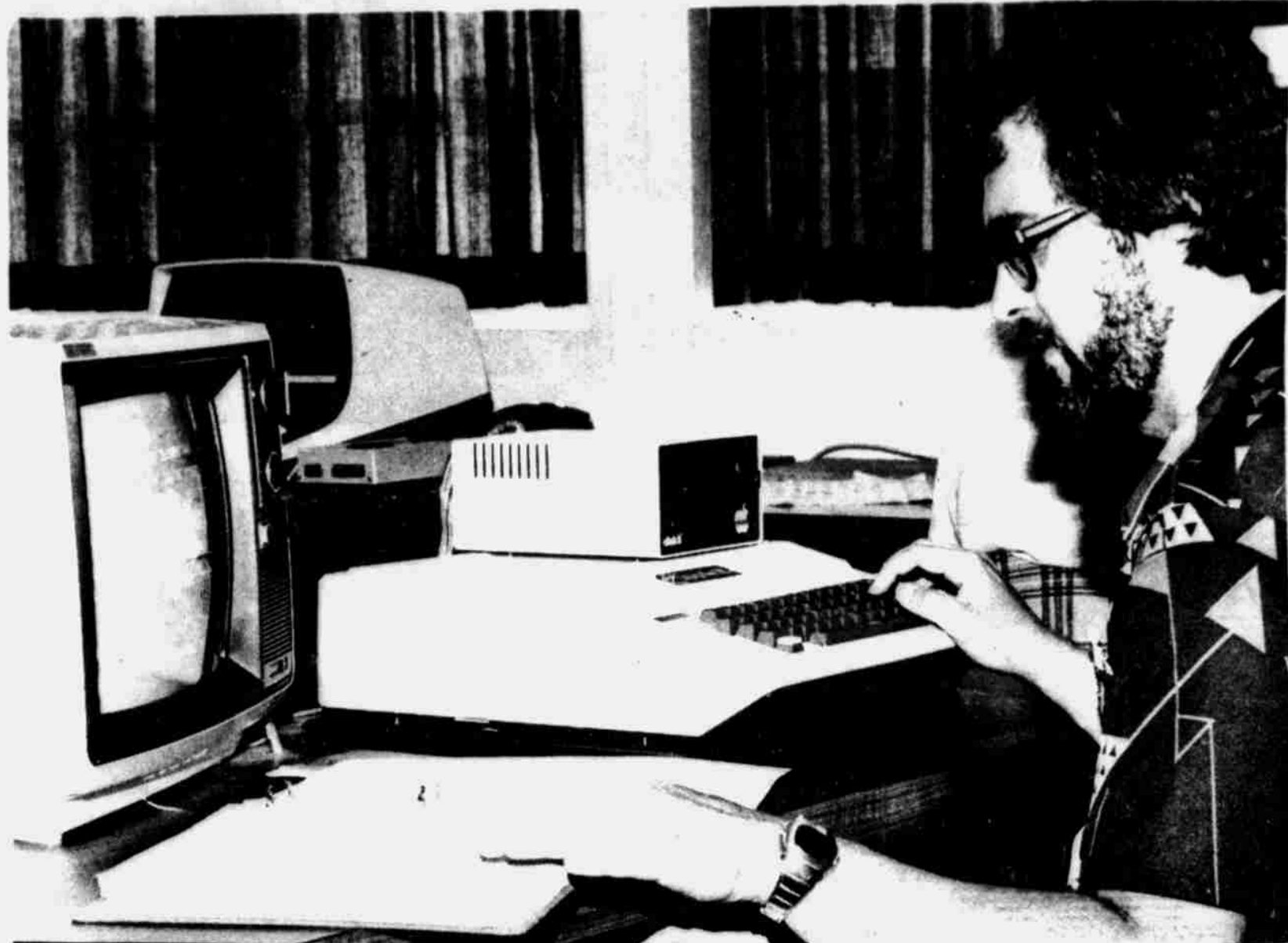
One track coach used a micro-computer to compute statistics for his girls track team.

The widest use of the computers is to drill, help teach and demonstrate to students, she said. Drills, such as history and math lessons, on the computer are a fast and efficient way to learn, she said. A lot of time can be saved by putting a complex trigonometry graph in the computer. By pushing a button, one can show the necessary changes and save a lot of chalk board energy, she said.

The 42 students of Steven's graduate level class are teachers and administrators at elementary, junior and senior high schools. They are taking the course, not to fill requirements, but because they feel it is important technology for teachers today, Stevens said.

In the class students learn how the computers operate and how to make their own programs suited to their

"There is so much more potential in the micro-computers than we have learned how to use," she said.



staff photo by Bill Graf

Chuck Sundermeier does his homework for his mini computer class in Henslik Hall.

classroom and administrative needs.

Teachers are taking the class because they see the benefits of the micro-computers and they want to benefit their students with the technology, Stevens said.

"Teachers are seeing the potential in micro-computers and are flocking to learn," she said.

Ed Husack, principal for a high school in Winnipeg, Canada, said he is taking the class as a "survival course." Micro-computers have become so popular in Winnipeg that about half the school districts are using them, he said. By the time junior high students, who are using micro-computers now, reach high school, their computer literacy will be higher than their high school teachers, he said.

The future of micro-computers in education is great, she said, yet much is still unknown about them.

Questions yet to be answered concern how much of

the student's time should be obligated to computer use, and if micro-computers really help students learn better, she said. Another concern is how to most efficiently use the computers in the learning process.

Stevens said she feels micro-computers will definitely play a big role in education in the future.

She stressed that "computers will never replace the teacher" but can enhance what one teacher is able to do.

The "futurists view" of micro-computers says each student will eventually have their own computer system, she said.

This is economically feasible, she said. Currently a smaller micro-computer can be purchased for a minimum of \$500. But, as fast as the market is growing the price will decrease, she said.

If the car industry had progressed as fast as the micro-computer industry is, Stevens said, a Rolls Royce would be \$2 today.

## Luhan: U.S. whitewashing Guatemalan situation

BY LORI MERRYMAN

In Guatemala, political dissidents, peasant leaders, news reporters, labor union leaders or anyone who doesn't side with the government are apt to be kidnapped, tortured or murdered by the Guatemalan government, J. Michael Luhan, a free-lance journalist who lived in Guatemala told UN-L students Thursday.

Peasant villages have been massacred by "para-military death squads" looking for one or two guerrilla rebels, Luhan said in one of two speeches given at UN-L.

Luhan, a 28-year-old writer who left Guatemala in February after working there five months, told of an incident where one person was kidnapped and 12 people were murdered from a nearby village. This is one example of the 15,000 lives taken by "death squads" since 1968, he said.

Luhan spoke to journalism students in Avery Hall, and was the featured speaker for the "Brown Bag Luncheon" series, sponsored by the University Program Council Talks and Topics Committee.

Little truth exists in reports issued by the U.S. State Department concerning conditions in central America, said Luhan, who lived in Guatemala as a Peace Corps worker from 1976-79. He is disturbed people are accepting, with little doubt, the State Department's faulty interpretations of the real situation, he said.

He showed various news clippings as examples of American policy. One article quoted Secretary of State Alexander Haig as saying "no human rights problems exist in Guatemala."

The State Department has people believing the Guatemalan government is fighting a "heroic battle" against Marxism and Leninism by blaming instability in Guatemala on Soviet and Cuban intervention, he said.

Since 1978, when the Guatemalan government began its policy of repression, thousands of Indian peasants have banded together with guerilla groups. These groups are now a threat to the government, he said. While some communists are involved, Luhan said, the majority of the guerilla forces are Indians who feared murder by the Guatemalan armies.

Although the guerilla forces are a threat to the Guatemalan government, they are no match for the 18,000 man Guatemalan army, he said.

People in Guatemala would be better off if the U.S. was not involved, he said.

"American involvement is the greatest enemy of Latin America," he said.

Withdrawal of U.S. aid would allow Guatemalans to have a greater freedom of choice, even if by violent means. Such a choice, he said, would result in a government similar to the Marxist governments of Castro in Cuba or the Sandinistas family in Nicaragua.

Marxist or Leninist rule would at least end the present regime's terror tactics and would provide basic living standards such as food, clothing and shelter — something which they don't have now, he said.

American churches must accept Marxism and Leninism as the better choice for countries such as Guatemala, he said. The Roman Catholic Church has been a leader in trying to support change, he said. Many other religions are showing more interest in the problems of Central America.

Hope for citizens in Guatemala lies within the churches efforts for the U.S. to withdraw all military support from the Guatemalan regime, he said.

Luhan's speech at UN-L wound down a 30-day speaking tour through the midwest sponsored by the Presbyterian Church to educate people on an alternative perspective in Central America.

Luhan received his master's in journalism from Indiana University. After free-lancing in Guatemala for five months for journalists who "would be killed if they returned," his own story appeared in the April edition of the "New Republic." Another story will be published in the "Penthouse" in October.

## UN-L ad students win agriculture competition

Twelve UN-L advertising students have won a competition conducted by the National Agricultural Marketing Association in New Orleans.

Students involved in the project were: Rosemary Abendroth of Bancroft; Roxanne Holoubeck of Clarkson; Gerald Brune of Dodge; Janet Harney of Julian; Shari Hansel, Julie Koch, David Moore and Virginia Walters, all of Lincoln; Tom Camenzine and Gary Coleman, both of Omaha; and Jan Pettit of Wymore.