



The Reflection

July 1990

Volume 1 Issue 8

The Chief Sez

"Economics 101"

I suppose what really sparked this decision was when I was asked if the "profit" from the newsletter was helping to pay my long distance phone bill. After that question I decided to re-evaluate and came up with this information.

"The Reflection" was

first mailed out in November 1989, the first issue was sent free to about 225 IMAGE sysops. My cost was around \$60.00 in postage, we did the copying ourself, if you include time and equipment and so on we went over \$100.00 for that issue.

The December issue was sent to 3 subscribers and over 100 IMAGE sysops received free copies. It was copied for us at a cost of around \$70.00 and postage was around \$30.00.

The January issue was sent to about 10 subscribers and 100 IMAGE sysops, and so it goes. The

June issue was sent to about 90 subscribers and about 20 free copies were sent.

Thus far we have calculated that it costs over \$.95 to send each issue and at \$10.00 per year that is \$.83 per issue. We have lost money on every issue shipped.

All of this boils down to the fact that we are forced to raise the subscription price. We are, therefore, raising the rate for a one year subscrip-

tion to \$15.00 which is \$1.25 per issue. That should be enough to cover the added postage we expect to see in February plus, hopefully, allow us to expand the newsletter to include more topics and more useful information.

Please note that this will have NO effect on present subscriptions, they will continue for the remainder of the subscription period. Renewal will, however, be at the new rate.

We are sorry for the rate hike. We had hoped that it would not be necessary.

NISSA CONFERENCE ON QLINK

See the *NISSA NEWS* for details

Programming

There seems to be a lot of confusion about error messages and just exactly what they mean. We'll take a look at some of the more common ones and see if we can shed some light on the mystery.

One of the most common error messages that is seen is "SYNTAX ERROR IN LINE XXX". This is especially common to anyone that 'mods' his system. It is one that should rarely, if ever, be seen when running straight stock files. What it is telling you is that there is something wrong with the line of code. There is something in the line that the computer does NOT understand. The SYNTAX of your statement is not correct. Examples might be if you inadvertently type PLINT instead of PRINT. The computer understands PRINT but NOT PLINT so it would give you a SYNTAX error. Another common example, and one that slipped by us recently was in the February issue of "The Reflection". There was a statement that said, among other things:

```
&str$(rb%):"Credits"
```

This produced a SYNTAX error. It SHOULD have said:

```
&str$(rb%):&"Credits"
```

By leaving out the & the computer did not know what to do.

Anytime you get a SYNTAX ERROR in a particular line look it over closely, there IS something wrong with the line, if you look hard enough you can find it.

Another common error message is BAD SUBSCRIPT ERROR often in 1079. Basically a bad subscript can be demonstrated this way. Assume that you dimension an array to 5 elements with `dim ar$(5)` and then you try to address element 6 of that array by entering:

```
PRINTar$(6)
```

You would get a "BAD SUBSCRIPT ERROR" since there are only 5 "subscripts" available for ar\$.

If you should ever get the "BAD SUBSCRIPT ERROR IN 1079" it will usually be after some change you have made to your system configuration and is directly related to the DEVICE and DRIVE settings in "config". This is one of the most common problems encountered with people first configuring IMAGE.

Another common error is an "UNDEFINED STATEMENT ERROR IN XXX". This error is also usually one that occurs during "mods" hen some changes are made to the system. It can occur and frequently does when an error is generated while the system is in the "error trap" or error handling routine. In that case it will be an "UNDEFINED STATEMENT ERROR IN 2012".

To explain the "UNDEFINED STATEMENT" error it is best to demonstrate what it is telling us. A short program:

```
10 print"hello":goto30
20 fori=1to10:next
40 print"whoops"
```

(Note that this program is STRICTLY for demonstration purposes) An UNDEFINED STATEMENT ERROR IN LINE 10 would occur since the program is being told to GOTO a line that does NOT exist (is undefined). If you should ever encounter one of these errors go to the line in question and check out EVERY line reference to see if one is missing. You might find something like:

```
172 onagoto200,220,240,280
```

In which case you would have to check out each line (200,220, etc.) to find out which was missing.

When the error shows up in 2012 it is usually because some module did not load correctly and the program can no longer find some of the lines, like 1010, that are in the "im" file but not where they should be any more.

Also common is the "ILLEGAL QUANTITY ERROR". This is one I've got to take a lot of credit for generating I'm afraid. I've

modified a couple of PFiles and I like to print out values with integer variables when I can so I will often set an integer to a value such as:

```
b%=pn:&"You have %%b dollars"
```

Which works wonderfully, until someone gets a BUNCH of money. If the value exceeds 35000 or so that statement will produce an "ILLEGAL QUANTITY ERROR". It can be corrected by changing the line to read:

```
&"You have":&str$(pn):&" Dollars"
```

(which is what I had to do in the version of Empire I worked on). Basically an ILLEGAL QUANTITY is simply one that is out of the range of the variable you are using, usually associated with integer (%) variables.

Another one that does occur but shouldn't is the "REDIMMED ARRAY ERROR". That occurs when an array is dimensioned AGAIN. The way IMAGE is written any array that the system uses is dimensioned in "setup" and held in memory. Any array that is dimensioned in a PFile is "erased" when the program goes back to the main

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prompt. There are a few occasions when that doesn't seem to function correctly when the program returns to the PF section. If it happens it may be necessary to go into the PFile in question and add an &,28 at the point where the PFile is exited. That should take care of any "REDIMMED ARRAY ERRORS".

There are many more errors that can occur. These are the ones that you are most likely to encounter. If you would like an explanation of any of the others there is a detailed explanation in the 128 "Programmer's Reference Guide" starting on page 644, or we'd be happy to try to explain them here.

Files

By: Bob Leary (DR.EOB)

The proper use of disk files is just as important as the actual coding of your program itself. Improper use of disk files can cause slow running and headaches to those who may use your program. Knowing where to store your data and, what kind of file you need is the key to success.

When deciding where and what type of file you will need to use ask yourself a few questions: Will it only to be read from disk or, will it also have to be written too often? Does it store individual data about specific users? Is it actually a sub-directory of topics? These are a few of the things you need to consider before you actually write the code.

All files which are read only from disk to screen such as title screens should be directed to your system files disk. Any other file you may need usually should go to the etcetera files disk with a few exceptions such as e-mail and sub-directories which would go to their respective drives.

The most often used file you will find is the sequential data file. There are several different ways that you may access sequential files through IMAGE BBS. The first way to access a file to be outputted to the screen and modem is 'gosub 1350' this routine is the same routine used to call most menus on your system to use this subroutine you simply would set a\$ to the filename needed and then gosub 1350. a\$ only needs to be set to the filename without the s. prefix, the prefix will be added by the subroutine.

EXAMPLE:a\$="myfile":gosub1350, this would open and output to the screen and modem the file "s.myfile".

Other ways of outputting the file are by using the calls at 1075 and 1076, which are basically the same will output the contents of the file to screen and modem (the only difference being that if 1075 is called instead of 1076 a CLR/HOME will be sent prior to the actual read). To use these routines a\$ must be set to the entire filename also, dr must be set to the proper system disk before the call to the subroutine.

EXAMPLE: a\$="e.myfile":dr=3 :gosub1075, would read the file

"e.myfile" from the etcetera disk.

The next few subroutines we will discuss are probably best used to read or write data NOT being outputted to the screen and modem, except in the few instances I will cover

The simplest way to open a file is with the call to 1011 (actually all the routines eventually hit here to open the file). When using this routine for sequential files be sure to specify ",s,(r,w,a)" depending on if you want the file to be opened for read, write, or append. the syntax you would use is basically the same as for 1075 and 1076 above, with the exception that you must add the ,filetype, how to open, physically in a\$, Also note that your file will be opened as file number 2 on the disk specified with dr.

EXAMPLE: a\$="e.myfile,s,w":dr=3
:gosub1011, this would open the file "e.myfile" for writing as file number two.

The best way to use a file that has to constantly scratched and rewritten is with the call to 1023, this call will scratch the filename contained in a\$ on disk drive dr and then re-open it for writing the syntax for this is exactly the same as for the gosub 1075 and 1076 above

The next routine is little used but is a good routine to use for files on the etcetera drive which need to be appended to. The call is 1027, to use this routine a\$ must be set to the way you want the file opened and b\$ to the filename minus the e. prefix.

EXAMPLE: b\$="myfile":a\$="a" :go-
sub1027: ife%thena\$="w"
:gosub1027,

this would open "e.myfile" on the etcetera disk for appending, if an error is encountered (like file not found) it will re-open it for writing. This is the perfect routine for things like game news.

These are just a few of the simple routines for handling files on your IMAGE BBS. For information about the use of relative files refer to the April issue of "The Reflection".



By: ROADMASTER

By: Mike Laponis

As with many sysops, we find the most fun running IMAGE is in some of the "mods" that are available! Here are a few more favorite "mods" that we use at "The Crossroads":

* USER ACTIVITY PERCENTAGE - We installed this "mod" by WIPEOUT from "The Midnight Resort". It is in ".on" so the user as he/she logs on is asked if they want to see their User Activity. If they do, the screen clears and they see their stats including, total posts, responses, and uploads. Then there is a percentage calcula-

Top Downloads From:
PORT COMMODORE
5-14-90 to 6-21-90

1.	prompt.sdl	22
2.	+.lynx	21
3.	CTAPack3.lnx	16
3.	CTAIM mods	16
5.	Empire 4.4.lnx	12
6.	+.changer	10
7.	+.modemconfig	9
8.	+.NM.netwall	8
9.	net900519a.sdp	7
9.	net900519b.sdp	7
9.	net900519c.sdp	7

There were 451 files downloaded during this period.

tion that uses those parameters in figuring the user's activity level. There is also a "scale" of what the percentage levels indicate, ie. 90-100% is Excellent, etc. This has been very useful in keeping users motivated and informed about their "standing" on the board. There has even been some "competition" among users to stay at the 100% mark! It seems to have prompted more user involvement.

CREDIT POOL - has been another excellent addition to "The Crossroads". It was designed and written by THE CHIEF from "Port Commodore". You can install it in "+.on" and it will ask each user if they want to join the Credit Pool or you can install it the way we did as a separate file that can be accessed by entering CR.

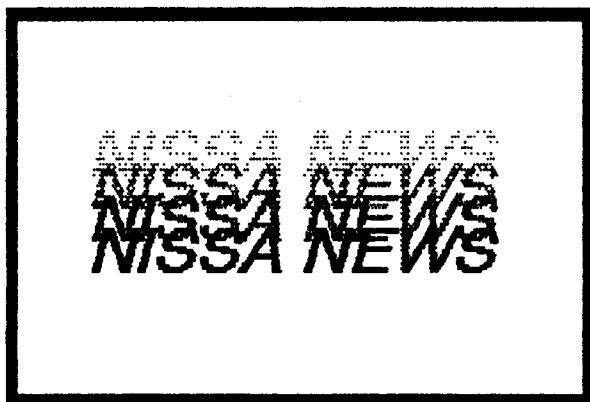
It sets up a pool of credits...then each night while perform-

ing auto-maintenance the credit pool selects (at random) a winner of the credits. One nice feature of the Credit Pool is in addition to pooling the credits users give to participate in the pool it also takes the credit charged to play games read files etc. and adds them to the pool as well. Our favorite feature is it can be set up to write a news file for all to read that will announce the winner and it sends e-mail to the winner notifying them how many credits they won! It has been very well received here. The Credit Pool is available on the TEC-NET Plus File Disk.

TIME MOD - Found a "mod" from DR.BOB at "Enchanted Forest" that I haven't seen on too many boards. It is a "mod" to the Time function. If a user enters the Time command it will tell when they logged on as well as how many minutes they have been on-line and how much time they have left! Also when a user logs off the system will tell the user the time they logged on the time they are logging off how much time they were on-line and how much time they had left. Our users have found it informative and useful.

There are MANY excellent "mods" available for IMAGE. We thank all of the authors of these "mods" and look forward to more!

If you have some favorite "mods" write about them and send them to "The Reflection" so we can all know about YOUR favorite "mods"! If possible be sure to let us know where they can be found as well.



By: Bruce Hammond
(DR MOFFETT)

Greetings to all from North-West Ohio and NISSA!! It's me again Dr Moffett one of the 'behind-the-scenes' people from NISSA.

Well first we'll hit a little of the old news. Believe it or not I'm still receiving a few surveys here and there and at the present time we have 66 boards on our list and we're still growing. I have also received a few notes forwarded mail etc. from people who have said they didn't receive the survey. A few of those have moved and did not update their addresses and a few did not even belong to NISSA before the change-over. If any of you reading this have not received a survey and felt that you should have please contact any of the NISSA Regional Boards and leave mail for me. I will be more than happy to take care of it.

Next it's true...By the time you read this you should have received your SSE test if you requested it. As of the writing of this article I know that Al is 'stuffing' envelopes with the tests. If you have not read his post in the NISSA Net

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

**NISSA CONFERENCE ON
QLINK**

Friday, July 13, 1990

10:00 PM EDT

**Telecom Conference Room
(Path)**

CIN

Computer Support Groups

Telecommunications

Chat/Help Rooms

Formal Conference Room

Mark your calendar NOW!!

Note: You need not be a NISSA member to attend, the conference is open to members and non members, sysops and users. Post a news file on your board and help promote the NISSA CONFERENCE.

Sub I'll sum it up briefly here. When you receive and complete the test DO NOT send it back to Al via any BBS. The test MUST be mailed to Al or it will be rejected. I don't think I have to go into any details as to why it must be mailed. Please remember also that not passing the test is not going to reflect back to you or your board in a negative manner. It is just a necessary for us to know who is capable of answering some of the 'more delicate' problems faced by the IMAGE SysOp.

The new boards list HAS been released and is available on any of the Regional boards as well as the Wrong # 2 Wrong # 3 and Port Commodore. Since all of the Regional boards are netted now (except for one but we're working on that) I will be forwarding to those boards

any updates usually two or three times a month depending on the amount of changes. I feel this will keep the 'system' more up-to-date and will enable NISSA to serve better (notice that I said SERVE). We are currently going through the other NISSA files at this time to determine if they need to be brought up-to-date also. If so they will be rewritten and sent out for distribution.

In case any of you missed last month's article here is the list of the Regional NISSA Boards:

The Crossroads 714-944-8665
 Truckstop 716-934-3474
 Treasure Chest 913-651-2330
 Atlanta's System Net 404-333-0044

We wish at this time to welcome these new Boards to the NISSA family:

G0536 City Lights 201-870-0852
 G0722 Ninja's Kingdom
 315-737-7284
 G0469 The Outer Limits
 416-654-1856
 G0717 Computer Alliance
 508-754-3806
 G0615 Spider One 619-447-6323
 G0273 The Animal House
 716-895-2927

And also add these boards that have return their surveys recently or have contacted us:

G0204 Commodore Connection
 606-269-7739
 G0170 The CIA 607-324-0197
 G0017 Int. Cal. Connection
 916-246-7439

Please delete the following board:

Media-Tec 914-895-9163

And also note these changes:
 City of Chicago has changes the

name to Chicago.

Lyon's Den East's new phone number is 313-453-2576.

I would also like to say at this point in time So Long to Rezh Dragonheart of the Black Dragon BBS. Rezh has helped us out quite a bit and was slated to be one of our regional boards but due to the requirements of schooling has gone on to IBM. Thanks Rob and good luck in your future plans. We will miss you.

Until the next time we talk again:

DR MOFFETT

Wrong Number 3

(419)/836-5002

Net Node 22

NISSA Co-Coordinator

(Making the World a stranger place to live in!)

The Washington Roundup

By: Ray Burke (MR. CTA)

Greetings from Washington! I do not have much to detail this month, but I do have some interesting news. We've had some changes in our local area with various boards going up and down.

First, board updates. The Parthenon was up for a few weeks, then had some major drive problems, so he is back down. Currently Chicago, Veilöend, and Land of Oz are the only IMAGE boards in the local Tacoma area. Chicago has recently gone 2400 baud, so we all are moving at top speed.

Second, new releases. I have uploaded 2 new releases onto Port Commodore. One is a text files with information regarding how to modify and make your "im" run more efficiently. The other is the third installment of my "mod" packs. This file contains advanced system news files, as well as small patches for "+.on" and "+.EM". This file can be found on Wrong #2, PC=, and Chicago.

Last, the System Operators Support Association or SOSA for short, is beginning a membership drive. If you would be interested in applying for membership, please call Chicago and use the SO command to apply for membership. This group is similar to NISSA, except it has a couple of added functions.

I'll send information on the group in next month's newsletter (editor permitting of course). I believe that's it for this month, so I'll see you all next time!

The Sad Tale

By: Karen Leary (ENCHANTRESS)

How to deal with a homicidal maniac (or the day the LK died)

It happened. I'm only happy I was not the one home when it did or I may not still be here.

Something happened to our drive. It was bound to happen. With three children running around. One just happened to jump at an inopportune moment. Wham. The board was gone. And the beast from computerholic land came. WITHDRAWAL. AAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!

The very first symptom of withdrawal was denial. I was forced to watch a grown man format a drive 700 times in one

day. Over and over he would format the drive, sysgen it, and just about cry when the computer would fail to boot.

The next was anger. He threatened to reduce the entire computer system to a pile of rubble. (It was trash day tomorrow, and the system had it, anyway.) At this point, I decided the kids and I would love to go to the park for six hours or so until he calmed down. (A man pushed to the point of almost damaging a computer seemed a bit too volatile around my children. If he would damage something inanimate, there was no telling what he may do to a child asking some smart question such as "Daddy why don't you buy another one?" Time seemed to help.

After a few days, I had to hold onto the hope that reason had to set in soon. He was like a man possessed. Every waking moment was spent trying to figure out how to get the drive running. He went between calculating how long it would take to redo files remembering where he kept this file and that. But the worst part of the entire ordeal was the constant stream of profanities out of his mouth directed toward serial drives. A hard drive is a blessing. It also spoils you for the limited capabilities of serial drives. Serial drives are slow, cannot store as much, and require more directions than a hard drive. But you really do not appreciate the hard drive until it becomes inaccessible. All I know is that I probably would not be typing on this now if a friend had carried out his suggestion, which while being helpful, would have surely reduced my system to a pile of rubble. While my husband was sleeping, our friend was going to collect as many 41's as possible, and set our board back up for us. Imagine the look on my husband's face if he had gotten up and before having coffee, looked upon twenty or so 1541's where his Lt. Kernal had been the week before.

Why?

By: Karen Leary (ENCHANTRESS)

I run a BBS to make lots of money and other myths

As I sift through the ever-growing pile of e-mail, I am forced to ask myself, 'Why do I run this thing?' A bbs is a prolonged headache, pure and simple. But it is much more than that. It is a chance to help other people. It is also a way to communicate with people. It is convenient when one has small children and not many opportunities to socialize.

But my personal enjoyment in watching something I have made from nothing grow is the most rewarding of all.

Most of my feedback deals with people having problems with their computers. I have gotten used to these questions and always try to answer them with an open mind. Ridicule will not help someone understand what he is doing wrong, only by careful explanation will the person gain a true understanding of the answer and thus learn something that he can pass on to others. That is one of the main reasons I liked modeming. I saw people passing on what they learned to others, always trying to be helpful. This is something I do not see everyday in real life, I usually see people trampling old ladies getting off the bus. The change is refreshing.

I have three small children. Not many places smile as I enter with my entourage. Lo and behold, when I log on to a board, noise is no longer a factor. I can escape to my favorite board and dodge housecleaning for a while. (Little John does not care what my house looks like when I call his board!) It is a much better alternative to child abuse.

It is also nice to read the subs and be able to talk to someone who has reached an

age when 'But why?????' is not the most intelligent sentence that the person can come up with.

Baby talk gets tedious after a while. It is better to get a much deserved rest from the kids. It gives me a chance to get away for a few minutes, and then I am much more calm and caring when dealing with my kids. I guess it works on the same principle as the 'count to ten' campaign against child abuse. Not that I could ever abuse such adorable children

Helping people and escaping my children are two benefits of telecommunications, but the most important benefit is the reward I get out of seeing my board, which has grown from a part time board running on a 1541 at 300 baud to a board which is known across the country. It just goes to show that persistence can pay off. I never tried to degrade people to get where I am, instead I knew that continually helping people who asked me questions would build my user list. I have always maintained that the users are the most important asset of my board. Without users, what good is a bullet-in board? My basic rule stating the only question that is dumb is the question that is not asked has paid off

I am very happy when I see a user, six months after purchasing a modem using most functions of my board and contributing to the use of my board.

No, I do not run a board for monetary rewards, I run a board for much deeper personal satisfaction. I like helping people. That idea is quickly vanishing in our society. I like the haven that telecommunications has provided. Most people who I come in contact with are very willing to help. I will continue to have a lot of fun in telecommunications as long as people are around who will allow me to do this.

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Listed here.
\$1.00 Per Ad.

BBS Ads

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\$1.00 Per Ad.

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128 development
24/12/300-24 Hr/7 Day
IMAGE Net Node 16

Tec-Net

Lt. Kernal and IMAGE Sales
80 Megs On-Line
Sponsor of the All-Tec PFile Disk,
RLE disk, Graphic Disk
Give Us A Call TODAY B)
904-756-2700

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BAUD

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Commodore

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2400 Baud, 40 Meg Lt Kernal
801-423-2734

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NISSA BBS - Running IMAGE V1.2
40 Meg Lt Kernal

3/12/2400 Baud 24 Hrs/7Days

UDs • On-Line Games • Message Bases
C/G Movies and MORE

"Insanity at it's Best"

216-746-0942

NEW NUMBER

Lyon' Den East

Image Net Node 1

Home of IMAGE v1.3

On-line data base to check orders

313-453-2576

ORDERS

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St. _____

Zip _____ Serial # _____

Products

IMAGE 1.2 From 1.0	\$25.00	_____
Best Of PFile #1 & #2	20.00	_____
PFile Dick #3	20.00	_____
GFX Disk #1	12.00	_____
GFX Disk #2	12.00	_____
Networking	20.00	_____
Turbo Rel Subs/SIGS	20.00	_____
Turbo Rel AND Network	30.00	_____
Subtotal of order		_____
Shipping/Handling	3.00	_____
COD (If Applicable)	3.50	_____
Grand Total		_____

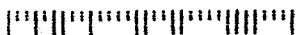
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Tec-Net Pfile Disk	\$16.00	_____
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