

# A public demand is needed before price can come down

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

An electronic scanner that reads the printed page to the unsighted is now in use in Lansing's School for the Blind. It is one of 50 in the U.S., the only one in the state, and costs \$50,000.

Sometime in February, a portable desk top model version of the machine that converts the printed material to speech will go on the market for \$19,000.

There will be 100 table models available, manufactured by the government.

"But even \$19,000 is prohibitive for most individuals, even groups," said Henry Guttentag, department head of Ford Research and Engineering in Dearborn.

"If this machine was properly publicized, if more people knew of its existence, if more people demanded it, the price would go down."

The Kurzweil Reading Machine is placed over a book and scans each line at the rate of about 250 words per minute, changing print to a synthesized speech similar to the "Speak and Spell" game produced by Texas Instruments which sold out in the Detroit area during the Christmas buying period.

GUTTENTAG HAS a two-pronged interest in the scanner and its price.

He is chairman of the board of Juvenile Diabetes Foundation in Michigan and is concerned for the diabetics who suffer loss of sight. Diabetes is the third largest cause of blindness.

And the Birmingham resident is convinced there is a costly communication gap between medical research, health care and industrial technology.

"If medical research (which developed the scanner for the blind) teamed up with industry, that machine could sell as low as \$50 and be accessible to every one who needs one," Guttentag said.

"Instrumentation needed by the medical profession is frequently available within industry and might only require minor modifications. The modifications would cost maybe a few thousand dollars where innovation would take millions," he continued.

He believes the scanner is a good case in point.

The market would include the 2 million legally blind persons in the U.S. today, those who have impaired vision children whose visual problems have



Thursday, January 25, 1979

Farmington Observer

## Suburban Life

(F)1B

not yet been detected, and some elderly.

IN A PAPER addressed to the National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council, late in 1978, Guttentag said, "Committees, commissions, design teams, societies of engineers and scientists and government bureaus, can take an idea, analyze it, alter it, and sometimes push it toward its most logical conclusion.

"But when it comes to the development of new ideas or the diffusion of several technologies, committees or commissions are almost totally useless."

His solution would be the well-diversified entrepreneur who serves as a catalyst between technologies with the background and foresight to create an ideal marriage between the medical profession and the latest technological advancements.

He is adamant that closing the communication gap would eliminate a great deal of duplication in the instrumentation field.

"So many times someone has got something on the shelf that the other can, or could, be using," he said.

As an example, he cited the Speak and Spell game as an example of what one arm had produced that another could utilize.

"Is it not possible that this same basic piece could be put in your car and tell you that you are running out of gas? That your tires are low? That your old tire needs changing?"

The answer lies, he believes, with ed-

ucational institutions developing this new breed of catalysts.

GUTTENTAG'S WORK in the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation began with the forming of the state chapter four years ago. Michigan was the third chapter to be formed, aimed solely for raising funds for research. President of the Michigan group is Dr. Leonard Wayne of Southfield.

The national organization is now 100 chapters strong and has given a total of \$2.8 million in research grants. Guttentag states with pride that Michigan's contribution has risen to \$150,000 in the 1977-78 period and he is high in praise of the women in the organization who are now sponsoring one of the largest lunch and fashion shows as a benefit in the entire metropolitan area.

He is pleased that delegates from the foundation have convinced the powers in Washington D. C. to raise the monies the government will spend on diabetes research.

"But I still cannot help but be concerned that there is some overlap, that joining with other researchers might be more to our benefit," he said.

When the delegates from the foundation convinced the Nixon administration to establish a committee to spell out the implications of diabetes, the results were much more severe than the group expected.

"BLINDNESS, vascular problems, heart disease, kidney failures, it all was pretty gruesome," Guttentag said, "but we do what we can and we go from here."

"My goal now is to make that reading machine available for everyone who wants one. The best way I can do that is by spreading the word and hearing a demand from the public."

Guttentag will take calls at his office, 332-6383, or at his home, 851-8130.



Henry Guttentag, department head of Ford Research and Engineering in Dearborn, is convinced that a machine which once sold for \$50,000 could be manufactured and sold for as low as \$50, if the public made a demand for it.



The new desk top model of the Kurzweil Reading Machine, being demonstrated to officers of Lions Club International, is less than one-third the size and less than 40 per cent of the cost of the original model.

## Kites are flying high in new art form

Story: CORINNE ABATT  
Photos: STEPHEN CANTRELL

Couple men's innate urge to challenge the birds with a buy a kite to be creative and what do you get?

Airplanes, maybe. Balloons, possibly. In Japan, the marriage of these two challenges is kites, and master kitemakers there carry the status of major artists such as Picasso.

Pat Gilgallon, founder/owner of "The Unique Place," 344 Hamilton, Birmingham, which specializes in kites from all over the world, has just opened a gallery. Displayed are prize examples of the Japanese kitemakers' art.

None are marketed out of Japan and only a few ever find their way outside the country. Mrs. Gilgallon acquired them when she participated in the 410-year-old kite festival held each May in Hamamatsu, Japan.

While the highlight of this colorful festival which rivals the Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans, from Mrs. Gilgallon's repertoire and photographs, are kite fights, there are also lots of other kite oriented activities.

Mrs. Gilgallon said, "Kite flying in

Japan is strictly a man's sport. They were floored when they saw me, a woman kite flyer."

She explained that the festival is really a celebration to honor all the male children born in the past year. After the days of kite flying and the elaborately organized kite fights which involved large neighborhood teams of men, parades and visits to the homes which have been blessed with male children in the past year occupy the evening hours.

Team members and individuals identify themselves by headbands called hachi-maki. Mrs. Gilgallon's willingness to trade her personal hachi-maki for a kite led to the acquisition of some for a kite in her gallery.

"You can't buy these fine kites, you can import them or tear them," she said. "You, if you are lucky, will be allowed to acquire them."

Acquiring them means being invited to visit the kitemaker's studio where, in the case of most kite artists, the kite isn't assigned to an owner until the bride (harness) has been put on and the maker has ascertained that it will fly.

ARTIST TEIZO HASHIMOTO, now

a very old man, uses rice paper, polished pieces of bamboo and hand paints the kite design. If the design is a one-time original, the work is very expensive, less so if he works from an original wood block print.

Mrs. Gilgallon said of Hashimoto, considered the kite master of Tokyo, "Hashimoto is like Picasso, but there's no one following him. None of the old kitemasters are training anybody and these men are in their 90s."

Hashimoto frequently does character kites, a single, beautifully colored face, much like those found of the fine enamel and porcelain art of Japan. Not all of Mrs. Gilgallon's prize kites are for sale, some she knows are one-time only, one of a kind treasures.

Just like the fine art market, kites by lesser known Japanese kitemasters sell for much less than those done by the revered artists.

While kitemakers tend to stay with a particular style that typifies their work, the range of kite art is as wide as the field of fine art itself.

While many of the kites which Mrs. Gilgallon has for sale in her kite shop follow the form of things that fly—insects, birds, airplanes—almost as many turn non-airborne things into flyers—ships, octopuses, fish, animals and a wide variety of boxes.

The fabric may be paper of one sort or another, but just as often it is silk or synthetic material. The colors are pure fancy—the brighter, the better for seeing high in the sky.

While the fighting kites of Japan may require the muscle and might of 30 or more men, there are plenty of other kites which one small child could launch on a mild March day.

One of the teams Mrs. Gilgallon encountered on her visit to the Hamamatsu

festival was the Nagoya Bee people, so named in kite flying circles because their kites are shaped and colored like bees and, when flown, carry hummers to make a loud whirring sound.

"WHEN THE NAGOYA bees are flying, it sounds like an invasion of locusts," Mrs. Gilgallon said.

She has pictures of the evening parade of yachts, which are two-story wooden carriages, lavishly decorated, in which the young girls of the neighborhood ride. The yachts belong to the teams, as do the tents they pitch on the grounds where the kite fights take place.

"The only thing I can think of to compare it to is a Medieval jousting tournament," Mrs. Gilgallon said.

Remembering the first art form type kite which she saw flying over a golf course in California, Mrs. Gilgallon

said this interest, first a hobby and later a business, has introduced her to a whole new world of friends, travel and research.

It fits beautifully with her family's interest in flying. She has had some flight training herself.

"When you say kites, you're talking about flying," she said. "Flying a kite is the next thing to flying your own plane."

An understanding of the principles of flying and aerodynamics helped her get this business off the ground. She uses this knowledge constantly as she outfits newcomers for their first kite flying experience.

She's planning to return to Japan for the festival again this May. Some of her spirit will probably always remain there, where kites are both a science and an art, as well as a sport to celebrate vitality.



Pat Gilgallon is known to Farmington area residents through classes she gave in Farmington Community Center on the art and aerodynamics of kite flying. Her class combined art, which was once her vocation, and plane flying, which is her avocation.

## Blizzard warnings affect the skin, too

It's blizzard time again. Severe storms have already caused discomfort in most of the country. Since this condition will remain for another 10 weeks, it's time to remember how to survive during snowy, icy attacks.

Along with all the other advice on how to survive the remainder of this winter, here are some tips for skin care in blizzards.

In strong, icy winds, wrap your muffer around your cheeks. Besides chapping skin, severe cold can injure the capillaries (the tiny blood vessels nearest the skin surface), causing them to swell up and break, and possibly show up later as small red thread-marks on the skin.

When you come in from the cold, don't immediately lean over a stove or fireplace, or wash your face in hot water. Sudden changes in exposure from cold to hot are also bad for skin because the capillaries need time to adjust to the difference in temperature.

Use extra lubricants on your skin in blizzards. Lubricants add a layer of protection, help skin retain its natural oils and warmth, and make it less vulnerable to wintry weather.

Protect your lips. Use an extra-

creamy lipstick or a stick of colorless lip balm which can also be dabbed around the nostrils. Wherever there is moisture, skin chaps more easily.

Moustaches are a definite blizzard hazard. While facial hair offers some warmth to the skin, it also collects moisture from snow which could freeze to ice. Again, wrap a muffer around your face for added protection.

It also helps to dab a little light oil on your moustache before going out, to make it shed water and therefore be less apt to irritate the skin beneath it. The same holds true for beards.

### Makes list

Katherine K. Taylor, of Farmington Hills, is part of the University of South Carolina's dean's honors list for the fall semester.

Ms. Taylor is the daughter of Robert B. Taylor of Farmington Hills.

The dean's honor list is compiled each semester to recognize students who have earned a grade point ratio of 3.5 or higher on a 4 point grade scale.