

Lifestyle

Computer trade shows

By SCOTT WILLIAMS

There are many signs of autumn and approaching winter; different signs have special meaning for different people. For some it will be the changing color of leaves, for others the shortening days, for others the crispness in the air.

For computer people, the surest sign of fall is the onslaught of computer trade shows. The Canadian Computer Show, held each fall at Toronto International Centre, near the airport, is the largest of the many computer shows held in Canada each year. Comdex, held each fall in Las Vegas, has grown to become the largest computer show in the world. In fact, with over 120,000 attendees, and over 2.2 million square feet of exhibit space, this year's Comdex was the largest trade show of any kind ever held in North America.

Both of these shows, in their own ways, give us a glimpse of what's to come - what the computer industry might look like for the next 12 months. Particularly at Comdex, where most of the products on display are prototypes, and won't actually be on sale for six to 12 months.

This year's shows, like most years, had a particular "feel" to them. This year's feel was both more friendly and more com-



Scott Williams
COMPUTER
CHIPS

petitive: computers that will be more friendly to people, and computer companies that will compete more than ever for consumers' attention.

What is a friendly computer? Basically it's a computer that is very powerful, but that is easy to use; that will be more intuitive and that will take less training and specialized knowledge. This is not a new trend: it's been happening for years in a quiet sort of way. But the momentum is definitely picking up, and there was a feeling at this year's shows that the computer vendors that can't keep up with this trend will fall by the wayside.

The "friendly" theme was picked up by Bill Gates, multi-billionaire and co-founder of the Microsoft software company,

who gave this year's keynote address at Comdex. The title of his talk was "Information at Your Fingertips". Gates described a world in which people would use computers as naturally as they now use a telephone, a calculator, or an electric typewriter. He described computers that could recognize handwritten letters and words, to save typing, and he described word processors that you could speak into so that you could have your comments attached to a letter or memo without ever having to touch a keyboard.

His vision of the future is that people will finally be able to harness the power of the computer, without becoming computer experts. And Gates had a dire warning for the computer industry - either shape up, and start delivering on this vision, or realize that the computer industry itself will stop growing.

The key to Gates' vision is software - powerful software that will be easy to learn and easy to use. The amazing thing is that most of the things he talked about were actually being demonstrated - in prototype form - at this fall's computer shows. Bill Gates' vision of the future may be only a few years away.

Farmers should support lobby groups

By ROB SAVAGE

Toronto Bureau

Thomson News Service

TORONTO - The Ontario government is committed to the idea of having all farmers pay support to farm lobby groups, Elmer Buchanan said Monday.

Buchanan, the Ontario minister of agriculture and food, told a luncheon audience of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture that all farmers who benefit from lobby groups' efforts should make payments towards such groups.

"I intend to work with your organization and the Ontario farm community develop a system which does provide stable funding (for lobby groups), while recognizing the historical diversity of general farm organizations within the province," Buchanan said.

Details of how the system would work still have to be

developed, Buchanan said.

However, he said the system would support more than one lobby group. Not all members would be required to join a particular group such as the OFA, he said.

"It is important that stable funding not become a divisive issue for the farm community at this time."

The fee to each farmer would likely be about \$100 annually, a committee studying the idea said earlier this year.

Fees to lobby groups were among a number of issues addressed in a speech to the OFA. Buchanan said his government will also be looking at environmental issues and other challenges.

About 400 delegates attended the first day of the OFA conference in Toronto on Monday. The conference runs until Wednesday.

NDP Premier Bob Rae told

convention delegates Monday that his government recognizes the importance of agriculture.

The agriculture industry has been in a recession for many years, Rae said in a speech, and his government wants to see the situation improve. Decisions about issues such as landfill sites won't be made without considering the impact on rural communities, he said.

"It's the country (rural areas) that's been seen - and sees itself - as the dumping ground for the city," Rae said. "So the solution has to involve everybody."

Rae also said his government recognized the "tens and tens of thousands" of jobs in the food production business. The NDP government, Rae said, wants to do more than simply ensure the stability of existing farm incomes.

"All you're doing is stabilizing poverty. It's not good enough just to do that."



New Chums invested

1st Georgetown Cub Pack had three New Chums invested last week. Pictured above, left to right, New Chums Kraig Anderssen, David King and

Justin Burton. Cubmaster Ken Nokes invested the New Chums assisted by George Hansman. (Photo submitted)

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