

OBSERVATIONS

FROM THE SIDELINES
BY Kathryn Hall Bogle



Teacher Craig Moore and Principal Herman Washington of Tubman Middle School observe the work of Jeremy Kropf, Heidi Darrow and Randy Richardson.

ALL AROUND us the old stance of drawing line positions between an academic education and vocational preparation is wavering and tottering. It is readying to fall under the octopus-like reach and squeeze of high technology already victorious in the daily life of business and government.

Welcome or unwelcome, the high-tech society is here and those persons equipped with the necessary skills are reaping the benefits. Business people look to educators to supply increasing numbers of data processors, programmers and analysts to handle the flow of business affairs.

Over at Harriet Tubman Middle School Principal Herman Washington, ambitious and far-sighted for his students, negotiated some time ago, with the Radio Shack people to supply Tubman with a computer system for beginners. No toys are these. Radio Shack, through their national program, provided 50 microcomputers with 8 ccc terminals that Tubman students can share with Jefferson High School.

Herman Washington has two full-time computer teachers, and an aide who carries on the instruction for Tubman's classwork. Heading the computer program is Craig Moore, teaching at Tubman since 1980. "Our math teachers also use microcomputers in their drill," the principal said. Washington, obviously pleased to have two good-sized classrooms for instruction in computer literacy, operation and care, points out that the study of computer science is an elective pursuit for

the 550 pupils enrolled at Tubman. There are about 290 of these involved in the program. "So it's over half the student body," he says.

"Tubman students choose to be in this computer program. We do not have to 'sell' the program to them. They ask for it and we draw parents into the decision. In fact," Washington laughs, "our athletics coach tells us that the conversation in huddles, or on the bench during basketball practice, is a toss-up between the topic of computer accomplishment and basketball."

Probably typical of the youngsters enrolled are Jeremy Kropf, Heidi Darrow and Randy Richardson, all 8th-graders at Tubman.

Kropf, 14, the son of Stanley and Marlene Kropf, first saw some computers in use at a store and became interested in learning to use one. His parents backed him in applying for classwork at Tubman. Now young Kropf owns a computer at home which he paid for himself by helping his parents in their drapery business.

Heidi Darrow, 13, daughter of Marvin and Birgit Darrow, says she enjoys operating a computer. She feels that knowing how to run one is on the level of her interest in other hobbies such as photography, sewing and dancing. "It's neat," is Heidi's summary.

Richardson, the 13-year-old son of Dorothy Richardson, a computer specialist and her husband George Richardson, a budget director for N.W. Gas Co., is now advanced enough to devise his own programs — "for games," he clarified for an inquirer. He has a "computer at



American State Bank president V.F. Booker; Tiem Co. bank clerk; and Dr. E.C. Ogboubiri discuss advantages of computer operation.



Portlander Ben Berry, Jr. in his DeLorean before his departure for Saudi Arabia. (Photos: Richard Brown)

home with a bigger keyboard" than the one at Tubman.

Washington intends to "keep upgrading" the computer program at Tubman, he says. Already he is looking to the future for expected additional space when Tubman moves, in 1984-85, to the rebuilt and renovated premises of Eliot.

Glen L. Hampshire is Director of Computer Science at Jefferson High School. Nate Jones, principal at Jefferson, can boast of a staff of six instructors, 24 terminals for student use and a four-year computer science program, which gives his school a place among high schools with the most comprehensive computer science programs in the nation.

"At Jefferson, business education students may study office procedures, and obtain training on word processing systems in a model office setting," says Hampshire in a pamphlet describing "Jeff's" program. The 24 terminals are connected to the Central Processor at the Portland School District offices and Jefferson students with proper permission can "execute professional level programs which handle large files." Apple, IBM, Mottola are familiar names heard in these rooms.

Over 270 students are involved in computer training at Jefferson for they believe with Hampshire that "Computers are here."

At American State Bank, V.F. Booker, president, surveys has banking domain with his staff hard at work and he realizes computers are here—to stay. Booker confesses to a "love-resentment" feeling about the computer system that controls institutions like his. "It's been a great help to us. It stores and retrieves the information we need in just moments. What used to take us a half-day to do, with the computer we can do the same thing in five or ten minutes.

"We can get our reports out to a board of directors in a few minutes. Our quarterly reports, our end of the day reports, and our reports to bank regulatory authorities are all from computer output. It's all very speedy—and seems like magic," Booker said, and added, "I guess that's the rub—it's so efficient, so automatic—if you know the system, and not everybody on our staff can operate the system."

American State Bank uses IBM computers tailored for them and installed and serviced by EZAK Associates, a custom computer business firm headed by E.C. Ogboubiri, an electrical planning engineer for Bonneville Power Administration.

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