AMTEC Leadership Award

The premier award given by AMTEC is the Leadership Award, a handsome engraved gold medallion. There may be no more than two recipients in any one year, and it is given in recognition of outstanding service in the field of educational media. Following are the general criteria for the award:

1. The nominee must have been active in the educational media field for 10 years or more.
2. The nominee may have been active at either local, regional, national or international level.
3. The award may be presented to one who is active, retired or deceased.
4. Nominations may be made by any member of AMTEC.
5. The nomination must include a brief biographical sketch of the nominee as well as any other information which will be useful to the selection committee in making their decision. This should include the educational background and the reasons why the nominator feels the award should be made.

Presentation of the award(s) will be made at the AMTEC Annual Conference Awards Function. This will be part of the annual conference in London in June 1984.

Nominations should be submitted to the Awards Chairman as soon as possible. Address all nominations to:

David MacDougall
Director of AV and TV Services
Sheridan College of AA & T
1430 Trafalgar Rd.
Oakville, Ontario   L6H 1L1

MICROWARE

By Leonard F. Proctor

If you have suggestions or contributions that you would like to make to this column, please forward them to: Dr. L.F. (Len.) Proctor, Dept. of Educational Communications, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 0W0.

Given sufficient time to search for treasure, sooner or later, every gravel pit will yield a jewel. Similarly, when media specialists are searching through the growing number of Apple computer graphics generating programs, sooner or later a gem will be found. That gem is the Beagle Brothers' program, Alpha Plot.

While Alpha Plot will do much more than has been highlighted here, this review will explore only the features of this program which make it a very useful tool to use in the preparation of simple thermalgraphic overhead transparency masters.

Alpha Plot contains both a drawing mode and a typing mode of operation. One keystroke permits the user to shift back and forth from one mode to the other while generating the desired graphic image on the Aplle's video monitor.

In draw mode, the program generates high resolution lines, circles, squares and ellipses; again, on the basis of a single keystroke, the geometric figures may be obtained in either an outline form or a filled form. While the game paddles can be used to move the cursor around, the user will soon find that with minimal practice, the keyboard commands afford a greater degree of drawing accuracy than the paddles provide.

In text mode, the program generates only one style of proportionally spaced letters. While there are four different sizes available, the user will likely find that the two smaller sizes are called up the most frequently. However, this apparent lack of selection is somewhat compensated for by the fact that the text on the image can be made to appear right reading, sideways reading or even upside down. This feature can be a real boom when it comes to inserting labels on unconventional diagrams, charts and graphs. One disadvantage of the text mode is that not everyone will immediately like to use this built in, distinctive, "checkerboard" style type face for this purpose.

Alpha Plot permits the simultaneous use of both of the Apple's high resolution graphics pages. This feature enables the user to superimpose any two images, view the results on a trial basis and then store the images in either their separate or combined forms. With the aid of this feature, masters for overhead transparency overlays are almost a breeze to produce.

This capability also permits the relocation or interchange of any rectangular section of the image on either graphics page. The relocation or exchange process can be achieved with the ease often associated with moving text around on a word processor. The user will come to really appreciate this very helpful utility when part of an illustration has to be moved in order to make room for the insertion of an overlooked or forgotten caption. Thus a great deal of redrawing and retyping can be avoided.

Alpha Plot, stores the generated images as standard Apple binary files. (May the Beagle Brothers forever prosper!) Hence, these files are readable and useable by other programs such as Zoom Grafix. Zoom Grafix enables the user to alter the aspect ratio of the image created by Alpha Plot. With this graphics printing program, the paper copy of the computer generated image may be further expanded or compressed and enlarged or reduced in much the same way as we are able to alter the size of an image with a zoom lens on a television camera. Thus, reasonable visibility standards for overhead transparencies are not only achievable, but "fun" to maintain.

To complete this review, a sample overhead transparency has been generated and reduced.

The hardware used to generate this sample master was a standard 48K Apple II plus and a C.Itoh Prowriter 8510A printer set to print unidirectionally. The software was, of course, Alpha Plot. Zoom Grafix was used to rotate the paper copy image into a horizontal format and raise the size of the Alpha Plot lettering to 3 units high by 2 units wide.

With this system, installed in a laboratory setting, twenty-four undergraduate eduction students who had little or no experience with the hardware and no experience with the software were able, with limited amount of coaching, to produce usable overhead transparency masters in one hour.