

# TECH TALK

## Technology Coordinator— 30 years in review:

*Where did all these computers come from*



BY ALEX FLAXMAN, MD, MSE, BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL CENTER/ALBERT EINSTEIN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, NY - EMRA TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR

With 1974 almost over, EMRA will soon purchase our first *computer* (pronounced kom-pyoo'-ter), an Altair 8800, to process our accounts. While I have complete faith in our accountants, our computer will calculate membership fees in just a few short hours, much faster than the days it currently takes them and their slide rules.

Our computer will do more than accounting. It will include a *floppy disk drive*, allowing us to store programs and data on removable pieces of plastic, each eight inches square and about 1/16 inches thick.

I want to buy a program called *Pong*. Written two years ago by a new company, *Atari*, it is the very first computer game. I hope some of our members will be able to come to headquarters to try it. More people will learn how to work with computers by playing "Pong" than by studying in universities.

Perhaps we will also buy a *printer*, allowing our computer to print correspon-

dence. Could we save on the costs of publishing *EM Resident* by doing it ourselves?

Can we use our computer to edit our pictures? Just last year, computer graphics were used for the first time in the movie "Westworld." Will this continue?

One day, every large institution, such as hospitals, will have a computer. If our members had access to their hospital's computer, EMRA could write a program and mail a disk to each member. Then, with a little help from the hospital's computer staff, each member could run it. Maybe we could write a little quiz to help you study for boards. A computer helping you study. Wouldn't that be great?

But it gets better. Last year DARPA, a federal government agency, developed TCP/IP, a way for computers to talk to each other. Currently, there are 23 connected computers in the country able to send messages called *electronic mail* (*e-mail*, for short) to each other. If we could all get on the computer network at our

own hospitals, we could "talk" to each other. It would be a great way to keep in touch between conferences!

What an exciting time as EMRA leaps into the technology world. Where will EMRA be in 1976 when the Queen of England becomes the first "Head of State" to write an e-mail? Will we switch to the Apple II when it debuts in 1977? Will we make a big jump when Word Star 1.0, the first word processor, is released in 1978, and when "VisiCalc," the first spreadsheet, comes out in 1979? Regardless of where it all ends, EMRA will be there.

*There was no Technology Coordinator when EMRA was founded. I am simply joining in the anniversary reminiscings in which the Technology Coordinator, up to now, has been absent. With good reason, for thirty years ago, there was barely technology in the world, let alone someone to coordinate it. Born in 1974, along with EMRA, I think about technology vs. EM (EMRA's position in EM), and I can't help wonder who has come further. ■*

## *How to manage your debt and have a life too!*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

### **DON'T FORGET!!**

You must periodically review your progress. An ideal time is each July with your pay increase. Review last year's numbers, update your balances, and make minor changes to incorporate your increased salary based on your highest priority.

If you take the time to establish and maintain a personal allocation plan, you will have the confidence throughout residency in knowing that every dollar you spend is working towards your goals as hard as you are.

As always, best wishes.

Shayne

*Shayne Ruffing, CLU, ChFC, AEP is a Chartered Financial Consultant, Chartered Life Underwriter and Accredited Estate Planner with the Potter Financial Group. Shayne specializes in corporate tax leverage and executive benefits for medical practices and can be reached at 800.545.5830, or on the web at [www.potterfinancialgroup.com](http://www.potterfinancialgroup.com).*

*Shayne is an Financial Advisor offering Securities and Advisory Services through NFP Securities, Inc., a Broker/Dealer, Member NASD/SIPC and Federally Registered Investment Advisor. NFP Securities, Inc. is not affiliated with the Potter Financial Group. ■*