*also conferences*
*also health industry*

## From all indications....

....the Health Industry Bar Code Council (HIBCC) Steering Committee has settled into a reasonable and orderly pattern to develop standards and procedures for that industry.

Following the October 4-5 open meeting in St. Louis (SCAN Oct-Nov 83), the HIBCC Steering Committee held its first organization meeting in Chicago on October 26.  Committees were appointed, assignments were made, and the next meeting was scheduled for December 1 in Washington, DC.  The Task Force report, recommending the adoption of code 39, was to be circulated for review and comment.

At the December 1 Washington meeting a tentative draft of the by-laws was presented; suggestions were considered to retain a consulting firm to evaluate the comments to the Task Force report; funding recommendations were made; and plans were set in motion to convene a technical advisory group.

### Comment

*As was to be expected, not everyone has been agreeing on everything, and there is a great deal of politicking afoot.  A major area yet to be resolved is the proposed adoption of a dual symbology system that would include UPC. Yet there seems to be a responsible organization in place operating with broad-based representation from all industry groups.  Most important, everyone will have a chance to be heard in a reasonably objective forum to help resolve the diverse interests in a complex industry.  (It is fascinating to watch some of the bar code industry "experts" trotting out old treatises from their historical files to support their positions.)  If the HIBCC will keep its cool and strive only to achieve what's best for the industry, it will all come out fine.*

The next scheduled meeting is at the American Hospital Association headquarters in Chicago on January 11-12, 1984.

## There is continued concern....

....by many industry members for the successful implementation of the government LOGMARS program (SCAN Dec 83).  In this regard, a new proposal has been offered by Ed Andersson, President of AIM, to the LOGMARS Coordinating Group (LCG).  All of this centers about the proposed revisions to Military Standard 1189.

In a December 22 letter to Stuart Crouse (the Army member of the LCG charged with drafting the revised standard), Andersson states he is "troubled by the potential

that exists for bar code technology to be compromised through ill-conceived standards and policies". He draws an analogy to the difficulties encountered by the Association of American Railroads in its Automatic Car Identification program. He points out that the failure to police the label specifications resulted in a growing no-read rate that eventually led to the abandonment of the railroad system.

Andersson fears that "history can repeat itself in the LOGMARS program". He emphasizes that realistic guidelines and standards must be set and enforced, including those that control bar code integrity and the performance of the scanning equipment.

The President of AIM therefore proposes that a special meeting of key LOGMARS implementors be called. AIM would conduct a seminar presenting responsible industry positions and recommendations dealing with the issues. This would be followed by open dialogue between the AIM panel and the LOGMARS group.

The major area of contention seems to be about Paragraph 7 (Quality Assurance Provisions). Following on the heels of the strong critical position taken by Harry Palmer, RJS Enterprises, (SCAN Dec 83) there is a considerable head of steam building to be sure the proposed revisions to Mil Std 1189 undergo very close security before implementation. Crouse believes there are many elements in the proposed revised standard which should be implemented now, and that any decision to hold another review conference, or to consider additional revisions, would delay publication of a new standard by many months.

The next meeting of the LOGMARS Coordinating Group is scheduled for January 24-25, and plans are to submit the revised draft for approval at that meeting. If the LCG does approve, final publication is expected in a few months. After getting that out of the way the group might take the Andersson/AIM proposal under advisement for a full airing of all new comments.

### Comment

*Our impression is that the LCG is very much concerned that the LOGMARS program prove to be the success promised by the early studies. Our conversations with individual members bears out this concern. If the proposed revisions to Mil Std 1189 do not answer all of the questions, then more contact between industry and government will be essential. Certainly any factual data on error rates, or other system problems, should be transmitted to the LCG at once. And industry representatives should continue to monitor results and express comments on this very important program.*

It was only natural....

....that the bar code scanning trade organizaton, expositions and seminars had their origins in the US. This is where bar code scanning achieved its earliest successes, and where important parts of the technology originated.

It was inevitable that the technology would spread to other countries, as it has, where significant achievements and market growth have been evident these past few years. The logical next step would have been the emergence of international/regional trade shows and trade organizations. And that's just what is beginning to happen. What is most encouraging is that the movement has the full endorsement and support of the US Automatic Identification Manufacturers (AIM).

In a recent interview with AIM President Ed Andersson, he told us that he is preparing a report, to be submitted to the AIM directors at their March 84 winter meeting, on his ideas of how such a plan might be implemented. He visualizes independent national or regional groups with separate by-laws, dues structure and programs. Planning is already underway to launch SCAN-TECH/Europe for which AIM is prepared to provide the organization and seed money. Paul Berge (Symbol Technologies/International) has been chosen as the European Chairman; Amsterdam as the tentative site; late fall, 1984 as the time. Berge has already received over 20 positive responses indicating strong support for this European undertaking. (More details in this month's INTERNATIONAL EDITION).

Planning is still in the early enough stages so that Ed Andersson would welcome comments and suggestions directed to him personally at Computer Identics, 5 Shawmut Road, Canton, MA 02021; 617/821-0830. Berge may be contacted at Symbol Technologies Int'l, Rue Gachard 51, Boite 19, 1050 Brussels, Belgium; 02/640-9232.

### Comment

*Considering our past efforts to encourage international membership in AIM, and the advantages of an integrated industry effort regardless of national origin, we are very enthused by these beginnings. We endorse the goals expressed by Andersson and will support them on these pages.*

*...But we do have a few suggestions: Despite the importance of a showcase that would be provided by a SCAN-TECH/Europe, we believe the creation of a viable controlling organization should come first. The stability, continuity, flavor, perception and efficiency of such an undertaking would be enormously enhanced if it were to be supported by a European organization in place and functioning. There are a number of important policy decisions that must be taken when preparing for a trade show, and those decisions can best be made by a national group fully cognizant of the regional mores; e.g., should retail scanning be represented? Is OCR sufficiently related to be included? Where does a user go to get objective, pertinent industry literature and information? Are American companies to be admitted as exhibitors?*

*Secondly, the scheduling of the first show without an existing local sponsoring organization, with less than a year's lead time, and just prior to the established SCAN-TECH '84, may not be the best of timing. What's the rush? The Spring of 1985 provides an additional 6-8 months for planning that might be sorely needed to make this undertaking successful.*

*And lastly, has anyone considered the establishment of an International Federation of Automatic Identification Manufacturers? This would provide the umbrella under which many regional international groups could be formed. It could avoid the fragmentation of unrelated organizations with conflicting charters. It could provide the focal point for international cooperation for standards and technological improvements that will benefit everyone.*

*We would like to suggest that the AIM directors consider establishing such an international group. Send out a call to those interested throughout the world, and invite delegates to the first plenary session to take place in December 1984 at SCAN-TECH '84!*

*We applaud Ed Andersson and the progressive AIM board for this positive attitude. We suggest that SCAN-TECH/Europe can wait a bit longer and that the industry will benefit much more from the establishment of INFAIMA -- the*

*International Federation of Automatic Identification Manufacturers Associations*
*(or some abbreviation thereof).*

*(Publisher's note: You will find divergent opinions among our editors. In this issue of SCAN/IE Paul Chartier of our INTERNATIONAL EDITION expresses a different point-of-view from his vantage point in Europe.)*

Computer Identics completed....

....its public offering of one million shares of stock on December 29, 1983 (SCAN Sep 83). The stock was sold at $3.00/share and will be traded over-the-counter under the symbol CIDN. The $3 million for the company is somewhat less than the $5 million contemplated in the original ("red herring") prospectus filed in August '83.

In addition, President David Collins announced receipt of a $3,950,000 research and development contract from Hutton/PRC Technology Partners (SCAN Oct-Nov 83). The contract calls for C/I to conduct R & D for a new integrated bar code collection and control system for industrial applications, to be called "System 128".

System 128 will include improved data collection devices, local area network (LAN) equipment to facilitate the processing of data from many fixed and portable data entry terminals, a 16/32 bit micro-computer-based factory floor processor designed to collect bar code data and control various industrial operations (e.g., conveyor lines, machine tools, robots, in-process test equipment), and enhanced software to provide management with a more complete and responsive data base for reporting and control. Completion of the project is scheduled to take approximately two years, at which time Computer Identics has an option to obtain an exclusive license to produce, market and sell System 128 in return for royalty payments.

Collins believes "This is the largest research and development program ever undertaken by a company in the bar code scanning industry."

The new U.S. Postal Service....

....mail-handling systems, which include bar code scanning, are resulting in significant purchases of scanning hardware. Accu-Sort recently announced its contract to ship 850 laser scanners for the U.S.P.S. mail bag sorting system (SCAN Dec 83). Now Symbol Technologies has announced an award for more than $750,000 to supply 947 of their LS7000 hand-held laser scanners, plus some additional hardware, software and services.

Symbol Tech's contract is with ElectroCom Automation, Inc. (ECA), the U.S.P.S. contractor, in this case. ECA will supply and install the material handling equipment to weigh the mail, scan and read the bar code, and print labels with routing and other dispatch information.

S/T's laser scanners will read the bar code on each air mail sack for identification and verification at its destination. According to President Jerry Swartz, this is the company's largest order ever, and demonstrates "the spread of bar coding as a valuable productivity tool in systems throughout industry, commerce and government."

Symbol Technologies also announced that it was awarded its second patent for improvements to its hand-held laser scanners (U.S. Patent No. 4,409,470). Swartz states that this "will further strengthen our present and future position as a leader in bar code technology."

## One of the more important....

....but less visible products in the bar code scanning industry has been film masters. For those individual bar codes which are to be printed in large quantities, a necessary starting point is the generation of the original plate-ready art to the high precision required.

Film master producers and distributors have tended to be smaller companies, or smaller divisions of larger companies. There are almost as many types of equipment and techniques for generating film masters as there are producers, and noone seems to know the total size of the market in the US or abroad.

A somewhat unique approach to film master production was taken by RJS Enterprises. RJS was a late bloomer, starting up its own US film master production units in January 1981. Up to that time the company had been a manufacturer of verification devices sold by Photographic Sciences. After a dispute between the two companies (SCAN Oct 80; Jan 81) RJS took over the direct distribution of the equipment, started up its own film master production, and created a marketing staff partially built on people wooed from Photographic Sciences. RJS's approach was to build generators to produce and sell its film masters (Code-Masters) in the US/Canadian markets; and to license producers in other countries to produce on RJS equipment on a royalty-fee basis.

According to VP Kathleen Parsons, RJS and its affiliates have become the world's largest film master producers. With the continued demand for UPC/EAN symbols -- the mainstay of the film master industry -- and the anticipated demand for the UPC/EAN Shipping Container Symbols, the company expects growing demand for this product. RJS CodeMaster generators are now in operation in England, Italy, France, Germany and Spain.

RJS Enterprises, 135 E. Chestnut Avenue, Monrovia, CA 91016; 213/357-9781.

## There have been some....

....personnel changes and assignments which should be noted:

- Dave Czaplicki is moving from the cold northeast to the cold northwest. "Zap" is relinquishing his director of marketing position at Skan-A-Matic (Elbridge, NY) for a new job in marketing with Intermec (Lynnwood, WA). He will be succeeded at Skan-A-Matic by Donald Attanas who had worked with Zap in the marketing department.

- Our very good friend, Beverly Joyce, with whom we cut our teeth on the early LOGMARS program, is back in the bar code scanning fold. In January 1980 Joyce moved from her position with the Army (Tobyhanna Army Depot, PA), where had been deeply involved in the startup of LOGMARS, to the Defense Logistics Agency in Alexandria, VA. In her newest job, with the Department of the Navy, she has been designated the Navy member of the LOGMARS Coordinating Group and will be working on the implementation

of bar code scanning systems.  (Old friends wanting to renew acquaintances
can call her at 202/697-7672.)


We have received....

....dozens of requests these past few months from newspapers, magazines, consult-
ants, venture capitalists, and companies planning to enter bar code scanning:

### HOW LARGE IS THE BAR CODE SCANNING BUSINESS?

Most people are interested in the commercial-industrial market for bar code
scanning (as opposed to retail applications) and they find it virtually impossi-
ble to lock in on any set of numbers.

One of the first difficulties is definition: Where does a scanning system start
and where does it end?  Do you include only the scanning heads, or do you also
include the readers, decoders, interface units, modems, computers, material
handling equipment, and those other parts of a complete system which may be
based upon bar code scanning?  And how about the demand printers and labels or
other bar code media, which are really an integral part of any system and of
this industry?

A corollary problem is that we are dealing mostly with smaller closely-held
companies, or divisions of larger companies, where definitive data is not avail-
able.  At the present time, there are over 30 companies in the Automatic Identi-
fication Manufacturers Association.  The Directory of Bar Code Manufacturers and
Services lists over 150 companies with products related to non-retail bar code
scanning.

If anyone has any working numbers, or wishes to suggest a method for arriving
at and maintaining these numbers, we will be happy to work with them to develop
and publish such data.  The very first step is to arrive at a definition.  Cer-
tainly this would be an excellent project to be undertaken by AIM.

Based on all of the inquiries that we have received, this could be very valuable
information.


As a follow-up to our item....

....on Percon (SCAN Dec 83) we spoke with Dave Whitehall, one of the founders
and owners of the company.  He indicates they are receiving pretty good response
to their E-Z Reader.  The simple (just plug into an RS-232 port), inexpensive
device is starting to sell, and projections are to move 2,500 units during this
year.

The company is in discussions with possible OEM users, such as Cardinal Com-
puters, and is actively seeking distributors and reps to carry this and other
devices they will be announcing.

Please update your records with the correct address and phone number:
Percon, Box 1352, Eugene, OR 97440; 503/344-1189.

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