

FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

Mailed Oct. 30, 1986

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio - Youngstown State University's Planetarium begins its season with a new program, "Digital SpaceScapes," which opens with a 2 p.m. showing Nov. 6.

"Digital SpaceScapes" will look at the most recent discoveries about our celestial neighbors, including the international flyby of Halley's Comet and the Voyager 2 encounter with the planet Uranus.

Planetarium shows are free and open to the public, but reservations are required because of the limited seating capacity.

Reservations may be made by phoning the Planetarium at (216) 742-3616. Reserved seats will be held only until five minutes before showtime. All programs begin promptly and latecomers cannot be admitted once the show has begun.

Because the subject and setting are inappropriate for them, pre-school children cannot be admitted.

Other dates and times for "Digital SpaceScapes" are:

Nov. 7	8 p.m.
Nov. 8	2 and 8 p.m.
Nov. 14	8 p.m.
Nov. 15	2 and 8 p.m.
Nov. 21	8 p.m.
Nov. 22	2 and 8 p.m.
Dec. 5	8 p.m.
Dec. 6	2 and 8 p.m.

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YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio - It talks, but it isn't human.

"It" is a talking computer in Youngstown State University's Microcomputer Lab of Cushwa Hall.

This regular IBM computer has an added bonus--a synthesizer that allows it to "talk."

The added bonus helps David Kweder of Youngstown immensely. The senior math and computer science major was pronounced legally blind in January of 1983.

"Before this, I had to have someone type all of my computer programs in for me. It was a lot more time consuming."

Kweder was introduced to numerous computers for the blind by the Cleveland Society for the Blind.

He mentioned the equipment to Neil Whipkey, YSU associate professor of Math and Computer Sciences, who at that time was his Calculus instructor. She, in turn, discussed the problem with the chairman of YSU's Math and Computer Sciences, Dr. Richard Burden.

Dr. George E. Letchworth, University director of Counseling and Health Services, was contacted by them, and after going through channels, the synthesizer was purchased for YSU's Computer Science Department.

Kweder learned how to use the synthesizer-equipped computer on his own with the help of some fellow students in the Microcomputer Lab.

He conceded that using it is "slower than if someone read a screen with their eyes," but points out it allows him to work at a faster pace.

The computer is connected with YSU's mainframe by a phone modem.

-MORE-

Add One

A voice similar in tone to the munchkins in The Wizard of Oz informs Kweder of each character as he types it into the computer. It is also capable of reading line by line, or reading a whole screen.

Kweder said it took him about a month to get accustomed to the voice. "Sometimes you get so used to it you begin talking like it," he said, referring to the way the computer pronounces some of its words. For example, instead of saying the word "equals" the way one is accustomed to hearing it, the computer pronounces this word as "eckwills."

The only drawback about the computer, Kweder noted, was that it sometimes reads material back so fast that he has to go through it a couple times.

Before the synthesizer, it used to take Kweder hours to complete a program. The tedious process involved his listening to a tape recorder, telling a person line by line what should be put in the computer, and then having the person read it back to him. He believes the synthesizer has enabled him to cut this time in half.

According to Kweder, the computer can also act as a word processor.

Although he is the only person using it at this time, he's sure it will be of great help to any other visually impaired students in the future.

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By Deb Pietten/YSU News Service
86-186
la,c,d+

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By Deb Patten/YSU News Service
86-186
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FOR RELEASE:

CUTLINE

YSU student David Kweder types a program into a talking computer while Vail, his Seeing-Eye companion, patiently waits.

(YSU photo by Elise Cleary)

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YSU student David Kweder types a program into a talking computer while Vail, his Seeing-Eye companion, patiently waits.

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