

TECH TOYS

WHO SAYS ENGINEERS CAN'T HAVE FUN?

by Joan Lynch, Managing Editor



IT'S NO ORDINARY PHONE

Now another home appliance gives you easy access to the Web and e-mail. The iPhone features a 7.4-in. touchscreen interface and keyboard for connecting to regular and advanced phone services, e-mail, and graphics from the Web. This first release displays only 16-shade gray-scale images, though. Touch a phone number on the screen, and the device dials it for you. A built-in directory lets you keep track of phone numbers and street and e-mail addresses. The suggested price is \$499. **Cidco Inc**, Morgan Hill, CA. 1-408-779-1162, 1-800-929-8246, www.cidco.com. **Circle No. 334**

MIND-MELD WITH YOUR PC

MindWizard lets you capture your knowledge and personal-reasoning patterns to give your PC decision-making capabilities. Instead of having to write thousands of lines of C++ code, you develop a MindChart—a visual diagram that identifies and organizes all of the factors and relationships among factors that are involved in making an important decision. A point-and-click interface lets you determine color-coded rules and assumptions. Use the software for strategic and tactical planning and problem solving, especially if you expect to encounter high levels of uncertainty. The company recommends running the \$149 program on a Pentium machine with Windows 95 or NT, but it will run on a 486 with 16 Mbytes of RAM. It's available through retailers or by contacting the company.

Richter Paradigm Corp, San Jose, CA. 1-888-366-4269, www.mindwizard.com. **Circle No. 335**



PROGRAMMABLE TERMINAL

The Callisto comes as a packaged terminal or as a stand-alone pc board. The basic version comes with 512 kbytes of RAM, which can expand to 64 Mbytes. The higher end version comes with 16-bit Soundblaster-compatible stereo sound and support for additional EIDE peripherals. Both models include two serial ports and one parallel port, PS/2 ports for a mouse and keyboard, and an SVGA connector. You can store software on the 256-kbyte embedded flash. Callisto costs \$299 (OEM). **Integrated Business Computers**, Simi Valley, CA. 1-805-527-6362, www.ibc.com. **Circle No. 336**

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

At first, I thought this book was a bad joke. There's a half-naked lady on the cover for no reason other than the obvious and a crazed Merlin look-alike in front of a mini Van de Graaf generator. OK, it worked. I cracked the book and soon found that this author will use anything—humor, analogies, buffoonery, and parables—to give nebulous electronics concepts a definite form. He needn't apologize, either.

There Are No Electrons: Electronics for Earthlings (ISBN 0-9627815-9-2) was written by Kenn Amdahl, who's vaguely related to the man who founded Amdahl Corp. You—the electron-initiated—will enjoy the ride; it will lift the fog from anyone who thinks he or she can't understand electricity. The book costs \$12.95 at Barnes and Noble bookstores. **Clearwater Publishing Co**, Broomfield, CO. 1-303-436-1982. **Circle No. 333**

