

You Can Take It With You

By David H. Fisher, Jr.

This is a true story that played an important role in the development of one of the tools that is taken for granted today. It started on December 26, 1980, in Topeka, Kansas. But first let's go back about thirty years when it really began.

During the early 1950s each summer my father took our family of four on a fishing vacation at Lake Chetek near a little town called Chetek, Wisconsin. He had a 3½ horsepower Montgomery Ward outboard motor. In preparation for the two day drive from Topeka to Chetek, along with our luggage, he was somehow able to load the motor into the trunk of our 1950 Pontiac 4-door sedan.

While in Chetek my Dad and I would go fishing every morning, afternoon and evening during our two week vacation. We fished from a boat using the small outboard motor to move around Lake Chetek. To start the motor we used a rope with a knot on one end and a wooden handle on the other end. We would fit the knot into a groove in a wheel on the top of the motor and then pull real hard and that would turn over the motor. You had to be careful as when the rope came out of the wheel at the end of the pull it would flip back and could hit anyone in the boat that was too close.

To further complicate the process you had to first pull out the choke and once the motor started you had to quickly push it in or the motor would die and you had to rewrap the rope around the wheel and try again.

When the motor was cold it usually took around 10 pulls before it showed any sign of life. Usually my Dad would pull until he got tired or frustrated and then I would try. Once the motor started and the choke was in the only way to back up the boat was to turn the motor around as there was no reverse.

We usually fished about a mile or two from the Crimson Hue Resort where we stayed in a little cottage named Beloit. Since the top speed of our 3 ½ horsepower motor was about as fast as you could walk it usually took between 15 to 30 minutes to get to our closest fishing location. While we were in route many other fishermen in their boats powered by 10 horsepower Johnson Sea King or Evinrude outboard motors would fly by like we were standing still. I was often embarrassed as many of the boats were driven by boys about my age who would smile and wave as they went by.

Sometimes my Dad would let me drive the boat and when the other boats would pass us I would often fanaticize that under the cover of our little motor was a powerful 15 horsepower engine and just as they would start to pass us I would open up the throttle and leave them far behind in our wake wondering what had happened.

While I was growing up I loved the idea of doing something that no one had thought of or done before, especially if it was more powerful than it appeared. And, I was impressed with anyone who was creative.

One of my heroes was Walt Disney who built a small steam powered railroad in his backyard which was the beginning of what ultimately grew into Disneyland and later into Walt Disney World.

In the summer of 1980 our daughter, Shannan, took gymnastics at the North Branch of the Topeka YMCA. My wife, Kathy, and I took her to class each Saturday morning. While Kathy visited with the other mothers I began to read a brochure I picked up at the Radio Shack about the TRS-80 computer.

TRS stood for Tandy Radio Shack and 80 was the model number. The TRS-80 was the sales leader of what *Byte Magazine* called the “1977 Trinity” which included Apple, the Commodore and the Tandy. This was well before IBM and Microsoft. The cost of the TRS-80 was around \$600.00 which was a lot of money in 1980. It included a full-stroke QWERTY keyboard and a monitor. In those days it was a very small size for a computer and used a well-written programming language called BASIC. You could actually fit the computer on a desk.

I couldn't afford a TRS-80 but enjoyed reading about it. I would often go to the Radio Shack and ask questions about this fascinating computer. One day while I was asking questions the store manager, Steve Maddy, mentioned that Radio Shack would be introducing a new computer called the Radio Shack/Tandy TRS80 PC-1 POCKET COMPUTER at a cost of \$230.00.

Over the next few weeks I stopped by his store several times to see if it had come in only to be disappointed. Then in mid December Steve called to let me know one of the pocket computers had just arrived. I stopped what I was doing and immediately went to the Radio Shack to see it.

Steve handed me the black simulated leather case and I pulled on the Velcro opening and slid out the silver and gray machine. The pocket computer was 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide, 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches tall and $\frac{5}{8}$ inches thick. It had a full QWERTY keyboard, a numeric key pad and a screen that measured 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches wide by $\frac{7}{16}$ inches tall which could display 24 characters. It had 1424 steps and 4 kilobytes of memory. With my interest in doing something that no one had

thought of or done before, especially if it was more powerful than it appeared I knew I had to have one.

Now lets return to December 26, 1980. I had some money left over after Christmas so I went to the Radio Shack and used all the money to purchase the PC-1 POCKET COMPUTER though I had no idea how it worked or what I was going to do with it. Fortunately it came with a manual.

That evening I began to feel very guilty having spent all that money and started getting sick. The next day I woke up with the flu and had to stay in bed. Several times during that first day I read part of the manual. I learned how to turn the pocket computer on. I learned that you didn't type in $2+2$ and press =. Instead you typed in $2+2$ and pressed ENTER and 4 would magically appear on the screen.

Soon I learned you could type $A=2$ and press ENTER. Then every time you pressed A followed by ENTER, 2 would appear on the display screen. Or you could type in $A\$="Dave"$ and press ENTER. Then every time you typed in A\$ and then ENTER Dave would appear on the display. Wow, I thought this was almost a miracle!

After several days of playing with the pocket computer I began to get over the flu and feel better. I figured I could now use the computer in front of an insurance prospect or client to calculate premiums by typing in the premium per thousand and then multiplying it times the number of thousands of dollars of insurance and press ENTER. The pocket computer would be very handy as I could take it with me.

After a few days I came up with the idea that I could write a small program and have the computer ask for the premium per thousand dollars of life insurance, the premium for waiver of premium, the premium for the accidental death benefit, the number of thousands of dollars of insurance and finally the modal factor for annual, semi-annual, quarterly or monthly.

I could then press ENTER and there on the screen would be the premium. I could use the pocket computer to make premium calculations much easier and more accurate than using a pencil and paper which is the method I had previously been using.

I developed the program and my prospects and clients seemed to be impressed when I used the pocket computer in front of them and it took much less time to calculate premiums. Most of my customers paid their premiums monthly which had a modal factor of .0858 of the annual premium. I decided to see if I could raise the insurance one dollar more and see if the premium stayed the same. Sure enough it did in most cases so I

modified the program so the computer would keep raising the insurance amount one dollar until it increased the premium one cent. It would then lower the insurance amount one dollar and that would be the maximum amount of insurance that could be purchased for the modal premium.

I started submitting applications for odd amounts like \$10,015 policies instead of \$10,000 policies. This generated phone calls from the home office wondering why I was submitting these odd amounts. When I explained what I was doing they were impressed as their main frame computers wouldn't do those calculations.

Next I decided I would try to write a program that would calculate how much life insurance a prospect or client really wanted to own. Not what my company or what I thought they needed but what they really wanted to own. I did this by having the pocket computer ask how much they needed to pay off any bills they owed and how much income they wanted for their family if they died, etc. I called the program the "Personal Financial Plan." I designed a small card that folded over to about the size of a business card. Now my prospect could fill in the numbers when the computer displayed their Cash Needs, Educations Need, Income Needs, Total Assets and Total Needs.

When the cards were printed I made my first presentation. I had my prospect fill in the amounts on the card as the computer displayed the needs in each category. The prospect didn't even hesitate when the pocket computer displayed his Total Needs. He just said, "How much will the premium be?" I used the premium program and when the premium was displayed he responded by saying, "Let's fill out the application." I loved the pocket computer as I could take it with me to appointments and my prospects were fascinated and impressed with its magic.

The first seven prospects I showed the program to bought immediately before one prospect said he wanted to think about it. Soon my production began to skyrocket and I received a call from a person in the home office marketing department wanting to know what I was doing to so dramatically increase my production. I had even qualified for the Million Dollar Round Table for the first time.

I explained the program I had developed, and a few days later, he flew to the Kansas City airport for a demonstration. This led to the home office scheduling me for a meeting with the Davenport, Iowa, Mass Mutual agency where I was to bring enough pocket computers for all the agents. I was to put on a seminar and let the agents practice with a pocket computer and then they could purchase one from me after the meeting.

I had typed in the program into my pocket computer. Fortunately Radio Shack had just come out with an interface that you could slide the pocket computer onto and, with a couple of wires attached to a cassette recorder, you could save the program onto a cassette tape. You could then put another pocket computer on the interface and load the program from the cassette tape into the new computer. The cost of the interface was \$49.00.

I went to the Radio Shack and ordered the interface and enough pocket computers for the Davenport agency. When the interface and pocket computers arrived I made a cassette tape of the program and loaded the program into each computer. It took about 5 minutes to load a program. It often took several attempts to load the program into the computer and would only work on the cassette recorder that made the tape. A short time later a Printer/Cassette Interface was introduced at a cost of \$149.00. The printer used its own mini ink ribbon and was slow but would print out a copy of the program. Loading a program using the new Printer/Cassette interface was also not very reliable.

As I recall, after I gave the seminar to the Davenport agency every agent purchased one. Soon the agency production went up dramatically and I again got a call from the man in the home office marketing department asking me to put on several additional seminars for other agencies. The results were the same for each agency.

The Kansas Association of Life Underwriters (KALU) found out about the program and asked me to speak at their annual convention and have a display booth. I discovered that the Radio Shack/Tandy TRS80 PC-1 Pocket Computer was actually made by SHARP Electronics and was now available directly from SHARP and it would be cheaper to purchase the computers from them. The SHARP pocket computer came with a hard plastic cover and color was slightly different but the computers were the same. SHARP called their pocket computer the SHARP PC-1211.

I started a Sub-S Corporation with an insurance agent friend and he helped man the booth at the KALU annual convention. Immediately following my talk before the general session I went out to the booth to discover it was swamped with agents purchasing the pocket computers with the insurance software I had developed.

A short time later I was contacted by several insurance industry magazines wanting to write articles about the pocket computer. It even appeared in the official magazine for the National Association of Life Underwriters. This resulted in calls and orders from all over the United States.

The system became so popular that we decided to develop a brochure. We contacted an advertising agency to design one. They told us we needed a name for the pocket computer system with the insurance program and suggested we call it the Fisher V.P. They said the Fisher V.P. would be the agent's Vice President of marketing. We thought that was a good name and the Fisher V.P. brochure was developed. On the front cover was a picture of a man holding a \$100,000 astronaut's helmet. It had been personally delivered to Topeka by a representative of the Kansas Cosmosphere and Discovery Center in Hutchinson, Kansas, so it could be photographed. The heading on the brochure read "IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO STEP INTO THE FUTURE WITH A V.P."

A short time later I was contacted by the head of pocket computer sales at SHARP Electronics in New Jersey wanting to know what I was doing with the pocket computer. He then asked me if I had any ideas for the design of future pocket computers. I recommended more memory, a faster processor, a larger display and a printer. (SHARP did not have a printer.) I was informed that SHARP was actually a Japanese company and the pocket computers were manufactured in Japan but he would get this information to SHARP headquarters in Japan.

Soon the SHARP PC-1250 was introduced which was a smaller more powerful pocket computer but still only had a one line 24 character display. It had what seemed at the time to be a huge 24 kilobytes of memory. SHARP also developed a printer with a micro-cassette interface called the CE-125. This made it much easier to load programs into the new pocket computer. With this exciting improvement I rewrote the program and we developed a new brochure called the Fisher V.P. II.

Mass Mutual contacted me again wanting me to put on more seminars, this time for agencies in California. I ordered the new SHARP PC-1250s, loaded the program in each computer and shipped them to the agencies in California. A week later my wife Kathy and I flew to San Diego and rented a car and put on seminars in San Diego, Newport Beach, Fresno, Sacramento, and San Jose.

I was surprised with the interest expressed by agents in California. Besides selling lots of computers, two things stood out about our trip. First, the general agent in the Newport Beach agency paid for our room at the expensive Balboa Bay Club. The next morning at the seminar I looked out the window into the parking and the lot was full of red, yellow, white and black Porsches, Lamborghinis, and Corvettes. The second thing that stood out during the California trip was the agents in San Jose were amazed with the pocket computer even though they were right in the middle of the developing Silicon Valley.

As more and more insurance agents purchased our pocket computer system I felt I needed to develop a way to keep in contact with them and to market future pocket computers and software. I decided on a quarterly newsletter I called ONLINE. At that time I had no idea the Internet would be developed and that the term online would become a household word. The first few issues of ONLINE centered on how to use the pocket computer and how to save battery power. Its content also included ways to use the computer to schedule an appointment with their prospect or client.

After several newsletters I decided to dedicate an issue of ONLINE to what I saw as the future of pocket and portable computers. In the issue I predicted the memory of pocket computers would increase dramatically. I also felt the future pocket computer would open up like a lady's compact with the keyboard on the lower half and the top half would be the screen.

I also predicted a larger portable computer would be developed with the same design but with a larger keyboard and screen. I called it a "briefcase" computer.

Sometime later I predicted that the ultimate computer would be what I called a Portable CPU (Central Processing Unit.) It would contain the CPU and lots memory that would be the size of a pocket computer with a keyboard and screen. You would plug a full sized computer screen and full sized keyboard into the Portable CPU and it would function as a Personal Computer. But you could also access the data on the Portable CPU by using its pocket size keyboard and screen.

I felt computer users would have a screen and keyboard in their home. Businesses would also provide screens and keyboards as well as hotels, etc. People would carry their Portable CPUs with them and then plug in the screen and keyboard. The screen would be plugged into an electrical outlet and then into the Portable CPU supplying power so the Portable CPU didn't drain its batteries.

This would be very convenient as you could almost always take your computer with you. You could access the data using its onboard batteries or it would function just like a PC when it was plugged into the screen and keyboard. It could be locked up for security rather than left on a desk.

I contacted Texas Instruments and, after completing a disclosure agreement, I explained my Portable CPU idea. They thought it was an excellent idea but that it would never be possible as they couldn't get enough memory into a pocket sized computer and it would require too much battery power. I couldn't get their interest in working on my concept.

Meanwhile our oldest son, Trey, was on the Topeka High School basketball team and Kathy and I enjoyed going to his games. To keep from getting nervous I kept score on a piece of paper. After a few games I got the idea of writing a program on the pocket computer to keep the team stats. After a few more games I was able to keep Fouls, Free Throws made and attempted, 2 point Field Goals made and attempted, (They didn't have 3 point field goals back then), and Total Points on the pocket computer.

After each game I would update the software so the program would work better. One evening after practice, Trey told me he had told his coach, Willie Nicklin, what I was doing with the pocket computer. Trey said the coach seemed very interested. At the next game Coach Nicklin came over and asked me if he could see what I was doing with my pocket computer.

I briefly showed him the basketball program and he was impressed and asked if the stats could be printed out. I said I had not thought of that and would see if I could change the program so the stats could be printed. Coach Nicklin replied, "If the stats could be printed out would I be willing to sit behind the team and give him a printout at the end of each quarter?" I told him I would work on it and let him know.

After lots of program changes I was able to printout the stats. The next game I sat behind the team and printed out the stats after each quarter and gave them to Coach Nicklin. Following the game he told me how helpful they were and asked if I could add points per possession and percent loss per possession to the printout. He then gave me the formulas.

Again I went to work modifying the program and had it ready for the next game. Following the game Coach Nicklin told me this was a tremendous help and told me there would be a large market for this product.

Before long SHARP came out with a new computer that was the same size but had more memory and a two line by 24 character display called the PC-1251. With this more powerful computer and the two line display I was able to modify the program so it was much faster and easier to use as well as create a program for a second computer that kept additional stats.

I added a season stats program that kept the stats for each player as well as rank them in the following categories: Total Points, Total Rebounds, Offensive Rebounds, Defensive Rebounds, Assists, Turnovers, Steals, Blocked Shots, Free Throws, Total Field Goals, 2 Point Field Goals, and 3 Point Field Goals. I also updated the insurance program which resulted in the Fisher V.P. III.

I began to market the basketball program under the name pocket*COACH. Soon basketball coaches in and around Topeka were purchasing the pocket computer system with the pocket*COACH software. It wasn't long before we developed a pocket*COACH brochure and began marketing it to high schools all over the United States. The computer later became the Official Pocket Computer System of the Kansas State High School Activities Association.

I decided to hire Steve Maddy, the Radio Shack store manager who sold me the original pocket computer, to help do programming. I also hired Trey to help with marketing. Later I hired Kathy, our son, Shane, and daughter, Shannan to help with sales and service.

SHARP was so impressed with all of the pocket computers we were purchasing for sale that one of their product specialists from Japan arranged to fly into Kansas City to meet with us to get my ideas on what we would like to see in the next generation pocket computer. A week or so later we met the SHARP technician in a hotel near the Kansas City airport. He kept asking us questions trying to get our ideas as to what we would like to see in the next pocket computer.

I again stressed more memory, faster speed and added something new, a larger backlit display. I also suggested a faster printer and more reliable micro-cassette recorder to save and load programs. After we had given the technician our ideas he told us SHARP was working on an enzyme chip. In his broken English he said, "Chip will hold all information known mankind just begin invade memory." We were impressed but I never heard any more information about the enzyme chip.

Several months later SHARP asked me to go to the SHARP annual convention in Orlando, Florida, and man a booth so we could demonstrate what we were doing with the pocket computer. When in Orlando the manager of SHARP's pocket computer division stayed in our booth to help with the demonstrations.

SHARP produced a booklet of the programs that had been developed for their pocket computers. We had several of our programs listed. Most of the other programs were simple but ours were much more sophisticated. Some of our software did things a PC couldn't do and still can't to this day.

SHARP later introduced the PC-1252 but it was the same as the PC-1251 only a slightly different color. SHARP never made any more changes to their true pocket computers. They did develop some slightly larger pocket computers but they required a large carrying case that would not fit into a

pocket and were not convenient to take with you. They were soon taken off the market.

Next SHARP developed the Wizard organizer but it was a scheduler and not a computer. The PC-1252 ultimately turned out to be the end of pocket computers as SHARP was the only company that made a true pocket computer.

I might add I have tried several different methods of keeping basketball stats including software for laptops and the Palm PDA. None of them could provide the fast input and portable printing like the pocket*COACH with the SHARP PC-1251 and PC-1252.

As a side note, I have enjoyed keeping the basketball stats using pocket*COACH so much it has become a hobby. I just completed my 27th year as the volunteer statistician for the Topeka High School basketball team. I have provided real time stats to coaches, Willie Nicklin, Bill Bagshaw, Mike Hansen and now Pat Denney. One year I was even asked to give the team a pep talk.

About a year or so after marketing the basketball program all over the country I got a call from the football coach at one of the high schools that was using the pocket*COACH for basketball telling me it was a useful program for basketball but a football program would be even more useful. He felt it would be a big help to defensive coaches who scout their opponents. I decided to look into this possibility and brought together several area football coaches to get their opinions and ideas as to what they would like a program to do.

The coaches really liked the concept and thought the program would be very popular with football coaches all over the country. With their enthusiasm and with their ideas we went to work developing the pocket*COACH Football program. By the next season the program had been completed and we sold it to several football coaches who started using the program to scout their opponents. They loved the fact that they could take it with them and scout their opponents.

One day I got a call from a coach who had found an opponent's printout on the football field after their game and told me the printout showed what his team did under just about every game situation. He was so impressed he wanted to purchase the system immediately.

Soon we were traveling to several states for their football conventions and sold lots of pocket*COACH Football systems. Our biggest state was California. One California coach called me with a quick question. He then

told me that during the earthquake that hit San Francisco a few days earlier his team was practicing and the ground shook so hard the entire team fell down. Another defensive coordinator called me with a question. In our conversation he mentioned that he was the lead guitar player for Eric Clapton's band.

One day the football coach in Marysville, KS, called and suggested that we show the program to the University of Nebraska. He said he would be happy to go with us if I got the appointment and offered to show them what the scouting computer was doing for his team.

I called and got the appointment and the Marysville coach, Steve Maddy and I went to Lincoln to give a demonstration. I was impressed with the big Orange Bowl trophies we saw as we entered the coaches building. Soon one of the coaches came out and said the staff wanted him to look at the program first. If he liked it he would take us into the coaches meeting.

I showed him the program and his eyes lit up and he said he would be back in a few minutes. Soon he ushered us into the coaches meeting room where Coach Charlie McBride, the defensive coordinator and Coach George Darlington, the offensive coordinator were seated around a large conference table along with about eight other coaches. The head coach, Tom Osborne, was not at the meeting.

I demonstrated the program to the coaches. When I was through, Coach McBride said he really liked what he saw but would like the program on a personal computer. After much discussion it was decided that if we could write the same program on a PC without charge they would use it and Tom Osborne would endorse the pocket*COACH football program and let us use his name and picture in our brochure.

As we were about to agree Coach McBride got a terrible look on his face and looked like he was going to throw up. He reached for a plastic lined waste basket and spit out a huge wad of chewing tobacco. The coach who had ushered us into the coaches meeting leaned over and told me that after awhile the taste of Charlie's chewing tobacco becomes so terrible he has to quickly spit it out or get sick. He then noted all of the waste baskets in the coaches offices were lined with plastic incase Charlie was in the area.

We then went on with our discussion, agreed to Coach McBride's request, went back to Topeka and developed the football scouting program for a PC using BASIC language. The program was to work the same way as the pocket*COACH. When we had finished the PC program we named it coach*PLUS Football and went back to Lincoln and taught the defensive coaching staff how to use it on a PC.

They were very impressed and explained they would use three coaches to put the computer into their program. One coach would watch the game and call out the data to another coach who would feed the information into the computer. This way they wouldn't miss any plays.

Another coach would wait in the locker room and as soon as the first half was over the coach in the press box would press the PRINT command and the stats would be fed to the printer in the locker room. As soon as Coach McBride arrived in the locker room he would be handed the printout and he would review it with the defensive team. The program predicted what their opponent would do in each type of play situation.

As we were about to leave the coaching staff offered us free tickets to all Nebraska home football games. Because we would have to drive to Lincoln we thanked them but graciously declined. From their facial expressions I don't think they could believe we didn't accept the tickets. We later discovered tickets were in very high demand as Nebraska tickets at home games were always sold out.

If you followed Nebraska over the Coach Tom Osborne years you would know that very few teams scored many points during the second half. This was largely due to the scouting done during the first half as the defensive knew what their opponent would do in just about every play situation. I might add it was also due to the talent of the Nebraska players.

A few days after we delivered the program we received a pocket*COACH endorsement letter from Coach Osborne along with his picture. A short while later we had a full color brochure for the pocket*COACH Football system including Coach Osborne's endorsement and picture. Using this brochure we sold even more pocket*COACH Football systems all over the country.

I contacted the coaching staffs at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University. KU invited me to attend their practice scrimmage and demonstrate the coach*PLUS Football system in the press box. I sat with John Hadl and demonstrated the program.

John was very impressed with the demonstration and said he would recommend coach*PLUS to the head coach. A few days later John called and told me that unfortunately they could not dedicate three coaches to run the program. Therefore they would not purchase the coach*PLUS.

When I contacted Coach Bill Snyder at KSU and explained coach*PLUS to him he was very gracious and said he felt the program would be very helpful

to their defensive staff but unfortunately he did not have the budget where he could have three coaches dedicated to run the program.

I don't recall the year but when Nebraska played at KU, WIBW-TV sportscaster, Gregg Sharp did a special on how Nebraska used coach*PLUS during the game. He interviewed one of the coaches who ran the system in the press box. The coach explained it was one of the reasons their defense was so effective during the second half. During his special, Gregg also had me demonstrate the pocket*COACH Football system. By the way, KU did not have a good second half and Nebraska won by a large margin. KSU did not do well against Nebraska either.

One year Nebraska was playing in the Orange Bowl. I was watching the pre-game show on TV when Shannan asked me to run to the video store to get a VCR tape that demonstrated a routine she was going to do at school. When I arrived at the store the owner asked if I was Dave Fisher. I said yes and he told me my wife had called at I was to rush home as the Nebraska coaching staff had a problem and needed to talk to me immediately.

I hurried home and Kathy told me she had given the coach Trey's phone number. Just then Trey called and said Coach McBride had called him and explained the problem. Trey said he told Coach McBride what to do and now they were up and running. It is an interesting feeling watching the Orange Bowl knowing that every time you see the press box you know inside are coaches using your scouting system.

One year we had a booth at a Nebraska high school football coach's clinic. The keynote speaker was Coach Osborne. I went into the meeting to listen to him speak. Coach Osborne spent a good part of his talk explaining how they use our coach*PLUS scouting system and how it helped them to predict what their opponent was going to do in game situations.

We continued to sell large numbers of the pocket*COACH Basketball and Football programs for several years. Then one summer we sold systems to high schools and then started getting calls from coaches stating their budget requests had been declined. It turned out this was the year schools were required to also support women's sports. This lowered the schools budgets for men's athletics dramatically and they could no longer afford the pocket*COACH. A few years later we decided to quit marketing the systems.

In addition to the three Fisher V.P.s and pocket*COACH programs we developed pocket computers programs for Universal Life insurance for several insurance companies, the Army's physical fitness program for the Army Reserve, a volleyball program and an Equine Colic program for the

Morris Animal Foundation in Denver. Then the laptop computer became popular and insurance companies developed their own programmers and our pocket computer business began to wind down.

One day I got a telephone call. In the background I could hear some strange beeps. On the other end a caller asked if I was Mr. Fisher. I said yes. I don't remember his name and rank but the caller informed me that he was on a United States Navy Aircraft Carrier. They were having problems with their SHARP Pocket Computer that they used to configure the catapults that launch their aircraft.

They had called SHARP's home office in New Jersey but SHARP didn't know how to fix their problem. The SHARP representative said if anyone could help them it would be Dave Fisher in Topeka, Kansas. I remember getting nervous while asking for an explanation of their problem.

When they told me I immediately knew how to fix the problem and told them what to do. There was a pause and I could hear voices over the phone along with the ship to shore beeps. Then the Naval Officer came back on the phone and said they had done what I had told them to do and the computer was working and their program was up and running. He then said, "Mr. Fisher, your country thanks you!" I had a good feeling when I hung up the phone.

Now, let me go back to my predictions in my ONLINE newsletter. The briefcase computer has already become a reality. In fact they are a major part of the computer market today. They are just called laptop or notebook computers. The Portable CPU has not yet been completely developed but we are getting closer every day. I don't think it will be long until men are carrying their computers in their pocket or on their belt and ladies will have their Portable CPU device in their purse.

One of the closest things to the Portable CPU today is the Apple iPhone which uses batteries, cell phone communication, and Wi-Fi to access almost unlimited information over the Internet. I am currently in the process of designing some apps for the iPhone myself. Someday I think you will be able to plug in a screen and keyboard into an iPhone type device and the Portable CPU will become a reality.

In December of 1980 the software I started designing for my insurance business began the process of developing an information system that you CAN TAKE WITH YOU. Topeka, Kansas, was truly the birthplace of pocket computer software. Portable computers have come a long way since the Tandy/Radio Shack TRS80 PC-1 Pocket Computer. What we will come

up with in the future is unknown but one thing is for sure, you will be able to
TAKE IT WITH YOU!