

UNDER COLOR

Box 6809
Roxbury, Vermont 05669

Dear Friends,

Thank you. Your support has been an encouragement and an inspiration.

Yet, despite all our best efforts, this is it, my friends. UnderColor is the latest casualty among computer magazines. Let me tell you what happened, and what's happening next.

Debra Marshall and I started UnderColor when The Color Computer Magazine died. We thought computer users needed a magazine/newsletter combination that could tighten up the time lag between new information and its publication, so we determined to put out a bi-weekly magazine whose news was gathered just hours before the press rolled. We also wanted a publication that wasn't afraid to discuss difficult issues, so we decided on outspoken news, editorial comment, and articles. Finally, we were committed to an elegant and artful appearance -- believing that the humanities are the crucial balance to cold technology -- so we put layout and photography in the hands of artists.

We pooled our limited resources, sought subscribers and advertisers, and set out to provide quality and timeliness. After a rough start, our first issue appeared December 10, 1984.

But we aren't "professional" publishers, and Modern Times can be tough. Remember Rainbow? ...I mean the FIRST Rainbow, all four dot-matrix pages of it. 12 bucks a year was the asking price -- \$1 an issue. Those were the "good old days". Rainbow soon grew to its full-color, one-pound size because readers and advertisers were scrapping for information and communication, and Rainbow was in there providing it.

A mere three years later, UnderColor was introduced. For less than \$1 an issue we offered not four dot-matrix pages, but 28 pages, typeset and printed, with top Color Computer authors. The articles were important, and you couldn't get information more timely -- UnderColor was even mailed first class! But, as I said, Modern Times are tough. A dozen issues and 100 or so articles later, we have grown to nearly 2,000 subscribers, but have only a few faithful advertisers.

We kept costs very low, running our own subscriber files, borrowing the facilities, equipment, and sometimes the staff of Green Mountain Micro and a cooperative New Hampshire publisher. Each staff member took home a handsome \$61 (yes, sixty-one dollars!) a week for salary and expenses. Our photographer did his very special work merely for the cost of materials. And our incredibly supportive authors accepted no payment for their work. Just as important, our readers regaled us with letters, suggestions, kudos and complaints. It's been a labor of love for all of us.

But we just can't do it. We're done. Each issue costs about \$4,000 to produce, advertising is critical, and we've gone broke. Although we're not skilled businesspeople, we had hoped our seriousness, integrity and quality

would carry forth our message. No deal. Most CoCo suppliers told us, "we'll watch how you do, then maybe consider advertising." Few computer businesspeople are the idealists they were in 1977.

We are thankful for the few who were faithful -- and we ask our UnderColor subscribers to reward those advertisers' good will with your good will: GRAFX, Dynacalc, EDC Industries, Spectrum Projects, and Seibyte Software. When you're done reading this, turn back to their ads in UnderColor and see which of their products you can use. "Tell them UnderColor sent you."

So that's our story. Now what are we going to do about it? First of all, we're not going to vanish from sight. And we're certainly not going to send you some lukewarm dishwasher magazine.

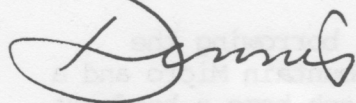
Let me tell you about a generous person by the name of Lonnie Falk. Lonnie, the founder of Rainbow, made me an offer several months ago. He liked UnderColor, but could see from the skimpy advertising that we were struggling. He offered to fulfill UnderColor subscriptions with Rainbow ("I'll probably only gain five new subscribers", he said) if we ever ran out of cash.

Lonnie and I didn't always get along. A series of misunderstandings clouded our relationship until we confronted each other at a Rainbowfest. We cleared away the confusions of the past, and realized that we were each dedicated to Color Computer users in our own way.

So Lonnie's offer was generous. And yes, that means your UnderColor subscription will be fulfilled with Rainbow. If you're already a subscriber, you'll have a few more issues tacked on to the end. Two-year subscribers will eventually be refunded their second year by me. (And if you know anyone who wants all the back issues of UnderColor, we still have plenty. The postpaid cost is \$15 a set, an amount we can use to clear our debts!)

UnderColor will still live in that I and some other UnderColor authors will write for Rainbow (among my articles will be a 64K serial printer buffer!). And you will get your "hot news" directly from me in an envelope whenever there's something important to say. The presence of UnderColor under the covers of Rainbow will be our continuing service to Color Computer readers.

Disappointed? So are we. It's hard to lose something you believe in. Although I will speak to you again from the pages of Rainbow, it won't quite be the same as the closer fellowship of UnderColor. My thanks to all of you for your support and friendship.



Dennis Bathory Kitsz
Publisher