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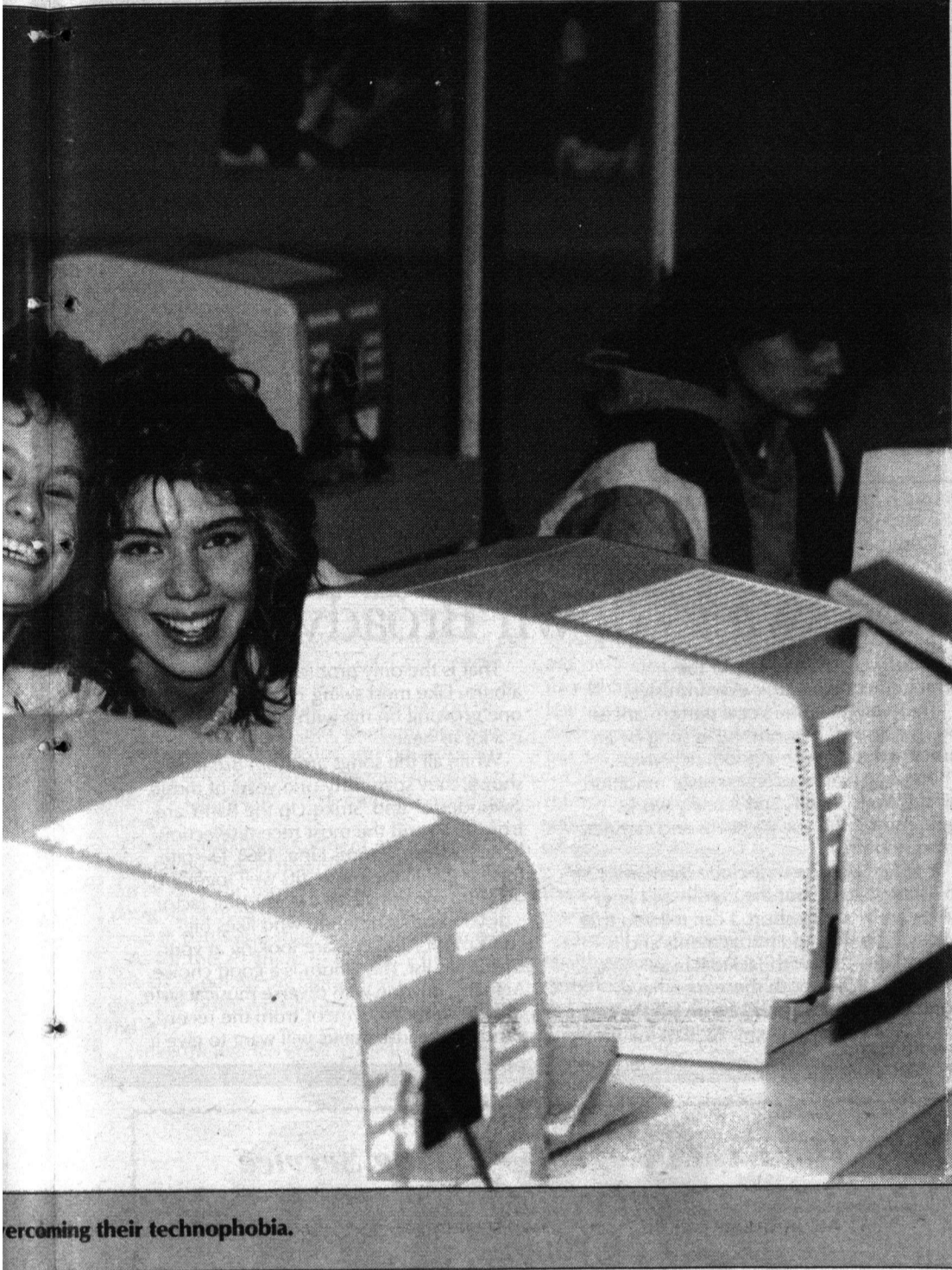

ercoming their technophobia.

asked if "they hate computers." Almost all said they had no plans to take computer courses in the future.

I talked to several of the girls who had raised their hands and they too agreed on their viewpoints. "Computers are frustrating . . . " one girl exclaimed and the others nodded.

They all thought that computers would play increasing roles in their lives, but they thought it would affect the boys more. One girl even stated, "I think the guys take computer science because they think they have more to lose. Since the guy is

supposed to 'bring home the bread' according to tradition, they think they need it so they will not be replaced by a computer."

The girls said they did not consciously think in stereotypes, but "still find themselves surprised when a guy hands in a good essay, or does well in a female dominated subject like english."

Mr. Kisilevich, the teacher of the Computing 30 class said, "Yes, I notice definite greater interest among the boys. The girls are more

interested in obtaining good marks, and boys take the course for the sake of curiosity more often."

Mr. Nishimura, a teacher of grade 7 Computer Literacy, echoed his sentiments. "Boys don't stick to the task as well as girls do — they like to fool around with it. Girls are more diligent." He also states that "girls tend to pick up the analytical aspects of computing more quickly."

He attributes the differences in attitudes to the general learning patterns of boys and girls and not the computers. "Boys tend to act like

peer pressure among the kids themselves.

And is this important? Apparently so. In most companies these days, how far you rise up the ladder is linked to knowledge of computers and management through computers. There is very little that has not been touched by the computer in our world.

By continuing with the established sexual mores pertaining to technology, we are unwitting accomplices to sexism. If we continue to maintain our sexual stereotypes, we are

"That's kind of funny, because if you started a boys only club everyone would start screaming."

know-it-alls, while girls come into it with the attitude that they don't know much."

From talking to the youths, a definite difference in the approach of the two genders becomes obvious. The girls tend to view the computers as tools, while the boys are more competitive and cavalier in their attitudes toward the machines. Boys were curious about what makes the things tick and considered them a challenge, and girls "don't care about what goes on inside. I just want the right answers to come out."

None of the kids had any misconceptions about the importance of computers. Most said they planned to go on to university if they can.

So where does this stereotype and social 'channeling' of the genders so that do 'girl things' and boys do 'boy things' come from? Apparently from our still not-so-liberated society. This is further reinforced by

indeed consigning women to play the inferior role in our society.

Some educators are noting these disparities, and in several places girls-only computer clubs have been formed. One of the students noted, "That's kind of funny, because if you started a boys only club, everyone would start screaming." And he was probably right. Measures like that are pretty half assed, bandaid solutions for a deeper problem. The real solution lies with re-educating the media and the population, starting with your kids . . .

Otherwise we end up in the same situation as we have here in the eighties, with people bickering about female membership to professional clubs. Computers, like most industries, don't have genders, so let's not assign them one. It's up to us as the media, and you as the future educators of our society to prevent this. Food for thought . . .