Have a byte

Digital Deli, by The Lunch Group & Guests, edited by Steve Ditlea; $12.95, Workman Publishing.

This is the latest book on the microcomputer world I've seen so far. This much constitutes like this leavens a bad taste in my mouth, but should be the ticket to getting the attention of the general public.

The holiday season doubtless saw thousands of gift-buyers lined up to buy the book.

Digital Deli is a compendium of short stories, replete with lots of pictures and caricatures. The food theme permeates the book from cover to cover. It is the brain-child of the Lunch Group, where a bunch of journalist buddies meet monthly to discuss trends and unprintable rumors. Converts of their own cleverness, they sold the idea for this book to Workman, and spilled the brew with a few high-recognition authors, including William Buckley Jr. and Timothy Leary.

The name-brand authors are the worst part of the book, as they generally show their ignorance of the microcomputer industry in the most obvious ways. I'd rather read Lindsey van Gelder than Henny Youngman on any subject. On computers, there is no contest.

Deli does manage to catch some of the flavor of the early microcomputer days, where any engineer with a spare garage could start a company. Lee Petenmits writes about the first appliance computer. Don Brinkman writes about quasi-legal disputes in the computer industry and "The Flash" describes the bizarre virus known as the computer show. Deli also has good essays by the computer elite on where the industry will go. Some of the articles have the distinct odor of ground axes but, even so, I enjoyed reading them and professionals writing on their work. The present is not well-represented, but that sort of coverage belongs in the computer magazines.

I found Digital Deli perfect for quick reading snacks, especially for classes to start or red lights to change, but I couldn't sit down and read it cover to cover. I enjoyed it, but it costs $12.95, and that's too much to pay for snack food.

Ken Meltzer

Back in purple

Deep Purple makes a comeback with their new album, Perfect Strangers.

"Deep Purple COMP "Deep Purple" together again" and Ritchie Blackmore (who, together with Roger Glover, went on to form Rainbow after leaving Deep Pur-

Deep Purple, the English hard rock band, has been reunited and rereleased with its latest album Perfect Strangers. As a comeback attempt for the band — which broke up in the mid-'70s — it is a winner, with two hits and a deserved position on the charts. The band's former originality, though, was diluted by the fairly predictable, if nonetheless enjoyable cuts on the album.

The hits are "Perfect Strangers," the title track; and "Kneeling at Your Back Door," a 5:40-paced tune highlighted by some sparkling guitar leads. The other songs have similar, driving drum and bass lines, with Ritchie Blackmore's lead guitar and Ian Gillian's singing.

Other band members are Roger Glover, bassist and producer; Jon Lord, keyboardist; and Ian Paice, drummer. Perfect Strangers results all of Deep Purple in its prime.

The new album reflects their influential breed of rock, which had profound affects on today's heavy metal. Deep Purple's hits have included "Smoke on the Water," "Space Truckin,'" and "Woman From Tokyo." But the vanguard ideas of the early '70s, are now old hat to fans who may have been expecting improvements.

Deep Purple's lyrics have never been exceptional and Perfect Strangers keeps that tradition alive. You can't read multiple meanings into every word; the lyrics stick close to typical rock themes like sex. But this doesn't seem to matter, for the music stands on its own. Even if the album lacks a message, it is above all entertaining and in that sense a winner.

Deep Purple is touring to support Perfect Strangers and should be in the Boston area before March.