DOOR KNOB

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IN THE LAST ISSUE, I mentioned that I was starting work with the City of Santa Rosa and that I would be learning WordPerfect. Some months have passed and I <u>am</u> working for the City of Santa Rosa, in the Traffic Engineering Division of the Public Works Department, and I <u>am</u> learning WordPerfect. In fact, this little publication is being rendered in WordPerfect using a Hewlett Packard LaserJet II printer for the master copy. By the way, this is <u>not</u> reduced type, for a change. It's a font called "Line Printer" which is one of the two fonts provided with the laser printer, the other being Courier 10 pitch in both regular and bold. Line Printer is a 8.5 point type which, according to the test print out the printer provides, is a 16.6 pitch type. Of course, the print specification menu on WordPerfect will not allow one to specify 16.6 pitch, so this is being printed in 17 pitch. This produces a very readable page with more characters per line (84 instead of 65) than the reduced 10 pitch type of previous issues.

Laser printers are somewhat amusing in that they are, actually, the Ultimate Dot Matrix Printer. The images one gets on the hard copy, be they text or graphics, are produced by a dot matrix some 300 dots to the inch. If you were to inspect the hard copy with a printer's magnifier, you'd be able to make out the dots. However, to the naked eye it appears to be "letter quality," and in fact the dots are such that the weird edges endemic to dot matrix type are not in evidence.

Last issue, I referred to WordPerfect as perhaps the ultimate word processing program. This was based on the very brief introduction to it I'd had at the time. Now, three months down the line and with a fair amount of WordPerfect under my belt, I have to agree with my initial impression. It's been pretty easy to pick up and is capable of all sorts of interesting stuff, especially on a laser printer which will support <u>everything</u> it can do. Which is a lot, and I won't get into it here, but suffice it to say here that WordPerfect is my current favorite of the word processing programs I know.

My <u>least</u> favorite is Multimate, which Elinor reports in the July mailing she's using on her new part-time job. Multimate is very easy to learn -- if you can find the F10 key on your keyboard you have 90% of Multimate instantly learned (he said, tongue in cheek, but not very far) -- but it has a lot of annoying features. For instance, if you find that you have to go back and insert something into your existing text, when you press the insert key all the text ahead of the cursor disappears down to the lower corner of the screen (and off of it, if there's very much). This would not be so weird in itself, although it's disconcerting, but on top of that you can't do most other functions when you're in the insert mode. Also, if you make an incorrect combination of keystrokes, you can accidentally wipe out everything to the right of the cursor. Very strange. I wouldn't recommend Multimate to anyone trying to figure out what word processing program to buy.

Wrai writes enthusiastically about his Leading Edge and its built-in word processing program, as do various participants in the Seattle party-shot in this mailing. I used that program on a two-week temporary job I had earlier this year, although on an IBM instead of one of Leading Edge's own computers, and I found it easy to learn, very "user friendly." I've heard mixed reports about the LE computers themselves. Just about everyone who's mentioned them to me says they're good machines to work on, with a good keyboard layout and good response times. However, a number of people have said that their technicians report a somewhat higher than average incidence of breakdowns. Of course, who knows what sort of possible mistreatment those machines may have been subjected to. However, as to the word processing program itself, it has my general recommendation.

Besides the above, I have a week's experience on IBM Displaywriters, an

archaic "dedicated" word processor which I wouldn't recommend to anyone. I also have two days "experience," if you can call it that, using WordStar 2000. This was on a temporary job for the administrative offices of a chain of steak houses. I typed portions of their manager's instruction manual onto disk so they could go back later and do revisions. I learned all manner of uninteresting trivia about the care and feeding of steak houses (such as the fact that employees of steak houses make so little money and are so overworked that the management of steak houses accepts and is even relieved when annual turnover is "only" in the vicinity of 300%; also, how to rotate your salad bar every hour or so to make it look "more interesting" in an effort to increase sales) but I found WordStar 2000 perplexing with that brief an exposure to it. It seemed to me that by and large, WordStar 2000 renames about 85% of the code names of WordStar functions and leaves the rest alone. Annoying, to say the least.

And then, finally, there's Good Ol' WordStar 3.3 itself, the program I originally learned. I recall someone in another apa referring to it fondly, saying something like they "speak WordStar" the same way they speak English. I acknowledge it as my "word processing roots," but wouldn't at all mind never using it again. After learning the above programs, I find it unbearably cumbersome. There's a later version, "Professional 4.0," which transfers most of the control-key activated letter codes to combinations of the function keys with the Alt, Control and Shift keys, but I have no experience with it. Someone told me it's WordStar's attempt to compete with WordPerfect, but I make no judgments.

A couple of years ago, before I got into computers myself, I would have found all of the foregoing probably very tedious and maybe even skipped over it all. I hope this hasn't been too boring for those reading who don't really care about word processing at all, or who use word processing but are perfectly happy with a program other than those surveyed here. I guess the bottom line of it all is that no matter what word processing software you use, the <u>important</u> thing is to be creative and write some words worth processing...

AND NOW FOR SOME MAILING COMMENTS, of sorts...

<u>Dian Crayne</u>: Like you, I've never been to one of my high school reunions, and in fact I purposely "disappeared" from their mailing list back during the '60s because I didn't want to be connected with that scene anymore. At that time in my life, I looked back on high school as a part of my life full of weirdness and random violence, sometimes directed at me. Also, I felt that the few people from high school with whom I wanted contact, I mostly was in contact with through fandom, i.e., Calvin Demmon, Jerry Knight and Arv Underman. Now I'm somewhat curious to find out what may have happened to some of the others I went to high school with, but I suspect that most of them might be the types to have disappeared, also. Well, if I <u>really</u> want to know, I can always write the high school and let them "rediscover" me.

<u>Redd Boggs</u>: Thanks very much for your account of the memorial gathering for Terry. ☺☺ I used to have one of those Sun-Up styli sets that Bjo was selling once upon a time, too, and in addition had a lot of other styli, shading wheels, shading plates, lettering guides, and all the rest of it. In my time, I was an above-average hand stenciller (also hand-masterer in the ditto medium, with lavish use of multiple colors). These days, though, as I've said before and will doubtless say again, if it weren't for photocopying, my fanzine output would be considerably smaller or nonexistent. I enjoyed the days of hand stencilling, but am not sentimental about them. And I think, by way of skills, that it takes just as much talent to do a good job of putting together a fanzine for photocopy reproduction as it does for mimeo or ditto. I've seen plenty of bad examples from those who lack that skill.

<u>Nancy Rapp</u>: That "vile black looking stuff" is called Vegemite and is often available in this country as well. In fact, among some local (Bay Area) fans it has something of a following and there are a few Vegemite T-shirts in evidence from time to time at local fan gatherings. Most of my experience with it dates back to

when I was living with Jeanne Bowman, who used to live in Australia at one time. Her father worked at that time for a large multinational corporation which sent him all sorts of places, including Australia. One time he brought back about half a dozen 16-ounce jars of Vegemite for Jeanne and she gave one to me. A little goes a long way and now, some five or six years later, that jar still lives, mostly full, on a shelf in my refrigerator door where, despite its expiration date of sometime in 1983, it is unchanged, unexpired, and (most of the time) unused. It's definitely an acquired taste.

Harry Warner Jr.: You forgot me as another member of both FAPA and SAPS. ∞ If the Harry Warner Jr. star of which you wrote has a solar system with even one habitable planet, it might be a good place for fans to migrate and set up our own world, especially if fandom keeps growing at the exponential rate it has in recent decades. By the time a means is found to transport humans that far away, fandom might well need its own planet to contain its members.

rich brown: Welcome to SAPS! ∞ I appreciate your kind mention of TRAP DOOR in your comments on the fanzine Hugo. As you probably know, it came in last in the voting. I attribute this to the fact that its circulation is significantly less than that of any of the other contenders. However, considering the votes it got in relation to its circulation, it's noteworthy that nearly one third of its readers gave it a first place vote. Only ANSIBLE equalled or bettered that percentage of first place votes to readership.

Elinor Busby: "I suppose that where rents and property are higher, wages are also higher, but I suspect that food, clothes and electronic goodies cost pretty much the same all over?" It's been my observation that the second part of that is more or less true. However, down here in California the first part of that does not especially apply. In Sonoma County where I live, rents and property are very high, but due to a "convenient fiction" among employers wages are nowhere near as high as they are in San Francisco or down in Silicon Valley. $60K cheap for a house in Seattle? It is here, too. For that kind of money around Sonoma County, one gets either a very small house or a fixer-upper, probably in an "undesirable" area out by the Russian River in the western part of the county. The average price of homes in Glen Ellen, on the other hand, is in excess of $100K. I pay $445 a month rent for a two bedroom apartment in a four-unit building and that's very low for around these parts. ∞ Agree with you about keeping fewer members and not placing a premium on large zines. I do my part. The 200th FAPA mailing came a few months ago, some 700 pages of it, and it has yet to be read other than a quick breeze through for members' page credit (I'm secretary-treasurer) and the mailing comments on my zine in the previous mailing. Fortunately, most FAPA mailings are significantly smaller than that.

Wrai Ballard: Books are definitely something I'd stock up on if I were to win some lottery or sweepstakes money in any large amounts. But a house on a good sized piece of land with lots of rooms, preferably a separate wing, for my children is a top priority with me. Pools and trips would not go unattended, though, either. And I'd still like to do a monthly, or at least frequent, fanzine if I had time and money.

G.M. Carr: What on earth do you mean when you say that the intensive farming in Israel is "disrespectful"? ∞ You say the only jobs government offers are in defense or administration. This will come as a great surprise to postal workers, national park workers, and many others. I don't have room in this issue to address all the ins and outs of your comment to me, and as I indicated in a previous issue it's quite probable that you and I will never agree on political/social matters. The main problem, though, is that you ramble around so much in your response that I would have to do a "Fanzine for G.M. Carr" just to address it all. Not this time around... ∞ Statehood for Cuba? Tee-hee. Would Castro be eligible to run for governor?

HOLIDAY BEST WISHES TO ALL! SEE YOU NEXT YEAR....