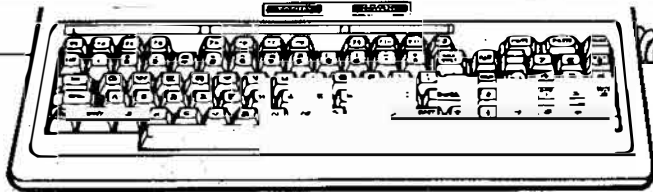
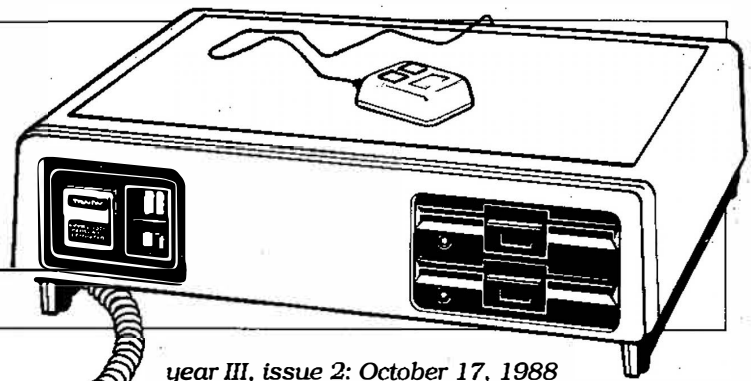


WE'RE GETTING BETTER WITH THE BEST COMPUTER: WE'RE THE BIGGEST ONE-MACHINE USER GROUP IN THE WORLD.

The Tandy 2000 Orphans' WHIMPER



year III, issue 2: October 17, 1988
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David R., coordinator

Milking the Magazines

What does a computer magazine do for you? Foremost, it supplies you with the full-page ads of companies that sell software and hardware at about 65% of list price. Use the magazines for this, but keep them from using you at the same time, making you buy things you don't need. They all run reviews with good detail about specific features, but with overall ratings (bad or good) that seem to be unreliable, either for sale (ad buyers score well) or utterly unrelated to quality and reality.

Next, you want instruction in computing, its main streets and fascinating new alleyways. Here the similarity among computer magazines ends. Two of the magazines care far more about their advertisers than their subscribers (PCResource, PCWorld), and their tables of contents are nothing but lists of thinly disguised ads: "Printers You Should Buy Now," "Spreadsheets You Should Buy Now."

Four other magazines have this kind of article, and you don't get listed in these articles unless you slip people bribes, but they include a healthy dose of how-to-compute articles. PC Magazine, InfoWorld, ComputerShopper and PCM (much the weakest sister) are this sort, a good sort.

The other two are a mix of the two approaches, a touch of how-to but heavily pushing products to buy: Personal Computing and the new kid, PC Computing. PC Computing is so new that all it does is giggle and scream about being a new magazine, but it has a huge publisher and may settle down to a half-and-half approach, selling its advertisers but also giving advice.

A third useful feature of all these magazines is their columnists, of which all have many. Some write for several of the group. They rarely push products, having much editorial control, and divide their time between giving advice (helpful) and whispering hot gossip (fun). None of them know much more than Your Fearless Leader, but we all pretend to know a lot, and in a way we do: Columnists let their noses, their instincts, do the talking, and if you've been in humanity and in computing for a year or two, it's fairly easy to figure out where the big, dumb companies are pointing. You take these solid predictions, say a little birdie snatched, and it makes both good and valuable reading. Columnists are the frosting on every periodical cake.

Info to You from 422

You may wonder why the computer magazines print such huge globs of interesting writing, enough to give you a week's reading in every issue, when all they want is advertising bucks and they hate to pay writers. The reason is (of course) dollars. Magazine subscriptions run \$10 or \$20 a year, but they would be \$50 to \$200 a year (with nobody subscribing) if they had to go first-class mail.

Now, there's a little-known, almost secret rule in the DMM (Domestic Mail Manual), that says you can't use second-class mail (wait-a-month bulk-mail cheapness, one-day letter speed) unless your magazine is at least 25% non-advertising. (section 422.231a) So that puts the computer publishers in a pickle. Each sells up to 600 pages of advertising every month, so they have to buy as much as

200 pages per issue of honest-to-god writing to go with it. Some such pages are not quite honest, as I have suggested, and the "new products" and "short reviews" sections of every magazine are blatant violations of the 25% rule, obviously paid for and forbidden in the terms of section 422.232. I'll print these regs if members ask me to. I don't know why the post office has not caught on, but I'm not about to rat on a custom that satisfies me. It's all information, and useful as long as I distrust the ratings given.

There is another twist to getting the most information and the least thought control from your magazines. You not only seek out the advice articles -- you seek out the advice buried in obvious advertising articles. Here you are, in the midst of a forest of "Twenty Databases You Should Buy Now," and you wander through a passage saying there's a sexy new feature, press ALT-2 and the program prints you a second copy! Wowie! Buy now!

Orphans
387 Main
Westport
CT 06880

return
postage
guaranteed

But if you're alert, you remember that you saw something like that in the back of the manual of the database you intend to keep using. You make a note on the magazine cover, "2-copy p.88," along with those prices you liked that are so hard to look up again. It helps to read with a "permanent commercial-art" marker within reach; it's the only thing that writes on those glossy covers.

Get What You Got, Save 100%

You check out your current hardware and software with the clues you've spotted in your "Buy New Stuff" reading, and you become a more effective user of your old stuff. It's not only as good as the day you bought it; it's better every time you learn a new trick for it.

Magazines are a useful tool for your computing. Drink their nutritious juice, and spit out the pits.

Don't Read This Boasting

Each of us thinks he's a bit better than others think, because what we do well approaches our own ideas of exactly right, but does not fit as well with the other guy's idea of exactly right. Given that caution, I now tell you that the Whimper has gotten better than the rest of the Computer press.

Impossible? Remember that we're talking about your leader's own idea of better, which is the only measuring stick I have. And what, in this limited viewpoint, is so good about the Whimper?

Our articles are not written with the implication that every computer magazine article carries as freight: "You need new hardware/software. What you have is not good enough."

This is nonsense, as all the writers know, but their editors insist on this slant because it draws advertisers like flies. Your Whimper, of course, has the opposite slant, the truth: your present hardware/software is perfect for you. There's no harm in buying some muscle, especially muscles that Tandy is about to discontinue, but our main feeling is that you have a marvelous machine with no need to change it. We don't lie to our readers.

Our staff is so small it can be counted on the index finger of your right hand, so our reviews and comparisons are less thorough than those in major magazines; but what we lack in depth we make up in accuracy: far from the ifs and buts of clone articles, our evaluations go no farther than the Tandy 2000. We give exact keystrokes and exact performance, our machine only. We are more helpful to our readers than the major magazines.

We don't have to worry about offending our advertisers, because there aren't any. We kid around a lot, which has two major benefits unavailable to readers of the majors: dull reading gets exciting enough to coax you through it, so you can get its value. And you get a feeling that you're back with your kind. Remember those Japanese soldiers in island jungles who hid and fought for years after World War II? Some of our new Orphans sound like that in their application letter, delighted that their lonely fight is over. We are fun.

Finally, thanks to a couple of members who said I must be a professional writer, I have been comparing the Whimper's writing quality to the majors. We win. With no exceptions I can think of, their writers are good but not great. They'd get B's in any writing course I taught. We are skillful.

Sure, we charge as much as a major magazine for only six instead of twelve or twenty-two issues, but since every word is about your machine, and only one article in twenty of the rest might apply to the 2000, you'd have to spend \$400 on major magazines to get the support you buy here for \$18. And as for support for the 2000 specifically, we're the only source in the known universe.

So you haven't made a bad choice.

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Nobody Doesn't Like AT

The Whimper keeps congratulating you on watching from a comfortable grandstand while IBM's new and old standard beat each other to death. And before every issue, the war gets bloodier. So the Whimper still congratulates you, for pecking your 2000 keyboard while IBM runs a tiny white flag up to its glorious corporate banner, a white fist with middle finger on high rampant on a field of blue.

The rules of war used to change in every war; now they change in every battle. In the old days when you ran up the white flag, you ran your battle flag down. But IBM, returning to the AT standard it dumped 18 months ago, says its glorious MicroChannel is the only game in town, and that its new AT compatible, the white flag, is only a favor for some boys down the hall who were curious about the old bus. Not to worry, the pinstripes whine, calling people they've snubbed for years to volunteer interviews.

Only trouble with interviewing IBM spokesmen, if you shift in your chair and kick that cord on the floor, it pulls out of the IBM guy's heel and he stops in midsentence. Then a smiling secretary with the placid face of a moron on valium comes in and replugs him, and his sentence continues from mid-syllable.

Things aren't perfect in Compaqland, either. They took the whole 18 months to do the obvious, a 32-line AT to prove that the 32-line PS2 is a scam. Now they've unveiled EISA AT, but it's only vaporware, a promise to do it sometime soon. The computer press knows it deserves to win, if only to get IBM's chokehold off the desktop computer market; but the buying public still thinks IBM can do no wrong. The game is still a tossup, and another year of the 2000 looks more sensible than ever.

I'll hand one thing to IBM: its android males and moron females are loyal to a fault. IBM kept the MicroChannel secret for its two years of development, even though Your Fearless Leader was questioning a moron female from the Armonk presidential suite once a week. IBMers who don't know what's good for them also don't know anything else;

you might as well interview a dish of applesauce.

So Compaq lost its chance to found EISA three years ago because IBM is so good at keeping secrets. Now they're playing a catch-up ball game with a team of wild-eyed individualists, including Tandy that hates everybody and only joined because they hate IBM too.

And the plot thickens: The honcho of M-A-S-H, Hawkeye Pierce, is finally getting the price he wanted and posing with the PS2. The hot rumor is that he's another 2000 orphan, but he hasn't returned the application we sent.

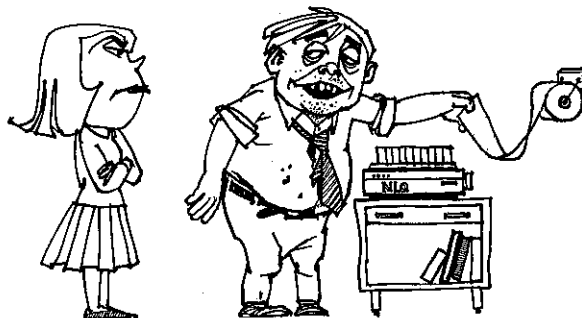
An M-16 for Spearchuckers

We have two kinds of letters about the Orphan printer, the TI 2106: "We want it when we can afford it," and "24-pin does all we need for \$2000 less."

Ten years ago you were typing and hand-calculating the things you compute today. Back then, you would probably have rejected the Tandy 2000 as expensive and unnecessary. The Orphan laser is all of that, with the same secret advantage -- it satisfies needs you didn't know you had.

Your Time is Your Money

You work 2000 hours a year (40 hours for 50 weeks), and spend maybe a tenth of that reading what your 2000 types (some a lot more, some a lot less). You read dot-matrix at 200 words a minute, but laser at 400, because it's contrasty, proportionally spaced (no crowded M's or isolated I's), curvy (dot-matrix favors boxy letters), and distinctive. Laser is loud and clear; dot-matrix is a mumble.



"You want a printout?"

Converted at \$10 an hour (you're worth more), you're throwing away \$1000 a year in extra reading time by not having a laser. What about printing time? Laser printing is often described as slow, but our Orphan laser's 400 crisp characters a second matches the best dot-matrix's "draft" speed, which comes out like the kitchen counter after you buttered the burnt toast. Quality "NLQ" dot printing picks your pocket of another \$500 yearly, at 1/3 the speed, and 1/4 as clear (in/dots per letter). "I think most of us who are loyal to the 2000 are using them at home or in small businesses, and flat can't afford to buy a new printer right away," says TB, adding that he uses a dot for most work, a daisy for quality, and a zerox for quantity. LJS says, "my dot matrix and my daisy wheel printers will be very adequate for quite some time." I can't argue with that approach, guys, as long as you promise that the 2106 is your next printer. "A good NLQ dot-matrix does just fine," writes RDB, in a three-page faded mass of rectangular letters that took me twenty minutes to decipher. When he wants quality for a special job, he buys typesetting at \$10 a page. I have a flash for you, RDB: for the price of 300 typeset pages, you can get those pages and have the best printer on the market as a free gift.

Typesetting, as we pointed out in June, is within the reach of every PostScript printer, which can make type in any size for photoreduction. Any storefront printshop has a plate camera that reduces to 50%, meaning 600 dpi on our Orphan 2106. At that clarity, the laser jaggies are smaller than the texture of offset printing paper -- as good as any typesetting. If you offset-print a report on glossy coated paper, your art for the printer can be four times oversize, giving you 1200dpi with photostats.

Even at 300dpi, people think of laser printing as something expensive you show to someone else; they run 144 fuzzy gray dots per inch from dot matrix for themselves, a mistake. You deserve the best, and are throwing away valuable time by not having it.

We 2000 Orphans spend less cash on equipment than businesses that thrive on all-day computing. "That's why most of us still use 2000s, and what makes us Orphans," says RDB. He's got a point.

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Take a Slice of Apple's Pie

There's something strange in the open market for word processing, that might allow more members to pay for the 2106. For reasons too deep for me, it's easy to find a home business that laserprints from Apple disks, but if you call around the yellow pages with an IBM disk, they tell you no thanks, the job of converting it to Apple is too hard. Take it down the street. And down the street is a storefront that can do the job, but wants two bucks a page for shabby laserwork.

You call around your area, and if the same thing is happening where you are, there's a great hole in the market. Check the phone company for the closing deadline on their next yellow pages. If it's within a month or two, consider buying the 2106 and buying a four-line box in the yellow book, not Nynex but the real phone company book. Mention that you print from "PC disks." Then you have a month or two to teach yourself laser printing the PostScript way. Pass out laserprinted 8-1/2x11 cards from the 2106 telling about your service, to small businesses around the fringes of downtown. Charge half what the storefronts charge, the same as the Apple laserladies, and all the PC guys who have dot printers will be calling you for work. To avoid every job being special, make them up a one-page order form specifying one typeface, one type size, one margin setup. If they want headlines or something else, make it a new job for a new minimum price. I'd do this, but you guys keep me too busy.

\$5000 Saves You 30¢ a Day

Here is a method to calculate exactly how much you need to spend \$5000 on a 386 machine with hard drive and monitor:

Take your work day, just the part of it you spend at the computer. Subtract the time you spend deciding what to do, your typing time, your printing time (OS2 has not yet given the 386 background printing). Then take off the time you use up waiting for disks to be read and written, which you could reduce a lot by doing all work on hard disk, keeping that hard disk neat, and merely saving your work daily on floppies.

What you are left with is processor time, 80186 work, which your 2000 does in absolute silence without changing the screen or making disk noises. Chances are that time is about two minutes a day, although it could be hours if you're in statistics or CAD a lot of the time.

Take that processor time, convert it to time lost in three years (a computer's life expectancy), and multiply it by the hourly pay you think you're worth. If the result is over \$5000, dump your 2000 as soon as you have researched the 386 market and hooked up your new system.

You Can't Buy Peace of Mind, But Five Grand Rents It

Because you're more human than your computer, you get other benefits beyond time saved. First, if you're the edgy type and those half-minute waits for processor time drive you wild, depressing co-workers, customers and yourself, then you can get a big benefit from switching to a 386 -- or training yourself to relax during the pauses.

And if you're a person with low confidence, low self-esteem, you can get a great lift (for a month or two) from having a 386 on your premises where the 2000 used to be. You could get very happy for a short while by switching

computers, or you could get slightly happy for a long while by using this computer quandary to justify risking more confidence in your beating heart, less dependence on the medals pinned on outside of it. The 2000 can do you more good than you thought possible.

There's a lot of talk about gigabyte laserfloppies and multimegamemory, but the closest frontier of computing is the monitor, which until now has been not much sharper than your TV set. There's a company now threatening to produce a full-page monitor (vertical rectangle) with the same resolution as your laser printer, 300x300 over the whole 8-1/2-by-11 screen. That comes out to 2550x3300, embarrassing today's best and insulting the needle-sharp 2000. But it's still vaporware, like dBaseIV, 123#3, the Tandy gigafloppy and the EISA machines promised by the Compaq gang. Therefore I won't tell you the company, and I've lost the article anyway.

Maybe, in a year or two, computers will get to the plateau that cars reached in 1950, where the only reason to buy a new one is advertising that appeals to the human qualities mentioned above. All we need is the promised leaps in monitors and laserdisks, and we don't need the 386/OS2/16megRAM monsters that Big Ed Juge aptly compared to driving to work in an 18-wheel truck.

What's New at HQ

We think of our "power users" on the leading edge of technology as the opposite of members who use DeskMate. Not entirely true. Member TEB reports that he's tracking weather at NASA launching sites with a 2000 Basic program he wrote. And "the only other program I have is Deskmate."

Yes, ABF, I want to offer your Kermit file to members, but I still haven't had time to organize the hundred member-provided disks that have blocked my desk for nearly a year. Even ButtonWare, AutoCAD, PageMaker and Wordstar are still waiting for my reviews of their latest efforts. It's crazy around here.

"As far as I'm concerned," writes not-yet-member Doug Fogg, "the Tandy 2000 is still an excellent computer and can do everything for which I need a computer. While many of the latest and greatest IBM-specific programs may not run, there are many which will accomplish a particular task. In time new computers will emerge, along with new operating systems. When their added benefit to me becomes worth their cost, I will probably buy one. Until then, I'm a happy 2000 user." Is it likely that a major computer magazine will run that refreshingly sensible quote? It's more likely that a Martian will be elected president.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the WHIMPER, 387 Main Street, Westport, CT 06880. The WHIMPER (ISSN 1040-0052) is published every two months by the Tandy 2000 Orphans, address above, for \$18 yearly (includes other member benefits). Second-class postage is paid at Westport, CT.

A nice change of pace: usually a member just runs off with an Orphan disk and uses it, like a tiger at the zoo with his morning steak. This month, for a change, a KM2 wrote back: "I got your load-us.com program for Symphony and it works great -- I can now use this great program without fear of the program disk going bad and leaving me with a bunch of lost data -- THANK YOU!"

"Then Mohammed shall move to the mountain," said the pompous prophet a week after commanding the mountain to move to him. Lucky Mohammed -- chances are he would have had a stroke if the mountain got up and walked over. That gives you some idea how Your Fearless Leader felt recently when the wife, who would rather comb out the kitty litter in a blizzard than press one key on the 2000, suddenly announced that it's time for her to learn computing. Seems she's in the art supply line, and has realized that the days of letraset, drafting and pasteup are numbered.

Your Feckless Leader page 4

If you sent in a cash gift, or an important story, and you find no mention of it in this Whimper, that's because Your Careless Leader lost a whole 4x6 yellow card with notes for this issue on front and back. Please notify HQ of the omission, and it will be covered in the December issue. You don't have to write a new letter; just your name will pull your first letter out of the file.

Thank you for the cash contributions, MSS, DDP, JHB. And thanks also to members who say "keep the change" of a dollar or two, although I don't mention you specifically. We remind you that Orphans has not gotten (and will not get) tax-deductible charity status.

They Re-Enlisted Me

These aren't exactly cash gifts, but BK and JRS just renewed for TWO years. Now if those aren't heavy hints to keep it up, I don't know what heavy is. I wish I were as confident as they seem to be, that Orphans will be here in two years.

The computer magazines to which Your Fearless Leader is addicted have been running drawings of their editors with their columns, so it's time we ran one here. Those of you who design work stations have noticed that I should have a full-sized desk at my left. I do, but there wasn't space for it in the picture. And since that desk is so piled with your letters and unreviewed software that it looks more like an unmade bed, it would have taken an extra twenty minutes to draw. I thought you guys would rather see the Herman Miller chair (the Charles Eames chair is hidden behind the printer) and the double floor stand with the headquarters 2000s, and get twenty extra minutes of Whimper editing. The wife says you guys won't like my left foot, and the adolescent says it looks "exactly, I mean how do you get it so exact?" like Y.F.L.



Not Quite the Oval Office

The Whimper Hamper

Why not put old Whimpers on disk, suggests TEB. That's a perfect suggestion, for two reasons I can think of right away: it enables members to get back issues for a bit less money; and for those looking for info on a certain subject, it enables you to load Whimpers into your favorite word processor and run a search for key words.

Whimper on disk will not be cheap, at \$40, but it could cut the cost of all ten back issues by \$10. It won't be paper, of course, so armchair browsing is out. But research will be easier. You'll make an easy \$40 in benefit from the first item you successfully look up, but you also know a disk is \$1, its box another \$1, and its stamps another \$1, so why the \$40? First, it stays in the ballpark with back issues, which dutifully reflect subscription prices. Second, it's a fundraiser. It cost big bucks (borrowed from DR) to start the Orphans, and right now we have about \$4 in the bank for each of you if we folded our tent today. Since the average member is owed half a year's subscription (\$9), we've got a ways to go before everybody is guaranteed an exact refund on quitting

day. That's why we sell a \$5 item for \$40.

Before the magnificent 2106 came, Your Fearless Leader used to pound out last-day bulletins on the old IBM Composer, which is about to UPS to LAM. If anyone wants me to plow through ten Whimpers, zeroxing all those hand-typed sections, they are available (only) as an add-on to the Whimper Hamper (let's call it the Missing Sock) for \$10. Do you need them? I don't know. We're asking for a volunteer to type them onto a disk (scanner is okay, of course), and after someone does, the topped-off Hamper disk will be available free to owners of the Hamper. Who will volunteer to get a dozen or so pages onto disk?

Dollars and Discrepancies

Just a few reminders about your payments: Renewal is your unreminded responsibility, based on the expiration date on your label on page 1. If an issue comes out between your expiration and your later renewal, you can buy it for \$5 like any back issue. Renewal remains \$18, \$20 Canada-Mexico, \$30 elsewhere. Canadians, stop sending checks and money orders unless they have "dollars (U.S.)" printed before you get the check, and below in small print, the name and address of a United States bank. A few people are joining or renewing with a \$15 payment, six months out of date, and I don't have time to hassle with them; they get a 10-month instead of a full 1-year membership. When your payment for a disk or zerox from the Souvenir Shop is several dollars short, I often shorten your membership for the same reason, no time to exchange letters about it. But please don't do this sort of thing on purpose; it unfairly takes ten or twenty minutes of my time.

Another batch of you is finding out the hard way as I write this: If, at Whimper time, you order from the Souvenir Shop or dash off a query about an error in your membership, our usually casual service is downright cruddy. Orders right after (and from) the Whimper get good service.

We do have a volunteer to index the back issues, RST, and he has our thanks and a stack of those issues. He turned down our offer of

disk Whimpers, but if you change your mind, RST, give HQ a buzz with that phone number we gave you. To you they're free.

We have been asking members to dig up the mods, the real tech bulletins that tell how to modify the bugs in our dear 2000. Now WOT sends us, without any comment that I can find, tech bulletins 1 and 2 (of a series of 42). We NEED those other 40, WOT! Can you get them to us? Please?

The Cowboy Club

We have two offers to catalog all members by latitude and longitude. Orphans is grateful to PDG and KM2 for being willing, and awaits PDG's valuable listing.

Running a list of Orphan towns was revealing in one way. Which community do you think had the most Orphans? New York? LA? The surprising answer is Oklahoma City, with 7. Fort Worth and Houston followed closely with 6 each.

Captain, It Is I

RCP, this is a command from your fearless leader: It's lucky I'm fearless, because I surely have even more faults than you and could be forever apologizing for them in the Whimper. So I now command you to stop apologizing for the frequency and length of your well-written, informative letters. They are fine, and so are you. Remember the last line of the movie, "Mr. Roberts," after that thundering at James Cagney's door: The namby-pamby (until now) Jack Lemmon walks in and barks, "Captain it is I, Ensign Pulver, and I just threw your damn palm tree overboard. Now what's this CRUD about no movie tonight?" Being fearless is like going to the bathroom. It's always an option, until you decide it's about time and do it.

Write Your Own Ticket

We keep getting offers to join our "guru squad," as HJB calls it, and we do have an awesome total of talent among our membership. But no, I'll not coordinate a guru squad because at one a month, we still have only four or five offers, which I have filed away without keeping track of them. HJB's is the latest. Such a group would be "pushing back the envelope" with my constant coordination. This would be too hard for me, given that most of you took months to offer even a tentative raised hand.

Members, you are all on a no-pressure guru squad, go at your own pace, particularly to increase our software base by writing patches to IBM-style programs, or just telling us things we can add to our master software list. We also need routes to the hardware power that has developed in recent years, which the 2000 is beginning to tap. Please start now! The only thing you lack, as a giant guru squad, is my nagging.

HJB puts it well: "Just for learning about MS Word 3.0, my dues are well spent; just for learning about installing larger hard drives, my dues are well spent. We are a self-help organization and that also should be part of our dues. The Whimper is a gold mine, but it can only be kept that way by the efforts of members." Your ignorant leader, who could help you very little by himself, agrees.

Your Mastery Is My Mystery

Members often baffle me with shorthand references to what they think I should know, but LJS finally gave me a smile about it. He says a certain program from PCM can be made 2000 compatible, and he's leaving the changes "as exercises for the reader. Boy, I've wanted to use that phrase ever since high school. I also like 'beyond the scope of this paper' and will try to use it next letter."

Program Problems

Anyone have Lattice-C compiler? Tandy and Lattice refuse to sell the original version that ran on the 2000. If a member has it, please call George at 801-254-6253 about making him a copy of disk and manual. Orphans does not help people copy software that's buyable, but we happily help with deceased programs that the manufacturer won't be nice about, exactly as we help with the 2000.

Who can break the copy protection on PFS Write? EIG has a lady in his house (I guess that makes her an honorary Orphan) who wants to ramdisk it, which makes any program work with bullwhip speed. But she can't copy it to those memory chips pretending to be disk drive E: until she can talk it into leaving home.

Who can tell us of a RAM-resident program that can save a Lumena picture? "Of course, Tandy locked it in to its own equipment," says RFC. We've run this question before, with no answer yet.

MultiPlan 4 won't install for LAM, who has called and written MicroSoft about it. They kept him on expensive hold for ten minutes and then disconnected; they didn't answer his letter which explained about the phone trouble. Has MultiPlan abandoned the 2000?

Does TurboBasic run on the 2000, asks MDL, and if so, how do you make it do so?

Software Support

We have a note from OR that he got a copy of the screen colorizer for the 2000 from EGG. (How? Did you hear about it on a BBS?) We suspected a virus in it, but OR says it works fine for him. The trouble remains a mystery. No, OR, headquarters has not had time to call Fortune Teller's maker for a copy, so I can't send you one to investigate.

We have, in the can, a long review of Symphony 1 (the 2000 version) from PGC, which the Whimper hasn't had room for in four issues it was tried in. Do we need it? Who is making a decision on whether to use Symphony? If even one percent of members writes in a request, we will run the review.

Members have found that the SI (system information) section of Norton dies on the 2000. But TEB reports that his works, by typing SI/D1\MORE and having more.com (from our DOS) on the disk with Norton.

Put the IRS in Your CPU

Programs that do federal income taxes (often state taxes with no extra typing) have been costing about \$1000, and delight the tax pros who can afford them. Recently, their prices have come down far enough to tempt the other professionals among us, for our own taxes. We are being sent review copies of two programs alleged to run well on the 2000, PencilPushers and FrankCrosse. We will try for a review in the December issue. We also were tipped about EZTaxPrep, but its 1988 edition (tax programs get yearly updates) will not run on the 2000. It is moving to a later edition of 123, on which it depends, and will crash if we use the 2000's Lotus, version 1. Thanks, GDB, for the tip on PP, but I won't cooperate with your proposal that you and Orphans get commissions from members buying it.

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Get a Date With a Debutante

Here's a tip for many nice programs that refuse to load on the 2000: They might run! The trick is to load it on a clone (don't start liking it), and bring up the installation routine. Quite possibly, it will give you the chance to select non-graphics mode, or even a 2000 screen driver that GFG amazingly found in DesignCAD. It runs on his 2000 now, no problem, our mouse included. It's super, he says, and its \$300 price is shockingly different from AutoCad's \$2600.

Another trick is to search the manual for the non-IBM loading command. Instead of typing SUPERDO, for example, you might break through to that working screen by typing SUPERDO/MONGREL. This approach works with Foxbase III+, RDB reports, but beware: although it works fine for him under our DOS .02, he says it may trash records (it's a database) when run under DOS .03.

Our Basic refuses to give EIG the white background he likes for typing his programs. Whether he calls for COLOR 7, or even 15, 23 or 31, he keeps getting a depressing dark gray background. But he's discovered that if he types COLOR 31,7 he gets his white paper background (light gray in a color setup).

A screenful of garbage bothered LER when booting up his newly installed DOS .03 with Basic. Checking files, he found that his use of diskcopy with files he needed from the old .02 disk had put the old CGDMP, DUMPCGP and DUMPBW on his new disk, where they conflicted with the new GRAPHICS.COM. He erased these, and took mention of them out of his config.sys file. Result: no more garbage.

Someone last time asked about a cheap (under \$200) word processor that has a good spelling checker. VEdit Plus and VSpell, says PAE, who praises VEdit frequently in letters to HQ. I suspect he may be behind the mysterious shipment of VEdit to HQ a year ago, which I have not had time to review. I wrote VEdit asking what gives, but they didn't reply. My major question: What can VEdit do for me that Word, Framework, WordStar and WordPerfect aren't already doing? Not you, PAE, your answers are always above my level. Someone else, what can VEdit do for us?

WordImperfect 5

Printing trouble in WordPerfect 5 keeps right on happening after you find the correct commands, because of a strange habit of WP5. The silly program does not discard your previous attempts to print, keeping them first in line. "All those documents going to LPT1 stay right in the queue," reports KH, back from a summer in Montana with her portable PC. "They clog up the works and prevent a correct printer command from getting through." Wipe out the mis-addressed jobs and start the print jobs fresh.

You don't get Tandy printer drivers in WP5, she also reveals, nor does Tandy offer them, but a call or letter to WP gets you the elusive drivers in a free seventh printer disk: 2100, 2110, 430 and IIB.

Does WP5 even run on our machine? HQ has no copy yet, but the rumor is yes. HJB's local PC user group had a WP sales exec as guest, who "was quite explicit in stating that 5.0 would not run on the 2000."

We get that a lot from software execs: having dealt with Tandy and learned to hate them, they figure they're punishing Tandy by spreading unresearched anti-Tandy guesses.

WordPerfect Library -- does it run? No, say many members, but HJB says yes. How did you do it, HJB, or does it just run right out of the box? Maybe their latest version is rewritten to be less machine-specific.

WP5 runs for SEB, but his double-floppy is awkward when he wants a speller and thesaurus working at the same time. PRN (instead of LPT1) works fine for SEB.

Trying to come out of WP5 to DOS, using VM1 with graphics card, SEB gets a crash of "unreadable graphics mode," and has to reboot. Who can help him?

DeskMaster

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DeskMate, the old version that runs on the 2000, is not a big favorite among those who have it, but EIG has a trick you may enjoy. "Since each of the TW*.EXE files is called by the DeskMate shell, it is possible simply to rename your preferred software, its .EXE or .COM file with a TW prefix and .EXE suffix, and then use the DeskMate shell to call them. They will have to exit when you go back into DeskMate (unlike Windows)." Using a RAMdisk at the same time makes the switching ultra-fast, EIG adds; this great speed is obtainable, in or out of DeskMate, from any program loaded into RAMdisk before it is called.

A RAMdisk is a row or two of black memory chips in the 2000 that pretends, helped by tricks that jump off the DOS disk during bootup, to be a disk drive. Programs then "go to disk" without the usual buzzing A: or chirping C:, and with fantastic speed. Your computing is suddenly lightning-fast.

If the minor parts of a major program are left off the RAMdisk, and the system's startup PATH command carries a trail to them, even a large program will run out of the RAMdisk.

Congratulations, EIG, for giving humble little DeskMate full membership among shells. A shell is a pretty screen on which you can call up any of your software, use it, and drop back to the point-and-run screen.

Daddy's Unlocked Back Door

The Tandy 1989 catalog, although it officially ignores the 2000, has a separate index of software it calls "MS-DOS." Since its 1000, 3000, 4000 and 5000 use PC-DOS (IBM-compatible) software, the MS-DOS list can only refer to our dear machine, and a check of its items shows it to be a what's-still-on-the-shelf gallery of software formerly listed as for the 2000.

There's a bug in our DOS, which no one has mentioned, that bites me occasionally. When you erase *USA.DOC, for instance, DOS obediently erases everything that ends with those six letters. But if you try to erase *USA*.DOC, you're in for a dreadful surprise. DOS gets nasty about too many *s, and erases every .DOC file on your disk. Take it easy with *s, and whenever you use even one *, run a directory right afterward to check. And like seat belts, it's better to have Norton on your shelf before disaster strikes. Norton has

bailed me out of a lot of my own mistakes, and that mistake by DOS.

Okay, so you ordered a hundred disks, and you have suddenly realized that, although formatting or compduplicing them all at once is the only sensible approach, you're in for an awful grind. Well, you can ease up on part of it by typing YY. After you stick the next disk in, you have to answer "shall we dance around the floor again?" You tap Y and the dumb machine asks you to reassure it by typing "any key." Well, Y is any key, so you can save five seconds per rotation by typing YY when asked for Y.

MouseTrap should have the often-used ENTER button on the left button of the mouse, so your agile index finger can work it. JB2 rightly adds that this switch is easily accomplished in your autoexec.bat, following the MouseTrap directions.

You Can Do Windows

It is apparent that Microsoft Windows 1, the only version which runs (with our Tandy patch disk) on the 2000, is extinct, and Microsoft, which shares IBM's and Tandy's go-to-hell attitude toward customers, refuses to help. Therefore, all members who now own Windows 1 (and will disk, box, stamp and mail it for \$5) please drop a note to headquarters, and all members who want it, you write also. I will keep the notes in a shoebox on the headquarters desk, and send out names to both givers and receivers.

Future Shock

If you want to check some traded or borrowed or downloaded amateur software for viruses, one handy way (on a bare double-floppy that a virus can't destroy) is to reset the system date, typing DATE and then naming a day in 1998. Then turn on the suspected program and watch for trouble. You might use it in B: with a sacrificial DOS copy in A:. When you then run a few DOS commands, the bug may show up.

Machine Mysteries

"Does the 512K memory expansion instruction really work, or is it better to utilize an Envision enhancement? Is that a loaded question?" No, LJS, it's not loaded because I don't have any deal with Envision. But I do like their work, and my personal choice was to buy their 640K (in both versions, 640 for the rear of one machine and 896 downstairs in another 2000). But I presume the 512 enhancement works, and I would like members to tell me, if they've tried it, what results they got. With my Orphan duties I have no time for benchwork, or I would have tried it myself.

Windows crashes on RPN's double-floppy, although it runs on his HD. Why? My guess, since I've run Windows on both setups, is that you didn't go through all the installation steps on the double-floppy, trying to run something you copied from your hard disk. But you're not missing anything, Windows, if you use it as a midstream job-switcher instead of just a pretty DOS shell, is frustratingly slow on floppies.

A couple of members were threatening to manufacture an external card cage, for those members (RDB for instance) who have had to leave out their mouse or graphics because of crowding. Where are you guys when we need you? You get free advertising in the Whimper, but you have to do the work!

Another solution to the crowding is to mothball your mouse and install a no-slot clock. The rom-chip piggyback clocks don't fit our motherboard, however. Who has tried one of the clocks that plug into the data line of a floppy? Does it do the job?

Does your B drive sometimes refuse to read until you ask it a dozen times? Does it behave perfectly on the repairman's bench? Tandy says, snigger, that CDT is the only person who ever had that problem. Could it be a tight fit inside the cover, binding the mechanism inside? Tandy's oriental and hispanic suppliers are not always accurate with their hole-drilling, as anybody who has mounted a 2000 floor stand can testify.

Hardware Help

We have more information on video RAM addresses in the 2000, from BJK, including their attributes (blinking, reverse, etc.). But this address thing is taking too much Whimper space for a dozen members who are interested. I'll put BJK's letter in the Souvenir Shop for a buck.

How would you like your daisy wheel to perfectly justify proportional type, make all foreign marks, and have "cursive capability" (what's that??) If so, PAE offers his formatter program, presumably free. Ask for Paul at 602-837-8872.

There is confusion about installing an 8087: the installation manual tells you to go out and buy (presumably different) covers for your power supply and motherboard. I did so, and the stuff coming through was identical. My trustworthy (gag, choke) store and repair center said the "different" covers are mythical, same parts exactly as the original. If any of you math-chip cowboys know different, please write details to headquarters, and I'll boot some butt.

A Little Laser Logbook

The current plan at Whimper is to insert a TI flyer on the 2106 into this issue. If you found it, we did it. It is an especially fine piece of work, heavy on facts and light on boasting. Put it in your hope file, and never buy another printer unless you buy this one.

Texas Instruments did NOT pay the Whimper to enclose this fact sheet, and was very reluctant to cough up a thousand copies. TI knows absolutely nothing about promotion, and has bad manners besides. But their 2106 is numero uno in a field that has no dos or tres.

When you buy, shop the street. But Leslie at 800-221-1127 ex223, is still stocking the 2106 for \$2990 plus UPS, and no tax unless you ship to a state bordering Delaware or Connecticut.

Your oversize address labels on the August issue were PostScript 18-point Bookman print samples from the headquarters 2106 laser, moved through DBXL and MSWord 3.1. The labels from April and June were also 2106, imitating an Epson 80.

Even the King Has Kinks

When a laser (or zerox) heats up the clinging black powder to stick it on the paper permanently, it uses either a hot roller (see August Whimper) or a heat lamp, RDB points out. The lamp method leaves more of a raised puddle, glossier, with sharper resolution (and therefore more of the jaggies). The roller method hides print jaggies among the paper-texture hilltops.

Either method, however, exposes more jaggies when your paper is smoother. A glossy coated-paper stock makes the slash in 1/4 look like a microscopic 39-step stairway for germs. Ordinary zerox paper, five clams a ream, does the best job. Ordinary offset-printing vellum hides jaggies even better, but it has a trace of fading in spots. Beautifully textured bond paper, as we said in August, loses blacks to ugly gray clouds about as big as a short word.

The 2106 has personality. Its velvet blacks will get some gray splotches, even on smooth paper, when it's hot or humid or both. The way to cope is to leave at least five inches in the rear for fan outflow, and on the left side for inflow. In heavy summer weather, turn the 2106 on just before the job to avoid hot idle time. Next, a steady run keeps temperature a bit lower in the box. Don't cool the box with the top lifted, because the photosensitive roller is visible in there and bright light shortens its life.

Nobody Licks 2106

Toner is costing us 1.3¢ a sheet, not a big deal with good paper costing 1.6¢, but it could drop way down when I locate a source of bulk toner, because the cartridges refill easily. Who can find us a seller of bulk toner, and is all toner alike or do we believe the Ricoh allegation that theirs is "special"? They flatly refuse to sell it in bulk.

The 2106 also uses a \$100 (list) bin to capture leftover toner dust, but when the first one comes out of the headquarters machine, chances are I will find a way to recycle it forever, saving us another 2¢ a page. The only cost we'll have to stick with will be 1¢ paper and 2¢ a page for the photo-plus-cleaning unit (\$200, 10,000 pages). That 2¢ would drop to 1¢ if we could buy the photoroller separately (another thing Ricoh refuses to do so far).

The October 31 PC Magazine squawks that laser printing has a "hidden" cost of 7¢ a page, as does one PCMag-reading member writing in to knock the 2106. But if we buy just what we need, a photoroller every 10,000 pages plus bulk toner, the "hidden" printing cost drops to 1.2¢ a page, plus a penny in paper cost that even PCMag admits all the printers have.

I just ordered a Whimper review copy of a disk called Trading Post, a PostScript printer driver for DOS and any other program you're using. If it runs, we're on the way to being the first only-PostScript computer, a goal announced a year ago in the Whimper. Watch our dust, Steve Jobs. Of course our support and intentions can't force you all to abandon your dot boxes, but we can at least point totally in the PostScript direction.

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A Message for Your Mouse

I keep asking you guys to try mice and report in, and year after year, no one does. RPN says he will do some digging for the mouse cause. Let's hope he does. Finally, as an aside in conversation, hardware guru Bob Spencer said he and his dad of the same name have adapted the Atari 2600 trackball (no longer sold) to our mouse port, and it imitates our Digi-Mouse well. He says any bus mouse will run on the 2000, without saying whether a rewired plug is required, provided you have the mouse board and software.

The mouse and board are not a lot of use to people until they put the Tandy clock-and-mouse disk into their booting routine. For those of you who picked up a second-hand mouseboard like SEB, I'll dupe that disk. Stored in your

SPEED! NOW! Right Greatest
MORE! QUICK! NOW! RIGHT! SPECIAL
MORE! NOW! BEST! NEW! BETTER! GET! ASTOUNDING! EASY! FINALLY! YES!
BELIEVE IT! IMPROVED! LAST! SMART! GOOD!

ADDITIONS TO AUGUST SOFTWARE LIST:
Aztec C-Compiler+Utilities, Manx
CED DOS Editor+Compiler, freeware
D-86 debugger, see A-86 in list
Flight Simulator, 2000 version
Foxbase III+
Infocom, all their text games
Kermit Communications, shareware
Peachtree Accounting
SPF/PC, by Command Technology
Turbo Pascal 2,3 and 4; Borland

config.sys and autoexec.bat, it installs the mouse and gets a time and date, every time you boot up. When you want to change the time or date, it does it for you. Aside from the mouse in MS Word, the major help for me is not having to answer those two idiot questions about time and date.

You Mean a Lumena Did This?

Silly headquarters, we sold our CGP-220 to HWK, who has a fleet of them, and now we find out that HWK is using the CGP to make giant graphics. He sends a small sample (nothing surprising, looks like an expert doodling in Lumena), and photos of a large office decorated with six abstract "paintings" roughly 3 feet by 4. I don't know abstract, but the wife got a master's degree from Yale in abstract, and she says it's interesting work (a major compliment in her terms). HWK says he does them with his CGPs, and welcomes inquiries from members eager to pick his brain or share other secrets of printing big color on the little CGP. Call 904-392-0205 and ask for Harold.

Groping for the Grail

We keep getting reports that this-or-that port of the 2000 is "CB8A, I wish I knew the IBM number." And we get letters giving the IBM-style ports, wondering what the equivalent 2000 port is.

Programmers, RCP has kindly sent in a zeroxed chapter of a book on the IBM family guts, entitled "Accessing Hardware Ports." Those of you who want this information for your compatibility research, check the Souvenir Shop. It's thirty pages and few copies will sell, so even with tight compressing (a bother), I will have to charge \$10 for a copy.

I know, as Klink in "Hogan's Heroes" used to say, NOTHING. RDB, however, not only knows something but is doing something about it. He promises soon to finish a video driver that will display IBM-style 640x200 programs in monochrome (even the color ones). Orphans will test it and gladly market it or send you to RDB, as he prefers. He is also working toward a Hercules port for us, 720x348 pixels. It would fit the 2000 screen by losing 40 pixels beyond our left and right edges, and leaving 26 pixels of black space top and bottom. More news on this development when RDB gets it done.

RCP has "gotten around screen access problems in one program by substituting the memory address of the screen which I got from the Doug Fogg article (Klok2K) which I sent to you earlier." But RCP doubts that a general converter disk can be made (The Holy Grail as we define it).

Doug Fogg, a sharp man with pen and program, says "Yes, it is possible to create a program which would allow our beloved Tandy 2000 to execute programs written for IBM compatibles." But it won't be done, he says, for three heavy reasons. First, the complexity of the task prevents any of us from doing it in spare time: it would have to be a full-time job. Second, it won't be a full-time job because the 2000 market is too small to pay for the work. [It would pay, if Big Ed Juge would cough up his 2000 list of 40,000 names, but he won't.]

The third reason is even more discouraging. To run IBM-style programs, our interpreter disk "would have analyze each machine instruction being issued by the program being run," and alter them when necessary (especially video and communications). This process would be "agonizingly slow," especially in graphics. Fogg uses an IBM-to-Mac converter, SoftPC, on which Flight Simulator "is no longer a reasonable simulation of flight." It's like waiting for your coffee to stir itself when you left the spoon in the other room. True, letter-and-number screens will generate quickly, but the programs running behind them will still convert slowly, giving us long waits instead of the short waits we are used to: searches in word processing, recalcs in spreadsheets, index work in databases.

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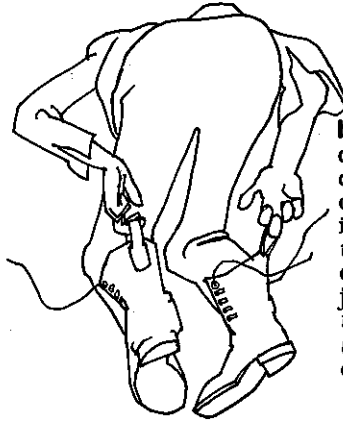
The Agony of Victory

What Fogg seems to overlook is that a converter program doesn't have to run at the same time as the program it converts. The Grail disk can, with "agonizing slowness," convert every machinery instruction in an IBM program to a 2000 call, and then write them all as a new program, a new disk, which runs as well as the original, but with the 2000's quickness. I tried it with AutoCAD, but ran out of time and expertise. WordStar 3 and dBIII, for instance, were ported to the 2000 with months of programmer time, all of it changing disk A into a disk B with about 10% of its information changed. Once a generic IBM/2000 converter program were written, you could convert WS3 and dBIII in a few minutes or even hours of unassisted, "agonizingly slow" disk action. Reducing months of human effort to minutes of electricity is what computers do best.

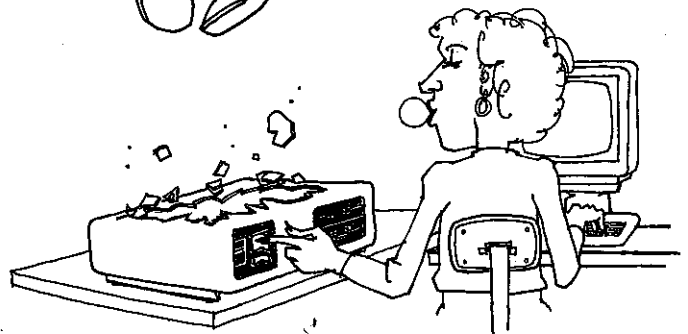
"On the bright side," Fogg continues, the 2000 has "plenty of excellent software," and software companies increasingly write "machine-independently. DBXL runs very well, while dBIII+ (which it clones) fails miserably. WordStar 4 runs nearly perfectly." (WordStar 5, in early headquarters tests, runs as well as 4. dBXL has begun to show problems in its second version, see review this issue.)

The many-temperature boot featured in August, the warm boot, eskimo boot and so on, gets this response from PAE: When your machine crashes and you turn it off, it takes the little charges in each smidgin of memory (the 1's: the 0's have no charge) a few minutes to seep away into the atmosphere. Presumably, the warm ctrl-alt-del boot works on a humid day, but the same charges require a long-wait eskimo boot in different air. If you re-boot too soon, the same 1's that popped your cork will bubble out again, re-crashing you.

He says "boot" comes not from soccer but from "pulling yourself up by your bootstraps," the way a computer keeps a few start-up instructions in a permanent ROM chip, so it can start itself by itself when you turn it on. Sounds right to me.



boot (BOOT), v.t. 1. to turn on a computer which begins operating under the control of permanent instructions in read-only memory (ROM). v.t. 2. to start or commence operation, as a computer just turned on. [bootstrap², to pull oneself up by one's (own) bootstraps, to help oneself by one's own efforts.]



Have you ever watched your long autoexec.bat rolling up the screen, wishing you could stop the stuff you don't need? You can. Hit control-C and whatever instruction is being done will be killed. "Finish batch job?" your stunned computer asks, and you can (if you want) hit N and get right down to serious computing. Revising that obsolete autoexec.bat might be your first serious task.

Tweaking the Twin 20

We have been complaining that the delightful Bernoulli twin-20 runs only 10 megs of each \$60 cartridge on the 2000. True, development honcho Rick Johnson says, but with the nagging of a couple of Orphans, he has put the problem on the back burner of one of his staffers, and that staffer has "mostly" completed the project. It's a software change only, and the new driver disk will be donated to the Orphans. We're not paying them, Johnson points out, so it will come only when it comes. Their motive: increase sales among the Orphans of the Iomega drives. Fair enough, it's a great drive and a great way to flip-flop the megabytes. For those lacking a cartridge controller, we have asked a hardware guy to make some for us, but he's not answering his mail. It would help if any members eager to buy one (figure \$100) would write in; I could then zerox your letters for him and lure him out of his burrow. In return for your written cooperation, I'll try to get a reduced price for (only) the guys who write in now.

When you buy your Bernoulli external twin-20, buy yourself a T-10 torx driver (or the full 8-piece set in folding jackknife form) so you can take off the cover and throw the one switch we described in our review last February. Then your snap-in-snap-out multi-megabytes can run from the 2000, as this sentence is doing right now.

Collect Your Nickel Deposit

When you guys unload your 2000s, not for a long time I hope, you will be basically giving them away. We will move them, at low prices through the Flee Market, to the more enduring members. If you are not tempted by the price and find the Orphans deserving, donate them and we'll move them through the Souvenir Shop. We can't offer you income tax help, because we have no charity status with IRS. Although non-profit, we cannot meet their requirements of incorporation, board of directors, annual reports, industrial-strength accounting, office and staff, and all that other garbage that insures that "true" charities spend a lot more on themselves than on the crowd they're allegedly helping.

We keep receiving flashes and bulletins about members and even Shacks that are unloading 2000s for "only" \$1000 including monitor and software. Horse plop. Anyone trying to sell a system for more than three digits is hereby ordered to lose hope; your offers go straight to the floor-mounted cylindrical file. The Whimper is not going to support greed. This applies to the several members who have sent in four-digit prices for the Flee Market: your ads aren't running.

A couple of members are trying to get around the flea-market high-price ban by offering swaps: my Word and 123 for your Framework and AutoCAD, that sort of nonsense. How much space do you think the Whimper has? Cash only, guys, and not much cash or your ads won't run.

Get used to the idea: When you buy, use and sell a computer, it's just like spending a week in the Indies: you've got nothing of value when you finish, but it was a hell of a good ride.

How Risky is Your Diskie?

It's great when your leader makes ignorant, unsupported statements in the Whimper, because it gets those who know over to their printers writing headquarters faster than any general request could.

FBS has no problem with the hub-ring DSDD Kodaks. But your leader continues to fear any hub-ring disk, for fear it will refuse to go when a huge vital file lives or dies with that disk. "Are you shooting yourself in the foot?" asks KM2. He gets one failure per hundred with 29¢ DSDDs, and that's good enough for him. An unanswered question: does that one failure come when he's formatting, raising his price to 29.3¢? Or does it come at the end of an all-night panic session for a million-dollar deal, raising the cost to \$10,101 per disk? Those who have been through it, tell the Whimper.

"Work great!" GDB exclaims, on an ad for 25¢ DSDDs by MEI Micro, 800-634-3478. They'll go to 21¢ on quantities of 1000. I got the same ad, GDB, but they have a picture of a hub ring on them and that freaked me out. Members who have sent disks to HQ with hub rings, the reason you didn't get thanked in the Whimper is that your disks didn't read. The headquarters 2000 is choosy. I also have MEI information noted as coming from PDG, so headquarters may be confusing the initials. Sorry.

Sure, the no-hub quad works fine, but the no-hub high-density disk, the one for the AT, "works fine," reports JHB. He fired a proof-of-purchase boxtop to headquarters, which identifies his favorite as Precision, 2S-HC, double-side, high-density, soft-sector, 96tpi, their reorder number 814232. Some very cheap high-density disks are out there, so they could be a good choice.

No problem with generic DS/DDs, says TB, who pays about 50¢ a disk. "About 3 out of 25 are flakey, but they work." How do you know they're flakey if they're working, and what's flakey? "I hit them with a bulk tape eraser to really scramble them before I try to format them. Seems to work." Works for the flakey ones, or for all of them? Please be a bit clearer about what you mean, TB.

"I was surprised to find that HD disks don't work. I've used a box of ten without any problem so far," reports DFW. "Memorex 3202-5606, no hub rings. Maxell HD seems to work too."

"Yes, I've had trouble with hub rings too," he adds.

We hear about magnetism, but can radio-frequency waves blast a disk? WMO, who works in a nest of techies, sent his 123 disk to HQ wrapped in aluminum foil, plus the usual box. Is his precaution useful? advisable? Anybody can answer that one, including WMO.

Disks don't like magnetism, you know, but do you know you have magnets lying around on your desk? Your phone, for instance, can destroy a 120-page book stored in a floppy, if it rings while the disk is in back of it. A cassette player or an electric pencil eraser carries a similar danger, although their motors are smaller. Even a computer printer is a threat. For sheer disaster, however, you'll have to set a disk file with your most important stuff on or against an electric appliance you're fiddling with. A vacuum, refrigerator, drill, saw, washer or dryer -- if the disks happen to be near the round black motor itself, you start your computing career all over again from zero.

We told you last time to rush out and buy the 2000 service manual, and with admirable consistency we did. The bad news is that if you have a 26-5404 Tech Ref manual for the 2000, the service manual is just an enlarged duplicate of it. The good news is that if you neglected to get the tech manual before it became extinct, you can get it as the service manual, big-page format for \$35 instead of \$20.

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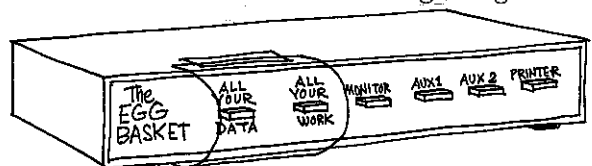
Meanwhile, Back at Shack

After all the times we have told you to stay out of Tandy stores, your leader wandered into one looking for banana plugs, which when soldered into one wire of an ordinary extension cord, fit the "10-amp" sockets of a multi-meter. It reads out the amps that any plug-in device is using. This yielded 119 watts for a double-floppy (124 watts while reading a floppy drive), 25 watts for a VM1 monitor, 29 watts for the headquarters twin-20 Iomega cartridge drive, and only 42 watts for the 2106 printer (jumping to 600 watts for the 40-second printer warmup and a one-second blast every 15 seconds). Shack also sold me a pair of banana sockets, which I'll epoxy together and use to connect the two bananas except during tests. Otherwise, an unsuspecting person could plug in the cord and grab a loose banana in each hand, instantly frying. Somebody should market a one-foot extension with wattmeter (scaled for 120 volts) built in. It would retail for \$15.

Now for the embarrassing part: Shacks are careful to pile all the expensive stuff in front, so you have to wiggle around it to get to the knick-knack rack. I was so tempted by an \$80 multi-switch that I bought one (with private cash) for the Orphan computer. At Shack! Egad. Please forgive me; the price was \$40 less than the Egghead next door and all my catalogs, and the headquarters desk wiring was starting to look like one of those "this causes fires" posters.

Master Switch Disaster Glitch

Beware! Don't start computing with one of those flat boxes with six push-switches on the front, until you correct its major design flaw. Take knife and scissors and slice a transparent collar out of flexible plastic, such as a pint soda bottle's middle three inches; cut away half of that cylinder, leaving what looks like a welding mask for a squirrel. Tip it sideways and Moore-tape it above the "master" and "computer" switches. Slide the other straight edge under the



switch box, and you're no longer able to destroy a day's work by pushing your chair away from your desk. I discovered this the hard way, but it only destroyed one minute's work. I'm glad the phone rang so soon after my first multi-switch bootup.

Note that some Tandy computer centers still have odds and ends for the 2000 kicking around in back. Those that do have been pressuring Fort Worth to mention them "as is where is" in a regular sale flyer, and Fort Worth just did so. It pays to hang around for a free salesman and ask him to get his hands dusty for you. Dustbin prices are insultingly low.

A year ago we drew a pretty picture of the hard-drive compartment of the 2000, with a drive that had its round part to the front of the computer. That was backwards, we redly admit. No members pointed this out, so some of you didn't notice and some of you are too kind. You flunked the member-participation test: the Whimper makes outrageous statements so you will send in the straight poop, so put your disagreements in writing.

If you find yourself taking out the 2000 card cage, a metal frame like a bureau with its four drawers removed, you will have to go underneath and unscrew two tiny phillips screws in the motherboard cover, using an eyeglass-size screwdriver so you won't strip the threads. It ties the motherboard firmly to the connectors for its children, the slide-in boards. Cage removal is a helpful step when you're moving hard drives in and out, giving you useful space for your fingers.

You will find on this page a panel showing miscellaneous parts you need in addition to a hard drive itself. There are

lots of twists in the picture captions, but some additional hints are: try the fit of the bracket without any hard drive; turn the computer over to check the fit of the little tongues in the slots; you'll have to do a lot of wiggling to get any new hard drive in, because if you follow those straight dotted lines of an exploded parts diagram, moving a bulky drive straight down into the pocket, it won't fit!

Finally, there are some maneuvers with screws. To keep them out of the silly motherboard, whither they instantly bounce when you slip, use a spring-loaded split-tip screwdriver on any phillips screws — it looks like a V looking down at an upside-down V in a horizontal mirror, until you slide the collar and pinch it together into an X. You slip it into the screw and slide the collar away, and the screw sticks to the tip. To make a straight-slot screw stick, wrap a rectangle of double-face tape around the end of the standard screwdriver. When a screw is going to hold a ground-wire terminal as well as the drive and card cage, the ground wire is a handy tool for lowering the screw to its hole. If, after all this, a screw rolls into the motherboard, don't oh please don't go after it with a magnet. If you're a guy, hold the computer upside down (no hard drive) and shake it. If that doesn't work, dismount the motherboard, gently hinge it forward on its wires, and grab the screw.

Defragment Thyself

The magazines are full of articles on keeping your disks neat, files in one piece instead of the 32 pieces I recently found in your database.

Being basically skills for the companies buying ads, they urge you to buy a housemaid for your disks, to "de-fragment"

them every week or so. Occasionally you see an article about doing your own disk cleanups, but its techniques are weak and the hidden message is still, go buy a product.

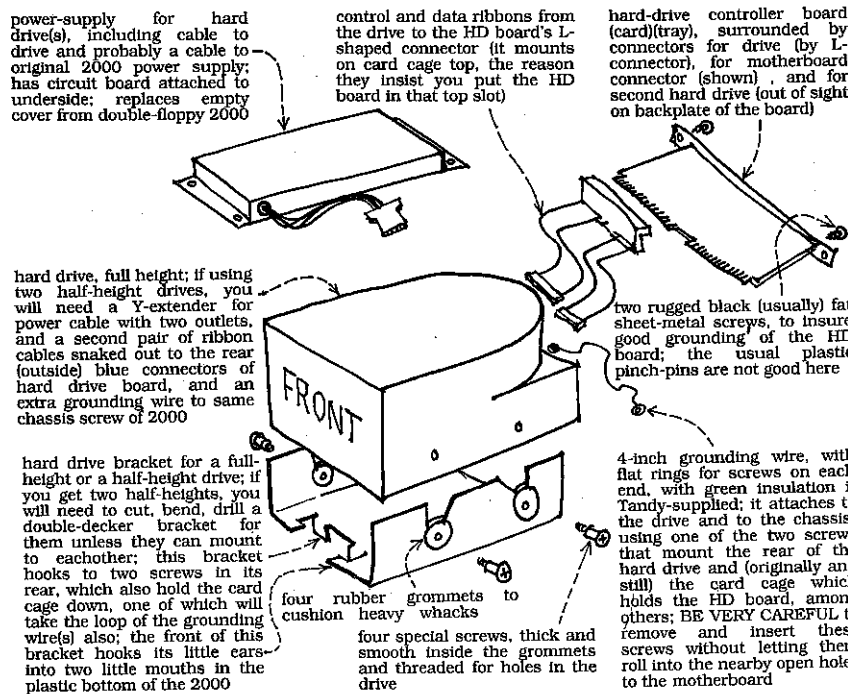
Now I have a question I'd like one of you hardware gurus to answer. Every disk has a FAT (file allocation table), which was the item I was most displeased with when it dropped you Orphans into 32 separate disk sectors. The "program" parts of my dBLX directory, even the niblets I wrote myself, seldom change and are not the problem. But it seems that every time some poor guy sends in 18 bucks from Oklahoma City, my FAT table blows his name and address all over my B: drive, as if he'd stepped on a two-ton bomb. Unfair?

Well, gurus, what would be the harm in taking every file that is constantly growing and changing, and phoning in a reservation for it? If I have a file that has ten sectors and might need another twenty later on, why not climb into the FAT with my can-opener, debug or Norton or SuperZap or you name it? Why not tell the dumb FAT that instead of pouring Mr. Oklahoma into sixteen separate slots, it has to roll consecutively through sectors 232 through 261, and that these thirty sectors are reserved for the exclusive use of my

ORF.DBF work file, no exception? How about pre-emptive directory entries and place-holding bytes in each sector? Then my work wouldn't fragment and searches and dumps might go ten times as fast. Is that idea too simple to work? It seems to me that we make computing a bit harder than it has to be, or do I read too many magazines?

After you format a hard drive, and extra partitions if you're using MLFormat, be sure to reboot before trying to call the drive. As I understand it, HFormat and the agile MLFormat change the IO.SYS on your DOS disk, so you have to reboot to make your computer understand the new situation. If you have several DOS disks that you use, or make one later, copy the changed IO.SYS to it (them). Of course, never ruffle one hair on an original DOS disk, or any other original.

The four headquarters hard drives, original full-height 10-meg units from 2000HDs, went out in September, all sold the first day of Whimper replies. As concerned as a mother loading four kids on a bus for their first day of school, I made up a picture showing all the other parts people have to get when they're converting a double-floppy to a 3-drive 2000. And like any flustered mother, I forgot to pack the instruction sheets when the packages went out. Here they are, for anyone who hasn't gone through a hard drive installation in the 2000, but will:



Members Review

"A program called Mex-PC is an excellent package on the 2000, the best I have found. It has all the common protocols, and has both menu and command modes." --BDA. NightOwl Software, Rt. 1 Box 7, Fort Akinson, WI 53538; 414-563-4013.

85% of all the computing GFG does is on the much-maligned OpenAccess 1 (version 2 is incompatible). He loves its menu-driven word processor, its well-tutored database and spreadsheet, and its flexible response to user needs, like easy creation of a driver for any printer. That could save a week of frustration. "I feel some people have not given this software a fair try."

LeScript speaks foreign languages, says EIG, solving the daisy-printing problems PAE addressed in the August issue. It happily backspaces and pops on the accents. EIG is

especially pleased to report that version 1.80 of LeScript, with our DOS .03, has bug-free operation, ramdisk copiability, a pop-up speller and 250, count 'em, 250 printer drivers.

"Cornerstone runs perfectly on the 2000," reports HJB, "and is far easier to learn and use than dBase (II or III). It's a true relational database, it accepts dBase files, and it comes with a high-quality tutorial as well. But the best part is the price, \$495 from Infocom in 1985, \$30 now from Triton (800-227-6900)." I called Triton and it's a shabby phone cellar staffed by morons, but they're selling a smart program.

Among DOS shells, XTree runs (in BW only), but the Norton Commander, 1Dir+ and LeMenu do not. The XTree people, they told HJB, could not get cooperation from Tandy, either tech info or hardware loan, so they had to skip color support.

"The IBM mainframe crowd will like SPF/PC from Command Technology, which runs on the 2000 under its MS-DOS setting, because it is a word-processor clone of the IBM program they know and love. For those who program, it's the best full-screen editor on the market." Thank you, RPN.

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De Bugs in dBase III by Stuart Elliott

The list of up-to-date 2000 programs gets thinner as the months roll by. But one company, WordTech, has brought out new software with a version for the 2000 (and many others), dBase III. It is a "superclone" of dBase III plus, meaning that it uses dBase functions, commands and file structures, but has extended them and added others. Considering that we have only dBase III (without the "plus"), dBase III might be considered a super-superclone for the 2000. It accepts and runs dBase III files.

dBase III has 90 functions, while dBase III has 37. The list reads like a dBase user's fulfilled "wish list" of features. You can search a file for something you spell wrong (SOUNDEX), a group of letters (ISALPHA), a group of capital letters (ISUPPER). You can format data on screen or in print with special spacing (TRIM), restrictions (TRANSFORM), or CENTERing. MEMORY gives the amount of RAM, IN gets data from a port, GETENV shows the DOS environment listing, OS gives the operating system version, and DISKSPACE gives the amount of space free.

In one of your databases, LUPDATE gives the date of last update, DESCEND forces descending order indexing or sorting, DBF gives the full name of the active file, FIELD gives the names of the fields, and RECSIZE is handy.

dBase III keeps the pressure on dBase by claiming 219 commands compared to dBase III's 126. (In "calculate 2+2," calculate is the command and + is the function.) Maybe dBase III's writers were frustrated dBase III users. dBase III has, and dBase III lacks, error trapping and setting the environment, such as the type-ahead buffer, printer port, date format, the fields to be accessed, and the width of the MEMO field.

A command history file records commands recently issued, which can be recalled, edited or run again. If you type in a long command with a typo, you don't have to re-type the whole line again!

dBase III is much faster than our dBase III, listing 776 records to the screen for me in 21 minutes, to 152 minutes in dBase III. dBase III indexed those records in 17 seconds, while dBase III took 135 seconds. The 2000 screen changes slowly with dBase III, but faster under the dBase III modes RETRACE OFF and SET CURSORMOVE OFF.

There are bugs in version 1.2 ("Diamond") that 1.1 didn't have. I couldn't use the function keys until I set them up individually; I was unable to display or print graphs; and pressing Help locked up the system. WordTech sent me version 1.2c, and DOS2FIX.EXE on disk to patch it, but these were unhelpful. CLEAR erases text but leaves any reverse video. COLOR will not work. Don't use dBase III's change-directory and set-path commands, which abort; you should designate your data area with the equivalent DOS commands, in the batch file that starts dBase III. You can also do this DOS maneuver from inside dBase III, using RUN.

[Editor's note: dBase III 1.1, the original version which worked well on our machine, is no longer sold. Headquarters uses it to keep track of the Orphans. WordTech has had

long, well-written letters from three members, which I compliment you guys for writing, and has not come up with solutions. They seem to be fairly stinky about giving help.]

dBase III needs a hard drive (you wanta swap five disks?) and requires 512k of RAM. When the dBase III SETUP Main Menu appears, the 2000 requires the first option, configuring for MS-DOS rather than the PC-DOS of the compatibles. Then choose option 9 (Tandy 2000). That's the easy part. The function keys can be used after you tell dBase III what the codes are, so choose #16, USER DEFINED, and then #6, MODIFY KEYS. You can then choose jobs for the function keys and any other key that doesn't work as you'd like it to. [Editor's note: When defining a key as a command, type in the "enter" so you won't have to hit "enter" each time you use the F-key. Keep dangerous commands like "delete" off the F-row to prevent disasters.]

The Commands and Functions sections of the manual are very good, going into great detail with examples. The tutorial is also good at explaining things such as windowing. This is one of the best manuals I've ever used.

You get a lot of support for your \$200 (\$115 at CompuClassics, 800-328-4473). WordTech was very helpful and generally knowledgeable. The help is free, but it was my nickel-- worth it.

The Souvenir Shop

POSTAGE: All prices include postage, packing and handling to the 50 states. Foreign Orphans, ask about price.

MONEY: No credit cards and no foreign checks. Only U.S.A. checks (preferably) or U.S. cash.

DISK PRICING (items 1,2,3,8,11,19): Item 1 costs 20.07 and item 11 20.19; add \$1 each for 2, 3, 8 and/or 19. If you're not buying 1 or 11, your first item from 2,3,8,19 is \$5.00, any others \$1.00 each. All your selections from this group will come on one premium quad ringless disk. [That \$1.00 will drop to maybe 25¢ when we get a big list of public-domain files that go ten to fifty on a disk, but for now it's \$1.00.]

1. Tandy-written Windows Driver disk, formerly their #7002611. This disk slyly erases drivers for non-Tandy printers, but we've added instructions for avoiding this trap. (198K) \$20.07, others inquire, but see "Disk Pricing" above.

2. "Creative Byting", a free-to-copy disk on how to write user-friendly well-selling software, put out by an apparently out-of-business disk publisher. One member said it was dumb, but I like the suggestions they make. (183K) See "Disk Pricing" above.

3. "Suitcase", a hard-disk packing-up utility which parks the heads on the last sector (least likely to have data). This is to protect data when you bump your computer while trying to lower it into one of those open-pit car trunks. After copying it to your hard drive, you type SUITCASE and turn off the computer. Load up! The disk unpacks itself next time you turn the machine on. (2K) See "Disk Pricing" above.

4. "Mastering the Tandy 2000", a compressed zerox of an out-of-print book mentioned in the February issue. Reprinted with paid permission. \$6.50.

5. Unprotected Lotus123. Send your program disk from Tandy 26-5300 with \$5.09 and I'll send it back unchanged with an unprotected 123 disk that copies to any disk any time. No other goodies on this disk. I only require the original to make sure you own it, so Tandy doesn't get me busted for copyright infringement. (Applies also to Framework and dBase III, but don't send Symphony.) Be sure to notify us if you have the Envision memory expansion; if so, you will be sent a slightly different version of 123, dB or FW.

6. Unprotected Framework 1. Send disk 1 or 2 of Tandy 26-5320 with \$5.03 and I'll send it back unchanged with an unprotected Framework disk that copies to any disk any time. No other goodies on this disk. See end of item 5.

7. Unprotected dBase III. Send disk 1 or 2 of Tandy 26-5353 (not dBase II) with \$5.11 and I'll send it back unchanged with an unprotected dBase III disk that copies to any disk any time. No other goodies on this disk. See end of item 5.

8. "SymPatch", a patch on disk to allow Symphony to run from a hard drive without the hassle of a Symphony floppy in A. (1K) See "Disk Pricing" above.

9. Instructions for putting 512K (or more) on a Tandy 2000 memory board. 7 pages zeroxed, \$2.00.

10. List of Tandy 2000 video ports. 3 pp. zeroxed, \$1.00.

11. "MouseTrap", which lets our digi-mouse run the arrow keys, the ENTER key and the F1 key, in your starting DOS or any software that lacks its own mouse driver, which means that now our mouse goes everywhere. \$20.19, of which \$10 goes to the deserving inventor, \$5 to actual costs of getting it to you, and \$5.19 to the Orphan phone bill. But see "Disk Pricing" above.

12. Modifying a Tandy VM-3 to work with the 2000, by MOR, zeroxed. \$2.00. Has pictures.

13. ViaNet board (one), no instructions or cable, \$45.00.

14. Desk stand for VM-1 (still two left), frees much of the most-needed desk space and tilts/rotates monitor to your best angle. \$20.00.

15. If you have mouse and its board but no Tandy disk: Clock-mouse software, \$10.00.

16. Tandy's clock-mouse installation instructions, 16 pages compressed into eight zerox pages, \$5.00.

17. Making Turbo Pascal 3 run on the 2000, a one-page patch supplied by BJK. \$1.00.

18. WordStar 4 version for Tandy printers, send \$5.23 and your original program disk. I will send it back unaltered with a disk containing the MicroPro-modified program and installation. No other goodies on this disk. See end of item 5.

19. "PC Boss", which allows you to navigate disks and directories with un-DOS-like skill and speed. (30K) See "Disk Pricing" above.

20. Saving a Basic color screen by HEB, one page, \$1.00.

21. Using TurboPascal 4 with 2000 by BJK, 4 pp., \$2.00.

22. Info on video RAM and attributes by BJK, \$1.00.

23. A book chapter listing and discussing IBM-style hardware ports, useful for assembly-language programmers among us trying to create a "Holy Grail" compatibility disk to convert IBM software for the 2000. 29 pages compressed into 16, \$10.00.

24. MS-DOS 2.11.03. Any of you guys who picked up sale 2000s with old DOS disks inside, you really should go down to a Shack and plunk down \$10 for a disgusted stare, a month-long wait, ten phone calls by you, another trip to pick up, and the latest 2000 DOS disk, the last our machine will ever get. Alternatively, you can get it in a week or two from us. \$5.31.

25. Back issues of the Whimper are \$5.00 each. Those now out of print will be supplied as (Z)eroxes. The full list of issues so far, skipping three early ones that were basically one-page letters without much information, is this: Mar(Z), May(Z), Aug(Z), Oct(Z) and Dec 1987, and Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug and Oct 1988. Be specific about issues; order "item 25" only if you're sending \$50.00. It would be nice if I could tell you what each issue contained, but issues touch on "everything" of interest, so contents listings would not help you choose; and those listings would fill several Whimper pages, a waste! Note that back Whimpers are now available as a group on disk, below.

26. The Whimper Hamper: Old Whimpers on disk, useful when you're searching for something by key word from a fast word processor. Also for those who would rather read at the screen than in an easy chair. This disk is not public domain, but your personal copy of copyrighted material, so don't even think of loading it out through your modem; I'm tired of cheap, demanding non-Orphan modem groupies who want Orphan help for nothing. \$40.00 for one disk stuffed with Mar, May, Aug, Oct, Dec 1987 and Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct 1988. Th-that's all folks; three earlier issues are basically one-page, uninformative letters.

27. The Missing Sock: Those sections of the ten existing Whimpers which were hand-typed on deadline day. You can spot them in Whimpers by the ragged right margin. Zeroxed. Only available with the Hamper, for \$10.00 extra. Skip it if you can, a revised Hamper is free to prior Hamper buyers when we get The Missing Sock on disk.

Sidewalk Salesmen

28. Function-key flipchart, ten stiff narrow pages in a 19-ring plastic edge-binder (specify ivory/brown or white/blue). Slips into existing slots and displays written or double-face-taped-on key functions for your ten favorite

programs. Send \$5.00 (includes postage, packing and handling) to Orphan Jack Doerr, 22407 Bayview Drive, St. Clair Shores, MI 48081. (Don't send your order to headquarters.) This gadget quickly becomes indispensable (it is for me), and takes four hours of hacking and trekking if you do it yourself (it did for me).

29. Our hardware honcho, Envision Designs, produces a galaxy of upgrade products that make Tandy's former efforts look sick. They make 640K for either your basement motherboard or an upper-floor slide-in tray, giving the tricky 2000 a monstrous meg of RAM (DOS calls it 896K). Software shipped with it teaches DOS to recognize it all, and to pack any amount of it into one or two groups which stupid DOS thinks are disk drives, such as D: and E:. These RAMdisks react in a microsecond, shaming today's state-of-the-art 19-millisecond hard drives. Envision also packages hard drive combinations and makes a "Faze IV" disk which makes DOS get hard drive info twice as fast. Also on their product list are an 8087 chip upgrade and a 3-1/2-inch disk drive. Orphan Dave Nechodom operates Envision full-time in an office/shop at his home. 1539 West Pearl St., Pasco, WA 99301; 509-547-1139.

30. MicroLink Technology, run by Orphan Bob Spencer, seems equal to Envision in raw skill, but has other interests besides the 2000. Their major product for us is ML Format, a disk which teaches our DOS to go into a hard drive bigger than 32 megabytes, after our HFormat does the first 32 megs, and format the remaining space into any number of any-size drives, such as D: and E:, or F: and G: if you have RAMdisks as D: and E:. MicroLink also makes an inexpensive replacement pair of ROM chips for our motherboard, that correct some problems and truthfully report your memory up to the 896K Envision limit. (The Envision 896K motherboard does this also.) They're at P.O. Box 2666, Sumter, SC 29151; 800-334-9612. MicroLink's most exciting product is MouseTrap, sold above in the Souvenir Shop.

31. We hate to recommend Tandy, but every 2000 that doesn't have an M printed (or scraped on) at the beginning of its underbody serial number should have the "mods." These 40 modifications are advisable, often necessary fixes of design boobies in the 2000. The parts cost a few cents each, and the labor is an hour or two. Go to your local surly Tandy repair center, the only way until we can steal the mod sheets and pass them to you. A secret Tandy memo tells the shops to give mods free if nothing else is done, but they usually insist on about \$65 for the job, worth it. If you're paying the \$65 anyway, blow another \$30 for them to run their two diagnostic disks over your drives, power supply and chipboards. Repairmen with 2000 experience are getting scarce.

Flee Market

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PRICES include postage, packing and handling to the 50 states, and UPS for heavy stuff. Air shipping is extra. Prices may be negotiable, it's not rude to ask.

Symphony \$85, BetterBasic \$60, MSAssembler \$40, TeleCommuter \$50, LeScript \$40. FLOOR STANDS (3), \$40 with no cables, add "about" \$10 for TJB to make you a cable for keyboard and a (VM1 or CM1) monitor. Call Timothy, 313-227-7344. [TJB: are you willing to be the Orphan cablemaker? If so, send prices for every single cable the 2000 can use, plus a typical sample of your work which I'll return. I'll put you by the Souvenir Shop as a Sidewalk Salesman.]

MS Word 1, not upgradable to 3.1, but some prefer version 1, \$25. 714-720-4978, ask for Harold.

CM-1 plus graphics board plus color chips, \$250; mouse and mouse board, \$50; double-floppy 2000, \$150. Call Tom, 205-347-5008.

Videotex Plus \$10; MS Word \$20; PFS Write, Report and File \$10 each; Basic manual (the one that came with the 2000?) \$7. Call Lowell at 714-688-8904.

A Shack has four mice: Mr. Lee, 312-844-2224, \$35 each.

If your Shack can't or won't order ink and clay paper for the CGP-220, try MicroSell at 800-352-8444. They specialize in Quadram, whose Quadjet was relabeled as the CGP by Tandy.