



## PERIPHERALS; Computer, Take a Letter!

By L. R. SHANNON

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GETTING a computer and a printer to work together should be simple, and it often is. At other times, it can be a frustrating process indeed.

"The Printer Bible," by Scott Foerster (Que, \$24.95), is a comprehensive guide to "how to coerce a printer into printing a letter in the place, size and style you want," in the introduction's words. To this end, the book describes the evolution of the machines and discusses all the knobs, buttons, commands, dodges and devices in detail.

Sections range from seemingly simple topics like turning on the printer ("The power switch is usually in the back in a corner where you will never see it.") to esoterica like constructing a serial printer cable.

There are chapters on buying and setting up a new printer, sharing a printer among multiple computers and even fixing one when things go wrong. Both major computer universes, PC-PS/2 and Macintosh, are covered. One topic I could have used, but didn't find, was how to hook up a Macintosh to a non-Apple printer. It is hard to think of anything else that's missing.

Now that your computer and printer are talking to one another, you might want to do a bit of desktop publishing. Nothing too taxing, though, calling for an expensive and complicated program; maybe you want to produce a club newsletter, put out an in-house company organ, or just make your correspondence a bit jazzier. Publish It! from Timeworks is the leader of the moderately priced pack, and "Publish It! Made Easy," by Paul Garrison (Osborne McGraw-Hill, \$21.95) takes the reader from the beginning stage to mastery in easy steps.

Part I is an overview of both Publish It! and its baby brother, Publish It Lite!, both for I.B.M.-compatible computers, along with a quick exercise in the basics of either program. Part II covers the resources of the programs; it is intended to be used as a reference section after you've read it and tried out some of the commands. Part III shows how to create text and graphics with the programs, or bring them in from other sources, and edit them. Part IV deals with the essentials of desktop publishing in general, like how to design a page that is both attractive and appropriate, and Part V contains seven appendixes.

Integrated programs are popular with new computer users. They promise to let you do most of the things people do with computers without having to learn the different commands and conventions of separate programs. Microsoft Works, which combines word-processing, database, spreadsheet and communications modules, is deservedly popular. "Works for the PC Made Easy," by Martin S. Matthews and Carole Boggs Matthews (Osborne McGraw-Hill, \$19.95), teaches the program by example: you learn

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its ins and outs by writing a business letter and building customer information and accounts receivable files. As you get more advanced, you create more complex files and learn how the components of Works can exchange information.

"Putting Microsoft Works to Work," by Douglas Cobb and the Cobb Group (Microsoft Press, \$15.95), published a year ago, should be mentioned here. It contains instructions for creating a dozen templates, models that can be used in home or business. There are personal templates, like a checkbook register and balancer and a personal financial plan, and business templates, like a simple general ledger and a mailing-list manager. The book opens with a chapter on Works basics, but the heart of it is making and using the templates.

AppleWorks is the equivalent of Microsoft Works for the aging Apple II series, and "AppleWorks Made Easy," by Carole Boggs Matthews (Osborne McGraw-Hill, \$19.95), is equivalent to the Works book, of which she was co-author. Some paragraphs, in fact, are identical, which is easy enough to accomplish when you write with a computer.

AppleWorks is a simpler program than Works for the PC - it lacks a communications module, for one thing - but many Apple II users swear by it. "AppleWorks Made Easy" is now in its third edition, as AppleWorks is in its third version. This book should be useful both to first-time users and to those who want to use the enhanced features.

"Pushing AppleWorks to the Limit," by Vincent D. O'Connor (Compute! Books, \$14.95), assumes basic familiarity with the program and plunges right into matters like extended memory cards and hard disk drives, bugs in ProDOS, the Apple operating system and advanced spreadsheet capabilities. There's life in those old computers yet.

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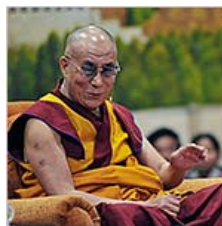


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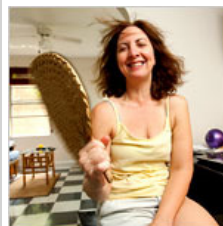
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