



TEACHING OLD DOGS NEW TRICKS

By Dennis Thorp

I finally took the plunge this past week and added a 3.5 inch 720 K disk drive to my machine so I could effectively communicate with IBM PS/2 machines. Maybe from now on I'll just send my articles in on floppy disks, save the wear and tear on my printer and let the editor "bring it up" directly on his machine for corrections and changes. When he can take the whole monthly edition to the print shop on disk and they don't have to re-enter it on their machines, the association may be able to achieve some dramatic savings. Of course that would entail all of the authors and the print shop working from compatible software.

When I was first contemplating the task of making Monroe Miller and Pat Zurawski comfortable with their computer, I thought I would just have them purchase the software they wanted and after I installed it on their computer, I would attack the task of teaching them how to use it. Clean and neat, but not very satisfying, at least from my standpoint.

Probably not very much fun for them, either. I've found that if a subject isn't fun or interesting, students have a harder time learning what I'm trying to teach them. I've always felt that one doesn't need to know how a television works to enjoy it; however, a computer is somewhat different. TV is, after all, a passive medium, while the computer is an active one — interactive to be exact. So in their case, I had them send me the software so I could learn it and when we got together, I had them load and configure the software. Some work is always required to make the computer and the software work together, under my "expert" supervision of course!

For the first session I taught them the basics of disk operations and file transfer. We were essentially working from the hard disk so learning how to make and change directories was important. But the ability to upload the downloaded files determines how confident any operator can be with himself and

his machine. Until someone actually creates a file, whether it is a spreadsheet, a document or a data file, loses it, and somehow is able to bring it back from wherever, he can never feel confident and tends to be "afraid" of the machine. That limits the possibilities for growth. There are programs that can "un-erase" or otherwise recover a scrambled file, but I decided to save that for lesson 2. Re-entering a program from a hardcopy printout may be good for the soul and a good teaching tool, but it is definitely hard on the fingers and the temper.

The first step, then, is to format some blank "floppy" disks, hereafter referred to simply as "disks." The removable disks that I am used to are 5.25 inches square and look fairly fragile. These 3.5 inch disks look much more substantial and can be comfortably carried in a shirt pocket. However, all the procedures are the same. The first step is to "format" a box of disks. I covered **format** in a previous article, but a little refresher may be helpful.

Think of the disk as an empty file drawer and the formatting procedure tells the computer how to put the information on the disk and retrieve it. Until a disk has been formatted, the computer cannot use it. Running out of formatted disks when they are needed, such as during a "hard disk backup", can cause severe stomach distress.

Learning how to backup the hard disk is the next step. Computers by themselves are basically useless. It is only the information that one can get out of them that has any value. The hardware can be replaced fairly easily, but the files in it may have taken many, many hours to create. In case of fire, theft or any other breakdown, the data can all be quickly recovered, if regular **backups** have been made and kept in a safe place.

Most of the hardware is covered by insurance, after all, and some policies cover the software, too. However, check with your carrier to see what is covered and what isn't. A box of disks,

containing all your programs and data, in the safe of the clubhouse may be the cheapest insurance you can ever buy. Since this computer already contains an irrigation control program, we will first back this up so our new operators can get some experience and confidence, and I will feel comfortable with the fact that no matter what happens, we can quickly return to where we were at 8:00 in the morning.

After this has been done, we will proceed to create two new directories on the hard disk and load our programs. "**Make directory**" and "**change directory**" are the next two commands we will work with. They are abbreviated as "mkdir" and "chkdir" or simply "md" and "cd". We are creating file folders on the hard disk for our programs and then transferring them from the floppy disks to the hard disk.

So first we have to get past the irrigation program that dominates the system to the "root" or main directory. The presence of a "C:\\" on the screen lets us know we are there.

This computer already contains a directory called "DOS" and now we are going to create directories called "LOTUS" and "WORDSTAR". After this has been done, we will change to the Lotus directory or "cd\lotus" (upper case and lower case can be used). Now we are prepared to copy the files from floppy disk to hard disk, following the directions given in the software documentation. Once we (or rather "they") configure the software, we will be ready to do some productive work. I may throw in some worksheets I have already created to get things rolling.

The problems we encountered were fairly typical and more than a little frustrating. I brought my machine along with me to this session so we would be able to transfer files "onsite". The programs we had only came on 5.25 inch floppies so I had to transfer them to the 3.5 inch format. Most programs will come either way, so be sure to specify the proper size disks when ordering

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 9

your programs and you will avoid some of the problems that we had.

My first attempt at a transfer gave us an error message on the screen of the target computer. Thoughts of a wasted day ran through my head as I feared a problem had developed in my computer. Then I tried to transfer file by file and that worked just fine. Periodically during the day we had file transfer errors that drove me crazy, but we eventually got the system to work the way

I wanted it to. I designed an opening screen menu and some modest batch files to keep things as simple as possible for the operator. I think I may have caught their interest.

All in all, it was a very interesting day. As much as I have bad-mouthed the IBM PS/2 in this column and casual conversation, I gained a measure of respect for that machine and I think Monroe and Pat had a lot better time than they thought they were going to have. Familiarity helps to eliminate some of

the fear. Anyway, we crammed as much information into six hours as any of us could handle. Now, I'll give them a few days to absorb the material we covered before I teach them some more.

The next article will cover the computer seminar that is going to be held during the GCSAA convention at Anaheim. It will be a gathering of many of the computer literate superintendents and suppliers in our industry and I am really looking forward to it.

University of Wisconsin-Madison



DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE HAS A BIRTHDAY!

By Dr. Robert C. Newman

The University of Wisconsin got under way in 1849. Another 40 years passed before an official Horticulture Department came into being. The Horticulture Department was created 100 years ago in 1889 with the appointment of Emmett S. Goff as horticulture professor. The department was one of the original four College of Agriculture departments and was housed in King Hall from its inception until 1911. Much of the early work in horticulture was related to fruit production.

Professor Franz Aust joined the department in 1915 and had teaching and extension responsibilities in the area of landscape architecture. Records indicate that Professor Aust did limited research on lawns and windbreaks.

Professor Aust was on the program of the first midwest greenkeepers short course held by a midwest state university. The five-day short course was held in Madison in February, 1930 with 59 greenkeepers from Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin in attendance. Professor Aust discussed care of trees and landscape problems — perhaps not directly turf related but certainly golf orientated.

Professor William Longenecker joined the Horticulture Department in 1924 as teacher of landscape architecture and among other responsibilities identified landscape plants including turf weeds. Professor Longenecker and later Professor Joseph Elfner taught a Horticulture course titled "Lawns." The course covered both lawn construction and lawn grass management.

Professor George Ziegler joined the department in 1947 as an extension landscape architect. In the 1950's Professor Ziegler wrote an eight-page extension circular titled "Home Lawns."

In 1964 the Landscape Architecture Department was established as a separate department and emphasis since that time has been associated much more with landscape design than plant management.

Professor Malcolm Dana worked on turf weed control in the Horticulture Department from about 1954 to 1964. Professor Robert Newman assumed responsibility for turf weed research and Extension from 1964 to the present time.

Faculty of the Agronomy, Entomology, Horticulture, Plant Pathology and Soils sponsored statewide, two-day turfgrass conferences from 1961 to 1965. Conferences were held in Madison on the campus. Since 1965 the departments of Entomology, Horticulture, Plant Pathology and Soils have held turf conferences in three or four locations around the state every year. Attendance exceeded 500 in the four-conference series in 1988.

Robert Newman started to teach Horticulture 261, Lawn Management,

in 1964. The two-credit course is taught in the fall semester with emphasis on grass and weed identification. Turf management was taught from 1964 to 1986 in the regular College of Agricultural and Life Sciences five-week short course. The short course was changed to a one-week session in January in 1987 to accommodate employed turf management clientele.

Other turf related activities within the Horticulture department include turfgrass and turf weed identification, turf weed control research, turf growth regulator research, turf cultivar demonstrations and answering a multitude of turf questions for turf professionals and homeowners.

The most recent turf publications by Robert Newman are Lawn Establishment, UWEX publication A3434 and Lawn Maintenance and Problems, UWEX publication A3435.

Editor's Note: The Department of Horticulture's rich and varied history is beautifully recorded in a booklet form. It was written by Emeritus Professor M.N. Dana. This article by Professor Newman is a supplement to that history. Call the Departmental Office on the Madison campus for details on how to obtain a copy.

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