

n Aptus in Every Home

Bill, one of my more faithful readers, sent me an incredulous note after last month's column, protesting that if I couldn't think of something to buy with my 500 Apple Dollars, he sure could. It's not that I can't think of anything to buy, it's that I want to buy a new computer, not just a new monitor, or a new printer, or a really cool new joystick, or a new Newton (is that redundant?).

No, I have my sights set very high. In fact, the other day Tiffany and I were cruising the web (I like cruising better than surfing, kind of like browsing versus grazing... or something), we were cruising the web for, of all things, furniture. One guy sells handmade log furniture (perfect for your log cabin, but where do you plug the computer in?) and there were several "build 'em yourself" kit stores. But then we started looking at computer desks.

Needless to say, I found one.

It's called the Aptus ER, and the base model, the 595, retails for just above \$12,500. The picture is from their web site, and I'm sure they won't mind my using it.

Let me explain. The horizontal desk space is extra. (So is the computer, by the way.) All you get for your 12 grand is the chair, which is admittedly very cool, and the "monitor stand," which is attached to the chair. That way the monitor is always at eye level, your body and the monitor are connected and move at the same time in the same direction. Yes, the whole thing is in fact, motorized for your convenience. Can

you imagine hand-cranking the thing up and down? The keyboard rest is also integrated and the whole thing is (I imagine) bolted to the floor.

When we visited their web site, they were taking applications for demonstration units. I tried, really, but all I got was a nice note saying they'd send me a color brochure. If anybody out there cares to try their own luck, you can find the Aptus and the company that makes it, Workstation Environments, at www.workenv.com

In the meantime, I received not one, but two copies of the System 7.5 Update 2.0 CD-ROM, both free, as it turns out. So I filed my Apple Dollars reward claim form against a future use.

I installed the update on a clean copy of System 7.5 that I installed on a Zip disk I bought. Occasionally I'll boot up from the Zip disk (named Cecilia, by the way) but it doesn't seem to give me much extra functionality. I'm not likely to load it onto Pokegenia. I guess it must offer more benefit to Power Mac owners.

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You'll recall my trials with AOL from last month. Well, I now have two AOL accounts, ten screen names, and too much mail. Amazing how quickly things can turn around. In fact, the bottleneck is no longer AOL, but my much beloved Emailer. Turns out that Emailer can only accomodate one AOL account, with its five attendant screen names. To have another AOL account I need to install another copy of Emailer. I'll be doing that today, most likely. Let me tell you, I cannot wait for version 2.0 of Emailer, and while I have no knowledge of such a version, I can't help but think that in this Internet-happy environment, a new edition can't be far away. At the very least they have to strip all references to eWorld from the program.

Seems a bit dated now.

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As you can tell from the ad at the top of this chapter, the t-shirts are on their way. This first run is only of Only Boy t-shirts, but one can only hope they'll become a collector's item someday. I'm ordering my first one now, to check on all those niggely little details, but you should be able to order one by next issue.

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I found a piece of hardware this past month for my mother. She's got a modem plugged into her modem port, and a printer plugged into her printer port, and a graphics tablet (yes, my mother is kinda cutting edge) that she plugs into one or the other. But she has to crane around the back to do it, and we thought there must be a more convenient method. So I turned to my favorite hardware peripheral supplier, APS. Not only do their catalogs have extremely funny bits (the latest addition being the Jennifer the sales agent spoofs) but they have just about anything you could need for storage or connection. The latest catalog even has keyboards and the like. It took me three minutes to find what I wanted, the serial Switch Cable for \$30. You plug two serial devices into it, and plug it into one serial port, then velcro it to the side of your computer, and when you need one device, you just reach up and flip a switch.

Very cool. Now all I need is a graphics tablet. A nice big one.

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And in sad news: Maxie has died. Maxie, some of you will remember, is a co-worker's Mac SE that I wrote about a while back in an article called "Resurrecting Maxie." I took her home one weekend last year because her hard drive wasn't working properly. I fixed it, using Norton Utilities, and diagnosed the problem as a lack of lovin'. So I christened her "Maxie," to make up for seven years of neglect as "HD 40," and John took her back as if she were a long lost child. The past few months have been full of stories about how "Maxie and Natalie wrote a book report," and "Maxie's been behaving very well." Alas, now news comes that she's given up the ghost. The hard drive won't even register now, and Norton can only describe it as a "damaged disk."

John is going to take it in for official repairs, mostly to try to recover some of the data on her drive. But he told me that he can't bear to part with her, now that she's Maxie, and not just some computer.

So, he'll buy a new computer soon, and in the meantime would like very much to discover how to turn Maxie into an aquarium. Anybody have Andy Inhatko's plans? Anybody know where I can get them?

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Nancy and I are still playing Warlords II, but I'm afraid I have a heresy to admit. My favorite game these days is not Warlords II. Nor is it on a Mac. I've been staying late at work playing Heretic, id Software's medieval version of Doom. Yes, I've only been playing the demo version, which is eight levels large, and yes, I know that both Doom II and Hexen, the sequel to Heretic, are available for the Mac. But they're only playable on a Power Mac, and as everyone who reads this column is painfully aware, I don't have a Power Mac.

So I've been playing Heretic on a Gateway 486 at work. Worse, I've been playing it without a sound card, so I don't even get that spooky sound rush out of it.

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In the end, it would seem I have too little of what I want, and that what I want is very expensive. Yes, I want a 200 MHz Power Mac (when they come out) and I want a graphics tablet and I want one of those Aptus chair extravaganzas. In an ideal world, there would be an Aptus in every household.

And yet, I am humbled by the folks who continue to plug away on their Mac SE machines, or even on their Mac Plus computers. I am reminded that I don't *need* any of this, especially since I can't afford it.

So I end by renewing my plea. Send me free stuff to look at or review. My address is:

617 S. 37th Street, #304
Omaha, NE 68105-1241

Thanks! I look forward to writing about it, playing with it, and even giving it back, should you insist.

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