

Editorial

The curse of the killer Quadra 650

A person can only take so much.

After the fifth time the *CapTimes*' Macintosh Quadra 650 locked up within 10 minutes, it was too much. Time to get some new equipment in this place.

The first question when considering purchases of this sort is how much money is in the budget. The depressing answer was not enough.

But we're journalists (or at least doing our best impression of such). We like to ask questions. So, we asked the follow-up: who has money we can get our grubby little hands on?

The answer—SGA and the student activities fee.

Our apologies to the unsuspecting passersby who were trampled by two sharks (a.k.a. editors) smelling blood (a.k.a. money). Money that may make this job a little bit easier.

We were quickly on our way to securing our funds. Budgets were checked, requests were made and with an inspirational vote by SGA we had our dough. It seemed almost too easy.

Then again, it should have been. Much of the work on the paper was done off campus. We simply did not have the equipment. Printing copies to proof was impossible with the printer we had, and any pictures that needed scanning were sent out. We had no scanner.

SGA kindly agreed. After all, what's the point of a college newspaper if it can't be done on campus?

So, after gleefully humming a few bars of Pink Floyd — "grab that cash with both hands and make a stash" -- we pulled out the latest copy of MacWarehouse.

The question of what to get was moot. Surely anything would be better than the Quadra 650. But if you're going to do it, do it right. We ordered the good stuff.

Everything but the computer itself was purchased from the magazine. All of it arrived within four days. Again, it seemed too easy. A nirvana-like state of bliss wafted through W341. Toys and more toys, all paid for with other people's money. . .

Paperweights. All of our wonderful toys are paperweights. This high-tech digital equipment does nothing but keep our good-ol' analog paper from blowing away in the spring breeze.

An electronic snafu has delayed the delivery of our computer. Apple computers prohibits any other company's resale of their units at a discounted price. For a school discount, we had to go through an Apple dealer. Any Penn State purchase must go through a specific dealer located in University Park.

Grab the phone and make the call, a few days later your computer arrives -- seems simple enough. As it turns out, the whole deal was done with a requisition order from PSH. All we had to do now is wait.

The requisition was made for our new G3. We sat back gazed at the ceiling and tried to imagine what our world would be like. Dreams of scanning, final proofing and lightning-fast microprocessors ran in and out of our minds and mouths.

The anticipation grew as the day approached. The concern grew as the day passed. Why were we still waiting?

Well, the waiting would continue. A computer snafu would not allow the requisition to be placed. Some network changes needed to be worked out, the authorization for our computer would have to wait. Something was working against us.

We called it the curse of the Quadra 650.

All we ever did was complain about it. Apparently it heard us. How would any computer feel under the same circumstances? Getting nothing but insults; seeing all the new and improved equipment arriving; hearing the tactless excitement of the jerks you tirelessly slaved for -- it was too much.

As far as our little version of HAL 9000 was concerned, it had to stop. He had a chat with his networked buddies. No, we can't prove it but isn't it obvious?

We sit here and brood now, still cursing the piece of junk. Once in a while we look at the light tables and the wax equipment and realize we could be doing this manually. It's a hollow feeling of appreciation and it lasts only until we see our useless playthings sitting on the desk.

It will be a cautious celebration when the G3 arrives. We'll make sure we give Quadra 650 share of work. But we know he'll be waiting for his chance to exact a pound of silicon from his new roommate.

We probably shouldn't network the two.

A thing of beauty and a joy forever

by Crispin Sartwell

The most profound and characteristic art form of our culture is professional wrestling.

Perhaps when you want to show what a deep and soulful person you are, you head for the museum to gawk at daubs of paint or to the opera to marinate yourself in the death howls of sopranos. Me, I just turn on the tube and catch "WWF Raw" or "WCW Monday Nitro."

Like Greek tragedy, pro wrestling provides a perfectly comprehensible spectacle of suffering. In Greek tragedy, a great man is brought low, often because, deluded by overwhelming pride, he can't see the fate that awaits him. Everything proceeds as it inevitably must; everything is destined; nothing is left up to chance. The audience achieves what Aristotle called "a catharsis of pity and fear" that can only come in a reconciliation with the inevitable.

All of this is true of pro wrestling as well. A pro wrestling match is always a strict application of destiny; everything follows inevitably from the character of the wrestlers involved. When Lex Luger pauses after clotheslining Sting in order to exult to the crowd, turning his back on his noble opponent, it is his pride that will bring him down. And no one could argue that Lex Luger is not a great man: the dude is six foot seven and weighs three hundred steroidal pounds.

The crowd screams its satisfaction; it feels purified of its negative emotions; it goes home having achieved a kind of reconciliation to the universe itself.

Like all great drama, the wrestling match often ends with bodies strewn around the stage, as the crowd and the cameras focus with unbelievable duration and intensity on the deepest, most public humiliation, or on a victory over insurmountable odds that signals transcendence. As the Undertaker inflicts slow, inexorable damage on the beautiful Shawn Michaels, we see the future that awaits us all. Life will snap suplex all of us in the long run, even the strongest and loveliest of us. Life will smash a chair across each of our backs. Life will bash our heads into the turnbuckle of fate.

Recently, the New York Times has been covering wrestling in its sports section. I think this is a good thing, though I also think the stories should be in the arts section. But the real problem is that they have no idea at all what pro wrestling is or how to write about it.

Writing about the recent Wrestlemania, in which Mike Tyson threw a punch and Gennifer Flowers acted as timekeeper, Dave Anderson of the Times wrote that the fact that anyone paid to see this thing was "proof of human gullibility." Wrestlemania was held in Boston at the Fleet Center, and a deeply offended Anderson, whose religion apparently revolves around a puck, wrote that it was "a sports sacrilege to the cherished memory of the Boston Garden, the ancestral home of the Celtics and Bruins."

People like Anderson are still telling us that pro wrestling isn't "real," as if that were news. I'm surprised that Anderson hasn't done us all the

service of informing us that the Titanic is not really going to sink tonight at the local multiplex, and suggesting that the movie's box office take is proof of human gullibility. Believe it or not, the stuff described in the works of Jane Austen did not really happen. Don't try skinny-dipping among Monet's water lilies. Othello doesn't really smother Desdemona every night and twice on Sunday.

This question of what is "real" is an interesting one. Certainly, four-hundred-pound guys are really lifting up three-hundred-pound guys and lobbing them out of the ring. On the other hand, as everyone who watches pro wrestling knows, the matches follow certain scripts and the outcome is known beforehand to those who compose these scripts. The point is just to have the right script.

That's why this thing is art, not sport. And there are true masters of the drama in pro wrestling: Rick Flair, the ultimate bastard with the incredible line of patter; Randy "Macho Man" Savage, who always ends up crucified on the ropes like Jesus; The Dog-Faced Gremlin, Rick Steiner, who despite his severely limited intellect is always trying to do the right thing; Public Enemy, a tag-team of white guys who are laboring under the delusion that they're black.

These are masters of their craft, cultural icons. Pro wrestling is a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

Crispin Sartwell is a professor of the philosophy of art. His e-mail address: mindstorm@pipeline.com

The Capital Times

Daniel A. Zehr

Matthew J. Bowman

Editors

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