

No. I don't want to go back to the "good old days."

And, I'm not going to wax sentimental about how we used to do things. Or how simple or much better life used to be. Or bore you with all that "now, when I was a kid..." stuff.

Still, there are moments when I almost yearn to return to the historical era of B.C.

You know B.C. Before Computers.

Computerization has "tripped my trigger" since the first Pcs came onto the market at a price that made the ownership of such technology a cost-effective possibility for the general public. Nevertheless, every advance I've made on the road to technological progress has had to begin with a push.

That's because, despite glib "plug-and-play" marketing promises, there will inevitably be a bunch of gliches somewhere in between the plugging in and the playing of the program. The incredible advancement of computer technology has still not overcome the fact that taking a byte into the chip still yields some crumbs. Or, in other words, no matter how simple it's supposed to be, your high-tech journey will still be pocked with potholes.

Our first computer came into the office about 15 years ago when my faithful, used, electric typewriter hiccupped for the umpteenth time, and choked. A total technological ignoramus, except for the minimal terminology I'd grasped scanning reading materials, I tiptoed into a local computer salesroom like a 5-year-old entering kindergarten. But I returned home with 128K memory and a knot in my stomach.

How would I ever get the stuff up and running?

No sweat. Our youngest paraded home from sixth grade, plugged all the components together, and in an hour I was computing. With a call to the manufacturer, a few days later I even managed to eliminate the triplespacing the printer insisted on inserting between every line of hard copy.

Confidence grew as I learned to make the system work, though I never did really learn DOS or how to go into the guts of the system. And occasionally, it struck absolute terror into my heart. Never more so than when I hit some combination of keys — which to this day I've never figured out and got total computer lock-up and a stern message that "you have found an error at 123456789..." or whatever bunch of numbers it happened to be.

A decade later, the beloved sidekick followed the typewriter to high-tech heaven. With slightly more confidence this round, we entered a new era of Windows on the world. And fell in love with a mouse that did something more worthwhile than chew up stuff it shouldn't and leave residue behind in the cupboards and drawers. Still plugging away, however, was our original stone-age-geared, dot-matrix printer.

The mouse's tummy ball was barely warm from use when computerization zoomed past on the wings of pentium chips, modem, laptops and a new addiction called "surfing the web." In a technological heartbeat, me and my little mouse friend were rended obsolete.

Thus, again, the need to interface with today's comprehensive, amazing, but memory-hog programs have booted this simpleminded, non-technorat along yet another stretch of the information highway. And I was dragged, screaming and yelling, into it. Because I knew full well that the upgraded computer road would be fraught with potholes and my life was too busy to take all these detours. Just let me keep computing on what I knew how to operate.

In the end, the promised destination of faster and greater capabilities won out over reluctance to navigate the potholes along the way. Some of 'em are filled, though rough edges and periodic speed bumps pop up on this sometimes-exciting, sometimes aggravating journey. I still stumble across an occasional error message, though they offer more explanation: "An unrecoverable error occurred accessing the drive or cartridge. There is a DMA conflict when using this drive." Or, "Error on file; did not match data."

Later the computer gods relent and pat me on the back: "Your files are safely backed up." I hope

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it knows. I don't. And — as if to taunt me even as I wrote this — the power shut down midway through this col-

umn and I had to rewrite half of it. We might have smoothed most of the potholes.

But the souvenir gray hairs I've picked up on the trip are no doubt here for life.

Dealing With Change Workshop

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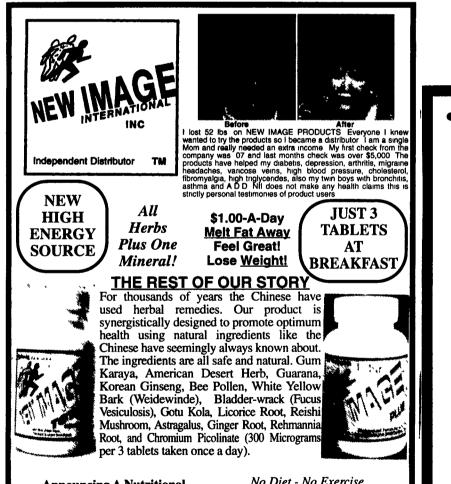
EBENSBURG (Cambria Co.) — How can you become prepared to deal with change in your life? Let Penn State cooperative Extension help you with this process by attending the "Living with Change" seminar being held at Seven Springs on Wednesday, April 30.

The keynote speaker, Eleanor Shano, one of the area's best known broadcast personalities will present "Aging with Attitude." This lively and interactive program shatters age-old myths. It's about celebrating the passage of time and facing the future without fear of growing older. It's about changing attitudes and building self-esteem. It's about exploring the body-mind connection. It's about self-empowerment.

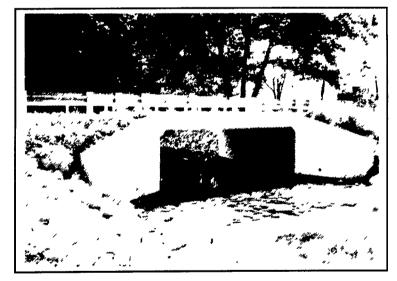
In addition to the keynote you may choose to attend two of 11 workshops. You can explore topics such as current health trends in workshops titled Making Your Kitchen Low Fat Friendly, Can Supplements Prevent Disease?, or Herb! Herb! How Does Your GarMoney management will be the focus of workshops titled Super Pocketbook, about how to stretch your money, and Quick, Quicker, Quickest, where you will become familiar with financial record keeping using jargon free software for your computer. Or, you may be interested in attending workshops dealing with personal situations, such as "Rising Over Troubled Waters," dealing with identifying problems, talking with teens and where to find help.

If parenting issues are of interest, choose workshops like putting Your Child Into the Winner's Circle and Kid's Day Out. Just for fun, you can start on a journey of family history in the workshop titled Digging At Your Roots, or learn how to make an inexpensive flower arrangement during your time in Roadside Arrangements "Working with Roadsidea."

A buffet luncheon is included in your registration and you may be the lucky winner of a getaway weekend at Seven Springs. Early bird registration is \$21.



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