

HOME ELECTRONICS

You can get the fax anywhere — even on the road



BARRY JENSEN

Communication is at the root of many home electronics innovations: cellular telephones, computers, cable TVs and facsimile machines.

Facsimile machines carved a big place in the office years ago, but now they have spread to the home and the automobile.

I remember sitting next to the granddaddy of them all, the Xerox Telecopier, as it ground out copy written in the Southfield office and transmitted electronically to the printing plant. The first Telecopiers were primitive, using carbon paper pressed against a roll of white paper to transmit a page in six minutes.

Faxes, as they came to be known, came into their own with the electro-mechanical models that used rolls of special thin paper. Plain paper faxes are nicer than the older electromechanical machines, but they are more expensive, and plain paper machines can run into limitations if you want to transmit a document 18 inches long to a machine that is loaded with sheets of paper 11 inches long.

A business fax, with lots of capabilities, can cost more than \$1,000. A simple fax for the home can be had for less than \$200.

The ability to send exact copies over great distances quickly is marvelous for businessmen. (It's also marvelous for people whose insurance policies are about to expire. The insurance compa-

ny employee just faxed a copy of the renewal form to me, and I filled it out and faxed it back, ensuring another year's protection for my house and property).

The fax also works well for people who want to see something printed. This capability is useful to public relations chairmen, coaches, letter writers, members of booster clubs, school principals and others.

Many of the people whose columns you read in this paper have, for years, been sending in their stories via fax. If the writer is using a fax at home, he doesn't have to leave his house to get his copy into the local newspaper.

Another option if you have a computer and a modem at home is buying a computer program that will send faxes. These programs have become very popular as the speed of the gimmicks that send the information (modems) have increased dramatically.

When I bought a modem last year, it came with a fax program, no extra charge. The program lacks bells and whistles, but it is enough for my needs. That modem is available for less than \$100.

To fax your letter or press release to

your local newspaper, call one of these 24-hour numbers.

- Birmingham Eccentric: 1-810-644-1314,
- Canton Observer: 1-313-469-4220,
- Farmington Observer: 1-810-477-9723,
- Garden City Observer: 1-313-691-7279,
- Livonia Observer: 1-313-591-7279,
- Plymouth Observer: 1-313-459-4220,
- Redford Observer: 1-313-591-7279,
- Rochester Eccentric: 1-810-651-9080,
- Southfield Eccentric: 1-810-644-1314,

Troy Eccentric: 1-810-651-9080, West Bloomfield/Lakes Eccentric: 1-810-644-1314.

Westland Observer: 1-313-691-7279.

It's always a good idea to follow up the fax by calling a human being to make sure the fax was received (machines can jam, run out of paper or become overloaded).

Barry Jensen welcomes your comments and suggestions for topics for future columns. His fax number is 1-313-691-7279. The voice telephone number is 1-313-953-2125. You can call at any time.

TREASURE SEARCH

Planters had special use



NANCY AND FRANK BOOS

Dear Nancy and Frank:

My mother always had this porcelain bowl and spigot on the wall, used as a planter. I haven't seen new planters like this and wondered if it was always meant for that or what its purpose in life really is.

Sally, Farmington Hills

Dear Sally:

The proper name for what you have is a "lavabo," which actually has ecclesiastical origins. Rain water was caught in the top portion (or placed there for religious services) and then flowed through a spigot to the basin positioned below. Lavaboes were used for the washing of the celebrant's hands after the offering in the Mass. They were also found in medieval monasteries and were used for the ablutions or washings involved in religious rituals. Their use was later expanded in European towns for the convenience of travelers needing water for washing or drinking. Yours has a value, if in good condition, of approximately \$2,200 to \$2,600 retail.

Nancy and Frank Boos are with the Frank H. Boos Gallery, an appraisal firm and auction house at 420 Enterprise Court in Bloomfield Hills that has been in the auction business for more than 30 years. Do you have an item you would like to know about? Send in a good photo of it, along with its description (including size, working parts, etc.) and any known provenance (history) to Treasure Search, The Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.



Water works: Lavaboes, once used to hold water for washing or drinking, make beautiful planters.

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