Mail From Our Readers

Doug Briggs at Apple in Massachusetts wrote to tell us "LisaCalc 1.4 and new version of the Office System have been revoked for an indefinite period of time". [See *Signal #6, 1.4 Release Fixes LisaCalc*] Serge Polevitzky of Hi-Tech Computing in San Diego also wrote, claiming "Office System version 1.4 has fallen into disfavor, as version 1.4 is reported to have more bugs than 1.2 or 1.0. The currently accepted fix for using the Apple plus Period keys in LisaCalc is: don't do that!"

Serge's letter also included some help for users who have run out of serial ports:

"Suppose you have a modem, ImageWriter [Apple's new dot matrix printer], and Letter Quality Printer. This would tie up three ports, when only two are available on the Lisa. Put the modem and LQP into serial ports A and B. An Apple D-25 Centronics cable can connect a Lisa parallel port to a MicroFazer parallel-to-serial 64K buffer, and an RS-232 cable using pins 1 to 8 and 20 connects the MicroFazer to the ImageWriter. The MicroFazer is jumpered for 9600 baud and request-to-send, while the

ImageWriter gets set to 9600 baud and X-on/X-off. Since Apple has not announced a serial card for the Lisa, this method saves shuffling the three serial devices around the two serial ports, and buffering does a lot to free up the Lisa. I am sure other (such as Practical Peripherals) buffers work just as well."

Serge also mentioned that error message #950 appears several times while installing Pascal, but that Apple's Hotline says this is an expected error and not to worry.

James Stephens, from Pasadena's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, sent us a copy of his interesting six page memo on "thoughts and suggestions about the use of personal computers [read "Lisa"] at JPL". Attached to the memo was a chart comparing Lisa with the IBM XT using VisiOn, the HP 9836A, the Corvus Concept, and the IBM 9000. The chart is similar to, but more detailed than, the Lisa vs. IBM XT comparison published in *Icon's* first issue. James also included a copy of an engineering drawing that is by far the most complicated LisaDraw document we have seen to date. The drawing nicely demonstrates how

shrinking Lisa listings with a reducing photocopier results in a professional, typeset look.

Last month we received a copy of the GD Info Net Personal Computer Newsletter from the General Dynamics Data Systems Division in San Diego. The 20 page December issue was created on a Lisa by a seven person staff, part of a group devoted to supporting General Dynamics employees using personal computers. The newsletter is mostly articles about Apple and IBM products, with one page of the December issue devoted to Lisa news.

Charles Negin of Grove Engineering in Washington Grove,

Maryland, sent us a copy of a letter to Apple that included a Lisa wish list. Most of the wishes were for LisaDraw: allow "shrink to fit" as in LisaProject and LisaGraph; provide more line types, such as dashed or dotted lines; allow user defined shades; provide rotation of any object, including text, to at least every five degrees; allow the angle of an arc to be read with "show size"; allow pages to be cut and duplicated exactly along a page boundary, even if crossed by an object. For example, cutting along a page boundary crossed by a circle would extract only the arc on the page being cut.

Other Grove Engineering wishes: not keying software to machine serial numbers, so that if a Lisa is taken in for repair, the ProFile or system diskettes don't have to be taken in also if the repair people need to run them; allow queueing any number of documents for printing; allow the out-of-paper printer sensor to be overridden; support a printer and plotter that can produce engineering drawings up to size D or E, to avoid having to piece together a large drawing from several small ones; allow columns to be inverted in LisaCalc and LisaGraph; allow logarithmic axes and graphs larger than one page in LisaGraph; allow changing a selected range of LisaWrite text from upper to lower case and vice versa.

And last but not least, Dave Redhed of Clear Skies Consulting in Seattle reported that large fonts sometimes print too wide. Our tests found that long Modern text seemed to print exactly as shown on the screen, but Classic tended to print 1/8" short. ⊟