

FRANCIS J. SHIELDS  
23 Ashley Drive  
Ballston Lake NY 12019-1539

*file*

10 August, 1995

Dear Roy,

Perhaps you recall my telling you, when you were here with Ron and the new motor home, that there was a computer store in the Latham area that handled Commodore equipment, and that it might be possible to buy a cable there (with what's called a Centronics connector) that would connect your Olivetti printer to the serial port on the 1541 disk drive you have.

Today I was able to ask at that store whether such a cable was available, so you could connect your Olivetti. So I have some bad news and some (possibly) good news about the subject. The bad news is that the company that for many years supplied the type of cable under consideration (for a price of around \$45, not exactly cheap) has gone out of business. Another entrepreneur, however, is now marketing a similar cable (which would have to be ordered), but at a price in the range of \$75!

The proprietor chatted away with me and said that if you wanted to keep using your Olivetti printer he'd be able to get a cable for you. I picked up on this and pointed out that you weren't able to use the Olivetti at all, and it wasn't a sacred possession to you, but it was frustrating not to be able to get hard copy when using the computer.

The (possible) good news is that the proprietor then said that periodically people come in with old Commodore computers and sell them to him for a small price, and that he had a Seikosha 9-pin dot matrix printer (which he showed me), complete with a standard 6-pin connecting cable for connecting to a Commodore disk drive. The setup doesn't require the costly Centronics/Commodore special interfacing cable, and is available for \$55 - cable plus printer! He pointed out that the availability of parts for this Seikosha printer is zilch, but that ribbons for it are still on the market.

So, whether that's good news for you is, I'm sure, a matter of economics, but one consideration is that there is a solution to your printer problem that's significantly less costly than the price of a Centronics cable all by itself. Another consideration is that the Olivetti requires those carbon vials and a spark discharge for printing. And, once you run out of the carbon cylinders, that would probably mean an end to printing with the Olivetti. A third consideration is that the Seikosha 9-pin printer, while not the best for quality of printer output (in comparison with today's 24-pin printers and with Laser or bubble jet printers) is a better printer than the Olivetti is.

Well, Roy, that's my story. I know this will take some thoughtful reflection on your part, especially with Ron's shoulder operation coming up shortly. But think it over, and if the Seikosha looks like something you can't resist, let me know. If you decide not to spring for the printer, that will be a proper decision so far as I'm concerned, and I'm not pushing you in either direction. But, one way or another, give me some feedback when you can.

Regards to you and Ronnie. Anna and I get the sense that you're both enjoying the new Honeybee. That's great; you've been a long time without the benefits and freedom it conveys. Enjoy it in good health. And speaking of health, we'll stay in touch with you regarding Ronnie's surgery.

Sincerely,

Francis