Mailbag
by our readers; edited and responded to by Todd Michael Lewis

We want your feedback! Send your letters to: **Softdisk, 606 Common St., Shreveport LA 71101-3432**, FAX to **(318) 221-8870**, or E-mail to **sdwletters@softdisk.com**.

Dear Softdisk,

I have been with you from the (Gad!) old 5 1/4 inch floppy #11 through all the 3 1/2 inch and now, into the great wide yonder of CD-ROM. What a progression!! Wonderful progression, great color graphics and sound - the music is great. I can't wait for the next Football Companion as I'm hooked on simulations and detailed sports compilations.

Charles B. Tome
Kerrville, TX

Todd responds:
Thanks for the kind words. We've gotten a lot of great feedback on our CD-ROM product, and I highly recommend it to any of our floppy subscribers. Not only do you get a great intro movie every month but hi color graphics, a free demo, full screen scenic wallpapers and more. How about the rest of you? Do we have anyone out there who has switched from floppy to CD-ROM with an opinion (good or bad)?

P.S. This month you get your wish. It's this year's running of Football companion with data for the 1997-98 season and improved prediction algorithms.

Dear Softdisk,

Family Medical History Manager. This is a good, helpful program; however there are a couple of glitches. I have entered 3 family members and when I try to add a fourth I get this message: "Duplicate entry for the key mem::mem_key." Also, it will not save any information in the "notes and comments" space in the Doctor's Visits - Visitations continued" area.

Florence Schierhors
Glen Cove, NY

Todd responds:

These are two genuine problems with the program. The "notes and comments" error is something that cannot be overcome. There is no way this field will ever remember anything you may enter into it. I don't know how that slipped by us.

The "duplicate entry" error can be prevented though. All the information for the program is stored in a database that keys off of the patient's social security number. Each social security number must be unique or this error will occur. When you add a new family member, please make sure to enter their social security number. The error usually occurs because the field defaults to "000-00-0000." Leaving it this way will work for one person. If you enter a second person and leave this field at "000-00-0000", you will get the "duplicate entry" error. Similarly, if you accidentally enter this field and duplicate a social security number already in the database, the error will also occur.

As with all programs, we will look into possible fixes for these problems. From time to time, we do offer patches for programs to alleviate certain bugs so there may be some fixes down the road.

Dear Softdisk,

You responded to a letter (about the program Screen Saver Randomizer) by saying there was a patch in issue 27, but I did not install the screen saver on that issue, so I guess I missed it. Anyway, I downloaded it ... and do not know what to do with it.

Florence Schiehors
via the Internet

Todd Responds:

Excellent question! Periodically, we provide patches to our programs, both on the issue and at the issue's web site (www.softdisk.com/sub/windows). There will usually be instructions for both. In the case of the patch in question, you can run it from anywhere, and it will do the job. You just have to remember where you installed the original program to. If you used the default directory during installation, then the patch already knows where to find the original files!

Dear Softdisk,

Here's my Word Square contest entry...

Anonymous
via the Internet

Todd responds:
We're all glad that people keep sending in scores and high scores for the programs on the issues. The Hall of Fame seems to be popular among subscribers. Sometimes we run contests for these programs. The last time we used a program called Word Square. Unfortunately, the deadline for this contest has long since passed. Please **DO** send in your secret words though. The Hall of Fame is a little light this month, and I know there must be some of you who want to see your name up in lights, so to speak.

Dear Softdisk,

The On Broadway crossword was published on your DOS issue a while back.

Ted Wojciehowski
Rice Lake, WI

Todd responds:
Good spot Ted. We draw from the same pool of crosswords for both our DOS and Windows products. The DOS issues would publish two crosswords while there was only one on the Windows issue. This meant that the On Broadway crossword got onto the DOS issue months ahead of the Windows issue. The result is that a DOS subscriber can switch to Windows and see some of the same crosswords. To fix this problem, we've started giving you two crossword puzzles on the Windows issue. This gives you more and helps to keep both issues in sync.

We are also paying closer attention that the same puzzles on the DOS issue are used on the Windows issue the same month or the next month. This should prevent any such crossover in the future for subscribers who switch between platforms on their subscription.

Dear Softdisk,

It would also be nice if we could fill out your report card on our computers using a simple word processor and then faxing it to you or even e-mailing it.

Warren Evensen
Freehold, NJ

Todd responds:

And how! Although having the report card built into the shell has been a great ease to many of our subscribers, there are still a fair number who want to load it up in their editor of choice. If you go to the report card, you'll notice a button that says "Save as Text." Click it, and you'll have a hardcopy version of the report card. Be warned though, sometimes you will get an error message. The report card will still have been written to disk though, so don't worry.

Secondly, we've been looking into putting some internet and e-mail capabilities into the issue for a long time. This way, anyone with a connection could send e-mail from the issue. Done with the report card...no problem, just hit the e-mail button and away it goes. You could also instantly respond to any program, enhancement or article on the issue. We don't have this capability yet, but we're working on it!