

RELEASING DORIS AND JOHNNY

by Fred Hobbs

First an admission. I admit I am afflicted, or better (or is it worse) yet, I am addicted. To sound. Human voices, music of a wide variety, birds chirping, geese honking, even occasionally a dog barking except for the little ones emitting those sharp yapping sounds so prevalent where I live.

Even as I write this little essay, my TV is tuned to the “easy listening” cable channel playing softly in the background. I am also a “vidiot”, admittedly inclined to watch too much television. Recently, a minor electronic tragedy sorely tested my ability to handle the consequences of my addictions.

Settling down to watch for the nearly one-thousandth time my favorite movie by my favorite show biz personality, I was shocked to see the screen suddenly frozen into a single image. No sound, no movement emitting from my “compact disc capable of storing high resolution audio material” (otherwise known as a DVD.) Beautiful, vivacious and talented Doris Day and the cast of *By the Light of the Silvery Moon* were motionless and silent, locked inside the plastic workings of my DVD player. Worse yet, the disc would not eject.

Doris was trapped and may never get released! At least not by me, because I didn’t how to accomplish the task.

That’s when I turned to Mike, my trusty, helpful and pleasant computer and electronics guru.

Mike responded quickly to my plaintive and over-emotional plea to free Doris from the “surly bonds” of videographic captivity while also recommending I replace my clearly outdated appliance. Carefully, so as not to damage the disc, Mike took apart the DVD player and gingerly released Doris to sing, dance and charm again.

Following Mike’s advice, I purchased and he installed a new combined DVD and VCR (videocassette recorder and player). My “historic” VCR tape collection included favorite excerpts from the *Tonight Show* when it was hosted by the best of them, Johnny Carson.

Assuring Mike I knew how to operate the new device, he departed to go to serve other technically challenged customers. By a remarkable coincidence, again exposing my ineptitude in this kind of endeavor, I could play Johnny Carson, but couldn’t find the right button to eject the tape. Another entertainment icon trapped in my living room and this time it was strictly my fault.

In a short telephone conversation, Mike patiently talked me through the navigation process in using the remote control device that I call “the clicker.”

Johnny and Doris now are easily accessible to bring joy at my command.

That is, as long as the new machine, made in China and purchased at Sears, holds up its part of the bargain!