Nuts to the Computer

*By Sharon Buchan*


COMPUTER PRAYER: Our computer, which art infallible, hallowed be thy data. Thy program be run on-line as it is off-line. Give us this day our daily printout, and delete our errors as we delete those who error against us. Lead us not into unauthorized files, but deliver us from invalid entries. For thine is the format, the power-up and the modem forever and repeat. (Sign-off)

I did not write the above Prayer. The language is far too polite and spiritual for me. I was going to the Center for Blind Adults in Alaska when I encountered my first Computer for the Blind. My teacher told me I would be great as I was such a good typist. What a nutty thing that was to say as it was followed by, "You will only have to remember several hundred commands." And this was before Windows 95!

Pascal once left me in the room alone and told me to relax, have fun and just see what I could do by myself. He returned ten minutes later to find that I had totally wiped all the information from the computer. He did some magic and took out a funny card with tiny little holes in it. (For Christmas that year I collected those cards, sprayed them red and made a lovely Poinsettia Wreath for Pascal's office door.)

WOW! What progress the Nerds have made in 35 years. Now I only have to memorize about 800 commands. Needless to say I have not done this and just barely get by. This, even after personally begging Bill Gates to make it easier. So do I often fail to accomplish what I desire to do? Absolutely! That happens every day. And do I talk to my Computer saying NUTS to you? I admit that is far too polite and even spiritual for me. I expect that someday my hand gesture will be recognized by my Computer and I will be told that I am off line until my behavior has improved.