# Computers HOLY COW!

## – LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #75 –



Our first computer, an Apple III, back in 1982.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of computers in Midway's early years; when we opened in 1977, our cash register was the most complicated piece of electronic equipment in the gun shop. It had department keys and spit out a tape at the end of the day showing how much cash should be in the cash drawer; that was about it. Twenty-two years later we completed one last major step in the seemingly endless process of computerization.

Apparently it was all about being in the right place at the right time; as the Company grew and we needed to manage a growing list of Customers and products, along came IBM and Apple with powerful and affordable computers.

Computer workstations were only part of the solution. There was also software and a huge amount of personal and organizational learning. I'd taken a Fortran class (early computer programming language) in college and worked closely with the computer department during the first half of my Air Force tour; but I was soon to learn that neither of those experiences were of much value in computerizing the business.

Our second computer, an IBM AT, in 1986.

In 1982 we bought our first computer, an Apple III with 128k of RAM, a stand-a-lone 5 megabyte hard drive and a daisywheel printer -- for the grand sum of $10,000; then the learning began. Initially we only used it to type in Customer names and addresses, then print out labels for mailing our first flyers. It worked just fine for that limited need.

In early 1986 we upgraded to an IBM AT, with an internal 20 megabyte hard drive; and we chose a database software by Revelation. We were now beginning to get serious about computers and database management. By the end of the year we had figured out how to use it, entered all of our Customers and products, and began invoicing on January 2, 1987. By March we had two computers networked together.

> "In 1982 we bought our first computer."

This was really an unbelievable system, for such a small company.

In the computer industry, technology was advancing very rapidly; the world was moving away from DOS and on to Windows, so we followed suit. Making this conversion was the biggest project we had ever attempted and it was two years of hard work before the job was complete; but we were a 'fully-computerized' small business and prepared for continued service to our Customers.

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Computer networking is like Christmas tree lights wired parallel.