abbreviated as EXE) exists which is intended to be run specifically from a shell environment.

ProSel-16 ($60 from us, and from the author Glen Bredon, 521 State Road, Princeton, N.J. 08540) combines a menu-driven selector similar to ProSel-8 with a programmable shell that can be accessed directly from any menu. Recent versions allow the selection of text-based or graphics-based menu screens, and give access to the desktop for use of New Desk Accessories (from the "apple" menu). ProS-el-16 allows launching S16, EXE, SYS, and BAS (with options such as startup pathname specification, purging options to attempt to free "idle" memory for large GS/OS applications, and IIgs slow/fast speed settings) files as well as its shell command files.

There are alternative desktop-based selectors. One of the simplest is the freeware LaunchBox, which allows you to define up to 23 buttons (via a text file) that can launch applications. A twenty-fourth button is reserved for launching other applications for which a specific button hasn't been defined. Making multiple menus involves creating multiple copies of LaunchBox and its application lists. It cannot pass a startup pathname, or set an application path distinct from the path the application is launched from.
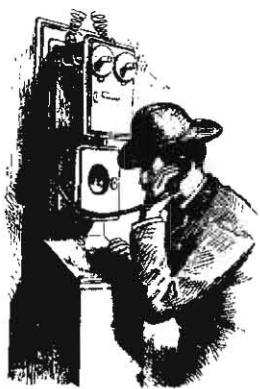
HyperLaunch ($60 from So What Software, 10211 Slater Avenue, Suite 103, Fountain Valley, Calif. 92708, 714-964-4298) also uses the button metaphor, and also includes file and disk utilities.

JumpStart (from Dave Hill at MaineFrame Software, 255 Mitchell Road, Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107) is a program selector with a "quick run" list and file and disk utilities. JumpStart can be driven by a text script, and includes provision for an application to be executed at startup. If you don't need (or have room for) the disk utilities, a more compact version of the JumpStart program without the disk utilities is provided.

When using an alternative selector, either it can replace Finder as the Start program by deleting Finder, or it can rename the current Start file to something else, or it can be installed to be launched from Finder. Unless disk space is at a premium, we've generally chosen to keep Finder available by renaming "Start" as "Finder" before installing a new selector. Before you remove Finder, make sure that your alternative utility has enough options to allow you to perform all the normal maintenence functions you may need; access to New Desk Accessories (for example, the "Choose printer" option now is only available in the Control Panel NDA!), ability to activate/inactivate initialization files (Finder allows this from the Icon Info dialog for an icon), controlled Shutdown (available from Finder's "Special" menu) and so on.

For AppleShare, we find ourselves using Finder because its utilities are fully AppleShare aware, and Finder's Icon Info dialog for file icons residing on an AppleShare volume allows changing access privileges (the IIgs AppleShare interface is superior to the Mac interface in this respect).—DJD

Ask
(or tell)
Uncle
DOS

24-pin printer support

I have some information in response to Rick Pedley's question on the Panasonic KXP1124 24-pin dot matrix printer, which appeared in **A2-Central** Vol. 6 No. 3, page 6.23.

The Panasonic KXP1124 is electronically and mechanically identical to the Roland Raven PR2417, except for some of the external casing. This was confirmed by careful examination of the technician's service manual for the '2417, which uses the two printers's names interchangeably.

I purchased the Roland Raven PR2417 last June. According to the self test, its ROMs are revision level "C". I use it on my Apple IIgs (ROM version 01) with an Orange Micro Grappler Plus (ROM revision 3.2) parallel printer interface in slot 1.

The '2417 has basically two emulations: Epson LQ2500 and IBM ProPrinter X24. Most printer control commands are common between these two printers (i.e. they have the same effect), but there are some very important exceptions.

Problems arise because some bit-graphics modes are not shared (e.g. Epson's "Esc ? n m" command), and that the same linefeed commands ("Esc A n" and "Esc 3 n") do different things. In Epson mode, the former sets paper feed to n/60 of an inch and the latter sets the paper feed to n/180 of an inch. In IBM mode, the same commands set paper feed to n/72 and n/216 respectively.

Some software explicitly supports Epson LQ-series printers; for example Print Shop GS, Publish-It! 3, Graph-It!, TimeOut SuperFonts, etc. These programs will work properly if they are installed for the Epson LQ. However, most programs (particularly older ones) only have support for 9-pin Epsons (e.g. the MX, LX, FX, etc.). If software is installed for an Epson FX80 and the printer is in Epson LQ mode, the '2417 will do a good job of emulating that 9-pin Epson, except that all bit graphics printouts will be stretched vertically by approximately 20%. This is because the Epson FX's linefeed value is not the same as the Epson LQ's. The solution, of course, is to set the '2417 to IBM mode, and then the aspect ratio will be preserved and there is complete compatibility. About 99% of software I have encountered falls into this category.

However, a problem arises when a program (installed for an FX80) sends bit-graphics commands which are not supported in the IBM mode. The result is seemingly endless pages of "garbage". The only example of this is the Activision GS/OS Epson driver. In this case, there is no choice but to set the '2417 to LQ emulation, and suffer with slightly stretched printouts.

For text-based programs (e.g. AppleWorks) there are no problems as long as the '2417 is in the mode the program is installed for.

Other than this one minor nuisance with graphics, I am completely happy with the performance of this printer. The printouts are razor sharp and uniform, and the paper transport system is very versatile and reliable.

Stephen Brown
Willowdale, Ont.

No zip in memory card

Ever since I installed a Zip Chip in my Apple IIc, I keep having unexpected crashes in Apple-Works. What's the deal?

James A. Strauss
San Francisco, Calif.

Chris Adams at Chinook says they have seen

problems with the combination of the Zip Chip and Apple's internal memory expansion for the Apple IIc. This seems reasonable, since Apple recommended against using their expansion in the IIc Plus due to compatibility problems with the accelerated CPU.

Chris says Chinook can modify the RAM expansion card for compatibility for the bargain price of $25; contact Chinook Technology, Inc., 601 Main Street #635, Longmont, Colo. 80501, 303-678-5544.—DJD

Bad driving?

Rumor has it that third party disk drives that would work with the old IIgs will not work with the new (ROM 03) version. Comment, please.

Bill Gallip
Virginia Beach, Vir.

The new second revision of **Apple IIgs Hardware Reference** does show a slight modification (mostly added resistances) to the disk port hardware. We have seen one anomaly connected with this; under GS/OS, if the operating system is scanning for a disk and reaches the AMR 3.5 drive we have installed on one of our ROM 03 machines, GS/OS will "hang" if the drive is empty. Inserting a disk in the 3.5 drive allows GS/OS to continue the scan.

Another anomaly we have heard about but haven't seen ourselves. A technician contacted us to tell us that there seems to be a problem with many third-party 5.25 drives when attached to the ROM 03 disk port daisy chain. His point was that Apple drives use the Phase 1 stepper motor (the device that positions the drive's read/write head over the proper disk track) signal as the write protect signal return while most third party drives use a different connection. His explanation of the problem is that a non-write-protected disk placed in the 5.25 drive can't be accessed by the ROM 03 IIgs (write-protecting the disk will allow read access).

The question is whether Apple made the change in the disk port in order to improve