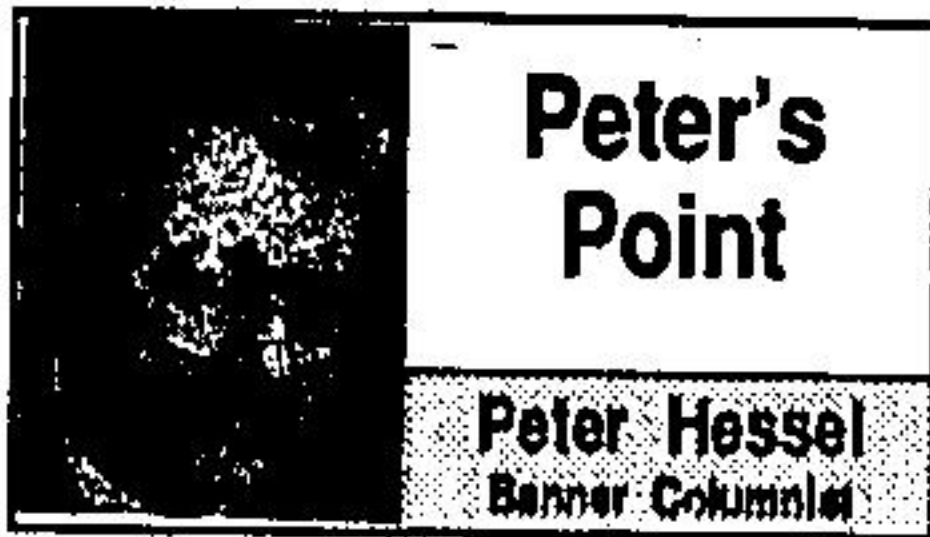


Faxing is 1990 society's favorite pastime

The 1970s were the decade when microwave ovens revolutionized our kitchens. In the 1980s everybody with any sense at all bought a VCR and a video camera. Now fax is conquering not only the office, but the world.

In the 90s faxing is fast becoming the favorite pastime around the globe. There is proof: offices with fax machines have happier employees than those without. Offices without fax are far less efficient and



Peter's Point

Peter Hessel
Banner Columnist

productive. Fax is already beginning to invade the privacy of our homes. For the benefit of the half dozen readers who still

don't know what a fax machine does: it copies anything you want and rushes it via the telephone wires to another fax machine anywhere on earth, where it can be read instantly.

I've recently interviewed the famous fax specialist Dr. Josephine Ringer.

"Dr. Ringer, I understand there are people who fax in total secrecy, with the curtains or vertical blinds drawn. They are afraid of the consequences, and they also believe that faxing is a

Humor

deadly sin."

"Please, call me Josephine," she said. "Yes, I think the subject deserves open discussion. Faxing is a basic human need. We can only create a harmonious society if we fax freely, frequently, without fear and without taboos."

"Do you think it would be OK for a woman to fax to a man, or should female faxers always hold back, show

some reserve and wait for the male fax to come in?" I asked.

"That is a thing of the past," she laughed. "Today, women can take the initiative, within certain limits, of course. But in general, our activity reports indicate that women are successful senders as well as receivers."

"How many times - I mean, how often should we fax?" I inquired cautiously. I knew it was a difficult and delicate question. She thought for a second.

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"Everyone to his or her ability," she assured me. "How very wise," I said to myself.

She added: "I would put it this way — anything that is becoming routine will sooner or later lose its appeal. A quick fax in the morning or in the afternoon, or after a satisfying meal will help you build self-confidence."

"But if two people, who only know each other as business acquaintances, are faxing too frequently or too intimately, isn't that going to affect their working relationship and perhaps even their family life?"

"Faxers must know how far they can go," Josephine said. "What I don't like, for example, is this constant aimless and hurried faxing-around. The noise alone is enough to drive you out of your mind. I prefer it when faxing is done with imagination and in quiet surroundings."

I told her that I had heard of people who fax only at night, and in total darkness.

"Yes, and we have evidence that their error rate is very high. Their messages become garbled, or they reach people they don't know at all."

"There are even public places for faxing now," I reminded her. "Don't you think that's terrible?"

"No. Why? Faxing has clearly become a universal human urge. Our society must take that into account."

"Some people are secretly faxing to themselves. Would you call that a form of perversion? Could it make you blind or give you a disease or something?"

"Of course not. That's all superstition. It is definitely better than suppressing your faxing urge altogether."

"So you think the faxing trend of the 90s cannot be stopped. Isn't there something immoral in all this?"

"You know, even the Pope hasn't condemned faxing, as long as it is good for business. I think it is quite wrong to over-indulge, mind you. But as a general rule, you could say that an office with a fax machine is where you find happy, contented employees. Faxing is clearly good for you."

"What if people are really getting sick and tired of faxing? If they develop faxing fatigue?"

"They should go and see a fax consultant."



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