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A Ted Bit

I guess 11 years is a fair lifespan— for a printer

Monday night, The Sidekick decided to work on some Christmas stuff.

Part of that 'stuff' required using our old long-suffering HP printer at home.

I received a call on my cell phone as I was about to leave the office for home.

"What ink cartridge do I need for the printer?" she asked.

I may be considered a bit weird, but I carry that info with me, scribbled on a business card tucked in my wallet. Recently I've recorded those bits of trivial information as a text file on my Blackberry.

I took a quick look.

"You'll need an HP 27 black ink cartridge," I replied. "The colour one is okay for now."

End of story, so I thought.

At home, as I returned to the house after leaving a barn full of contented sheep, she arrived home with her load of 'stuff' to work on.

As an aside, before anything can be done in the evening, The Sidekick is adamant that she prepare dinner. She fantasizes about what we're having for dinner before she's finished her breakfast in the morning.

Frozen food **MUST** be taken out before she leaves for work so it can thaw during the day. (One time I questioned what the 'defrost' setting was used for on the microwave oven— the glare said it wasn't an appropriate question.)

Before dinner could be prepared, she needed a recipe off the Internet. I said I'd print it out for her.

"Out of Paper" came up on the screen. I checked the printer— lots of paper. Hmm.

I pulled out the stack of paper and shuffled it a bit and replaced it.

"Out of Paper".

Again, I reloaded the paper, and then the printer kicked into service, giving me a light but readable copy of the recipe. It was really ready for that black cartridge.

Dinner was a magnificent feast, and as I was about to settle down to watch TV, The Sidekick called from the kitchen.

"Can you replace the black ink?"

Grumbling, I took the cartridge box to the office. I opened the lid of the printer, expecting it to move the cartridge to the centre of the track, so I could pop it out.

It started moving, back and forth... back and forth... back and forth... and so on.

All the while, it was making some really bad groaning and crunching noises.

I unplugged it— the crunching stopped. Plugged back in, it continued its attempt to self-destruct.

"I don't think you're going to be able to print out any labels tonight," I said to The Sidekick in the kitchen.

A somewhat miffed answer returned. She stuck her head into the office to check out the problem.

As I put the power to the old printer, it hummed and hawed again, non-stop rocking back and forth, not sounding the least bit healthy.

She got the message.

"I guess it can wait," she said. "Can you buy a new printer tomorrow?"

I agreed, and my day's quest was decided.

I checked when I bought the old printer. It was a display model from Zellers, and I paid half price— it cost \$40.

I recall that number well cuz the first time I had to replace the ink cartridges, I had to cough up \$60 for them.

I looked up when I bought

it— April, 2002.

I suddenly didn't feel bad about it giving up the ghost. I think 11 years is more than a fair life expectancy for a piece of plastic.

The next day I went shopping for a printer, and learned the printer world has progressed at warp speed in so very many capabilities— wire-

less connections, direct print from a cell phone, all-in-one scanner, printer, copier— you name it.

I found a unit that looked okay.

"How much?" I asked the sales guy.

"Well, it lists for \$99.95, but if you buy it with this computer I can sell it for \$30."

"How much can you sell the printer for alone?" I countered.

After some discussion, he sold it to me for \$40 plus tax— the same price I paid for the old one 11 years ago.

So we now have a printer (which also scans, copies, prints from a cell phone— and God only knows what else it can do.)

And judging from the lifespan of the old one, I'd venture to guess we'll likely need to replace it sometime around December of 2024...

—Ted Brown can be reached at tbrown@theifp.ca



TED BROWN

'Out of Paper' came up on the screen— there was lots of paper in it...

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