

Editorial

by Michelle Winegar

I remember hearing about a chef once who was in charge of defrosting a lot of frozen foods in a fine dining restaurant. During those long pauses while waiting for the friendly 'bing' of the microwave, he would lean back on his warm plastic surface and read a murder mystery (or maybe the Ontarion), or just talk to the other chefs. This guy was pretty healthy and seemed fine until one day he just up and died. Now the point to this story is that when they performed the autopsy they found, there inside of him, an array of partially cooked organs.

Yes, this story is a little gruesome, but it's told not just to be gruesome, but you see...they found a crack in the microwave.

The man had died because of all the radiation that was secretly passing through his skin while he was calmly leaning on.

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The story does sound a little far fetched, but it got me thinking in computer class the other day. My professor was saying how office computers were originally supposed to dramatically decrease the amount of paper used, however stud-

ies had found that computers had actually increased paper waste from (if my memory serves) 20 to 30 percent. The obvious solution, he pointed out, is to edit on screen as opposed to printing and reprinting for tiny errors.

At first I thought this was a fabulous suggestion. I imagined the amount of paper I use to write an essay. How I usually print out a couple of drafts, and then I multiplied that by all the essays I write in a year, all the students at U of

G, and then by all the students around the world. That amount of paper, I imagined, could equal a thousand green forests to run naked in.

But I also had a tiny nagging feeling, not nearly so optimistic. I thought of the chef. I

thought of spending eight hours a day with my head, a soft target, a propped sponge for all those persistent wavy lines of radiation. Sure...the levels are small, much smaller than a microwave, much much smaller than a Hiroshima, but I asked my professor anyway. "Are their any health side effects from working on a computer for long periods of time?" His answer went something like this--"Well, the jury is not really out on that one yet. Numerous health journals have done studies which demonstrate their is a need for concern, however many computer manufacturers absolutely dispute that claim in their own studies."

I see the microchip conveyor belt pushed to light speed. I hear the rubber tires of truck loads of computers screeching to a halt... hundreds of businesses rushing towards them for automation, and above it all I see the CEOs of Apple, and IBM, nestled together puffing away on high tar cigarettes. After all, Export came out with a conclusive study last year that finally proves, once and for all that the whole nicotine thing is just a lot of hype.