7. Look before you leap . . .

As you become familiar with Laurel, you will doubtless discover features that please you and "features" that annoy you. This section reports some of the annoying "features" other users have encountered and, in some cases, what to do to get around them.

Formatting messages for non-Laurel users

Laurel breaks lines in a transmitted message by a rather simple-minded algorithm. This may lead to line overflow when the message is read on certain terminals using MSG (or other mail systems). If you know that some of your recipients have this problem, you may wish to exercise care in the formatting of your outgoing messages. Use explicit CRs and keep your lines down to about 80% of the Laurel screen width. (A relatively painless way to do this is to compose the entire message *without* using CRs, then just before delivery make a final pass over the message, substituting CRs for spaces at appropriate points.)

Shifted (and secondary) selection from the message display region

Text in the message display region generally has real CRs in it. Laurel respects this formatting information, even when displayed text is copied into a composed message. When you insert text from a displayed message into the message composition region, you may discover that the real CRs break lines in the wrong places. If you don't like this, you will have to replace those explicit CRs by spaces after copying the text. The **Substitute** command (S (COM-S), section 4.4.10) provides a convenient method for doing this if a large number of CR's are involved.

The Answer form

The form provided by the **Answer** command is not always exactly what you might want. Laurel takes the viewpoint that it is easier to delete than to add text, and therefore includes all the information that seems to be relevant. For example, Laurel often includes your name in the cc: field of the answer form, even though you may not want a copy of the message you are composing. You should *not* expect that the answer form will be exactly right; always examine the header to be certain it contains the desired information.

In particular, if you reply to a message that was directed to a distribution list, the **Answer** command will copy the distribution list name into the cc: field of the answer form. You should consider carefully whether or not it is appropriate for your reply to be sent to that distribution list, and if not delete the distribution list name. (See also the discussion of Reply-To: fields in section 6).

Space requirements

Many Laurel users find it convenient to designate a disk on which they will use Laurel exclusively. You will need about 700 disk pages to hold Laurel and a moderate-sized mail file.

Some users, when converting from MSG to Laurel, have had a rude shock when they transferred their archival mail files from Maxc to their Alto disk. Recall that one Maxc disk page becomes four Alto disk pages when a file is moved. This is another reason for dedicating an Alto disk to mail processing and filing, particularly if you maintain archival mail files.

Hardcopy usage

Laurel's **Hardcopy** command is intended for use in printing copies of isolated messages that you may wish, for whatever reason, to obtain in hardcopy form. It is only suitable for obtaining hardcopy archives of all your messages, say, to put in your filing cabinet, if you print using the "Archive" hardcopy form (section 3.3.2). The other standard hardcopy forms, that print each message on a separate page, are definitely unsuitable for hardcopy archives.

If you do wish to maintain a hardcopy archive, and the "Archive" hardcopy form is not to your taste or itself produces too much paper, we recommend that you use Empress.run (or other printing programs) to print your mail file directly as continuous, unformatted text.

Type-ahead and button-ahead

Laurel directly senses the COM key (modeless editor only) and the SHIFT key for the SHIFT-BS and SHIFT-NEXT combinations (also modeless editor only) at the time that the command is performed. Thus type-ahead for these combinations is not supported. For normal text type-in, type-ahead is supported.

Mouse button-ahead is not supported at all.

Type-ahead is flushed on entry and exit from the **Run** command. Have patience at these times.