Chelm Computer Club Committee
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Chelm had a visitor. He was a computer salesman from Lublin. At a meeting of the Chelm Elders he made a presentation on why Chelm should have a computer. His argument mentioned the United Nations and how it was possible for third world countries to bypass the 19" century and go into the latter half of the 20" century—so why not Chelm?

All this sounded logical to the town Chelm Elders; however it raised many questions. Questions flew left and right and there was bedlam. Finally Mayer the Mayor said, "This will get us nowhere. We must have a committee to look into the matter and we must lay out the questions they must ask and get the answers to them.

Because of the nature of the task it was decided that the committee must be made up of the greatest talent in Chelm. Selected for the Chelm Computer Club Committee; were Mendel the math teacher because computers have numbers, Lena the language teacher because computers have letters, Peshke the postman because you can send e-mail and Donele the town detective because you do searches on the computer.

The committee was charged with researching the following four questions/problems and report back to the Mayor and Council.

• Why do we need a computer?
• Where would the computer be kept?
• Who would learn how to use the computer?
• What would the computer be used for?

Why do we need a computer?

This was the simplest question to answer. After all, didn't the computer salesman tell them that the Director General of the United Nations said, "It is possible for third world countries to bypass the 19th century and go directly into the latter half of the 20th century." The Elders looked at each other and no one wanted to admit that maybe the Director General of the United Nations could be wrong. Was Chelm like a third world country?

Where would the computer be kept?

This was a moot question, for it was obvious. There was only one place it could be kept. The idea of it being in the Chelm City Hall never even came up. The possibility of it being kept in the library was out—the librarian always wanted silence. Of course

the synagogue would be out because someone might want to use it on the Sabbath or holy days.

There was only one place where all would agree—the Chelm Kavehoyz. The coffeehouse was conveniently located near the train station. Everyone was free to talk there, and it was open 364 days of the year. The only day it was closed was on the Chelm-Lublin football (soccer) match. Sooner or later every Jew in town came to the Chelm Kavehoyz.

Who would learn how to use the computer?

At first it seemed that it was not important, couldn't anyone learn how to use the computer? The salesman had said that even a child can use a computer. However, word got out from Hershl the horse trader, who had just gotten back from the Annual Lublin County Fair, that the best people to learn the computer are the teenagers.

Reb Ruvn, principal of the Chelm Talmud Torah, was asked to select a group of students to learn how to use the Mac that the salesman had sold to the Chelm City Council. It had an operating system of version 0.1—the salesman had assured them that it was the latest version.

What would the computer be used for?

It's a good question. The salesman said, "It is used for searches." Immediately the mayor laughed and said, "From now on when anyone forgets something, we'll just ask the computer." Everyone agreed—that is enough reason to have a computer.

All went well until Tshepe's mother came to a council meeting and told the wise councilmen of Chelm, "The only searching the computer boys did on the Mac was for computer games and girls. You should excuse me—without any clothes."

Immediately the Chelm City Councilmen voted to shut down the Chelm Kavehoyz, pass an ordinance outlawing computers and to discard the computer.

If you visit Chelm today, you will find a plaque on the building that housed the Chelm Kavehoyz. The inscription reads, "Site of the Chelm Kavehoyz where the Mac computer was located." Likewise you will not find a computer in all of Chelm, for the ordinance is still on the books.