

REWIND, PLEASE

ROLODEXES, VCRS, TYPEWRITERS:
SOME LI OFFICES ARE STILL OLD SCHOOL

BY LISA IRIZARRY

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There was a lot of excitement back in 2016 when a new, technologically advanced \$30,000 chocolate coating machine arrived at the American Classic ice cream manufacturing and distribution facility in Bay Shore. But it was sidelined

in about a week and today sits shrouded in garbage bags.

"The employees love that one," said company co-owner Robert Kronrad as he pointed to the newer model's predecessor — a chocolate enrober made in the 1950s. "We were constantly repairing it," Kronrad said of the more high-tech machine. "And the old one is

easier to operate — with basically an on and off switch for the conveyor, and an on and off switch to heat the chocolate."

At some businesses, including American Classic's sister company and neighbor — All Star Carts & Vehicles — their workplace is full of things from the past including Rolodexes, videocassette tapes and

recorders, electric typewriters, adding machines with paper tape, paper calendars and old phone systems. Others have old favorites here and there, but they're still used every day.

"If it works, what's the problem?" asked Town of Shelter Island Clerk Amber Wilson of preferring some older office staples or equipment to some-

thing newer.

There are paper calendars and typewriters that still have a place in Wilson's office. A paper wall calendar hangs near the front counter where visitors are greeted, Wilson has a smaller one on her desk and typewriters are used for writ-

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Leslie H. Tayne, founder of Tayne Law Group in Melville, uses old-school calculators and desk calendars for ease and efficiency. ■ Video: newsday.tv

CLASSICS from A29

ing some things such as permits for removing shellfish from town lands, death certificates and addressing envelopes.

“A paper calendar, I believe, is a preference,” Wilson said. “It’s quicker to look at the one on the wall near the front counter when I’m assisting people” rather than electronically looking up a date. She noted that on her paper desk calendar, “I can write down when committee meetings are being held, other meetings . . . and things like my kids’ baseball games. It’s quicker writing things down instead of dealing with a computer.”

‘No need for the new’

According to Richard Chan, an associate professor of management at Stony Brook University’s College of Business, going with the old instead of the new is a more popular choice than one might imagine in this digital world.

“This actually happens quite regularly in entrepreneurship,” Chan said. “There’s a branch that focuses on innovation and what’s new, and the paradigm shift to things that will replace existing technology.” However, he added, “At the same time, when innovation is being introduced the rate of adoption tends to be slow, and people don’t know how to use it and appreciate its utility. But once they understand it and appreciate it, its [use] accelerates, and eventually there are enough customers to use the new technology, but then it [the number using] becomes flat.”

Chan predicted there will continue to be resistance to



Linda Cass, deputy town clerk for Shelter Island, types a permit using an electric typewriter, which still gets the job done in a digital world.

some technological changes in some workplaces and beyond.

“There will always be a small group of customers who choose to use the prior technology — they have no need to use [what’s new] and the cost is a

major issue,” Chan said. “People still use traditional cell-phones [that offer calling and texting but no other features smartphones have] because they get the job done and are cost effective.”

There are similar mindsets and cost considerations in the workplace, Chan added.

“Operating new technology can be expensive, especially when novel,” Chan explained. “There could be compatibility

concerns. When you need to upgrade a whole system, that can prevent people from adopting new technology. And sometimes older technology may be more reliable and may not require an additional platform or

Low-tech options in the high-tech world

“Bad to the Bone” played during a recent trip to the offices of All Star Carts & Vehicles in Bay Shore — the song, released in 1982, emanated from a cassette tape inside a boombox purchased during the same decade.

The merchandise kiosks and food trucks maker is the sister company of ice cream manufacturer and distributor American Classic and in the building they’ve shared on Fifth Industrial Court since 1983, the “oldies but goodies” don’t stop with the music. This is despite the fact their shared history includes such notable clients as NASA, the U.S. military, Auntie Anne’s pretzels, Dove Bar, Good Humor and Manhattan’s glamorous The Mark Hotel.

American Classic’s office is managed by co-owner Steve Kronrad’s wife, Theresa, and she uses such old school “tools” as an adding machine and paper calendar every day to do her job. She’s very happy with how they work and isn’t looking to change a thing.

“I use an adding machine

for everything — adding up deposits, drivers’ invoices . . . every function of the business,” Theresa Kronrad said. She said she likes adding machines with the paper tape because they provide a receipt-type record of transactions. “I have tape and I have proof that goes with the paperwork. They’re [adding machines] very valuable.”

Theresa Kronrad said she’ll take a paper calendar over a digital one any day, too.

“With a paper calendar I don’t need a phone — it’s in my face — and I have them going back five years,” she said. “I can write when employees are out, have answers [regarding other dates] in a moment’s flash, and I can write notes to myself and see them at a glance.”

Steve Kronrad noted the All Star Carts & Vehicle’s Rolodex is good to still have around as well. Robert Kronrad said it might date all the way back to the ’70s.

“We were trying to look up a supplier the other day and

didn’t know what it would be under on the computer, so we finally found them on the Rolodex,” Steve Kronrad recalled during a recent interview.

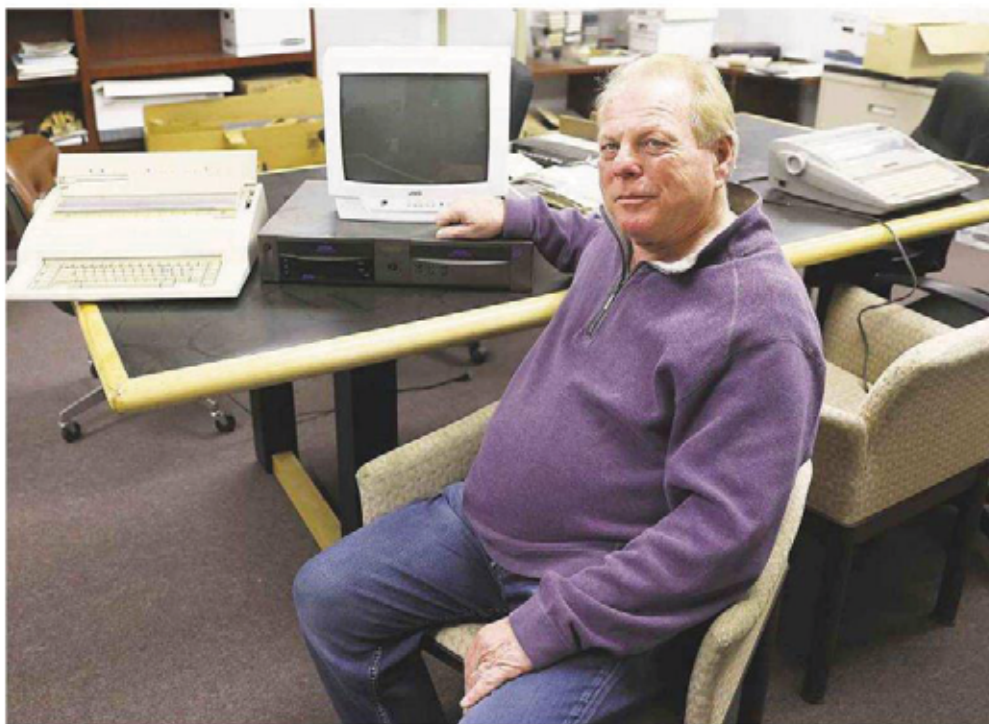
Walking into an upstairs meeting room is like stepping into a conference room from the ’70s or ’80s. VCRs (videocassette recorders) are used for safety training videos, and the electric typewriters include an Olympia Mastertype 3 and a “backup” Brother typewriter that are always at the ready to fill out insurance and other forms.

“People still like typewriters because of the simplicity of using them,” Robert Kronrad said. “They’re not complicated.”

The All Star phone system is another throwback — but at least the 2000s, not the 1980s, are calling. It’s Comdial, installed around 2003.

“Everybody here still uses them,” he said of the phones. “For a small office, they work.” He added, “In some cases, the old stuff is just better than the new stuff.”

— LISA IRIZARRY



Robert Kronrad’s business doesn’t shun the use of typewriters, VCRs and other older technology.



RANDEE DADDONA

Amber Wilson, Shelter Island town clerk, consults a wall calendar in her office. “If it works, what’s the problem?” Wilson says.

WHAT TO KNOW

■ **Rolodexes, video cassette** tapes and recorders, electric typewriters, adding machines with paper tape, desk calculators, paper calendars and early 2000s phone systems are still used on a regular basis at some Long Island businesses.

■ **Experts say the** throwbacks are a more popular choice than one might imagine in this digital world, particularly among entrepreneurs.

■ **Workers say the** older equipment combines familiarity with efficiency and accessibility.

Physical beats digital

Credit and debt expert Leslie H. Tayne, who is founder and head attorney of Tayne Law Group P.C., in Melville, works in an office where its business is crunching lots of numbers all the time. What’s used? Calculators that were purchased at least 10 years ago.

“Yes, we still use physical calculators in our office,” Tayne said. “There are probably 10 — one on each desk . . . simple and easy to use for basic calculations.” She added, “They are old, probably 10 years or more, but they remain essential for our work.”

For Tayne, age is nothing but a number.

“Their simplicity and reliability make them preferable to computer software for certain tasks,” Tayne said of the calculators.

Tayne likes keeping it simple when it comes to calendars, too — she likes paper — the type of calendar that she said has been tried and proven true to her for years.

“I started using paper calendars when I was in college. I used a calendar book for all of my assignments, and it just stuck through law school. I am very visual, so I like to see things, and when I write it down, it’s committed to memory,” Tayne, 50, explained. “It’s always accessible without having to unlock a screen or navigate through apps.”

In addition, Tayne still has an old Rolodex at the office that she said contains some outdated contents, but she can’t bring herself to part with it.

“It’s great to always have a physical copy of digital information,” Tayne said.

additional things for them to operate.”

Chan gave an example of how some things from back in the day function in a way that can’t be replaced by more high-tech versions.

“In the classroom, the blackboard and whiteboard still exist with computers — it’s difficult to replace those because for different occasions they still serve a purpose,” Chan said. “When technology is broken, you can still switch to the blackboard or whiteboard.”

Chan said there are also people who just simply like the old way of doing things and don’t see why they need to complicate matters with lots of modern bells and whistles.

“New technology requires a new set of knowledge of how things work, and if the old things can operate efficiently there’s no need for the new,” Chan said.