



# Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

For the last nine years I've been pounding out my typographical errors on an IBM Selectric typewriter. At the time I bought it, it was the finest machine on the market. Now IBM has come along with an even better machine. It has all the features of the Selectric, plus an erase key which automatically erases all my mistakes. I made the plunge and went big time (and believe you me, any typewriter that costs as much as two color TV sets is big time).

The erase key does all I hoped it would do. But the new keyboard is just slightly different from the old one, and try as hard as I can, I am unable to keep my little finger off the key that used to make exclamation points. (My writing always contains a lot of people shouting "Help!!!") Now my "holler key" types a ½ instead of an !.

I've concluded that breaking in a new typewriter is almost as bad as breaking in a new wife. Not that I've had any experience in the last 20 years in breaking in new wives. It's just that it has taken me that long to break in the first one, and I still keep hitting the wrong keys.

For instance, just this morning as we were preparing for a weekend trip to Washington, Jackie came in my studio and said, "How many suitcases should we take?"

Now I've had years of experience with that question. I knew better than to even try to answer it. But I

jumped right in and said, "Why don't we take just one for a change. I'll take half and you take half. You always carry too much stuff anyway."

After 20 years of marriage I should have known better than to hit that key.

"Why don't you just carry your toothbrush in your pocket and I'll carry what I want," she snorted.

It was too late to back out. "There's no need to carry nine dresses and four pantsuits when we're just going to be gone for three days. Why can't you do like me and wear the same clothes two days in a row? Actually, all you need is a change of underwear and you don't actually need that if you'll wash your things out at night and hang them on the doorknob."

"Oooh, MEN!" she screamed. "Just because you don't wear socks to church doesn't mean that I have to dress like a barbarian. You can carry your stuff in a paper bag if you want, but I'm going to take two full suitcases plus my toilet bag. What do you think about that, caveman?"

Like the Swede who proposed and then didn't say anything for the next three years, I determined I had said too much already. I returned to my typing and promptly hit three ½s in a row. However, thanks to IBM I did have an erase key. There's no such key available in marriage. I'll just have to learn, through the painful process of "thinking feminine," that it's easier to prevent errors than it is to erase them.