North Texas PC NEWS

Special Interest Programs

Programmers

The programming language FORTH was the official topic of the programmer's SIG meeting on December 18. Marvin Elder, president of the Dallas FORTH User's Group, presented some of the finer points of using this functional language and discussed its application to past and current projects.

Group chairman Neil Bennett led a continuation of individual reports from the COMDEX show. Summary comments included:

- 68000-based systems are coming up fast.
- 32 new 8086/8088/186-based machines were counted at the show, many styled similar to the PC (the 186 is an upgrade of the 8086).
- Quantum leaps are being made in price/performance of high resolution color graphics systems.
- Hardware systems and peripherals are being introduced so fast that software availability continues to fall farther behind.

At the request of the group, Ken Langham discussed the architecture of some new Intel chips in development, and their significance for system implementation.

Program planned for the structured portion of the next meeting:

January 15 - "Speaking Out" by Mike Hauser
Methods and techniques for using the
built-in speaker of the PC.

Dick Gall

New Location for Meetings

You can park in your usual place by the Heroy Building and walk approximately a quarter mile due South, or approach from Mockingbird on Bishop. Either way, look for the Fincher building; it's the one with a gold dome on top. We'll be meeting in the Business School auditorium, 1st floor of the Cox School of Business in the Fincher building.

Agenda

For the next meeting, the general order of business will be:

1. Club Business
2. Presentation —
   Dr. Richard S. Barr, Associate Professor, Management Science and Computers, SMU, will review Microsoft's MULTIPLAN electronic worksheet
3. Question and Answer Period (as time allows)
4. Vendor Announcements Club "Professional" Members
5. Specialty Group Agendas for Next Hour (Each SIG Chairman makes 1-minute announcement)

Chris

Next Meeting January 15, 1983
Auditorium, Cox School of Business, Fincher Building
(1/4 Mile South of Heroy Building)
SMU Campus
10:00 TO 12:00

NEW!

North Texas PC NEWS

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Programming Editor: Tom Prickett   (214)387-3667

Deadlines:
All material (articles and ads) for publication in PC NEWS must be received by the NEWS staff by the first Saturday of the month in which publication is desired.

North Texas IBM Personal Computer Users Group

A non-profit, independent group, not associated with IBM Corporation. The Group meets on the third Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM in the Heroy Bldg on the SMU Campus.

Officers:
President   Alan Elliott   (214)941-8475
Program Chairman   Chris Morgan   (214)446-0484
Treasurer   Bill Hood   (214)350-9784

Special Interest Groups:
Beginners   Mike Durbin   (214)271-8779
Business Applications Alan High   (214)385-0553
Disk of the Month   Will Janoschka   (214)231-6449
Programmers   Neil Bennett   (214)238-7650

Special Group
Bylaws Committee   Fred Williams (214)245-4319

Dues: Professional Membership - $36.00 year
        Regular Membership   - $24.00 year
        Student membership   - $12.00 year
Payable in January, dues are prorated for balance of year when applicant joins after January. Dues may be mailed to the editor of PC NEWS.

R O B O T I C S

If you are interested in robotics contact Alan Elliott at (H) 214/941-8475 or (W) 214/692-3598. Alan has been in touch with an Atlanta, GA Group who is exploring this subject and is looking for interested parties.

M E M B E R S H I P   D U E S

Again we're including a membership renewal application with this issue of PC NEWS for those of you who have not paid your 1983 dues. (If an application is attached and you have already paid for 1983, please coordinate with me so we can keep the record straight.) To remain on the rolls, payment is required during January. Please bring the form and your payment to the January meeting.

D I S K   O F   T H E   M O N T H

PROGRAMS PLANNED FOR THE JANUARY DISKETTE

LD - LIST DISKETTE. An implementation of the function of the PC-DOS directory (DIR) command appropriate to a tool for modern times. Lists diskette contents in 2 parallel rows, sorted alphabetically by filename, or optionally (under DOS 1.1 only) by file extension name, file size, or date. Provided in machine language as LD.COM.

GAMES - An assortment of games in BASIC for use with the color/graphics adapter and color display, by Lewis Rigdon.

DISKMOD - by Pete Lewis. This BASIC program displays diskette files sector-by-sector in both hex and ASCII (in dump format) and allows file modifications entered either in hex or ASCII. A compiled version is included to demonstrate the size/speed tradeoff between compiled and interpeted BASIC. Includes detailed operating instructions.

INSTALL - A program for interfacing WORDSTAR 3.2 to several types of printers, by Philip Chamberlin. Also adds capability for changing the background/foreground colors for color monitor users.

PRTSCN - A BASIC routine for copying the monitor screen contents of to a diskette file.

B E G I N N E R S '   C O R N E R
(c o n t i n u e d)

Personable Computer with only an 8-bit data bus. But then she stopped; I begged her to go on, but she wouldn't. It was over my head, she said; I wouldn't be able to handle it, she said. I pleaded and pleaded, but it did no good; she just wouldn't tell me. I hope and pray that you can help me, or at least tell me where to go for help. I am desperate, as you can tell. I must know why it is that IBM done did this thing to my Personable Computer. Thanking you so much in advance for your kind help, I am

Personably yours,
I. B. Pricklebreath

I address the following to Prickly and his lovely bride Myrtle. Unfortunately I am not of sufficient wisdom to resolve your dilemma. I have had my PC for seven months now and have not yet approached the level of expertise which you two have achieved in only one month. Your letter makes me feel very humble and inadequate. I can only urge you to attend the monthly meeting of our PC Users Group this Saturday and seek the answer to your dilemma at that gathering. You will find that we have a wealth of expertise and you will have no problem finding any number of people who will be happy and willing to tackle your problem. I must warn you ahead of time, however, that we are still a young group. We are still seeking appropriate structures to allow us to adequately serve the needs of our members. At present we have only three active special interest groups (SIG's), one for beginners, one for programmers, and one for those interested in business applications. We are in very bad need of additional groups. I have had numerous people come to the Beginners SIG these last six months who have not returned in succeeding months because we could not serve their needs. I believe that 1983 will see a real maturing process in our group as more and more people step forward to start up various SIG's. Just based on the interests I have seen expressed in the Beginners' group I think our group could support additional SIG's in the following areas: Basic Programming, Home Applications, Education, and Graphics. In fact, Prickly and Myrtle, how would you like to head up one of these groups? Don't let your newness to the group stop you if you have an interest. And, if there's anyone out there reading this article who would enjoy heading up the Beginners' group, please let me know. I would love to move on and start up a Graphics SIG. Meanwhile, hang in there, Prickly, until Saturday.

Programming Topics

It's a conspiracy!

Reprinted with permission from Softworld)

"There are old pilots, and there are bold pilots, but there are no old, bold pilots." So said a character in Star Wars, and who can doubt the truth of this?

The average intelligence of fish increases with the size of the fish. Any fish that lives to be a whopper has to be smart (as well as lucky).

The higher up the ladder in the banking business, the more conservative the people are. Anyone high up in the banking business, got there by not making a mistake (not too many, anyway).

BASIC, FORTRAN, and COBOL are terrible computer languages, but they will probably be around forever. If you are reading this article, you are interested in computer software, (maybe even more than space pilots, fish, and the banking business). I well remember the day in the mid-60's when our local IBM man came around and told us we could throw away our FORTRAN and COBOL manuals; that a new language called PL/1 was coming; within 18 months, you would not be able to find FORTRAN or COBOL anywhere! Did it happen?

BASIC reared its unstructured head in the late 60's much to the jeers of the programming elite. PASCAL came along in the mid-70's and its supporters predicted the doom of BASIC. Did it happen?

A couple of months ago at the APPLE club here in Dallas, a gentleman from APPLE gave us a demonstration of LOGO

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Programming Topics
(continued)

(the language of the future!) He predicted that LOGO will take over the world. Do you think it will happen?

Sure, this is a one-eyed view of the software industry. If there was any justice in the world, FORTRAN, COBOL, and BASIC would have died out years ago and PL/1, ALGOL, PASCAL, and ADA would be the only languages used. (Oops, I forgot LOGO!) Why is this so? Why do all those bad languages linger on? I suggest the answer is momentum. What manufacturer would introduce a personal computer without having BASIC as part of the machine? Would IBM dare do it? Would any lesser manufacturer (and there's lots of them) dare do it?

The APPLE II computer has two BASIC's for it. The whole system makes it easy for independent software developers to write programs for the APPLE II. If a person wants to buy a personal computer, he needs software to make it sing and dance (who needs a computer that can't sing and dance?). He goes into his friendly computer store to look at computers and sees the APPLE II with an acre of displayed software behind it. He sees the XYZ system, (with 3 pieces of software) at about the same price, and the salesperson says within 6 months there will be mountains of software. Which machine do you think he would buy (particularly if he's been in the banking business for 20 years!)? Unless XYZ stands for IBM, the answer is clear.

Imagine now, that you are a software developer. (I mean a real software developer; not someone with a regular 8-5 job, not someone with a rich, sympathetic uncle, but a software developer who relies on the sales to fight the wolf away from the door!). Which system would you be writing for? The system with the largest consumer base? Which language would you be using? The language available on every machine, or PASCAL (and maybe half that consumer base)?

So you see, it is all a conspiracy to keep BASIC as the most popular language. The manufacturer and the software developer conspire together to build machines and write software using BASIC because they are both motivated by money! The manufacturer who builds a nice machine and provides PASCAL (and no BASIC) will sooner or later be having a talk with his rich uncle or his banker (that guy gets into everything!).

What about FORTRAN and COBOL? If you know a large, long-established installation, think how many lines of code they have stored away (probably on punched cards)

in FORTRAN or COBOL. The larger the investment in programs, the more reluctant they are to scrap it and start all over in some new, better language. While they have this huge investment, what sort of programmers are they going to be looking for? Are they going to hire a guy fresh out of college who wants to talk PASCAL, or will they go for someone who speaks COBOL? The long established installations will go for the COBOL speaking guy. The just-starting up installations may feel that one of the new exotic languages is the way to go. (Do you remember something about old, bold pilots?)

I know most of this is not quite true. I do know that despite all their faults BASIC, FORTRAN, and COBOL linger on. There must be some better explanation...

                                        Neil Bennett

More on the PC's Huge Information Base

As I continue badgering our membership for articles to appear in this column, we often discuss the best way to reach the wild variety of people that are attending and becoming members. Do you want details, rumors, entertainment, gotcha alerts, reviews, warnings, or good information about the local scene? As near as I can determine, the answer is yes. And, that is before we get down to specific topics.

We are witnessing a true explosion of information on the IBM-PC, in both supply and demand. In past issues, Mr. Dixon (November), and Mr. Durbin (October) have given excellent coverage of the many magazines devoted all, or in part to the IBM PC. The national coverage on the PC is not just good, it's phenomenal. Rather than rehash the details of some of the articles that I have been reading, I would like to review my favorites and cover more than I could ever write in this column.

PC Magazine - "User to User" edited by Andrew
    Fluegelman. A wealth of tidbits. We will have
    to see what becomes of this magazine since they
    have recently undergone a staff walkout.

Softalk for the IBM PC - "System Notebook" articles by
    Alan Boyd have excellent tutorials discussing the
    ins and outs of DOS.

Programming Topics
(c o n t i n u e d)

Creative Computing - "IBM Images" by Will Fastie: Best general gossip column, intelligent reviews.

Personal Computer Age - "Roundtable" discussions between readers and editors. More tidbits.

Info-world - Product announcements everywhere. Their weekly emphasis and large subscription base seem to net them the earliest announcements.

And on the local scene, talk about an explosion. Driving around in the North Dallas area, I am always running into new computer stores. Most are definitely oriented to software, some sell only software. I have listed some at the end of this article. One very interesting one called S & V Computer Professionals is dedicated entirely to the IBM-PC, but they don't sell them. They sell only IBM- PC software and PC look- alike hardware.

For a quick education of the local scene, do the following: Look at a DFW Business-to-Business yellow pages that Ma Bell puts out, the consumer yellow pages (Home edition) doesn't have much to offer. Under the heading of Computer Dealers-Business, you will find ten pages containing listings and ads. Keep in mind, that this is the entire Metroplex. The shops are all over, please forgive the N. Dallas bias in the list that I have made below. I am assuming that you are aware of the old standbys for the PC such as Sears Business Systems Centers and Computerland.

The following is a list of stores that I am aware of that have at least some of their store devoted to IBM-PC products:

Soft Wares - Coit & Spring Valley - They offer courses.

Software Concepts - Preston & LBJ - Very good magazine selection.

Software Etc. - N. Tollway, S. of Beltline - Only a few weeks old.

Software Source - Alpha Rd., E of Montford - New, but a good IBM selection already.

Strictly Software - Belt Line, W of N. Parkway - Next to Jade.

CompuShop - Off N. Central, S. of Spring Valley - Carries IBM-PC hardware and software.

Compco - Arapho, N. of Prestonwood Mall - Newly sanctioned dealers of IBM-PC hardware.

Shepard & Vick Computer Professionals - Central & NW Hwy., Caruth Plaza, just a few doors from the Sears Business Sys. Center - Dedicated to IBM-PC look-alikes and PC software. They will also be teaching courses. Brand new store.

While browsing these stores, I noticed three computer newspapers, all published locally:

SoftWorld - Billed as the Metroplex Microcomputer User's Monthly

Turtle News - Put out by the Young Peoples' LOGO Association

Basic Society News - An IBM Small Systems Users Group (Not affiliated with IBM).

The DFW marketplace is truly amazing.

Tom Prickett

A D V A N C E D   B A S I C

Anyone interested in forming an advanced BASIC Special Interest Group should contact Chuck Loftin at phone (H) 214/492-3594 or (W) 214/630-3594.

P C   W O R L D

We reported last month that PC WORLD magazine would probably make it's debut in January... Well, it now looks as if the first issue will not appear until February. Don't know the subscription price, but we found an address where you can send an inquiry if you're interested:

PC World Communications, Inc
490 Taraval
San Francisco, CA 94122

UPDATE PC UPDATE PC UPDATE PC UPDA

The following news items are reprinted with permission from Computer Industry Update published by Industry Market Reports, Los Altos, CA.

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IBM is replacing the printer for its Personal Computer with the Graphics Printer, an 80 cps printer with 240 dots per horizontal inch and 216 dots per vertical inch. The price will be $595. A conversion kit for the original printer will be available.

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Seven new software packages for the PC have been announced by IBM. The packages include the File and Report programs from Software Publishing which are $140 and $125 respectively, Microsoft's Multiplan for $250 and four programs published through IBM's software submission plan. The packages are the Personal Editor for $100, the Basic Programming Development System for $130, the Diskette Librarian for $45 and the Casino Games for $35.

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Educational institutions will receive a price break on Personal Computer hardware and software products with discounts ranging from 20 to 22% off the IBM Product Center price.

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IBM has awarded a contract for 5 1/4" Winchester disk controllers for the PC to Xebec of Sunnyvale, CA.

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IBM is reportedly negotiating with the Netherlands based Holland International BV concerning its HAI$BAS operating system and HAI$LINE application packages for the PC.

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IBM is attempting to curtail sales of Personal Computers with plug-compatible memories by restricting shipment of its Model 515001 16K version to dealers and discontinuing marketing the machines through its own stores. Resellers can purchase a Personal Computer with 16K of memory for $1250, add three 16K RAM chips and a 320KB disk drive and price the unit well below IBM's $2400 for a similar machine.

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The Enterprise Information Systems' fall forum heard a cheaper IBM personal computer predicted. IBM is expected to overtake competitors in very low-end systems in two years.

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Control Systems of Minneapolis, MN announced the Artist I color graphics controller with 1024 by 1024 by 4 resolution for industrial use, and the Artist II with a resolution of 640 by 640 by 4 for the business graphics market. The bit mapped raster scan controllers offer 16 colors, zoom, pan, scroll, light pen and paging capabilities. Optional Textronix 40XX emulation software provides an interface for the Personal Computer to mainframes with graphics software. The controllers come with a C language library of commands for use on the PC-DOS and Qunix operating systems. Artist will support the GSX CP/M graphics extension. The controllers are $3195 and $1595 respectively.

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Quadram of Norcross, GA is offering the Quadmaster software which reduces running time of computer programs by 80%. The capability is for use with the Quadboard four-function expansion card which is available in versions with 64K bytes to 256K bytes of RAM at prices from $595 to $995.

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RCS of Santa Clara, CA announced the PCX-6 expansion frame which provides six additional system slots for the PC. It is available with a number of options including memory, communications ports, real-time clock and a heavy duty power supply. The product is $595.

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The Sorbus Service Division of MAI is offering on-site and carry-in repair services for the Personal Computer. Sorbus has service centers in 165 U.S. cities compared with 25 IBM repair centers.

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Technical Analysis of Atlanta, GA announced the direct native-mode coaxial cable attachment which allows a PC to be attached directly to any 3274 or 3276 controller. The interface is $1195.

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Accounting Systems of Boise, ID is offering a product which allows the PC to be used with General Electric Information Services' Mark III remote computing service. Ascom includes a communications package for $195 and an accounting package for $295.

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Bit Software of Milpitas, CA is offering the Forms Designer/Package for the PC which facilitates design and layout of forms as well as creating, storing and updating a data file based on the forms. The Forms Designer is $275 and its Data Entry program is $75.

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Business and Professional Software of Cambridge, MA is offering the BPS Graphics software for creating line, bar, and pie charts. The software is $350.

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Info-Pros of Irvine, CA announced a Sort/Select package for the Personal Computer. It is $145.

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PC UPDATE
(c o n t i n u e d)

Micro Architect of Arlington, MA announced a general ledger package for the PC. It provides double entry accounting, ISAM and an 80-column screen display. The capability is $248.

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N.F. Systems of Atlanta, GA introduced four packages for the PC. Filemaster and Textmaster are $100 each. Screenmaster for building and modifying full-screen displays and menus is $80 and Comparemaster, a file comparison utility is $35.

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Scripts Data Systems of San Diego, CA announced the Budgets job cost system for the Personal Computer. It is $495.

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SSI of Orem, UT is offering a full-screen program/text editor for the PC. P-EDIT runs undr PC-DOS and is $195.

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Supersoft Associates of Champaign, IL announced the PDB operational data base program of the PC. It is $125.

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VisiCorp of San Jose, CA announced the VisiWord word processing package for the PC. The capability is intended for managers and clerical workers who are not primarily typists. The package stresses ease of learning, extensive help facilities and integration into the Visi series of products. It will be available the first quarter of 1983.

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PC SHOP & SWAP

PC UPDATE UPDATE

Prices reported in last month's PC NEWS for RAM expansion cards produced by Daystar Systems of Dallas TX have been reduced. New prices are $695 for 256K version and $895 for a 512KB UltraRAM board.
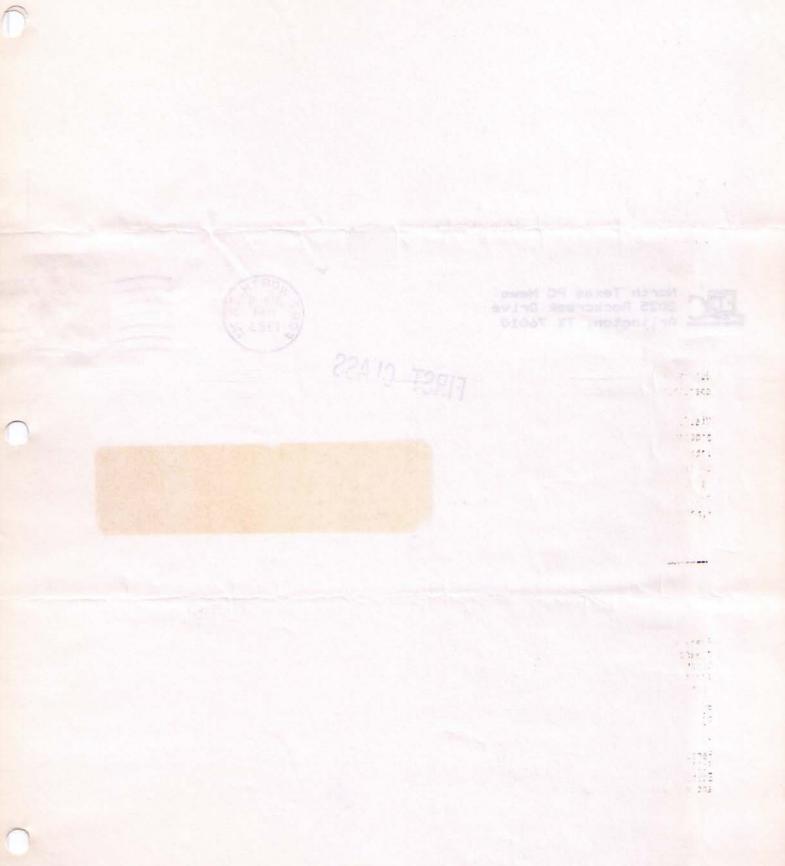

CHANGES IN MEMBER INTERESTS ...

Every attempt will be made to keep your PC NEWS slanted toward member interests, and to get your copy to you before each meeting. To do this we must keep our address/activity/interest listing current. Please provide new information when your situation changes.
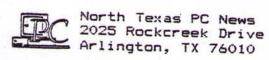
Fill in changes and mail the following form to Editor, PC NEWS, 2025 Rockcreek Dr., Arlington, TX 76010.

If you know someone who is interested in the IBM Personal Computer and is not now a member of our Group, fill in their name and address and send the form to the Editor. We'll send them a complimentary copy of the News and a membership application blank.

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                                         NEW APPLICANT ___
Name _____        CHANGES ___
Address _____

City _____ State ___ ZIP _____
Phone: Home _____-_____-_____ Metro?___
       Work _____-_____-_____ Metro?___

by:
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FIRST CLASS

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