



NEWS

Vol 3

North Texas IBM Personal Computer Users Group

No. 9

Special Interest Programs

Programmers 12 noon Room 106

Last month the group had its final fling at guessing what IBM's next PC would be like. The final consensus actually came rather close to what IBM did announce. Many were expecting a high resolution graphics board (which IBM apparently almost announced but did not). The group discussed the enhancements to PCjr, the 'IBM' Mouse and the fact that all the slots in IBM's Portable PC are not created equal. Neil discussed his Professional Basic, and the group discussed C development systems and how to transfer data from a 1600BPI tape to a PC.

The September meeting will continue in our usual vein. As IBM is already shipping the PC-AT, we may get some initial responses from members who have had a chance to use one rather than just play with it in a store. In any case, you can be sure the AT will be a major topic of discussion.

Carrington Dixon

Beginners 9:00 am Room 105
John Hall

BASIC 9:00 am Room 107
Mike Durbin

Business 12 noon Room 105
(See description on page 8)
Burke/Talbott/Fries

Beginning Assem 9:00 am Room 106
Charles Shultz

(For a complete listing of room assignments and meeting times, see page 4, Ed.)

Agenda

During the main session we will have a presentation on:
IBM PC-AT
MS-DOS 3.0
PCjr Enhancements

Benard Penny from Boca Raton, Florida will represent IBM
Charles

Board Meeting

There will be a meeting of the Board of Directors and the User Group Officers in room 108 at 9:00 am September 8. The Board will meet approximately every three months as announced in PC NEWS. This meeting is open to all members.

Dues

There has been a change in membership terms.

In the past, membership dues were paid through December of the current year. Effective this month, both new memberships and renewals will be for twelve month periods. This will reduce the burden on the Treasurer, and spread out the blip that occurs when all renewals are in January.

Renewal dates will be printed on the newsletter mailing label in the form YYMM. For example, if your renewal date reads 8504, your membership will expire April 1985. Dues must be received at least six weeks before the first of the expiration month to assure uninterrupted receipt of PC NEWS.

Remember! Check the date on the mailing label periodically to be sure you don't miss your renewal date. No separate renewal notice will be mailed to you.

Bill Hood

Next Meeting September 8, 1984

Jesuit College Preparatory School
12345 Inwood Road, Dallas, Texas

(Schedule on page 4 - Map on page 12)



North Texas PC NEWS
STARMAIL ADDRESS 50573

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Editor	John Pribyl	(817)275-4109
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Illustrations by Mel. White and Marion Cutler

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Deadlines:

All material for publication in PC NEWS (articles and ads) must be received by the NEWS staff no later than the fourth Friday of the month prior to publication.

Articles:

Column width is 56 characters. Article submission is preferred by modem or disk (ASCII format). Double-spaced, typewritten copy is acceptable.

North Texas IBM Personal Computer Users Group

A non-profit, independent group, not associated with IBM Corporation. The Group meets on the second Saturday of each month. See page 1 for meeting time and place.

Officials:

President	Chris Morgan	(214)739-5895
President Elect	open	
Program Chairman	Charles Kroboth	(214)739-5895
Treasurer	Bill Hood	(214)739-5895
Secretary	Charles Kroboth	(214)739-5895
Operations Director	Jim Graham	(214)739-5895
Setup Team	Jim Janeway and Tom Fowlston	

Special Interest Groups:

Beginners	John Hall	(214)495-2375
BASIC Applic.	Mike Durbin	(214)271-8779
Business Applic.	Sharlene Talbott	(214)386-5596
	& Ricky Burke	(214)276-5003
	& Ed Fries	(214)783-8543
Disk of the Month	Doug Windham	(214)278-5321
Programmers	Neil Bennett	(214)238-7650
Beginning Assembly	Charles Schultz	(817)566-3919

Telephone (during business hours) (214)361-0304
Bulletin Board SYSOP: Mark Collard (214)223-0983
(24 hrs, download & upload, messages, 300/1200)

Dues: Regular Membership - \$24.00 year
Student membership - \$12.00 year

Dues are payable for full-year increments only. PCN mailing label shows your membership expiration date. Renewal must be received at least six weeks before that date for uninterrupted mailing of PC NEWS. Mail payment to: Treasurer, NT IBM PC UG, 10400 N. Central Expwy #210, Dallas, TX 75231

READ.ME

...by Charles Kroboth, Program Chairman

Membership Cards

Membership cards will be distributed at the September meeting by the Treasurer, Bill Hood. After the main meeting Bill will be at the Disk-of-the-Month booth in the cafeteria. We'd like to thank Ben Driver for taking care of production details for the cards.

Thanks!

A special thanks to Jim Graham, Jim Janeway and Tom Fowlston for volunteering to help set set up equipment for our presentation each month.

RGB Projection System

We are very fortunate to have Tom Fowlston, one of our members, offer an RGB projection system for our use during the main session each month. Use of the unit is through courtesy of CROSSROADS AUDIO at 2623 Myrtle Springs Avenue in Dallas. Christmas may have come a little early this year!

Charles

Nominations

Nominations are being accepted for President-Elect. This position is open since Alan Elliott resigned and Chris Morgan became President. Duties of the President-Elect as defined in our BYLAWS are given below.

"PRESIDENT-ELECT. It shall be the duty of the President-Elect to perform such duties as the President may delegate in the event the President is temporarily disabled or absent from meetings. The President-Elect shall coordinate all committee activities. The President-Elect shall become President at the completion of his term of office."

Elections

It will soon be time for the Board of Directors to appoint a nominating committee for next year's slate of officers. Elections are scheduled for January. If you feel you are right for 1985 President-Elect, or have the qualifications to serve on the board of directors, let it be known... Who knows? Maybe you'll get the chance!

FIRST IMPRESSIONS...

MICROSOFT MACRO ASSEMBLER V1.20

by Jim Hoisington

My macro assembler finally arrived the morning of the August club meeting. Having lived with the many shortcomings of version 1.0 of the IBM assembler, I was anxious to learn just how much had been done to improve the new version.

The first thing that I noticed was that the version number for the assembler was up to 1.27. I have included a portion of the file README.DOC at the end of this article. It lists (some of) the improvements in each of the products included with the assembler.

Since I do not use Microsoft's Linker, I have no experience with the version 2.44 Linker that comes with the assembler. Nor have I tried to master the version 2.20 Librarian that is also included. Cref is still at version 1.00 and contains the same bugs as the one that comes with IBM's Assembler. However, the manual has a much better description of how to use Cref and it lists most, but not all, of the error messages.

The Good News

The first experiment with the Masm (Asm is not in the package) was to assemble a large (158,208 byte) assembler program with both version 1.0 and 1.27. Masm version 1.00 assembled the program from/to a ram disk in 20 minutes and 7 seconds. Masm version 1.27 assembled the same program in 5 minutes and 17 seconds. The new version is significantly faster.

Another surprise was that the new assembler found errors in existing programs. Version 1.00 had allowed the statement `ADD ES,1024` to exist in one of our programs. (For those of you that aren't into the design of the 8088, you can't do arithmetic with the ES register.) Fortunately, version 1.00 generated the code for `ADD AX,1024` which is what we wanted anyway.

This version of the assembler supports the commands for the 8087 directly. No more macros to simulate the 8087 commands. But, not all the commands for the 80286 mpu and the 80287 math coprocessor found in the IBM PC AT are in this version.

The Not-So-Good News

Version 1.27 of Masm is very picky about the type of storage that registers are moved to/from. I had been fond of reserving two words with a `DD` statement and then moving the contents of two different registers to the two words. The new assembler requires that the "type" of the label be the same length as the register. For example:

Version 1.00

```
Two_words DD 0 ; Reserve two words
MOV Two_words,AX
MOV Two_words+2,DX
```

Version 1.27

```
Two_words DW 0 ; Reserve one word
DW 0 ; Reserve another
MOV Two_words,AX
MOV Two_words+2,DX
```

The old Masm always built the code section first in the object module, even if the data section was physically first in the source code. This meant that the linker always linked all the code modules ahead of the data modules. The new Masm builds the sections in the order in which they occur in the source code. If the data section is first, then all the data sections will be linked ahead of the code sections. It was always supposed to work this way, but if you are not expecting it, the results are surprising.

The Bad News

Not all LEA instructions will assemble with version 1.27. Sometimes you just have to substitute `MOV AX,OFFSET` for the existing LEA.

Neil (Bennett) called me one day and said that he couldn't get the new Masm to assemble a short return instruction. I tried for several hours myself and wasn't successful either. We resorted to substituting the instruction `DB C3h` (which is the op-code for a short return.)

The worst problem I found is with macro expansions. I use a macro to define a series of memory locations that I use to control open disk files. Since more than one file can be open at a time, I invoke the macro enough times in the data section to reserve sufficient control blocks.

Room Assignments



M o r n i n g :

<u>Room #</u>	<u>9:00 - 9:55</u>	<u>9:00 - 10:25</u>	<u>10:00 - 11:30</u>	<u>10:30 - 11:55</u>
105	Beginners - IBM	-	-	open
106	Beginning Assem - IBM	-	-	Mac - Lisa
107	BASIC - IBM	-	-	Stock Investment - Apple/IBM
108	Officer's meeting - IBM	-	-	Advanced Topics - Apple
109	-	Beginners - Apple	-	Business - Apple
111	-	Beginning BASIC - Apple	-	6502 Machine Lang. - Apple
113	-	CP/M - Apple/IBM	-	Genealogy - Apple
114	-	Advanced Applesoft - Apple	-	Games - Apple/IBM
116	-	Pascal - Apple/IBM	-	open
Auditorium	open	open	<u>IBM MAIN MEETING</u>	-

A f t e r n o o n :

<u>Room #</u>	<u>12:00 - 1:25</u>	<u>1:00 - 1:25</u>	<u>1:30 - 2:30</u>	<u>1:30 - 3:30</u>
105	Business - IBM	-	-	-
106	Advanced Programming - IBM	-	-	Assembly Language Instruction (Members Only) - IBM
107	Communications - Apple/IBM	-	-	-
108	Engineering/Scientific - IBM/Apple	-	-	-
109	Apple III - Apple	-	-	-
111	Printer/Hardware - Apple	-	-	-
113	Graphics - Apple	-	-	-
114	Spreadsheets - Apple/IBM	-	-	-
116	Education - Apple	-	-	-
Auditorium	open	First Time Apple Corps	<u>APPLE MAIN MEETING</u>	-

MICROSOFT MACRO ASSEMBLER V1.20

(continued)

The disk module had been working for some time with the data section placed physically after the code section. During a recent modification, I decided to place the data section first in the module. (This helps the assembler generate more efficient code since it has had a look at the data when it is working with the code that references the data.) However, I forgot to move the macro definition. The data section with the macro invocation preceded the macro definition.

The assembler gave no error. The listing showed the macro properly expanded. The data areas in memory were properly initialized by the macro expansion. BUT, no memory was reserved for the macro generated data area. The linker overlaid my file control blocks with the data from the next module.

Summary

I'm using the new assembler. I like its speed and its improved syntax checking (even if I have to rework a couple of DD and LEA statements.) I like the fact that it supports the 8087 math coprocessor commands. But, it is not error free. CAVEAT DICTUS.

README.DOC

Microsoft Macro Assembler v 1.27

May, 1984

I.ADDENDUM TO MICROSOFT MACRO ASSEMBLER:

The following describes the differences between Microsoft Macro Assembler versions 1.25 and 1.27:

- IFB & IFNB have been corrected
- Recognizes memory greater than 512K
- fsubr, fdiv & fdivr have been corrected



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The Savior	100.00	85.00
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MODEMS

Cermetek Modem Mate 212 (Internal Modem)	350.00
Hayes Smartmodem 1200	570.00



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FX-80	499.00
Okidata 92 for IBM	525.00
IBM-Centronics Cable	40.00

BUSINESS

Harvard Project Manager	262.50
Visischedule	225.00
Supercalc 3	296.25

LANGUAGES

Microsoft Fortran	262.50
Microsoft Cobol	525.00
Digital C Language	262.50



CHIPS

8087 Arithmetic Coprocessor	195.00
8087 Coprocessor Kit (Kit Includes Software for use with Macro-86 Assembler & Basic Compiler)	295.00
Set of 9 Chips: 64K 200 Nano	62.50
Set of 9 Chips: 64K 150 Nano	67.50

Price and availability subject to change without notice.



Wildcat Computing, Inc.
PC 4-84
1830 Avenue K
Plano, Texas 75074
(214) 424-3582

WILDCAT COMPUTING, INC.

MICROSOFT MACRO ASSEMBLER V1.20

(continued)

2.ADDENDUM TO MICROSOFT LINK:

The following describes the differences between Microsoft LINK versions 2.00 & 2.44:

A.Now allows for up to 1000 segments to be linked together

B.MS-LINK SWITCHES ADDENDUM (Page 2-11)

/NO - should be changed to
/NOD (NODEFAULTLIBRARYSEARCH)

/NOGROUPASSOCIATION - Overrides the standard Group Association. This is documented for Historical Purposes only, users of Microsoft Macro Assembler should not have any reason to use it.

/NOIGNORECASE - By default, "FOO", "foo", and "Foo" are treated by the linker as being equivalent. If /NOIGNORECASE is specified, then they are all different symbols.

/CPARMAXALLOC:NNNN - By default, the cparMaxAlloc field(at offset #0C) in the EXE header (see chapter 5 in the MS-DOS Programmer's Reference) is set to 65535. This switch allows you to set the value to any number between 1 and 65535; if the value you specify is less than the computed value of cparMinAlloc, the linker will use the value of cparMinAlloc(at offset #0A) instead. If you are running programs under MS-DOS 1.25, you should not use the switch.

/OVERLAYINTERRUPT:NNNN - By default, the interrupt number used for passing control to overlays is CD hexadecimal. The overlay interrupt switch allows the user to select a different interrupt number. NNNN can be any of the following:

- A decimal number from 0 to 255(numbers that conflict with MS-DOS interrupts are not prevented, but their use is indivisible).
- An octal number from 0 to 377. A number is interpreted as octal if it starts with a zero, e.g., 10 is 10 decimal but 010 is 8 decimal.
- A hexadecimal number from 0 to FF. A number is interpreted as hexadecimal if it starts with "0x". Thus, 10 is decimal ten, 010 is 8 decimal, and 0x10 is 16 decimal.

3.ADDENDUM TO MICROSOFT LIB:

The following describes the differences between Microsoft LIB Versions 2.00 & 2.20:

A.Summary of Enhancements to the Microsoft Library Manager:

The contents of one library file may be added to another simply by specifying the library file name as the argument to the addition operator ("+"). Make sure to use the '.LIB' extension or LIB Lib will look for a file with '.OBJ' extension instead.

The internal page size is variable; thus, the amount of wasted space inside libraries can be reduced.

The user may specify a name other than the original name for modified library. The primary benefit of this feature is that the user may place the modified library on a different disk drive than the original library.

If the original name is to be used for a modified library, then the old version is saved under the same name, except that its extension is replaced with ".BAK". Thus, if an error occurs during operations on an existing library, the user can recover.

The user is no longer limited to a maximum of 1000 public symbols within a single library. The maximum is now on the order of 3000 to 9000 symbols depending upon whether symbols average more or less than 9 characters in length.

New operators have been defined, thus simplifying replacement, extraction and deletion of modules.

Jim

Door Prizes

Did you know that door prizes were given away at the last couple of meetings? Thanks to Wildcat Computing and Metropolitan Computer Products for donating last month's prizes



DISK OF THE MONTH

by Doug Windham

AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

Each month I am asked, "Where do you get all these programs?" My answer is always, "Lots of different places." Some programs are downloaded one at a time from bulletin boards, others are traded with/or are purchased from user groups around the country, and still others are contributed to the club by members such as yourself under the exchange program described below.

September 1984 (Double sided)

GALAXY TREK Version 2.1 (C) Larry E. Jordan 1982. Here is an excellent version of the classic STARTREK type game. It even has 4 pages of instructions. **COREWAR** is a computer game played both with and by computers. In **COREWAR** two player-written computer programs operate concurrently in a "circular" memory array. A program "loses" when it hits an instruction it cannot execute. **COREWAR** is described fully by A. K. Dewdney in the "Computer Recreations" column of Scientific American, May 1984. **UTIL** is a multifunction utility from Mutant Software for DOS 2.x only. This is version 1.63, with many bugs fixed and new features. Prior version was on PD0004.

PD #11 (Double sided)

This is **RBBS-PC CPC12.2B** (C) 1983, 1984 by D. Thomas Mack and Jon Martin. It is a program to allow you to operate (be the **SYSOP**) a **BBS** (Bulletin Board System). Hardware Requirements: 80 column monitor (any type), Async adapter (serial port), Hayes Smartmodem 1200 Voice grade phone, line 25 pin RS-232-C modem cable, 192 RAM, Two double sided drives, Printer, DOS 2.0 or 2.1. This program is from the **CAPITAL PC USER GROUP** library. It is their disk number 18.

PD0012 (Double sided)

123PREP is a compiled BASIC program by Jon Sims that converts a simple text (ASCII) file of fixed length records into columns usable by the **LOTUS 1-2-3 FILE IMPORT NUMBERS** command.

Lots of utilities programs, programs to put capslock on, change status/undelete files, put file into another subdirectory, puts Epson printer into compressed, puts Epson printer into normal size, pages text file screen at a time, formatted listing of text file, add/alter disk volume label, dump any file in HEX and ASCII like 360 dump makes printer advance a page, sends line feed to printer (down a line), plus others.

SCREEN SAVE PROGRAM FOR THE HERCULES GRAPHICS CARD

There is in circulation on electronic bulletin boards, magazines and users groups a program called variously, **Mono Blank**, **Monitor Blank**, **Monblk2**, **Screen Save**, and probably a few other things by now too. The program is designed to remove the display from the monochrome screen after some period of inactivity. This is meant to protect the monitor from having an image burned into the phosphor is something is left on the screen for too long. The program will work on IBM's monochrome board, but is quite unsuitable for use with a **HERCULES** graphics card. **HERCULES** has provided a program that works with their card to do the same thing.

PD0013

(Single sided)

EPISTAT is a collection of programs written in **BASICA** for statistical analysis of small to medium-sized data samples (< 28 samples or variables and < 2000 total data entries per file). The 25 programs in **EPISTAT** perform more than 40 common statistical test or functions and provide utilities for data entry, editing, printing, graphing, sorting, selecting, transforming, and crosstabs. ===== A USER-SUPPORTED PROGRAM ===== BY **TRACY L. GUSTAFSON, M.D.** 1705 Gattis School Road Round Rock, Texas 78644

EX0006

(Double sided)

This is the **IBM EXCHANGE** diskette #6, dated August, 1984. This double-sided diskette has -

From the Editor's Desk

1. Editorial

New Product Announcements

2. IBM PCjr New Keyboard

3. IBM PCjr Power Expansion Attachment

4. IBM PCjr 128KB Memory Expansion

5. IBM PCjr ColorPaint

6. Hydrologic Cycle - Earth Science Series

7. Ground Water - Earth Science Series

8. Moisture in the Atmosphere

9. Surface Water - Earth Science Series

10. Teacher's Quiz Designer

11. Private Tutor Version 2.00

12. IBM PCjr Speech Attachment

13. Writing to Read

14. Managing Your Money with the IBM PCjr

Views and Reviews

15. Diskette Librarian Tips and Techniques

16. Caps Lock Defeat

17. Reducing BASIC Program Size

18. Personal Editor Aids

19. Writing on Line 25 in BASIC

20. Reloading COMMAND.COM from a RAM Disk

21. DOS 2.00 Piping

Focus on Software

22. Drawing Spirographs

DISK OF THE MONTH

EX0006 (continued)

Focus on Hardware

23. IBM Printer & Graftrax Compatibility
24. Disk Test Program New Users Column
25. Mode Command Detailed

All members of the club are encouraged to contribute copies of public domain programs to the club library. For each new diskette of software contributed, you may select any diskette in the club library in exchange.

MAIL ORDERS

As long as the members use it, I will fill mail orders on the following basis. All orders must have payment enclosed and addressed to: Doug Windham, DOM Chairman, PO Box 475205, Garland, Tx, 75047. Postage and handling must be enclosed per the following: \$.50 per diskette ordered with a \$2.00 MINIMUM charge, and \$1.00 for each catalog.

DISK DETAILS

Price: \$5.00 Catalogs: \$2.00
Available at the meeting, in the cafeteria at the specially marked table, before and after the general meetings. Media: DSDD 5 1/4" diskettes formatted without DOS (320k). Public domain software only, standard full disclaimers. Call disk of the month chairman Doug Windham at 278-5321 any time (have answering machine) to contribute new programs for future Disk of the Month issues. All back issues are be available at the meeting and by mail order (see note above).

Doug

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Complimentary Memberships

The Club offers complimentary memberships to members who submit original articles for publication in PC NEWS.

GROUND RULES

Subject Matter. Articles may cover any aspect of the IBM Personal Computer (or work-alike) world. Main criteria is that they be of interest to members of our group. Some typical subjects include: Hands-on review or personal experience with new software, hardware or techniques... Peripheral interconnection problems and solutions... How-to articles on furniture, diskette storage, printer paper control... A standard "tree" structure for the average hard disk user... etc, etc

Number and Length of Articles Required. Four or more articles during one membership year. Each article must be a minimum of 400 words.

Submission. Submit general articles to the Editor; programming articles to the Programming Editor, Tom Prickett; and software reports to Software Review Editor, Dick Gall. Phone numbers are shown on page 2 of each issue of the newsletter.

Format. Unjustified. Standard one-column max width is 56 characters; two-column max is 120 characters. Send articles by modem if practical. General articles may be sent to PC NEWS Editor via STARTEXT, address 50537. If you send your article on disk, be sure it's saved in ASCII format. It may be single- or double-sided, DOS 1.0 or 2.0. If you send typed copy, please double space.

Notify Treasurer. At the end of your membership year, provide a listing of published articles to the treasurer in lieu of cash for next year's dues.

Special Interest Programs

(continued from page 1)

Business 12 noon Room 105

Doug and Debbie Stone of Eclipse Computer Support will be discussing the differences between dBase II and dBase III. They will also discuss some of the many capabilities of Ashton-Tate's new integrated package, Framework.

Doug has experience in hardware as well as software, and is currently involved in networking PCs for various businesses. He began the Dallas dBase II user's group about two years ago. (See Doug after the meeting if you want information about this Group.)

Debbie has been a dBase II consultant and instructor for over three years, and is currently writing instructional workbooks for both dBase II and dBase III.

Eclipse Computer Support offers a wide variety of services from initial system definition to installation and technical support. A unique offering is Eclipse CustomWare (trademark), which provides custom software at a guaranteed price.

There will be a general question and answer session from 12:00 until 12:30, with the dBase and Framework presentation from 12:30 until 1:30.

-Ricky Burke

a

S_T_A_R_T_E_X_T O_B_S_E_R_V_E_R

by Dick Gall

THE NEXT STEP IN NEWS, as STARTEXT likes to call itself, is about to take the big step to its Version 3 software system, offering users faster response time, 1200 baud service, and the beginning of the introduction of a host of new features that will stretch well into 1985.

STARTEXT is the super 24-hour bulletin board with heart sponsored by the Fort Worth Star-Telegram newspaper. Currently almost 1200 subscribers use the dialin service via 28 phone lines, 8 of which are metro lines providing toll-free access for Dallas subscribers.

It provides local & national news, lots of computer columns (including PCTALK by group member Carrington Dixon and TIPRO by yours truly), movie reviews, sports, weather, stock quotes, EMAIL, classified ads, and features on everything from gardening to politics. The cost is \$7.95 per month for unlimited access time at 300 baud. 1200 baud service will cost \$10.95 per month for unlimited access time, when initiated. Editor Gerry Barker encourages prospective users to sample the wares by calling for a free trial password that provides 5 log-ons within a 30 day period. Call (voice - metro) 429-2655 ext. 832 or 905 or Fort Worth 390-7905 to arrange service or a free trial. STARTEXT talks pure

ASCII, so it can be accessed with almost any modem and communications program. Even the transmitted screen width is adaptable upon user command.

For hardware, the service uses a VAX/750. A second /750 is planned to be online in parallel by October 1, and the two will share access to about 450 Mbytes of info storage. Version 3 will also bring keyword searches for directly locating such items as individual stock prices. Mutual funds coverage is planned to be added to the current NY, AMEX, and NASDAQ daily listings.

STARTEXT's Email service is already an integral part of publishing this newsletter. Since joining the service a few months ago, PC NEWS editor John Pribyl collects part of the copy for each edition (including this item) via the Email service, sometimes known as STARMAIL. John has also become a master at using STARMAIL to send out diplomatic reminders of impending copy deadlines. The Version 3 software system will greatly expand the Email services, including multiple destinations, forwarding, saving e-letters in an individual e-box, and hard copy mailings (for a slight fee - watch out MCI mail!).

Private data base service will also be offered in the near future. The system is planned to support up to 255 private data bases, and discussions are already underway with some interested groups. STARTEXT will begin taking advertisements this year, and subscribers will be able to place ads on line for both STARTEXT and the Star-Telegram.

Beyond Version 3 are being planned such new features as online games, real time conferencing, banking transactions, and downloading of public domain software. An on-line auction block service is being considered. STARTEXT plans to do WINDOWS TO THE WORLD by providing gateways to other online services such as CompuServe.

The responsiveness of STARTEXT's staff and its thoroughly reasonable price for unlimited access time makes STARTEXT a very unique local asset. Users submit comments via the MESSAGE command, and the staff responds for all the world to read in the COMMENTS section. THE COMPUTER PHONE BOOK, a compendium of over 400 bulletin boards and online systems across the country, comments that STARTEXT is the largest local area service in the country, is the biggest bargain to be found in local systems, and is fast, flexible, and very easy to use. With Version 3 it will be even better!

[Subscribers: Send your mail ID to me at #1483 to be included in a future listing in PC NEWS]

Dick

B.I.S. Instant Information is Power

GENERAL LEDGER ON LINE

Instant Posting-Immediate Reporting

POWER to make fast, efficient management decisions. POWER to adjust to fluctuations in sales. POWER to increase productivity and profits.

B.I.S. is more than just a general ledger... it's a business information system that can produce selected business activity reports immediately.

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SOFTWARE REPORT

by Dick Gall



PASCAL SEES THE LIGHT

The Sept. 18 issue of PC magazine arrived today, just in time to prevent the reincarnation-by-reformatting of the demo diskettes containing the two programs that are the subject of this month's software review. The salvation was Softech's ad announcing UCSD PASCAL GOES DOS, i.e., programs can now be written in UCSD Pascal and executed under PC- & MS-DOS.

There are reasonable people who use the UCSD PASCAL system. But this month's two demo diskettes have confirmed everything this confirmed non-UCSD PC'er has ever heard about the UCSD system being slow, cumbersome, and prone to conducting endurance tests on floppy drives. Plus it has the arrogance to make one boot away PC-DOS in order to run it. The new PC-DOS compatibility announcement (at least at run time) has mitigated these hard feelings enough that we're willing to proceed with reviews of demos of two UCSD PASCAL based programs that have long been on the shelf.

JACK 2

This is an integrated package that combines word processing, spreadsheets, data base, and graphics charts (even on the monochrome screen). The most unique feature is that spreadsheets and charts can be embedded directly in text files, which makes it handy as a business tool.

Files are shown on the screen as envelopes, and forms within the envelopes can be displayed and selected by pointing. The editor handles multiple text columns, and variables embedded in text can be linked to spreadsheet and graph segments so that all related items are updated at once when a change is made.

Most standard database search-type functions are included, but generating subtotals or summaries requires an additional program, JACK2 REPORT. Setting up a spreadsheet involves specifying column and row fields, and the capability to name columns and rows can simplify setting up calculations. Graphics are limited to only two types of charts. The word processing function and its merge capabilities present some of the strongest features of the package.

JACK 2 requires two disk drives and 128K of memory. The demo diskette supplied for review makes it look excep-

tionally easy to learn and operate, once one gets past the \$495 price (JACK2 REPORT is \$250 additional). For additional information, see PC Magazine's review in the July 24 issue.

ADVANCED DB MASTER

This little number requires only 512K of ram, and an inhuman amount of patience while it spends up to 20 seconds opening a file and from 20 seconds up changing functions. PC covered it as part of its recent 7-issue series PROJECT DATA BASE, and tore into it and the use of the UCSD p-System to maintain portability as the product was transferred from DB MASTER of the Apple II realm. Learning the advanced version is a chore, bugs have been reported, and the sample version provided assumed expert familiarity with data base terminology and fair capability with ADDBM itself. Its allegedly been improved, so we'll try to get a new sample to review. Meanwhile, exercise caution in evaluating this \$595 product from Stoneware, Inc., of San Raphael.

Dick

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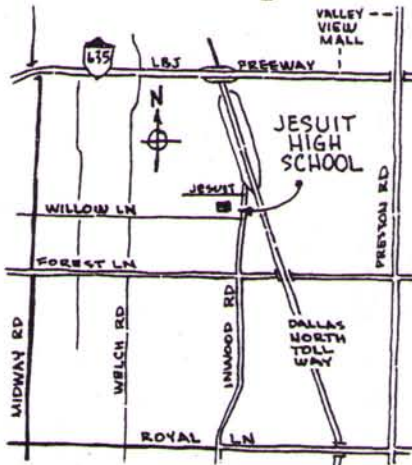
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