



North Texas PC Users Group

6.2

February 1987



North Texas PC NEWS
(STARMAIL ADDRESS 51563)

Published monthly by members of North Texas Personal Computer Users Group for their use. Members each receive a free subscription; for others, price of the NEWS is \$2 per copy. Members are requested to notify the Membership Director in writing of address changes. Send all editorial correspondence to:

North Texas PC NEWS
2025 Rockcreek Drive
Arlington, TX 76010.

Editor/Publisher (817)275-4109
John Pribyl
Assistant Editor (214)348-2345
Carole Phillips
Newsletter Exchange Editor (214)890-9087
Tom Prickett
Software Review Editor (214)234-8888
Dick Gall
Advertising Manager
- o p e n -

Illustrations by Russ McArthur

The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Group or its members. Copyright (c) 1987 by North Texas PC NEWS. (Articles may be reproduced by other User Groups if credit is given to the author and the publication.)

Deadline:

All material for publication in North Texas PC NEWS (articles and ads) must be received by the NEWS staff no later than the 15th of the month.

Articles:

Please do not right-justify, indent or otherwise code the copy. If column alignment is critical, send along a hard copy, or written instructions. Article submission is preferred by modem (817/275-4109 or Startext 51563), or disk in ASCII format, unjustified. If you send a disk, please include a printed copy of the article to assure accuracy. Double spaced, typewritten copy is acceptable but must be received a week before the deadline.

Circulation:

North Texas PC NEWS circulation is 1126. Member distribution is 889; remaining copies are distributed to PC user groups around the country, and to advertisers, prospective members and others with common interests.

This issue of North Texas PC NEWS was composed using PS Technical Word Processor by Scroll Systems. Repro was printed on a Toshiba P351 dot matrix printer in Prestige Elite and GTHIC151 typefaces.



DEADLINE

Copy deadline for March PC NEWS:
Sunday, February 15th.
(... get your contest entries in early!)

Future Meeting Dates

March Meeting - 3rd Saturday (21st)
April Meeting - 2nd Saturday (11th)
May Meeting - 2nd Saturday (9th) tentative

**North Texas Personal Computer
Users Group, Inc.**

P.O. Box 780066, Dallas, TX 75378-0066

Board of Directors

Jim Graham, Chairman Jim Hoisington
Dick Barr John Pribyl
Jim Janeway

The North Texas PC Users Group, Inc., is a non-profit, independent group, not associated with IBM or any other Corporation. Membership is open to owners and others interested in exchanging ideas, information, hardware, predictions, and other items related to IBM Personal and compatible computers. To join the Group, complete the application blank printed elsewhere in this issue, and send it with \$24 membership dues to address shown below. A subscription to the newsletter is included with each membership.

The Group meets once each month, usually on the second Saturday. See cover for date, time and place of the next User Group meeting.

Officials:

President - Jim Hoisington (214)245-8975 h
President-Elect -
Program Chair - Charles Kroboth (214)245-4763 w
Treasurer - Joe Brophy (214)891-8187 w
Secretary - Laura Murphey (214)824-1885 h
Membership Dir. - Bob Russell (214)422-4269 h
Disk of the Month - Tim O'Neil (817)267-8988 h
Public Relations (o p e n)

Special Interest Groups:

SIG Coord. - Phil Chamberlain (214)243-5034 h
APL - Jim Fiegenshue (214)539-9281 h
Artificial Intel. Jim Bender (214)423-3470 h
Astrometry - Arlin Collins (214)351-5137 h
Assembler - John Cole (214)669-4700 w
Beginners - Phil Chamberlain (214)243-5034 h
 - Jim Graham (214)931-8505 h
DOS - Jim Hoisington (214)245-0973 h
 - Dr Reagan Andrews ()
Business Applic. Bruce Schubert (214)539-7330 h
 Linda Handlogen ()
C Language - Dr. Sid Nolte (214)233-6178 h
Communications - Fred Williams (214)492-1315 w
Databases - Chris Morgan (214)245-4763 w
BASIC - - o p e n -
Genealogy - Minnie Champ (214)341-6507 h
Graphics - Mike Durbin (214)271-8779 h
Invest - N-Squared Greg Morris (214)680-1445 w
LOTUS - Susan Reyes (214)270-3504 h
 - Peyton Weaver (214)462-0552 h
Programmers - Dr. Neil Bennett (214)422-5673 h
Science/Engr. - Sam Leven ()
 - David Lamb (214)931-3068 h
Turbo Pascal - Warren Ferguson (214)692-2506 w

BBS: SYSOP: Tom Prickett (214)418-6969

Payment of dues, address changes, and inquiries about membership should be directed to:

NTPCUG Membership Director
135 Skyline Drive
Plano, Texas 75074

Check newsletter mailing label for your membership renewal date. No separate renewal notice will be sent.

Prez Sez . . .



NEWSLETTER

In trying to plan for 1987, we have decided to make some changes to meet the ever changing needs of you - the members. Over half of your dues go toward producing the newsletter. It has been our desire to increase the number of articles. To help that along, we instituted the contest. However, we know that if we add many more pages, our postage costs will quickly use up most of your dues. We are currently looking at sending out the newsletter by second class mail or bulk mail. That will have an impact on those of us who use the arrival of the newsletter as a signal that the club meeting must be the next Saturday.

Either bulk mail or second class mail will not guarantee us that the newsletter will arrive in the week before the meeting. We'll try to keep the meetings on the second Saturday, but we have to go to alternate weekends for a couple of months because of trade shows that are already scheduled at Infomart on the second Saturday in those months.

BEGINNERS' SIG & DOS SIG

We have had a lot of members join recently that are new to the PC and DOS. We are doing two things to help you learn about the machine. Phil Chamberlain and Jim Graham are cooperating on a Beginners' SIG. It will have a three session syllabus that will repeat every three months. Each session may be an hour and one half in length to accomodate the amount of material that will be covered.

We noticed that you have been attending the DOS SIG in large numbers. From the topics that you wanted covered and the questions that were asked, it became obvious to us that the title of this SIG should really be, "INTRODUCTION TO DOS."

Reagan Andrews and I have taken over "hosting" the 9:00 session and we are looking for one or two people to begin a 3:00 session. We need the afternoon session for two reasons. First, big rooms are hard to come by and we'd

like everybody to have a chair. Second, we realize that there are "morning" people and there are "evening" people. We don't want you to miss this SIG just because it's at 9:00 am on a Saturday.

WHAT'S A SIG

I just realized that I have been using the word SIG freely and if I've learned one thing in the DOS SIG, it's that not everyone knows all the buzzwords. SIG stands for Special Interest Group.

DALLAS COMPUTER COUNCIL

I know you've heard the officers of the club talk about the Dallas Computer Council from time to time. Last Monday, the Dallas Computer Council was dissolved. (Actually I am writing this in December.)

You may wonder what effect that will have on the North Texas PC Users' Group. Well, the DCC (Dallas Computer Council) administered the lease that allows us to meet at the Infomart.

The DCC was originally set up to allow the exchange of information between the computer clubs in Dallas and it was felt that the administration of the Infomart lease would not take up much of it's time.

In practice, the coordination of the meetings at Infomart took up all of the DCC's time and then some. For the past six months, the four officers of the DCC put in some very long hours trying to make it work. In the end, we decided to reorganize as the Computer Council of Dallas in order to better handle these once a month events.

However, we couldn't have made it through the last six months without some very hard work behind the scenes. I would like to thank the outgoing officers of the Dallas Computer Council for their efforts. They are: Gary Sewell, president; Bill Kauth, vice president; Ed Kobus, treasurer; and Louis Guion, secretary.

Jim

□

Computer Council of Dallas NEWS

January, 1987

There was a lot happening in the first week of January for the CCD. Finally, after much gnashing of teeth, Articles of Incorporation have been submitted to the state. So, by the time you read this, the CCD should have legal existence as a corporation.

Also, a rough budget for 1987 has been prepared and submitted to the council. Just as everywhere else, costs of meeting at INFOMART will be going up this year. Things like rent, fees, and insurance always go up. So, the CCD will be looking for ways to increase revenue.

There are several new representatives from various affiliates, so it will be a learning process for some. But last month's decision to

reduce the number of representatives on the Council is already bearing fruit in the streamlined workings of the CCD.

There were 35 tables sold at the January Users Forum. While this is a decrease over recent months, this was anticipated with the meeting date falling so early in the month, and so close to the holidays. But if you know of a vendor that could profit by joining the fun, but isn't, please let your CCD representative know. Remember, we all benefit by having more vendors.

The 1987 contract with INFOMART sets up tentative meeting dates for the entire year. Remember that dates more than a couple of months in advance are subject to change. Scheduled dates are: 2/14, 3/21, 4/11, 5/6, 6/13, 7/11, 8/8, 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, and 12/12.

john l. pellet mc92019

Desktop Publishing

XEROX VENTURA PUBLISHER EDITION - Page and document composition software, with true WYSIWYG text and graphics interfaces. \$895

AMDEK 1280 - 15" High-Resolution monitor, with 1280 x 800 display - Perfect for Ventura and Autocad. \$999

Moniterm VIKING 1 - 19" Hi-Resolution Monitor with 1280 x 960 display, complete with GEM and MS-Windows drivers. \$2,395


OASYS LaserPro Printers - A complete family of Laser Printers with full-page 300 x 300 dpi graphics. Prices start at \$1,895

ITT QUME LaserTEN - Complete HP and EPSON compatibility at a low, low price. \$1,894

Everything you need for PC Desktop Publishing is now available from one source. Why look further, - a full PC Publishing System that gives you the crisp perfection of professional typesetting is available today from AMCAD.

DEALER
INQUIRIES WELCOME

Call today for our low, discount prices and an In-House Demonstration.



214-323-0700

1325 Whitlock Lane #314
Carrollton, TX 75006

February

Charles Kroboth,
Program Chairman

February 14, 1987
9:00 AM to 11:30 AM
Infomart Auditorium

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Pagemaker (Aldus)

From 9:00 to 9:45 Donna Belk will give us a demonstration of Pagemaker, a product just recently ported from the MacIntosh to the PC by Aldus Corporation. Donna began her career as a typesetter and graphic designer, giving her experience in nearly all aspects of newspaper, magazine, book, and advertising production. She developed the in-house typesetting department for Texas Monthly Magazine and owned and published her own monthly periodical, New Texas.

Ms. Belk has concentrated her efforts in the field of personal computers since 1984. This has included consulting on PC-to-typesetter interfaces and training as well as conducting desktop publishing seminars.

Ventura (Xerox)

From 10:00 to 11:00 Xerox will be represented by Herb Karasik and Dixon Bunger. They will be showing us the many features of Ventura, one of the best selling Desktop Publishing products for the PC. Many computer publications also consider Ventura to be the best DP package available in 1986. Ventura accepts text from most major word processors and graphics from most major graphics packages.

Table of Contents

Organizing for Speed, Convenience and Reliability (No.1) Dr. Reagan Andrews	4
On Complexity (No. 6) Jim Hoisington	7
Computer Assisted Jury Selection - A Fair Deal? Bob Russell	9
Survey Results; Contest Topics Tom Prickett	14
Local Boys Do Good - Reprints	15
Data Communications John Keohana	16
Good News/Bad News - Exchange Tom Prickett	21
Greetings from BBS Sysop Tom Prickett	23
Agenda	3
Financial Report	6
Group Purchase: USRobotics Modem	13
Contest Rules	15
Membership Application Blank	22
Editor's Notes	24
Room Assignments	25
Features:	
CCD News	2
SHAP SHOP	15
Disk of the Month	17
SIG Reports	19
Variety Store	21

Election Results

Vote tabulation and verification were not complete at press time. Results will be available at the February meeting, and will be reported in the March issue of the newsletter.

**Organizing for Speed,
Convenience and Reliability
(No. 1 in a Series)**

Dr. Reagan Andrews

Sooner or later, every microcomputer user finds him- or herself feeling a need to "get things organized."

We knew this should have been accomplished from the start -- even before the new computer was removed from its shipping boxes. Most of us, however, were too anxious and began using our new computer immediately. We waited until things were too cluttered to tolerate longer -- or we couldn't find important files -- before recognizing the importance of computer organization.

"Getting Organized" in this case really means reorganizing.

The same principles apply to both the new user with his or her first computer, and the experienced user who is drowning in clutter and unidentifiable files.

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions...

Before you begin, take stock and decide just what you are going to do with your computer. Tasking and sequencing are important components of any organization scheme and the user should have that in mind when planning is underway. Reorganizing an existing system has some advantage here, since usage patterns and typical sequence of operation are already established.

However, it may be worthwhile to approach this stage of organization from the perspective of the "new" user. Even the experienced, knowledgeable user may discover present patterns aren't what they really want or need.

Core questions, then, are:

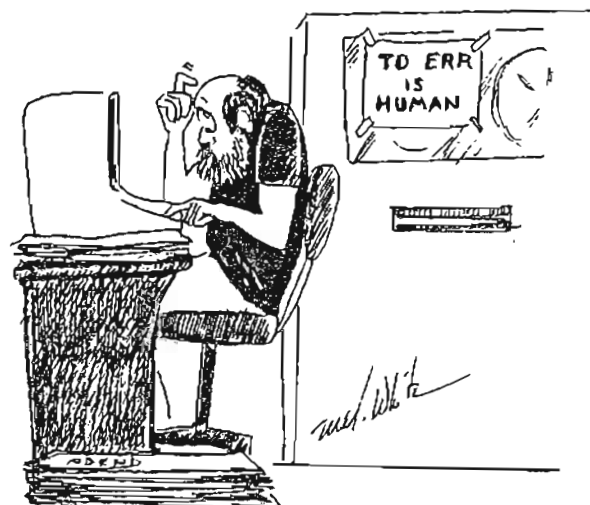
- Who -- who will be using the computer?
- What -- What will be accomplished with the computer?
- How -- how will the computer be operated?

Who will be using the computer?

Will it be a "private" -- i.e., one-user machine, or will several others also use the computer? In the latter case, where many people may have access to the computer on a daily basis, other questions concerning data and program security, user priorities and responsibility for file maintenance, etc. are raised.

Most of us won't be presented with such a grand array of potential decisions. Generally, we'll think of the computer as "personal" or limited to access by one or two others in the family, office or business.

Floppy-only computers have had a distinct advantage -- when storage limitations are ignored -- in multiple-user situations. Each user has his or her own set of system and application/s disks, and is responsible for their own file security and maintenance. In terms of eliminating potential interpersonal aggravation and friction, this is the ideal system. Program sharing and data sharing, however, are very common in floppy-systems and provide significant potential for disagreement unless all concerned are very careful in their operating habits. ▶



Contemporary equivalent of the "floppy-only" system is a computer equipped with Bournelli Drives or removable hard disks. These offer the advantages of significant storage and speed with security made possible by removable media.

Each individual user on such systems can determine their own preferred mode of computer operation and configure the system accordingly when it's "their turn." This can be particularly helpful when small children will also have "access rights" to the computer for games and educational programs. Even in more sophisticated systems with hard disks, it's a good idea to provide the child with bootable floppys with their games or other programs and bypass access to the hard disk.

What will the computer do?

Typically, microcomputers have been purchased with only one or two major applications in mind. But, "personal" computer owners tend to "discover" the tremendous potentials of computer use and augment the "primary" spreadsheet or word processing program with data-base, financial and accounting programs, educational and game programs.

Business settings tend to narrow scope of computer usage to a few "primary" tasks initially and infrequently expand beyond these. Tendency is to acquire additional computers if more tasks are added. Dedicated, or "turnkey," use is found most frequently in these settings.

University and educational settings tend to resemble home or "personal" use patterns with multiple applications, many of which may involve intensive database, word processing and mathematical calculations such as statistical analysis, equation solving, etc. Also, such machines tend to be very, very "public" with many potential users with varying degrees of computer skill. Computers in these settings present unusually complex challenges when attempting to organize system and usage interfaces.

How will the computer be operated?

Along these lines, several basic choices face the user/owner in setting up their machine and configuring their hardware. Basic modes of operation are:

- (1.) Command-line operation: using MS/PC-DOS, utilities and applications programs "right out of the box." That is, the user "boots" their computer and operates from the MS/PC-DOS prompt, "A>," by typing the appropriate commands.
- (2.) Operation through menus and DOS "shells": with either menu systems or "shells" such as "1-DIR", "PathMinder", "Gaspl", "Norton Commander", etc. acting as program and utility selection controls.
- (3.) Dedicated or "turnkey" operation: where the computer is used for a single application or integrated group of applications and users usually have no, or very limited, access to other computer functions. That is, when the computer is turned on, it immediately goes to specific application program without user input.

Command-line Operation

First of these choices is probably the most common and actually the most flexible in terms of operation. However, many users consider MS/PC-DOS difficult to use and quickly move on to the second choice -- use of menus and "shells" between themselves and MS/PC-DOS without learning its command structure or power.

Few people, even if they wish to do so, choose or are able to rely on a "pure" command driven system. With the exception of MS/PC-DOS utilities, most current software places the user in a "menu" environment at least some of the time. Also, many applications programs are themselves "shells" and replace MS/PC-DOS commands and syntax with their own. ➤

Menu and "Shell" Operation

The second category, menus and "shells" is initially appealing because they often offer a more "logical" and/or visually appealing operating interface than MS/PC-DOS. All, however, place some limitation on operational flexibility and are usually just as difficult to use as well as MS/PC-DOS. Users with limited memory soon discover that the convenience of the "shells" has a price in terms of memory needed just to run the "shell." This is less of a problem now as more computers tend to be equipped with MS/PC-DOS's 640K RAM maximum.

Power-user Futurists (the group hanging out in the Advanced Programmers SIG) predict, though, that "shells" are the operating environment we'll all be using in the future and wax eloquent over Microsoft's "Windows." It might be helpful to keep this in mind when planning organization.

Dedicated or "Turnkey" Operation

Dedicated use configuration is the least flexible scheme possible, but has advantages when "typical" users will not be familiar with computers. When the computer is turned on, it goes to a specific application or integrated group of applications. Nothing else is available to the user. Many mainframe and mini-computer systems functionally achieve the same result for individual terminals attached to them.

Security considerations and ease of operation for people without computer skills are major advantages of dedicated operation. Individuals' access to programs and data may be much more easily controlled this way, thus reducing possible database compromise. Persons with limited experience can utilize such systems with minimal training time which can be very important in a business setting.

Many games effectively turn personal computers into dedicated systems as a result of copy protection schemes that demand the game disk

be used to boot the system. Although, restrictive, this may be preferable when small children have access to a computer.

Balancing Acts to come:

After the owner/user has assessed his or her application needs, determined who will be using the computer/s and chosen a desired operating "style", decisions about equipment -- hardware and memory -- loom on the horizon. The next installment of this series will discuss possible computer and storage ramifications -- including modification and/or addition to existing equipment to meet operating needs while keeping budgetary considerations in mind.

Reagan

■



**North Texas PC NEWS Financial Report
13 December 1987**

July - December 1987*
(December Printing 1175)

INCOME:

Advertising, Labels	\$ 738.75
Cash from Treasury	7200.00
BALANCE - Dec 1986	-77.39
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: none; border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>
	\$7861.36

EXPENSES:

Office/Art Supplies	\$ 127.76
Misc (Copies, Newsltr Exchange, Startext)	76.90
Print, Dist & Mail PCN	7565.69
Telephone Calls	36.57
BALANCE 14 June 1986	54.44
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: none; border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>
	\$7861.36

*Includes 6 issues PCN, Newsletter Exchange, PCN/StarText connection.

On Complexity

No. 6 in a Series

Jim Hoisington

"People forget that it's a system!". Those prophetic words came from Ken Land as we were working trying to get a friend's computer running one Saturday. He was referring to a PC, not a mainframe and it was said after we had seen some PC's that were configured by salespeople in some of the local computer stores.

A corollary to Ken's statement would be Amdahl's law which we heard about in the December meeting. "A computer is dominated by its slowest component."

It was brought home to me when I tried to configure the club's bulletin board machine with a hard disk. It took several tries before I was able to find a hard disk that worked for more than eight hours with our machine. And when I finally found the right combination, it really ran up impressive numbers on the Core Labs disk test.

Without going into all the details, here's why I think I had problems finding the right disk drive. Our processor (8088) runs at 4.77 megahertz or at 8 megahertz. Its speed is selectable from the keyboard. The memory is all on the motherboard so there is no speed restriction placed on the bus (as in wait states) because there is no need for additional memory cards. The bus runs at 8 megahertz. It doesn't change speeds when the processor runs at 4.77 megahertz. And that turns out to be the problem.

After some investigation, I discovered that some (maybe most) "turbo" XT clones leave their bus running at the slower speed while they speed up their processor. In my book, that's like driving a Porsche at 35 mph. When the processor gets work to do, it does it

quickly. But the system is dominated by the slow bus so the processor spends most of its time waiting for work. What does this imply about configuring a PC?

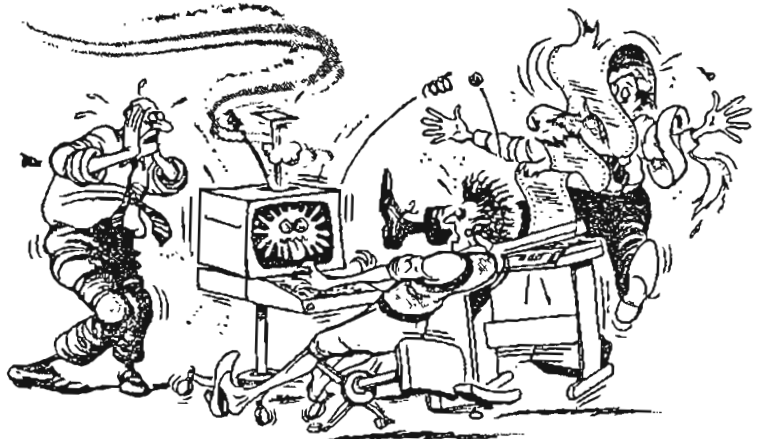
You don't need a 20 ms access time on your hard disk if you are running a vanilla PC at 4.77 megahertz. Conversely, (and more commonly,) you will be wasting your money if you put a slow 90 ms access time hard disk in your 8 megahertz AT.

But it's more than that. There are new disk controllers with caching schemes that buffer the hard disk and diskettes from the bus. And, there are processor accelerator cards that plug into the bus and provide memory caching for a faster processor. (Does anyone remember what ROS storage did on the IBM 360?). So, when you are buying a new PC or adding equipment to an old PC, keep in mind that it's a system. The components of the system interact with each other. Remember that it will be dominated by its slowest component. And most importantly, don't trust the salesperson to be any more technically sophisticated than you are.

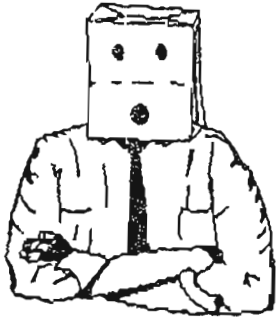
To quote another friend of mine, "Caveat Dictus!"

Jim

2



NERD ON THE STREET



person considered most responsible for A-T's growth from \$10 million to \$200 million is Ron Posner. As System, Service, and Information Division Executive Vice President he also masterminded their acquisition of Framework, MultiMate and RapidFile. Look for some interesting things from Ansa this year.

Brown Bag Software recently offered owners of Sidekick a \$20 rebate if they switched to Homebase 2.0, that accompanies desktop organizer. Borland President, Philippe Kahn, responded by declaring "war" on Brown Bag. Before Mr. Kahn could regroup Brown Bag attacked again by hiring Lars Sorenson, project leader of Sidekick Plus.

P&L: Atari's financial woe's have eased since their public offering left them with \$15 million after paying off back debt. The Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation (MCC) in Austin was said to be in trouble by Business Week due to CEO, Bobby Inman leaving and shareholder, BMC Industries of St. Paul, Mn. pulling out. BMC's shares were sold to a new partner, Hewlett-Packard, and things are looking up again. Other shareholders include DEC, GE, Unisys, Motorola, and NCR. H-P was also recently cited for excellence by the Bureau of National Affairs in its hiring of minorities.

An agreement has been signed between Microage Computer Stores and Moore Business Systems to convert most of the 45 Moore locations to Microage franchises. Microage is

currently 176 stores strong and says that many of the Moore managers have expressed interest in becoming franchisees.

Networking companies seem to be doing exceptionally well. 3COM recently reported a record \$2.9 million in income while Novell posted profits of \$3.38 million compared to \$1.66 million last year.

PARTY TIME: For those of you not aware of IBM's policy on company parties, suffice it to say that "Dancing on the ceiling" is a phrase seldom heard. At a recent press reception held at the St. Regis Hotel in New York, Gatorade was served in large punch bowls. One IBMer said: "We generally come to these parties tipsy and leave sober".

REVENGE: Ever wish you could get back at your PC for crashing your hard disk? Now you can at the Bullet Stop, in Marietta, Ga. The Bullet Stop is a shooting range and you are encouraged to bring in your own targets (mothers-in-law excluded). According to NPR's All Things Considered, the owner of BS says customers frequently bring in their personal computers to shoot up with rental machine guns.

COMPUTER COUNCIL OF DALLAS: No news is good news!

ICBM.WKS: Ever wonder what happened to Mitch Kapor. On leaving Lotus he alluded to having to find himself and apparently has. Mitch is now a member of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility and is sponsoring a film called "Reliability and Risk: Computers and Nuclear War". The idea is that the software used for the Star Wars defense system is inherently unreliable. I like "SPIES LIKE lotUS" better.

Nnnnn

■

Computer-Assisted Jury Selection -- A Fair Deal?

Bob Russell

There are few things in life that cause such ambivalent feelings as receiving a jury summons. Everyone should serve at least once; it is a very rewarding experience. At the same time, one feels the imposition of an intrusive government hand. There is never a good time for it to happen, and we would like to be very sure that the selection is fair and impartial. With the advent of microcomputers, there has been a move toward using computer data bases to maintain the voter registration rolls and to select candidates for jury duty. In the case of Collin County, the only system examined, the necessary fair selection of prospective jurors proves not to be built into the system despite the best efforts of those responsible for the jury system. This analysis will discuss the pitfalls of a particular system of jury candidate selection, with the purpose of highlighting the fact that complexity is not a guarantor of effectiveness where computers are involved.

Summary

Experience and discussion with numerous citizens of Collin County prompted an examination of the method used for jury candidate selection. The theoretical probability of selection for jury service is much lower than the observed frequency for some of the population, and very much higher than the observed frequency for others who have never been invited to

serve this vital function. This observation as to the behavior of the system is borne out by the analysis of the system purchased in March 1986 and used by the Data Processing Department to select jury candidates from the voter's rolls of the County. Previously, the candidates were selected by a data processing service in Dallas, using a "very complicated equation that nobody understands". When I asked for information about the system in 1984, I was assured that the District Clerk's office would take it up with their computer consultant. It appears that the same method as that used then for candidate selection is being used now with the same incorrect result.

A random number generator and jury selection program is part of the dedicated computer system used to maintain the voter rolls in the office of the District Clerk in the Collin County Courthouse. While the system was supposed to be fair, impartial and objective, the method programmed by the vending company is complicated, clumsy, and extremely unfair, as shown by the analysis which follows. The random number generator is taken from an authoritative source, and is shown to be unbiased. The numbers taken from it are used to form letter sequences to determine the names for a candidate list, introducing a totally fallacious and complex procedure. Apparently the company wished to incorporate proprie-

tary techniques to support claims of ownership so that changes could be made only by that company, and so that the method could not be easily understood.

A good jury selection system can easily be programmed to replace the current system, which may be in use in many districts throughout the country inasmuch as the company, Computer Election Systems (CES), apparently has sold its product at the national level. The following analysis shows in detail the innate unsuitability of the CES jury selection system to perform the task specified by the Commissioners' Court order No. 86-140-3-10, Adoption of an Electronic Jury Selection System.

Motivation

In the last 6 years, I have been summoned for jury duty four times. I have talked to a number of people who have lived in the county longer than I have, and there is a strong feeling that the system of selection is quite unfair. The responsible county office-holders all admit to bafflement as to why the process seems so uneven, and to not being able to understand the description of the method used. I took a straw poll of more than 60 people, and my observation was corroborated. Virtually everyone had stories about the inequities of the system without quite understanding how the process works. Of those who had served, most had served several times. About 30 percent had never been called to serve. They also knew many others who had never been sum-

moned for jury duty. Most felt there is something wrong and unfair about the process, but could not prove it. In summary, the feeling is that:

- o Once you get on the list, you will be called repeatedly
- o Many people don't get the opportunity
- o Every one should have the privilege of performing this patriotic duty.
- o No one minds performing the duty, as long as every one has an equal opportunity

Probability of Selection

The probability of not being selected at one draw is $1 - (1/\text{sample space})$, where sample space is the number of voters registered in the county. Thus, each of the almost 100 thousand voters in Collin county should have a probability at each draw of $1 - 1/100000$, or .99999, of not being selected to receive a summons for jury duty. About 400 candidates per week are selected, with drawings usually conducted at three to four week intervals. In any one week, then, my probability of being not selected should be $1 - 4/1000$, and in one 50 week year, $1 - 20/100$. In other words, every registered voter should expect that he or she might be selected about once every 5 years. On average, a fair system with replacement of selected candidates after one year would select only 8 voters out of 1000 three times in a given five year period; 173 of 1000 would be selected two times; and 491 in 1000 would be selected 1 time in that five

years. 328 out of 1000 would not be selected in that period. In a system where prospective jurors were selected without replacement, no one would be called a second time until everyone else had been called—in the case we have postulated, after five years. These figures presuppose a fixed population, and are, of course, subject to some deviation.

Information Sources

I talked with Mr. Jim Patton, head of Data Processing for Collin County. He is tasked by the District Judges and the District Clerk to run the program to select jurors from the registered voter list of County residents. The process to initiate the selection is a small ritual involving secret numbers held by each participant (The presiding judge, the Sheriff, and the District clerk). The computer uses the date and time as the initial entry in a program which is supposed to select names at random from the voter registration list maintained by the District Clerk. This random selection program was developed by a company called Computer Election Systems (CES) in Berkeley, California.

Mr. Patton said they tested the process about a year and a half ago, but did not offer a test report. He stated that the responsibility for developing the name list belongs to the District Clerk and to the Judges; he merely runs the program. I have since requested a test report from the District Clerk.

I obtained a copy of the executive order dated 10 March 1986,

with attachment. The order specifies that a "fair, impartial, and objective system of ... jury selection..." be implemented. In particular, it specifies that the voter registration list be used until it is exhausted. This implies that prospective jurors are not to be replaced in the pool of selectees until all members of that pool who have not been selected have been selected once. The attachment is a letter that describes the algorithm used to produce a pseudorandom sequence of numbers, which are then used to select jurors from the list of registered voters maintained by the District Clerk's office.

Testing

Using that letter, I translated the algorithm and programmed the random number generator using LOTUS 123 and generated a 2000 number list, enough to test without being unwieldy. In a selection system such as we are describing, each individual should have the same probability of being selected as any other—a uniform distribution. By comparing the numbers generated with the statistics of a known sequence generator, I could determine if the generator was providing the desired uniform distribution.

There is a built in random number generator in Lotus 123 that generates a uniform distribution of output numbers. The average, variance, and standard deviation of the two generators were similar. The plotted histogram of 2000 numbers sorted into 200 bins showed good distribution over the range 50,000 to 999,999, with the average

number of generated items per bin(relative frequency) about 9.8 to 10.1, as would be expected for a small sample of a uniform distribution. The Chi-Square test was used to measure the deviation from the desired distribution--a uniform probability of selection of any given six digit number. It showed that the distribution was near the desired curve, without being deterministic; a reasonable result. The spectral test showed that the random number generation equation in use gives a flat distribution between the 5 percent and 97 percent points on the curve. Thus the statistics look about as good as could be expected. Thus I conclude that the random sequences being generated are satisfactory. The author of the linear congruential equation used in the algorithm is Donald Knuth, a well-known authority in the computing field. He warns in the text of his book (Vol. 2 of seven volumes on the art of computing), which is quoted as the source of the random number generating equation, that the results of the random number generator must be used wisely if proper results are to be obtained.

I then turned my attention to the name selection algorithm that uses the random number sequence. Two numbers, each of six digits, are generated. These two numbers are concatenated to form a twelve digit number. This number is then considered as six two-digit numbers and used to look up letters in the letter table shown below. The characters chosen by the six pairs of random numbers are used to form the

first four characters of the last name, the first, and the middle initial of each prospective candidate. "The voter with the closest name is then selected from the voter file", says the letter from CES.

The Fallacy

Picture for a moment what is being described. A twelve digit number forms six pairs of numbers. These numbers are used to step through a table (Figure 1) eeny meeny miney mo, to select one of the characters in this 73 character table. The next pair is used to run through the table until the next character is selected; and so on for all six pairs of numbers. Now the character sequence is used to look up a name in the voter rolls. The characters looked up in the table are patterned in an apparent attempt to approximate the frequency of letters making up names in the population.

```

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIIMNOPRSTUABCDEFGHI
MNOPRSTABCDEF GHIHINOPSRABCDE
FGHILMNOPSTABCDEF GHIMSA
    
```

Figure 1.

One only has to think of the number of ethnic groups and their differences to realize that this frequency must change from district to district, and particularly from state to state. The English language follows a very complex set of rules--the spelling of names is anything but random. The same can be said of Chinese, Japanese, and Greek transliterations. Other languages that use the

Roman alphabet have their own rules and letter frequencies. There is serious doubt that a letter frequency table that might be true in California would be also valid in Texas, with the different mix in ethnic groups, even if the selection method could be thought to be fair.

What is wrong?

Selection using the random character sequence generator disregards the variable size gaps between names. The random number generator is generating numbers in the range from zero to one less than one million--a six digit number. There are almost one hundred thousand voters in Collin County. Thus, the numbers map into 6-letter sequences from Figure 1. The question is, do they map uniformly between individual names? In other words, are there as many possibilities between McClesky and McCormick as there are between Russell and Rouch? Obviously, the difference in the number of possible random four letter character sequences is tremendous. There is almost no gap between the Scottish names beginning with Mc...., while sequences spelling names that have a vowel as their second letter will have thousands of possibilities between the end of one vowel sequence and the beginning of a new one--where the gaps will again be fairly small until the sequence has completed. The pointer used to select the name of a voter as a prospective juror may land

anywhere--but the distance to the next name from the place where it lands varies by large factors, and is not predictable.

If there is a gap where that pointer lands, the person at the first slot past the gap is going to be chosen each time a character group points anywhere in the gap. A gap would be started when, for instance, a consonant requiring a vowel to follow was selected as the first character in the sequence. The first feasible slot from that point would be the next name with a vowel as the second character. For example, after the last R0xx, a gap consisting of RPAA to RPZZ, RQAA to RQZZ, RRAA to RRZZ, RSAA to RSZZ, HTAA to RTZZ, and finally RUxx--a total of more than 90,000 combinations--would all result in selection of that first RUxx name--And there are many four letter sequences that do not comprise pronounceable combinations, but each letter in that 73 character table has an equal probability of being selected. This guarantees that there will be many gaps in the list of character sequences, and the first name following each of those gaps is going to be chosen whenever the generator lands in the gap. Just as surely, the second (and third, fourth, generator must spell his or her name exactly, or he/she will not be chosen. If the first name found is not qualified, then a jump of 10 names in the list is made, and that voter is a candidate for

selection, and so on until a name is chosen.

Conclusion

The foregoing is an analysis of the behavior of a system implemented according to the description provided by CES's letter attached to the Commissioners' Court order that caused the current selection system to be implemented in Collin County, Texas. I must infer that CES has sold this program many times throughout the United States, and that each District implementing it has been assured that it is a "fair, impartial, and objective selection of prospective jurors." The analysis result is entirely consistent with the observed behavior of the selection system, which is anything but fair and impartial. The culprit is the character sequence generation and selection by name. The character table is a complication added by CES to the random number selection process, and destroys any semblance of fairness in the system. It is a total departure from the theory of random selection as described by Don Knuth. Its secondary effect is to ensure that the process will not be able to be understood by the mathematically unsophisticated.

Recommendation

It is predictable and interesting that the solution is simplicity itself. The desired result is specified by statute (Article 2100a, Vernon's

Texas Civil Statutes, according to the Commissioners' Court Order). That result is random sampling of the voter registration list without replacement until the list is exhausted. The computer can generate only pseudorandom sequences, each of which is repeatable. Random numbers can be approximated by using a function with a long cycle, and initiating it with a different "seed" number for each session. Dr. Knuth's book discusses not only the generation of random numbers, but the testing of random number generating equations and the fact that most of the generators in use are unreliable. The linear congruential function $X = (A * X + C) \text{ mod } M$ is shown to be quite reliable as a source of random number sequences when properly used, and tests for the randomness of the sequences generated are provided. In Knuth's book on the Art of Computer Programming (Seminumerical Algorithms, Vol. 2, ISBN 0-201-03822-6. Copyright by ADDISON-WESLEY, 1981), in the same chapter from which CES draws its material, the function which should be used for selection of a specified number of random numbers from a population of known size is given and discussed. Each random number generated should be treated as an index into the list of voters to select the next candidate. No complication need be introduced, and the procedure provides a one to one mapping, rather than the clumsy and forced alphabetic mapping of the

Survey Results; Contest Topics

The club's newsletter contest gives you the chance to win a trip to Comdex. What are you waiting for, get started on that newsletter article today!

Here are some suggestions for subject matter.

Below are results of the October survey on what articles members would like to see in the newsletter. Numbers shown represent percentages of respondents requesting coverage of the subject.

Graphics series

- 21% Graphics Editors
- 29% Graphics subroutine packages
- 29% Graphics controller boards for PC's
- 43% Effective use of color in programs

Equipment procurement Series

- 57% Local hardware Vendors
- 50% Local software Vendors
- 57% Local mail/order & discount Vendors
- 36% Striking the right price/support/service equation for your computer.
- 57% New product announcements

Communications Series

- 43% Communicating with local BBS's
- 14% Communicating with national BBS's
- 14% Transferring public domain software PC to PC
- 21% Comparison of error checking protocols
- 14% Specialty BBS's
- 14% Using CompuServe
- 7% Using Dow Jones Retrieval

Network Series

- 21% Introduction to Local Area Networks
- 21% Network protocols, advantages

New Frontiers Series

- 50% 386 Processor and beyond
- 36% Future Operating Systems
- 14% Operator Interfaces of the Future
- 36% Optical disks on personal computers

Political Series

- 21% Legislation involving bulletin board systems

- 21% Misrepresentation in computer advertising
- 29% Legal issues for computer consultants

Software Review Series

- 21% Directory Manager programs
- 21% Investment programs
- 14% Business programs
- 29% Spreadsheet programs
- 21% Data base programs
- 21% Program Management programs
- 0% Time Management programs

Clone Compatibility Issues

- 43% Look-alike selection
- 50% Maintenance of a clone computer

Beginner's Series

- 21% Introduction to DOS
- 21% Introduction to 123
- 14% Introduction to Basic
- 29% Introduction to Pascal
- 14% Introduction to C
- 29% Introduction to Assembly
- 36% Introduction to BAT files

Some Survey Comments Received

SIG needed for novices which explains and shows innards of computer (i.e. hard disk controller, switches, plugs, etc.) and how to configure and diagnose problems.

Would like to read articles about suggested books to read on various languages (Assembly, Basic, etc.)

I would like to see Qmodem vs. Procomm vs. PC Talk III vs. PC Dial, etc.

Graphics article on using color while using DOS commands.

Need project management software review.

Product evaluations!

Still video image digitization/display/storage, thermal transfer color printers, and write once CD-ROMS.

Tom Prickett

■

Local Boys Do Good
 Newsletter Reprints in Other Cities

Dick Gall:

"Review: PC File III", reprinted in the Athens Area IBM-PC User Group - Summer, '86.

"Software Report, IBM Writing Assistant Ver 1.01", reprinted in the Silicon Forest Gazette, August, '86.

"Software Report, Finance Manager II", reprinted in the IBM-PC User Group of Kansas City Newsletter, September, '86.

"Software Report, Finance Manager II General Ledger", reprinted in the Silicon Forest Gazette, September, '86.

Computer News:

"Nerd on the Street", reprinted in the Silicon Forest Gazette, September, '86.

Ray Quay:

"A Novice Walk Through Turbo Prolog", reprinted in the Saskatoon PC Users Group Newsletter, October, '86.

Jim Ryan:

"Add and Divide", reprinted in the Boeing Employees Computing Society Newsletter, September, '86.

Fred Williams:

"Giga Bits and Mega IPS", reprinted in the San Diego IBM-PC User Group Newsletter, September, '86.

Stuart Yarus:

"Disk Toolkit - A review", reprinted in the IBM-PC User Group of Kansas City Newsletter, September, '86.

APL Conference

The upcoming International APL Conference, APL87 will be sponsored by the Special Interest Group on APL (SIGAPL) of the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM) and the Southwest APL Users Group (SWAPL).

Conference: APL87, The International APL Conference

Subject: APL Computer Programming Language

Date: May 10-14, 1987

Location: Fairmont Hotel, Dallas, Texas

Sponsors: SIGAPL of ACM & SWAPL

Contact:

APL87 Registrar
 440 Northlake Shopping Center
 Suite #210
 Dallas, TX 75238

SWAP



SHOP

Four lines free each month to members; 5th through 10th lines at 15 cents per word. Larger ads at commercial space rates. Send check to the Editor for words exceeding the four-line limit. Free ads are on a space-available basis. Mail ads to the Editor.

IBM Software - New, good selection - Word Processing, Data Base, Utilities, Graphics, etc. - No games - 214/341-2906

**WIN A FREE TRIP
 TO THE 1987 FALL COMDEX
 IN LAS VEGAS!!**

If you write an article that is published in the Newsletter and your article is selected as the best one published during the period of the contest, you will win an expense-paid trip to Comdex.

The Contest Rules are as follows:

1. All dues-paying members are eligible to win.
2. Articles must be submitted between December 1, 1986 and May 1, 1987, and must be published in the Newsletter before the entries are judged.
3. The articles must carry the name of a single individual as author, must be original, and must not have been previously copyrighted.
4. Articles will be approved for publication by the Newsletter editor, with the assistance of the Board of Directors. Their decisions are final. Articles received within the time limits of the rules but not selected for publication within these rules will not be eligible to win, but may be published in a later issue of the Newsletter.

5. Articles may be on any subject that is of interest to PC users.

6. No minimum size of articles. Lengthy articles (over 5-6 pages) may be "serialized" by the editor, appearing in successive issues of the Newsletter. Each part of a serial article will be considered a separate article in the contest.

7. The editor may judiciously edit articles, and they will be judged as published.

8. A ballot will be published in the Newsletter at the end of the contest, listing all of the entries published. All recipients of the ballot, including other Users Groups, are eligible to vote. The author of the article receiving the most votes will be declared the winner. In case of a tie, the winner will be selected by a drawing to be held at the main meeting. The winner need not be present.

9. The prize will include airplane, taxi, and hotel costs for the COMDEX Meeting. Approximate value \$600.

10. If a conflict arises regarding interpretation of contest rules, decision of the Board of Directors will be final.

Data Communications

John Keohane

The message was on my answering machine. "This is Jeff Hampton. I got your article. Do you have a modem?" He then left his number. When I got the message, I phoned. Then with a computer to computer connection, I sent him my article electronically, from my PC, through my modem to him. It is the first time I had ever sent something electronically. That article's published in the December issue of DALLAS.

A month earlier I had captured a file electronically from a remote bulletin board. In that case, I was retrieving a utility program to use in recovering a client's data file.

Without a modem and communications software, it would have taken me days to utilize the mails to request and receive a floppy disk, to fix my client's file. Without a modem and communications software it would have been impossible to electronically send a file to Jeff Hampton, editor of DALLAS magazine. His own computers are old-style TRS-80s, and not IBM compatible.

Fortunately, there is a standard code for computer data, adhered to by all manufacturers of PCs (including IBM). It is also the standard code for all mainframes except those of IBM, and it's called ASCII. I transmitted an ASCII file of my article to Mr. Hampton. ASCII stands for the American Standard Code for Information Interchange.

Because of file transmission, which took only about five minutes, Jeff did not need to have my article re-keyed into his computer. Not only did we save the work of re-keying, but we also prevented possible errors. DALLAS (not to be confused with D magazine) is the magazine of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce. This article is on user groups for personal computers.

Communications with computers. It may be helpful to you. To communicate over phone lines, you will need a modem and communications software, a serial port on your computer,

and of course a phone line. Some computers come with a serial port. My IBM PC-AT is one of these. If your computer does not come with the necessary connection, you can buy an expansion card which includes a serial port. A modem is electronic equipment, to convert digital to analog, and vice versa. Computer signals are digital. The phone company's lines are analog. Modems provide translation between digital and analog, and back again.

For computer to computer communication, how about digital communication? Well, it is not here yet with Southwestern Bell telephone lines, but it is a coming thing, and I am pleased to mention that a speaker I expect to hear soon will be Dr. John Bellamy, one of the leading authorities on digital communication. I look forward to his speech, partly so I can tell you more about that subject after I know more myself.

For analog lines, and computer information, modems for translation are essential. Modems are either internal or external. My own modem is a 2400 external modem, about 7" x 11" and 1 1/2" high. I use Crosstalk XVI as my communications package. Besides a modem, you will need a communications package, which is software to operate your modem. My modem is a 2400 Baud modem, but allows 1200 and 300 Baud communication as well, and some whom I will communicate with can only accept the slower speed. I can also transmit or receive at 2400, or 1200, or 300. Currently 1200 Baud is pretty standard, but as more people, and more electronic bulletin boards as well, utilize 2400 Baud that will become a new standard.

The manual with my software package emphasizes how to communicate if both parties have the Crosstalk XVI software. That is often a pretty unlikely possibility. What if you are not using the same communication package as the other computer?

In that case you'll probably want what is called Xmodem transfer of data. This allows interchange between all kinds of computers, using all kinds of software packages.

John

a



Disk of the Month

By Tim O'Neil

We had a great month at the Disk of the Month table for January considering we only had two weeks. Thanks to all our hard working volunteers!!!!!!!!!!!!!! We have 6 new PD Software catalogs at the table. In front of all the books is a new index that really helps to find the disks you need for your library. Come and browse the catalogs. \$2 is all you pay for each disk. Remember though, we expect you to register all shareware you find useful so that we can keep the spigot open!

The Disk of the Month for January AM-Tax sold really well. We had nine registrations of AM-Tax through our program of "registration for members" at a discount price of only \$35.00. We also offer a savings of 30% on all Buttonware programs. If you enjoy being able to get quality software at \$2.00 a disk come by our booth. We now have Master Card and Visa for your convenience.

Disk of the Month for February:

A Three disk Package of Game Disk:
 Draw Poker Donated by Jerry Stamp
 Hacker Games Donated by Mark Gruner
 Basic Games Donated by Mark Gruner
 A really fun set of disks.

We will have ample copies of the software I bought from the Houston Library for the Assembler and C-Sig groups.

We have added more Lotus Templates and will have several new disks for the Lotus group.

We will have the Disk Drive Utilities that Regan Andrews reviewed in the newsletter last month. And, also Time-Saver, a neat program we just received from Houston.

We are introducing a set of disks for the first time user of a PC. (Word Processor, spread sheet, file, tutor, etc.) We have been working on this set for three months. All beginners should get this set.

We need a few more volunteers to work the DOM table. Each volunteer will receive a free disk of their choice and have a lot of fun. Call me at home 267-8981 before the next meeting. The Library belongs to you, our members, and all the money we make goes to the club. We have no paid staff, only volunteers.

Our diskette mailing service has improved. If you neglected to buy that disk you wanted at the last meeting, send me a note at Box 396 Bedford, Texas 76021. With \$2.00, the title of the disk and \$1.00 (mailing cost) I will send it to you.

We're working on a new Library index which we'll publish soon. Keep asking about it!

Thanks. Tim O'Neil DOM Chairman

DOM Particulars

The North Texas PC Users Group copies these programs as a service to the club and its members. We try to test all the programs, but we do not warrant the programs in any way. You must decide if a program is suitable for your system and use. If you ask, we will tell you what we know about any program, but the final decision to buy and/or use these programs is yours. We will gladly and without question exchange an unreadable diskette for one of the same program.

EXCHANGE: 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. The contributions will be reviewed before credit is issued at the next meeting.

MAIL ORDERS: At prevailing prices plus \$1.00 for mailer and postage. Mail your order to Tim O'Neil, Box 396, Bedford, TX 76021.

PRICE: Members: \$2.00 per diskette (if the program is on two diskettes the price is \$4.00). Non-members: \$3.00 each diskette.

CATALOG DISKETTES: Currently this is a two volume set priced at \$4.00. This has all of the readme files from each diskette in the club library.

MEDIA: DSDD 5 1/4" Formatted as 9 sector data diskettes. Public domain software only, standard full disclaimers.

AVAILABILITY: We will do our best to have all past diskettes at each meeting. DOM sales will begin at the DOM counter around 9:00, and continue until 2:00 PM.

IBM EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER: The EXCHANGE for the current month will be available at the auditorium AFTER the main meeting, at no charge to paid up members of the NTPCUG.

Telesearch Compu-Systems



PRESENTS



"PC/286 SOFTWARE"

The software that is totally Ram Resident, Menu Driven, and so easy to use. We have all the software that you will ever need or use for your business, from Accounting Programs to Word Processing we have it for you. So call today for a demonstration.

"FREE DEMO"

on all of these programs. Must furnish the disks.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE | APPLICATION/JOBS |
| INVENTORY W/POINT OF SALE | WORD PROCESSING |
| BOOKKEEPING | REPORT GENERATOR |
| CHECKBOOK | LABEL GENERATOR |
| FINANCIAL PLANNER | MEMBERSHIP |

We also do "Custom Programming" at \$ 15.00 pr/hr & up.

COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Cordata Portable 1 floppy, 20 meg. HD, 512k, w/clock.....	\$ 1,495.00
Cordata Desktop 1 floppy, 20 meg. HD, 512. w/clock.....	\$ 1,495.00
Televideo Telecat AT 1.2 meg floppy, 20 meg. HD, 512k, w/clock.....	\$ 2,795.00
Cordata Laser Printer 38 fonts included.....	\$ 2,695.00
C.ltoh Printer 80 columns, 14.5 lbs.....	\$ 249.95

Buy any computer system and get any software program at half price.

TELESEARCH COMPU-SYSTEMS
P.O. BOX 300577
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011
METRO: (817) 792-3823

Special Interest Program Reports

General Special Interest Group (SIG) News

A reminder that any SIG news items for this newsletter must be received by noon of the 14th of the month -- regardless of the date of the next meeting. - Phil Chamberlain, SIG Coordinator.

ASTROMETRY SIG

In the February meeting we will discuss two programs. First, a program to determine the date of Easter Sunday and Second, the meteor flight program from the January issue of Sky and Telescope.

We will point out any noteworthy observational events coming in late February or in March. A good source of mathematical information is 'The Astronomy Data Book' by Muir- den for our resource review. - Arlin B. Collins, StarText 124994, 351-5137 (home)

BASIC APPLICATIONS SIG

This SIG is temporarily without a leader. However, Mike Durbin, who did such a fine job with this SIG in the early days of our users' group, will handle the meeting in February and determine if there is interest in its continuation.

BEGINNERS SIG

The January meeting was the first one for this SIG, and it was well attended. February will be the 2nd of the Three (or possibly Four) sessions in the series. It will cover the sequence of things that occur when you "boot" your computer (including the functions of the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files), formatting and backing up disks (and why you should set the time and date in your system), other important DOS commands for beginners to know, and lists of reference books and magazines helpful to the beginner.

The initial notes for the SIG may be ready. They will be sold for the cost of their reproduction -- probably about 50-cents. Also, DOM may be ready with a pack of diskettes for beginners. See the DOM announcements in this newsletter. - Phil Chamberlain

BUSINESS APPLICATIONS SIG

There just isn't room in this desk drawer to keep all those important addresses on little slips of paper, maybe I'll have to get a bigger desk. Where is that telephone number, I had it around here somewhere? If only I had one complete list of customers where I could turn to. I am so sorry, I forgot all about that appointment. Hello dear...it's nice of you to call

me at work...do I know what today is?...well, emptied the garbage yesterday ... what?...our anniversary, today?... click...hello, hello, operator I've been disconnected!

Don't panic, help is on the way. Organization is coming into your life. David Shearer, an engineer by profession, will be demonstrating a shareware product called PC-FILE. David will show us real life situations where he uses the product in his daily business. PC-FILE is available from the disk of the month table. Interest in this February session should be high as we could all stand to be better organized by using a good, economical data base manager. - Bruce Shubert

BUYERS SIG

There WILL BE a meeting of this group in February. After a month or two of "shake-down", it is returning to its original idea of discussing what software and hardware to "buy or not buy". There is not yet a regular SIG leader, but David McGehee has kindly agreed to lead the group until a permanent leader is selected.

Special Interest Program Reports

DOS SIG

Co-led by NTPCUG President Jim Hoisington and Dr. Reagan Andrews, the DOS SIG explores PC-DOS and MS-DOS as a "generic" operating system to assist users in discovering DOS's pleasantly-surprising and helpful features while avoiding its unanticipated pitfalls for the unwary. SIG meetings are split between tutorial presentations by SIG leaders and open-ended discussions of common problems encountered by novice and experienced users alike in daily use of MS/PC-DOS.

January's SIG meeting was focused on operating tips, suggestions and warnings concerning mixing incompatible versions of DOS on users' systems. Differences in MS-DOS and PC-DOS with similar version #'s and bug-fixes reported in PC-DOS 3.2x were discussed.

The next several meetings will emphasize organization of both floppy and hard-disk systems for optimal operating convenience, speed and reliability. - Dr. Reagan Andrews

C LANGUAGE SIG

Dr. Neal Bennett presented the January program on screen drivers for the PC and compatibles. Neal's programs are designed so as to take user response time requirements into account. We learned how to utilize the PC graphics adapters

to design programs to accommodate those requirements.

The February program will be presented by Rex McAnally. It will be on the subject of advanced memory management. In addition to the memory management functions provided by C, Rex will talk about the LIM standard.

C is rapidly becoming the most popular programming language for PC's. Come join us C enthusiasts for an interesting presentation. - Sid Nolte

GENEALOGY SIG

The purpose of this SIG is to present computer programs available in Genealogy, their methods and techniques. We depend heavily on the experience of members in using programs to evaluate their good and bad features. While cost is important, the utility of the program is of greater importance, since the entry of thousands of records can prove either great or disastrous to the user.

In January, Judge Linebaugh inquired whether members are interested in "A Review of Genealogy Programs for the Computer", which will be a compilation of reports on all programs presented by the SIG since its organization in May, 1984. A nominal charge for photocopies is involved. A show of hands indicated considerable interest. Our aim is to have the compila-

tion ready for the February meeting.

Everyone present at the January meeting has a computer. This was a first for our SIG.

At the February meeting, Travis Morris, Route 6, Box 716, Cleburne, TX 76031, will present PERSONAL ANCESTRAL FILE, by the Genealogical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons). - Minnie Champ

TURBO PASCAL SIG

In January, Andrew Chalk presented a lecture on Turbo routines to quickly display routines on the monitor. Much thanks go to Andrew for taking the time to prepare this nice lecture.

At the next meeting Turbo routines will be presented for evaluating a mathematical expression. Please bring a disk if you want a copy of routines presented.

Work on using one of the bulletin boards for the exchange of ideas between meetings is underway.

Please come to the meeting with ideas about the direction you want this user group to go. - Warren Ferguson 692-2506 (w)



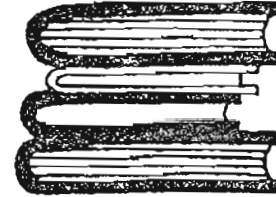
The Variety Store

Quadram announced the availability of a Lotus 1-2-3 software driver for QuadEGA Prosync, Quadram's graphics board. The driver permits users of 1-2-3 Version 1A to take advantage of the PROSync's high resolution display to support 120 columns x 25 lines. Users of Version 2 have the additional option of a 120 column x 43 line format. ProSync retails for \$595. Quadram Corp., One Quad Way, Norcross, GA 30093-2919.

Optical Storage International (OSI), a division of Laser Magnetic Storage International and three other international electronics companies have jointly announced an Optical Memory Recording Standards Proposal for a family of 130mm (5 1/4 inch footprint) optical disk drives and media. The proposed data format is based on a so-called sampled servo format. This format shows a good adaptability to a broad range of optical media based on different technologies, including read only, write once, and erasable media. Claim is made for a minimum of 300 Mbyte user data on each side of the cartridge.

The Multimil Memocard (TM), is a credit-card sized microcomputer that combines a microprocessor and large capacity EEPROM. Information can be stored, retrieved, manipulated, changed and erased through a read/write device that can be in an external box next to each network station or installed within an IBM or compatible PC. The card will be applied to network access security systems by Tools & Techniques Inc. of Austin, TX. Initial application has been developed for Ungerman-Bass Net/One users.

The Good News, the Bad News.



The newsletter exchange program has been a very popular feature of the North Texas IBM-PC User's Group. Since the beginning of this program in June of 1984, newsletters from other clubs have been signed out to hundreds of members. There is no way to count the additional hands they pass through while they are checked out.

Some people reading this in Dallas may not know what I mean by "Newsletter Exchange Program". Others, reading this in other cities, may wonder what happens to the newsletters they have been sending off to that place with the strange name of Dallas, Texas. For these groups, I will explain.

Each month we take the total collection of newsletters received during the prior month, and bind them into a gigantic (approximately 2 in.) volume. Then we check them out, like a library, to our members. At each meeting they change hands again, for another month. And yes, they are popular; they also contain a lot of good information. So much so that I get them back only after they are very old news. There are always people waiting to try another issue.

We also know that other user groups' members read our newsletters. They reprint many of our articles. And we don't mind that because we reprint theirs. A good test for all you aspiring newsletter contributors out there is to see how many other newsletters will reprint your articles.

But now for the bad news. The exchange part of the program has not been working as well as it could. For example, last month there were more than twelve volumes checked out that should have been recycled. Only four came back. There were a record number people waiting to check them out and they were not too happy with this turn of events. Some of these volumes were a month or two late, and a few others were dreadfully, horribly late! This fact failed to amuse me, and made me believe that something drastic should be done. Not being used to mahem, I re-wrote this article which successfully appealed to your sense of responsibility two years ago when the same problem reached epidemic proportions. It worked then, and I'm hoping it will work again.

Voice Synthesizer

Howard A. Karten of Randolph, MA is looking for someone who knows about speech synthesizers. He writes, "Some Texas-area electronics stores have recently been selling voice-synthesizer subassemblies. I would like to hear from any readers who have successfully attached this device to their IBM PC's." Howard's address is 40 Woodland Parkway, Randolph, MA 02368, phone #617/986-4869.



At our next meeting, lets make the exchange program the success story it deserves to be. If not, we will be forced to consider other methods of distribution.

Tom Prickett

Δ

MEMBERSHIP  APPLICATION

Name _____ NEW _____
 _____ RENEWAL _____
 _____ ADDR. CHANGE _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone: Home _____ Metro? _____
 Work _____ Metro? _____

Send completed application with your \$24 check to:
 Membership Chairman, 135 Skyline Dr., Plano, TX 75074

Greetings from the North Texas BBS Sysop

At the time of this writing, our long awaited BBS is close to becoming a reality! Actually, it is more accurate to say that we are still getting ready to get started. For those of you that are not familiar with the bulletin board circuit, let me offer a few opinions:

First, the bulletin boards I am familiar with all seem to exhibit a specialty. One board may be primarily a message board where you can get the latest opinions on an incredibly wide range of issues. Another board may specialize in software and the latest releases of public domain offerings that are out there. Some focus on specific subjects - legal, investment, women rights, even some x-rated graffiti boards too.

Secondly, bulletin boards evolve. The sysop's role is more that of a stage manager than a performer. The users of the board determine its direction by what they use and don't use. I have yet to see a board, or any group of computer users for that matter, that do not have an opinion on how they think things could be done better. The boards that last longer than a few months do so because they are performing a service that people can use.

Lastly, a bulletin board is an information resource. It is good if it provides useful information, if it doesn't, it can be very frustrating!

So much for my opinions. How will the North Texas PC User Group Bulletin Board evolve?

We will start out as a message board. We do not have public domain software for downloading at this time. Our disk of the month program is working well and is a major source of revenue for the club. I feel we should neither circumvent nor compete with their success. Additionally, at this time we have a

limited number of telephone lines, and downloading/uploading of software takes a lot of telephone resources. However, if this is the direction that the club wants to take, I will certainly try to set the stage so this can happen.

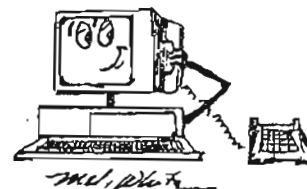
The BBS will be for members only. I will have access to the current membership list, and will use this for validation when you sign-on. Yes, there will be a validation procedure. When you sign-on for the first time, give the name that appears on the newsletter mailing list. You will only be given 15 minutes, and won't have access to a whole lot during this call. I will attempt to validate new users every twenty-four hours. Once validated, your security level will be upgraded to allow you to send/receive messages, and to upload files for newsletter articles.

Finally, as you might have suspected, the plea for help!

I welcome your ideas and your suggestions. Remember though, our resources are limited. You may find me agreeing with you about the usefulness and the need for this or that, but when the help isn't available, some of the most desirable ideas remain undone. I especially welcome ideas that are accompanied with assistance to make them happen. You may be of the opinion that there is not much on the BBS at this stage. I too share that opinion. But, at least we are at the point where we can begin the evolutionary process together. (More later.)

Tom Prickett

□



Editor's Notes



Desktop Publishing

Desktop Publishing seems to be the latest in buzz words for the PC community. It probably doesn't mean much to a lot of readers, but to those exposed to house organs or other newsletter or pamphlet publication, it sounds like a boon. Too good to be true, in fact.

One of the biggest problems of the uninitiated, regarding their newfound entry into the "easy production" life that includes multiple type fonts, page makeup, art integration, and other makeup and production aids, is an attempt to put in everything but the kitchen sink. (And some even try to do that!) The result appears to be a statement to the effect, "Look how much capability I have!". Resist the urge to use all the fonts; plan the "look" of your document.

Each page must be considered on its own merit.

- o Is it pleasing to the eye?
- o Are the important things the first to get your attention?
- o Will the reader be lost in a maze, not knowing where to look first?

If something seems to be needed, start over with a blank sheet of paper. Look at each element as a simple block of relative value, both weight and content. Do as an artist does when sketching - fill in the blocks with relative densities that reflect what you want to interest the reader. Move the blocks around. Play with the arrangement. Change sizes and shapes. Change relative positions on the page. Change densities (type font). And don't forget blank space; white is an excellent tool for isolation, and highlighting.

After it looks good, format and print your copy and see if it matches your expectations. If it does, you probably have a better than 50-50 chance that the reader will feel the same way and read the article. As layout artist, that's the ultimate that you can do for the writer - get the reader to read his work. From there,

it's up to the writer and what he wrote and how he wrote it.

A single good page layout will not be enough to sustain the reader. The same principles that apply to the single page must be applied throughout the document. Layout of the entire document must be analyzed and coordinated in a similar manner to that for the single page.

Does it flow? Or are your nerves jangled just paging through?

If after several iterations you (or your boss) are still not satisfied, get some help from your public library. Study up on the elements of design.

Some of the new page makeup programs on the market are advertised to help the above process. They are designed to show not just a single page, but to present the entire document as it will look when printed. This is a giant leap over the method prescribed above, and though the design principles definitely still apply, the process from conception to completion should be quicker and easier. Don't let the capabilities of this new "tool" lull you into thinking you do not need to consider design. You do. The page maker and fancy printer will only provide the good looks of a professional document if the elements of design are considered, first.

Speedup Boards

If you have an early model IBM PC (you know, the one with 64K on the motherboard) and are tired of it klunking along at its slow dogged pace, get a speedup board. Late last month I bought one and am really happy with it. There are a number of them on the market - the one I bought is Breakthru-286. It comes with Intel 286 processor, cache memory (16K), 8MHz clock speed, and Lightning disk speedup program. Installation of the Breakthru-286 is simple and easy; it takes one slot and has a cable that plugs into the motherboard 8088 socket. Provisions are included for an 80287, but the math coprocessor costs extra. It's amazing how much faster my applications run now.


John



MEMBERSHIP CARD

This is your membership card in North Texas PC Users Group. You will need it for identification at Disk of the Month sales, group purchases and other activities. This card is valid only for you, the person named on label on reverse side. It is valid through expiration date shown on the label.

When trimmed, the card will fit the holders previously furnished for Infomart cards which are no longer required. Wear your membership card instead. Additional holders will be available at a nominal charge.



Membership Card
North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

This card valid only for individual named on label affixed to reverse side, only through year/month printed on the label, and only with proper identification.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Trim card to wallet size.

Room Assignments



Saturday, 14 February 1987

Check times & room numbers in lobby at INFOMART

Special Program This Month

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

9:00 - 11:00

Business Meeting 11:00 - 11:30

From 9 to 9:45 we'll have a demonstration of Pagemaker, a product recently ported from the MacIntosh to the PC by Aldus Corporation.

From 10 until 11 the program will be presented by XEROX. They will show us the many features of Ventura, one of the best Desktop Publishing products for the PC.

11:30 - 11:55
Orientation

12:00 - 12:55
Assembly Language
APL
C Language
Turbo Pascal

12:30 - 1:55
Invest - N-Squared

Room

9:00 - 9:55

Science/Engineering
DOS
Genealogy (w/Apple)
Graphics
Buyers Guide
Astrometry
Beginners

9:30 - 9:55
Orientation

Room

1:00 - 1:55

Artificial Intelligence
Business Applications
Communications
Databases
Lotus
Dataflex

2:00 - 2:55

Advanced Programmers
Integrated Software
Basic Applications

Room

