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North Texas PC Users Group

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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.

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DEADLINE

Copy deadline for April PC NEWS:
Wednesday, April 15th.
(... still time to enter the contest!)

Future Meeting Dates

May Meeting - 2nd Saturday (9th)
June Meeting - 2nd Saturday (13th)
July Meeting - 2nd Saturday (11th) tentative

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

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

(Send membership dues, renewals & address changes to Membership Dir. address at bottom of this column.)

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Jim Hoisington, Chairman Jim Graham
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Kathryn Crawford

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.

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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 renewal date.

April 11

Charles Kroboth, Program Chairman

9:00 AM, Auditorium * Surprise Presentation *

10:00 AM, Auditorium * Lotus Corporation *

Representatives from Lotus' local Irving office will be demonstrating HAL and Metro. HAL is that company's "English Language Interface" to Lotus 123. Metro is Lotus' desktop accessory package.

Editor's Notes

Some things never change!

Browsing through back issues of the newsletter the other day I saw this ad in the April 1983 issue of North Texas PC NEWS:

"WANTED: Advertisers for PC NEWS. Rates are reasonable, exposure is great! Circulation approximately 140 PC users/owners..."

Well actually, circulation has changed a little, but the need for advertisers has not. Ad rates are given on page 17 if this issue. Sell your friends an ad...!

Some things DO change!

The same issue had this news item:

"Corona Data Systems of Westlake Village, CA introduced an external version of its Personal Hard Disk and optional external power supply for the PC. The disk is \$2195 for 5MB and \$2695 for 10MB. The power supply is \$189.50."

Bulk Mail. From the preliminary reports I've gotten, sending the newsletter by bulk mail seems to be working fine. The initial influx of returned address corrections is tapering off as we go into the third month. Your address changes are still needed as they occur, to avoid missing an issue or two when you move. Send them to Bob Russell (Membership Director) at the address on the inside front cover. Sending them to the newsletter is OK but will usually cause a delay getting them into the mailing data base.

How do you feel? Feedback is essential in all functioning systems where improvement is the byword. Tell your officers, directors, and other leaders how you feel about the club and its activities (good and bad), and the direction you think we should grow. Tell the Program Director what programs you think the group would like to see. This is your club; make it better! And be sure you tell the leaders how you can help out. Do it!

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The Answer Man

Dear Answer Man,

My problem seems simple - I have two dates on my machine and the wrong one appears all the time. How the devil do I get rid of one, and get the current one to appear on new files?

My computer configuration is:

- IBM XT Clone 640K ST 1000 (Jan 86)
- Twin Floppy Disk Drives
- MS-DOS 2-11 Microsoft
- Hercules Mono Graphics Card
- Microsoft Mouse - Bus w/card
- I/O Multi Board w/Bat Clock Cal

Bob D. Marletta GA

You need to buy a copy of IBM's PC DOS or Compaq's MS DOS. The reason for this is that your machine was built to be very much like the IBM PC. Hence the name "clone".

The AT&T 6300 is a really great machine but it is quite different from an IBM computer. The version of MS DOS that they sell with their machine, hides those differences from the user and the software as long as that software talks to DOS rather than the hardware.

One of the differences is the address of the clock in the computer. The AT&T software is trying to set a clock at the wrong address. The IBM or Compaq version of DOS will know the correct address of the clock.

The Answer Man

Dear Bob,

After looking at the documentation that you sent me about your problem, I noticed that you are running a copy of MS DOS meant for the AT&T 6300 computer.

(Guest Answer Man this month is Jim Hoisington. Send your questions to The Answer Man, c/o North Texas PC News, 2025 Rockcreek Dr. Arlington, TX 76010.)



LAST CHANCE: Contest ends May 1st!

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.

Prez Sez . . .**Questionaire**

Andrew Chalk has been analyzing the questionnaire that was filled out at the February meeting. Some of the results are really surprising:

Twenty-four percent of us are computer consultants, each recommending over \$10,000 worth of hardware and software each year.

Members spend on the average \$2,165 for hardware and \$1,716 for software for their own personal use.

Seventeen percent said that they intend to buy a 386 based machine in the next year.

Hopefully, we'll be able to have the complete results in the May newsletter.

Oh yes. If you were wondering about the results of question 12. I would personally like to thank the UFO people . . .

May Meeting

In May we will be sharing the INFOMART with ATARIFEST. We'll probably have to give up some of the bigger meeting rooms but Stuart Yarus, who handles the room assignments, assures us that he can handle it. The ATARI group(s) say that there is a possibility that Jack Trammie, the president of ATARI may attend.

Bylaws Change

We need to change our bylaws again. Somehow we wound up with our fiscal year ending in July. This creates a lot of extra work for

our treasurer Joe Brophy. Joe is recommending that we end our fiscal year in June. We'll have the proposed changes in the May newsletter.

Renewal Letters

Reagan Andrews is working on a letter to be sent to all members in the month before their membership expires. We're losing too many members because they don't realize that their membership is expiring. He has a second letter that will go out to people who let their membership expire and haven't renewed in the last four months. He also mentioned that he is working on a letter that will go out to people who shouldn't renew. But I don't think he's serious about that one.

(Your membership expiration date appears in the upper RH corner of this month's mailing label. Ed.)

Nerd on the Street

I see from last month's Nerd on the Street column that Bill Gates of Microsoft will be coming to visit us at one of our meetings this year. I called Charles Kroboth and he confirmed it. How did the Nerd find out before I did?

Jim

▲



Have a

H A P P Y

E A S T E R

**Organizing for Speed,
Convenience and Reliability**
(No. 2 in a Series)

Reagan Andrews, Ph. D.

Hardware Wars -- Getting what You Need and Making Do with What You Have.

Eventually, any organization scheme has to come to grips with the equipment that will form the heart of the user's system. Remember questions from my last article? Here's where we get into choices dictated by those decisions.

But, first -- a word from the sponsors...

Computer magazines. Newspaper articles. North Texas PC News. Stacks of them everywhere. They're packed with PC information and news. I love them -- all of them.

But, beware! PC hardware and software advertising pays for it. "Techie" editorial staffs add their slant. Their message is simple, "Buy the software or hardware reviewed/advertised." It's a Siren Song designed to convince the PC owner that he or she must buy something "new and improved" or be inexorably doomed to suffer:

- (1) Mortification, shame and public ridicule.
- (2) Business failure,
- (3) Technological ignorance.
- (4) And, finally, the kids will be forced out of school and have to sell apples (or other things) on the streets.

So, What do I really need?

Even "Minimalist" advocates admit that a certain degree of hardware sophistication is necessary to accomplish most computer tasks. Memory and storage are at the top of the list.

Best guide for what you MUST have in hardware capabilities is found in the software you plan to use -- its requirements in terms of mass storage (floppy and/or hard disk capa-

city) and available RAM memory after loading MS/PC-DOS. This latter point -- space for DOS -- becomes very important as DOS grows. (See Jim Hoisington's No. 4 "On Complexity" in the December, 1986 North Texas PC News 5.12.)

Current releases of popular applications software should prove to be a reliable guides. Here are some packages and their requirements:

Program	RAM (Sugg.)	Floppy/s	Graphics	Hard Disk
LOTUS 1-2-3*	256K (640+K)	(1)	NO	NO
HAL	512K (640+K)	(2)	NO	NO
SuperCalc4	256K (512K)	(2)	NO	NO
VP Planner	256K (512K)	(1)	NO	NO
Word Perfect	256K (512K)	(2)	NO	NO
MS WORD	256K (512K)	(2)	NO	NO
R:Base 5000	320K (512K)	(2)	NO	NO
System V	512K (640K)	(1)	NO	YES
dBase III +	256K DOS 2.x 384K DOS 3.x	(2)	NO	NO
PC-FILE III	128K (256K)	(1)	NO	NO
MS WINDOWS	256K (512+K)	(2)	YES	NO
IBM TOPVIEW	320K (512+K)	(2)	NO	NO

* 1-2-3 (2.01). LOTUS 1-2-3 (1A) will run in DOS 1.1, and is still widely used and preferred by some users. Later versions accept Lotus-Intel-Microsoft (LIM) expanded RAM above 640K offered by some expansion boards.

With exception of PC-FILE III, all listed programs specify DOS 2.0 or higher. Only dBase III + made provision for the increased size with later (3.x) DOS versions.

All of these programs specify minimum RAM, but these appear to be just to run the respective programs without program files. Experience indicates that all seem to work more eff-

iciently if lots of memory is available, i.e., 640K. This is particularly true if using a floppy-only machine in which extensive disk swapping will be required.

What's a "PC-I?" -- and other Hardware Confusion

A PC is a PC is a PC -- or is it? When talking about upgrading your PC, you need to know which one you've got. Most users know the difference between the IBM-PC, IBM-PC/XT and IBM-PC/AT. But, IBM made more than one IBM-PC. Similar problems also plague "Clone" owners, since various system ROM revisions drastically alter system performance with some software and hardware additions.

When IBM released the first IBM-PC in 1981, it came equipped with 16K of system RAM soldered on the motherboard with empty sockets to accommodate an additional 48K of system RAM -- if the buyer could possibly find any use for it! Early PC's only supported single-sided floppy disks and were usually sold with a single SSD drive. This is the PC referred to as the "PC-I."

IBM changed the basic PC memory layout (without any advance announcement) in March, 1983, when the PC-XT was introduced. Both the IBM-PC and PC-XT would take 64K RAM chips on the motherboard for a total of 256K system RAM. Both machines now came with double-sided floppy disk drives. Also without announcement, IBM included hard-disk management capabilities in the system ROM's of both PC's and PC-XT's. The non-XT PC's are referred to as "PC-2's."

Systems that Must be Upgraded

An original IBM-PC-1 with one single-sided, floppy-disk drive, 64K RAM and running under PC-DOS 1.x is inadequate for anything other than games. Double-sided drives (1/2 height) can be purchased new for approx \$100. Used full-height DSD drives can be purchased for much less. Some NTPCUG members probably have one or two gathering dust since the hard-disk purchase. Ask around -- you'll be sur-

prised how cheaply a drive that originally cost \$550 from an IBM dealer can be obtained now.

Don't stop at one. If you don't want, or can't afford a hard disk, add a second floppy drive.

Memory

Given my "druthers", I'd opt for spending to upgrade memory before any other addition to an existing system if current memory is below 512K RAM. Bringing a PC up to the 640K limit -- and beyond with LIM (Lotus-Intel-Microsoft) expanded memory boards -- gives the most bang for the buck in terms of speed and performance increases.

Although most currently available software will run in 256K RAM, there's not enough left over to do much. 512K RAM might be considered the absolute minimum to run serious data-base software at this time. 640K RAM would be even better. Several manufacturers make add-on memory cards that allow adding up to 576K. Price to bring systems up to this level is below \$100 presently. It should be given priority in updating an "older" system.

Hard Disks

Unless you plan to run one of the "bigger" new software packages, you can get along with two DSD floppy disk drives. However, even a small (10M) hard disk can greatly facilitate word processing and database manipulation. A number of the new, "integrated" software packages demand a 10M hard disk as a "minimum."

Four types are available: internal, external, external removable and "Hard-Card," each with its own benefits -- and deficits. Internal hard disks typically mount in one of the floppy-disk drive bays (holes) on the computer chassis. If you don't want to "lose" a floppy drive, use a half-height hard disk (most are now) and mount a half-height floppy BELOW it in the same bay. Some "clones" only allow half-height drives anyway, so this is not a problem for them. ➤

You will also need a hard-disk control card -- and an empty slot on your motherboard. Because the IBM-PC's power supply is anemic at best, it may need replacement with a more powerful unit. Typical cost at this writing is in the \$350 range for a half-height, 20M unit (usually a Seagate ST-225) with control card. A number of 20M drives can be formatted to run with RLL 2.7 encoding and yield approx. 30M for roughly \$450 - 500.

External hard disks are pretty rare now. The hard disk and a power supply to run it are mounted in a box attached to the PC by cables, but a controller, and motherboard slot, are still required. Most available are either close-outs or used drives with exception of either very large drives (200+M) or for computers that don't take internal drives.

External removable hard disks -- Bernoulli drives and some others, offer significant advantages in terms of massive potential storage. However, these units tend to be very expensive in comparison to "fixed" hard disks, and some have displayed problems in the past in "portability" between machines. In a business setting with "sensitive" data files, such as personnel records, etc., these offer quite good security if users avoid "mingling" with system files.

"Hard-Cards" are actually small hard-disk drives that are mounted on the control cards. You won't lose a floppy with this system, but still lose AT LEAST one slot for the controller on the motherboard. Some of the larger of these hard disk cards do take up more than one slot and you should check before purchase. Also, not ALL hardcards are low power. You may need a bigger power supply with some.

Monitors and Display Standards

More and more software calls for graphics display capabilities. This trend doesn't show any signs of subsiding and appears to be replacing the IBM (or clone) Monochrome Display Adapter (MDA) and monochrome monitor as the minimum standard for serious computer work. Still, I doubt that anyone can do significant text-oriented work with IBM's Color

Graphics Adapter (CGS) and medium-resolution (320 X 200) color monitor over long periods.

PC users on a budget might consider one of the clone boards that support Hercules graphics standards for approximately \$80 (locally) for use with the monochrome monitor. EGA Clones are becoming available at prices considerably lower than IBM's initial \$500 and most will work with existing monochrome monitors in both EGA monochrome mode and in Hercules monochrome graphics mode. Select with care -- EGA boards will present some unanticipated conflicts if accelerator or "speed-up" cards are present in the PC.

Discouraging Words About Updating PC-I's

Until last year's drastic price reductions for both IBM-PC's and Clones, upgrading the PC-I made sense. Now, it may make more sense to purchase a new clone than to invest several hundred dollars in bringing a PC-I up to current standards. The same holds for PC-II's.

Reasons? -- only five (5) expansion slots on the mother-board, the anemic power supply, and the system ROM that must be changed in order to install a bootable hard disk. No matter how much you may love the old clunker, those limitations are real and still exist. You will certainly bump into them quickly if you intend to install a hard disk, internal modem, EGA adapter and LIM expanded memory card.

Price of some "Turbo" Clones with 640K RAM, parallel and serial ports, and heavy duty, i.e. 135-150 Watt power supplies is less than \$700. "First Saturday" and other electronics/computer flea markets can bring the price somewhat lower.

If you are willing to put up with these PC-I limits, the PC-I & II's still make great, single application machines. Slow, and kludgy to some degree, a PC-I or II with full memory (640K RAM) and two DSDD floppy drives can handle word processing and small data base applications quite well. ➤

The Home System

What do you really need? Lets look at the first system considered -- probably most representative of NTPCUG members' configurations -- the PC in a home environment which is used by various members of the family. These computers have roughly the same usage patterns as microcomputers in university settings. That is, they tend to be "generalist" machines utilized by a variety of people, each with different goals.

The PC in the home should be configured to the highest or most demanding level of use. If "1-2-3" spreadsheets of substantial size will be used, maximum (i.e., 640K or more) system RAM is desirable. For convenience, a hard disk may be seen as equally desirable, but isn't really necessary. The same may hold for complex data-base use. Remember, though, few files for home data-base use exceed 100K, much less the 362K limit imposed by DOS (2.x and higher) on DSDD floppies.

If the home computer is really a small business computer, then characteristics will be dictated by business software being utilized. In this case, the hard disk may be more necessary than in "pure" home or family usage.

Caveat Children

Small children and hard disks really don't get along too well. A possible solution is to reformat the hard disk for the latest version of MS/PC-DOS (3.2 at this writing) and take advantage of DOS 2.x's inability to access the hard disk when formatted to version 3.2. That is, the children's games and educational programs can be booted and run under 2.x and won't "see" the hard disk. This may insure some degree of safety to data integrity.

Other members of the family, perhaps fearful of "blowing-up" the PC, may be equally "protected" by the same procedure. This forms a natural barrier and a first "security" level.

Using the inability of DOS 2.x to "read" hard disks formatted under DOS 3.2 as a low-level "security" technique only makes sense if you

remember to remove, or disable, FORMAT.COM from the 2.x disks. You can insert a second level via using DOS's ATTRIBUTE.COM to make all important files on the disk "read only," particularly COMMAND.COM and any important data files. The syntax is simple:

```
ATTRIB +R [d][filespec]
      (You can use wildcards, *.*).
```

Small Business Computers

Small business machines tend to be utilized for combinations of data-base, accounting and spreadsheet applications with word processing occasionally added. Such systems should be configured for the most demanding task requirements.

Security is much more important in a business setting than in home PC's. Although newspapers and magazines have created an abhorrence of 13 year-old "hackers" with modems, reality indicates "insider" data compromise is much more serious -- and prevalent. Owners of small businesses contemplating PC's might keep this in mind. Both hardware and software protection schemes exist. The latter are not terribly "secure" when many experienced users will have access to the system.

In a multiple-user-access system, the floppy-equipped system shines in terms of security. Similar features are available through use of Bernoulli Drives with removable media. This setup allows entire data bases to be removed from the machine by authorized users when finished. Each user may have the records and files necessary for their task without compromising security.

Removable hard-disk media run a close second. Most of them are a combination of removable and fixed media. That is, there may be a 10 - 15M removable disk coupled with a 10 - 20M fixed disk on the system. As long as the fixed media only contains programs and general maintenance utilities and not critical data files security is maintained. However, there is a tendency to enhance convenience and place critical data files on the "fixed" portion of the system, thus defeating the secure nature. ►

Incompatible Business Users

Office settings frequently demand more than one system for optimum efficiency and convenience. Generally, word processing should be placed on a separate system if usage conflicts will ensue.

Lessons learned through slowed systems, frustrated power-users and irritated/angry writers tend to emphasize necessity of separating heavy word processing tasks from everything else. Although most word processing really amounts to the CPU waiting for the writer to make a keystroke (99+%), letters and memos tend to be seen as "rush" more frequently than other tasks.

Again, the simple, dedicated PC with 640K and two disk drives does very well in this task. Hard disks are very convenient, but files are quite accessible to anyone who can get to the PC. Floppy disks do offer the best security as they can be removed and locked-up.

REFERENCES

These are some sources I've found quite helpful in preparing this series, and in working with MS/PC-DOS in general. I've borrowed (stolen) quite a bit from these while writing this series and thought the authors deserved

some mention. All are worth buying. They are listed in reverse order, i.e., the newest first.

Berliner, Don & DeVoney, Chris (1987). *Managing Your Hard Disk*. Indianapolis, Indiana: Que Corporation.

Wolverton, Van (1986). *Supercharging MS-DOS: The Microsoft guide to high performance computing for the experienced PC user*. Raymond, Washington: Microsoft Press.

Brown, Robert E. (1985). *About Hard Disks for the IBM PC: Selecting the right hard disk for your IBM PC*. Sunnyvale, California: Landmark Software.

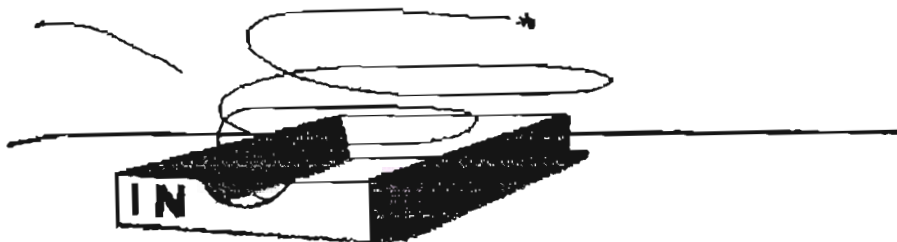
Norton, Peter (1983). *Inside the IBM PC*. Bowie, Maryland: Robert J. Brady Company.

IBM (1983). *Guide to Operations*. Boca Raton, Florida: International Business Machines Corporation.

This is the owner's manual that came with my IBM-PC. Owners of non-IBM machines such as COMPAQ, Tandy, and other Clones should always refer first to their manuals when there are questions concerning compatibility, switch settings and important hardware questions.

Reagan

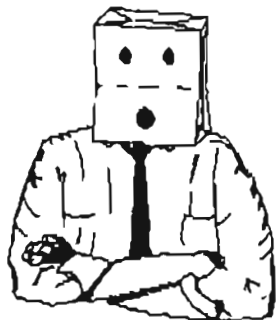
□



The IN Basket is empty!

Send your articles to the Editor today. . .

NERD ON THE STREET



NEW STUFF: A joint venture between AT&T and Intel has produced an 80386 UNIX operating system to run on 386-based PC's. The product is marketed by Microport Systems, Inc. in Scotts Valley, CA. and will sell for \$299.

Toshiba dropped the price of their T3100, 286 laptop by \$300. Compaq released their new semi-laptop but priced it too high and beefed up the clock in their Deskpro 286 to 12 MHz. Just after Lotus offered a student version of 123 to schools for \$50, Paperback Software announced their student version of it's 123 clone, VP-Planner, for \$19.95.

REVIEWS: A recent review in INFOWORLD magazine compared several major communication packages. "One program was the true surprise of the evaluation: Procomm, whose wide availability, easy customization, extensive script language, and detailed documentation are breathtaking. We've never seen a package that offers so much for so little, and merits the consideration of every PC owner shopping for a way to dial into the world. It has our highest recommendation." For more information, consult our Disk-of-the-Month chairman, Tim O'Neil, at the user-group day flea-market in Infomart's basement April 11.

If you were one of first nerds on the block to purchase a 9600 baud modem only to find yourself all dressed up and no place to go, not to worry. The Texas Computer Market magazine lists 2 turbo bulletin boards in Houston and 2 in Lubbock.

STATS: The leaders in word processing software for 1986 were; Word Perfect with 11.5% of the market. Microsoft Word with 11.2%, Wordstar with 10.5%, DisplayWrite with 9.2% ("Other" captured a 49.8% share). For microcomputer unit sales Apple lead the pack with 32.4% of the 2 million units sold in 1986. They were followed by IBM with 21.6% and Compaq with 7.4%. A variety of clones made up most of the remaining systems sold.

MICROSOFT: Bill Gates recently said Microsoft's 286 version of DOS was 6 months away. Maybe I missed something, but hasn't the 286 been out for about a year and a half and aren't there more than a few 80386 machines floating around Corporate America. Why aren't Bill, Big Blue, & Company diverting energy to 386 DOS?

On a brighter note, Microsoft announced the first general purpose reference work on CD ROM. The product is called Bookshelf and includes a dictionary, thesaurus, ZIP code directory, the 1987 World Almanac, Chicago Manual of Style (?), Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, and more. It works with the major word processors and allows you to toggle back and forth between the CD and your document. I'm not sure of the initial price, but it will be given away free with each \$1099 Laserdrive CD ROM disk drive manufactured by Amdek Corp.

STOCKS: Zenith reported \$1.9 billion in sales for 1986, an increase of 16% over 1985. It also posted a loss of \$10 million on those sales. While unit shipments were increasing, price pressure was driving net income down. Atari finished 1986 with \$44.5 million in net profit, an 81% increase.

CLONEWS: Blue Chip Electronics of Chandler, Arizona, cut \$100 off the price of its \$695 Hyundai PC-compatible. At \$595 it includes 512K, 1 floppy, serial/parallel ports, AT style keyboard, six full slots, 130-watt power supply, Hercules-compatible monochrome graphics card, MS-DOS, and is a cash&carry at your local KMart or Federated.

DEAR MR. NOTS: My computer salesman told me to reformat a disk with bad sectors and it will map the bad sectors and make the remainder of the disk usable. Is that true? Newman Newt, HEB, Texas.

Dear Mr. Newt: If we all had your attitude there would be a severe shortage of square frisbees and hi-tech trivets.

Nnnnn

A



Disk of the Month

By Tim O'Neil

We are introducing 22 new disks at the DOM table this month! This has been a hard month because we tried to get all the disk that we have reviewed into the library. We still need help from our general membership in reviewing new disks. Please call or write me or send me a message on Startext. (Tim O'Neil, Box 396, Bedford, TX 76021 Phone: (817)267-8981 Startext MC 6442)

Note to SIG Leaders and Bulletin Board users: If you run onto a program that you think other people would enjoy using please send me a copy and I will get it into the library.

The mail program is working great. More and more of you who miss meetings are sending orders for disk---keep them coming.

Along with trying to bring you the best software in the market place we have arranged the following discounts for members:

PC-Write

Bob Wallace word processing program that is a winner I will have soft bound manuals 2.7 for sale at the booth for \$25.00 a \$10.00 savings that includes a user fee. Please register you PC-Write through the user group. Will can get up to \$25.00 for each registration that goes directly to this club.

Buttonware

If you register through us you get a 30% discount on your registration.

AM-TAX

You can register through us for \$35.00

PC-Key-Draw

Full registration for \$70.00--If more than 10 register It will be \$60.00 (Normal cost \$100.00)

DOM for April

PC-Graph---By Jim Button

A simple easy to use Graph program. Those of you who have tried to use some of the programs available in the market place will really enjoy this one.

Additional highlights:

Spreadsheet---Programming Language
 Turbo Cal ---8.01
 Mortgage Plus V2.0
 Letterwriter
 D85-Forth Programming Language
 Forms-Generator
 Grade Guide--Teacher Aid
 Statistical Process Control
 Notes & Sources Display
 ---Supports Genealogy
 Family History---Complied Version

Remember you can order any of these by mail for the following prices:

Members:

1 to 4 disks \$2.00 ea + \$1.00 handling
 Over 4 disks \$2.00 ea + \$2.00 handling

Non-Members:

1 to 4 disks \$3.00 ea + \$1.00 handling
 Over 4 disks \$3.00 ea + \$2.00 handling

The March 1987 issue of North Texas PC NEWS contains a catalog of disks that sell for the same prices. The March issue is available for \$2.50 postpaid from the Editor, North Texas PC NEWS, 2025 Rockcreek Dr. Arlington, TX 76010 - while supply lasts.

Things to come:

New words will be appearing in our library:

Shareware

You get a free look at the software but you need to pay the programmer.

Limitware

You get the software but you are limited by the program. It is not a full version of the program. ►

The following statement will appear on all our new disk:

The user supported software concept (usually referred to as shareware) is an attempt to provide software at low cost. The cost of offering a new product by conventional means is staggering and hence dissuades many independent authors and small companies from developing and promoting their ideals. User supported software is an attempt to develop a new marketing channel, where products can be introduced at low cost. If user supported software works, then everyone will benefit. The user will benefit by receiving quality products at low cost, and by being able to "test drive" software throughly before purchasing it. The author benefits by being able to enter the commercial software arena without first needing large sources of venture capital. THE DISK OF THE MONTH OF THE NORTH TEXAS PC USER GROUP DOES NOT SELL SOFTWARE. WE ARE SELLING YOU THE DISK. IF YOU USE IT. WE ASK YOU TO REGISTER THE DISK WITH THE AUTHOR.

If you have any questions please give me a call or drop me a note. Thanks.

Tim

(Editor's note: Not all disks we sell are "Shareware" or "Limitware". The third category is "Public Domain" wherein the originator has donated the program to the general public and is not asking for a contribution. Most of the disks we have in our Library are Public Domain.)

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.

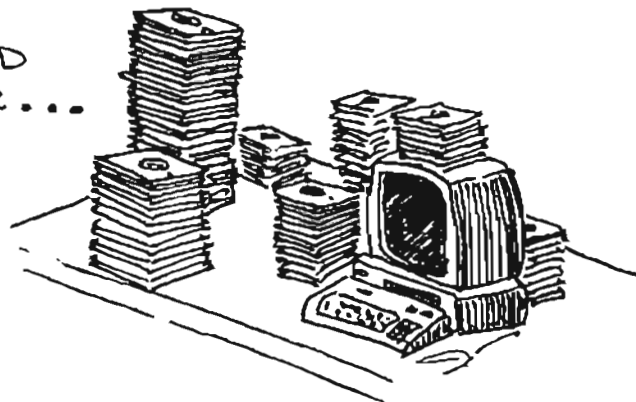
CATALOG DISKETTES: Curently this is a two volume set priced at \$4.00. This has all of the readme files from each diskette in the club library.

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

AVAILABILTY: 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.

NOW IF I CAN JUST FIND
AN AUTDMATIC LOADER...



On Complexity

No 8 in a Series

Jim Hoisington

Have you bought any software lately? If so, then you know that it is a very complex process. For the first time in a long time, I tried to buy a software package without being sure of which one of several competing packages I wanted. What an ordeal!

If you haven't been through this exercise in futility lately, let me explain what you'll encounter.

Theoretically, the computer store (read non-discount store) charges higher prices because they are supposed to be able to give you more service. Their salespeople are supposed to know more about the products and should be able to assess your needs and recommend a product.

Before I get too cynical, let me say that there are a couple of chains of store in Dallas that do spend a lot of effort to make sure that their salespeople have experience with the most popularly selling products. But, based on my experience, the product that is recommended is too often the product with the highest profit margin.

I realize that times are rough and that it takes a lot of money to keep a store in business. However, I just can't believe that a store that always recommends the highest profit products won't soon develop a bad reputation. Maybe that's why there are a lot of stores in Dallas that have gone out of business.

I also tried a discount store. They were able to name the five most popular products that did what I wanted to do, but had no information about what the product did.

The mail order people were about the same as the discount store. They knew the popular products and which ones were selling the best but could offer little more than that.

As a last resort, I called the software companies that made several of the products that I was considering. Typically, I got someone in the "sales" department as opposed to "techni-

cal support" which was reserved for people who had already purchased the product.

The range of information ran from reading the points listed in the last advertisement to someone who really knew the product and listed its strengths and weaknesses. Buying from the company that makes the product is usually the most expensive way to buy the product because they do not want to undersell their distributors and retailers. However, you will almost always get the current version.

But even if you have decided to order a specific product, there are a couple of pitfalls. If you buy the product in a local store, you may not be buying the latest version. Depending on the product, you may find that it will cost you an additional sum of money to get the current version.

Why is the current version important if the software does what you want it to do? Because, the software developers will only support the current version. If you have questions and are fortunate enough to get through to their "technical support" staff, they usually won't help you if you don't have the latest version.

If you order through a mail order company, be sure to ask if the software is in stock. Most of them will tell you that it is in stock but some aren't very good at lying. If you suspect that they may not be telling the truth, ask when they intend to ship the product. Also ask about their return policy if the software is defective or out of date.

Finally, remember that they are required by law to ship it within thirty days of billing your credit card. If you don't have it in thirty days, call up and cancel. An unfortunate fact of life is that some mail order firms need to collect your money before they can afford to buy the product to ship to you. If they go broke before they ship, you'll have trouble getting any of your money back.

It is better to make up your mind about which package to buy before going to the store or calling a mail order company on the telephone. You can find out about software ►

DON'T MIX 'EM,
MATCH 'EM!

A DOS Mixer
Or
How an Intrepid Young Adventurer
Tamed a WordPerfect Gone Wild

David Schwartz

As I become increasingly dependent upon my PC, I find it harder and harder to give up my old software in favor of these newfangled, gadget-filled programs. So it was with great reluctance that I finally decided to put my faithful Wordstar out to pasture in favor of WordPerfect 4.1

After installing WordPerfect on my hard disk, I anxiously typed "WP" and waited. As I sat in front of my computer staring at the screen, I saw the red lights on my two floppy drives come on and after several moments of seemingly furious activity, turn off again. When all the fanfare was over, I received a simple message: Correct copy of WP.EXE not found! Please type full subdirectory path and file name. After reading the message, I typed in the subdirectory name and the program worked brilliantly.

Complexity (continued from page 12)

packages through magazines and some of the weekly newspapers dedicated to micro-computers. Another excellent source of information about software packages is our montly meetings. Our program chairman, Charles Kroboth, usually has two presentations at each meeting. And you have the added advantage of hearing the answers to questions that some of our members ask.

Jim

■

The next time I tried to enter the program, I was again confronted with the same message. No matter what I tried to do, I had to wait until the computer looked at all of my available disk drives, and then type in the path to where the program was located.

At this point I began to fumble through my documentation to see if I missed something in the installation. To my surprise I found no mention of my particular problem.

In my usual hard-headed fashion, I spent the next few months tolerating my computer's apparent disagreement with my choice of software.

After inquiring with some experienced WordPerfect users, I was still unable to find any reasonable solution to my problem. After I had tried everything I could think of I finally decided that I would have to contact SSI Software and face the dreaded customer support.

After two short conversations with their technical support staff, I was able to locate the problem. It was at this time I could feel the cold chill of embarrassment coming over me.

Apparently in my haste of copying this and copying that, I inadvertently copied a DOS 2.1 COMMAND.COM file in the root directory of my hard disk. Unfortunately, my hard disk is formatted with DOS 3.1.

This DOS mixer was causing WordPerfect one enormous problem (These computers are so picky). Despite my complete loss of face, I am now happily writing on my new, and yes, even better word processor.

I have even decided that my preconceived notion of technical support staffs may not be completely justified. Although the people I talked to did not seem to know the details of the program, they were able to help me find the cause of my problem.

Reprinted from GS-BUG, the newsletter of Greater South Bay PC Users Group, Redondo Beach, CA.

■

LET YOUR COMPUTER HELP YOU WIN

Robert T. Huff

You say you're going to Comdex in Las Vegas this year? You say it is to be strictly a business trip with no time for gambling? I've got news for you! Unless you're some sort of moral zealot or so wrapped up in computers that you don't know what else is going on, you will probably succumb to the lure of the casinos. After all, it isn't every day that you are in Las Vegas. And you can't miss them. Every hotel has a casino just inside the front door and it's open 24 hours a day, just waiting for you to come inside and break the bank.

Assuming that you decide to try a little gambling, what are you going to play? The three most popular are Slot Machines, Craps and Blackjack. Every major casino has several banks of slot machines, several Craps tables and lots of Blackjack tables.

Slot machines are the easiest to play. You just put your coin in the slot and pull the handle. If you win, your winnings drop into a tray at the bottom of the machine for you to pick up. If you lose, nothing drops into the tray. The slots are also the easiest at which to lose because you have absolutely no control over the machine. The machine is set to pay off a certain percentage of the bets and will always make a profit for the casino.

Craps is a little different. You have control over where you place your bets. Still, unless you have studied the game so that you really understand the various bets and your odds on each plus have some luck running for you, you are apt to lose at craps.

Blackjack seems to be a game that most inexperienced gamblers can understand. After all, it's just a matter of trying to draw cards closer to a total count of 21 (without going over 21) than the dealer isn't it? Most of us have played some form of Blackjack at some time in our life even though it may have been just a friendly game with no money involved. Maybe we even won at the game. This game seems to be the one of the three mentioned which actually gives you a chance to use your brain. After all, you decide when to take

additional cards, when to split and when to double down. And while you get to make all these decisions, the dealer is forced to follow strict rules in his play. Obviously, you have a chance with this game, right? Probably wrong!!!

Once you have decided to gamble a little, let's assume that you decide that Blackjack is the game to try. The remainder of this article will be concerned only with how you can prepare to give yourself a better than average chance of winning at Blackjack.

CHANCES AT WINNING WHEN FOLLOWING THE DEALERS RULES:

I've read several books on Blackjack and each time the author reports his mathematical studies and informs us that the player who follows the same rules the dealer must follow is destined to lose. Some say the odds against you are 8% and others say it is as low as 5% against the player. In any event, that is pretty strong odds against your winning at the game. 5% odds against you means that, on average, out of every 100 hands, you will win 5 fewer hands than the dealer wins. To put this in perspective, you can assume that you will be dealt as many as 300 hands per hour at a Las Vegas casino. This means that, if you are betting the \$2.00 minimum on each hand, you will be losing something like \$30.00 to \$48.00 per hour. While there are worse ways to play the game, it is obvious that playing the same rules as the dealer is not a very good one. Each of these books explain in some detail why the dealer has such an advantage when you follow his rules (the biggest reason is because when you "bust" he takes your money even if he later "busts" on the same hand).

CHANCES AT WINNING WHEN FOLLOWING THE BOOKS BASIC STYLE OF PLAY:

Most of the books then have a chapter or two telling about the authors basic style of play (when to split pairs, when to double-down, when to take additional cards and so forth).

The idea is that if you can play a smart game, you can reduce the dealers edge considerably. Most of the books are honest at this point in that they tell you that the authors basic style of play will reduce but not eliminating the dealers advantage. If you follow the authors style of play you can reduce the odds to about .5% to a full 1% in favor of the dealer. This means that instead of losing \$30.00 to \$48.00 per hour, you will be losing only \$3.00 to \$6.00 per hour on average. Doesn't sound very great does it? You are still losing! But, before you can win, you must know how to play the cards to your best advantage and this section of the book is extremely important even if you skip the rest of it.

CHANCES AT WINNING WITH THE BOOKS ADVANCED BETTING SYSTEM:

In the following chapters, the author will usually attempt to explain a complicated betting system which is used in addition to his basic style of play. He will tell you that his system will actually give the player an advantage over the casino. His system is inevitably based on some form of card counting and to my way of thinking, is far too complicated for the casual visitor to Las Vegas to attempt to master. He will often fail to mention that the casino operators aren't friendly with card counters. If they catch you at it, they will take measures which will not please you. Often, he will also fail to mention that the casinos, in order to dissuade the card counters, have taken certain measures such as dealing Blackjack from a 5 or 6 deck shoe. Personally, I feel the combination of my lack of time and dedication to gambling plus the risks involved reduces my chances of winning using a card counting scheme to zero.

WHAT WE NEED HERE IS A LITTLE COMPUTER RESEARCH:

In Blackjack, as in many other games, winning hands often come in streaks. You may lose several in a row and then win several in a row. It is not always a matter of you and the dealer taking turns at winning. If a system could be

devised where you are betting larger amounts during your winning streaks than in your losing streaks, you can make a profit even if you win slightly fewer hands than the dealer.

With the above fact in mind, I decided to do some computer research to determine the best betting system for me. My research consisted of the following five steps.

1. I played 2000 hands of computer Blackjack using a Public Domain program. I assumed a bet of \$2.00 on each hand and used the basic style of play from one of those books. While playing, I recorded every win, loss, double, split, blackjack, etc. so that I could recreate the exact betting results.

2. I entered the data gathered in step #1 in a data file so that a computer program could read the file and, based on various amounts bet, show what the overall results would be.

3. I devised a computer program in which I could alter the amount bet on each hand in some automatic manner. The program then reads the data file and computes results based on the system in use at the time.

4. Before going further, I checked the computer program to be sure that when I told it to bet \$2.00 on each hand, I came out with the same results as I had in step #1.

5. I then divided the 2000 hands into 5 sessions of 400 hands each and experimented with various methods of changing the amount bet in an attempt to find the one that resulted in the best results for the player.

Admittedly, I did not test every possible betting scheme. Only those which I dreamed up and thought had a good chance of working. Some worked fairly well, some failed miserably and a few resulted in great success.

THE "THREE COIN SYSTEM" AND HOW IT WORKS:

The system that worked best for me in my computer research involves a basic bet of \$2.00. It also involves continually keeping



track of the results of the last three hands. The idea is to take advantage of the winning streaks by varying the amount bet dependent on the results of the past three hands. If you have won one of those hands, bet \$5.00. If you have won two of the last three, bet \$10.00. If you have won all of the last three, bet \$15.00. If you haven't won any of the last three, keep the bet at the \$2.00 minimum. By using this method, you will soon be betting your \$15.00 maximum when in a good winning streak and likewise soon be betting the \$2.00 minimum when the dealer is on his streak.

The name "Three Coin System" comes from the fact that you can easily keep track of the results of the last three hands and easily tell how much to bet on each hand by placing three coins on the table and following these simple rules.

1. Start with all coins in a row and each one showing "tails". In your mind, you determine that the coin positioned to far right is coin #1 and the coin to the far left is coin #3.

2. Whenever a hand is played which results in a win or loss, coin #3 is moved to position #1. Thus coin #2 becomes #3 and #1 becomes #2. The coin that was moved to the #1 position is placed "heads" up if you won the hand or "tails" up if you lost. The other coins are not disturbed except by moving them down in the order by one position.

3. After moving the coins, look at them to determine your next bet. If no "heads" are showing, bet \$2.00. If one "heads" is up, bet \$5.00. If two "heads", bet \$10.00. If three "heads", bet \$15.00.

I can't guarantee that use of the "Three Coin System" will be as good for you as my research indicated it would be for me. However, I can report that I used it in Las Vegas last year at Comdex and found the following:

1. The dealers did not object to my having the three extra coins on the table and shuffling them around all the time. They seemed a little curious about what I was doing, but since they are not allowed undue familiarity with the players, none of them even asked what it was all about.

2. With two exceptions, I won every time I used the system. The losing experiences in each case came when I quit playing early. In one case I quit because my Blackjack table was right in front of the slot machines and I couldn't concentrate due to the noise they generated. In the other, I had to quit early due to another member of my party insisting that we move on to another casino.

3. Although I did not "break the bank", I won enough to cover all of my expenses except the plane fare. I think that's pretty good when you consider the fact that I was playing with a very limited bankroll on the \$2.00 tables. If I had the money and the nerve, I could have played for bigger stakes and possibly have done much better.

MY SUGGESTIONS TO HELP MAKE YOU A BLACKJACK WINNER:

If you really want to be a winner, do some research of your own, practice what you learn to become confident in your system, then try it with a limited amount at risk. I suggest these steps.

1. Go to the nearest library and check out a good book that includes details on the best way to play the hand. This is the part I refer to as the authors basic style of play. Study that section. Make up a cheatsheet if you think it will help.

2. Do some computer research of your own similar to that which I have done. Test your theories against betting a set amount every time and against my system. Decide what betting system you will use. (please let me know if you find one that beats mine)

3. Practice playing Blackjack using the basic style of play as recommended by the book and the betting system you have decided on. Make sure that you practice enough so that the method becomes second nature to you.

4. If you become uncomfortable with a dealer or casino or for any other reason don't feel good about the situation, find the nearest exit and use it. ►

- 5. Don't get greedy or take more money into a casino than you're prepared to lose.
- 6. If you believe in your system, stick with it and do not vary from it. Otherwise don't play at all.
- 7. Remember that the temptation to make a killing by betting a big wad of money is strong, but is the wrong thing to do.
- 8. No alcohol while playing! Accept their free drinks, but make them Coke or Ginger Ale until you are ready to quit.

Robert

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.

SALE. Fast 88 No Slot Accelerator Board. Never unwrapped, with card. \$50. See PC Magazine, Vol 5, No. 15. Bill Westerlage 214-368-7590

Have no need for recent purchase of DAC Accounting and Payroll. Make offer. Dorothy Wright 214-530-6546

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Need a Laptop on a short-term basis? Rent mine. IBM compatible, full-screen-- Fits in Briefcase! Printer, too. Daily \$30; Weekly \$150; Monthly \$500. 686-5346.

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Ad Prices:

Full page (7 x 9)	\$120
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Deadlines:

All advertising copy must be prepaid and received by the NEWS staff no later than the 15th of the month.

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- . Shop & Swap ads must be typed, or neatly hand lettered.
- . Commercial ads must be in repro form, final size, ready for printing.
- . No ads will be run on cover.
- . No bleed pages. No color.

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Call J. P. Pribyl at 817-275-4109.



MAKE MY DAY!





MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

North Texas Personal Computer Users Group

The NTPCUG is a non-profit independent organization of individuals learning to apply personal computers to practical problems. For additional information call 242-4187 and leave message on the answering machine.

Check one: >>>> NEW: _____
>>>> RENEWAL: _____
>>>> ADDR CHG: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Comember's name (in your family): _____

Phone: (Home): _____ I prefer calls at this No. _____

(Work): _____ I prefer calls at this No. _____

Please initial here _____ if you wish to have your address included in member lists sold for the club's benefit to advertisers of IBM compatible products.

You will be asked to assist for a few hours each year. Please check all areas of interest that apply:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| BB. Bulletin Board | 1. APL |
| DM. Disk of the Month | 2. Assembler |
| ES. Equipment Setup | 3. Basic |
| FB. Financial/Bookkeeping | 4. Beginners |
| GP. Group Purchases | 5. Business Appl. |
| IB. Information/Registration Booths | 6. C Language |
| MP. Main Meeting Programs | 7. Communications |
| MM. Membership | 8. Databases |
| NL. Newsletter | 9. Eagle Computer |
| PR. Publicity/Public Relations | 10. Genealogy |
| SI. SIG Setup/Coordination | 11. Graphics |
| ST. Startext NTPCUG Column | 12. Integrated Software |
| VO. Volunteer Coordination | 13. Investment |
| | 14. Programmers |
| | 15. Science/Engineering |
| | 16. Turbo Pascal |

Membership Dues are: \$24.00 regular ___\$12.00___ Student(Show ID)

Make Check Payable to: **NTPCUG**
Mail Application to: North Texas PC Users Group
135 Skyline Drive RR2
Plano, Texas 75074

Received: \$ _____ Check Number: _____ Date: _____ Initials: _____

Special Interest Program Reports

General Information on Special Interest Groups

Since a SIG is a very loose association of people with a common interest, its existence depends on there being enough participants to make the SIG worthwhile, and on a leader who is able and willing to devote enough time to keep the SIG vital.

SIGs come and go, reflecting changes in interests -- as well as changes in software and hardware.

As of March, there will be no more Assembler or DataFlex SIG's. Assembler is discontinued primarily because of the lack of a leader. DataFlex is discontinued because of a lack of attendance.

However, one of the older SIG's has been rejuvenated -- there WILL be a BASIC SIG meeting this month!

One new SIG will start in April -- DBASE. Look for the time at the meeting.

And, there is some continued interest in the creation of another new SIG -- Desktop Publishing. If you are interested, let us know in March, and it may appear on the schedule in April.

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.

BASIC APPLICATIONS SIG

The BASIC Language Special Interest Group is active again -- this time under new leadership. To get in tune with the directions that the group would like to take a questionnaire was distributed at the March meeting. The results are not available at this writing but we expect to present a program that will be of interest to the majority of the respondents. More next time on future programs. Ross Carter 238-8638

Raima Corporation. Larry will tell us about db_Vista, a C function library to aid in the development of network model data base management. It is written entirely in C and consists of a data base definition language to structure the data base and a library of C functions used to access and manipulate it.

Come join us for this interesting program. Sid Nolte

DBASE SIG

For our first meeting we will be comparing application generators, which make the task of writing dBase applications a little less painful.

David Hayden will be demonstrating Genifer and Viewgen, two highly acclaimed application generators, while Burton Craig, from Ashton Tate, will be demonstrating Appsgen, which is the application generator included with dBase III Plus. Burton will also be available to answer technical questions. dGenerate, a public domain application generator, will also be briefly discussed. At the end of the meeting a drawing will be held for a free copy of Genifer. This SIG is not intended for first time computer users. David Hayden (214)380-8172 (214)931-2209 BBS

BEGINNERS SIG

April signals the start of the second "go-round" of the Beginners SIG. As a reminder, this is currently a three-session SIG designed to help beginners get started on their IBM-PC's and compatibles.

"Graduates" of this SIG will most likely want to continue in either the DOS SIG or the BASIC SIG.

The April repeat of the first session will cover the real fundamentals of starting up DOS on your PC.

"C" SIG

The program for the April meeting will be given by Mr. Larry Streepy who is representing the

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Special Interest Program Reports

GENEALOGY SIG

At the February meeting Travis Morris presented PERSONAL ANCESTRAL FILE, a genealogy research program. Three programs are offered: Family Records, Research Data Filer, and GEDCOM (Genealogical Data Communications). The program is quite user-friendly. CONFIG asks the type of machine and printer, which drives the program and data are located. The user is lead through questions. Data entry starts with the family. Each individual is given a Record Identification Number (RIN) by the program. If the individual is not recorded in the file, he is added.

The entire program is menu driven and accepts name, gender, title, birth date/place, etc. Notes can be added to any record -- no limit. Family groups can be assembled to link parents, children, siblings for each generation -- both previous and subsequent generations. The program will prints lists alphabetically or by RIN.

GEDCOM works through a modem. With its use information can be transferred to another machine. However, the protocol for GEDCOM is still in the works. It may be a year or more before this becomes a reality.

PERSONAL ANCESTRAL FILE costs \$35. It is available from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Salt Lake City Distribution Center, 1999 West 1700 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84104.

Judge Linebaugh has compiled a REVIEW OF COMPUTER PROGRAMS presented in the Genealogy SIG from June 1984 through January 1987. The compilation is available at a cost of \$1.50. Initial distribution was at the March meeting.

The March meeting was held at the Eric Jonsson Library, rather than the Infomart. Details will be in the May Newsletter.

applications. Having discussed macros in the last two meetings, the April meeting will be on database applications.

In each Lotus SIG meeting, we try to start off at the beginners level and then move on to more advanced topics as the meeting progresses. In this way all levels of Lotus users should get something from each session. Come join us!

We will try to schedule folks from Lotus Development for a meeting in the near future to present HAL and companion products.

TURBO PASCAL

At the April meeting the code segments for evaluating mathematical expressions, interactive entry and editing of lines of input, and the simple graphics package will be integrated to produce a simple version of a mathematical function explorer.

Warren will be out of Dallas for the May and June meetings, so someone needs to volunteer to take over the TPSIG for these meetings. Warren Ferguson

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LOTUS SIG

In the March meeting, Mark Gruner completed his discussion of Lotus Macros with a discussion of interactive, branching, and looping macros. The session was very interesting for all levels of Lotus users.

Peyton Weaver presented results of the survey taken in the January meeting, which indicated that the topics of interest to most attendees were Lotus and Symphony macros, then database





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Room Assignments



Saturday, 11 April 1987

Check times & room numbers in lobby at INFOMART

	8:30 - 9:30	Room
	Beginners	_____
<i>Special Presentation</i>	9:00 - 9:55	
	Science/Engineering	_____
	DOS	_____
	Genealogy (w/Apple)	_____
	Graphics	_____
	Buyers Guide	_____
	Astrometry	_____
9:00 Auditorium Surprise Presentation	9:30 - 9:55	
	Orientation	_____

MAIN MEETING: 10:00 - 11:00

Lotus Representatives will be demonstrating HAL, the Company's "English Language Interface", and Metro, their desktop accessory package.

11:30 - 11:55	Room	1:00 - 1:55	Room
Orientation	_____	Artificial Intelligence	_____
12:00 - 12:55		Business Applications	_____
Assembly Language	_____	Communications	_____
APL	_____	Databases	_____
C Language	_____	2:00 - 2:55	
Turbo Pascal	_____	Advanced Programmers	_____
		Integrated Software	_____
		Basic Applications	_____
		Lotus	_____



North Texas PC NEWS

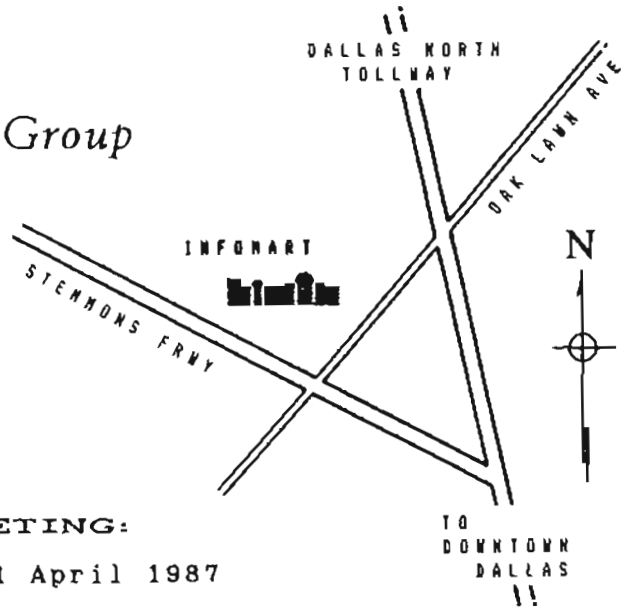
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NEXT MEETING:

11 April 1987