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*North Texas PC Users Group*

9.3

March 1990



# North Texas PC NEWS

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## Deadline:

All advertising and other material for publication in North Texas PC NEWS must be received by the NEWS staff by the 10th of the month prior to publication. See deadline information below.

## Circulation:

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Member distribution is 1316; remaining copies are distributed to PC user groups around the country, and to advertisers, prospective members and others with common interests.

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## DEADLINE

Copy deadline for April  
North Texas PC NEWS:  
Saturday March 10th

## Meeting Dates:

March Meeting - 2nd Sat (10th)  
April Meeting - 2nd Sat (14th)  
May Meeting - 2nd Sat (12th)  
(tentative)

*Our volunteers are  
the greatest!*

## EDlines

Fortunately, the February and March meetings coincide with the newsletter deadlines. This means that we can corner the writers at the meetings and remind them about the article they promised us when they missed last month's deadline. The writers also get to corner us and ask us why we butchered their submissions. Just kidding. Most, if not all, articles are submitted on time and very rarely do we cut anything from a submitted article. Usually, all we have to do is check for spelling errors. (Most of the writers are hopeless insomniacs who write their best stuff at 2:00 a.m. on heavy dosages of java. Making sure the spelling is correct might interrupt their flow.) If you like to stay up all night, why don't you try writing an article. We gratefully accept hardware reviews, software reviews, tips, trends, and just about anything else related to PC's for publication in the North Texas PC News. You don't have to write at 2:00 a.m., you can write at any time that suits you, but please consider it. If you have any questions, send me a message on the NTPCUG BBS or call me (no 2:00 a.m. calls please) at (214) 255-1732.

Now, on to a completely different subject. When you buy a new piece of software or hardware, do you send in your registration card? Yeah, I know those things breed junk mail like rabbits, but I usually chuck that out with the ADVO Marriage Mall "stuff" (tempered for the reading public). Anyway, on most of these cards, there's usually a question about how you became aware of the product. If you read about it in the NT PC News or saw a presentation at our monthly meeting, let them know! It can only help the group when you let people know about us. You are the front line of this users group's public relations. By making manufacturers and software companies aware of us, you help to increase advertising revenues for the newsletter (and thereby holding dues down) and you also create the opportunity for more diverse presentations at the meetings. So when you fill the registration card out, make sure to mention the NTPCUG, and if there's a box that just says "User Group", find a blank spot and write down "North Texas PC Users Group". I do!

Once again, I'll climb down from my soap box and bid you "Adieu" until next month.

Douglas McQuaid

## Submitting Articles for Publication in North Texas PC NEWS

**1. Article Style.** Type all copy flush left without justification. This includes headings, bylines, and the first line of each paragraph. Place a credit byline (author's name) between the title and first paragraph. Leave a blank line between paragraphs.

**2. File Formats.** ASCII text files are preferred. Use .TXT extension for ASCII files. If formatting is crucial, Microsoft WORD and WordPerfect files will be accepted. Other word processor file formats may be acceptable, if the article is accompanied by hardcopy and an ASCII file version of the article. Word processor files create a lot of extraneous work for the editors. If the article can be ASCII-fied, please do so.

**3. Submitting Articles.** You may use one of two methods.

a) **NTPCUG BBS (Preferred).** Log-on to the BBS and select (U)pload from the main menu. Your default file transfer protocol will be displayed. If you want to change your default protocol, use the (P)rofile option. Once you have set the file transfer protocol, select the (A)rticle option from the upload menu. You will be prompted for the filename to upload and a one-line description of the file. Enter the filename and the description and begin the file transfer. (OPTIONAL -Send a BBS mail message to Douglas McQuaid regarding your article.)

b) **SnakerNet.** Track down one of the editors at the monthly meeting and give them a diskette with the article on it.

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# Program for March \_\_\_\_\_ Timothy Carmichael \_\_\_\_\_

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

## Videotex Systems, Inc.

### Video Color Image Capture and Databasing

Dallas-based Videotex Systems Inc. will demonstrate color image capture technology on the AT and introduce its image database product, T-BASE, designed to bring color images into any DBASE or CLIPPER application. Videotex is a software development and systems integration firm.

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

## Ashton-Tate Corporation

### Word Processing and More with Multimate V4.0

*Jeff Spokes, Product Manager*

Come see a demonstration of the newest version of Multimate with features such as grammar checking, graphics and text import and edit, electronic mail, and advanced printer support.

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

## NTPCUG Business Meeting

*Join us - you're missing the latest and greatest when you're not there!*

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

## Company: Microsoft Corporation

### Microsoft Word for Windows

*Monica Haring, Product Manager*

MS Word for Windows has a fully graphical interface for the Windows environment. This demonstration will introduce you to word processing capabilities within a graphical user interface (GUI).

## Prez Sez...

**Andy Oliver, Jr. -**

**(S)pecial (I)nterest (G)roup Coordinator**

Andy, currently the Assistant Volunteer Coordinator who works with Volunteer Coordinator, Connie Andrews, has agreed to take over my position as SIG Coordinator. Many of you see Andy at the Information/Registration booth every Super Saturday in the InfoMart near the front doors. Others have heard from Andy on the telephone for he has called a great number of you to confirm your hour(s) for volunteer activities on meeting day.

Beginning in March 1990, Sig Leaders should send their Selected SIG Happenings to Andy by the 10th of the month for the following month's PC News. All other SIG related equipment and room requests should be addressed to Andy. These request should reach Andy at least two weeks prior to the next Super Saturday meeting day. Thank you Andy Oliver for you invaluable and continued service to the NTPCUG!!

### Borland International's Quattro Pro Presentation

Mark Gruner, Lotus SIG Leader, has been working closely with Borland International over the last few weeks to make arrangements for another Quattro Pro

presentation. Recall the Super FREEZING Saturday at InfoMart when Borland presented Quattro Pro to a frigid audience among the icicles in the auditorium at 10:00 am, December, 1989? We'll try to have a warmer room and audience for Borland's 1:00 pm March 10 presentation to be located in one of the large cave-like rooms located at each end of the 7th floor.

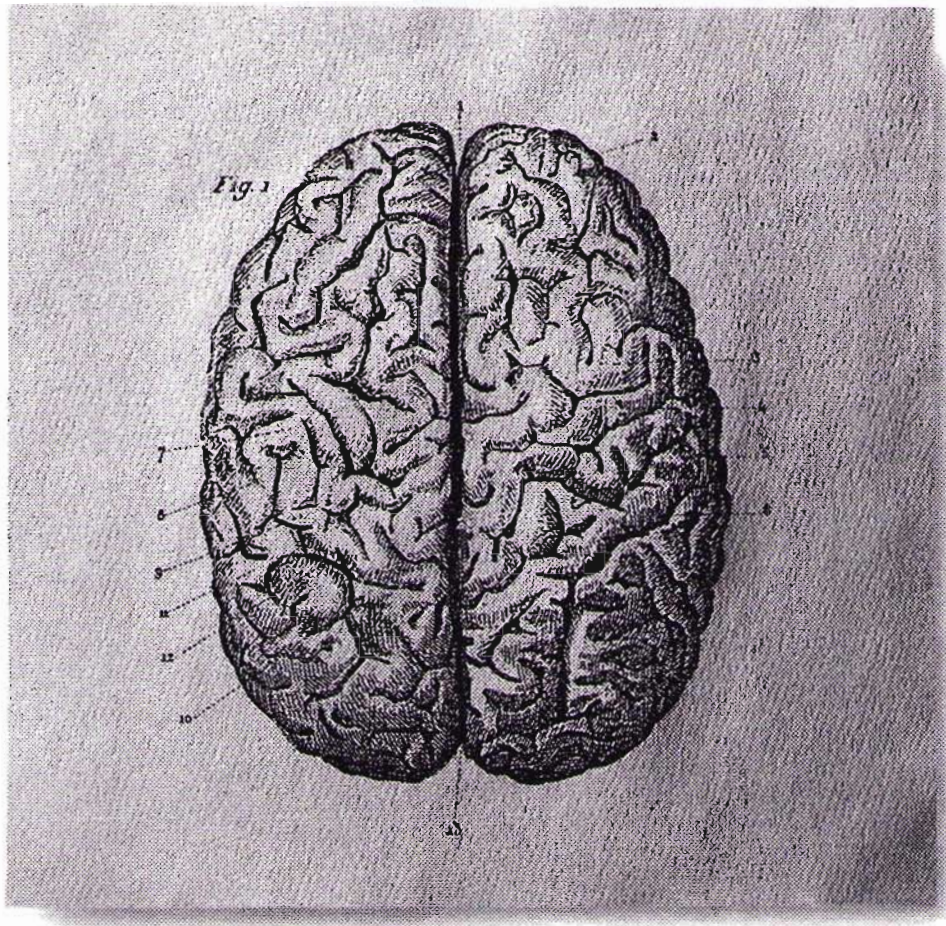
Borland plans to rent a table in the basement vendor area and will have special pricing on their new Quattro Pro product. See Mark Gruner's article in the Selected SIG Happenings section of this issue of the PC News for further information.

### Phil Chamberlain - Many Things to Many Members

Phil Chamberlain, currently Board of Directors Member, SIG Leader of the new Beginners Pascal SIG (which meets at noon) and Assistant Sig Coordinator, has agreed to remain in the position of Assistant SIG Coordinator until Andy finds Phil's replacement.

As mentioned above, Phil just started another new SIG, the Beginners Pascal SIG. Saturday the 10th of February was this SIG's first meeting. There were fifty people in attendance. Looks like this ones gonna be another heavy hitter! ▶

# Now QuickPascal makes this software go even faster.



Even the quickest minds tend to brake suddenly when confronting new languages.

Enter new Microsoft® QuickPascal Compiler.

The first Pascal that is not only powerful but easy, intuitive and 100% headache-free.

For example, our new hypertext QuickPascal Advisor offers on-the-job training: by cutting and pasting sample code you can learn to program in Pascal from scratch. And if you do hit a snag, the Quick Advisor can straighten everything out right on the spot.

To accelerate your thought processes even more, all of our processes are seamlessly integrated; no other Pascal offers you easier

access to your editor, debugger and compiler.

What's more, QuickPascal is the first PC Pascal to offer Object Oriented Programming, or OOP. With objects, you can easily assemble whole programs from modular building blocks of code and data. And once you know Pascal, OOP is a snap. Which means, you get maximum productivity with minimum effort.

Naturally, our Pascal is also fully source compatible with Turbo Pascal®.

So stop by your Microsoft dealer soon.

You'll find our software is on the same wavelength as yours.

**Microsoft®**  
Making it all make sense™



**Unix / Xenix SIG**

The new UNIX / XENIX SIG had its first meeting at 10:00 am on February 10, 1990. Douglas Scott, SIG Leader, reported that there were up to twenty people in attendance at this SIG's first meeting. A good showing considering that this SIG is in the same 10:00 am hour with LAN, Paradox, Graphics and Personal Users.

**Databases by Rodney Haas**

Rodney, Databases SIG Leader, regrouped his SIG and started a database beginners schedule in January. I attended some of the meeting in January. Rodney had the attendees begin by defining the application and then had the group start definition of databases and fields. If you are a beginning database user check this one out.

**New PC Viewer Bought by NTPCUG**

NTPCUG just purchased a second PC Viewer (LCD Plate) from Sherri Lee Jones of Data Projections, 2661 Midway Road, Carrollton, Texas. The PC Viewer is an LCD Projection plate.

The PC Viewer sits on top of an overhead projector to display information directly from a computer onto a wall or projector screen. It's an efficient and interactive way to make presentations in our Special Interest Groups and other User Group meetings. This new PC Viewer is a high contrast 20:1 black & white display with 640 X 480 pixel resolution. It works with CGA, EGA and VGA video.

Phil Chamberlain took delivery for the User Group and was first to use the PC Viewer in his Beginners Pascal SIG on Saturday, February 10, 1990. Second to use the Viewer was Mark Gruner, Sig Leader of the Lotus SIG and newly elected member of the Board of Directors. Both Phil and Mark had glowing reports about the quality of display provided by this new Viewer.

**Randy Lahti Donates Equipment**

Back in January, Andy Oliver took delivery on behalf of NTPCUG of a donated PC from NTPCUG member Randy Lahti. The donation included an IBM XT with 640K of RAM and a floppy drive, and a TI 810 dot matrix printer. This equipment was forwarded to Jay Shilstone, SIG Leader of the Volunteers SIG, who will make final disposition of the equipment. Thank you Randy for your good thought and kind actions.

Zack Porterfield 

**ON COMPLEXITY**

*No. 37 in a Series*

by Jim Hoisington

Computer to computer communications is changing the way we work. As communications change from connecting "slave" computers to the all powerful "host" computers to connecting computers on a "peer to peer" basis, new and exciting ways of working become possible.

Lotus NOTES is a new software product which belongs to a family of products called "groupware." NOTES creates an electronic workplace. There are private areas where people can work independently and there are shared areas where people can work together. However, the workers do not need to be in the same geographical location or work at the same time of day. I got to see this product a year ago while it was still undergoing development. It was impressive then and it undoubtedly has gotten better.

Another new piece of software that will change the way we work runs on Local Area Networks (LANs). This piece of software allows the Network Administrator to nominate specific PCs on the LAN for extra work. When a PC receives more work than it can do or wants to do, it can ship the work off to a program running on a file server. This program checks the nomination list for PC's that are not currently busy. When it finds one, it sends the work off to the unused computer giving the network users true multi-programming.

A major investment firm pioneered the use of this software. They wanted to monitor certain stock prices off of the Dow Jones service. As the prices for each of the stocks changed, the firm wanted to do a trend analysis calculation so that the brokers could quickly spot the direction of the stock's price. Using 100 PCs sitting in a room on racks, the Local Area Network was able to compute the new trend analyses without tying up any of the broker's computers.

I recently returned to working with mainframe networks after five years. I am amazed at how limited and difficult they are to use. The last time I used these same systems (little has changed in five years), they seemed so simple and easy. As Local Area Networks become commonplace and the software is written to take advantage of LAN architecture, we'll see changes in the way we work.

Jim 

# Combining Words and Graphics...

by Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.

Third in a series on bringing graphics into modern, high-powered word processing



The logo features the word "GEM" in a large, bold, serif font. To its right, the word "Artline" is written in a large, elegant, cursive script. Below "Artline", the text "by CCP" is written in a smaller, clean, sans-serif font.

Fun in German is *Spass*. For users with "small" PC's it might be *GEM Artline 1.01*.

Last of the major graphics editors covered in this series, *Artline 1.01* is a German product of CCP Software-Entwicklungs GmbH that runs under Digital Research, Inc.'s *GEM*. *Artline* should have been the first package reviewed here. I'll explain why later.

*Artline* first caught my attention at COMDEX/Fall '89 where it was being demonstrated at the DRI booth. It was fast, looked "different" than the other art packages I'd seen at COMDEX and seemed easy to use. After explaining my interest to the DRI folks, they promised to send me a copy for review.

## *Artline* arrives -- installation

The box that was delivered by UPS was small -- much smaller than the other editors' packages -- but contained everything necessary. Included were a full-scale *GEM 3.1*, *Artline 1.01*, small manuals for both and many, many update and addenda pamphlets. Both 3.5" and 5.25" program disk versions were included along with the ubiquitous Bitstream *Fontware* installation kit containing Dutch, Swiss and Charter typefaces.

Installation took about ten minutes after reading the documentation (which took somewhat longer) and used less than 2M on my hard disk. It took somewhat longer to install the Bitstream typefaces (which later proved unnecessary) as well as some PostScript typefaces. The manuals supplied were actually confusing and not much help here.

I was impressed. *GEM 3.1* ran as advertised and *Artline* came up quickly -- very quickly.

## Screen minimalism marks *Artline*

First thing new *Artline* users will notice is the relatively uncluttered display screen. *Artline* doesn't

show (or have) all the drawing tools seen in most of its competitors. It really doesn't need them as a result of the flexibility and power incorporated in the drawing tools it does have.

One tool is outstanding and I love its icon -- the Rolling Pin. This is a skewing tool. If the user needs to alter perspective, particularly in type, this is the fastest, smoothest tool I can imagine. The Rolling Pin's power means users will have to be careful though, because grabbing different handles produces different effects -- such as shifting perspective when a uniform slant, perhaps to produce italicized letters, was intended.

Symbols are a real strong point in *Artline*. Facility for inserting and creating symbols (and boiler plate such as small logos, etc.) is outstanding. While other editors may have slightly similar features, none are as easy and intuitive to use.

Line width is dealt with differently than most other editors and relies on a paintbrush-like scale and pointer. I might have preferred some indication of true line width in points, or at least a screen indication of the effects of using this tool instead of having to wait till the final printed graphic came out of the printer.

Missing? There's no auto-trace for bitmap tracing. This is a manual operation in *Artline 1.01*. Since most editors' auto-tracings result in significant after editing time, this may not that important.

## Type handling a strong point

*Artline* handles type very well. It doesn't come with the array of type faces found in Corel and A&L -- just the Bitstream Charter, Dutch and Swiss faces in addition to Nimbus Serif and Nimbus Sans faces. Since *Artline* utilizes standard PostScript outline type faces,

any outline type font package capable of generating the appropriate .AFF files can be used.

If the user will be incorporating the graphic in a document produced with outline type faces, the type can be matched in the graphic. One use would be large, banner headlines or type effects that call for some modification of the basic typeface.

Some things it can accomplish with type such as skewing with the Rolling Pin much more quickly and easily than other packages. Other aspects, however, are done slowly and laboriously. *Artline* doesn't fit type to a path as does *Arts & Letters* and *Corel DRAW*. Its method of producing curved type or circled type takes some getting used to, but can arrive at a very good finished design.

### Input and output limited

GEM *Artline* works with .GEM files. This product really was directed at the GEM market. Ventura *Publisher* is major example. As delivered, it only exports .GEM and encapsulated PostScript (EPS) files which Ventura handles easily. Everything else (almost) is foreign to *Artline*. It can bring .IMG, .PCX and .TIF in for manual tracing, but cannot export files created in *Artline* to those formats.

Graphics Filters are available from DRI (at additional cost) that allow more extensive conversions – PCX to IMG and IMG to PCX, PIC to GEM, DXF to GEM, CGM to GEM and GEM to CGM, and TIF to IMG.

PC users wishing to import art files from *Artline* for use in non-supported products or editors may have to do some fancy footwork. Most high-level graphics editors and word processors can use .EPS graphics files and this is a good avenue of escape from *Artline's* export limitations.

### The final test... Printing

Printing is another matter. Most popular printers are supported by *Artline* and additional drivers are available from DRI. The GEM driver for Hewlett-Packard LaserJet II's handled my H-P IIP very well, better than the Windows 2.11 driver with *A&L* and *Corel DRAW*. The Toshiba dot matrix driver was OK, but not as good as the Windows driver written by Micrografx.

GEM handles printing in a manner similar to Windows, but there are some differences. Unlike Windows, after printing is completed, the GEM user is not moved automatically back to the graphics editor. Also, the user can insert a number of files to be printed, with the file listing displayed in the window along with various printer icons. GEM's spooler

didn't seem as slow as the Windows spooler, but then everything seems faster in GEM.

Did have one peculiar experience here. Exported a .GEM file to Ventura 2.0 (which runs under GEM also) which printed with a hatchwork fill rather than the expected solid black fill. I'm not sure if this was the new IIP, GEM or Ventura. It was strange and elusive to track down.

### *Artline* shines on small machines

First in the series? *Artline* should have been the first editor reviewed. "Universal" applies here. *Artline* runs on nearly anything that can run DOS. More NTPCUG users could comfortably run *Artline* than any competing package.

*Artline* is the only editor that really works well on "small" machines – including PC/XT's. It is small, very quick running in GEM and doesn't demand the disk space needed by the other "big" graphics editors running in Windows. If the user is going to do a lot of bitmap tracing, at least 1.3M expanded memory will be required. But, *Artline* is completely usable on PC/XT's, slow (6 MHz) PC/AT's and other PC's with limited disk space and speed.

Limited typeface selection supplied with *Artline* is a drawback when compared to the competition. In compensation, *Artline* can produce identical typefaces, via outline fonts, to those being used in the document text. This can be a real plus if the user is primarily word oriented and using *Artline* to make



## DOS Environment Trick

by Fred Williams

Jim Hoisington recently mentioned the DOS environment feature that allows referencing a DOS environment variable from a batch file. This feature was introduced with the release of DOS 3.3. I haven't seen much written on the use of this handy addition to the batch language. So, I guess I'll add my two cents worth on how I make use of it.

I'm sure I'm not the only one who has set up separate subdirectories on the fixed disk for my various software products. I have seen too many other machines configured in the same way. This makes for a very convenient arrangement when upgrades are required. I like knowing everything for a particular software product is within a single subdirectory. I also keep any related data (like spreadsheets for Quattro Pro) in subordinate subdirectories.

The only problem is that when you wish to use a software product the subdirectory containing the actual program files must be placed in the DOS "path" environment variable. This must be done so that DOS can use the path to find the programs. The disadvantage to this is that the longer the DOS path is, the longer it will take DOS to find the requested program file.

The little trick I'm going to show you will keep the total length of the path variable short. We also will insure that the subdirectory containing the most heavily used program files will be listed first in the path. The only down side is that we may use some additional environment space.

If you have a very long path or have a busy DOS environment, you may have to increase the size of

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### GEM Artline continued

very large headlines, leading letters, etc., rather than doing full-page ad layouts.

*Artline* only needs the basic PostScript font outline and handles scaling internally which cuts down the storage requirements needed by very large bit-mapped fonts for non-PostScript printers. However users with PostScript and other printers incorporating internal, scalable type fonts may find this feature's importance is diminished in the future.

I really liked *Artline* on my PC/XT. It's one of the few graphics editors that doesn't make me wish for a 33 MHz 386 or 486-powered PC everytime I use it.

Reagan ▲

your DOS environment. I'll show you how to increase the size of your DOS environment later in this article should the need arise. But, now for the trick. To accomplish our goal, we will take advantage of a batch file's ability to access a DOS environment variable.

What we want to do is temporarily modify the DOS path to include the subdirectory that contains the software programs we wish to use. This will allow DOS to find the programs for as long as their use is required. Once we are finished with a particular software product, the DOS path needs to be reset to its original state.

What I'm going to do is show you how I have designed a Batch file that I use to run Borland's Quattro Pro on my system. Once you understand the principles involved, you can apply the method to suit your particular needs.

To set the stage, Quattro Pro's programs are resident in a subdirectory named "Quattro", and the spreadsheets reside in a subordinate subdirectory of "Quattro" named "Data". Imaginative names, wouldn't you say?

A listing of my "Quattro Pro" Batch file follows:

```
@ echo off
quattro\data
set tpath=%path%
path=\quattro;%tpath%
mouse >nul
q
mouse off >nul
path=%tpath%
set tpath=
cd \
```

Now, what it does.

The first line, "@echo off", makes sure I don't have to see the batch file displayed on the screen every time I run Quattro. Line two, "cd \quattro\data", switches the current directory to the directory that holds the Quattro spreadsheets.

In the third line of the batch file, "set tpath=%path%", I create a DOS environment variable named "tpath" and set it equal to the current DOS path. Then, in the fourth line, "path= \quattro;%tpath%", I establish a new DOS path with the Quattro subdirectory as the first subdirectory to be searched. The old value of the DOS path is concatenated following the Quattro subdirectory to maintain addressability to other programs that may be needed while working with Quattro.

The next batch file line, "mouse on >nul", starts the very professional sounding "pointing device" without showing me all the Microsoft verbiage. Let's see now, IBM has "pointing devices", Mac's have "mice". Says a lot about who's user friendly, doesn't it? The next batch file line, "q", starts Quattro Pro. Once I am



finished with Quattro, the batch file line, "mouse off >nul", turns off the mouse sans the verbiage.

To restore the DOS path to the state it was in before starting Quattro, the batch line, "path=%tpath%", is executed. This batch file line sets the DOS path equal to the contents of the environment variable "tpath". Remember that "tpath" contains the value of the DOS path before the addition of the Quattro subdirectory.

Now that I'm done with the temporary DOS environment variable, "tpath", the next batch file line, "set tpath=", removes "tpath" by setting it to a "null" (empty) value. Setting a DOS environment variable value equal to nothing causes DOS to drop that variable from the current DOS environment. The last line of the batch file switches the current directory back to the root directory. I do this more from habit than necessity. I don't use any menuing system or such. Real programmers run their systems from the DOS command line!

If you try this trick and part of your DOS path gets truncated in the process, this means you are short on DOS environment space. I think that is a nice little

DOS feature. Just truncate the environment content and don't bother the user with an error message or anything like that.

To increase the size of your DOS environment from the default size of 128 bytes, you need to add the following statement to your system's "Config.sys" file:

```
Shell = drive:command.com /p /e:nnn
```

Where, "drive" is the drive on which your system's copy of the DOS Command file is resident; and, "nnn" is the number of bytes you wish to set the DOS environment size equal to. For example, my "Shell" command line is:

```
Shell = d:command.com /p /e:256
```

My system's DOS command file is on drive "D:" and the total size of my system's new environment is 256 bytes. Don't make your environment any bigger than absolutely necessary as DOS environment size reduces the total free memory available for program execution.

Fred

a

## DAC-Easy Light

By: Fred Williams

I have a couple of programs I wrote for General Ledger posting, and a couple of Multiplan spreadsheets I set up to do Income Statement, Balance Sheet, and Income Tax calculations. Though I pass myself off as an automation expert, I have used this mess for several years now to maintain my company's books. Last year I tried to do the posting using a "Shareware" General Ledger, with less than stellar results. This year I decided to "bite the bullet" and spring for a "real" accounting package.

One thing that I have been guilty of in the past, when recommending a software package, is failing to see why the client claimed, "That is not the way we run our business." Now, I try not to judge too quickly. I do point out that the recommendation is a close fit, and is an improvement over what he is currently using. If I can't prove that, then he is right, the package does not fit.

General Ledger is General Ledger, is General Ledger, right? Well, kinda. One problem I have noticed with current integrated packages is that you still have to lug around the overhead for those features that you don't really intend to use. Most integrated accounting packages try to give you General Ledger, Ac-

counts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Billing, etc., whether you want them or not.

What I wanted was a pure General Ledger package, no frills, no thrills, just plain vanilla. Cost, though important, was not, within reason, a limiting factor. Where in Dallas does one go for prepackaged software? Soft Warehouse, naturally. Soft Warehouse has a broad array of packages to choose from. Most of the accounting packages displayed had many more features than I wanted. I already have an invoicing package that I designed and wrote. I run my business on a cash basis. My wife won't let me have accounts payable. I try to have clients that pay on time, and avoid those who don't.

After perusing the lot, my eyes settled on DAC-Easy Light, "Less filling accounting for home and office." One intriguing feature of this product was the fact that the producers are located on Preston Road here in Dallas. If things didn't work as advertized, I could always take it over to them to see if they think Light does "Taste great!"

For the princely sum of \$29.95, I carried away my very own copy. Inexpensive software still makes me nervous. It takes a lot of nerve to complain if a less than one hundred dollar package does not mow the lawn and carry out the trash. Light still had more features listed on the packaging than I wanted.

Once back at the office, installation proved to be a breeze on the hard disk, after I freed up some space.

►

Where did that 40 meg. go that I didn't need? Light will even run on a single 360k diskette drive system. Are any single drive systems out there any more? DAC-Easy Light also requires 256k, and DOS 2.0 or better. A printer that can print "compressed" mode is required for hard copy printing of the accounting reports.

Part of the installation procedure builds you a model chart of accounts. The chart of accounts is tailored to either a "home" or "business" environment, an option you select during installation. You also select the printer type from a somewhat "light" list of supported printers. There is a "default" printer that will work on all but the strangest of printers. You also may tailor the screen colors if you don't like the supplied colors.

If you setup Light on either a hard disk or high density diskettes, file sizes are set to allow: five hundred accounts in the chart of accounts, eight hundred checks, twenty-two hundred journal transactions, and five hundred invoices. If you set Light up on 360k diskettes you are limited to: three hundred- fifty accounts in the chart of accounts, three hundred checks, eight hundred journal transactions, and three hundred invoices.

Except for the limit on the chart of accounts, these limits are for "open" transactions. Closing a month empties the journal transaction file. Reconciling the checking accounts removes the check transactions. There also is a procedure for deleting closed invoices. If for any reason on this earth you should exceed these limits, you truly are a cheapskate of the highest order, and should go out and spend much more than \$29.95 for a good accounting package.

The Light User's Manual is 101 pages long, counting the Index. Light is so easy to use that I must admit I have not used the manual other than to verify that I really can't make Light do whatever it was that I was attempting to do. There is an on-line help that is well done. The help function does a good job of answering operational questions. The help function also does a very elementary job of explaining the supported accounting procedures.

I might mention that Light is not intended for the great unwashed masses who have not had the extreme pleasure of being exposed to the inner secrets of the fine art of bean counting. One should have at least a rudimentary understanding of double entry bookkeeping. The less one knows the more one should use the universally ignored good backup procedures. Sometimes what is thought to be a debit is not, and what is not a credit, is. So, as not to make many messy correcting entries that usually "correct" in the wrong direction, you can reload from backup and try again.

Light uses both pull down menus and function keys to provide an easy to use and understand user interface. The major functions available from the main menu are check writing and reconciliation, credit card accounting, invoicing, journal posting and printing, and report printing. Both the check writing and invoicing functions can print on extra cost pre-printed forms. The checking account function also will allow manual check writing.

I guess the best way to describe DAC-Easy Light is to take each bookkeeping function supported and cover each in detail. Since I have my unique reasons for using Light, I have not used all the major functions in depth. I have not used the invoicing at all. I also have not attempted to use the credit card function to do elementary accounts payable either. The rest of the major functions I have used extensively to post Systems Consultants' company books for 1989.

The most common use mentioned for a small accounting package is for check writing and bank statement reconciliation. Why anybody would attempt to print their personal checks on a "home computer" is beyond me, but you can do it with DAC-Easy Light. The most sensible use for me is to post my company's checks after they have been manually written. This year I'm going to attempt to do this at the end of each month.

A couple of things I did prompted greatly improved backup procedures. I learned the hard way, you can and will enter and post an incorrect check number, and you cannot reverse an incorrectly voided check. These are times when the manual comes in handy. It has the customer support number in it. The nice little lady confirmed my worst suspicions, "No you can't. You do have a backup don't you?"

The check posting (writing) function does everything that is required, including full disbursement to multiple accounts for a single check. Very handy, when you've been to Sam's Wholesale and bought some stuff for the company, some more goodies for your personal use, and paid for it all with one company check.

When the bank statement arrives, you can select the reconciliation function and quickly balance the old check book. Come quick Donna dear, and see how I can use my \$5000 computer to balance my check book! What do you mean, you do the personal account with the \$50.00 TI desk calculator?

The reconciliation function did not work exactly as I thought it should. You begin by entering the closing balance shown on your current statement. Using function keys, you either "clear" an outstanding transaction or mark the transaction as "outstanding". So far, so good.

Although I was interactively processing transactions, the reconciliation totals were not being updated in

real time. Also, I did not receive a total until I physically marked every transaction as cleared or outstanding. Common logic would lead one to believe if a transaction is not marked cleared, then it must be outstanding. Au contraire, overdraft breath, Light makes no such assumptions.

At first I didn't think that the "credit card" accounting function would be of much value. We use one credit card account for both business needs and personal wants. Before switching to Light, I did the expense dispersion manually when I posted the check paying off the card account monthly. What a hassle! Now, with Light, I just use the credit card statement to post the individual purchase transactions to the proper expense accounts. The monthly check is now posted to the credit card account.

When you choose "Accounting" from the Light Main Menu, you have access to the Light functions that are closest to what is thought of as double entry accounting. Here you may post transactions to supplemental journals that you may choose to establish. For example, I use a General Journal to post transactions involving purchases I make for the business and pay for with cash out of my pocket.

The accounting function is also where you modify the pre-generated chart of accounts that Light builds for you during the setup process. The chart of accounts is the heart of any double entry accounting system. Light is aware of this critical importance, and has built in "hard coded" accounts in the chart of accounts.

All the accounts critical to the successful functioning of an accounting system are "locked up" and cannot be modified or deleted by the user. Light does not even allow you to change the name of these accounts. Obviously a choice was made by the designers of Light. They considered that it was more important to insure the integrity of the accounting system than it was to allow the user complete freedom with the tailoring of the chart of accounts.

Since I don't totally agree with the chart of accounts supplied with Light, I consider this restriction excessive. My company is organized as a sole proprietorship. As I understand it, standard account naming conventions imply that the equity account for a sole proprietorship should be named using the owner's name. For my company the single equity account would be named "Capital, Fred Williams". There also should be no "Retained Earnings" account in a sole proprietorship's chart of accounts as this account is intended for use by Corporations.

The default equity accounts in Light are protected, and therefore cannot be modified. There is no way to establish a single capital account that includes the owner's name. The Light created retained earnings account may not be deleted either. Two other ac-

counts I don't want, but can't do anything about, are the Long Term Liabilities and Cost of Sales accounts. I currently have no long term liabilities. And, a pure service business lacks direct cost of sales expenses.

Some other features I have not used or mentioned are: accounts receivable statement printing, budgeting with variance reporting, and mailing label printing. In order not to mislead anyone, I will only say that they should provide a respectable level of capabilities. I drew this conclusion after reviewing the Light User's Manual sections and physically looking to see how these features would work.

Some things I wish Light could do and can't: (1) retain all detail transactions until specifically deleted, (2) allow greater freedom in chart of account tailoring, (3) allow closing the month of December before posting year end expense adjustments, (4) Not pre-allocate fixed file sizes, even when zero transactions are present and, (5) provide an easy method of transaction reversing.

DAC-Easy Light does a good job of meeting my current accounting requirements and will continue to meet my needs into the future, even considering that I have been working this past year on starting up a small manufacturing business. Should this new venture fly, I will need some of Light's features that so far have not been used.

For \$29.95 my company's accounting has taken a quantum leap forward. Light doesn't do everything just the way I want, but it does do enough to qualify as a major improvement in System Consultants' bookkeeping. If the lack of any features or capabilities should in the future deter either of my companies growth, I'll stick Light on the shelf with PC DOS 1.1, 2.0, 3.2, Easywriter, Multiplan and many other packages that have served me well in the past.

Fred ▲

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## C-CAD's Computer User Group

### *Enabling Independence Through Computer Technology*

The C-CAD's Computer User Group meets every Super Saturday at INFOMART, from 10:30-12:00. Our main focus is to present computer technology as it relates to individuals with disabilities. Demonstrations are given by vendors and individual computer users, in order to aid in the awareness and knowledge of technology available to enhance lives and create employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

If you have any questions concerning C-CAD, please call Cheryl Keifer at (817) 870-9082, Metro (214) 654-9614, or TDD (817) 870-9086.



# The Variety Store

*(New or unusual hardware/software/applications for IBM small computers and compatibles.)*

## Top of the news --

### Freedom of Speech on BBS's?

What happens when large, PR-sensitive companies decide to get into the on-line information service business? Seems they conduct business just like their own internal information channels handled by PR departments.

Case in point is the new "Prodigy" on-line service developed by Sears and IBM and the furor generated by internal censorship over user messages.

Unlike most area BBS's, Prodigy's messages are screened by an editor before being posted on the service. That raises some questions, but Prodigy's recent "elimination" without warning of a "town meeting" forum that was a little too hot for its corporate leaders raises a number of issues related to 1st Amendment rights according to computer media types.

## 286 Stomping Ahead --

### Just how fast will the 386SX run?

Intel hasn't announced (officially) really high-speed versions of the 386SX chip when this is being written in February. Late January rumors hinted at imminent arrival of a 20 MHz version of the chip, but nothing firm.

What is becoming well known is that most software runs faster on 80286 PC's than on 386SX PC's at equivalent system clock speeds. Couple this with available higher-speed 286's (but not from Intel) and Intel's PR efforts to eliminate the 80286 from future designs seems understandable.

Western Digital (WD) thinks Intel will answer with higher-speed

386SX chips in the near future. A major maker of support chips for PC's, WD announced their WD6400SX chip set for 386SX MCA compatibles running at 16, 20 and 25 MHz. Everyone expects a 20 MHz 386SX, but 25 MHz?

## Meanwhile, Compatibility?

### Intel claims not all XXX87's equal

This is really old news, but interesting none-the-less. Intel has been less than ecstatic about the new competition in the math coprocessor line(s) -- 80287, 80387, etc., and released some interesting comparisons between their chips and the competing makers' chips.

Most particularly, Intel pointed to differences in their 80287 and the Integrated Information Technology (IIT) 2C87 chip when performing side-by-side in Lotus 1-2-3, PC-Matlab and Autocad. Intel claimed everyone should get the same answer as their chip(s) in the same application(s) to call themselves compatible.

IIT's response was that their chip was actually more accurate than the Intel chip, hence the "different" number(s) their chips produce. Hmmm. Maybe that's one I should have tried in fourth-grade arithmetic.

## Speaking of errors...

### 486 Bugs swarm over EISA

Errors and rumors of errors in Intel's 80486 chips continue with several new twists. Compaq (Houston, TX, clone maker) reports production delays in 486 products as result of buggy chips, while rumors are circulating that only the EISA-bus implementations are hung by 486 bugs still being discovered.

EISA is the Extended Industry

Standard Architecture developed by the "Gang of Nine" -- the Houston, TX, clone maker was a founding member -- to compete with the MCA (Micro Channel Architecture) bus found in IBM's PS/2 machines. I'm waiting (very eagerly) for the "conspiracy" rumors on this little gem...

## Is 640K Limit real?

### DOS Extenders probe life beyond 1M

Since 1981, PC users have been imprisoned by the 640K RAM limit dictated by IBM and Microsoft. That wasn't unreasonable in 1981. Most applications actually would run on 64K PC's (except 1-2-3, which was considered pretty RAM hoggish, even then). Meanwhile, software has grown to a point that a 640K PC is inadequate in many applications.

That is, unless the PC is equipped with a DOS extender.

LIM (Lotus-Intel-Microsoft) expanded memory is probably familiar to most users -- usually in RAM disks and disk cache applications.

PC users with 286, 386SX and 386-powered machines have been experiencing the same RAM strangulation experienced by their PC/XT cousins, but several publishers see light (increased RAM) at the end of the tunnel.

The next several blurbs concern the increased attention being given DOS extenders by very, very serious users.

## Is Microsoft a "serious" user?

### 386MAX Rescues Windows/286

Microsoft has touted *Windows/386* for its memory management facility for the last two years. What do Microsoft machines have loaded, though? *Win-*

*dows/286 and 386MAX. Why?*

Even the Microsoft gurus acknowledge something lots of other PC owners have discovered. The combination works much better than *Windows/386*, and takes a lot less overhead. Quoted in a recent *InfoWorld* article, Russ Werner (also quoted last month about Microsoft's memory management developments) admitted that the Qualitas product is superior to *Windows/386's* memory management capabilities.

According to Werner, the pending release of *Windows 3.0* will eliminate the advantage that *Windows/286 - 386MAX* currently enjoys. *386MAX*, however is incompatible with *Windows/386*.

**VCPI Market heats up -**

Phar Lap driver said to work with 3.0

Phar Lap Software reported in January they were working on a VCPI DOS extender that would permit applications created with DOS extenders to work with the unreleased *Windows 3.0*. VCPI (Virtual Control Program Interface) has been adopted as one method of allowing programs to exceed the 640K barrier - Lotus 1-2-3 version 3.0, AutoCAD and other programs rely on VCPI to provide sufficient memory for their use.

As reported last month, Microsoft is not happy with the VCPI standard and is working on their own that would allow safe operation in multitasking environments. Microsoft does have one available XMA driver - *HIMEM.SYS* that makes an additional 64K of RAM available for some applications. The Microsoft program comes with new *Windows* versions, but does not presently have the extended capabilities displayed by other DOS extenders.

**Spare video memory?**

*Above Disk 3.1* will use it

Memory marches on, wherever the user can find it. Prior to release of *Above Disk 3.1*, many users had lots of unused RAM sitting on EGA and VGA boards.

*Above 640*, part of the new update, will use the unused video RAM when it finds it in the user's PC - up to 96K can be added to conventional memory this way.

Other sources of unused memory aren't bypassed by the new program which can also add hard-disk spillover with caching to its methods of expanding available memory.

**Memory management?**

A tale of lost letters

This is a story about a memory management company that doesn't. Recently saw massive Quarterdeck ad campaign for what looked like a really nifty memory use description program. After several weeks of seeing this ad everywhere, ran out and purchased the product. Bought their competitor - Qualitas *386MAX* too.

Quarterdeck memory manager was in there, but the neat RAM use program wasn't. Wrote letter to Quarterdeck and mailed with product registration card. Following resulted.

Got phone call from woman, Melinda, at Quarterdeck on answering machine. Returned call (not an 800 number). Placed on hold (receiver laid on desk) while man who answered phone call tried to figure out how to transfer call to woman across the desk from him. She finally walked around desk and took call. (Remember - this is my dime.)

She remembered letter, but couldn't find it. Was very helpful? and told me to send them a copy of the product registration card and \$30, and they'd send the software update. I tried explaining that the software was seven (?) days old, that my letter had accompanied the registration card and I was somewhat miffed at being asked to ante up another \$30.

Melinda suggested I talk with her supervisor if I was upset. I agreed and she tried to forward the call. Supervisor gone for the day.

Moral: Qualitas *386MAX* works - very, very well.

**Didn't know OS/2 so hungry --**

IBM - Siemens work on 64M DRAM chip

How big is excessive? *InfoWorld* reported that IBM and Siemens signed a joint agreement to develop a 64-million bit DRAM chip in January. According to the *InfoWorld* article, the new chips should be available "in volume shipments" by the mid 1990's.

Both companies will share equally costs of the chip's development, but each company will manufacture the resulting chip in their own chip production facilities. Current plans call for immediate efforts to take place at IBM's East Fishkill, NY, Advanced Semiconductor Technology Center.

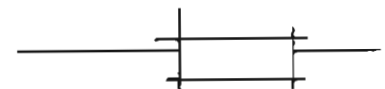
**A new print standard?**

Hewlett-Packard LaserJet III

Coming fast on the heels of H-P's recently-released and widely-acclaimed LaserJet IIP, Hewlett-Packard is preparing for release of the LaserJet III in March rumors report. It may be out by the time you read this.

The new H-P printer will use the Cannon SX engine rated at 8 PPM and incorporates eight internal scalable fonts as well as internal bit-mapped fonts and an expanded printer command language (PCL). According to media sources, the PCL is significantly improved and the new controller will also feature digital filtering resolution enhancement that will "Make the printer's 300 DPI resolution look as crisp as 400 to 600 DPI output."

Price of the new LaserJet III is reported to list at \$2,395, approximately \$300 less than the current LaserJet II.



## Q & A - Windows

by Alan Lintel

*Marshall Spires is the president of Publishing Technologies Inc., makers of the PubTech File Organizer, a program which replaces Windows' MS-DOS Executive with a graphical interface, allowing icons to represent programs, directories, files, etc. The PubTech File Organizer was selected as one of the "Best of 1989" by PC Magazine in the January 16, 1989 issue. Another offering, PubTech Batchworks, provides a batch language and macro program for Windows users.*

**Q** In the last year, a lot of major application programs have been released for Windows. Is this reflective of the acceptance of Windows by the public?

**A** Microsoft Windows has become the de facto standard for IBM PC's, PS/2's and compatibles. As millions of new copies of Windows were installed on PC's in 1989, the demand for applications that work with Windows has naturally increased. The acceptance of Windows by the public is indicated by declining or lower-than-expected sales of non-Windows applications. Obviously, this topic has been hotly debated by non-Windows developers who feel that Windows is not all it's cracked up to be; but because of sheer volume, Windows is here to stay. Add to that the probability of it being incorporated in future versions of MS-DOS and dramatically improved versions of Windows and the public will come to regard it as a given on any PC.

**Q** What effect will the popularity of Windows have on the acceptance of OS/2?

**A** A better question might be: Can OS/2 make it without Windows? After investing billions of dollars in non-OS/2 compatible PC's, users aren't going to toss good hardware out the door just to get a new operating system. Businesses in particular MUST be able to integrate their old PC's and operating systems in with the new. Because Windows provides SOME of the functionality of OS/2, it is a natural for use in these homogeneous environments. By adding on products like PubTech's File Organizer to Windows, it becomes even more like OS/2 and even provides consistency with other non-IBM compatible hardware like Sun, DEC and Apple. In the long run, OS/2 will be fully integrated into the corporate marketplace, but it will probably not replace DOS. I expect that by 1995 there will be an almost equal mix of machines running DOS, OS/2 and UNIX with a smaller, but significant, mix of Apple machines.

**Q** Will Windows 3.0 significantly narrow the gap between Windows and Presentation Manager? What new features does Windows 3.0 provide?

**A** Future releases of Windows products are likely to look and function much more like OS/2 1.2. Again, because of the need to mix operating systems in businesses, it is in the user's best interest

to provide like functionality while there is so much overlap. However, this can only be "skin-deep". Since DOS is not a multitasking operating system (and likely never will be), Windows can't provide true multitasking power (like OS/2 and UNIX). The best new Windows products are likely to do is break the 640K memory barrier, improve speed of operation and become more graphically oriented. As far as new features are concerned, you'd have to ask Microsoft.

**Q** Early reports state that Windows 3.0 is incompatible with a significant (40%) portion of existing software. How long before Window 3.0 compatible software is available?

**A** If future Windows releases implement radically improved graphical controls (such as 4-plane graphics for icons, cursors, and other screen display objects) and if programs are to use those features and be compatible with new implementations of Microsoft's Windows Software Development Kit (SDK), then it is highly probable that many existing 2.x applications will not run. Microsoft may, however, provide some flexibility in running less powerful implementations of Windows, say in real mode (instead of protected mode), which will support a greater number of existing applications. The disadvantage of this is that, in real mode, you would be back to the 640K barrier. Most major software developers will be ready with upgraded applications, however, because Microsoft has been aggressively shopping pre-release SDK's and working closely with developers. By the end of 1990, it will hardly be an issue.

**Q** One feature of OS/2 which won't be in Windows 3.0 is multi-threaded operation. How do multi-threads improve an application, and is this a feature which is important to the normal user?

**A** Application threads are probably the single most important improvement in OS/2. Threads provide for multiple concurrent processes to be running on a process (or for that matter, used by multiple boards in a bus-master configuration in Micro Channel Architecture). This gives OS/2 its multi-tasking capabilities. The impact on the normal user will be significant and will be a compelling reason to switch to OS/2. For example, in PubTech's File Organizer for OS/2 (available later in 1990), you will be able to start a copy of a directory (and all its subdirectories) by dragging an icon from one disk to another disk. So far, just like in the Windows version. However, after OS/2 File Organizer starts the directory copy, you will also be able to go start a disk format (in another thread) and then start a backup (to another floppy) and THEN, do your real work (like do a file search for your last weekly report because you can't find it). In Windows, you have got to do all these processes one at a time and wait until they are complete before starting the next. In OS/2, doing these things simultaneously is a breeze.

Alan

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# Selected SIG Happenings

## News and meeting notes of Special Interest Groups

(Material for this column should be sent to Andy Oliver, SIG Coordination, before the 10th day of each month)

### Beginner's Pascal SIG

The first meeting of this SIG was held in February. In future meetings, at least the following topics will be covered (and more may be added later).

- Operating the Integrated Development Environment
- Using Turbo's "Help" files
- Pascal's Reserved Words
- Identifiers
- Types, Variables, Constants, and Typed Constants
- Procedures and Functions
- Discussion of the majority of the "Standard" Procedures and Functions supplied with Turbo
- Standard Libraries and Units
- Programming "style"
- Programming a Turbo Unit
- Files - Text, Typed, and Untyped
- Compiler "switches"
- Debugging with the Integrated Debugger
- Efficient use of memory

The meetings will follow this general format:

- 5 minutes of review or follow-up upon the previous meeting, if necessary.
- 40 minutes of presentation, including answering of pertinent questions.
- 10 minutes of questions on any Pascal topic.

Diskettes will be available for exchange for a blank diskette on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

They will contain program notes in two formats - Microsoft "Works" word-processor format, and straight ASCII, formatted for printing.

Phil Chamberlain

### DOS SIG

DOS "Extenders" have been making the media sing over the past several months. March's DOS SIG Meeting will focus on the DOS extenders with emphasis on what they can - and cannot - do for the PC user.

Jim Hoisington and Reagan Andrews will valiantly attempt to make sense out of all the advertising muddle surrounding DOS extenders. Planned are visual aids

depicting DOS's memory mapping and locations frequently used by the extenders in making more memory available. We'll also show where the traps are here, with suggestions for installation and utilization on "typical" PC's.

As usual, the March DOS SIG Meeting will terminate via a Q&A interchange between the participants and SIG leaders.

Reagan Andrews

### LAN SIG

The February meeting of the LAN SIG was led by Francis Bright, our Assistant SIG Leader. Francis discussed some of his LAN experiences with American Airlines. Thanks, Francis.

Our March meeting is tentatively scheduled to be a demonstration session presented by one of our local LAN hardware and/or software manufacturers. Please watch the LAN SIG conference area on the club's BBS for further details. Come join us at 10am. See you there.

Bernie VanRoekel

### Lotus SIG

The subject for the February meeting was macro commands that allow keyboard interaction. These commands include the pause, get-label, getnumber, menubranh and menucall commands to name a few. Many users have been told that these commands are only for the "advanced users". These other people are completely wrong. These commands can be used by everyone. The presentation included many simple macros that anyone could use. Other happenings at the February meeting included a discussion of possible presentations in the future, the Lotus SIG disk that has been available since December, and other assorted topics.

The March meeting will be a special treat for many people. Borland will be at the March Lotus SIG meeting and will give a presentation of Quattro Pro - a competing spreadsheet program. Borland demonstrated Quattro Pro at the December NTPCUG meeting in the auditorium. Gordon Lowe of Borland in Dallas suggested that they come to the Lotus SIG in the near future to show their product. Having asked the SIG in January and having an enthusiastic Yes from the crowd, The SIG has made arrangements for Borland to be here in March.

In conjunction with this presentation, SoftSource, a local vendor, will be selling Quattro Pro downstairs in the vendor area. Quattro Pro will be sold for the upgrade price of \$99. SoftSource will have approximately 50 copies or so of the program. If the 50 copies are not enough, then SoftSource will turn your order around in three business days. Under this upgrade program, you would normally be asked to bring the title page of any competing spreadsheet program. However, for the March meeting the title pages will not be required.

Mark has received many questions concerning the speed and features of Quattro Pro vs 1-2-3 2.2 and 1-2-3 3.0. Therefore, Mark is going to try to have a handout in March similar to the one he produced when the original Quattro came out. The handout will include some benchmarks, speed tests, memory tests, and others.

By all means come on by and see us in March.

Mark Gruner and Pat Henley

### Paradox SIG

The first meeting went very well. I had a much greater attendance than I had anticipated. I thought with so little prior notification the attendance would be somewhat light. I didn't count heads, but would guess at least 30+ were there.

These first couple of meetings are for getting feedback from those who will be attending. I need to know what it is that the members would like to have presented. ▶

I'm not even going to try to second guess the outcome of the as yet to be February meeting (this is being written prior to that one). I'll just proceed directly into the future.

I am currently planning some form of introductory presentation for the March meeting. I haven't settled on a formal title yet. (Why do today what you can put off until tomorrow?) I will be along the lines of "Introduction to Relational Database Design" or something like that.

Why a presentation on relational databases? Paradox is a rather well done implementation of a relational database. Fact is, I foresee it becoming the "default" personal computer relational database in the near future.

Saw a pre-release demo of a Paradox to Oracle SQL Server product that will blow your socks off! How 'bout doing Paradox QBE style database processing on your PC and having the database tables you are using be transparently resident on your PC and/or any Oracle platform anywhere in the (world?), including Old Blue's DB/2.

Been looking over a new book from my favorite expensive database people, Oracle. The title is "Case\*Method Entity Relationship Modeling" by Richard Barker. Got it at the Bookstop at Preston and Forest Lane. It is the best I've seen on the subject. I plan to base at least one future presentation on entity relationship design methods.

I am currently looking for people who would be willing to do some introductory and beginner level presentations. I am exploring the possibilities of Borland presentations. I also hope to find some case studies to present or have presented.

We had at least one member of the PUNT (Paradox Users of North Texas) present at the first meeting.

I am extending a special invitation to all PUNT members to attend our SIG.

I have also joined PUNT and feel that having two meetings a month directly related to Paradox is going to be twice as good as one. PUNT meets every third Thursday evening each month at Infomart. I encourage everyone interested in Paradox to give PUNT a look.

Well enough already! See y'all at the March meeting. The presentation should last about half the meeting with a Q&A period to follow.

Fred Williams

### Personal Users SIG

This Special Interest Group (SIG) is for you!...if you consider yourself any of the following: ...a novice...a new PC owner...a beginner with PCs...a person curious about PCs...a soon-to-be PC owner...a personal (versus professional) PC user...or...a PC user needing some "fundamentals" review.

We offer sixteen (16) individual, stand-alone classes covering the "fundamentals of personal computers." Four classes are offered at each monthly meeting of the North Texas PC Users Group (2nd or 3rd Saturday on the 7th floor of the Infomart in Dallas). After four monthly meetings (covering four classes each), the entire 16-class curriculum is begun again. The classes are presented in numerical sequence, but you can take them in any sequence convenient to your personal schedule. The classes always start each month at 9:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 12:00 Noon, and 1:00 PM. Since each class is a "stand-alone"...i.e. self-contained and NOT requiring any other classes as prerequisites...you can begin attending at any time convenient to your other priorities and schedule. In addition to receiving informative instruction from people very knowledgeable in their field and class topic, you also receive a set of

handout notes for each class, to allow you later review. There are no homework assignments, no pressures, no tests, and no dumb questions. You don't even have to be a member of NTPCUG before you attend...ALTHOUGH YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO JOIN NTPCUG AND VOLUNTEER YOUR TALENTS. This 16-class curriculum of PC fundamentals is specifically designed to be the kind of learning experience you always wished existed...where you are accepted just as you are, and where you can gain knowledge without hassles...and best of all...the classes are FREE!

Join us as we learn and review "THE FUNDAMENTALS."

This month our four classes will be:

9:00 AM - Class 13.0 - Printer Setup  
10:00 AM - Class 14.0 - Writing LOTUS Macros  
12:00 Noon - Class 15.0 - Major Categories of Software  
1:00 PM - Class 16.0 - PC's to the End of the 20th and Into the 21st Century (panel discussion of NTPCUG experts).

Bob Presley

### WORD SIG

March's WORD SIG plans center on a probable Microsoft demonstration of WORD for WINDOWS 1.0 in the main auditorium at 1:00 p.m. Note: I use "probable" because Microsoft wasn't absolutely confirmed at press time.

If Microsoft does show Word for Windows (and DDE with EXCEL), it should be a very exciting presentation if it follows the format seen at COMDEX. SIG members have heard about Word for Windows' downside from those of us who have struggled with the beta version(s) - now see how the production version works when handled by the experts.

Following the presentation (see note above), Microsoft will be available to discuss WFW and other Word products with SIG members.

Reagan Andrews

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*Join the Special Interest Group of your choice!*

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# Word processing will evolve more on this page than it has in the last ten years.

### Location, location, location.

Use the ruler to make everything flush left, or right. Or centered. Single-spaced. Double-spaced. Anywhere and any way you want it.

### A symbolic gesture.

Icons on the ruler allow you to make formal changes with a simple click of a mouse.

### A dynamic exchange.

Through dynamic data exchange (DDE), any changes made to the original spreadsheet will show up here automatically.

### What you see is what you get.

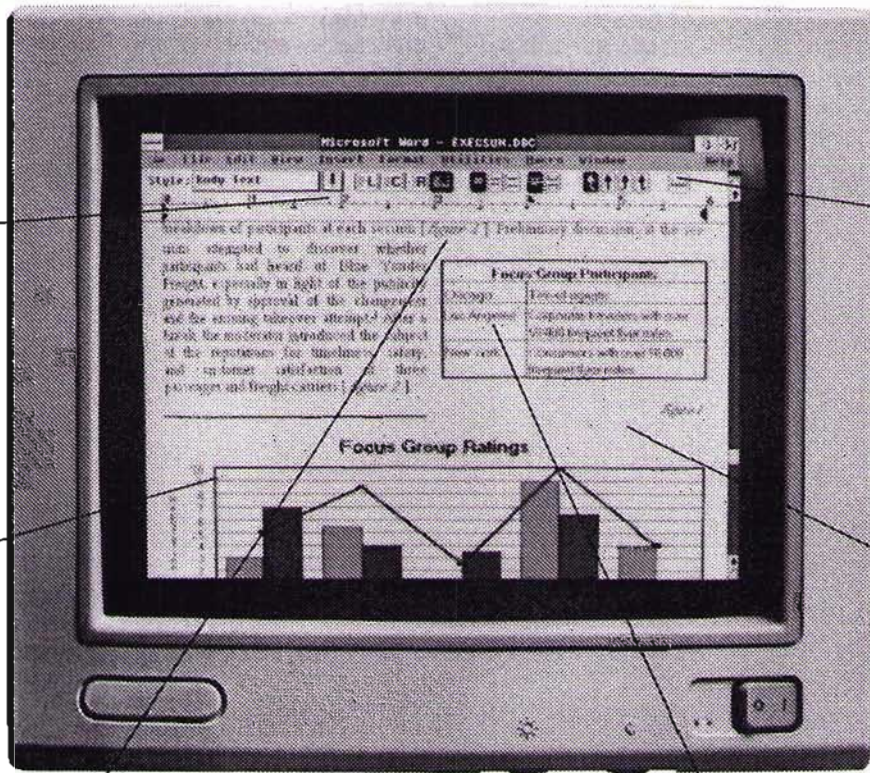
With WYSIWYG, you see exactly what your changes are the instant you make them, right on-screen. And through Page View, you get a full-size, fully-editable view of your page. You'll see headers, footers, multiple columns, and graphics in their exact locations.

### It's a wrap.

You can move or resize any positioned object and watch the text automatically wrap the whole thing into a nice, neat package.

### We've got tables covered.

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For more information, call (800) 541-1261, Dept. K64. Outside the U.S. and Canada, call (206) 882-6661. © 1990 Microsoft Corporation. Microsoft and the Microsoft logo are registered trademarks and Making it all make sense and Windows are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. \*The Working Model will view and print documents up to two pages in length; a charge of \$9.95 covers shipping/handling and is refundable upon acquisition of the product.



## Inside the North Texas PC Users Group Community

Connie Andrews, Volunteer Coordinator

It is such a pleasure to work with efficient people. That's the way it's been with Andy Oliver hanging out as Assistant Volunteer Coordinator. Actually, he and I have reversed roles back and forth over a number of months as a way of insuring that if a schedule conflict arose for one of us the other would be available to step in at any time.

The Information Booth serves as a "command post" for many volunteer activities on meeting day. Coordinating volunteer efforts involves not only Information Booth volunteers, but also placing volunteers at the auditorium, at the vendor area for our CCD commitment, and for special projects.

Andy has also been calling for and lining up volunteers the week before the meeting, organizing setup

at the Information Booth at 7:30 in the morning on meeting day and working until well after 3:00. And in his spare time he has streamlined our activities with new ideas and procedures.

Recently, Andy agreed to take over the position of SIG Coordinator. While I and the other volunteers at the Booth will miss working with him, the NTPCUG is very lucky to have his time and energies. Congratulations, Andy! And come see us.

In this issue we are acknowledging volunteers who served for the month of January. Don't forget our officers, directors, SIG coordinators and leaders, newsletter publisher, editor, staff and writers, newsletter exchange and BBS staff are all volunteers; their names are listed in other sections of this newsletter.

**INFOMART Liaison**  
Stuart Yarus  
Robert Hilliard  
Bob Russell  
Archie Pinkney

Jose Valenciano (Anchor)  
Paul Williams (Anchor)  
Wayne Woody

**With Special Thanks to:**  
Joe A. Allen  
Gene Carleton  
Paul Corbett  
Shawn Dunn  
Wade Mayfield  
Jerry Stone  
Oscar Tyler

Tony Nogueras  
Andy Oliver, Jr.  
Ron Ricketts  
Leroy Tennison

**Presentation/Equipment Setup and Breakdown**  
Timothy Carmichael  
Tom Fowlston  
Pamela Brown

**Disk of the Month (DOM):**

**DOM Central Committee**  
Preston Brashear  
Charles Carter  
Mark Gruner  
Howard Hamilton  
Kathryn Loafman  
Kenneth Loafman

**DOM Review/Presentation**  
Steve Lanier  
Nyles Nielsen

**Public Relations Committee**  
Francis Bright  
Peh L. Lee  
Elwood Lindell  
Charles Lucas  
Tony Nogueras  
Reagan Andrews

**Auditorium Tickets**  
Pehl. Lee

**DOM Volunteer Coordinator**  
Bill Drissel

**Information/Registration Booth**  
Mike Ashley (Anchor)  
Randi Boucher  
Mark Cook  
Lonny Cordell (Anchor)  
Martha Eickman  
John Ferguson (Anchor)  
Paul Fredd (Anchor)  
Rick Griffith (Anchor)  
Allan Harbough (Anchor)  
John Mackoy (Anchor)  
Larry Matzek  
Raymond Reyes (Anchor)  
James Russell-Redman  
Douglas Scott (Anchor)  
Jay Shilstone  
Connie Testa (Statistician)  
Larry Tucker (Anchor)

**DOM Table**  
Roy Bales  
Charles Cashion  
Jay Chambliss  
Bill Drissel  
Kent Haven  
Pat Henley  
Jo Johnston  
E. M. Kelley  
Duane Martin  
Jerry Mayfield  
Bob Post  
Virginia Salter  
Tom Scurlock  
Jay Shilstone

### VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

1. **Via BBS:** (817) 461-0425 (metro) or (817) 461-0506 (metro). Sign up on the Volunteer Conference - make the subject matter your area of interest.
2. **Meeting day:** Sign up at the Information Booth or DOM Booth to work those areas in a coming month.
3. **By phone:**

<b>Auditorium Presentations</b>	
Timothy Carmichael	331-6303 (h) 661-4626 (w)
<b>DOM Booth Activities</b>	
Bill Drissel	264-9680 (h)
<b>DOM Software Review</b>	
Howard Hamilton	644-5721 (h)
<b>Information Booth and General Information</b>	
Connie Andrews	828-0699 (h)

## DON'T THROW AWAY THAT TONER CARTRIDGE

by Robert L. Perrenot,

"Refilled toner cartridges (LASER PRINTER ENGINES) used in LASER printers and certain PC copiers are as good as new ones." This is a claim made by some "refillers," to sell their product and service. The claim is not without merit if the cartridge is skillfully remanufactured.

There are two ways of processing an empty cartridge to make it useable.

(1) The slipshod method is a process called "drill and fill." A hole is drilled in the toner reservoir, toner is added, and the hole is taped. The cartridge is not properly cleaned, oxidation is not removed from the drum, the doctor bar is not adjusted and the old toner is not removed.

(2) The safe and sure method is to remanufacture the cartridge. This is reliable and will compete, quality-wise, with new cartridges.

There are only a few cartridge designs used in most printers which are manufactured by many companies. The basic cartridge design, regardless of whose name it bears, is a Canon design. To name a few of the printer manufacturers who use this cartridge: A.B. Dick, Acom Computer, Apple Laserwriter, Apple Laserwriter Plus, Canon LBP-8, A-1 and A-2, Hewlett-Packard 1686TA, Laserjet, Laserjet II and Laserjet Plus, Memorex, Kodak, Canon PC copiers and more.

There are users who fear the refilled cartridge will damage the printer or copier. There is nothing that could happen to a refilled cartridge that couldn't happen to a brand new cartridge. The cartridge is a self-contained, sealed device and it is difficult to envision how it could damage a printer or copier unless it was deliberately abused.

There are several very important steps in the successful rebuilding of a toner cartridge:

(1) The empty cartridge needs to be tested on a printer or copier to be certain that it will take a refill. The drum, particularly in the EP-S cartridge, has a limited life, thus a limited number of times it can be refilled.

(2) The entire cartridge is disassembled and thoroughly cleaned with a vacuum and some parts are cleaned with alcohol.

(3) The drum is cleaned on an ADC machine and deoxidation cream is used to remove oxidation and impacted toner and to top coat minor scratches.

The drum is the most sensitive part of the cartridge. It is sensitive to light and to the touch of hands. Considerable work is being done by toner manufacturers and others to develop a method to rejuvenate expired drums. Use these with caution as there is doubt that the process has been refined.

(4) Old toner in the reservoir is removed. Old toner does not mix well with new toner as toner over a period of time will absorb moisture.

(5) New toner is added. This is one instance where the refill can be superior to a new cartridge. Some refills have 200 grams of toner added to the reservoir. This will usually give you over 4000 to 4500 typed pages. The manufacturer estimates the original toner load will produce approximately 3000 typed pages.

(6) The corona wire is cleaned with cotton swab and alcohol.

(7) The doctor bar is adjusted with respect to the magnetic roller. This is critical and is done with feeler gauges. An improperly adjusted doctor bar could cause uneven distribution of toner on the drum which would show up on your copy as light on one side and dark on the other, and blotching.

(8) The entire cartridge is reassembled.

(9) The reassembled cartridge is quality checked on a printer or copier. This indicates whether or not the job has been properly done. Test fonts should be provided to the customer with the refilled cartridge to show the quality of the cartridge.

Some suggestions that will make your cartridge more prolific:

(1) Read the instructions that come with the cartridge.

(2) If streaks appear on your prints, clean the transfer corona wire in the machine and in your cartridge with alcohol on a Q-Tip.

(3) If you are getting light prints, remove the cartridge and rotate on the length-wise axis.

(4) Store the cartridge in a dark, dry area, free of dust.

(5) Replace felt wand every time you replace your cartridge.

If you have had bad experiences with refilled toner cartridges, don't abandon this process. Find a new refiller. It could save you money.

Robert a

*Bob Perrenot is the owner of Tiger Paw of Dallas (214-247-5184), a rebuilder of laser printer cartridges.*

# Disk of the Month

Disks released at the January 1990, and February 1990 meetings; as edited by Kathryn Loftman.

## JANUARY 1990 Disk(s) of the Month:

### Disk 439. 4 Pinball Games: ASTRO, Pinball, Rain, BEM

ASTRO, By Unknown PINBALL, By Unknown RAIN, By Robert G. Hays Black-Eyed Monster (BEM), By Gus Smedstad

For pinball game addicts, nothing could be better than a pinball game that does not eat quarters. These four pinball games do not need any quarters at all. All four of these pinball games were created with the Pinball Construction set and operate with the same commands/keys (listed below). While the games may not quite be up to your standards when it comes to pinball games, all are very enjoyable. System requirements are minimal: CGA monitor and IBM PC/XT/AT or compatible with a minimum of 128 of RAM.

ASTRO and PINBALL are the most basic of the four games. RAIN puts five balls into play on each turn. All five of the balls must go down the shoot before the turn is over. BEM (for Black Eyed Monster) is perhaps the best of the four pinball games with bumpers and flippers everywhere. BEM also traps balls so that all can be released for multiple-ball play.

Brief documentation exists for RAIN and BEM.

*This review prepared by Mark Gruner.*

### Disk 440. Two Blackjack games: Ultima 21 Deluxe, by Jay J. Falconer (Shareware fee = \$20.00) Blackjack!, by Donald L. Granger (Shareware fee = \$24.99)

Blackjack, also called 21, is a well known and easy to play game. This disk contains two excellent Blackjack games - Ultima 21 Deluxe and Blackjack!. Ultima 21 Deluxe will run on IBM PC/XT/AT or compatible with CGA (or better) or monochrome systems with at least 256K of memory. Blackjack! has the same system requirements except that an EGA, VGA, or Hercules monitor is required.

Ultima 21 Deluxe has excellent graphics for a CGA monitor and every command available is shown at the bottom screen and uses the function keys. A short documentation file is included but not really needed. Commands available in Ultima 21 Deluxe through the function keys include Help, Hitting, Staying, Doubling, Splitting, Surrendering, Changing game options such as whether Dealer wins on a Push (tie), View statistics, and Exit. If the dealer has an Ace showing, you can buy insurance. You can also change the speed of the game for different processors (8088, 80286, and 80386). Of the CGA Blackjack games I have seen, this is the best of the lot.

Blackjack! requires an EGA, VGA or Hercules monitor and has fabulous graphics in EGA mode. Documentation is also included. Blackjack! includes 4 casinos for play including a user defined casino, Bally's in Atlantic City, Peppermill in Reno, and Caesar's in Las Vegas. Other main menu options include Viewing casino definitions, Editing the user casino, Card counting drills, Basic strategy drill, and Registration forms. Tournament play is also possible. Also more than one player is possible, with the additional players being played by other people or by the computer. You

can even choose the seating arrangement of the players. Commands are shown at the bottom of the screen. Commands include Hit, Stand, Double down, Split, and Surrender. Insurance is also available when the dealers up card is an Ace. Pushes (or ties) means that no one wins or loses.

*This review prepared by Mark Gruner.*

### Disk 441. GT Power 15.01 (2 disk set), by P & M Software Co. Communications and Bulletin Board System. Shareware fee = \$70

GTPower is both a communications package for those who wish to connect to other computer systems (either directly or by a modem) and a full function BBS system for those who wish to have one. GTPower supports only two terminal emulations: ANSI and VT100. Anyone who needs their communications package to look like some other type of terminal (e.g., Wyse or Televideo) should pick another product. Multiple telephone directories are supported with up to 999 entries each and with full call statistics for each entry. Up to 200 numbers may be placed in a circular redialing queue to allow a user to keep trying a list of other BBS's for the first available one. Once a session has completed, the other numbers remaining in the redialing queue may then be tried. Files may be transmitted in a variety of protocols: ASCII with XON/XOFF &/or line pacing, Xmodem/CRC, WXXmodem, Ymodem/CRC, link/CRC, Compuserve "B", MegaLink, SEALink, and up to 10 externally defined protocols (e.g., Kermit and Bi-Modem). One nice feature is that a session capture log may be enabled at the same time that files are being uploaded/downloaded without either one of them being messed up. Another very nice feature is that COM ports 3 and 4 are supported in addition to the normal ones. This is helpful for those who have one of the more flexible internal modems, or a non-standard serial port card.

The BBS features are included as a "host mode" function of GTPower. It allows the ability to accept incoming calls, a security system to keep unauthorized callers from getting access to your system, a message (e-mail) system, and a ring-back procedure in case it is needed. All calls are logged, as are the files that are transferred.

GTNetMail is also provided to "REGISTERED" users GTPower. This is an easy way to communicate with other GTPower users in a network which "stretches from Australia thru the US and Canada to the United Kingdom and the Netherlands."

*This review prepared by Ben Weatherall.*

### Disk 442. PC-Areacode 2.0, by Left Coast Software. Areacode Lookup for Texas & Illinois. Shareware fee = \$15

This program is an excellent compliment to your database where you need to know the areacode that goes with the city or vice-versa. The program is fast and works well. The program can run stand alone or as a TSR. If you run it as a TSR, you can insert the areacode into your database or word processing program.

Three documentation describes several TSR conflicts. This Shareware version includes 2,000 listings, with complete listing for Texas and Illinois. The Registered version includes 18,500 listings.

*This review prepared by Andy Oliver, Jr.*

### Disk 443. Slowdown Programs for Games

Three Utilities to Slow Your Fast PC

SLOW286 by David K. Goodwin (modified)

VARISLOW by Ray Usher (slow down to play games).

WHOA!, from COMPU Publications, Inc. (c1988)

Now that you have the superfast AT you've always wanted, you suddenly discover why the old PC was so popular. In the old days, with practice, good coordination could beat an 8088 three out of five times. With a 386, forget it. It's no fun getting trounced by

the computer every time. So strike back! When skill is out-matched, it's time for cunning and guile. Show your computer who's boss.

These slowdown programs generally work by stealing clock cycles from the game program being run. They are Terminate and Stay Resident (TSR) programs and may be incompatible with other TSRs. For the programmers, the source code for WOAHI is included. These programs were tested with the game "GRIME" and found to work. The most likely problem to be encountered is a "Drive not ready" error. This means the computer has been slowed excessively.

Based on the reviewer's and editor's experience with these three programs the following points are worth noting:

- 1) Expect poor disk drive performance. If you can keep the machine running without errors that should probably be considered "success".
- 2) Don't try to change the speed too much.
- 3) Expect some parts of the game's sound and screen displays to be adversely affected.
- 4) Based on 1) and 3) above, don't even think of running non-game applications with a slowdown program installed. Boot up, run the slowdown program, play your games and then reboot.
- 5) These tests were done on an AT running at 6MHz, and repeated on an IBM PC, a 10MHz XT laptop and a 10MHz AT done. Given the problems mentioned above, it is likely that faster machines will have more serious incompatibility problems.

*This review prepared by Leroy Tennison.*

**Disk 444.** SuperMorse 1.07, by M. Lee Murrah Morse code teaching aid. Shareware fee = \$10

This program is a teaching aid for Morse code, which is a required skill for obtaining an amateur radio license. Super Morse is a full featured program which takes the user from the basic learning of the code itself, to increased skill by utilizing a variety of exercises. To gauge your improvement, a speed testing feature is included, as well as sample QSO's (code conversations) which are strikingly similar to the actual examinations administered by the FCC.

This program teaches the code by the superior method of sound pattern recognition instead of the old style method of dots and dashes. The recognition of letters as a coherent sound pattern instead of discrete bits increases the potential speed of code text that the user can comprehend, and does a good job of bypassing the learning hump that comes at about 10 words per minute. Both plaintext and code groups may be used in the exercises, and the user may add text of his own. There is ample adjustment in the code speed to allow rates from 5wpm (Novice class) to 20wpm (Extra class) and above. I found the speaker on my computer provided clear audio tones up to speeds of 35wpm.

SuperMorse has perhaps too many options, particularly in the area of adjustments to the character cadence, controlled by word speed and send speed. It is too easy to get the cadence values out of reasonable range, thus causing the code sounds to become garbled. These adjustments are best left at their default values. Also, it is vital that the manual timing process is done. Tested on a 386 system, the auto timing feature did not work properly, and the code was sent too fast.

I found no bugs in the program. For any person wanting to learn the code the right way, this software is highly recommended.

*This review prepared by Ron Rickells.*

**Disk 445.** TURBO-LESSONS 5.0, by Dr. Lyle M. Faurot Turbo Pascal Version 5.0 tutorial Shareware fee for Set 1 (Lessons 1-16) = \$10

TURBO-LESSONS 5.0 is an excellent tutorial for a novice Pascal programmer to both become acquainted with the Pascal language and Turbo Pascal 5.0. The lessons covered in this tutorial pertain through Version 5.5 as well. The author familiarizes the student

with the operation of the Turbo editor, compiler and internal debugger as the students programming skills are developed. The Pascal structures are covered well through strings and real numbers. More complex data handling is left for a later series of lessons. Example programs are included.

*This review prepared by Nyles A. Nielsen.*

**Disk 446.** VPIC 2.2, by Bob Montgomery Graphic file viewer, converter, enhancer Shareware fee for non-commercial use = \$15

VPIC is an EGA/VGA graphic file viewer, converter and enhancer. Requires DOS 2.0 or up to run from current directory, or DOS 3.0 up to run from anywhere. You must configure VPIC for your graphics board (except for an Orchid Designer VGA with 512 K).

As a file viewer for EGA, MCGA, VGA and SuperVGA, the program has the the following features:

-Views the following file formats in EGA, MCGA, VGA, or SuperVGA: GIF, ZSoft PCX(including 256 color), ColorRX/EGA Paint SCx, Pictor/PC Paint PIC, Targa 16 or 24 A, Dr. Halo CU with PAL if present), Deluxe Paint LBM (or IFF), or MAC files.

-Saves any picture to any of the above formats (except MAC) in the current mode (EGA, MCGA, or VGA).

-Allows you to save a GIF file of the current image in regular, interlaced, inverted, mirrored, or rotated 90 degrees CW or CCW. Great for scans.

-Configurable for display boards using Teng, Paradise, Everex, A Ident, C& or Video 7 VGA chips.

-/R option allows an application program to show a file and regain control without changing the screen mode.

-Allows you to specify a new path from the menu with the F9 key. Also updates menu when files are added or deleted.

-Allows adjustment of picture color and VGA contrast and brightness.

New for VPIC version 2.2:

-Fixed problem in new path command (F9 from menu).

-Fixed intermittent GIF decode problem.

-Program now tells if GIF image and screen sizes conflict.

-Menu now correctly displays file sizes larger than 1 Mbyte.

-Now lists & displays Electronic Arts IFF files (same as LBM).

VPIC is one the best file viewers and converters. It has many options and features that allow you to get very good results.

PICTURE files: Several GIF files are included on this disk.

*This review prepared by Tony Noguerras.*

Herewith follow Some Words of Wisdom from Preston Brashear regarding the Use of Tax Preparation Software, as Described for Disks 447-449:

Tax preparation programs should be thought of as fast and semi-smart adding machines only. The program cannot contain all the logic necessary to connect all the provisions of the tax laws with the particular situations of all taxpayers. The IRS will hold you responsible for all errors in your return, whether mathematical or substantive. Reliance on a tax program will probably not save you from penalties (including fraud) or interest charges, if you claim some tax benefit you are not entitled to. Use this and other tax programs for preliminary calculations and "what if" scenarios to check the tax effects of making or not making IRA contributions, etc. Thoroughly check the instructions that the IRS furnishes with each form to be sure that you are entitled to use the form, and that the data is properly entered and that all adjustments and limitations have been applied. Be sure that you are not required to fill out additional forms or schedules not included in this package.

And manually check all calculations, and table lookups to be sure that the figures are correct. There could always be obscure errors that do not show up in trial runs with sample data.

**Disk 447. AM-Tax 1989, by AM SOFTWARE.** Federal income tax preparation.

AM-Tax is a software program designed to assist you in the preparation of your 1989 federal tax return. There are three versions of AM-Tax, a shareware program and two versions of the registered program. This is the shareware version of AM-Tax. It can prepare a complete tax return consisting of the Form 1040 and any of the Schedules (A, B, C, D, E, F, R, and SE). The printed copy of the Form 1040 cannot be filed (you'll need to transfer the figures to an official form or use special pre-printed forms or overlays). However, the shareware AM-Tax will print all of the other Schedules in a format accepted by the IRS. For those with relatively simple tax situations, the shareware version may be all you need to use. Registration to use this version is \$20.

The "regular" AM-Tax version also supports Forms 2106, 2119, 2210, 2441, 3903, 4562, 6251, 8615 and (new for '89) 8814, and prints an IRS-approved version of the Form 1040 on most Epson and IBM-compatible dot-matrix printers. Form 4136, which was included in the regular version last year, is now in the advanced version. Registration, \$45, includes the latest regular version, telephone support and annual updates for \$29.95.

The "advanced" version of AM-Tax was first published 1988. It was developed for those that demand even more forms (3800, 4136, 4137, 4255, 4684, 8582, and 1040ES) and features. It can print an exact replica of the Form 1040 on HP-compatible laser printers using a \$225 font cartridge. The advanced version is distributed on two diskettes and requires 320K and two disk drives. Registration for this version is \$60 the first year. Annual updates for the advanced version is \$39.95, if you register either the regular or advanced.

AM-Tax is easy to learn since it's designed around the Federal 1040. Supporting documents are accessed by pressing the F6 key when you're on a line calling for one of the schedules or forms included in the AM-Tax program. General-purpose worksheets are also available to enhance your record keeping. For instance, to keep a permanent tax record of your medical expenses, tell AM-Tax to itemize that line of the Schedule A. AM-Tax will add up the expenses, transfer the total to the line itemized, and print a detailed list for your records. Up to 50 lines of your tax return can be 'itemized' and up to 45 items can be listed on each worksheet. You'll find many other useful features after reading through this manual and trying the program.

*This review prepared by Howard Hamilton.*

## FEBRUARY 1990 Disk(s) of the Month:

**Disk 448. Share-TAX/1040, from Bammel Software.** Tax Return Preparer for 1989. Shareware fee = \$5.00. Enhanced version (USA-Tax/1040) is \$24.00.

Using the data you enter, Share-TAX/1040 does all computations and prints out your complete tax return (Form 1040 and Schedules A, B, and C). For all schedules and forms other than Form 1040, it prints substitute forms approved by the IRS. Share-TAX/1040 will not make a tax expert out of you. It only performs the mechanics of tax return preparation using the numbers you supply. Therefore, you must know as much about taxes as you would if you were filling out your forms with pencil and eraser. You need only enter the correct numbers, and Share-TAX/1040 will do all computations for you, forwarding amounts from one form to another as necessary. The order in which you enter your data is arbitrary, and you can at any time suspend your data entry to work on a different tax return or exit the program. Then later you can resume where you left off. When tax season arrives, you might want to

have an idea of what your tax bite is going to be before you have all necessary information. With Share-TAX/1040, you can enter the data you have, estimate the significant items you don't have, and in a few seconds have your estimate. When you get the missing numbers, you simply enter them, and in just a few moments have your complete tax return ready to submit to the IRS.

*This review prepared by Preston Brashear.*

**Disk 449. PC-TAX89 89.11, by James Demberger Tax Return Preparer for 1989 Shareware fee = \$25**

This is a compiled Basic program to calculate and print 1989 Federal tax forms 1040, 2106, 2441, 3903, 4562, 6251 and 8615, and Schedules A, B, C, D, E, F, R and SE. Documentation is fairly extensive, consisting of 35 pages of material. Menus take you to the selected form or the desired action, but this is not a program that you can run without thoroughly studying the documentation first. Some required actions are not intuitive. It is necessary to "print" all schedules to the screen or printer in a certain sequence in order to process all figures properly through the "transfer file". It is also assumed that you know enough about the federal tax laws to select the proper forms and put the correct amounts on the right lines. Some forms which you may need may not be included. Schedules and forms (except for form 1040) may be directly printed in a form which is acceptable for filing with the IRS, so you won't have to transfer the figures to pre-printed tax forms.

*This review prepared by Preston Brashear.*

**Disk 450. Clarion Personal Developer DEMO, Clarion Development system**

The Clarion Personal Developer is a self-contained system for developing application software. The program sells for \$169.00.

*This review prepared by Howard Hamilton.*

**Disk 451. PC-BROWSE 1.0 (2 disk set), from Quicksoft. Text file(s) Scanner/Retriever Shareware Fee = \$49**

Have you ever needed to insert a small piece text from a very large text file, then PC-Browse is for you. This resident program will popup upon command, request a file and a string to search for, and then mark the first occurrence. The marked text can then be inserted into your word-processor generated text or whatever. Another feature (Lookup) allows you to generate a hypertext file and its associated index file(s). Lookup finds information in files that have sorted records quickly. According to the company, it takes less than 1.1 seconds to search a 2Mb file.

This program should appeal to everyone from the casual letter writer who likes to include text from other files all the way to a newsletter editor. These tasks range from effectively a self-guided search and insertion of text to a fairly complicated procedure to create the hypertext file. Those familiar with the documentation style of Quicksoft will have no trouble with these documents.

*This review prepared by Richard Bauman.*

**Disk 452. Rad Databases, 6 personal databases by Rad Delaroderie.** There are 6 simple databases on this disk available for a fee of \$5 each.

—SongBase 1.0. Catalog your music collection and create sub-lists of your music.

—BioBase 8.1. 1000 item address/phone book with features such as extensive search and find capabilities. Also keeps track of the current age of all your entries.

—BookBase 1.0. Book inventory program designed for book collectors, up to 10,000 entries.

—CoinBase 1.0. Catalog your coin collection with sub-lists of your coins.

-MagBase 1.0: Designed for those who like to keep track of certain subjects or information in articles they find in various publications and magazines, up to 10,000 entries.

MyStuff 4.0: Personal inventory program designed to keep track of your belongings: up to 999 items/\$1,000,000). Great for insurance purposes.

These are very simple databases used to keep track of personal friends or items. The databases can store from 300 to 10,000 items each depending on the database and whether the files are stored on floppy disk or hard disk. The programs will take advantage of a color monitor if one is available. They are slow on floppy disk, but perform reasonably on a hard disk. A search capability is included, which is case sensitive. Instructions are simple and are self explanatory within each program.

*This review prepared by Paul Van Dreal.*

Disk 453. Timestar 2.08, from Timestar Systems. Windows time management/scheduler Shareware fee = \$89 registration only (\$199 with manual)

This program is an excellent time management/scheduler to be operated as an

application under Windows 2.0 or later. Operation is easy and seems to be complete. A printout can be obtained of any day's schedule together with the next day's, and a 3 month calendar. It will list Highlighted events for up to 90 days in the future. Timestar automatically saves entries to disk every 60 seconds, thus minimizing potential data loss. The timestar notebook application can be used to maintain an ASCII database of your addresses and phone numbers. The Notebook can also import ASCII text files and cardfiles produced by the Windows Cardfile application. Pull-down menus suggest a number of neat things that timestar can do, but documentation with the program does not describe many of the functions. Even payment of the \$89 registration fee does not get you a manual, so unless you want to pay the full \$199 retail price, you will have to explore the features of TimeStar without much guidance.

Timestar requires Microsoft Windows 2.0 or later (Windows 2.03, Windows/286 2.1, or Windows/386 2.1). 512 K RAM is recommended for running Windows and Timestar.

*This review prepared by Paul Van Dreal.*

Disk 454. CityDesk 7.31, by Robert S. Shaw of Asysta Consultants. A two column desktop publishing package. Shareware fee = \$25

CityDesk is a shareware desktop publishing program that allows you to produce documents with headings in a two column format. According to the accompanying documentation, "This release is designed to address problems of release 19881201 which was a memory hog and locked up on certain CPU's." In order to incorporate bit mapped graphics you have to purchase another program called INSET which was available from its developer for \$100 at the time CityDesk v3.0 was reviewed. No information about cost or availability was included in documentation. To use INSET you must first load INSET as a memory resident program before running CityDesk. NICEPRINT and LETTERix are fonts that are available from Asysta (No cost given) that can be used to enhance printing and download fonts to laserjet printers and are not included in this release of CityDesk. Automatic Indexing is available with REGISTERED copies of CityDesk. CityDesk requires the use of an outside word processor to produce clean ASCII text files which must be in column width and length size selected in PUBLISH FUNCTION. WordStar files must be converted using a convert program selected from the menu. Printing with CityDesk requires an intimate knowledge of your printer escape codes. This program is only practical if you are not serious about producing a newsletter. In order to do much of anything it requires the purchase of other modules. If you are serious and can afford the price,

buy a commercial products such as Newsroom or First Publisher or get a recent release of WordStar, Word or WordPerfect.

*This review prepared by Ann Weatherall.*

Disk 455. 4DOS 2.21, from J.P. Software. Replacement for COMMAND.COM. Shareware fee = \$50

4DOS is designed to help you get the most out of your IBM PC or compatible system. It replaces COMMAND.COM, the command interpreter that comes with all versions of MS-DOS and PC-DOS.

You'll find 4DOS provides a wide variety of capabilities COMMAND.COM can't, ranging from a vastly enhanced DIR command, to point-and-shoot file selection for any command, to the ability to completely redefine your system's commands. Yet 4DOS is fully compatible with COMMAND.COM.

4DOS is a "DOS shell" (a program that gives you access to DOS functions and commands), but it's unlike most DOS shells on the market. Virtually all of these shells are designed to isolate the novice user from the DOS command line. 4DOS, on the other hand, is intended to make DOS easier to use and to make you more productive while working at the command line. It provides enhancements to most of the DOS commands, as well as more than 30 new commands. Just these improvements make 4DOS a much richer and more powerful working environment than COMMAND.COM, without sacrificing the compatibility, flexibility and control you get from working at the command line. If you're tired of the limitations of COMMAND.COM, you'll love 4DOS!

4DOS is written for the IBM PC, PC/XT PC/AT PS/2 (all models), and compatibles. It requires MS-DOS 2+ (MS-DOS 3+ is recommended), and uses a total of about 56K of RAM (less than 5K when swapping to EMS memory or disk).

*This review prepared by Kenneth Loafman.*

Disk 456. QUICKCACHE 4.20 (2 disk set), P.R. GLASSEL and ASSOCIATES, Inc. Advanced Disk I/O Subsystem for DOS Shareware fee = \$25

What exactly is an "Advanced Disk I/O Subsystem" in this context? It is the ability to use memory in all its forms, Conventional, Extended, Expanded, to augment the disk I/O system supplied by DOS and cache those sectors of the disk that are heavily used in memory so that whenever an I/O operation takes place requesting one of these sectors, it will be available via a memory to memory operation rather than through a disk access.

According to the author: "While performance figures will vary from application to application, benchmarks have been performed that run 4 times faster on a 55ms access hard disk and 14 times faster on a standard floppy diskette subsystem."

As part of the review process, this reviewer installed QUICKCACHE on a 10 MHz PC/AT system and allocated 1408Kb of expanded memory to disk sector buffering and has run for several days with no problems. Benchmarks were run with some surprising results: Norton's Disk Index went from 3.5 (straight MS-DOS) to 20.2 (QUICKCACHE), and the Core International Performance Index went from 3.41 to 168.5 (not a typo). In a real life scenario using a series of compiles and links, the improvement was almost 2:1 (thus showing that benchmarks are not always real). The same benchmark against PC Tools PC-Cache 5.5 showed a 34% improvement using the same memory allocation and operating environment.

QUICKCACHE requires no modification to any user programs and works with the 2.xx and 3.xx releases of PC-DOS and most versions of MS-DOS. It requires 10kb of memory for the actual I/O subsystem code, and 530 bytes for each sector supported (a minimum of 40 is recommended). Memory for sector buffers may be allocated from system main memory, extended memory, or from any expanded memory that supports the Lotus/Intel/Microsoft expanded memory specification. ▶

The installation program will assist you in creating the proper directories and in modifying the DOS system files as appropriate. No modifications will be made to your system without your express approval.

*This review prepared by Kenneth Loafman.*

**Disk 457. Buick Dimensions 1990** (2 disk set), a DEMO of the Buick 1990 Cars. Created by The Inmar Group for the Buick Motor Division of General Motors.

The Buick Dimensions 1990 is primarily designed for those interested in Buick cars for the 1990 model year. The program enables the user to look at options of features of any vehicle in the Buick 1990 product line. The program has outstanding graphics for a CGA monitor and is so easy to use, no need for documentation. If interested in buying a 1990 vehicle, this disk will let you examine the 1990 Buick cars in the privacy of your own home on your PC. The menu options available are always available on the screen itself as well as at the bottom of the screen. ESCAPE will almost always bring up a menu. Just press the key corresponding to your choice. The main menu includes 4 menu options which are the Great American Showroom, Technology in Motion, Hit the Road, and 1990 Buick Challenge.

The first main menu option, The Great American Showroom, contains all of the information about the Buick 1990 cars. The cars included are the Riviera, Reatta, LeSabre, Regal, Century, Electra/Park Avenue, Skylark, and Wagons. For each model, there is a brief description. Other information about the cars is the Standard Equipment, Value Options Packages, Technical Information, Pricing Spreadsheet, and Competitive Pricing. The Pricing Spreadsheet will estimate your loan/lease payments. A list of lease terms is also available.

The second main menu option, Technology in Motion, is a collection of informative animations of some of the technology available in Buicks. The animations include the Supplemental Inflatable Restraint System (airbags), 3800 V6 Engine and Drivetrain, Gold Series Sound System, Dual Temperature Control, Dynaride System and Pass-Key System.

The Hit the Road main menu option is a unique road atlas of the US where users can tour a section of the country, check out the basic of various cities and national parks. Information about locations can include an Overview, Points of Interest, Nearby (close attractions), Special Events, and More Info (such as a tourist bureau). The final main menu option, 1990 Buick

Challenge, is a game on knowing the Great American Roads. The game gives a list of locations, and asks the user to determine which of the locations is shown on the map. For each incorrect guess, another clue is added and the value of the correct answer is reduced.

This software was donated to the user group by the Buick Motor Division of GM. This review prepared by Mark Gruner.

**Disk 458. Ford Simulator II**, a DEMO of Ford 1990 Cars & Trucks. Created by The SoftAd Group, Inc. of Sansalito, CA for the Ford Motor Company.

The Ford Simulator II is primarily designed for those interested in Ford cars and trucks for the 1990 model year. Specifically, the program allows users to look at options and features of any car or truck in the 1990 Ford model year. Also included is a driving simulator game. The demo has excellent graphics for a CGA monitor and is so easy to use that no documentation is required. If interested in buying a 1990 vehicle, buying this disk will let you examine the 1990 Ford cars and truck in the privacy of your home on your PC.

The main menu is always shown at the top of the screen. You simply use the function keys and arrow keys to select menu items. The main menu includes six items - Driving Simulator, Electronic Showroom, Ford Buyer's Guide, Ford Infocenter, Customer Feedback, and Exit to DOS. The Driving Simulator is a game that you can test your skill on. There are three games - Attack, City Chal-

lenge, and Backroads. Each of these games have three versions. You can even change the settings before playing the game.

The Electronic Showroom lets the user choose from 16 vehicles and get a description of that vehicle. This menu option only includes some of the models available. The Ford Buyer's Guide is a database of Ford, Lincoln, and Mercury cars available. In this menu item, most if not all cars and trucks are included. The information available on each vehicle include Specifications, Standard Features, Preferred Equipment Packages, Optional Features, Sticker, and Spreadsheet. The Spreadsheet allows you to determine what your loan payments might be based on options chosen, interest rate, and number of payments.

The Ford Infocenter briefly describes several Ford innovations. The innovations include the JBL Audio System, Supercharged Engine, Safety Features, Heated Windshield, and Anti-Lock Braking. The Customer Feedback main menu option is a questionnaire about the effectiveness of the demo, the cars you currently own, time you expect to buy a car or truck. The results can be printed out and you can even receive additional information.

*This review prepared by Mark Gruner.*

**Disk 459. Fed Micro '89**, assembled by Bill Fowler Collection of neat utilities

This diskette was prepared for distribution at the Federal Microcomputer Conference and Exposition held September 6 and 7, 1989 in Washington, DC. Hopefully, some of these utilities will be new and useful to you.

DOCSMASH 2.92 (shareware fee = \$5), by David W. Rettger, will print 4 pages on a sheet of paper in your dot matrix printer. You can set parameters to adjust the printing to your printer: left margin, number of columns across, number of lines per page, and distance between lines.

FFCOM 2.10 (\$25) by Keith P. Graham, is a fast file finder that can find files on any disk. It has about 20 options, including searching inside .ARC/.ZIP files.

FINDUP 3.5, by Karson W. Morrison of Caleb Computing Center, will locate duplicate files on your hard disk. This version will search across multiple drives. Registration is \$35 for business and \$10 for personal use.

Two utilities by Vernon D. Buerg. FV 1.16 is a verbose archive directory lister: display the names and attributes of files contained in ARC, ZIP, PAK, DWC, LZH, ZOO and many self-extracting .COM and .EXE files. LIST 6.4a is the latest version of his file viewer. Licenses for commercial use are required.

FXMASTR 3.31E (\$15), by Brian Raub, uses one menu (or command line parameters) to let you select Epson FX-series commands from your keyboard or batch files.

DC88, by Scott Houck, provides geographic location for DC phone numbers.

HISTORY 7.1, by Bryan Higgins, will recall, edit, and reuse prior DOS commands.

JULLAN, by Warren E. Fuller, will lock your keyboard while you're away.

LISTDBF 1.1, by Mark Holgerson, provides quick reports of selected fields from dBASE files. Registration is \$15.

LOOK120 is an experimental program by Doctor Debug to allow viewing of 120 columns on CGA or EGA displays.

Two programs by Emery Wooten of M.R.E. Software: RAT 2.30 provides a Resident Ascii Table (RAT using less than 5K of memory. Stereo Shell (S) 1.00 is a DOS shell with two independent file/directory displays which provide powerful file handling. It provides an interface to PKPAK/PKZIP. Registration is \$20.

WARPSPEED 1.0 (\$20), by FAB Software, is a keyboard speedup utility using <1K.

*This review prepared by John Puckette.*





## Disk of the Month MAIL ORDER FORM

*North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.*

Mail form to: NTPCUG, DOM Mail Order, P.O. Box 780066, Dallas TX 75378-0066

Sold To:

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DOM Disk #	Number of disks in set.	TITLE/DESCRIPTION

TOTAL disks _____	@ \$2.00 each .....	
	Shipping and Handling - \$1.00 for each 5 disks .....	
	TOTAL AMOUNT FOR ORDER .....	

Specify disk size: 5.25"  3.5"  Unless otherwise indicated, 5.25" disks will be sent.

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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### North Texas PC Users Group

The NTPCUG is a non-profit, independent organization of individuals learning to apply personal computers to practical problems. For additional information, call (214) 746-4699.

Member # \_\_\_\_\_

Name: (Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ (Suite/Apt) \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Check Preferred No.) Home \_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Metro? Y \_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_

Work \_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Ext. \_\_\_\_ Metro? Y \_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_

Occupation/Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check one from each column below:**

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Cash _____	Regular (\$24.00) _____	New Member _____
Check _____	Student (\$12.00) _____	Renewal _____
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Do you want access to the NTPCUG Electronic Bulletin Board? Y \_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_ Already Have \_\_\_\_

Please initial here \_\_\_\_\_ if you do not wish to have your address included on member lists sold for the NTPCUG's benefit to advertisers of IBM compatible products.

The NTPCUG expects and encourages volunteer participation by members in assisting with monthly meetings at INFOMART and other activities during the month. This usually consists of a few hours of your time each year. If asked, would you consider working with one or more of the following activities:

1. Working with NTPCUG Volunteer Committees? (Please check all that apply.)
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Bulletin Board (BBS) <input type="checkbox"/> Disk of the Month (DOM) <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Setup/Breakdown <input type="checkbox"/> Financial/Bookkeeping <input type="checkbox"/> INFOMART/Vendor Setup	<input type="checkbox"/> Information/Registration/Membership <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations/Advertising <input type="checkbox"/> Special Interest Group Coordination
---	--
  
2. Working with Special Interest Groups? (Please check all that apply.)
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Astrometry <input type="checkbox"/> Communications <input type="checkbox"/> MS/PC-DOS <input type="checkbox"/> Local Area Net <input type="checkbox"/> R:Base <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft WORD	<input type="checkbox"/> Assembler <input type="checkbox"/> Cryptanalysis <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy <input type="checkbox"/> LOTUS <input type="checkbox"/> Stock Market	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Applic. <input type="checkbox"/> DAC Software <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Users <input type="checkbox"/> Turbo Pascal	<input type="checkbox"/> C Language <input type="checkbox"/> DBase <input type="checkbox"/> Hardware Solutions <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Programmers <input type="checkbox"/> WordStar
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3. Being a volunteer, informal "consultant" in your area of expertise for NTPCUG members?  
 If so, list area(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Detach below for receipt.

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Applications should be mailed to: North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 780066  
 Dallas, TX 75378-0066

Received: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_

# Meetings & Times



9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

**Videotex Systems, Inc.**  
Video Color Image Capture and Databasing

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

**Ashton-Tate Corporation**  
Word Processing and More with Multimate V4.0

(See page 1 for description of programs.)

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

**NTPCUG Business Meeting**  
Come see what you've been missing!

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

**Microsoft Corporation**  
Microsoft Word for Windows

## Special Interest Group Meetings

For possible time changes, check the Bulletin Board just before the meeting and the overhead display in the lobby at INFOMART.

<p><b>8:00 - 9:55</b></p> <p>Assembler Community Volunteers DOS Hardware Solutions Personal Users</p> <p><b>10:00 - 10:55</b></p> <p>Graphics Local Area Networks Paradox Personal Users</p>	<p><b>11:30 - 11:55</b></p> <p>Orientation</p> <p><b>12:00 - 12:55</b></p> <p>Beginners Pascal C Language Communications Personal Users RBase Stock Mkt Investing</p>	<p><b>1:00 - 1:55</b></p> <p>Business Applications LOTUS Personal Users Turbo Pascal Windows &amp; OS/2 WORD</p>	<p><b>2:00 - 2:55</b></p> <p>Advanced Programmers Cryptanalysis DAC Easy Accounting Databases</p>
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## North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

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

Phone (214)746-4699 for recorded information about the User Group and meeting dates.

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 newsletter, and send it with \$24 membership dues to the Membership Director whose address is 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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**Zack Porterfield,** Chairman  
**Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.**

**Phil Chamberlain,** President  
**Mark Gruner,** Vice President  
**Jim Holsington,** Secretary

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Disk of the Month	Kathryn Coalman	(214)596-2539
Group Statistician	Connie Testa	
Volunteer Coord.	Connie Andrews	(214)828-0699

### Members Emeritus

Stuart Yanus      John Prybyl

NOTE: To access the BBS from outside Area Code 817, use Area Code 817. (This is NOT a toll call from Area Code 214.)

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Pete Testa

**User Relations:** Kent Cobb  
**Information Mgt:** Dan Marmion  
**Technical Services:** Leroy Tension

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

**NTPCUG Membership Director**  
P.O. Box 780066  
Dallas, Texas 75378-0066

(Check newsletter mailing label for your renewal date..)

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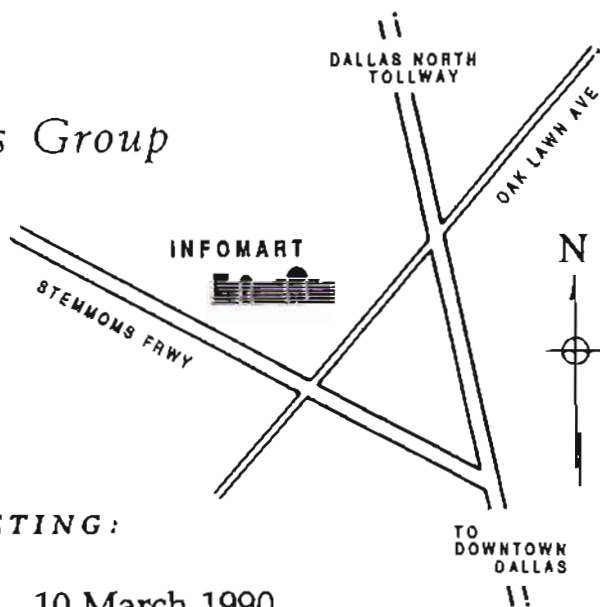
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**NEXT MEETING:**

10 March 1990

