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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:

North Texas PC NEWS circulation was 2016 last month. Member distribution was 1680; remaining copies were 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 November
North Texas PC NEWS:
Saturday, October 10th

Meeting Dates:

October Meeting - 17th
November Meeting - 2nd Sat.
December Meeting
tentatively scheduled - 3rd Saturday.

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. **Media.** All copy exceeding 10 lines should be submitted via the NTPCUG BBS or on floppy diskette(s) - (5.25" or 3.5" DOS formatted). If you want the disk returned please include a self-addressed return-postage-paid mailer. If you submit your article in hardcopy and expect us to transcribe it, bear in mind that we don't type so well. Most times, hardcopy-only-articles get filed in the Void.

3. **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 but only 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 three 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. Enter the filename (don't use drive or path name). The BBS will prompt you to begin the file transfer. (Refer to your communications software manual for instructions on transferring files.) After the file transfer has been completed, you will be prompted to, "press any key to continue..." You will then be prompted for a one-line description of the file. Enter the description. To exit the Article Upload Menu press ENTER until you get back to the Main Menu. (OPTIONAL - Send a BBS mail message to Douglas McQuaid regarding your submitted article.)

b) **Snail Mail (a.k.a. U.S. Postal Service).** Put the article on a floppy diskette and mail it to: 10429 N. MacArthur, #360, Irving, TX 75063

c) **SneakerNet.** 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 October _____ **Timothy Carmichael** _____

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM **SCSI: The Enabling Technology**

Adaptec, Inc.

Robert Csongor, Product Manager

Small Computer System Interface (SCSI) is a high performance Input/Output(I/O) technology that allows access to new, exciting applications and technologies enabled by emerging peripherals. Mr. Csongor will discuss the benefits of SCSI technology available today, and what the future of I/O will bring.

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM **R:BASE 4.0 - The First 32-bit PC-Based Relational DBMS**

Microrim Inc.

John Murphy, Sales Engineer

John Murphy will present Microrim's latest release, R:BASE 4.0, the first 32-bit PC-based relational database management system (DBMS) - released in June of 1992. John will present R:BASE 4.0's new features and enhancements and how these will benefit the user. An on-line demonstration of the new product will accompany the presentation, along with a few tips to get users started with R:BASE 4.0. There might be a drawing for free products.

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM **NTPCUG Business Meeting**

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM **Quattro Pro for Windows**

Borland International

Stuart Hoffman, Systems Engineer

Borland will present Quattro Pro for Windows, which was designed expressly for the Windows environment. Borland built Quattro Pro for Windows using object-oriented tools, resulting in a product with a powerful and intuitive data organization metaphor called Spreadsheet Notebooks, a simplified menu structure, access to external databases, visual application building tools, and the power and flexibility to accomplish any spreadsheet task. There will be a drawing for free copies of Quattro Pro for Windows.

* Tickets for each drawing will be given out from 10 minutes before until 15 minutes after the start-time of the meeting to attending NTPCUG members who show proof of membership.



Prez Sez...

Lotus sends the top brass

Bob Weiler, Executive Vice President of Lotus Development Corporation, was in town recently and I was invited to a meeting where the topic was what's going on at Lotus and how can they improve. Also at this meeting were Mark Gruner and Betty Brooks from this group, a few of the members of the Micro-

computer Managers Association, and the regional manager and local account manager from Lotus.

The focus of this get together was on Lotus meeting customer demands for solid upgrades, easier network licensing, and after-the-sale support. Bob was very straightforward and answered all of our questions thoroughly. It was refreshing to have a corporate executive take time out of his schedule and listen to our comments, and promise to take our suggestions back to the home office and have them reviewed.

What's happening in the job market

Again this month there were postings on the BBS for Paradox programmers, C programmers, and a PC COBOL programmer. If you are looking for a job and you are not on the BBS, it might be in your best interest

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The TI-PRO BBS is back

We are pleased to announce that the bulletin board system for Texas Instruments Professional Computers has been re-established. It has a new Sysop, and a different look. For the first time we have installed over 20 Meg of TI-PRO programs, formerly distributed as Disks of the Month, for on-line downloading. The telephone number is (214) 361-5275.

We have made repairs and improved the system. A crashed 20 Meg Seagate Winchester was replaced with two 30 Meg Miniscibes. A failed Cypher tape drive was repaired, and now operates.

Prez Sez continued

to get a modem and communications software and sign on.

Other benefits of the BBS include finding answers to questions, listening to others Q&A, and a swap shop for buying or selling hardware and software.

SIG's

We will have a "test" gathering of a new Desktop Publishing SIG this month at 12:00 noon. Check out the SIG Happenings section of this newsletter.

Thank a volunteer!

Better yet, become a volunteer. Plenty of positions are available each month requiring just one hour of your time.

Officer's meeting of August 11, 1992

Most items covered in our August meeting have been discussed in this column already.

Alex Lilley has agreed to take over the leadership of the Community Services SIG. One suggestion on how to help other non-profit organizations with their computer systems was to invite them to a two hour class. The class would cover topics of interest to these organizations and there would be user group members there to answer questions.

There was a drawing at the September Business Meeting (11:00 a.m.) for bundles of 50 360K diskettes. The diskettes are WORN (writ once, read never) from our Disk-Of-The-Month Library. Look for (or is it look out for) future prizes from the DOM group.

Andy Oliver ■

The BBS is installed in a new location, on a phone line near Southwestern Bell's Emerson exchange building.

The hardware consists of a Texas Instruments Professional Computer, with two Miniscribe 30 Meg Winchesters, 768 K RAM (DOS supported), a 3 Plane Graphics Card, a Zobex Winchester controller, a Cypher tape backup system, a TI (Matsushita) Color Monitor, and assorted accessories.

The software is Tigger, Version 1.15, which was designed and written by Greg Gilley as a volunteer project for the Austin, Texas TI-PRO Computer Users' Grqup.

The new Sysop is Tom Blackwell, who has been active with TI Professional computers since 1985.

The system offers message exchange areas for public and 'private' messages, and the file area consisting of Disks of the Month from the Dallas TI-PRO Users' Group and the NTPCUG, which merged in 1991. IBM users are cautioned that TI-PRO programs are not intended to be compatible with IBM.

NEW SOFTWARE: We are the first to distribute a new public domain program, the MENUMAKER, from JJ Software of Richardson, Texas. This program creates custom color menus, taking advantage of the TI-PRO's 3 Plane Color Graphics card. ■

Election of Officers

Election of officers for North Texas PC Users Group is coming soon... Is this your year?

As established in the bylaws we will elect a President-Elect, and three members of the Board of Directors. If you have someone to recommend for office, notify a member of the nominating committee (Doug Gorrie, Chair).

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Batch File Tips and Utilities

The Sixth in a series by Mitchell A. Hoselton, Ph.D.

The focus this month returns to CONFIG.SYS. We'll look at DOS configuration commands, non-DOS memory managers and DOS's own supplementary device drivers.

This article also examines some alternatives to BOOTCON for managing multiple DOS configurations. The classic way to change the PC configuration is to edit CONFIG.SYS and reboot. The modern approach is to tune highly specialized configurations for specific tasks and then switch among them. BOOTCON is a classy option for juggling multiple configurations. Even so, there are other alternatives worth considering.

Ordering and Organizing CONFIG.SYS Commands

DOS is not fussy about the order in which you list the various commands in the CONFIG.SYS file. There are three units to a well organized CONFIG.SYS file. They are the configuration commands, the device driver installation commands and the SHELL command. It is convenient though by no means necessary to keep these sub-units separated from each other. Furthermore, it is handy to keep the sub-units in a consistent relative order to improve readability. A consistent order makes it easier to work with numerous configuration files. Furthermore, it makes it easier to incorporate CONFIG.SYS enhancements.

The order of configuration commands within their sub-unit is arbitrary. The order of device drivers within their own sub-unit is sometimes critical. Device drivers for memory cards, speed-up cards, memory managers and some other devices want to load first from CONFIG.SYS. They can't all be first, however. You may have to work out the correct order by trial and error. Fortunately, most device drivers do not care about the order. The simple rule is that device drivers providing services to other device drivers must load ahead of their clients.

CONFIG.SYS can also contain any number of blank lines. These make it easier to read the file and to find errors. Blank lines also make the organization readily apparent.

Adding Comments to CONFIG.SYS

DOS versions 4.0 and 5.0 support the use of REM (short for Remarks) in CONFIG.SYS. REM can document the file and improve its readability. Also, the REM command can be used to deactivate commands in CONFIG.SYS. Adding REM at the beginning of any line will force DOS to ignore everything else on that line. This obviates the need to erase and reenter commands while testing new configurations.

In most DOS versions a colon (:) at the beginning of any line in CONFIG.SYS produces almost the same effect as using REM. The only disadvantage of the colon is that it generates the following error message, or one like it.

Unrecognized command in CONFIG.SYS Error in CONFIG.SYS line xx

This error message has no effect on the other commands in CONFIG.SYS or on the remainder of the boot-up process. Ignore the message if you know that REM is causing it to appear. See page 288 of the January 28, 1992 edition of PC Magazine.

The CONFIG.SYS Configuration Commands

Chapter 11 of the MS-DOS 5.0 "User's Guide and Reference" describes the DOS configuration commands. The most important ones are BREAK, BUFFERS, DOS, FCBS, FILES, LASTDRIVE, STACKS, and SWITCHES. Put these together at the beginning of the CONFIG.SYS file. DOS has a default value for each one, but the DOS defaults do not configure most PC systems optimally. Think of the list at the beginning of CONFIG.SYS as the new default values for these configuration commands. If any of these commands appears again in CONFIG.SYS, the latter command will take precedence over this first one.

A) The BREAK works in CONFIG.SYS, in batch files and from the DOS prompt. Using the BREAK command changes the way that DOS responds to the use of [CTRL]-[C] and [CTRL]-[BREAK] keystroke combinations. Normally, DOS only checks for [CTRL]-[C]

or [CTRL]-[BREAK] while reading the keyboard, writing to the screen or writing to the printer. With BREAK=on, it checks for these keystrokes while reading from the disk or the keyboard and while writing to the disk, the printer or the screen. Most CONFIG.SYS files routinely include the BREAK=on command to increase the frequency with which DOS checks for these keystroke combinations. Enable BREAK with the BREAK=on command. Reset it to its default setting using the BREAK=off command. Enabling the BREAK=on, slows the PC slightly. Some application programs may intercept the [CTRL]-[C] and [CTRL]-[BREAK] keystrokes. Such applications will circumvent DOS's ability to respond to these keystrokes while the application is running.

B) The BUFFERS command controls the amount of memory set aside for handling disk transfers. DOS divides this section of memory into areas called buffers. Each buffer is the same size as a disk sector, 512 bytes. Under DOS 5.0 the buffers reside in low memory (below the 640K boundary) whenever DOS loads low. When DOS 5.0 loads into the high memory area (the HMA occupies the first 64K above the 1 Megabyte boundary) it loads the buffers into the HMA, too. If there is not enough room in the HMA to hold DOS and all the buffers, DOS loads the buffers low and keeps DOS in the HMA. DOS 5.0 leaves enough room in the HMA to load about 50 buffers. The default value on most systems is BUFFERS=15.

The DOS buffers act as a very simple disk cache. They are so simple that the level of incremental improvement after the first five or six buffers is usually not very impressive. Still, for every hardware configuration there is a BUFFER setting that makes disk transfers optimally fast; at least some of us would like to think so.

The right number of buffers will depend on hardware configuration. Too many or too few buffers can choke the entire system down to a crawl. Without worrying about optimization, BUFFERS=20 to BUFFERS=35 is a good range to start with. See page 111 of the December 1989 edition of Personal Computing for a discussion of the BUFFERS command and its relationship to disk caching.

Disk caching device drivers like DOS's SMARTDRV.SYS and Qualitas' QCACHE.EXE (QCACHE comes with 386MAX by Qualitas, but it is actually a version of Super PC-Kwik by Multisoft Corp.) may impose additional restrictions on your use of the BUFFERS command. With some versions of SMARTDRV.SYS, for example, DOS recommends

using less than 20 buffers. QCACHE.EXE is optimized to use 8 buffers. These disk caching programs do everything that the buffers can do and they do it better. It is no sacrifice to use the number of buffers recommended for these disk caching device drivers. Using fewer buffers also preserves low memory for use by your applications.

C) The DOS command should appear once and only once in the CONFIG.SYS file. The DOS=high command forces DOS to load into the HMA if there is an extended memory manager present. The DOS=high command can appear anywhere in CONFIG.SYS because it is the last command that DOS processes before it finishes with CONFIG.SYS. If an extended memory manager is not present, DOS loads itself low and the rest of the boot process continues normally. A message appears saying that DOS did not load high. (When DOS loads high, it loads into the HMA. When device drivers and TSRs load high, they load into high RAM. High RAM and the HMA are not the same thing. High RAM, also called the upper memory blocks, is in the address area between 640K and one megabyte. The HMA is the first 64K above the one megabyte boundary. Also, see the discussion below.)

The DOS command also accepts a UMB parameter. The UMB parameter enables DOS 5.0's ability to load programs into upper memory blocks. Using the upper memory block manager provided by DOS is not nearly as efficient as using either QEMM386 from Quarterdeck Office Systems or 386MAX from Qualitas. These non-DOS memory managers do not need the UMB parameter though some will recognize and respond to it.

D) Application programs that use file control blocks sometimes fail to run on systems where CONFIG.SYS does not include an FCBS command. The default value is 4. That is enough for most programs that require file control blocks. The FCBS command can be set to any value from 1 to 255.

E) The FILES command specifies the size of the System File Table (SFT). Each open file requires an entry in the SFT. Many applications recommend FILES=20 to FILES=35. This is a good range in which to experiment. Systems running Microsoft WINDOWS may require a larger number. The default value is only FILES=8. Each file after the first 8 takes up 59 bytes of low memory. See page 469 of the November 12, 1991 edition of PC Magazine for a discussion of the FILES command.

F) The LASTDRIVE command indicates the letter of the last drive that DOS will recognize. There is some confusion about its default value. It is not, as the DOS 5.0 manual seems to say, one letter above the last drive installed on the system. On a system with two floppy drives and 10 logical partitions on a single physical hard disk, the default value matches the actual number of drives and partitions present, namely 12 or LASTDRIVE=L. It is not possible to set the LASTDRIVE to recognize fewer drives than actually exist on the system, including all the logical or physical drives installed by CONFIG.SYS. Use the LASTDRIVE command is only required when you need to reserve room for other logical drives (for example when using the SUBST command) not created or installed during boot-up. Each drive recognized by DOS 5.0 requires 100 bytes of low memory.

G) Most PC systems do not require STACKS. Therefore, adding a STACKS=0,0 command to CONFIG.SYS will usually save some low memory. The default value depends on the hardware. Most non-IBM PCs have a default value of STACKS=9,128. Nine stacks of 128 bytes apiece should consume just over 1K of low memory. Actually, it consumes 1.8K because of extra overhead. Some hardware systems use stacks for processing certain hardware interrupts. On systems that occasionally crash for no apparent reason, using REM to disable the STACKS=0,0 statement reestablishes the default value. It may also eliminate those unexplained crashes.

H) The SWITCHES command is only useful to those using WINDOWS (the /w switch) or to those using a small number of finicky utility programs (the /k switch).

The /k switch is for programs that do not support extended ROM BIOS on 101/102 key keyboards. These include Lotus METRO, Lotus EXPRESS, IBM DISPLAYWRITE III, Borland's TURBO-LIGHTNING, and Micro Logic's TORNADO 1.8. Adding the SWITCHES=/k command to CONFIG.SYS will fix keyboard errors that these programs otherwise generate.

The DOS 5.0 manual recommends adding the /k switch to the ANSI.SYS driver when using the SWITCHES=/k command.

Loading Device Drivers from CONFIG.SYS

Loading device drivers from CONFIG.SYS requires entering the DEVICE command followed by the device driver file name, including its extension. DOS

supports the use of a path before the device driver filename.ext. It also supports the use of parameters after the filename.ext, if the device driver uses parameters.

The standard syntax appears on the following line.

```
DEVICE=[drv:][path]filename.ext [dd-parameters]
```

Once CONFIG.SYS loads a device driver there is frequently no way to remove it, except by editing the CONFIG.SYS file to remove or disable the DEVICE command that loads the device driver, and rebooting the system.

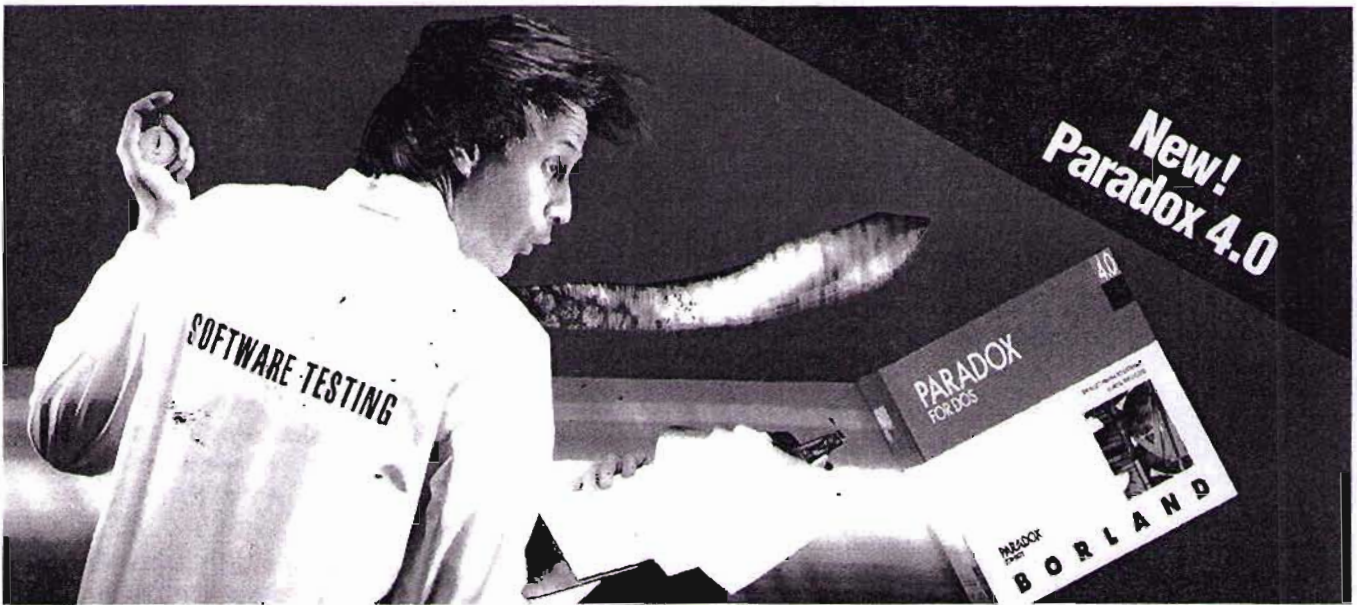
These installable device drivers supplement the device handling tools built into DOS. Installable device drivers can add new capabilities to the operating system so that it can manage new external devices, like speed up cards or video boards. Device drivers can also manage old devices in new ways. Memory managers, for example, use memory in ways that DOS, at least until DOS 5.0, could not imitate.

DOS communicates with hardware devices using messages called interrupts. Device drivers can intercept these interrupt messages. Microsoft provided the software "hooks" that make it possible for device drivers to perform this feat. Microsoft wanted hardware vendors to provide device drivers to integrate their hardware with the standard PC hardware and the DOS operating system. Now, however, there are a lot of device drivers on the market that fall into the category that I would call system enhancements. This goes well beyond the original aim of integrating new devices into the system.

The next few sections discuss two classes of system enhancement device drivers. These are Memory Managers, and DOS's own supplementary device drivers. Memory managers are definitely in the system enhancement category. DOS's supplementary device drivers provide features Microsoft probably should have built into the operating system in the first place. On a proprietary hardware platform Microsoft probably would have done so. In the world of PC clones installable device drivers offer the user a choice among competing device drivers, flexibility across a wide variety of hardware platforms, and loading options in the form of command line switches. These device drivers and others like them also qualify as system enhancements.

Mitchell

■



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Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.

The Variety Store

A personal view of new or unusual hardware, software, and applications for IBM small computers and compatibles.

Oops! Here we go again -- IBM changes PC name, Borland sues Symantec over Wang, Microsoft's 'Hidden' Windows 3.1 calls enrage developers

Same old, same old, for September
Leading into Comdex/FALL '92

Just when we thought things had settled down before Comdex/FALL '92, both Borland and TI announce unexpected forays on the legal front. IBM announces new, "restyled" IBM Personal Computer Co., and Microsoft takes it on the chin in the recent book, *Undocumented Windows*.

Compaq turned a new page -- and now is touting their end-user support. They're even shipping software to allow remote troubleshooting by Compaq technicians. Anyone else remember "End-user support is only available from the dealer," Compaq's, old, favorite line?

Some things stay the same

Compaq (again) still can't produce enough "ProLineas" to meet unexpected buyer demands. That must be both frustrating and a really pleasant surprize to Compaq's new managers.

Lots of buyers for new Compaq PC's. Production under Compaq's quality standards (which is why the buyers want the new PC's) is the problem now.

We all waited, but don't care

OS is another story. Buyers -- the buyers still don't care much for 32-bit OS capabilities, and everyone is "leaking" news on new Microsoft beta versions. Rumors make new DOS 6.0 beta about 200M big (all the new features and utilities) and nobody seems to know when *Windows NT* will make it to the "real" beta version.

The real fun is media alignments -- for and against *OS/2 2.0* or *Windows NT*. It all sounds a lot like last September going into Comdex (October) when PR shops of major producers were grinding out "new" releases hourly.

Hardware prices?

Shriek! Hardware prices continue to plummet unabated. Where they'll stop nobody knows and lots of folks are wor-

ried. With good reason. Saw new 33 MHz 386SX motherboards at 1st Saturday for \$130, 33 MHz 386DX motherboards for less than \$200 with 64K SRAM caches. Major makers are hurting -- big time.

Can you say "Chapter 11?"

More than one major vendor is reported a banana peel away from serious financial problems. At least one has tried to secretly form a new, low-tier subsidiary in an effort to shore-up sagging sales on the mail-order front. With hardware profit margins sliding toward zilch, end-user support may be the first casualty.

Software a different story

Another 500 or so *Windows 3.1* programs announced in last week -- at least one wasn't a word processor or DTP package. There must have been at least two or three DOS and/or OS/2 products announced in same period -- shipping later, much later.

And, we still don't understand the Accolade vs. Sega appeal decision.

'New' IBM Personal Computer Co. Sounds like old Blue, new clothes

Only the name has been changed to protect somebody or other. IBM announced their new IBM Personal Computer

Variety

Company in early September. According to media blurbs, this is IBM's latest effort to recapture the excitement and energy of the original ESD - Entry Systems Division - that brought the PC to life in 1981.

Elephants dancing?

Jim Cannavino will remain at the helm of the new "company," who's structure is still up for definition. The media report that IBM will consider the new unit as an independent company and will transfer approximately 1200 employees to staff the new organism.

All this comes at about the time that IBM has seen its PC market share hit a new low as former "clone" makers take premier positions in the race for #1 PC maker. Reporting on the shift, the *Wall Street Journal's* September 4, 1992, story stated that IBM plans to expand mail-order operations and announce "significant" expansions of the former PC/1 line(s) in September and October, 1992.

One question remains. Who will accept responsibility for marketing *OS/2 2.0*? What should have come out roaring like a tiger in IBM's struggle with Microsoft's *Windows 3.x* wound up mewling like a distraught kitten as a result of very badly implemented marketing and delivery.

Think I'm exaggerating?

IBM is bragging about selling one million copies of *OS/2 2.0* - in eight months. That's about how many *Windows 3.1* upgrades were delivered - in the first week of release.

Bill Gates must really get a chuckle out of this.

No Dan Quayles here -- Silicon Valley lawyers Go on attack in September

Ahhhhh. More lawyer action this month, with a slightly different twist than the routine mega\$\$\$ suits we've played over the past year. Still no final word on Apple vs. Microsoft, though.

TI hits US firm this time

If you think the Memory Wars are dead, ask TI. Texas Instruments, who has honed litigation into the latest super high-technology tool, announced a new attack, this time in the U.S.

Claiming "patent infringement" TI went after Micron Technology, Inc. in September. Micron made a preemptive strike with a move in Boise, Idaho, against TI's memory technology patents after negotiations with TI failed. While TI has vigorously pursued similar litigation against offshore memory makers (primarily in Japan, Taiwan and Korea) as we all cheered, this one's closer to home.

Micron is a U.S. company, one of the few still producing commodity memory chips, located in Idaho. This is the latest skirmish in a battle between TI and Micron dating back to 1988 over memory chip patents.

Angry 'cause he lost Wang, Kahn's Borland pursues Action against Symantec

Sorry, just couldn't resist temptation this time. Eugene Wang (not Wang of Massachusetts)

is/was a top executive, head of languages, at Borland. He was until he shipped over to Symantec where he was named Vice President of Development Tools and Productivity.

That's not uncommon in Silicon Valley. It's sorta like "Musical Executives" and is the second-most popular game in town.

When criminal charges are considered, the game changes. Borland charges that Wang not only went to Symantec, but also sent them a lot of Borland secrets via MCI Mail while still at Borland. **Secrets via MCI Mail?** Really makes us wonder about the recent media story on Symantec/Norton's MCI Mail utility.

Sounds like "Dallas", doesn't it? But this is California, an icon vs. icon story, and no mention of the local outfit(s) who made big news doing the same thing(s).

That's where the Santa Cruz County DA's office and the police come in. They searched the Symantec offices in Cupertino, CA, Wang's home and Gordon Eubanks' home in search of clues (evidence of foul play and alleged secrets). The story appeared in *Infoworld's* September 7, 1992, issue with more details.

Can you say "Keystone Kops?"

Microsoft says *Undocumented Windows* is a tempest in a teapot Angry developers disagree

What a difference a book makes! *Undocumented Windows* is a new book written by Andrew Schulman, David Maxey and Matt Pietrick that reveals approximately 200 undocu-

Variety

mented Windows calls they claim Microsoft has used in new Windows products.

This is a good one for anyone who likes conspiracy rumors/stories. If you do, and don't like Microsoft, enjoy.

We've all known that Microsoft has a lot of undocumented features (some folks call them bugs) in their software. Now some developers are calling them unfair advantages.

At issue is "hidden" Windows 3.1 code or calls that Microsoft applications developers have utilized in new versions of Microsoft programs. The book's authors claim use of these "secret calls" has given Microsoft an unfair advantage over the competition.

Microsoft admitted some Microsoft products do use some of the calls. Microsoft says they don't do anything any better than the "documented" calls. Some developers claim otherwise. However, a number of non-Microsoft software developers also used undocumented calls in their latest product releases.

You figure it out. I can't.

This is not a new issue. There have always been undocumented calls, etc., in DOS and Windows. Microsoft encourages software developers to stay away from them, even though they are well known, because they may not be supported in "future" versions.

We've all been caught when developers ignored this advice. Our software, written to take advantage of undocumented features, crashes and burns — big time — when a new version of DOS or Windows no longer supports the old undocumented calls.

Folks (developers) who got caught, whined like crazy.

More Microsoft — Visual Basic for DOS Gets September launch

Don't know if this has bundles of undocumented calls, but Microsoft launched *Visual Basic for DOS* in early September. That's a surprise.

We all thought we'd seen the last major DOS release from Redmond, WA. According to media sources (*PC Week*) the new Microsoft program is an acknowledgement that Microsoft recognizes that DOS is still an important factor in the PC marketplace. Same sources agree that the new DOS program will closely match the features available in the Windows product.

This should create a major stir in the NTPCUG BASIC SIG this month.

It's all FUD, All over again, But a new player

FUD — Fear, uncertainty and doubt. I don't think Hayes and Multi-Tech Systems Inc. will share a Comdex booth this

year. Best description of their mutual interaction style might be "bare knuckles" negotiation.

Now, this is shaping up nicely and really looks like fun. Hayes is angry that lots of modem makers are close to their prized "AT" command set, but far enough away to avoid litigation.

Hayes, originator of the "AT" command set and modem innovator in the 1980's, decided enough is enough. Hayes technicians devised a modem test kit with a twist — when it detects a non-Hayes modem, it tends to return an error message indicating a fatal flaw was detected.

Technical aspects involved are too complex to set out here. However, some very good modems on the market are not Hayes, and their makers resent Hayes' implication in advertising that their modems will lose or corrupt data transmitted via their modems. Multi-Tech, another premium modem maker, is among the enraged.

I would be angry too. The Hayes ads in question are pretty tacky.

Multi-Tech is definitely not afraid of a good scrap. Another instance of "my lawyers can lick your lawyers" is gathering momentum. Media accounts should be very interesting.

Reagan

Coming Soon...

Election of User Group Officers will be here soon. Notify the nominating committee (Doug Gorrie, Chair) if you would like to recommend someone for office (President-Elect or Board of Directors).

Variety

. An open letter to Vendors

Dear Vendor,

To all those wonderful folks who have sent me unsolicited software, you may be wondering why you haven't seen your software reviewed or mentioned here. After all, you did send it to me and just know I'll love it and write truly wonderful things about it.

Well, a few reasons you haven't seen any glowing prose from my pen (keyboard) mentioning your marvelous software follow:

First (The "Biggie") If you sent me any kind of "CrippleWare", i.e., with file-saving, printing or other parameter limitations, sorry 'bout that. I won't do anything with it except re-format the floppies for later use. (If it's CrippleWare and you sent the product on 3.5" floppies with the write protect tabs removed, I'll just throw them in the trash.)

Other reasons I didn't review your product:

1. Any product that requires that I open my PC and make any hardware modifications—ain't gonna see no ink here.
2. Any product that alters my AUTOEXEC.BAT or CONFIG.SYS files without asking permission—ain't gonna see no ink here.
3. Any software product that alters/appends or otherwise messes with my WIN.INI or SYSTEM.INI files without my permission—ain't gonna see no ink here.
4. Any product that requires me to print out the documentation, and the .DOC or .TXT file is more than 25K—you know the refrain.
5. If your product was obviously "stolen" from another, better-known product, and I recognize it—(refrain).
6. Products that are really bad, almost in the "truly terrible" category (refrain). Consider this an act of kindness. If your genius child messed with my disk(s) in any way, though, you may be hearing from another person representing my interest(s).
7. If the disks you sent contained the absolute latest versions of STONED, Michaelangelo or some other virus/trojan horse, etc., please see #6, above.

Even if I like it—there's still a delay.

If you passed all the above, and I really liked the software, wait a while. NT PC News deadlines dictate at least a month's delay between receipt of the software and my comments here.

Sometimes I ask for review copies of software/hardware. I'll tolerate almost all the above except CrippleWare—I did ask for it—but, you can be sure my review will point out the flaws found as well as the neat features.

Reagan Andrews

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ON COMPLEXITY

No. 67 in a Series



Slipstream Updates

by Jim Hoisington.

One of the topics that seems to come up every time people for various user groups get together is "slipstream updates". Those are the software updates that get made to the shipping version of a software product without any visible method of identifying that change.

The question was addressed by the Borland product managers at the Borland User Group Retreat in July. Their answer reflects the policy of most software vendors.

After a major version is made available to be shipped, many small problems surface in areas that are not used by the majority of the users. (At least, that's the theory. After all, if there were problems in frequently used features, they should have shown up in the alpha and beta testing.) These problems can be fixed with a minimum of work and rarely require any documentation change. The feeling of the software companies is that is unfair to deprive other users of the product the use of these fixes by making them wait until a new version of the product is released.

If that's what they did, we wouldn't really have much of a problem with "slipstream updates".

The problem is that all software companies are tempted to slip in major feature upgrades in response to new features in competing products and major bug fixes that slip through the alpha and beta testing. How much of this goes on and which companies practice this is hard to determine.

The company that has been known for "slipstream upgrades" for a long time is WordPerfect Corporation. Every so often, they update their production version of any product version with a new copy of

their software that incorporates a variety of fixes. The updated product is always available at a nominal cost (less than \$15) to current users of the product. I've never found any major feature additions or bug fixes in any of their "slipstream upgrades." Major bugs always seem to get at least a minor version number and major features of WordPerfect usually are given a major version number of their own.

So what's the problem with these updates and why is it always a topic for discussion?

The problem is that some "slipstream upgrades" create incompatibilities both with other versions of the same product and with products from other vendors. And, there is no easy way for the user to determine why one computer running EasyWretch version 5.3 doesn't work with MyBase III files and another computer running EasyWretch version 5.3 has no trouble at all using MyBase III files.



What's the solution? Apple Computer Products attempts to address the problem by having tediously long version numbers like GummyCat version 6.3.2.1.4. And even then, a few things seem to "slip" into the production version of 6.3.2.1.4 over its very short life span.

It appears that all software vendors will be tempted to incorporate these "slipstream updates" no matter how sophisticated their version control system. As a user, you need to be aware of them and don't assume that because two computers are both running version 4.6 that they are running the same software.

Jim

■

Mike Firth

1019 Martinique, Dallas TX 75223
214-827-7734

Programming for small
business

Data conversions: standard
software and old stuff
MS-DOS, Mac & Apple II

The Adventures of PC Tech

Chapter 14

by Ben Thar

Things seem to roll along smoothly for our heroine with minor problems resolved without incident until the week before a long-planned vacation. "Why did I think that the installation of a network was a breeze? Just because we did it successfully in class? Ha!"

The server and components arrived on time. The wiring company had excellent references and Mary Margaret watched as they tested the cables to each workstation. She almost forgot to have them run a cable to the file server. "While you are at it," she told them, "pull a second cable from the wiring closet to the file server in case I need it in the future." She remembered and bought all of the network interface cards the same and configured them exactly the alike.

Then a dark cloud adopted PC Tech. The Network Operating System would not install. It came back with a strange error code. The documentation just said to reset the controller cards and try again. She did. No luck. She ran diagnostics on the server and no IRQ conflicts or memory conflicts appeared. Mary remembered an advertisement for a 24 hour help line called 1-900-HELPHYOU. She thought, "Hang the cost; it's 11 p.m. and I promised the users that the newer network version of their main software package would be operational and solve some of their budget consolidation problems." So she called. Vic answered and said he would be glad to help. After looking up the error message and telling her the same thing she already knew, he said, "Let's go through the install procedure again step-by-step. And while you get set up, I'm going down the hall to get a sandwich from the vending machine, so don't go away." After 45 minutes on the phone with the help person (read clown), he said that it looks like the hard disk controller cards will not work with this version of the operating system. "What do you mean," screamed MM, "the controllers were co-developed by the same people who wrote the operating system?" Vic's only advice was for Mary to call the vendor that sold her the software and hardware and

have them confirm that the combination has been tested.

Bright and early Mary Margaret was on the phone to her vendor. They said that they had never personally tried the combination, but it should work. Mary ordered them to put up or shut up and give her money back. The company sent out new controller cards that they had successfully installed in other customer sites.

The install procedure went farther this time, but the server still would not come up. This time she had the pager number of the vendor's chief troubleshooter, and she called him. He talked her through several incantations, the final one taking two hours. Before he hung up, he made the comment, "This will work and if it doesn't, I'll come down tomorrow evening on my own time and make it work." Well, she saw him the next night. He tried the same procedures that she did and got the same results. She smiled inwardly. Next, he made a few changes to the install procedure and changed some jumpers on the controller cards. "Why?", she asked. "Oh, I just remembered something that is not in the manual." It worked. Mary wrote down each and every setting, in case she had to do it again.

PC Tech loaded the network version of the integrated software, went to a workstation, and brought it up successfully. All of the user accounts were set up next and the menuing system was loaded. She had already installed the network cards. Success was plastered on her face as she drove home.

The next morning she stood over the shoulder of each user as they logged in. When the second person tried to access the main program, it would not let him in. Mary dug through the sixteen manuals of varying sizes (wondering why they didn't put it all in one three-ring binder) and finally found out that the software has an internal counter and it defaults to one. Resetting the counter to seven (the number of node copies that the company owned) resolved the problem.

The Drafting Department called and said that when they went in to the computer-aided design program on the local hard disk, the screen froze and they had to power the p.c. off to get it back. To make this day long story short, the digitizer pad and the NIC were conflicting. The digitizer's card did not allow you to change IRQ's so Mary had to change the NIC (and

TBBS Word Wrap Blues

by Fred Williams

I'm resisting the common practice of most software users. I am not going to let myself become a TBBS zealot, with the emotions and reactions of your average Spanish Inquisition member. Yes, I like TBBS very much, but I refuse to rate it right up there with the invention of fermentation.

One of TBBS's most bothersome "features" is the word wrap algorithm used in the message display function. This seems to be the "bug" biting most of the BBS users on a continuing basis. The explanation of how to format your message to defeat TBBS's auto

word wrap is explained in the TBBS users guide available in the BBS Download area.

Since so many users are having problems with message formatting I can only assume that the supplied documentation is not very helpful. Y'all have read the documentation, right? Well, anyway, I'm going to attempt to explain both why and how the TBBS word wrap feature works.

Why word wrap? The TBBS word wrap feature provides the ability to display message text on any size output device. No matter how small the width of the output device, TBBS will automatically word wrap the message text to fit.

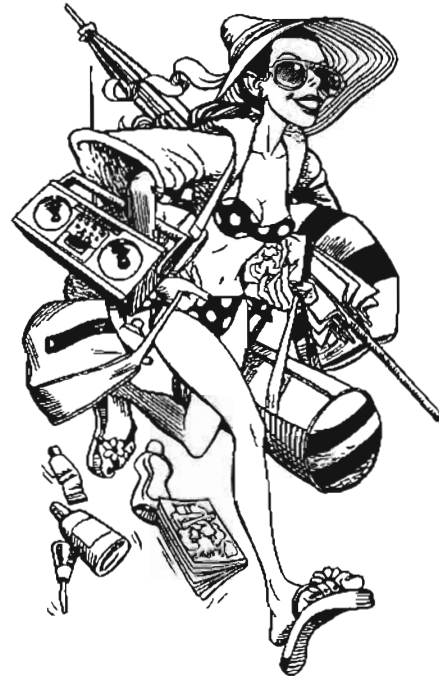
All the 80 column monitor users probably think this is a pretty useless feature. The NTPCUG BBS is here to serve all of our members, no matter the size of their hardware. And if there is one thing I have noticed, most of us like to brag about the size of our hardware!

PC Tech continued

she changed her documentation to reflect this deviation from her standard).

Two of the p.c.'s with only one megabyte of RAM locked up when someone sent them an electronic mail message. Mary disabled their E:Mail and ordered more RAM for their p.c.'s. And finally, one of the users was on vacation when the network was installed and when she came back and booted her p.c., it just beeped at her. PC Tech thought it sounded like a key was stuck on the keyboard. She tried several keyboards to no avail. Giving up in frustration, Mary sent the p.c. back to the vendor. The vendor service manager called her the next day to say there was no problem with the machine. The beeping reappeared upon rebooting the computer in Mary's office. Now she put the entire system in her car, drove to the shop, and stood over them while they turned it on. It beeped. The technician tried another bootable floppy disk and the system did not beep. "I've never heard of a bad diskette causing a problem like this." The technician concurred and didn't charge her for the time.

A well deserved vacation was only minutes away.



TBBS word wrap works just great as long as the message being displayed is pure continuous text. It is when the sender wants to control message line formatting that things can get a little messy.

For example, let's say I wanted to send the following message to someone on the BBS:

cc: Ginger Lynn, John Holmes
 Dear Ms. Chambers,
 Please read your BBS documentation to best understand how the TBBS word wrap feature can affect your message format when it is displayed.
 Fred

When the person receiving the message displays it (assuming an 80 column monitor), the message will be formatted thusly:

cc: Ginger Lynn, John Holmes
 Dear Ms. Chambers, Please read your BBS documentation to best understand how the TBBS word wrap feature can affect your message format when it is displayed. Fred

The easiest way to preserve your message format is to insure that a blank line follows any line you do not wish to have automatically word wrapped. We can fix the example message by entering it with the following format adjustments:

cc: Ginger Lynn, John Holmes

Dear Ms. Chambers,

Please read your BBS documentation to best understand how the TBBS word wrap feature can affect your message format when it is displayed.

Fred

But, you say you want to leave a list of old family treasures for sale in the "Swap Shop" conference of the BBS. Leaving a blank line between each item will make the message inordinately long.

The easiest way to enter a list of lines is to precede each line in the list with at least a single blank, as in the following example:

I will consider any and all offers on the following priceless historical artifacts:

Original IBM 80 cps, non graphics, dot matrix printer.
 Easywriter Version 1.0.
 Hayes 300 baud Smartmodem, with manual.

Please state your museum affiliation when responding.

I used more than one space in the previous example to add emphasis to the technique, and to insure Ventura publisher didn't kern the white space down to where the indention would not be readily apparent.

Be aware of some TBBS undocumented pitfalls. If the above message were to be displayed on a monitor with only 40 columns it would appear thusly:

I will consider any and all offers on the following priceless historical artifacts:

Original IBM 80 cps, non graphics,
 dot matrix printer.
 Easywriter Version 1.0.
 Hayes 300 baud Smartmodem, with manual.

Please state your museum affiliation when responding.

I can see a need for TBBS's word wrap feature, but have found it to be the most difficult TBBS feature to control. Like any other default, it is **right** handy when it is needed, but darned inconvenient when it is not. I have resigned myself to formatting my messages to display on the somewhat standard 80 column display device.

It would be a nice enhancement to TBBS if the message sender could select whether word wrap would be applied to a particular message. But remember, this could cause the message to be difficult to read for anyone not using the same size output device as the message sender used for input.

As I stated earlier there is some additional information on TBBS's word wrap feature in **the TBBS** user documentation contained in the NTPCUG BBS download area. I'll optimistically **encourage** you all to download and read this valuable information.

Fred

☺



CELLS & RANGES

- an eclectic collection of spreadsheet information

by Betty Brooks

Accessing Databases From Within Windows Spreadsheets

Last month's column discussed accessing information in Paradox databases while using 1-2-3 3.x or Quattro Pro. While I was unable to go into great detail on how to do the actual process, I tried to give a feel for the depth and breath of capabilities of these spreadsheet programs. I also gave ways to find additional information and tech notes that supplement the manuals. Lotus has a new tech note that can be obtained free by calling Veronica Ward at 617-693-1571 (or 693-1606 - Elena Fernandez if you have trouble getting through to Veronica). Be sure and leave a clear message spelling your name and address and the name of the tech note (Database Application Tips for 1-2-3 Release 3.x, 1-2-3/G, and 1-2-3 for Windows) so the correct one will be sent. This tech note tells you more than is in the manual and with greater clarity, so it is well worth obtaining. It is full of examples showing the extent to which 1-2-3 allows you to manipulate and modify the data from the databases.

The current version of 1-2-3 for Windows uses the same type of Datalens technology as 1-2-3 3.1, which still leaves room for improvement in the upcoming version. In a discussion with a Lotus spokesperson, I was informed that we can expect 1-2-3/W 2.0 to be a great leap ahead in usability. The query process will no longer use criterion ranges and those other terms that tends to confuse new users. The process of querying and extracting from the external databases will be entirely menu driven. There will also be more datalens drivers available which will allow access to other database products. Unfortunately, that is all the information I am allowed to put in this article about the next version. For more information on how to use the database access through Data External menu choices, please refer to last month's column.

The menus are a little easier to follow in 1-2-3/W partly because you are somewhat guided with the dialog boxes. When you have SmartPak connected to your 1-2-3/W, you can easily take the output from your database queries and dress them up by using the SmartFormat command and the SmartSum buttons. Thus, 1-2-3/W does already make working with the external databases easier than in the DOS versions, but look for greater things to happen in the next Windows version of 1-2-3. I have been given no time table for its release, so we'll have to hope it is ready, or near ready, to ship within a month or two of the time you read this column.

Quattro Pro for Windows is not yet shipping when I am writing this column, but hopefully will be when you are reading it. I have already received my upgrade notice for Paradox 4.0, but nothing about Paradox for Windows, yet. When you get a chance to see and use Paradox for Windows, you will find it quite different than the DOS version, while still keeping the basic functionality of things like query by example. As I said last month, even the programming language is new in this version and is called ObjectPAL. If you are looking for a Windows database program, you will definitely want to check out Paradox for Windows. Everything is graphically oriented and event driven. It is easier to create your data input screens and reports than in the DOS version. You can add clip art and choose your font types and sizes that obviously allow you to create much nicer looking forms and reports. The program is fast and still easy to use. Once you have tried it out and become familiar with the look of Paradox for Windows, you will be pleasantly surprised to find that when you are in Quattro Pro for Windows' Database Desktop, you will have a screen which is just like the Paradox screen.

Quattro Pro for Windows has a whole subprogram included called Database Desktop which allows you to easily access, query and extract data from external databases. You can choose from Paradox and dBase files and even mix the types together on the spreadsheet. You will think that you have started a Paradox for Windows session when the Database Desktop screen comes up, though you are really in Quattro Pro. The same buttons appear on the SpeedBar, too. When you first start up, you will either find the last table you worked on present or a blank area with one button for creating a new query and there are three menu choices, one of which is File. You will need to choose File and then open a database table to work with. You will be allowed to edit the data or browse through it, both in table view

or form view. There are menu choices that will bring up a query view that enables you to create your own queries on the database or to use predefined queries. If you are in the Database Desktop and want the information from a query to appear in a range of the spreadsheet, this is easy to do, too. In fact, you can use DDE links to and from the spreadsheet to the actual query form, so that changes made on the linked spreadsheet cell will change the query and subsequent output when the new query is performed.

While in the Database Desktop and a table is being viewed, you will find a new set of buttons available on the SpeedBar. These buttons act just like those in Paradox for Windows, in that they allow quick movement through the table and for the user to go into edit mode or field view mode. You can insert new records, delete or modify existing records. All of the special features available in Paradox, like locking of records, field validity checks and field lookups to other tables are also available in the Database Desktop, too. Like most other programs, there are buttons for cutting and pasting on the SpeedBar. If you are not sure what any of the buttons are for, all you need to do is put the mouse cursor over the button and look at the bottom left side of the window and there will be an explanation for the use of the button. This feature also works in the spreadsheet window of Quattro Pro which makes it very helpful in figuring out what some of the little symbols on the buttons are supposed to be telling you they do. I am still using this help, because it is easy to forget, especially since the SpeedBar changes depending upon which mode you are in.

Most of the things you can do in Paradox for Windows, such as modify the view of the table, re-size, rearrange and lock columns and re-size rows are also available in Database Desktop. You just use the mouse cursor to point to the line dividing the columns and then hold down the mouse button and drag in the direction you want the column width to grow or shrink. You can also use drag and drop to move a column to a different place in the table.

One of the nice things about using relational databases, is the ability to join different, but related databases of data into one table of data to be used in some type of report or analysis. For instance, there could be a customer database and a sales database that have a customer number field in common. This common field would be the way that the program would relate the two different databases to each other in order to do the join. Relational databases allow a

query to join these types of databases together in order to create a report, etc. Both 1-2-3 and Quattro Pro will allow you to do a query which creates a join of multiple databases. With Quattro Pro for Windows's Database Desktop you perform the join just the same way you would in Paradox. You create a query on the different tables involved and use the example method to show which fields to relate. In other words, there must be a field that holds the same information in each of the databases. For instance, the customer database would have customer numbers which would relate to the customer numbers used in the sales database. You would create some type of example such as xxx which would be placed into the proper place in the customer number field in the query form for both the customer database and the sales database by using the <F5> key before typing in the example (xxx in this case). You also need to place checkmarks in the fields for each of the fields you want included in the output from the query. When you perform the query, you get an answer table on the Database Desktop, just as if you had done the query in Paradox. You can use cut and paste to take this table over to the spreadsheet or use DDE linking. These queries can be saved by saving with a name of your choice. This allows you to use the same query again without having to set it up each time. In fact, you can use these predefined queries while still in the regular spreadsheet by using the Data Table Query menu choices.

In 1-2-3, the table join is done somewhat differently because of using the criterion and output ranges. In the criterion range you would create a special type of formula that showed the range name for the external database and the field name equaling the other range name for the other database along with its field name. For instance, under the Customer field in the criterion range, you might have a formula like: +CUSTOMER.CUSTNO=SALES.CUSTNUM. You would create a row of field names from each of the databases that you want included in the output. This row would be the output range for the data query extract and the information from the joined tables would be listed below the row. The method used to define which records are included in the results of a query is to put some type of defining information into the criterion range in 1-2-3 or the query form in Quattro Pro's Database Desktop. The types of conditions allowed in 1-2-3 are not as extensive as those allowed in Quattro Pro. You can do exact matches, "not", "and", and "or" types of criteria in both products quite easily. You can also do wild card criteria,

although in 1-2-3 you can only use the wild card at the end of the criteria unlike Quattro Pro which allows its wild card criteria to be placed either at the front or the end. For example if you wanted all names that began with Smith, you would have Smith* for the criteria in 1-2-3 and Smith.. as the criteria in Quattro Pro. If you wanted names that had Smith anywhere in the name, you could use ..Smith.. as the criteria in Quattro Pro.

You can do queries that result in new calculated fields. In 1-2-3, this is achieved by creating a computed column in the output range. Use the field names as part of the formula to create the name of the new field, which serves as the field name for this computed column. In Quattro Pro this calculated field is created by placing a calc query into the proper field of the query form. You would use examples along with the calculation type to tell the query what type of output to calculate. The new field name in the answer table will show the field names and the calculation. For example, if we wanted to take the amount field and multiply it by the price field, we would type +AMOUNT*PRICE as the field name in the output range in 1-2-3. In Quattro Pro, you might use amt as the example under the amount field in the query form and price as the example under the price field. You would then also need to use those examples to show the calculation you want. So, the actual input under the price field might be: price, calc amt*price. To create an example, you must press the <F5> key before entering the example, so to type in the previous query you would type the following keystrokes: <F5>price,calc <F5>amt*<F5>price. The results are the same in either program. You can do many types of calculations and summary calcula-

tions, such as averages, counts, minimums, maximums and sums.

Quattro Pro also allows queries that will change certain information in a chosen field, find records which are LIKE the criteria besides being an exact match, or, do inner and outer joins of tables. Essentially, if you can do it in a query in Paradox, you can do the same query via the Database Desktop of Quattro Pro. This is much more flexible than what you can do in 1-2-3, although you will be surprised just how many different types of queries can be accomplished in 1-2-3. If you do extensive work with Paradox or dBase databases and want to do further analysis of the data from within a spreadsheet, then either one of these products would work for you. Quattro Pro can do everything 1-2-3 can do, plus much more. It is easier to do the work in the Database Desktop, because it is set up like the database. You will be able to read any version of Paradox or dBase data from the Database Desktop, and hopefully, from the next version of 1-2-3/W.

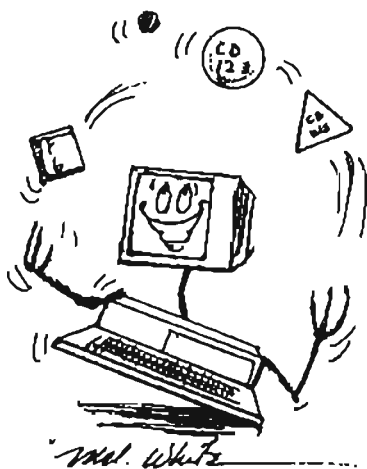
The WYSIWYG features of these spreadsheet products allow you to create very attractive reports from the results of the queries and data manipulation. Quattro Pro has a SpeedFormat button that works like the SmartFormat in 1-2-3's SmartPak, but it is much more flexible and has a large choice of format versions. With it you can choose which parts of the report you want to format, such as the row totals, column headings, fonts, line drawing and alignment, etc. This allows for tremendous flexibility in the SpeedFormat and makes formatting the report very quick to do.

Borland includes an entire manual just for using the Database Desktop. In it you will find lots of examples of the many types of queries available to the user. Reading it, reminds me of reading parts of the Paradox manual. Lotus needs to beef up their documentation on using the Datalens drivers in 1-2-3. Hopefully, we will see this happen along with the improvements expected in the next version.

Next month I hope to write about some of the new products I've seen in the past few months. Excel 4.0 is just one of the interesting products now on the market that I plan to discuss.

Betty

□



Betty has a spreadsheet and database consulting business called Records & Ranges. She can be reached at 214-618-1608 (4312 Bragg Place, Plano, TX 75024) if you have any questions or suggestions for this column.

Selected SIG HAPPENINGS

News and meeting notes of Special Interest Groups

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

Assembler SIG

The Assembler SIG September meeting featured a presentation on the use of segment directives in the assembly process. Our October meeting will feature a discussion of protected mode programming. Please plan to attend the meeting - we welcome suggestions for topics, etc. See you there.

Frank D. Cavallito

BBS SIG

The purpose of this SIG is to bring you up to speed on the new Bulletin Board System (BBS) provided for NTPCUG members. It is our desire to see it used as much as possible to the benefit of our members.

The new TBBS software has now been installed for about 6 months, and continues to get rave reviews. If you wish to become more proficient in its use, or just want to know the basics, drop by.

Our meetings are very flexible, and we will typically stay beyond 3:00 if there are individual questions, etc. Topics might include how to decompress and install shareware communications programs (Telix, Telemate, QMODEM, etc), ways to speed up TBBS operation, TBBS features, and more. We meet at 2:00 PM each Super Saturday, so join us!

Doug Gorrie

Business Applications/DAC Accounting SIG

The presentation of Avagio Publishing System v 2.0, by Randy Rice at our September meeting was a big hit as was the drawing for several classy ceramic tipped pens and two copies of the software. All of these goodies were generously supplied by the publisher, Unison World Software, 1321 Harbor Bay Pkwy., Alameda, CA 94501, Phone 1-800-444-7553. We really appreciate their generosity and want to publicly thank Randy for his presentation and for making arrangements for the prizes. I'm sure that all the winners will enjoy using them.

Our October 17, meeting will be directed toward DAC Software, once again. DAC began shipping DAC Easy Accounting v 4.3, this month and we are fortunate to enlist the services of Keith MaGee, Director of Channel Sales for DAC, to provide a demonstration of what I feel is a highly tuned-up release of the smooth running but somewhat slow v 4.2. The print activities have been greatly accelerated, eliminating the long pauses in 4.2 while the data is searched for the information required to produce such things as Sales or Purchase Journals, as well as many reports.

There are lots of other improvements, as a result of DAC listening to suggestions from their many users as well as their Certified Consultants. We'll save them for Keith. Whether you are an established DAC Accounting user or are looking for a full featured accounting program, you won't want to miss his presentation. I'm sure that we will have a drawing for software and, as usual, you must be present at the demonstration in order to be included in the drawing.

Putt Shaw

Communications SIG

The meetings in August and September centered on how modems work, including all the various standards and protocols (V.22, V.32bis, etc) that confuse us. We started from ground zero, explaining how digital computer data is converted by modems for transmission over telephone lines. From there, we analyzed the protocols developed by Bell Labs and the CCITT, explaining what each one meant. We even demonstrated, through diagrams, how these standards are implemented in day to day use. And, if you thought "baud" and "bps" were interchangeable terms, you learned otherwise.

For those of you that were on vacation, don't fret. We'll do this presentation again next year.

For October, we are hoping to get a representative of Southwestern Bell to come in and discuss "POTS" (Plain Old Telephone Service). When your communications link creates garbage, or won't support your 115 kbps transmission speed, this discussion will (hopefully) explain why. As of press time, this wasn't set



in concrete, so we might have to fall back to Q&A.

In the near future (probably in December), we plan to cover data transfer protocols (XMODEM, ZMODEM, KERMIT, etc.). Plan on being with us for that discussion.

Also, if you are interested in learning more about our TBBS Bulletin Board System (BBS), join us at that SIG's 2:00 PM time. The Communications SIG, of course, will continue to meet at Noon.

See you on October 17!

Doug Gorrie & Bill Green

DOS SIG

Wow! We did it again. October DOS SIG will meet in the Main Auditorium with the Hardware SIG to hear Adaptec wax eloquent on the SCSI interface and what it means for users.

Adaptec is one of the premier SCSI forces and maker of some of the better-regarded SCSI boards for PC's. CD-ROM's are only one example of the spread of SCSI technology that promises to free users from the IRQ tyranny we've tolerated since the PC/XT. Adaptec's presentation should be extremely illuminating for DOS SIG and Hardware SIG members.

On a more mundane note, it's hippity, happity, hoppity, beta time again! That means at least one of the DOS SIG Leaders (if not BOTH) will once more be under Microsoft non-disclosure agreement.

Does this mean an end to candid comment in the DOS SIG Meet-

ings? No, DOS 6.0 and Windows NT aren't the end of the world. There's a new bug-control release of OS/2 2.0 due out "Real soon now," as well as lots of remaining questions about DOS 5.0.

Come to the October DOS SIG Meeting in the Infomart Main Auditorium and we'll hash out solutions for the problems sure to follow hardware innovation(s) now being announced by hopeful vendors.

Reagan Andrews

Desktop Publishing SIG

We will hold an info-sharing and "Hey, look us over" meeting of this brand NEW SIG at 12:00 noon on October 17th. The room number will be posted. We will be an interdisciplinary forum, not a Pagemaker or QuarkExpress support group, e.g.

Topics may include sloppyware fiascoes, hardware choices, dpi choices, BBS echoes, binding, printing, typography, halftones and the five little splatters, software directions, job market implications, full fontal viewing, how-to materials, vendors, resource groups, cheap PostScript printing, newsletter/book/mag publishing, and MAC jokes. Expect lots of wise and witty participants who together can find all the answers that leave lone rangers breathless.

We have been granted this one meeting to prove that there are enough of us interested in this discipline to keep the SIG active. We must also submit two names to act as SIG leader and assistant!!! If you are interested in these glamorous and lucrative positions, please call Lewis Graber at (214) 335-9103 (metro, sort of) evenings ASAP, or leave me a

note on our club BBS, so we can strew palm fronds in your path as we plan future meetings.

If you can volunteer well ahead of the October 10th PC News deadline for November events, we can hold this valuable resource group together and get our own conference on the club's BBS.

We also believe in shameless bribery. There will be a free drawing for some PostScript emulator software which allows printing of high-quality PostScript files on dot matrix, inkjet or laser printers!

Lewis Graber

General Genealogy SIG

The General Genealogy SIG meets from 9 to 10 a.m. and is one of four genealogy SIGs that meet each Super Saturday. Attendance at the August meeting was 65. It was announced there is now a monthly newsletter available. It is called Computer Genealogy Notebook, 1104 Carroll Dr., Garland, TX 75041-5011 (\$13 for 12 issues). It's aim is to make the computer transparent to the genealogist. It offers step-by-step solutions to the reader's problems.

The program in August was on the primary software programs used by the SIG attendees and other popular genealogy software programs that are available. The name of these particular programs was presented and then a SIG user of each type told of that program's good and bad points. A list of these programs and their capabilities are in the September issue of Computer Genealogy Notebook. It was apparent that a good many SIG members used more than one of these programs. The most apparent reason for this



is that the different programs offer different methods of entering data and printing out data. Therefore, one program is used solely for inputting all the genealogy data and for producing certain types of data outputs, such as family group sheets, descendent charts, etc. Then one or more programs are used to print out data type outputs not available with the user's main program. These outputs are, generally, box charts, graphs, and reports. The reports can be printed in book form complete with an index - all work done by the computer. The method of transferring data between programs is GEDCOM. This is a standardized form of ASCII agreed upon by the makers of genealogical software. Therefore, it is almost imperative that any program one buys is GEDCOM compatible. The most popular GEDCOM programs with the SIG members are (listed in alphabetical order): Brother's Keeper, Everyone's Family Tree, Family Roots, Family Tree Journal, Family Tree Maker, PAF, Roots 3, and The Family Edge.

September's program will be DOS - Windows - OS/2. It will try to show the history of the progression of the software, the benefits of each to genealogy, and the projected future.

Al Sanford

PAF SIG

Personal Ancestry File (PAF) is a genealogy software program. The Dallas PAF users group meets from 10 to 11 a.m. on Super Saturdays. This software has

both IBM and Macintosh versions. There were 56 present for the August meeting.

Travis Morris, the SIG leader, was the discussion leader. The first part was an informal question and answer session. The latter part discussed PAFability, a software utility program for PAF. PAFability had been discussed before but only briefly. August's program demonstrated and expanded on the software package's capabilities. PAFability is a shareware (\$12 registration) program which can be obtained from the PAF disk library to try out for \$2. It's creator is Barbara Bennett, 6426 Pound Apple Court, Columbia, Maryland 21045-5414. She provides technical support from 9 pm to 11 pm Eastern Time at 410-381-1735. The current release is version 2.0. One of our members, Leonard McCown, has been in contact with her and influenced some of the changes in version 2.0. PAFability produces a report, or book, of PAF data complete with index. This output is a modified form of the "Register" or "New England System." The major advantage of this program to PAF users is that they do not have to GEDCOM their PAF data to programs like Brother's Keepers, or Roots 3, etc. in order to have a report.

PAFability has an Options Menu, which give the user great flexibility. There is a report selection, which allows choice of single or cascading report (descendants of a specified individual or a chart for each end-of-line ancestor of an individual), you can use the default record number, or choose RIN field, or choose ID field. It gives the option of which notes to print, whether to capitalize surname, abbreviate titles, include RIN, include IF, etc. The report can be printed

in regular type, 10 characters per inch, or compressed, 17 characters per inch. There is even an option to print on both sides of the paper. The report can be output to a file instead of a printer, if you so desire. The advantage of this you can then use your favorite word processor to fine tune the report.

Al Sanford

Paradox SIG

Betty Brooks has done an excellent job of working with the local Borland office and coordinating a joint presentation of both Paradox 4.0 (Windows?) and Quattro Pro (Windows?). This is the inter-operability presentation that I just could not get to happen earlier this year.

The plan is to have Borland personnel start the presentation in the Paradox SIG and carry on through the Spreadsheet Developers SIG which immediately follows our Paradox SIG in the same meeting room.

This should prove to be a most interesting presentation and a good work out of two fairly new products. I don't think that Borland will have the resources available to do the Supermarket emulation I saw a couple of years ago, but a less structured environment provides for better audience participation.

This should be a good follow on presentation as we are having the first look at Paradox 4.0 at the September SIG.

We owe a special thanks to Betty Brooks of the Spreadsheet SIGs for putting this one together.

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 PC's... a person curious about PC's... a soon-to-be PC owner... a personal (versus professional) PC user... or... a PC user needing to review some "fundamentals".

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), we take a month off and then 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 (except our month off) 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 the NTPCUG before you attend... ALTHOUGH YOUR 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 the hassles... and best of all... the classes are FREE!

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

October 1992 is our month off.
Come see us in November when
we start up again.

Bob Presley

Spreadsheet SIG Spreadsheet Developers SIG

Plans for the October meetings of the Paradox and Spreadsheet Developers SIGS include showing Paradox and Quattro Pro for Windows working together, plus some demonstrations on how to use DDE, OLE and the dialog box creator, etc. This could be a very interesting program for all levels database and spreadsheet users. The Paradox SIG meets at 10 AM in the same room as the Spreadsheet Developers SIG which meets at 11 AM. Plan to attend these SIGs in hope of seeing the new products and how to use them. Even if you are not a Quattro Pro spreadsheet user, you will be able to learn interesting functions that will apply to other Windows products.

The Spreadsheet SIG will meet at 1 PM down in the auditorium where the main meeting will have a presentation on Quattro Pro for Windows which will

show us all the great new features of this product.

Betty Brooks

Unix SIG

Well, let's see here. I'm going to have to peek into the old crystal ball again to see what happened at the September meeting.

If everything has gone according to the plan, we will have discussed some of the basics of life with Unix. There will hopefully have been some discussion on the basics of the system, the login process, the shell and how it relates to everything else, and just what ARE processes anyway?

Seriously, we'll be taking the next few months to explore and discuss the fundamentals of Unix. Over the next few months we'll talk about shell scripts, editors, system to system communication, and networking.

The exception to this schedule will be the meeting on October 17th. At that meeting representatives of Informix Software will give a presentation on several of their products. Please join us for what promises to be an interesting presentation.

Jim Stallworth

Word SIG

Wow! It's another revision of Word for Windows 2.0 (W4W 2.0). This time it's Word for Windows 2.0B. So what's all the noise about? Come to the October WORD SIG Meeting and see.

Since I'm writing this before the September WORD SIG Meeting, there's a good chance that the new W4W 2.0B release will be discussed in September. If so, we'll



look at type color and other attributes in October as well as discuss the latest W4W bug-fix release.

What about Word for DOS? Word 5.5 is two years-old, a little ragged around the edges and ready for upgrade. Can we expect it this year? That's one of the questions we'll explore in the October Word SIG Meeting.

Bring your questions about Microsoft's Word products to the meeting. We'll end on a general Q & A session where printer drivers, type handling, spell checking, etc., will be open for inspection.

Reagan Andrews

**WANTED:
MORE ARTICLES
FOR North Texas
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Members of North Texas PC Users Group now have additional incentives to writing articles for their monthly newsletter, North Texas PC NEWS.

Writing four or more articles of at least 400 words during a single membership year entitles you to a one-year extension of your membership in the Group. At the end of your membership year simply forward a listing of your published articles and the month they were published to the Membership Chairman in lieu of dues.

Offer open to all members.



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Applications should be mailed to: North Texas PC Users Group, P.O. Box 780066, Dallas, TX 75378-0066
(Make checks payable to NTPCUG)

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.

NEW DISKS

...from the DOM Squad

Disk 750. CMOSCHK, CMOSREST, CMOSSAVE Version 1.3 - Saves/Restores CMOS Settings, Canadian Mind Products, 1020 Mainland Street, #138, Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 2T4. Registration Fee: \$20.00.

CMOSCHK, CMOSREST, and CMOSSAVE are three programs to save and restore the settings in your computer's CMOS so that if those settings are inadvertently changed, you can restore them without having to know all of the settings. Why do you need these programs - 1) users sometime change CMOS settings without knowing it and do not how to restore them (let alone what they were in the first place); 2) power surges can corrupt the CMOS settings; and 3) if the battery fails, the CMOS settings will be lost.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM AT, PS/2 or compatible that uses CMOS settings for systems configurations.

To install the programs, make a directory on your hard disk, make that directory current, place this disk in drive A:, and type COPY A:.* at the DOS prompt. Or alternatively copy the files into a utility directory.

CMOSSAVE saves the CMOS settings to a file to a hard disk or floppy disk. You should save the CMOS to both a hard disk and a floppy disk. The command to save the CMOS settings to a file is CMOSSAVE PATH\FILENAME where PATH\FILENAME is the drive, path, and filename of the file that you want to use to store the CMOS settings.

CMOSREST restores CMOS settings from a file stored on the hard disk or floppy disk. The command to restore the CMOS

is CMOSREST
PATH\FILENAME.

CMOSCHK checks to see if the CMOS setting have been changed from those setting stored in the CMOS settings file. This program is very useful in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file. If the CMOS settings are stored on the hard disk in the file C:\CMOS.SET, adding the following commands to your AUTOEXEC.BAT file will automatically restore the CMOS settings if the settings are different than those in the C:\CMOS.SET file:

```
CMOSCHK.COM
C:\CMOS.SET IF
ERRORLEVEL 1 CMOSR-
EST.COM C:\CMOS.SET
```

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Leafman(8/92).

Disk 751. Metric-X 2.02, 5/92 - Metric Conversion Program, Orion Development Corporation, P.O. Box 2323, Merrifield, VA 22166-2323. Registration Fee: \$24.95 + \$2.75 S/H.

Metric-X is a metric conversion utility and is designated as an "Accepted Metric Conversion Tool" by the U.S. Interagency Council on Metric Policy's Metric Operating Committee (ICMP/MOC) and has been submitted for review by the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, Inc. (IEEE), the American National Metric Council (ANMC), the United States Metric Association (USMA), and the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS).

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM PC/XT/AT, PS/2, or compatible with 128K of available memory.

Using the program is very easy. Just select the type of conversion such as length, the "from" measurement, and the "to" measurement, and then the program gives you the answer. It is just that simple.

One other interesting aspect of the program are the other *.DOC files that are included. Many of these DOC files are federal laws and regulations, or contacts for those interested in metric conversion, laws, and contacts. These additional files are great for those interested in the metric system and would be a great addition to a teaching curriculum.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Leafman(8/92).

Disk 752. Writer's Dream 2.0, 7/92 - Electronic Book Creator/Reader, Jeff Napier, Another Company, P.O. Box 298, Applegate, OR 97530. Shareware fee = \$19.95 or \$9.95.

Wanna write a book? You probably know something very useful and possibly unique. Perhaps you are a retired glass blower, or know everything about training seeing-eye dogs, or could teach people how to cook nutritious foods. Perhaps you could write a course in industrial grinder safety, or volleyball, or advanced electronics, or elementary geology. Maybe you would be good at writing science fiction or children's stories.

But why bother? Becoming a published author is nearly as difficult as becoming a rock 'n' roll star. Self-publishing costs money and requires marketing skill. GUESS WHAT? There is another way to be published that works for absolutely everybody! Yet, almost no one knows about it. Using this technique costs almost nothing, but literally millions of people will read your writing! What are we talking about? The

Writer's Dream. The Writer's Dream is a way to put your information on IBM-compatible disks.

Let's say you have written a disk about house cats. You release it as a shareware product. This means you send copies to some shareware distributors. There are 72 million IBM-compatible computer users in America. Almost all of them are frequent shareware buyers. Some of them will get your disk, and they will make copies, which will in turn be read and copied by others. Eventually, one person out of every ten is likely to read your disk-based cat book. You, with your own little computer, will be an author with 72 million readers! And that's not all. You can put a commercial in your disk which inspires some of the readers to send you money. For instance, your commercial could introduce another disk-based book you have also written, called Dogs. Dogs is not shareware. The only way the readers can get your excellent dog disk is to send you \$19.95! If only one out of every 100 of these 72 million people send you money, you'll make over one million dollars! No doubt you see the potential!

Easy-to-use for both the author and the end user, Writer's Dream is colorful, allowing the reader to change the colors to suit. It has some special features like automatic electronic indexing, on-line help, and "Autoscroll." Automatic indexing simply means that the reader can press the [S] key at any time, type any word or phrase, and instantly find it anywhere within a chapter. Autoscroll is really neat. Simply type a number from 1 to 9 while reading, and the program will scroll the text past your eyes at whatever speed is comfortable. The Writer's Dream main menu is mouse-driven for those who prefer a mouse interface.

Copy all the files to a subdirectory on your hard disk, type BEGIN, and press ENTER, and by reading an electronic book using Writer's Dream it

you'll learn how to use this interesting program.

The source of this disk is the author.

This review prepared by John Puckette, edited by Mark Gruner(8/92).

Disk 753. SkyGlobe 3.1, 6/92 - Fast & Easy Astronomy Program, by Mark A. Haney, KassM Software, 284 142nd Avenue, Caledonia, MI 49316. Registration Fee: \$20.00.

SkyGlobe 3.1 is a fast and easy astronomy program that provides a realistic display of celestial bodies. The author claims that it is the fastest program of its kind available. SkyGlobe could be used to plan a night's viewing, or to learn about the stars. SkyGlobe displays 25,000 stars, constellation lines, the planets, Sun, Moon, the Messier Objects, the Milky Way, and more from over 230 locations from around the world.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM PC/XT/AT with a CGA/EGA/VGA monitor and 640K of memory.

The documentation is well written and should be read by the users to get the most from the program. The documentation includes lots of help for novices and tips on using the program.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman(8/92).

Disk 754. Party Planner, 3/92 - Party Organizer and Planner, Smart-N-Easy (tm) Party Planner, Automated Systems, 386 Main Street, P.O. Box 192, Little Falls, NJ 07424. Registration Fee: \$15.00.

Party Planner is designed to help you plan a party so that you enjoy the party itself instead of all of the little details. This program helps to organize your plans, schedule, guest list, seating chart, gifts received, contributions, expenses, budget, and others:

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM XT/AT, PS/2, or compatible with at least 512K of RAM and a hard disk with at least 1M of available space.

If you have to plan a big party such as Birthday, Retirement, Fund Raisers, Prom, Engagement, Bridal/Baby Showers, Graduation, Reunions, or just a really big party, Party Planner could really help have a successful party and help to insure that all the details are just right.

Minimal documentation is available, but little is needed since the program is easy to use.

This software was downloaded and donated by the author.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman(8/92).

Disk 755. Wedding Planner 2.0, 2/92 - Wedding Organizer and Planner, Smart-N-Easy (tm) Wedding Planner, Automated Systems, 386 Main Street, P.O. Box 192, Little Falls, NJ 07424. Registration Fee: \$15.00.

Wedding Planner is designed to help you plan a wedding so that you enjoy the wedding itself instead of worrying about all of the little details. This program is packed with features including guest list maintenance, bride and groom appointments schedulers, customizable planning guide, checklists, reminders, honeymoon planner, expense and budget tracker, and gift recording to name a few.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM XT/AT, PS/2, or compatible with at least 512K of RAM and a hard disk with at least 1M of available space.

Minimal documentation is available, but little is needed since the program is easy to use.

This software was downloaded and donated by the author.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman(8/92).

Disk 756. Word Search Puzzle Maker, 3/92 - Creates Word Search Puzzles, by Steve Groll, Impact D. Publishing, P.O. Box 1596, Palm Desert, CA 92261.

Word Search Puzzle Maker (WSPM) quite simply makes word search puzzles. The user can create their own lists of words and then tell the program to create the word search puzzle. The user has control over the size of the puzzle, style of word in the puzzle (up, down, diagonal, backwards), and other features.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM PC/XT/AT with at least 512K of RAM.

Documentation that explains all of the neat details and customizations of WSPM.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman(8/92).

Disk 757. Magic Crayon 1.03, 9/91 - Coloring Program for Children, Alive Software, P.O. Box 4004, Santa Clara, CA 96056. Registration Fee: \$18.00.

Magic Crayon is a collection of three colorful and fun games for children 3 to 12 years old. The program is a creative and challenging experience for young children who like to explore and experiment with color and shapes. There are two levels of difficulty, menu operation, on-line help, mouse support, scorekeeping, and nice graphics.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM PC/XT/AT, PS/2 or compatible with EGA or VGA monitor, a mouse, and 256K of memory.

On each picture, there are suggested colors. To select a color, move the mouse to a color on the right side of the screen and click on it. Then move the pointer to a component of the picture and click the mouse again and that section turns to that color. When the picture is

completed, the user is rewarded with a song.

Registered users will receive an additional 50 colorful pictures.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman(8/92).

Disk 758. Jill of the Jungle 1.0, 5/92 - Epic MegaGames Adventure Game, by Epic MegaGames, 10406 Holbrook Drive, Potomac, MD 20854. Registration Fee: \$15.00 (\$30 for all three volumes).

Jill of the Jungle of the is a Nintendo-style arcade adventure game with 256-color VGA graphics (but also supports CGA and EGA), great sound effects. The game is equipped with a save feature so that you can stop and then come back and start where you left off. All this and sound-blaster support.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM XT/AT, PS/2 or compatible with at least 512K of RAM and about 1M of hard disk space. The authors recommend a 80286 or better processor. CGA/EGA/VGA graphics is supported.

The game includes a demo and instructions. Have fun.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.

This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman(8/92).

This Disk Distributed on 1.2M Disk Only.

Disk 759. Galatix 1.3, 6/92 - Arcade-like Space Game, Cygnus Software, Suite 309, 98 W 63rd Street, Willowbrook, IL 60514. Registration Fee: \$15.00.

Galatix is set in the year 2019 when the last tree in the rain forest is cut and the Earth is being invaded by Xidus fighters. Your mission is to destroy all of the Xidus fighters, the Xidus command ship (in wave 49), and finally the evil overlord's flagship (in wave 100). In the

course of the game you can get extra laser cannons, energy, bombs, missiles, and retrieve bonuses.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM AT, PS/2, or compatible with a VGA monitor, 2.5M of available hard disk space, and 560K of available RAM.

Galatix has great graphics and is challenging. The Xidus fighters come in waves and you have to shoot'em down while evading the shots the fighters they are firing at your ship.

Since the authors are concerned about the rain forests, a percentage of all profits will be donated to help save the rain forest.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.
This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman(8/92).

This Disk Distributed on 1.2M Disk Only

Disk 760. Animated Words, 5/92 – Educational Spelling Game, by Tom Guthery IV, Rt. 1, Box 601, DelValle, TX 78617. Registration Fee: \$12.00.

Animated Words is a spelling program for children from preschool through first grade. The child is helped to match a word with the word's picture. Then the word is correctly matched, pieces are added to a puzzle. After five correct answers, the puzzle becomes animated. The program includes sound including speech.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM XT/AT, PS/2, or compatible with an EGA or VGA monitor, 640K of RAM and approximately 1.5M of available hard disk space.

This version of the program has 50 words and 10 puzzles. Registered users will receive an additional 100 words and 20 puzzles.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.
This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman(8/92).

Disk 761. Xyphr 2.0, 6/92 – VGA Arcade Game, by Eugene Lin, 200 Lincoln Road, Horseheads, NY 14845-2266. Registration Fee: \$20.00.

Xyphr is an arcade-style game where the user is in control of the most agile and powerful space vehicles in the solar system. Your vehicle has a 2 million watt laser cannon and the best shield the space program can afford. Your mission is to find what is out there and then destroy it. The enemy constantly comes at you with energy pulses, fireballs, and projectiles.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM PC/XT/AT, PS/2, or compatible running DOS 3.3 or higher and a VGA monitor. A mouse and hard disk are recommended but not required.

Xyphr has excellent 256-color graphics as well as excellent animation. When you move your ship to the right or left, the ship tilts that way. Similarly, when you increase or decrease altitude, the ship's appearance reflects the change in pitch. What's even better is the graphics are fast.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.
This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman(8/92).

This Disk Distributed on 1.2M Disk Only

Disk 762. Castle of the Winds, 5/92 – Windows Game from Epic MegaGames, by Epic MegaGames, 10406 Holbrook Drive, Potomac, MD 20854. Registration Fee: \$25.00.

Castle of the Winds is a fantasy role-playing game for Windows 3.0 or 3.1. You quest begins with "A Question of Vengeance" as you try to discover the secret of your mysterious past, and why it has proven so deadly to those you love. This game is set in the world of Norse mythology with lots of surprises including a hundred unique monsters, and enchanted objects.

Castle of the Winds is also a new style of adventure game in that most of the adventure is created anew every time you play.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM or compatible computer running Windows 3.0 or 3.1, 1M of available hard disk space.

Np documentation is available on disk, but the Help file is quite extensive and should answer most of your questions. However, some preliminary information is available on the disk.

This software was downloaded and donated by Mark Gruner.
This review prepared by Mark Gruner, edited by Kathryn Loafman(8/92).

Disk 763ABC. PC-File 6.5, 6/92 – Full-featured Database by Buttonware, P.O. Box 96058, Bellevue, WA 98009-4469, (206)454-1838 Fax.

This version is Jim Button's return to the Shareware Arena with this enhanced Relational Data Base. Numerous additions and speedups have been incorporated over all previous

versions including the non-shareware version 6.0.

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS: Any IBM XT/AT, PS/2, or compatible with at least 640K of memory.

PC-File now has a Graphical User Interface! You can organize, retrieve and manipulate information with buttons, scroll bars, pull-down menus and dialog boxes. Analyze data with relational retrieve, relational posting, search/query, duplicate record check and global update. Print mailing labels, mail merge letters, custom reports, charts & graphs. Plus bar code printer support, macros, full mouse support and more! Requires hard drive and 450K available Ram. There are 3 diskettes in the set.

Special Note: The Program Documentation on the 3rd diskette will produce a stack of printed paper about 3 inches in volume, make sure that you have a good ribbon and plenty of continuous paper in your printer.

The source of this software was the publisher, Buttonware, Inc.
This review prepared by Roy Bales, edited by Mark Gruner (8/92).

DOM Mail Order Form

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Inside the North Texas PC Users Group Community

Connie Andrews

A special thanks to Alex Lilley (SIG Coordinator) and Randy Wicks for pitching in to help at the Information Booth when they discovered we were short-handed. Neither one was scheduled to work the booth in August; they just saw the need and stepped up to bat.

This is certainly not the first time our members have joined the team on such short notice. The DOM Booth has benefited from the same generosity, as have SIG Leaders, auditorium and vendor setup/breakdown.

We try to schedule a full slate of volunteers for the meeting but emergencies sometimes deplete our ranks. And occasionally we just need a few extra

hands. If you have a little free time, stop by the DOM or Information Booth to see if you can help out. Or offer your assistance to a SIG Leader, or for auditorium or vendor setup/breakdown. We'll all be glad you did...

In this issue we are acknowledging volunteers who served for the month of AUGUST. In addition to those listed below, our officers, directors, SIG coordinators and leaders, newsletter publisher, editor, staff and writers, newsletter exchange, and BBS SYSOP and staff are all volunteers; their names are listed in other sections of this newsletter.

PLEASE remember to say thanks to our volunteers!

INFOMART Liaison
Stuart Yarus

Vendor Setup/Breakdown
Anchors:
David Slavik
Frank Dorer
Crew:
Jack Atkinson
Mark Beitzel
Martin Mills

Auditorium Presentations
Timothy Carmichael
Chris Jung
Christopher Carmichael

Information/Registration
Booth
Statistician:
Connie Testa
Scheduler:
Dianne Arnold
Anchors:
Conley Andrews
Harvey Andrews
Dianne Arnold (2 hrs.)
John Arnold
Ralph Beaver
Rick Griffith
Allan Harbaugh
Hank Holt
David Huckabee
Wade Mayfield
Claude McClure
Jean Waldrep
Peyton Weaver
Bob Wuller

Booth Crew:
Loyce Coolidge
Nancy Feaster
Martin Gluck
Alex Lilley
David Martin
John Trotter
Randy Wicks
Floater:
Pehl. Lee

Disk of the Month
(DOM)
DOM Desk Crew:
Joe Allen (2 hrs.)
Doug Athas
Ralph Beaver
Rob Bender
Stan Berlin
Gene Carleton
Charles Carter
Jay Chambliss
James Donlon
Thomas Goodwin
Jimmy Green
Kent Haven (2 hrs.)
Pat Henley (2 hrs.)
Jo Johnston
Lloyd McKeethen
Kathryn Loafman
Duane Martin
Cliff Murphy
Bob Post
George Read
Craig Ringener
Elain Stephens
Oscar Tyler
Claude Walston

With Special Thanks to:

Set-Up Crew:
Jay Chambliss
Kent Haven
Pat Henley
Jerry Stone
Shift Supervisors:
Gene Carleton
Jay Chambliss
Kent Haven
Pat Henley
Kathryn Loafman
Claude Walston

Inventory and Take-Down
Crew:
Ralph Beaver
Charles Carter
Jimmy Green
Kathryn Loafman
DOM Desk Scheduler:
Charles Cashion
Disks-for-Review Man-
ager:
Howard Hamilton
Disk Production:
Kathryn Loafman
Kenneth Loafman

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

1. Via BBS: (214)387-2751, (214)387-2752 or (214)263-9036 (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:

Auditorium Presentations Timothy Carmichael	861-4826 (w)
DOM Booth Scheduler Charles Cashion	881-0952 (h) 519-2583 (w)
DOM Software Review Howard Hamilton	644-5721 (h)
Information Booth and General Information Connie Andrews	828-0699 (h)



9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

SCSI: The Enabling Technology

(See page 1 for description of programs.)

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

R:BASE 4.0 - The First 32-bit PC-Based Relational DBMS

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

NTPCUG Business Meeting

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Quattro Pro for Windows

Special Interest Groups

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.

9:00 - 9:55	11:00 - 11:55	12:00 - 12:55 cont
BASIC Programming-Visual DOS General Genealogy Hardware Solutions Personal Users Quicken Software Review Windows Applications WordPerfect	BASIC Programming-Begin. Assembler Community Service Family Roots - Gnlgy. MS Works Roots III - Genealogy Spreadsheet Developers Windows Developers	R:Base TI Pro General Mlg cont
10:00 - 10:55	11:30 - 11:55	1:00 - 1:55
BASIC Programming-Adv. CAD dBase for TI Pro Fox Pro Database Local Area Networks PAF - Genealogy Paradox Personal Users Unix/Xenix	Orientation TI Pro General Mlg Alpha Four C++/Advanced C Communications Investors OS/2 for End Users Personal Users	ACTI Beginners C Language Business Apps./DAC Easy OS/2 Developers Personal Users Spreadsheet Startext WORD 2:00 - 2:55 Advanced Programmers BBS

SIG Coordinator	Alex Lilley	(214)953-4970 w (214)517-7430 h
ACTI	Paul Williams Michael Hill Jim Thompson	(214)423-7585 w (214)487-0085 w (214)276-3661
Alpha Four	Ron Jackson	(214)423-9221 h
Assembler	Frank Cavallito	(214)827-7734
BASIC Prog-Adv.	Mike Firth	(214)230-3485 w
BASIC Prog-Visual	Woody Pewitt	(214)283-2292 h (214)235-5968
BASIC Prog-Begin.	Jim Carter Charles Jacobus	(214)224-2880 h (214)296-9736 w (214)233-8353 w (214)775-1503 (214)343-3862 h (214)341-1890 w (214)618-8002 h (214)464-7942 w (817)731-1308 h (214)953-4970 w (214)517-7430 h
Business Applic. C Lang. Begin. C++ / Advanced C	Bruce Schubert Stan Milam Kent Cobb Tom Cook	(214)296-1799 w (214)669-9633 w (214)235-2559 h (214)416-3101 h (214)828-0699 h (214)644-7536 (214)278-7888 h (214)681-0202 h (214)937-9676 w (214)937-5851 h (214)458-9158 (817)461-4120 w (817)451-4540 h
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Community Svc	Bill Green Alex Lilley	(817)731-1308 h (214)953-4970 w (214)517-7430 h
Comp Aided Design DAC Software	Bill Sephton Purt Shaw	(214)296-1799 w (214)669-9633 w (214)235-2559 h
DOS	Jim Holsington Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.	(214)416-3101 h (214)828-0699 h
Fox Pro Genealogy Hdw Solutions	Kevin White AJ Sanford David McGehee Gary Johnson	(214)644-7536 (214)278-7888 h (214)681-0202 h (214)937-9676 w (214)937-5851 h (214)458-9158 (817)461-4120 w (817)451-4540 h
Investors Local Area Net	Nash Kappoor Bernia Van Roekel	(817)461-4120 w (817)451-4540 h
Spreadsheet	Francis Bright Mark Gruner Pat Henley	(214)964-8174 h (214)271-4911 h (214)229-9218 w (214)618-1608 h (214)827-7734 (214)279-1738 h (817)962-4596 w (817)481-4986 w (817)481-6625 (h)
MS Works OS/2 Dev	Betsy Brooks Mike Firth James Dunn	(214)618-1608 h (214)827-7734 (214)279-1738 h (817)962-4596 w (817)481-4986 w (817)481-6625 (h)
OS/2 for End Users	Bob Fernier	(817)481-4986 w (817)481-6625 (h)
Paradox	Fred Williams Greg Kane	(214)492-1315 (214)299-9318 h (214)241-3307 w
Personal Users	Bob Prasley Bob Russell	(214)867-1679 h (214)422-4269 h (214)458-9211 w (214)317-0125 h
Programmers	Kent Klingery	(214)458-9211 w (214)317-0125 h
Quicken	Jim Holsington Billy Pitts	(214)416-3101 h (817)430-8148
R:Base Roots III Software Review	Jo Johnston Don Branham John Wylie Pat Henley	(214)352-0888 h (214)495-4410 (214)271-4911 h (214)229-9218 w (214)964-8174 h (214)618-1608 h (214)271-4911 h (214)229-9218 w (817)355-9594 h (817)478-6665 h (214)821-4788 h (214)634-2360 w (214)348-3766 h (817)267-0758 h (817)878-0367 w (214)596-7807 h (214)604-2228 w (214)618-1266 h (214)618-1266 h
Spreadsheet	Mark Gruner Betsy Brooks Pat Henley	(214)964-8174 h (214)618-1608 h (214)271-4911 h (214)229-9218 w
StarText	Beverly Kurin Jim Boughton James Corbett	(817)355-9594 h (817)478-6665 h (214)821-4788 h (214)634-2360 w (214)348-3766 h (817)267-0758 h (817)878-0367 w (214)596-7807 h (214)604-2228 w (214)618-1266 h (214)618-1266 h
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Unix/Xenix	Jim Stallworth	(214)596-7807 h (214)604-2228 w (214)618-1266 h (214)618-1266 h
Windows Applic. Windows Dev.	Arthur English Arthur English	(214)618-1266 h (214)618-1266 h
WORD	Reagan Andrews, Ph.D. David McGehee Dorothy Bertine Lori Quinn	(214)828-0699 (214)681-0202 h (817)387-9993 h (214)255-0555 w Metro (817)481-6453 h (214)823-9837 w
WordPerfect	Mich Milam	(214)823-9837 w

North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

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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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Reagan Andrews
Jim Holsington

Doug Gorrie
Mark Gruner

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(214)871-5750 w
President-Elect: Doug Gorrie (214)618-8002 h
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Group Statistician: Connie Testa
Volunteer Coord.: Connie Andrews (214)828-0899
BBS: Tom Prickett

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Phil Chamberlain
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Stuart Yarus

NOTE: To access the BBS Metro line from outside Area Code 214, use Area Code 214. (This is NOT a toll call from Fort Worth and the Mid-Cities area.)

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(214)387-2752
(214)263-9036 (Metro)

SYSOP: Tom A. Prickett
TBBS: Fred Williams
User Relations: Adam Peterson
Information Mgt: Doug Gorrie
Technical Services: Leroy Tennison
Adviser: Pete Testa

Voice line for validation problems:
(214)565-2814 Ask for Adam

TI PRO BULLETIN BOARD (214)361-5275
See footnote*

SYSOP: Tom Blackwell

Address Changes, etc...

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.)

* Editor's Note: The TI Professional Computer BBS is a valuable resource to members with TI Pro PCs. If you don't own a TI Pro computer and are tempted to check out this TI Pro BBS, please DON'T. Running TI Pro software on another brand of computer could lock up the machine, reset the CMOS RAM and other such nasties. Fair Warning—.

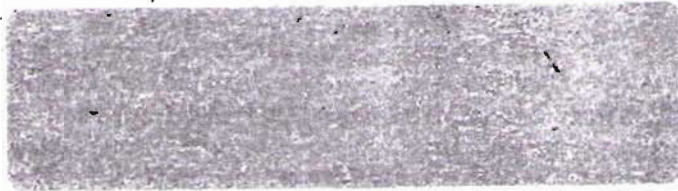


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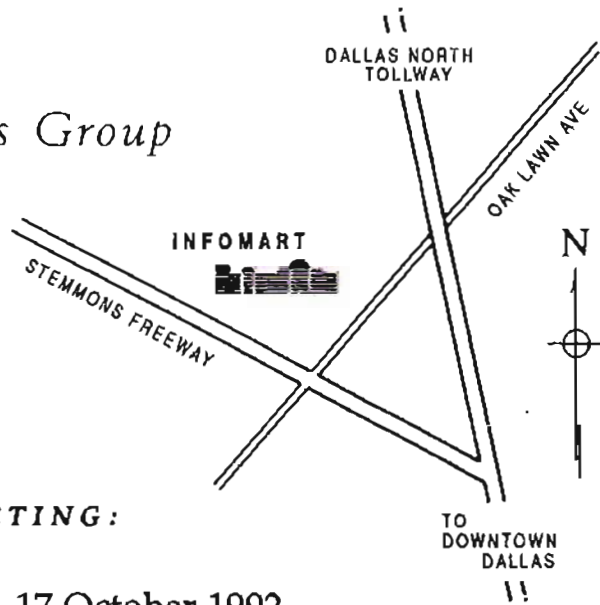
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North Texas PC Users Group



NEXT MEETING:

17 October 1992