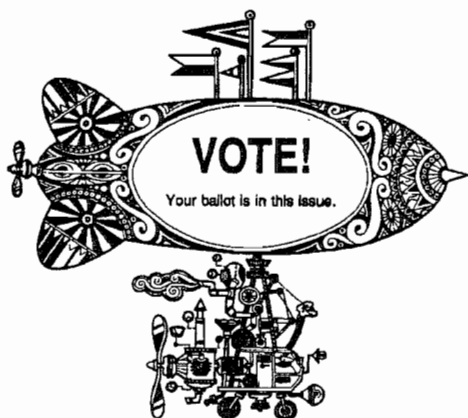


North Texas  NEWS

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*North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.*



*January 1993*

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# North Texas PC NEWS

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### Deadline:

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

### Circulation:

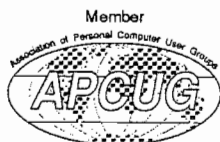
North Texas PC NEWS circulation was 2018 last month. Member distribution was 1721; remaining copies were distributed to PC user groups around the country, and to advertisers, prospective members and others with common interests.

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**DEADLINE**  
Copy deadline for February  
North Texas PC NEWS:  
Sunday, January 10th

### Meeting Dates:

**January Meeting - 3rd Saturday.**  
February Meeting - 2nd Saturday  
March meeting tentatively scheduled  
on the third Saturday.



# Submitting Articles for Publication in North Texas PC NEWS

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

2. **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: 3851 Double Oak Lane, Irving, TX 75061

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

## Table of Contents

President's Message . . . . .	1	
Doug Gorrie		
NTPCUG Community Service . . . . .	4	
Alex Lilley		<i>Special Items:</i>
NTPCUG On-line . . . . .	5	
Fred Williams		
Batch File Tips and Utilities . . . . .	7	Agenda . . . . . 1
Mitchell A. Hoselton, Ph.D.		
Fixing a Dot-Matrix Printer . . . . .	12	Membership Application . . . . . 16
Mike Firth		
Symantec User's Group Summit Part 2 . . . . .	13	Volunteer Guide . . . . . 25
Andy Oliver		
Nominations for Officers—1993 . . . . .	14	SIG Reports . . . . . 26
Ballot is on page 15		
Cells & Ranges . . . . .	16	Officers, Meetings & Times . . . . . 33
Betty Brooks		
Variety Store . . . . .	18	
Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.		
The Visual BASIC Corner . . . . .	22	
Jim Carter		
GENTECH A Genealogy Conference . . . . .	23	
Al Sanford		
Thanks to our Volunteers . . . . .	24	
Doug Gorrie		
Paradox Database, Version 4.0 A Review . . . . .	31	
Jim Hoisington		

# Program for December

Timothy Carmichael

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

## HP LaserJet and PaintJet Printers

Hewlett-Packard Company

*Dean Fortune and Ford Phillips, Corporate Account Representatives*

This presentation will cover the HP LaserJet family of printers including the LaserJet 4 series, and also the HP DeskJet family of color printers including the HP DeskJet 550C and HP DeskJet Portable models. Features and performance characteristics will be detailed and your technical questions will be answered.

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

## Fontographer 3.5 For Windows

Altsys Corporation

*Jim Machock, Account Manager*

From the developers of Aldus FreeHand comes Fontographer, the font creation and editing program for both the novice and professional. With it you can create logos, foreign characters, graphics and calligraphic text with scaled precision drawing tools and assign them to a keystroke within any font. Features include: pressure-sensitive tablet support, automatic and manual hint-editing, plus the ability to create, adjust and import kerning pairs. Superior autotrace capabilities turn bitmaps or scanned images into editable PostScript outlines. There will be a drawing for a free copy. \*

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

## NTPCUG Business Meeting

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

## Windows for Workgroups

Microsoft Corporation

Windows for Workgroups is Microsoft's newest version of Windows which builds networking into the Windows 3.1 operating system making it easier to share information and work together with others. Come see how Windows for Workgroups will change the way people work together in Windows. There will be a drawing for free products. \*

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

## MS-DOS Futures

Microsoft will talk about what to expect in an upcoming version of an operating system. There will be a sneak preview of a soon to be released product.

\* 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.

*Pres Sez...*



### Vote This Month...

As we enter 1993 and I assume my role as 1993's NTPCUG President, it's appropriate to make those notorious "New Year's Resolutions", and give thanks.

Your resolution for January (I'm helping you get started!) is ... To VOTE ... for those that will guide your Users Group through the coming year. As a re-

sult of your willingness to contribute time and effort, we have a record SIX candidates vying for the three general Board of Director positions, and one for President-Elect. Thanks to the many folks that called to discuss filling the Board positions.

PLEASE LOCATE YOUR OFFICIAL BALLOT NOW within this publication, cut it out and complete it. To cast your ballot, you may either mail it as directed on the ballot or BRING IT WITH YOU on Saturday, January 16 for deposit in the Ballot Box at the Information Booth. Ballots will NOT be available at the Infomart meeting.

### 1993...

Somewhat to my surprise, being 1992 President-Elect has actually been FUN!! And with that year as a

*Prez Sez...* continued

training period, I actually feel ready to assume the role of President. Fortunately, there are LOTS of good folks available to assist, many of whom have been part of NTPCUG since its inception. As President, I'll get more calls and be more involved, but will always be a part of a team effort.

I'm also beginning to realize what it's like to have Christmas year round. As the "Prez", I'm already getting various mailings from hardware and software vendors around the country. Many of these make great Business Meeting giveaways, while others go to our software reviewers. Some are advertising, which I read diligently, of course?!

What's in the works for 1993? I'd like to see continued improvements in BBS capabilities, including V.32 bis (14,400 bps) access on all lines, availability of an off-line mail reader, and connections to an echo-mail network. I'd be ecstatic to see us top 2000 members this year, too (see below).

**Membership Increases...**

THANKS go to you, the NTPCUG membership, for making our organization successful. As of 12/1/92, we have grown to 1732 paid members (12/1/92 data), an increase of 108 over 12 months. This is SUPER! Keep those new members coming.

A major software vendor has tentatively agreed to pay a large portion of dues for NEW members who join in February, IF they will attend his auditorium presentation. Watch for more details in the February newsletter, and line up your friends and business associates for this one time reduction in membership costs.

**Volunteers...**

Thanks goes to ALL the volunteers, without whom there would be no NTPCUG. Find the "Volunteer Guide" section in this newsletter, and note how many of your fellow members spend time helping. And there are MORE participating as SIG Leaders, Officers, and in many "behind the scenes" activities. A club as large as ours needs a LOT of people resources, but the more that volunteer, the less the pressure on any one individual.

Several folks have contributed heavily over the years. Because of the significance of their contribution, I've moved their "Thanks" to a separate article. Please look for and read it. If you enjoy the meeting location and

overall success of NTPCUG, extend your personal Thanks to these folks next time you see them.

Spreading the NTPCUG workload is what makes it enjoyable for all. Believe it or not, PARTICIPATING really makes it more fun. I strongly encourage you to volunteer a few hours a month, or year, either on our meeting days or elsewhere throughout the month. Call me, home or office, and I'll assist you in finding a role that is as large or as small as you wish.

Of special interest this month is the "changing of the guard" at the Information/Registration/Help Desk. Having managed this extremely important area since 1987, Connie Andrews is wanting to spend more time walking the halls and trying new things. In her place comes Claude McClure, a long time Anchor at the Help Desk. Connie tells me that she is especially pleased Claude accepted her invitation to serve. Thanks, Connie, for all the effort, and, Welcome, Claude.

HINT: Did you know that Help Desk volunteers get free shareware disks from the DOM (Disk of the Month)? See Claude for details.

**Special Interest Groups (SIG)...**

As of December, we have at least 40 SIGs. The most recent addition is the Dataflex SIG. David King anticipates leading the SIG, and invites all to attend. As an established club, David brings with him up to 40 new members. Please welcome them to NTPCUG, and help them get settled.

The "Beginning C" SIG will rename to "Middle C", to better align with where their emphasis is placed. In addition, SIG Leader Stan Milam has turned the reins over to Tom Cook. Many thanks go to Stan for his contributions to the SIG, and to Tom for agreeing to assume control.

The BBS SIG is moving to a 1:00 time frame beginning this month, and will (hopefully) follow right behind the noontime Communications SIG for most meetings. In addition, Fred Williams has agreed to take a predominant role in managing this relatively new SIG. If you are interested in learning how to use this and/or other bulletin boards, drop by.

**Bulletin Board System...**

The big news from the BBS area is twofold. First, Tom Prickett, "perpetual SYSOP", has conveyed the SYSOP title upon Fred Williams. As noted elsewhere in this publication, Tom has done a truly marvelous job keeping the BBS alive and well over MANY years, but felt it was time to pursue "something dif-

# Now, other word processors have something they never had before.

Features	Ami Pro 3.0	Word for Windows 2.0b	WordPerfect for Windows 5.1
True WYSIWYG in all views eliminates guesswork	Yes	No	No
Fast Format - quick repetition of text formats	Yes	No	No
SmartMerge step-by-step mail merge guide with a card file data manager	Yes	No	No
Preview of professionally-designed Style Sheets for memos, faxes, letters, newsletters, etc.	Yes	No	No
WYSIWYG preview in File Open to quickly view, print, or extract text	Yes	No	No
Number of import/export filters (word processing, database, spreadsheet, graphics)	45	27	36
Grammar Checker	Yes	Yes	No
On-line Tutorial	Yes	Yes	No
Automatic re-numbering of lists	Yes	No	No
Colorful, customizable, editable, sizable SmartIcons™ for one click access to your most frequently used tasks	Yes	No	No
In-context editing of drawings and charts	Yes	No	No
Laptop Install option for quick and minimal configuration on a laptop	Yes	No	No
Clean Screen option for total workspace customization	Yes	Yes	No

## Competition.

Take a look at this chart and you'll see, feature-by-feature, just how far Ami Pro® 3.0 has leaped ahead of other Windows™ word processors. Which, not surprisingly, is why it's being hailed as the best word processor for Windows by respected and objective evaluators.

### Ami Pro 3.0 takes top honors.

In fact, in recent tests\* conducted by the National Software Testing Laboratories, Software Digest™ (Vol. 9, No. 6, Sept. '92) gave Ami Pro 3.0 the highest Overall Evaluation in its category.

Their reason: "Lotus Ami Pro 3.0 offers an unbeatable combination of peerless usability, top-level features and fastest overall performance."

It also received the highest score ever for a Windows word processor in a recent InfoWorld® review, and won the PC Computing MVP award for word processing. So it's definitely the word processor to evaluate.

Now that you've seen the evidence, why not prove it to yourself? Call us at **1-800-872-3387, ext. 7347** for your free working model or to upgrade from your current word processor for just \$129.\*

Ami Pro 3.0. It's the one word processor for Windows that doesn't just invite comparison. It welcomes it.



## Lotus. Ami Pro 3.0 Word Processor for Windows

\*Among Windows word processors tested. Reprints of report available upon request. \*Offer expires 3/31/93. Call for a list of eligible word processors. Education-priced Lotus products not included. Offer valid in U.S.A. only. Not to be combined with any other offer. Please have your credit card and current word processor ready when you call. In Canada, call 1-800-GO-LOTUS. © 1992 Lotus Development Corporation, 55 Cambridge Parkway, Cambridge, MA 02142. All rights reserved. Lotus and Ami Pro are registered trademarks and SmartIcons is a trademark of Lotus Development Corporation. Software Digest is a registered trademark of NSTL, Inc. InfoWorld is a registered trademark of InfoWorld Publishing, Inc. WordPerfect is a registered trademark of WordPerfect Corporation. Adobe Type Manager and the ATM logo are registered trademarks, in the United States, of Adobe Systems, Inc.

*Prez Sez...* continued

ferent". We've managed to retain Tom as a BBS Director, though, so we won't lose his expertise.

To the joy of many, TBBS has recently begun shipping an Off-line Mail Reader (OLMR) component known as QSO (QWK Support Option). QSO, in conjunction with OLMR software on your PC, allows you to transfer personal and conference mail to/from the BBS in small, compressed packets. Packets downloaded from the BBS can be uncompressed on your PC, read, then deleted, saved, and/or replied to. New messages can also be created, then compressed and uploaded as personal or conference mail. The end result is that messages can be transferred to/from the BBS in a very short time, releasing the phone line for use by others.

OLMR instruction and literature will begin to appear this month. Visit the Communications and BBS SIGs to learn more, and watch for articles within PC NEWS.

**"JOBS" Conference...**

One of the objectives of NTPCUG is to advise members of known job opportunities. The BBS has a new conference that jobs can be posted in. In order to maintain a level of order, the following rules will apply:

- 1) The job offer must be posted by a member. Placement services may enter listings only after acquiring a membership.
- 2) The posting **MUST** identify whether the position is being submitted by the employer, or by an agent (placement service).
- 3) Postings will be deleted automatically after 30 days.

A conference monitor has been assigned to assure these rules are followed.

We hope this member benefit proves useful, and are interested in feedback. Please leave a message in the conference, or to the SYSOP, if you become employed via this conference.

**Giveaways in January...**

We all like freebies. If you want yours, join us at the Business Meeting at 11:00. Giveaways this month will include a variety of software that vendors just keep sending us, as well as some goodies from the November COMDEX show in Las Vegas. Of course,

YOU MUST BE A NTPCUG MEMBER TO WIN (all the more reason to join...).

**Call for Volunteer...**

NTPCUG has need of someone to coordinate the receipt and duplication of each month's NEW shareware disks. The ideal person is one who lives in Richardson or a surrounding community, since some weekday coordination is needed with our disk duplication service in Richardson. The individual should have a somewhat flexible schedule, or perhaps be retired. A benefit to this volunteer is free access to all of NTPCUG's newest shareware titles. For further information, please contact the DOM Director, Kathryn Loafman, or myself. See inside back cover for numbers.

Doug Gorrie



## NTPCUG Community Service

### Part 2: The Plan

In the previous article I described the potential opportunity for the disadvantaged in our community to have access to modern computer technology due to the dramatic drop in prices of used computers. This article will describe the Dallas Computer Literacy Program's (DCLP's) two approaches to taking advantage of this unprecedented opportunity. These approaches are teaching and computer lab access.

The DCLP is currently offering free computer classes at Daniel "Chappie" James Learning Center, a DISD grade school that has two outstanding computer labs. One lab has 20 Macintosh LC II's networked together and the other lab has 20 stand alone IBM clones with 8088 processors and 20 meg hard disks.

We are currently offering these classes: Introduction to Computers, Microsoft Works, DOS 1 and 2, Windows and a Works Spreadsheet course with other courses to follow. The rate at which we add courses will be determined by the number of volunteer instructors we have.

We are currently teaching classes after school 3 days a week and are planning on going to 5 days a week shortly. As we get additional volunteer instructors,

we will be offering classes at other DISD schools in South Dallas.

By providing free and convenient educational opportunities to the disadvantaged in our community, we hope to foster an interest in education and development of skills among the youth and adults in the inner city community. This provides an opportunity for young people to seek additional education after school and for adults to increase their job skills and potentially move up the economic ladder.

By establishing a partnership with the DISD and other schools in the South Dallas community, we are able to increase the utilization of valuable computer resources. This also offers young people an alternative to "hanging out on the streets" and provides adults with additional educational opportunities they would not normally have access to.

A second major part of the DCLP's plan is the concept of a "neighborhood computer lab". This is a church, community center or YMCA that has established a DCLP Affiliated Computer Lab with donated computers. Here any person that has received a DCLP computer literacy ID card (a person receives this after taking the Introduction to Computers Class) will be able to use the computers during lab hours. Each organization establishing a DCLP Affiliated Computer Lab sets their own time for lab hours and provides lab monitors during these hours to supervise the use of the computers.

Young people are able to go to the labs after school and have access to computers with which to do homework, play games or use the available educational programs. Through the neighborhood computer lab the DCLP hopes to offer youth a "high tech" alternative to drugs, gangs and the street.

Adults also have access to these computers and educational programs during lab hours. They can use the lab to develop computer skills, further their knowledge through educational software or to manage their personal or business affairs. By using these facilities adults can significantly improve their potential for employment or promotion.

Because of the dramatic drop in the value of used computers, establishing neighborhood computer labs is now possible. Because of innovative and insightful leaders within the DISD and at other private schools, free computer classes are being offered to people in disadvantaged inner city neighborhoods. The potential of establishing 50, 100 or more neighborhood computer labs is technically and economically possi-

ble. The only question is: Are people in the Dallas Community interested in doing this?

Part III of this article will be in the next issue. For more information or to donate a computer call Brian J. Mickel at 521-6670 or Alex Lilley at 953-4970.

---

## NTPCUG On-Line

By Fred Williams  
Sysop, NTPCUG BBS

Greetings one and all, and a Happy New Year. This is the first of a somewhat regular series of articles I have planned for the future. In these articles I will bring you the latest news, directions, BBS user tips, BBS staff personalities and anything else related to the BBS that I think might prove interesting.

The biggest and saddest news is that Tom Prickett is not doing this article. After seven plus years as the NTPCUG BBS Sysop, Tom turned in his resignation. Tom was responsible for taking the BBS from a 8088 based platform running in a spare bedroom to a 80386 with 14.4 baud support and UPS protection. The BBS equipment is now located at a commercial quality site.

One of the final decisions Tom made as Sysop was to switch the software that the BBS was built on. That's how I became so closely involved with the BBS. I volunteered to convert the old BBS over to the new software.

Tom, seeing a golden opportunity, was able to transfer the Sysop job to me so that he would be free to pursue his new personal challenges. All is not lost. I have convinced Tom to remain on as a Co-Sysop. He will be a great source of knowledge and experience to the entire NTPCUG BBS staff.

Ah, the NTPCUG BBS staff. A great group of dedicated volunteers that give their personal time to keep the BBS, and most importantly the BBS users, happy. In future articles I will be highlighting the individuals behind the BBS curtain. The new TBBS software makes BBS maintenance a breeze, but it certainly does not eliminate it. There are a multitude of tasks that must be accomplished to keep the BBS well tuned and providing the best available service to the users. ►



Speaking of service. The latest BBS news is the addition of QSO, the TBBS QWK Option Module. QSO allows the BBS to support the QWK off line mail readers which have become so popular in the BBS community. QWK support was officially turned on December the 4th. It would appear that a few of the old hands jumped immediately on the new service and more and more message "Tag Lines" are showing up every day.

Many of the BBS users have ask, "What does QWK mail packets do for me?" There are several advantages to using an off line mail reader. And, off line mail readers are not for everyone. The advantage I like most, is the ability to run the BBS messages I compose through my system's spell checker. It won't catch all of my errors, but it don't let two many of them slip through.

An off line reader also allows you to compose your messages when it is convenient for you. You are not locked on line, feeling you have to hurry, or simply choose not to respond to a message because the information you need is not at your fingertips.

Another advantage to the BBS staff and other BBS users, is that transferring messages with QWK mail packets takes only a fraction of the time required to send and receive messages on line. This feature of QWK mail reduces the overall connect time dramatically. The reduced connect time contributes to more efficient use of the BBS's limited resources.

For users that are new to the BBS world, I would not recommend jumping immediately to the use of an off line reader. There is a lot of novelty and experience to be gained by accessing a BBS in real time. Off line mail reader users do occasionally need to sign on the BBS in real time, as not all services of any BBS is available through the off line reader interface.

As to what the BBS future holds, coming real soon now will be a new service that will allow the BBS users to do key word searches of the NTPCUG Disk Of the Month (DOM) diskette index and read.me files. With a little luck, the service may even be available at the time this article goes to press. The feature has been under development and testing for some time now and Pete Testa is working on getting the Index and Read.me files up to date.

Lewis Graber and I are looking into the possibility of offering the BBS users access to selected electronic periodical publications. We are thinking of offering a locally published BBS oriented electronic magazine to start with. We are also investigating some more

"main stream" publications which could possibly be made available.

Slow progress is being made on connecting to one of several international networks. The hottest candidate is currently Internet. Internet is a large quasi commercial network initially started by the federal government. Internet is now in transition to becoming a privatized venture. Some promising contacts have been made, but progress is slow.

We started initially with the intent of getting one of the very limited "free" connections to the Internet. It seems that these free connections are rapidly fading as the commercialization of the net progresses. We are now also studying, "low cost" alternatives. The NTPCUG's "not for profit" status has aided us greatly in our negotiations for low cost services so far and we do hope to have something in the near future.

I think that the NTPCUG BBS users and the NTPCUG membership in general owe Tom Prickett a great big "Atta Boy!" for all his years of service. He is not gone, nor will he be forgotten. The NTPCUG BBS is, because of Tom Prickett. I just hope to be able to pick up the ball and continue to run.

Fred



*Your ballot is on page 15. Use it!*



## Batch File Tips and Utilities

*Seventh in a series by Mitchell A. Hoselton, Ph.D.*

### Calls and Jumps

We'll start this article by looking at ways to move the point of execution from one batch file to another. There are two approaches; batch file jumps and subroutine calls. In a batch file jump the execution pointer moves from one batch file to another. It cannot store information about where it was in the parent batch file so it has no way of returning to that point. Following a subroutine call, DOS stores the execution pointer in a subroutine stack. The subroutine stack can hold many execution pointers. The stack uses a last-in/first-out storage scheme. DOS creates a new execution pointer for each successive subroutine.

When a subroutine finishes, the most recently saved execution pointer is retrieved from the subroutine stack. It still contains its last address and COMMAND.COM restarts executing the calling batch file at that point. I've already demonstrated one advantage of using subroutine calls; the FOR IN DO command can execute multiple subroutine calls. A FOR IN DO command can only execute one batch file jump, however. The FOR IN DO does not create pending jumps the way it created pending GOTOs. It jumps at the first opportunity and does not return.

To further complicate matters, there are actually two types of subroutine calls. One type uses the CALL command to initiate execution of the subroutine. The other uses COMMAND.COM to initiate execution of the subroutine. These two types of subroutine calls have distinct uses.

The appropriate use of the words "subroutine" and "call" applies only when storing an execution pointer in the subroutine stack. This is in contrast to a jump, which does not save the execution pointer.

The linguistic style is to "call a subroutine" or to "execute a jump," whichever is appropriate. The batch file that contains the calling command for the subroutine is the "calling batch file." The batch file that contains the jumping command is often the "parent batch file." (Some use "jump" and "branch" interchangeably. I want to avoid confusing jump and the branch initiated by a GOTO command).

### Batch File Jumping

When the execution pointer jumps from one batch file to another, there is a simple analogy with using the GOTO command to branch within a batch file. In both cases DOS keeps no record of where the branch or jump started and has no inherent way of returning to the branch or jump point.

Jumping from one batch file to another is conceptually simpler than using subroutines, so we'll cover it first. Whether calling a subroutine or jumping to a batch file, the new file always starts executing at the first line of the file.

Be aware that there are no intrinsic differences between batch files that initiate jumps or calls, batch file subroutines and the targets of batch file jumps. A single batch file can do and be all of them. One batch file can be called as a subroutine, serve as the target file for a jump, issue subroutine calls and issue jumps commands. The distinction between a jump and a call has to do with the specific command used. It has nothing to do with the type of file it is in. They are all just batch files.

A batch file jump simply requires listing the target batch file on a line by itself, as follows.

```
batch_file_name
```

The syntax for a conditional batch file jump goes something like this.

```
IF [NOT] condition batch_file_name
```

DOS does not load a secondary command processor as part of a jump operation. Therefore, the target batch file has access to the same DOS environment as its parent batch file. This can be either the primary environment or a copy of the environment depending on which command processor is highest in memory.

A series of batch files may jump to and from each other. As soon as any one of the batch files executes its last command, the process stops. All of the batch files involved in these jumps will have access to the same copy of the DOS environment and each will respond to changes made in the environment made by any one of them.

LISTING 1 shows three ways to use jumps. These are only three out of an infinite number of possibili-

ties. The art of batch file programming lies in finding innovative ways to use these tools. This will only get you started.

### LISTING 1 - Three Different Types of Batch File Jumps

A) The simple batch file jump to a batch file named TEST1.BAT.

```
\
Start of the parent batch file.
/
TEST1
\
If there are any more lines in this batch file, they will never execute
because of the unconditional jump to TEST1.BAT.
/
```

B) A conditional batch file jump to a batch file named TEST2.BAT.

```
\
Start of the parent batch file.
/
IF "%T1%"=="JUMP" TEST2
\
The rest of this batch file will not execute if the batch file sets
the environment variable T1 equal to JUMP before testing it.
/
```

C) A compound conditional batch file jump to a batch file named TEST3.BAT. In this particular case the batch file jumps to TEST3.BAT with a parameter whose value depends on the value of a replaceable parameter.

```
\
Start of the parent batch file.
/
IF "%1"=="VER" TEST3 verify
IF "%1"=="CONS" TEST3 consolidate
IF "%1"=="PRINT" TEST3 print
\
The rest of this batch file will not execute if the replaceable parameter,
%1, satisfies any of the three test conditions.
/
```

### Batch File Subroutine Calls Using the CALL Command

Starting with DOS 3.3, batch file subroutines can be executed using the CALL command. The simple subroutine CALL uses the following syntax.

```
CALL batch_file_name
```

The CALLED subroutine retains the same ECHO status as the calling batch file. The CALLED subroutine uses the same command processor as the calling batch file and has access to the same DOS environment. That means that the batch file and the subroutine can pass data back and forth to each other using DOS environment variables.

The calling batch file can use an IF [NOT] == test to find out which environment variables were created or changed by the subroutine.

This type of subroutine call can use an IF commands to make a conditional subroutine calls. The syntax is as follows.

```
IF [NOT] condition CALL batch_file_name
```

This type of subroutine call can use a FOR IN DO command to execute a series of subroutine calls to different subroutines. The syntax looks something like the following, where the batch file subroutines TESTING.BAT, PRINTING.BAT and ARCHIVE.BAT execute, consecutively.

```
FOR %%X IN (testing printing archive) DO CALL %%X
```

The following command could execute TEST1.BAT, TEST2.BAT and TEST3.BAT, consecutively.

```
FOR %%L IN (1 2 3) DO CALL test%%L
```

This type of subroutine call can also use a FOR IN DO command to execute a consecutive series of subroutine calls to the same subroutine. The syntax looks something like the following example, which executes the subroutine seven times.

```
FOR %%R IN (x x x x x x x) DO CALL batch_file_name
```

Note that the %%R does not appear in the batch file name. The same batch file gets executed each time. The number of subroutine calls equals the number of items in the (set). Because of the 127 character limit for the command line length, this technique limits the number of repetitions to about 48 to 50.

Alternatively, the members of the (set) could be a series of different parameters for the subroutine, like STATS.BAT in the following case. Then the FOR IN DO command would look something like this.

```
FOR %%R IN (hits runs errors) DO CALL stats %%R
```

### Batch File Subroutine Calls Using COMMAND.COM

Prior to DOS 3.3, this was the only way to execute batch file subroutines. It still works in DOS 5.0. The simple subroutine call using COMMAND.COM uses the /c switch in the following syntax.

```
COMMAND /e:yyyy /c string -- (yyyy = 160 to 32,768)
```

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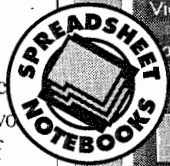
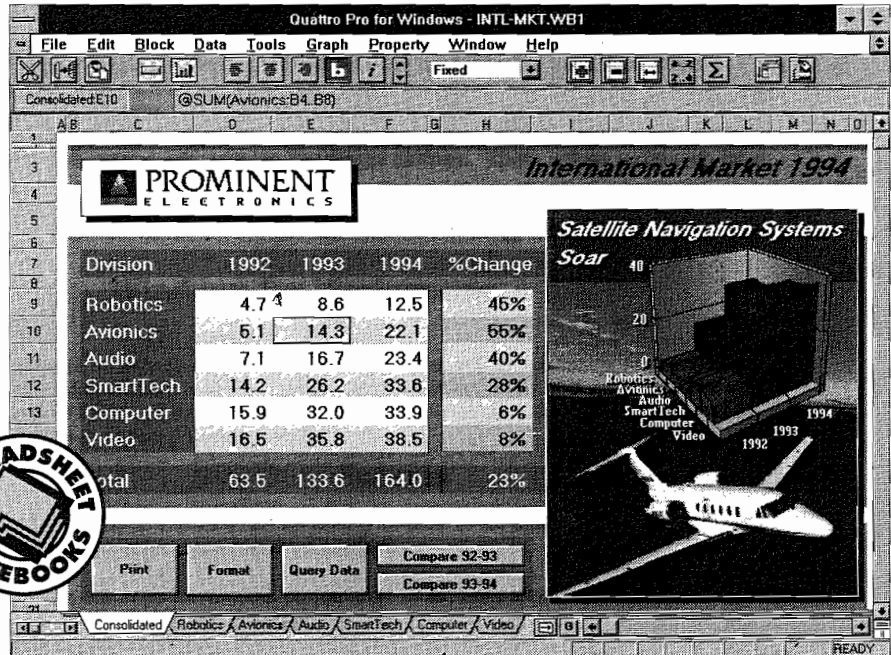
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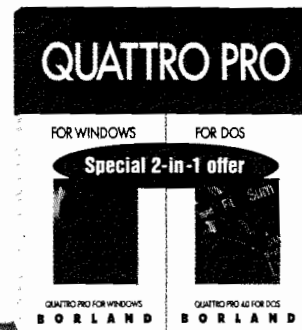


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The /c switch forces COMMAND.COM to interpret the string that follows the switch as a command to execute. That command can be a batch file name, an application program, or a DOS command. Using the /c switch also forces COMMAND.COM to unload itself after it finishes processing the command.

The version of the COMMAND command to use depends on the DOS version. DOS 3.0, DOS 3.1 and DOS 3.2 will not work with the /e switch. With DOS 3.3 and above the /e switch is optional.

The subroutine does not retain the ECHO status of the calling batch file. An ECHO off followed by a CLS command (or @ECHO off in DOS versions 3.3 and above) should be included at the beginning of any subroutine called using COMMAND.COM.

The /c switch specifies that a secondary command processor load and execute the command. It will unload itself when it finishes processing the command. Since the command is operating under the control of a secondary command processor, it only has access to a copy of the DOS environment. If the command is a batch file subroutine, it can read the environment but it cannot pass data back to the calling batch file using environment variables. This is the major difference between subroutines called with the CALL command and those called with COMMAND.COM.

One way for these subroutines to pass information back to the calling batch file is by creating temporary files. The calling batch files can check for the presence of these temporary files using IF [NOT] EXIST tests.

It is easy to create a zero byte file, with any required name and extension, by redirecting the output of a blank REM statement to that file name. For example, the subroutine might include a series of IF statements that conditionally create one or more files this way. Such IF statements use the following syntax.

```
IF [NOT] condition REM >(drive:)[path]filename.ext
```

After the return, the calling batch file can use IF [NOT] EXIST tests to find out which files were created. It is a good idea to create temporary files in a single directory with a common and distinctive extension. That makes it possible to use the following command to get rid of all the zero byte temporary files in one step.

```
DEL (drive:)[path]*.ext
```

An extension like ZRO might be a good one to consider.

The copy of the DOS environment the subroutine gets may not be as big as the original DOS environment specified with the SHELL command in CONFIG.SYS. It is only large enough to hold the current DOS environment variables, rounded up to the nearest multiple of 16 bytes, or 256 bytes, whichever is larger. If the subroutine makes extensive use of the DOS environment, the /e switch can create a larger environment size for the secondary command processor. Alternatively, delete environment variables from the copy of the environment. Clearing variables from a copy of the environment will not affect the primary DOS environment. Do not erase the COMSPEC variable, however.

This type of subroutine call can use an IF command to make a conditional subroutine call. The syntax is as follows.

```
IF [NOT] condition COMMAND /c batch_file_name
```

This type of subroutine call can use a FOR IN DO command to execute a series of subroutine calls to different subroutines. The syntax looks something like the following, where the batch files HOP.BAT, SKIP.BAT and LEAP.BAT execute, consecutively.

```
FOR %%X IN (hop skip leap) DO COMMAND /c %%X
```

Alternatively, a FOR IN DO command like the following can be used to execute the batch files TESTX.BAT, TESTY.BAT and TESTZ.BAT, consecutively.

```
FOR %%L IN (x y z) DO COMMAND /c test%%L
```

This type of subroutine call can also use a FOR IN DO command to execute a consecutive series of subroutine calls to the same subroutine. The syntax looks something like the following example, which executes the subroutine five times.

```
FOR %%G IN (z z z z z) DO COMMAND /c batch_file_name
```

Note that the %%G does not appear in the batch file name. The same batch file gets executed each time. The number of subroutine calls equals the number of items in the (set). Because of the 127 character limit for the command line length, this technique limits the number of repetitions to about 48 to 50.

Alternatively, the members of the (set) could be a series of different parameters for the subroutine, like MEMO.BAT in following case. Then the FOR IN DO command would look something like this.

```
FOR %%G IN (Bob Carol Ted Alice) DO COMMAND /c memo %%G
```

### How to EXIT From a Subroutine

The options available for a normal exit from a batch file subroutine can depend on the method used to call the subroutine. One sure way to exit from all subroutines is to branch to the last line of the subroutine. When the subroutine ends, the calling batch file resumes execution at the line following the call to the subroutine. This branching operation can slow down the entire process in a long subroutine; the command processor has to scan the entire subroutine to find the last line before it can terminate and return.

A jump to a short batch file is a more elegant way to terminate a subroutine. Jumping does not, by itself, trigger the return. It is finding the last line of a batch file that triggers the return to the calling batch file. The trick is that it does not have to be the last line of the called subroutine that executes. It can be the last line of any batch file. There are times when it is quicker to jump to a short batch file and let it end rather than wait for the command processor to find the last line of a long subroutine.

For DOS 3.3 and later, Paul Somerson, in his book "PC Magazine DOS Power Tools, 2nd Edition," recommends jumping to the short batch file, which he calls DO.BAT, containing the following single line.

```
%5 %6 %7 %8 %9
```

To terminate a subroutine anywhere other than at the end, include the following conditional test in the appropriate places.

```
IF [NOT] condition DO message
```

The message can contain up to nine words. DO.BAT displays the message just before the calling batch file restarts. For DOS versions before 3.3, the initial ampersand should be omitted from DO.BAT. The message is optional. This technique works for subroutines called with CALL or COMMAND.COM.

A redirected REM command will create a zero byte batch file. Jumping to that file triggers a return to that calling batch file, too.

The EXIT command will only terminate subroutines called with COMMAND.COM.

Subroutines called with the CALL command do not respond properly to the EXIT command. If the active command processor is the primary command processor, they just ignore the EXIT command. If the batch file issues a CALL command and a secondary command processor already resides in memory, the EXIT command forces the secondary command processor to unload itself. A return to the batch file that issued the CALL command is impossible after that. The EXIT command forces a return to the batch file that loaded the secondary command processor, instead. With a manually loaded batch file there is no calling batch file to return to; batch file execution ends. In either event, execution cannot resume in the batch file that issued the CALL command because the subroutine stack disappeared when the secondary command processor unloaded itself from memory. There might be rare cases where this is the desired result. Usually, it is just a mistake.

The best techniques for returning from a subroutine are jumping to a short batch file or branching to the end of the subroutine. Both techniques work no matter how the calling batch file executed the subroutine call.

An EXIT command always forces the active secondary command processor to unload from memory. That unconditionally terminates any batch file it is running and restarts the batch file that loaded the secondary command processor. If the primary command processor is running the batch file, EXIT has no effect, because the primary command processor will not unload from memory.

Using EXIT is only slightly faster than using DO.BAT but it does not include the option to display a message. Also, it forces the programmer to keep track of two types of subroutines; those called with CALL and those called with COMMAND.COM. Use of the EXIT command should be discouraged unless the subroutines are only going to run on PCs using DOS versions prior to 3.3. That is no longer a safe assumption and EXIT is falling out of general use by batch file programmers. ➤

## Nesting FOR IN DO commands

DOS does not allow nesting FOR IN DO commands. By using a secondary command processor, however, you can work around that limitation.

The example lines shown in LISTING 2 can print out all of the batch files in the current directory. (As an aside, note that this batch sequence simplifies the DOS PROMPT to make the printouts easier to read and then restores the PROMPT after it finishes printing.)

### LISTING 2 - Example of "Nested" FOR IN DO Commands

```
set oldp=%prompt%
prompt=$g
FOR %%A IN (*.bat) DO C:\COMMAND /c FOR %%B IN (ECHO TYPE) DO
%%B
%%A pm
prompt=%oldp%
set oldp=
```

This sequence first ECHOes the name of a member of the set (\*.BAT) to the printer and then TYPEs its contents on the printer. ECHOing the name simply creates a header for the listing that follows. If you have a little utility called FF.COM, you can include it in the second set, (ECHO TYPE FF), and get each batch file to print out on a separate page. This sequence repeats until it has printed all the members of the set (\*.bat).

Nesting FOR IN DO commands is a little tricky but it opens up some interesting new possibilities for creative batch file programmers. Sometimes its helpful to experiment at the DOS prompt. When working at the DOS prompt, remember to use only one percent sign in front of the variable name.

Assume you have a group of batch files that handle the quarterly accounting summaries. Here are the names.

EXP1.BAT	INC1.BAT	NET1.BAT
EXP2.BAT	INC2.BAT	NET2.BAT
EXP3.BAT	INC3.BAT	NET3.BAT
EXP4.BAT	INC4.BAT	NET4.BAT

What is the order of execution when the following nested FOR IN DO command executes these twelve batch files?

```
FOR %%T IN (EXP INC NET) DO COMMAND /c FOR %%Q IN (1 2 3 4) DO
CALL %%T%%Q
```

What is the order of execution when the following nested FOR IN DO command executes these same twelve batch files?

```
FOR %%A IN (1 2 3 4) DO COMMAND /c FOR %%B IN (NET EXP INC) DO
CALL %%B%%A
```

Mitchell

□

## Fixing a Dot-Matrix Printer

by Mike Firth

In October, my four year old Epson LQ-850 lost the use of one of the 24 wires in the printhead. Since the head is easily removeable without tools, I snapped it out and found one black hole where a wire should be, so it was broken rather than a circuit problem. Unfortunately, the wire was the one that printed the tops of small letters (a,e,o,n) and they looked stupid. I found I could print from Windows with the different sized fonts and get acceptable output.

I shopped around for a replacement printhead, calling Epson for references, and found that everyone I called, locally and nationwide, wanted about \$180 and most were strident, "If you walk in the door and pay cash, there is no warrantee unless we install it," - for a lot more. Since a roughly equivalent printer (the LQ-570) costs only \$265 and comes with a two year warrantee, \$180 was ridiculous. But I was reluctant to spend any money and dumping the printer would have tax consequences, as it wasn't old enough.

I talked to the low-cost ribbon people downstairs at the November meeting and they recommended Impact [Impact Printhead Services, 1-800-777-4323], an Austin company that they say advertises nationally. I called and got an RMA number and a stated price of \$86 + \$2.25 s/h with a 1 year warrantee and five working day turn around. (3-5 days is typical, I checked.) I got a slick poster of printheads, a catalog, and a mailing label a couple of days later. I sent mine before Thanksgiving, it got there on Monday the 23rd, and I got it back on the 3rd. It was very clean works fine and I am happy.

Mike

□



## Symantec User's Group Summit Meeting

Part 2

by Andy Oliver

In the December issue of the PC News, I began writing about the Symantec User's Group Summit Meeting that I attended in San Jose, California. Gordon Eubanks, CEO of Symantec, runs his company as I'm sure he commanded in the Navy; everyone is accountable for their contribution to the company. I got the feeling from the product developers and managers that Gordon welcomed differences of opinion, but you'd better be able to back it up and stick to your beliefs.

Symantec has a different view of development tools. They are working on a joint project with Apple Computers called BEDROCK. Bedrock is, for lack of a better term, a language that will allow developers to build applications that will work on dissimilar platforms. The secret to writing this is to develop reusable code. Sounds easy in theory, but it takes a lot of effort. Think of it as a wrapper around the file manager and memory manager, for example, and you want to write a checkbook program. With Bedrock, you would write your program to retrieve files, save files, and work with the available memory without concerning yourself with the platform. When you are finished, the program would run on Macintoshes, Windows PCs, OS/2 PCs, and Unix systems.

Gordon Eubanks stated that OS/2 was the best production operating system on the market. This was months ahead of PC Magazine awarding OS/2 the PC Mag Technical Excellence Award for best operating system. You can bet that Symantec will be writing utility programs for OS/2 just like they are now for DOS, Windows, and Apples. Not being of the Apple world, I was surprised by how many products Symantec makes for that platform. 85% of Mac developers use a Symantec product called Think. (Don't you wish 85% of any group that you know would use the concept THINK.)

Back on the subject, the neatest product that I saw was the Multiscope Debugger. If you are writing applications for Windows, and you don't have this product, you are probably wasting a lot of

time. With the program running when your Windows system crashes, it save the state of the system to a file. You can call up another product, MED, to analyze the file to help you determine what caused the crash. Many development houses have access to this program, such that, if you send them the file, they can help resolve your Windows system crashes.

So, am I a Symantec evangelist. I have a greater respect for and understanding of what they are doing than I did before. I have been a Norton Utilities user since it came out and we use it at the office on a daily basis. I'm not a programmer, so I don't know how Zortech C++ compares to Microsoft's or Borland's C++. So the answer is that I know what I like, but I definitely won't preach it as being the only way. And as you have probably noticed in this user's group, there is no lack of opinions.

The Q&A database and Timeline (DOS and Windows versions) are other Symantec products that are gaining momentum because they work. Timeline is used for project scheduling. Not everyone needs a project scheduler, but when you do need one, the computer and software to do it is thousands of times more flexible than trying to schedule everything on paper. A project or task can be cut up into the component parts, by who does what task when, to arrive at a target date with a completed project. If a piece is completed early or late, one change adjusts the rest of the items that depend on it. Live, on the screen, no Big Chief eraser necessary. The Windows version of Timeline has a Co-pilot program that will make suggestions for you along the way.

We (the ubiquitous We) come to look on software programs as things that either help us do our job, or relieve the stress of our jobs (Tetris), or sit on the shelf because they do neither. Through my user group involvement in going to the auditorium presentations and going to conferences like this one at Symantec, I now see software as people. People who come up with the ideas, who write the code, who market the product, and who answer the phone when I call for support. These people brought us together, not to sell us product, but to tell us what they were doing and at the same time, to listen to suggestions that we have for features and fixes, likes and dislikes. If you know somebody is listening, you can at least feel like they care.

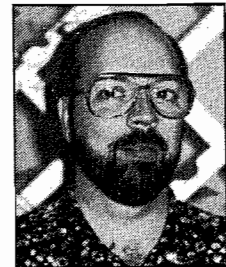
Andy



*January—election month. Here are the nominees. . . . .*

**Nominee for President-Elect**

Andy is the 1992 President and Chairman of the Board of the NTPCUG, which means that he served in 1991 as a Board member and President-Elect. He has served as SIG Coordinator in the past as well as an Info Booth anchor-person and phone caller for volunteers. Andy is also a member of the Microcomputer Managers Association and the Dallas Netware Users Group. In real life, he is Supervisor of the Microcomputer group at The Rosewood Corporation, and is rumored to be friends with the author of The Adventures of PC Tech.



Andy Oliver

**Nominees for Board of Directors**



**Reagan Andrews**

Reagan is currently a member of the Board, and a past President. He is co-leader of the DOS SIG and leader of the Microsoft Word SIG. You may also have noticed his by-line in the newsletter on the VARIETY STORE column. Reagan works for the federal government (VA Hospital) where he treats veterans suffering from delayed stress syndrome, and has a private practice. He and his wife Connie have made the annual pilgrimage to the Fall COMDEX computer show, and Reagan always has an interesting commentary on this event.

**Mark Gruner**

Mark is currently on the Board of Directors. He leads the Spreadsheet and Spreadsheet Developers SIGs, and helps with two of the sixteen Personal Users SIG series dealing with Lotus 1-2-3. Mark is actively involved in securing and evaluating shareware for the DOM (Disk of the Month) group, and has served in the past as NTPCUG's representative to the Computer Council of Dallas. His real life includes being an Senior Financial Analyst for EDS, husband, and proud father of a very-mobile 1-year old.



**Timothy Carmichael**

Timothy has been the Program Chairman for the NTPCUG since 1989, and a member since 1987. He schedules and supervises the auditorium presentations and with the help of his son, Chris, coordinates the ticket handouts and drawings. Timothy is an electrical and biomedical engineer doing basic research, applying computer hardware and software for medical measurement and diagnostic systems.



**Jim Hoisington**

Jim is a current Board member as well as past President of the NTPCUG. He helped start this group. Jim has been acting Membership Director for the past two years, and is the group's "postal carrier", picking up and distributing mail from our P.O. Box. He co-leads the DOS SIG, and hangs around the Advanced Programmers SIG for "dirt" to print in the newsletter. Jim has served as North Texas' representative to the international Association of PC Users Groups (APCUG). In his other life, he is husband, father, and occasionally finds time to consult/contract program to get a paycheck.



Nominees for Board of Directors continued

Woody Pewitt

Woody is currently the Visual Basic SIG leader. The SIG is a new addition to the NTPCUG, dealing with Microsoft's Visual Basic and other Windows development concerns. He plans to start a Visual Basic class for anyone wanting to learn more about the easiest way to program for Windows. This past December, Woody represented the NTPCUG at the Visual Basic Summit held at the Microsoft's headquarters. Woody is married, and works in DeSoto as a partner in DPC Software.



Fred Williams

Fred has been a member of NTPCUG since its founding in 1982. He has been SIG Leader of the Communications and Local Area Network (LAN) SIGs, and is the founder and current leader of the Paradox SIG. He chaired the NTPCUG BBS Steering Committee which reorganized the BBS support staff, and provided project management and technical services while converting the NTPCUG BBS software from Chairman to TBBS. Fred is currently a CoSysop of the NTPCUG BBS. He has been an independent software developer of communications and database systems for personal computers since 1982. Fred's wife Donna is a Network Administrator for Otis Engineering. Their son Roger is married and a sophomore in college majoring in History.



USE ORIGINAL BALLOT—Copies not acceptable.



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North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

Nominee for President-Elect

Vote for 1

Andy Oliver

Nominees for Board of Directors

Vote for 3

Reagan Andrews

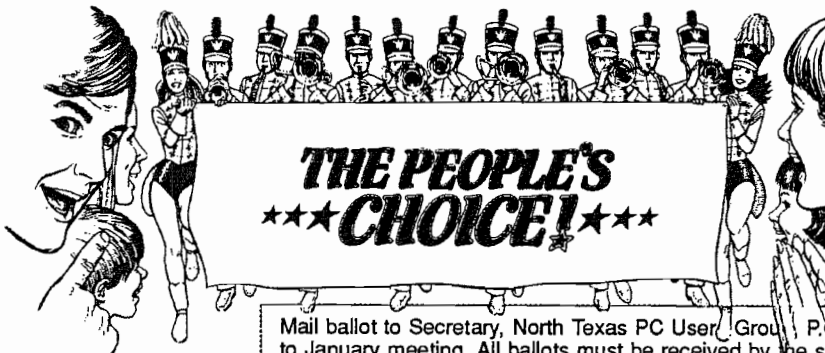
Timothy Carmichael

Mark Gruner

Jim Hoisington

Woody Prewitt

Fred Williams



Mail ballot to Secretary, North Texas PC Users Group, P.O. Box 780066, Dallas, TX 75378-0066 or bring to January meeting. All ballots must be received by the secretary no later than January 18, 1993.

# CELLS & RANGES

- an eclectic collection of spreadsheet information

by Betty Brooks

## Retrieve A File and Run the Same Macro on Each File in a List of Files

There are times when you need to do an operation of some sort on a list of files. I am going to describe a macro library solution I have used in the past. The macro starts out on a regular spreadsheet which calls up the library manager and uses the /File Admin Table function on the spreadsheet to create the list of files and then creates a library file which includes those file names in a list which was given a range name for the macro in another library to call for the file retrieve operation.

```
GET_TBL {if @isapp("MACROMGR")=0}/aaMACROMGR~nq
/adMACROMGR~aMACROMGR~nq
{goto}{FILE_TABLE}~{blank FILE_NAMES}/fatw~~
{if @cellpointer("type")="b"}{branch ERR_MSG}
/rncFILE_NAMES~
{bs}~{end}{down}{end}{down}{up}{|}~
{|}/df{bs}~{r}{end}{down}{end}{down}{end}{up}{|}~1~~~
/aiMACROMGR~IADJMACS~sFILETBL~yFILE_NAMES~n
{branch [START_UP]}{quit}

ERR_MSG
{goto}ERROR_MSG~{goto}ERROR_MSG2~{indicate " "}
{wait @now+@time(0,0,6)}{home}{branch \M}{return}
```

The following range names used in this macro: GET\_TBL and ERR\_MSG are names of the two macros used on the original spreadsheet, [START\_UP] is the name of the macro which is in the macro library ADJMACS, which runs after the new macro library file called FILETBL has been saved with the range name [FILE\_TABLE] containing the list of the files. Although this sounds a little confusing, it will be explained below along with the description of the macro commands.

```
{if @isapp("MACROMGR")=0}/aaMACROMGR~nq
/adMACROMGR~aMACROMGR~nq
```

The first two lines are to check to see if the macro manager add-in has already been attached. If it is



## Membership Application

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

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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.

not, then it will be attached and then it will detach the macro manager and re-attach it. This is done to make sure that there are no libraries in memory when the macro starts up. If there were libraries present, there could be some potential conflicts with macros and range names. If you are running a macro on a spreadsheet and want to remove the libraries from memory by using the macro library menu, the macro will hang up after removing the library and the macro will not be able to get out of the menu. So this is the only way I have found to make sure there are no libraries in memory without having to quit out of 1-2-3 and starting over again.

```
{goto}[FILE_TABLE]~{blank FILE_NAMES}/fatw~~
```

This next line moves the cursor to a range named [FILE\_TABLE] on the current spreadsheet and blanks the range name FILE\_NAMES. Then the menu is used to do /File Admin Table Worksheets from the current directory and place the resulting table on the spreadsheet starting at the current cell.

```
{if @cellpointer("type")="b"}{branch ERR_MSG}
```

This if statement is checking the top cell in the range to see if the file table contains a file name. If it does not, then the macro branches to the macro named ERR\_MSG, which informs the user that there were no files.

```
/rncFILE_NAMES~  
{bs}..{end}{down}{end}{down}{end}{up}{left}~
```

These two lines create a range name, FILE\_NAMES by pressing the backspace key to "loosen the cursor" and "unpaint" the last known range settings; pressing the period key to lock down the current cell and then doing and {end}{down} twice, which should take you to the bottom of the spreadsheet. Then and {end}{up} is done to take you to the bottom row of the range. This is done to make sure that you don't create a range that goes to the bottom of the spreadsheet because the file list contained less than two files. The {left} paints the column to the left of the column of file names. You will notice that the table contains 4 columns of information: the file name, file date, file size and save time. We are only including the column with the file names and the blank column just to the left in the range named FILE\_NAMES.

```
{!}/df{bs}..{r}{end}{down}{end}{down}{end}{up}{!}~1~~~
```

The cursor is then moved to the left and the menu is invoked to start /Data Fill. The range is defined in the same manner we painted in the range for the range name operation above. The data fill range should be the blank column next to the file names, but only include the rows which have the list of file names which is why we use the column of file names to help define the rows to include.

```
/aiMACROMGR~ADJMACS~sFILETBL~yFILE_NAMES~n
```

This macro line invokes /Addin Invoke Macromgr Load ADJMACS (the library file containing the macro which will run to retrieve and work on each file) Save FILETBL Yes (overwrite old copy of FILETBL). The range name FILE\_NAMES describes the range to be used to create the library. The n tells 1-2-3 that there will be no password needed. Once this is finished, the library FILETBL will contain the list of files along with a number corresponding to the file's placement on the list.

```
{branch [START_UP]}
```

This line of code branches the macro to the macro called [START-UP] in the library named ADJMACS. This macro uses a {FOR} loop and an @vlookup to use the list in the library FILETBL to retrieve the files and do whatever operations are needed.

```
{goto}ERROR_MSG~{goto}ERROR_MSG2~{indicate " "  
{wait @now+@time(0,0,6)}{home}{branch \M}{return}
```

This ERR\_MSG macro which is called only when there are no files after doing the /File Admin Table. It moves the cursor to a blank screen which has an error message typed in the middle. The cursor is then moved to the error message which will highlight the message. The indicator on the upper right of the screen is blanked out by the {indicate " " } which just puts a single space up there rather than a message which might wipe out part of the error message appearing on the edit line (because we have placed the cursor on that line). This just makes sure that the user sees the message without any distractions. The {wait ...} macro command makes the macro stop executing for about 6 seconds to make sure the user sees the error message and then moves the cursor to the A1 home position and invokes the macro command \M, which in my case brings up the main menu.

This is just one method a macro writer can use to retrieve many files while still maintaining control. There are others which could be used in other versions of spreadsheet programs. This method only works in 1-2-3 2.x. Spreadsheets that allow more than one spreadsheet in memory at a time would save to a spreadsheet instead of to a macro library and could do the same method of file retrieval by using File Open, etc. This macro method is just the basic idea on one approach to doing this type of operation. If you were to implement it, you would probably need to add your own error checking, etc.

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.*



Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.

# The Variety Store

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

## **Clash of the Titans redux -- COMDEX/Fall '92 Microsoft clearly winner on volume alone as IBM does "casual" while Dell plays "dress-up"**

COMDEX/Fall '92 wasn't the same this year. It was bigger, gaudier, more brassy and much, much louder.

Sure -- there was all the glitter, noise and tasteless entertainment that's made the giant computer show famous. Display skits and presentations were just as inane and silly, even insulting on occasion, as past years. (More on this later)

There was just so much more of it! 2000 exhibitors (most ever) in six convention sites covering 2,000,000 square (and very sore) feet.

And excitement. Excitement bubbled all over Las Vegas as rumor mills churned at a furious rate. Lots of unofficial speculation at after-hours receptions and parties about no-shows, pending legal (Intel vs. AMD) action and the FTC's investigation of Microsoft.

### *APCUG shines brightest of all*

The APCUG -- Association of Personal Computer Users Groups -- put on the best show this year, though. The APCUG *User Group Summit Meeting* was the most successful ever with 352 user group leaders and officers participating in APCUG Comdex activities.

Success was due in large part to the untiring efforts of Las Vegas PC Users Group volunteers who supplied muscle, organization and direction for APCUG participants during the giant computer show.

Most visible was Sandy Frunzi, Past President of the Las Vegas PC Users Group, who assisted harried APCUG members with Comdex registration, room reservations, meeting and reception RSVP's among about 1000 other details involved with a successful meeting.

Everything worked this year. Thanks, I know it wasn't easy.

### **Comdex crowds smaller Than claimed 140,000**

Lot of folks stayed away, including Compaq, this year. Good news for me -- made roaming the convention-site halls easier --

but, may be bad news for the PC industry?

Real crowds just didn't appear after the first day at Comdex. Interface Group, producers of Comdex, claimed 140,000 visitors during the show. I didn't see indication(s) beyond 110,000 -- if that many.

Remember last month's column and the "Oasis Effect?" We saw a lot of both cozy (small) and spacious (large) oases at all Comdex exhibit sites, including the prime Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC) this year.

It may have been smaller than advertised, but it was still the biggest and most important show in the industry.

### **Themes impossible to identify**

Real theme(s) were hard to identify other than Microsoft's domination of this year's Comdex with *Windows for Workgroups* (ubiquitous) and *Windows NT* on lots and lots of non-PC platforms at non-Microsoft displays. First time I can remember so much "beta-ware" running throughout the show.

That doesn't mean IBM was shy. IBM was out in force at several locations at LVCC and Bally's. (Gosh, this sounds strange.) But, IBM was largely overshadowed by Microsoft's

## Variety . . . . .

huge presence at Comdex this year. If Microsoft brought 300 people to Comdex last year, this year's employee participation must have topped 600.

### CPU speculation rampant

Most speculation was centered on the CPU vendors. Intel, as expected, made the most of their near-dominance of the x86 market, showing more versions and varieties of 386, 486 and 586 chips than I knew existed. (I said I wouldn't use "Pentium" and I meant it.)

Cyrix had a booth this year, a very well attended booth in spite of a less than optimal location at LVCC -- and a somewhat suspicious "viral infection" in one of their display PCs. Saw the Cx486SLC, Cx486DLC and the Cx486DRu2 (clock-doubled) chips running quite nicely.

**Advanced Micro Devices** (AMD) did show a 486 at Comdex. Also showed a lot of high-speed 386DX, SX and other chips as well. AMD had a very active area with good visibility. Unfortunately, AMD ended the show with an adverse court ruling viz its use of Intel micro-code in their 486 chip.

### Multimedia -- lots and loud

Multimedia had to be some sort of winner in noise volume alone if for nothing else. Imagine a relatively small area -- the Bally's exhibit area -- crammed with a hundred audio-related products. Think of each trying to show that their soundboard,

etc., was louder than the competing products at the next booth or across the hall.

It was loud, if unexciting.

I walked away from the Bally's Multimedia area, still unsure of what "multimedia" really is, and where it fits in the scheme of things. CD-ROMs are a good example -- are these just massive storage media, or are they part of the "multimedia explosion?" I saw CD-ROMs at all locations, including IBM's developers' area. Some had video and sound, some didn't.

### Real crowds? Try Microsoft, IBM, WordPerfect or Borland

In fact, only five exhibitors were really crowded throughout Comdex -- Microsoft, IBM, Intel and WordPerfect at the premier Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC) display area, and the IBM Multimedia display section at Bally's.

**Borland.** Borland ran "fifth" in spite of being in one of the more stylish and attractive display areas. Saw large crowds of interested people followed by periods of almost emptiness off and on during Comdex. Lots of attention to *Paradox*, *dBase IV* and *Quattro Pro*. Lots of interest in language products and lots of "techie" visitors at this display area. Still waiting.

**Microsoft** was so crowded the times I went by, I was never able to really "see" their offerings outside of the canned, marketing displays. (APCUG solved this problem, though.) I

did get lots of glimpses of *Windows NT* and *Windows 3.1 for Workgroups*, but no sightings of the rumored *Word 6.0 for DOS*.

I left Microsoft's display area(s) more confused than ever about where DOS, Windows and 32-bit operating system(s) are going to fit together in Microsoft's strategy.

**WordPerfect.** Same went for WordPerfect -- still busy and crowded late Friday afternoon, last day of Comdex. The sound level at WordPerfect was much lower this year than last two years' Comdex exhibits, which must have been a welcome change for nearby exhibits.

Again, I didn't catch sight of rumored *WordPerfect 6.0* that was said to be waiting in the wings. One thing I didn't see was important -- no crashes at the *WordPerfect 5.2* demonstrations as the Orem folks really put it through its paces.

*Office* was showing and looking very good. It may be the "killer app" waiting to blossom with the anticipated explosion of small LANs this year.

**IBM.** IBM was lots less formal, lots more aggressive in pursuing developers and "power users" at this year's show. If they keep up the pressure, *OS/2* may become a real winner as *NT* shipping dates are set further back. The low-key approach may be more effective than the massive displays of Microsoft and WordPerfect in terms of information interchange. The IBM people sure were more talkative than in the past. ▶



## Variety . . . . .

I heard a surprising observation from one of the IBM exhibitors at Comdex: This year IBM people were casually dressed in open-collared shirts and pastel sweaters instead of their usual navy suits and white shirts with ties. Meanwhile, across the hall, the Dell people were all dressed in dark suits, white shirts and ties.

What happened to Armonk?  
What happened to Austin?

**IBM Multimedia.** IBM's multimedia display(s) at Bally's were hugely attended compared to last year. Even late Friday afternoon, the display area for developers at Bally's was packed.

IBM also had one of the better and more humorous skits at Bally's! It was short, good and fun. (See question above.)

**Intel.** Intel had to have one of the hokiest exhibits at Comdex -- and some of the best available technical expertise. I know these skits are dreamed-up by marketing departments, but Intel's skits were even bad by marketing-designed standards.

Heard no comments at the Intel booth about the heating problems with the 486DX2 or other (586, according to rumors) 66 MHz products. Sure saw lots of small, fan-equipped heatsinks around other show areas, though.

But, if you had other technical questions, Intel was the place to be at Comdex. I've never seen so many "real" people (not empty suits) willing to share their expertise.

And, if you couldn't get your questions answered at Intel's display booths (Intel, like Microsoft and IBM, had several at LVCC), folks at the Intel booths would direct you to the Intel area at the Sahara where product designers and managers were available for discussion. (Intel folks would talk about heat here.)

### Real show/news at Comdex Via APCUG after hours ...

Comdex show floors are pretty much ruled by empty suits -- important news and information rarely comes from such sources. That's the reason the after-hours receptions and parties at Comdex are so important and so hard to get in.

APCUG sponsored a number of vendor-hosted events at Comdex this year ranging from breakfasts to after-show receptions and everything in between. Some are excellently done, some are kinda questionable.

Five of these formed an interesting contrast in style and content.

### Best of breed:

Microsoft hosted a reception Wednesday evening that showed Bill Gates, Microsoft CEO, and Microsoft at their best. Gates spoke for about ten minutes, then spent the next 30 minutes in Q & A talking about Microsoft plans and directions, products and Gates' view of the PC viz the world.

He covered his thoughts about objects, *DOS 7.0* (Yes, there will be a *DOS 7.0*), *Windows NT*, and 32-bit operation in general. The session was Gates at his best -- informal, candid, and passionate about his views of computers. MS's colorful CEO did comment (some) on the FTC issues and on his feelings about the affair which he felt would take years to resolve.

Symantec hosted the traditional Peter Norton breakfast Wednesday morning. Gordon Eubanks filled in for Peter Norton who was in Cambodia (Kampuchea) and was sparkling. (Yes, Zach, "sparkling.")

Eubanks spoke for about 30 minutes informally. The emphasis of his talk was on "reusable software," 32-bit OS's coming on line, and how Symantec would move in response. Eubanks focused briefly on the OS/2 vs. NT issues and said Symantec would support both platforms (as expected) and would be releasing tools, including *Commander*, for OS/2 this year.

Later, Eubanks introduced Gene Wang and later, made several comments about Symantec's MCI Mail products as well as some humorous asides about how helpful *Grandview* was to their "busy" attorneys. (This latter was a somewhat non-subtle mention of Symantec's current problems with Borland vis Mr. Wang's MCI activities as he left Borland.)

**Borland.** What would be more natural than Borland the next



## Variety . . . . .

morning? Philippe Kahn had some pretty tough acts to follow Thursday morning when Borland hosted breakfast for APCUG officers.

Kahn was hoarse, tired and charming. He followed an excellent juggling (Las Vegas show quality) act with an emphasis on problems facing the nation (education) and problems facing software publishers in the future as programs become bigger and more complex.

Borland's CEO illustrated the publishers' dilemma by citing the limits of engineers' ability to produce enough code, singly and in groups. According to Kahn, traditional development methodologies just won't work in the future and this is his reason for so much emphasis on "objects."

Kahn said the productivity limits above were the major reason why Borland, and everybody else, had been experiencing so much difficulty with shipping dates for new products. He also alluded to Borland's recent negative stock market performance (Borland took a major "hit" during Comdex) attributed to shipping problems.

### **Worst of the breed: A contrast in style**

Microsoft and Intel had "formal" events on Monday, the first day of Comdex, that illustrated both ends of the spectrum. Each was useful for different reasons.

Microsoft had their *Access* and *FoxPro 2.5* database roll-out Monday afternoon at Caesar's Palace. I'd estimate about 700 Comdex visitors attended this spectacle keynoted by talks by Bill Gates, Microsoft CEO, and Dave Fulton, former Fox CEO.

Gates can be either exciting or deadly dull in formal presentations. The latter was the case Monday, but was offset by Fulton who was relaxed, witty and fun.

The formal presentation droned on and on for approximately 90 minutes. Both *Access* and *FoxPro 2.5* running in *Windows for Workgroups* looked good and both were interesting, but, ninety minutes in the dark is ninety long minutes.

None the less we felt it was time well spent -- since we each got a copy of *Access* at the end.

### **Intel bombs big time**

Intel hosted a reception for APCUG user group presidents and officers Monday evening. We were ushered into a ballroom at the Sahara Hotel arranged theater-style. We then were treated to one of the worst presentations it has been our misfortune to nearly tolerate.

Intel VP David House did the mixed-media presentation. He's a good speaker (heard him last year.) But, the Intel presentation was simplistic, boring, way too long (another 90-minute job), insulting and (I think) sexist. (I'm the original "MCP," and when I think something is sexist, it must be plain awful.)

Connie and I walked before it was finished. We heard later we missed a great buffet. No matter, a 24-oz. porterhouse couldn't have compensated for the pain of that presentation.

### **MultiTech did though**

MultiTech makes great modems. No argument. After exiting Intel's disaster, we headed out for the MultiTech party. This was definitely not APCUG country.

Just had to have a presentation, but this one was different and in the form of a survey/quiz show featuring audience participation. It was done in a slapstick mode, but was an excellent antidote to the earlier, deadly Intel 90-minute sales pitch.

Ask NTPCUG Past President, Andy Oliver, what his table "won" at MultiTech.

### **Intel's other side**

I asked some questions at Intel's LVCC booth about their 16-bit LAN NIC's that the personnel at the booth couldn't answer. I was given a couple of passes to Intel's Sahara "Intel at Work" area.

This was a blast. The area was dark with flashing red lights and lined with scaffolding and other indications of construction. Kinda spooky, but filled with Intel product managers and engineers.

Ask a question here -- you got a dissertation and education in response! I found people knowledgeable about CPUs, LANs, ▶

# The Visual Basic Corner

by Jim Carter

The Visual Basic Team at Microsoft has backed up its claim that it wants to support the User Groups in general and the Visual Basic SIGs in particular. NTPCUG benefited at its November meeting when two members of the Visual Basic Team visited. Mike Risse, Product Manager for Visual Basic, and Tom Button, Director of Product Management, attended three SIG meetings before lunch and then put on a great demonstration of the new Visual Basic 2.0 in the auditorium after lunch. They stayed and answered questions until they nearly missed their plane for Las Vegas!

Mike and Tom attended the Visual Basic SIG from 9:00 AM until 10:00 AM. We divided the audience into two separate groups in order that Mike could address the experienced Visual Basic users while Tom addressed the newcomers that had yet to purchase Visual Basic. Both sessions used the Q&A format very successfully. Total attendance at the Visual Basic SIG meeting exceeded 60 where we normally have about 25 attendees. Many said they would be back to the SIG meeting again.

At 10:00 AM, Tom Button addressed the Advanced Basic Programmers SIG led by Mike Firth. Tom had been on the development teams for both QuickBasic and the Professional Development System. Tom discussed the transition methodology between QuickBasic 4.5 and PDS 7 to Visual Basic for MS-DOS. An active Q&A session followed.

At 11:00 AM, Mike and Tom visited the Windows Developers SIG led by Art English. This meeting enjoyed the intense debate on the subject of the most appropriate development tool for designing Windows applications. Tom Button and Mike Risse took the position that Visual Basic was the most ap-

propriate tool for over 90% of Windows applications. Tom Button stated that he had participated in similar debates with the "C" and SDK programmers at Microsoft. The result is that most all applications at Microsoft are now being written in Visual Basic and the first significant application will be announced in the next month or so. Microsoft is convinced that development time for Windows applications is significantly reduced with Visual Basic. I believe a few of the Windows Developers were convinced that Visual Basic deserved a test drive.

Approximately twelve folks joined the Microsoft lunch table in the Infomart cafeteria and the Visual Basic discussions continued. The lunch was a quick one, however. Tom and Mike had to go to the auditorium at 12:30 to set up their demonstration of Visual Basic 2.0. The presentation was introduced by Tom Button who gave us some insight on the development goals for Visual Basic 2.0 and the final implementation. Mike Risse then demonstrated the Visual Basic 2.0 development environment to illustrate the new features and then demonstrated some hot applications that have been sent to him by Visual Basic developers. These demonstrations included video clips from the just announced NTSC video board and clever sound effects from the new Microsoft Sound board. All in all, a very professional and informative demonstration for the 450 or so attendees. Following the drawings for software, Tom and Mike answered questions for another hour or more. They had less than an hour to catch their plane for Las Vegas (COMDEX) when they left Infomart!

See you at the Visual Basic SIG meeting on January 16, 1993 at 9:00 AM in Room 7011.

---

## *Variety* . . . . .

FAXing, modems -- you name it. I wish I could have stayed far, far, longer. Buffet was excellent too.

### A wrap

You've noticed by this time (if you're still here) I haven't said much about new, exciting software and hardware. That's on purpose.

We'll be looking at both in the next several months here. There was so much at Comdex that demands integration that I felt it better to look at the overview, then proceed to the specifics. If I had stumbled (appropriate by Friday afternoon) across something really sensational, I would have placed it in this installment.

The problem is/was that Comdex was preceded by two major trade shows within a month, and we're still waiting for word from the FTC viz Microsoft.

Reagan



Jim



# GENTECH

*A Genealogy Computer Conference*

by Al Sanford

Friday and Saturday, January 22 and 23, 1992, is a conference of interest to all genealogists, especially those who use a computer, and to all computer owners who are thinking about genealogy (or other) uses for their computer. Features include lectures on techniques, new services, new generation software and hardware, and educational presentations for genealogists at all levels of computer expertise. Last year, under the name of GenTex, a similar and abbreviated seminar was held in the Dallas area under the sponsorship of the Irving and Grand Prairie genealogical societies. GenTech, Inc., is a non-profit, non-membership organization without ties to any genealogy society or group. Its primary function is to put on regional conferences in genealogy at least once a year.

**When:** Friday & Saturday, January 22,23 1992

**Where:** Southland Center Hotel, Dallas (call 1-800-272-8007 and mention GenTech for special discounted room rates)

**Fees:**

Friday Study Day at the Dallas Public Library \$10

Friday Evening Keynote Dinner, \$15

Saturday Lectures Registration (includes syllabus)\$40 (\$35 if postmarked in 1992 or bought at vendor table on Super Sat in Dec or Jan)

Saturday Exhibit Area Only, Free

## Lectures

Each registrant may attend 5 of Saturday's hour-long lectures, which begin at 8:30, 10, 11:30 am, and 1:30, 3 pm.

- New approaches to tabulation projects by the LDS Family History Department
- Using Mapper to solve a genealogy problem
- Bureau of Land Management On-Line access to Federal Land Grants
- An overview of GEDCOM
- The next generation of genealogy software
- Disciplines for entering genealogical data into your computer
- Acquiring and digitizing very large collections
- Using a computerized surname database in a family association

- The Civil War Soldiers Database to be used by the National Park Service
- Why should a little old white haired lady use a computer?
- Pennsylvania Gazette Genealogy catalog
- Application of computers in genealogy book publishing
- An update from the National Genealogical Society Computer Interest Group
- WordPerfect as a genealogy tool
- Use of scanning technology in genealogy

## Demonstrations

Product demonstrations will be held through the day.

## Library Study Day

- Begins with breakfast (cost not included) at the hotel, during which library staff will instruct on best uses of the genealogy section of the library. The group will be furnished transportation. The study day fee includes a copy of the book Dallas Search, published by the Dallas Genealogical Society.

## Keynote Buffet

Friday evening and will include two keynote speakers and advance access to the exhibitor area.

For further information, write GENTECH, Inc., P.O. Box 28021, Dallas TX 28021 or call Preservation Emporium at 214-630-1197 or Conference Chairman John Wylie at 214-495-4410.

Al



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## THANKS to our Volunteers

by Doug Gorrie, NTPCUG President

Although we have LOTS of volunteers, the efforts of some always seem to stand out. I'd like to pass along thanks to all of them, with special thanks to some, starting with Connie Andrews.

Among other things, Connie has directed activities at the all important Information/Registration Booth since 1986, and has helped us find many new volunteers to fill other club needs. There is no doubt that the success of the club is largely attributable to the smooth manner in which the information booth operates. As Connie transfers control to Claude McClure, we say thanks for the commitment. And, Claude, THANKS for saying "Yes" so quickly when asked to help.

Tom Prickett has managed the BBS as SYSOP (System Operator) for "eons", and made other major contributions to NTPCUG as well. Long time BBS users KNOW the time and effort Tom spent keeping those "older" BBS systems operational and running smoothly, and the emphasis he placed on moving us to a 20th century BBS. His perseverance was a major factor in moving us to our current TBBS bulletin board system, and from those of us that use the BBS regularly, we all say "Thanks" for a job well done. Those of you that know Tom should make it a point to thank him personally for his efforts, and for ensuring that his successor, Fred Williams, shares his desire for a successful BBS.

Fred, too, has been a major contributor to NTPCUG since it began in 1982. He has started several SIGs, leads the Paradox SIG at present, and has agreed to run the BBS SIG for the foreseeable future. He has been active in making the new TBBS system one of the smoothest around, and hopes to make it even more useful in the months ahead.

Take note, too, of our Members Emeritus (see the inside back cover). This honor is bestowed on some that have made major contributions to the user group over the years. Special, ongoing thanks go to both Jim Hoisington and John Pribyl, both of whom contribute untold hours each month assuring that the club remains successful.

John Pribyl, as publisher, along with Doug McQuaid (editor) and his staff, hustle each month to get all the

articles edited and formatted in time to print and mail our 2000+ newsletters. This is no small chore, and the effort is not always apparent. If you like the newsletter, tell John.

Jim Hoisington's efforts go back to the club's beginnings. Jim is a multi-term President, Board member, and SIG Leader. As the current Membership Director, he is widely known for having revamped the membership database into a model of efficiency, thereby eliminating the multitude of problems that had often appeared. There are lots of "behind the scenes" functions he does as well. Much of the NTPCUG's success is owed to Jim. Be sure to tell him how much you appreciate his efforts.

Another Member Emeritus seen each Super Saturday is Stuart Yarus, who in recent years has worked with the Computer Council of Dallas (CCD) in support of its objectives. Stuart is one who contributed significantly to NTPCUG's beginning, and toward acquiring Infomart as our monthly meeting location. His efforts help keep member dues low by assuring that the vendor area (basement) functions well, which in turn pays the rent for all the Users Groups that meet at the Infomart. I know we all appreciate the time he has contributed.

Many of you recognize Timothy Carmichael as he introduces our auditorium presenters each month. Not as obvious is the time and effort expended by Timothy in arranging for these monthly presentations. Coordinating the schedules of multiple vendors over several subsequent months equates to a juggling act, and those last minute cancellations are no fun either. Thanks, Timothy, for keeping it running so smoothly.

A final "Thank You" goes to David McGehee, who had served as both SIG Leader and NTPCUG Secretary for several years. David was recently forced to resign from both positions due to job requirements (something to do with working 25 hours/day AND commuting to Colorado...). As Secretary, David has kept us on track and on time, and we appreciate his commitment to the group's success.

THANKS to these and all the other volunteers. Your efforts are appreciated.

Doug





# Inside the North Texas PC Users Group Community

Connie Andrews

This is really hard for me to write, because it's time for me to say goodbye.

The years that I have volunteered for the Users Group have been an immensely rewarding time for me. I have met many interesting people and made some good friends along the way. And, I've learned a lot.

Actually, it's been so much fun that I have let other projects and obligations in my personal life fall behind. Each month/year, I kept tucking them away and promising myself that I would work them in. But I haven't. Now, it's time for me to take a break and play catch up.

I'm especially grateful that Claude McClure has offered to take on the position of Volunteer Coordinator. He's a nice guy and a hell of a hard worker. (I love you, Claude, for saying yes, but we won't tell Reagan.)

I believe very strongly in the Users Group and what it does, so I hope some day to be able to give more time to it. In the meantime, I plan to attend the meetings and perhaps help out a little.

A special thanks to all the volunteers I have worked with. It's been a privilege to be in such good company!

In this issue we are acknowledging volunteers who served for the month of NOVEMBER. 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  
Mike Griffin  
**Crew:**  
Jim Aragon  
Bill Vallance  
Paul Weathers

**Auditorium Presentations**  
Timothy Carmichael  
Chris Jung  
Christopher Carmichael

**BBS Champion**  
Louis Graber

**Information/Registration**  
**Booth**  
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Ralph Beaver  
Loyce Coolidge  
John Ferguson  
Paul Fredd  
Judy Griffiths  
Allan Harbaugh

David Huckabee  
David Martin (double)  
Wade Mayfield  
Claude McClure  
Everett Turner  
Jean Waldrep  
Peyton Weaver  
Paul Williams  
Bob Wuller  
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Joseph Denton  
Shirley London  
Ed Moreland  
John Myers  
Tony Plain  
Kim Pratt  
Randy Wicks  
**Disk of the Month (DOM)**  
**DOM Desk Crew:**  
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Bernie Baars  
Roy Bales  
Bob Bender  
Don Chick  
Norman Dang  
Frank DeVault  
Judy Griffiths  
Steve Hay  
Pat Henley  
Tim Lanz  
Duane Martin  
Lloyd McKeethen  
Cliff Murphy  
Stacy Naftel

Bob Post  
George Reed  
Bob Reynolds  
Ed Snuggs  
Oscar Tyler  
**With Special Thanks to:**  
**Set-Up Crew:**  
Bill Chambliss  
Jay Chambliss  
Kent Haven  
Pat Henley  
**Shift Supervisors:**  
Ralph Beaver  
Gene Carleton  
Kent Haven (double)

Pat Henley  
Claude Walston  
**Inventory and Take-Down Crew:**  
Jo Cannon  
Coy Jacobs  
David Perkins  
**DOM Desk Scheduler:**  
Charles Cashion  
**Disks-for-Review Manager:**  
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:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Auditorium Presentations</b><br>Timothy Carmichael              | (214)661-4626 (w)                      |
| <b>DOM Booth Scheduler</b><br>Charles Cashion                      | (214)881-0952 (h)<br>(214)519-2583 (w) |
| <b>DOM Software Review</b><br>Howard Hamilton                      | (214)644-5721 (h)                      |
| <b>Information Booth and General Information</b><br>Claude McClure | (214)867-0978 (h)                      |

# 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)*

## Advanced BASIC SIG

The planned activity, using files in BASIC programs, got set aside because of visitors from Microsoft to talk about Visual BASIC for DOS and how it fit with previous products. The planned material will be used in December, when we should also cover taking an older program into the newer versions of BASIC. During the MS presentation, a quick survey, after we pointed out that no one knew the MS guys were coming, revealed that most of the group has been working with BASIC for years, in many cases going back to versions of BASIC before the IBM PC.

Mike Firth

## Visual Basic SIG

The January 16, 1993 meeting of the Visual Basic SIG will feature a comprehensive review of two third-party tools designed to simplify database applications written in Visual Basic. SIG Leader Woody Pewitt will present these reviews.

First will be Agility/VB (version 1.1), a complete database manager for Visual Basic offered by the Apex Software Corporation. Agility/VB is used to create database applications using powerful grid, text, and picture custom controls. Agility/VB provides complete program control over all database operations.

Second will be Q & E Database/VB (Version 1.0) by Pioneer Software which helps the writing of multi-user database applications. QEVb adds a set of database Custom Controls to the VB toolbar, enabling the building of database applications without writing any code.

One of the most popular tasks programmed by Visual Basic is front-ends for databases. Come look at some powerful tools you can use in your applications.

Another topic to be discussed at the January meeting will be the SIG's requirements for training. Woody has been trying to obtain appropriate training space to set up a class and we hope he will be successful soon. In the meantime, we would like to hear specifics about the type of training you would like. Be ready to discuss this at the January 16 meeting.

WHAT A MEETING IN NOVEMBER! Microsoft Product Manager for Visual Basic, Mike Risse, and Director of Product Management, Tom Button (Mike's boss) came to Dallas for our meetings while on their way to Las Vegas for COMDEX/Fall '92. We had over 60 attendees at our SIG meeting and broke up into two groups. Mike Risse held a Q&A session for experienced Visual Basic users and Tom Button held a Q&A session for newcomers/non-users

(yet) of Visual Basic. Both sessions were very active and we had to drag the speakers out of the rooms to allow the next SIG meeting to begin. Mike and Tom generated a lot of interest and understanding in Visual Basic. Thanks to them both for coming.

Jim Carter

## BBS SIG

In January, the BBS SIG will move from 2:00 PM to 1:00 PM. This change has been requested by several persons unable to meet at the 2:00 PM timeframe. In addition, our new SYSOP, Fred Williams, has agreed to chair this SIG.

The BBS SIG is geared to the use of NTPCUG's BBS system. Anyone unfamiliar with our BBS, or wanting to know more about its use, should drop by.

As always, questions regarding the BBS can be directed to the SYSOP throughout the month.

Doug Gorrie

## Communications SIG

Our December SIG meeting was part party, part work. In the weeks following the November Super Saturday, the BBS staff had beta tested, purchased and installed eSoft's QSO product for off-line mail reading. QSO was a predominant topic for this meeting.

With QSO, a BBS user can instruct our BBS to locate all personal and conference mail of interest to the users, bring it together into a "QWK" packet, ZIP (compress) it all together, and present it to the caller for downloading to his/her PC. Once on your PC, the caller can disconnect, then examine the personal and conference mail using an off-line mail reader (OLMR)





In a similar manner, the OLMR on your PC allows you to reply to that personal and conference mail, and/or create new mail messages, while unconnected. Later, the user can upload the replies to the BBS when time permits, and QSO will receive and distribute all the messages just as if the user was online the whole time!

Off-line mail readers are very common in the BBS world, but new to NTPCUG, so an education process is beginning. Be sure to watch for articles on this as we get up to speed.

Due to the importance of this topic, and the expected questions, OLMR will be the topic in January also. See you then!!

Doug Gorrie

## DOS SIG

Gee, is it 1993 already? January? That means Microsoft will probably be talking about DOS 6.0 -- sometime today. Maybe. Perhaps, that's what's going to happen at 2:00.

Since we're meeting at 9:00 a.m., the DOS SIG will go on -- as usual -- with a continuation of our December LAN & DOS discussion. Emphasis will be on Upper Memory Blocks (UMBs) in the 640K - 1024K region and what can work there instead of the "Low DOS" area. That's more than just LANs and covers a lot of territory, time permitting.

We'll try to wrap it up with a general discussion of LAN configuration and when users should consider a LAN instead of new sneakers and an "A - B" switch on their printers.

May also be a good "prep" for the Windows 3.1 for Workgroups demonstration at 1:00 since Windows and DOS are becoming increasingly intimate in their respective configurations. Hopefully, the Microsoft people will be able to answer some questions about optimal DOS configuration for the new Windows.

Of course, we'll end on the accustomed Q & A session with members asking questions concerning their day to day use of DOS and applications software.

Reagan Andrews

## Desktop Publishing SIG

Back in November, our graphically correct members brought examples of their own DTP projects for "Show-and-Tell" day. We had some useful discussion of the job/project hunting process for technical writers. A large DTP literature/ resource bibliography was passed out. For those who missed the meeting, a few copies were available in Dec.

December was Newsletter Month. Since we meet at high noon, we honored not only Gary Cooper but our own John Pribyl, who has braved many a dead-line to publish 2,000 copies of PC-News, month after month. His how-to descriptions of that process were most insightful.

January 16th: Christy Kurtz will do a presentation on the special requirements of producing "long documents." If you are doing books, manuals, genealogies, long newsletters, catalogs, magazines, etc., come and listen to advice from a pro.

February preview: a Plano PC-based DTP service bureau with

some fabulous cost-saving abilities will tell us all about it. Don't miss.

The Desktop Publishing conference on the NTPCUG bulletin board is now up! We fought long and hard for the right to gab, ask silly questions, and be witty, so please feel welcome to join us in this valuable forum.

Lewis Graber

## General Genealogy SIG

The 14 November meeting drew about forty people despite being the weekend of the Dallas Genealogy Society's 1992 Fall Genealogy Symposium and Beginner's Workshop. Quite a number of regulars to this SIG are active members in the DGS. I was able to make the afternoon session, and can safely attest to a successful meeting plus a remarkable syllabus. The General Genealogy SIG is one of four genealogy SIGs that meet on Super Saturday. It meets in Room 7001 from 9 to 10 am. In addition to the program, there is a disk library (\$2 per disk) and hard copy library (books, magazines, printouts, etc. available for checkout and return).

Everyone's Family Tree was the program for the November meeting. EFT is a genealogy program for MS-DOS computers. It comes with a fairly complete and easy to use reference manual and a preview slide/sample reports manual. EFT has built-in GEDCOM support and thus allows you to transport data to and from it. Its installation instructions are simple but explicit and complete. A complimentary copy of the quarterly Genealogy Bulletin is included with the purchase. The program is from The Dollarhide Systems, 203 W. Holly St - Suite M4, Bellingham, WA 98225 (1-800-733-3807) and costs \$149. It can





be purchased cheaper (about \$120) locally at places like Heritage Quest's Genealogy Resource Center, 2600 N. Stemmons Frwy, Suite 131, Dallas, phone 630-1197. This company also sells EFT at the vendor tables in the Infomart on Super Saturdays.

EFT allows easy data entries, a current living address, and the capability to print pedigree charts, photo pedigree charts, Family Group Sheets, Individual Summary, Name List, Ahnentafel List, Ancestor Table and three types of Descendancy Reports (Register, Modified Register, and Henry Systems) with index. There is also a demonstration program available on disk from the SIG's disk library.

This write-up had to be in by 10 December and December's meeting is not until 19 December. That program will show a slide presentation on genealogy. Instead of presenting genealogy in descendant or ancestry charts, graphs, etc., one enterprising computer fiddler used a motion presentation program to present his family's genealogy in the form of a slide show. The slides start with the family's origin in Europe and show the progression to and within the United States.

January's program will feature two DOS tutor disks (available from the disk library). It will also emphasize the following weekend's GENTECH meeting.

Al Sanford

## PAF SIG

The Personal Ancestral File (PAF) genealogy software is the most popular genealogy software in use today. It is cheap (\$35) and easy to use. It has GEDCOM (GE-

nealogical Data COMMunication) capability which means its data can transferred to other GEDCOM compatible genealogy programs for more unique printouts, reports, etc. The PAF SIG users group meets in room 7001 from 10 to 11 a.m. on Super Saturdays.

Attendance at the 14 November meeting was 34. This was down from the normal 45 to 55 people because of the Dallas Genealogy Society workshop which was being held on the same day. The program was brought by Travis Morris and was Focus/Design Reports. The PAF main menu list 11 options, number 7 is Focus/Design Reports. This option gives the ability to select different ways of looking at your data. You can arrange your data (temporarily) in any grouping of people, dates, places or events and can print out the results in any arrangement you chose. The notes file can also be searched for a certain word or phrase and a print out can be made of the individuals having that note. You cannot focus on marriages, but if you go to notes you can Focus on marriage in the notes. The Focus/Design Reports Menu (assumed to be empty at start) is as follows:

1. Look at Records in Focus List (0 individuals)
2. Change from ADD to REMOVE
3. Add All Individuals
4. Add Individual
5. Add Family
6. Add All Ancestors
7. Add All Descendants
8. Add Records that Match ALL Fields You Enter
9. Add Records that Match ANY Fields You Enter
  - A. Add Records that Match Note Text You Enter
  - B. Design/Print Reports

Travis gave a demonstration of the above menu, using data in the computer.

The topic for the 19 December meeting will be Hot Notes. Hot Notes is a software program de-

signed to make entering notes into PAF software easier and more desirable. It is a shareware program available at the SIG disk library.

Al Sanford

## Personal Users SIG

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

The four classes for January 1993 will be:

9:00 am Class 5 Fixed Disk Directories,  
Batch Files, and Paths  
10:00 am Class 6 DOS Menu Systems on  
Fixed Disks  
12:00 noon Class 7 Fundamentals of  
Lotus 1-2-3  
1:00 pm Class 8 Fundamentals of the  
"BASIC" Language

Bob Presley

## Quicken SIG

There is always so much excitement this time of year with all the upgrades and new applications jostling for attention. We have two intrepid members who have braved the unknowns of importing prices for securities into Quicken and exporting tax information out of Quicken. These are two new functions which Quicken has been developing recently. Giving and receiving information is the reason we all head for the SIG groups on Saturday, so someone who is using the DataEase database please respond to Al's difficulty in importing stock price histories. And those who have worked with TurboTax imports from Quicken,

please respond to Pat's problem with the case of the unmultiplying W-2's.

Both these problems surfaced via the BBS -- an example of the unlimited possibilities of this shared forum for discussion.

Now that you have hashed out all of your problems in the last two or three meetings, you will be ready for a new beginning. Billy & Company has high hopes of loading the latest Windows version of Quicken onto a portable computer and of creating entries for a small business. How would you like to see your special problem appear on the screen instead of taxing your powers of description? In January, look forward to the actual setting up and entering of accounts in Quicken.

I'm sure that there will be some discussion of the latest Quicken upgrade which some of you already are using, the Windows version, and some of the new applications like QuickBooks....not to mention an ongoing dialogue with respect to CheckFree which admits that the service is probably not cost effective but is addictive.

Jo Johnston

## Software Review SIG

My trek through the convention halls of fall COMDEX has already begun to flower and promises to continue. This means more, newer and better software for YOU to review. Please pick a package in December for January review. Please don't take a package unless you have the time and energy to give the program its due. We have business, astronomical, anatomical, geographical, time management packages and others on the way.

Come see what we have, run it and write it up!

Pat Henley

## Spreadsheet Developer's SIG

At the January meeting, the Spreadsheet Developer's SIG will be discussing Excel's Dialog Box Editor that is used to create customized dialog boxes for macros. Without the Dialog Box Editor, it would be virtually impossible to create dialog boxes. This presentation probably will not take the entire hour, so Charles Suitte will hopefully bring in his basketball game that his Microsoft Support team created with the Excel macro language. Talk about an unusual application - basketball.

Come on by and learn about dialog boxes and basketball in January.

Mark Gruner

## Spreadsheet SIG

At the January meeting, the Spreadsheet SIG will be discussing the mathematical functions available in 1-2-3 (all releases). This subject was recently suggested as a topic and we will see what all can be said about these functions. Many are often used and some are not. For instance, the SUM command is perhaps the most common function used in 1-2-3 while COS and TAN are probably seldom used. Come on by in January and see what is going on.

The Spreadsheet SIG always takes time to answer questions that users have with any spreadsheet program including 1-2-3, Symphony, Excel, or Quattro Pro.

Mark Gruner



## Unix/Xenix SIG

For those of you unable to make it to the November meeting you missed a lively discussion on editors. We ran out of time at the end because of the length of the presentations. If there is enough interest, we will repeat or continue this presentation at a later meeting.

This month Doug is away on vacation so I will be working solo. We will continue our discussions on the basics of Unix. I'm going to discuss the basic commands and utilities found in most versions of Unix. If possible, I'm going to bring in a laptop and we'll see if we can conduct a presentation on the overhead screen.

I'm still trying to confirm a date for the rescheduled Informix presentation. So far January is not looking likely. February appears to be much easier for Informix to schedule. I'll be providing more information as I discuss things with Informix. Watch the bulletin board for details.

Jim Stallworth

## MS Word SIG

Just when we thought it was safe to focus on writing and forget about installations, Microsoft is preparing/did prepare and ship/may prepare and may ship a "C" version of Word for Windows 2.0. Sorry about the ambiguity (above), but this is being written in early December.

According to media stories, this will be a maintenance upgrade to enhance Word's operation in Windows 3.1 for Workgroups.

January WORD SIG Meeting will focus on the continuing saga of

"fixes" for Microsoft Word products and the wait for a new DOS version of Word. Since I don't remember Microsoft ever "officially" getting as far as a "C" version of Word, this may really be an interim release of Word in anticipation of changes to foster more group-oriented operation.

That would fit with Microsoft's emphasis on networking via Windows for Workgroups and Windows NT over the past several months. We should have a better "read" on the situation in January and the WORD SIG Meeting would be quite interesting. Plan to be here.

Reagan Andrews

## WordPerfect SIG

WP DOS Tip of the Month:

Scenario: Sally Sue down the hall has started a document that you now have to finish. Her default settings are different than yours. So you jump to the top of the document, expecting to find a variety of codes that you can delete. But there are no codes!

That's because they are in Document Initial Codes: {Shift}[F8] 3-Document, 2-Initial Codes. She probably didn't create them there, but that's where they end up because of her default settings. (It's your lucky day, Judy. This works in 5.0 the same as 5.1.)

Any formatting changes set in the Document Initial Codes affect the entire current document but do not embed codes at the top of the document. Because these codes are assigned to the document, they affect all subdocuments as well: headers, footers, footnotes, endnotes, and graphic boxes.

The cursor can be anywhere in the document to make these changes. So if you've already cre-

ated the document, this can still be used. There are limitations as to what you can use, so you'll want to experiment. Basically you can use every option found in the Line format menu and most options found in the Page and Other format menus. You cannot use text or a graphics box that contains text or a graphic. You can use a graphics box but it must be empty or must contain a Graphic on Disk (5.1 only).

This is also an excellent way to "hide" codes and is a great help with a primary file when merging because you don't get duplicate codes with each record that's been merged.

On to January SIG Business: Columns will be the topic. When to use columns versus tabs or tables. How to incorporate graphics, lines and columns. We'll cover some other desktop publishing features and create a newsletter.

See you then!

Lori Quinn

## MS Works SIG

Besides answering questions, we spent most of the hour talking about available functions for the Spreadsheet section. Next time we will cover functions and formulas in the Database section including reports.

We had a lot of new people and the handouts on What is Works were swept up quickly. While Works for Windows was rated the highest by PC Magazine among Integrated packages, most of the people present are using Works for DOS. I have both on my machine, but since Windows will not accept CGA as a video choice, we can't throw it up on the overhead.

Mike Firth

## Paradox Database, Version 4.0

A review by Jim Hoisington

I'm a Paradox fan. I've used it since version 2.0. The North Texas PC Users Group has always used it to analyze the demographics surveys that we conduct every fall. Our newsletter editor, Doug McQuaid, asked me to do a review of version 4.0 when I set up the tables and scripts for this year's demographics.

The strength of Paradox has always been that it was easy for a spreadsheet user to transition from a spreadsheet which brings all of its data into RAM memory to a database which has so much data that it cannot bring it all into the computer's RAM memory at one time.

Paradox keeps its data in tables which conform to the rows and columns familiar to a spreadsheet user. And, until version 4.0, the only menu option in Paradox was the "bouncy bar" menu along the top of the screen so familiar to early users of spreadsheets. These two familiar paradigms when combined with Borland's VROOM technology which shuffles data into and out of memory behind the scenes, help many spreadsheet users move up to a database.

The other strength of Paradox has been the ease with which users could form a query across tables. Most databases require the user to learn some sort of query language. Paradox forms its queries by visually linking cells in rows of multiple tables and forming an answer table with the result. The technique is far more intuitive than learning other programming languages that often give their answers in less than intuitive forms.

The good news is that neither of these strengths has been compromised by version 4.0. They have both been enhanced to keep pace with the developments in spreadsheets.

### New Menus

Just as spreadsheets are no longer limited to the one or two line "bouncy bar" menus along the top of the screen, neither is Paradox. Paradox has kept its traditional top level one line menu but as each item is selected, a CUA (Common User Access) compliant, drop down menu appears. The menu items are still in the same order that they have always been, but it is a lot easier to see where you are if you are down to the third level of choices. The old method kept re-

placing the single line at the top with a new line representing the new level with no visual indication as to how deep you were in the menu system or how you got there.

Not only does this make Paradox more consistent with the way other programs work, it makes it much easier to learn because there is much more information on the screen.

### More Information

Paradox now uses the bottom line or lines to provide additional information as the user moves from choice to choice on the menu. This extra information saves a lot of time navigating the help screens.

Another way Paradox provides more information is that it stacks tables on the screen so that the user can see the titles of the previous 4 tables. The user can navigate between the tables using the F3 and F4 keys or the mouse.

Actually, Paradox 4.0 isn't quite perfect here because I found two significant errors in the first hour I used it. While flipping between tables and between forms and tables it is possible to have "bit droppings" on the screen (or desktop in Borland parlance.) "Bit droppings" are pieces of information on the screen which have become detached from their original object and are in an area of the screen that hasn't been repainted (updated).

While bit droppings are not dangerous and they don't hurt your data, they are distracting and sometimes misleading.

When I reported the problem to Borland's technical support (I was on hold for 23 minutes before I got to a technician), it was not a known bug. That amazed me since I found them within the first hour of use using the sample tables provided by Borland. The only reason that the support technician could imagine that it wasn't reported was that I was using the F3, F4, and F7 keys to navigate through the tables and forms and that all the testers had used the newly added mouse support. Anyway, by the time you read this, the bit droppings problem will probably be fixed.

### Speed

Borland claims to lead the pack in speed. As is typical in these products, that claim will probably hold until the next release of any of the competing databases. I did not try to do my own evaluation of

Paradox 4.0's speed because I just don't have enough data lying around to give it a fair test.

I build LAN based databases for a living and have always been amazed by the wimpy speed tests done by the trade press. Most reviewers put something like 5,000 to 6,000 items in a database and then try to evaluate how "fast" the software is on a "large" database. In real life, most "average" LAN databases contain from 100,000 to 250,000 items per table. "Large" used to mean 500,000 items but I'm now seeing estimates of tables containing over one million items at year end.

A good speed test would run on a table containing 250,000 items and I don't have anything like that at home.

One other feature that I haven't had time to test yet but has been really needed in Paradox is secondary indexes. An index keeps information about a particular field in a way that gives you rapid access to the table if you are interrogating that particular field (column in spreadsheet parlance). Secondary indexes allow you to have rapid access to more than one field (column) per table.

## BLOBS

Paradox 4.0 allows you to store BLOBS! And, they won't make your hard disk sticky.

BLOBS are programming shorthand for Binary Large Objects. The ability to store BLOBS is important because we are starting to put things into databases like pictures, digitized sound, and digitized handwriting. Having the ability to store and categorize the large objects is something that will be needed by all database products if they want to continue to compete in the market.

## Programming in PAL

The good news is that the Paradox Application Language now supports more than the "bouncy bar" menu. There are now: floating, bi-modal, windows; pulldown menus; dialog boxes; radio buttons; check boxes; sliders; labels; and event triggers. Well, we asked for them.

With all these new features comes the complexity of programming in an event driven environment. It's going to take a lot longer to bring someone up to speed as a PAL programmer. However, the applications that the programmer can create will be much easier for the people how use the applications to learn and use.

## Mouse Support

Yes, Paradox 4.0 finally brings mouse support to Paradox. It works because I followed the cable from the back of my computer to a big pile of 360K diskettes and found by mouse. I clicked and double-clicked through a couple of screens and everything seemed to work correctly. The Dark Side of Paradox 4.0

## Here's what I found that I didn't like about Paradox 4.0:

The mouse support was developed before Borland "invented" (found) the right mouse button. All future Borland products use the right mouse button to bring up the properties of an object. No so in Paradox 4.0. (Once you've used it, it's hard to go back.)

Paradox 4.0 carries a certain amount of "disk bloat" with it. The tables that I converted from Paradox 3.5 format to 4.0 format increased in size from a low of 35% to a high of 50%. These were small tables (20 or so items) and maybe the overhead is on a per table basis and would not be so noticeable in large tables.

The report writer and the form designer were untouched by the development team. That means that while you are designing forms and reports, your mouse can crawl back under that pile of diskettes at the back of your computer table.

The Paradox debugger received minimal improvements and still has a long way to go. (My standards are pretty high here -- I think Microsoft's Codeview is [expletive deleted]!)

## Summary

Paradox 4.0 brings some long overdue features to Paradox. Despite some of the drawbacks that I've found with the package, I'd recommend it. I'd also bet that there is a 4.x version out in the early spring that fixes some of the anomalies in 4.0.

Paradox is still unique among the mid-range database products in being the most intuitive database for people who are just starting to use databases.

Jim







9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	<b>HP LaserJet and PaintJet Printers</b>
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	<b>Fontographer 3.5 For Windows</b>
11:00 AM - 11:30 AM	<b>NTPCUG Business Meeting</b>
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	<b>Windows for Workgroups</b>
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	<b>MS-DOS Futures</b>

(See page 1 for description of programs.)

## Special Interest Groups

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<b>BASIC Prog-Adv.</b>	Mike Firth	(214)827-7734
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	Jim Carter	(214)283-2292 h
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<b>DAC Software</b>	Putt Shaw	(214)669-9633 w
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		(214)867-1679 h
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<b>R:Base</b>	Don Branham	(214)495-4410
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<b>Software Review</b>	Pat Henley	(214)326-2526 w
		(214)964-8174 h
<b>Spreadsheet</b>	Mark Gruner	(214)618-1608 h
	Betty Brooks	(214)964-8174 h
<b>Spreadsheet Dev</b>	Mark Gruner	(214)618-1608 h
	Betty Brooks	(817)355-9594 h
<b>StarText</b>	Beverly Kurtin	(817)478-6665 h
	Jim Boughton	(214)821-4788 h
<b>TI Pro</b>	James Corbett	(214)634-2360 w
		(214)348-3766 h
	Kurt Krider	(817)267-0758 h
<b>Unix/Xenix</b>	Doug Scott	(817)878-0367 w
		(214)596-7807 h
	Jim Stallworth	(214)604-2226 w
<b>Windows Applic.</b>	Rick Silvernall	(214)306-5422 h
		(214)250-8146 w
<b>Windows Dev.</b>	Arthur English	(214)618-1266 h
<b>WORD</b>	Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.	(214)828-0699
	David McGehee	(214)681-0202 h
	Dorothy Bertine	(817)387-9993 h
<b>WordPerfect</b>	Lori Quinn	(214)255-0555 w
		Metro (817)481-6453 h
	Mitch Milam	(214)823-9837 w

## 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.

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

## North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

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

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

The North Texas PC Users Group, Inc., is a non-profit, independent group, not associated with IBM or any other Corporation. Membership is open to owners and others interested in exchanging ideas, information, hardware, predictions, and other items related to IBM Personal and compatible computers. To join the Group, complete the application blank printed elsewhere in this newsletter, and send it with \$24 membership dues to the Membership Director whose address is shown below. A subscription to the newsletter is included with each membership. The Group meets once each month, usually on the second Saturday. See cover for date, time and place of the next User Group meeting.



### Board of Directors

**Andy Oliver, Chair**      **Doug Gorrie**  
**Reagan Andrews**      **Mark Gruner**  
**Jim Hoisington**

### Officers

<b>President</b>	Doug Gorrie	(214)618-8002 h
		(214)464-7942 w
<b>President-Elect</b>	Vote your choice at the January elections!	
<b>Program Chair.</b>	Timothy Carmichael	(214)661-4626 w
<b>Treasurer</b>	Raymond T. Reyes	(214)495-7071
<b>Secretary</b>	John West	(214)620-8741 h
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<b>Advertising Dir.</b>	John Pribyl	(817)275-4109 h
<b>Publicity</b>	Peyton Weaver	(214)462-7980
<b>Disk of the Month</b>	Kathryn Loanman	(214)596-2539
<b>Group Statistician</b>	Connie Testa	
<b>Volunteer Coord.</b>	Claude McClure	(214)867-0978 h
<b>BBS</b>	Fred Williams	(214)492-1315

### Members Emeritus

Phil Chamberlain      Jim Hoisington  
John Pribyl      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.)*

**NTPCUG BULLETIN BOARD (214)387-2751**  
**(214)387-2752**

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**Assistant Sysop: Tom Prickett**  
**Assistant Sysop: Doug Gorrie**  
**Information Mgt: Lewis Graber**  
**User Relations: Adam Peterson**  
**DOM Index: 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 PC's. 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—.



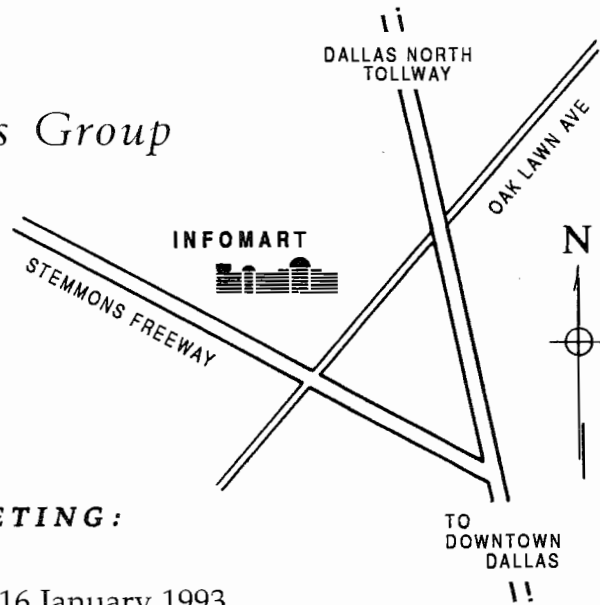
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**NEXT MEETING:**

16 January 1993