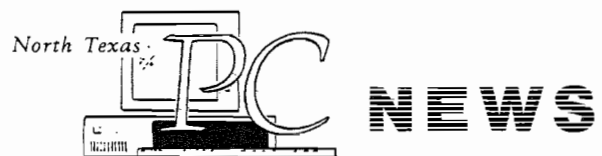


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North Texas PC NEWS

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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 2194 last month.

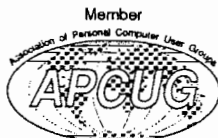
Member distribution was 1791; remaining copies were distributed to PC user groups around the country, and to advertisers, prospective members and others with common interests.

The editors of North Texas PC NEWS use Microsoft Word for Windows. This issue of North Texas PC NEWS was composed using Xerox Ventura Publisher and HP Scanjet Iip. Corel HEADLINE and CorelDRAW were used for some headings. Repro was printed on a NEC LC-890 Laser Printer. Principal typefaces include: Palatino, Helvetica and Banff.

DEADLINE
Copy deadline for May
North Texas PC NEWS:
Saturday, April 10th

Meeting Dates:

April Meeting - 4th Saturday
May Meeting - 3rd Saturday
June meeting tentatively scheduled
on the first 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.

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*Program for April**Timothy Carmichael*

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

PC Tools for Windows

Central Point Software

David Wainwright, Regional Manager

The demo of PC Tools for Windows will show you how to organize and simplify your work, manage your files faster and easier, automatically protect your data and optimize your system performance. The product's key features include: MultiDesk, File Manager, WinShield, Optimizer and System Consultant. There will be a drawing for free products. *

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Lucid's Product Offering for 1993

Lucid Corporation

David Hayden, Director of Public Relations

Demo of utility and application software. The Lucid 3-D spreadsheet, and the Lightning line of disk caching which includes Windows, DOS, and CD-ROM support and utility software for notebook computers. The demo will include a new Windows desktop manager that works the way you think. Lucid will also give their first public demonstration of the Windows version of the Lucid 3-D spreadsheet. There will be a drawing for several free copies of their software. *

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

NTPCUG Business Meeting

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Paradox 1.0 for Windows

Borland Corporation

Dewayne Gimpel, Systems Engineer

Paradox 1.0 for Windows is the relational database for Borland's innovative object-oriented technology for data management. It gives you powerful database capabilities and a sophisticated programming environment -- without the need for programming! There will be a drawing for 5 copies. *

* 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...**Membership, and Microsoft (two favorite subjects) ...**

This month, we should have a BIG increase in new members, largely though the generosity of Microsoft Corporation. They offered to contribute \$10 toward NEW memberships received at our March 20 Super Saturday meeting, leaving only \$14 due from the purchaser. This is a true win-win situation, one we were happy to accept.

Apparently, Microsoft wasn't happy with just a GREAT offer; they wanted to make a SUPER GREAT offer. So they extended their \$10 contribution to include new memberships received at the Windows NT Business So-

lutions Conference (March 5), AND at the DOS 6 rollout (March 30). We're extremely appreciative of what Microsoft does to further the interests and success of NTPCUG. Next time you see Bill Gates, give him and his top-notch personnel our Thanks! We'll give you a final New Member count at the April Business Meeting (11:00 AM).

Speaking of the DOS 6 rollout, NTPCUG was privileged to be one of 15 or so User Groups participating in this FIRST official DOS 6 announcement. And in their typical generous manner, Microsoft also matched funds contributed that night for NTPCUG's chosen charity, the Dallas Computer Literacy Program. (That total, too, will be announced on April 24th.) It's always good to hear Bill Gates' views on the future of the computer industry, although we're not sure if he FORESEES the future or just MAKES it happen! Either way, it was a great night, and NTPCUG participants felt privileged to be involved.

I'd like to give special thanks to those who volunteered to promote membership at the above events. These include Claude McClure, Andy Oliver, Woody Pewitt,

John West, Fred Williams, and others whose names were not yet available as my "Prez Sez" deadline arrived. Thanks, y'all ! And welcome to all our new members.

Membership Renewals ...

One more comment on memberships. Look at the mailing label on your copy of PC NEWS. Note when your NTPCUG membership expires (upper-right corner). Now, make a note on your trusty calendar to renew your membership in the month PRIOR to that date. (EXAMPLE: Renew in April if yours expires in May.) Why? Because a renewal in the month prior to expiration saves us the printing, postage, time and envelope costs required to mail you a renewal letter. It also eases the load on our overburdened Membership Director, Jim Hoisington.

When you do renew (you will, won't you?), plan on picking up your membership at the Infomart the following month. That, too, avoids us the cost of mailing it to you.

All these little things add up toward keeping your membership low. Please do your part if feasible.

Bylaws Changes ...

At the February meeting of the NTPCUG Board of Directors (BOD), a proposal to increase the number of at-large Directors was unanimously approved for submission to you, the membership. The BOD proposes that the Bylaws be amended to require five at-large Directors, to better represent the interests of our ever-expanding membership. Other changes are also being included to clarify vague sections, bring phraseology in line with current User Group structure, etc.

Specifics of all proposed changes are detailed elsewhere in this issue, and complete copies of the proposed bylaws will be available at the April 24th business meeting. In addition, members attending that meeting will be asked to approve all changes via voice or written vote. Your vote will count, so please plan on attending.

Women's Center of Dallas ...

As "the PREZ," I get a number of calls from groups and individuals that recognize the diversity and professionalism of our members. One such call came from Chris Michalek, a representative of the Women's Center of Dallas. As noted in a recent press release, their mission is to "change society's expectation of women through research, education,

counseling and communication". To this end, the Women's Center is recruiting women in math and science professions to be included in a data base which will be used to encourage girls to enter these fields. These professionals will serve as mentors and speakers to young women who are interested in math/science.

If you are a woman in the category above, and are interested in promoting the participation of girls in math and science, please contact Chris at (214) 625-2343. Without a doubt, math and science are critical elements in the design and application of computers, without which we would still be adding by abacus. Who knows what hidden talent lies out there, waiting for the right encouragement before developing the next generation of super-PCs. If you can help, or know of someone who can, please call Chris.

More Microsoft Kudos ...

In April, Microsoft is hosting their fifth User Group Summit Meeting, Mindshare 93. Two representatives from each of 40 User Groups nationwide are invited to meet in Bellevue, Washington to exchange ideas and information, and to get an in-depth look at Microsoft's product strategy for the next 18 months. Although non-disclosure agreements are often required, the stated intent is for this information to be shared with our membership wherever possible. The representatives will also have an opportunity to convey to Microsoft what "we" feel are key issues in both the industry and in the user group community. If you have thoughts in this regard, please forward them to me via letter, and I will arrange for them to be forwarded to Microsoft during the event.

Sadly, we were unable to get this information early enough to allow us to draw for the representatives. So, as "the PREZ", I guess I'll have to go so our seats there will not remain unused. Despite the strain of long distance flight, jet lag, etc., I will take diligent notes, and dutifully transcribe to readable text each night as I remain trapped in my hotel room. (NOT !!)

Fortunately, Microsoft picks up most of the tab, so the strain will be somewhat "bearable". Ahhh, the trials of the Presidency...

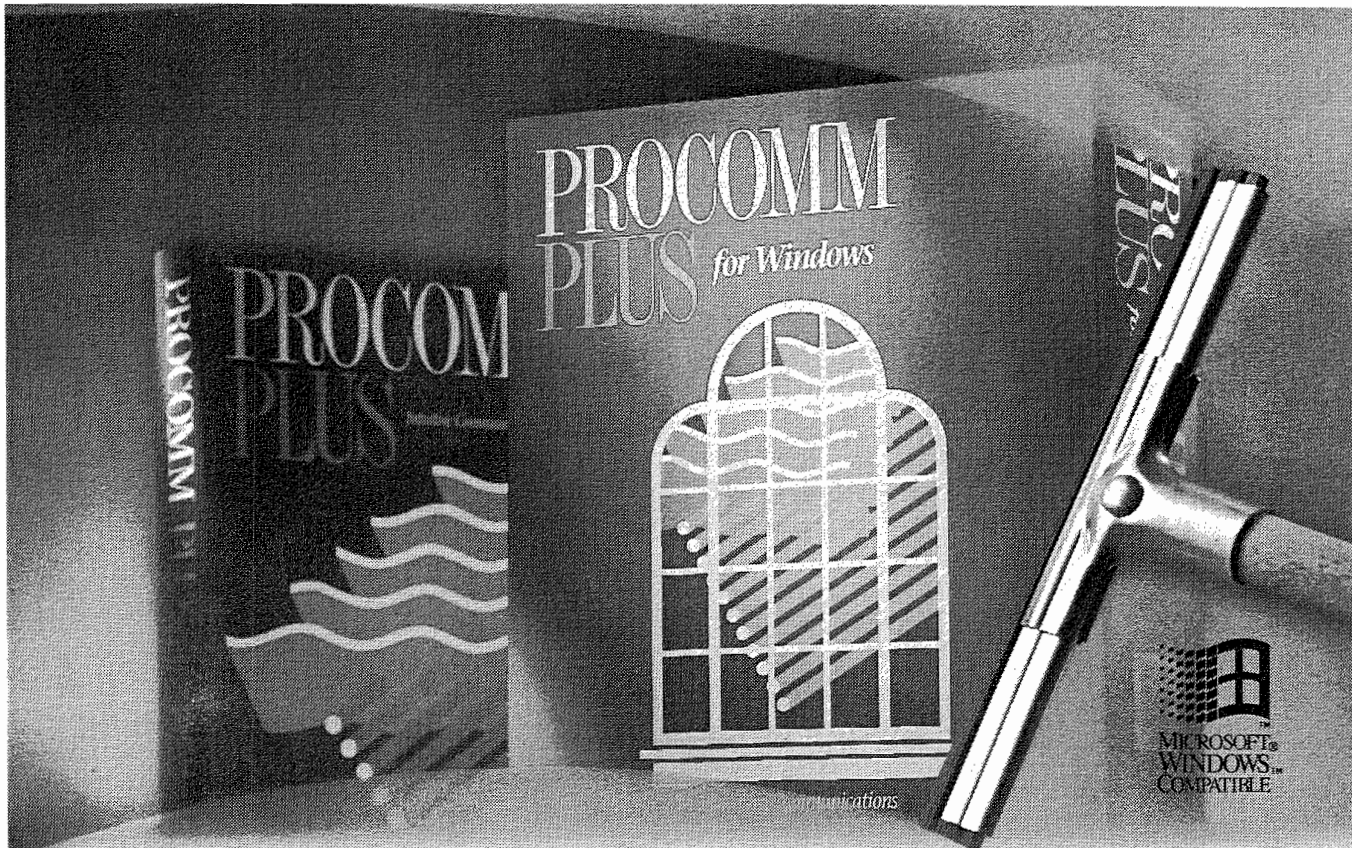
Secretaries Day ...

This reminder – don't forget that April 21 is Secretaries Day. Be nice. Candy, flowers, and a raise would be nice...

Have a good month.

Doug Gorrie

☞

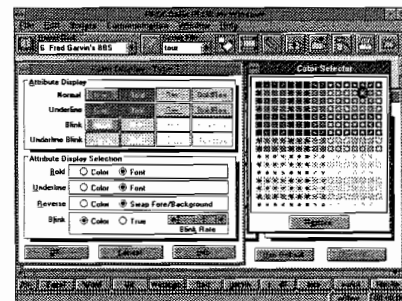
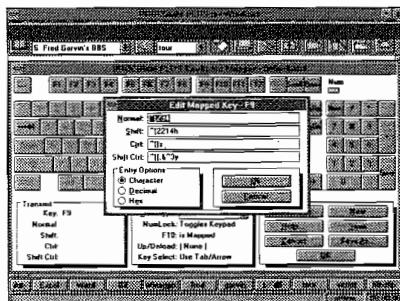
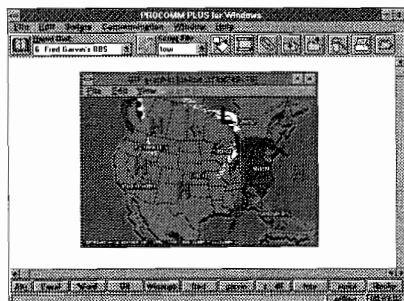


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If you're not considering Lotus Ami Pro, you must know something the experts don't.

"Ami Pro® is the best word processor on the market... [it] goes the competition one better in every respect."

1992 MVP, PC/Computing 12/92

"Ami Pro 3.0 takes the lead over Microsoft® Word as the Windows™ word processor to beat."

Top Rating Ever for Windows Word Processor, InfoWorld 9/28/92

"Ami Pro 3.0 provides a host of new and enhanced features... that save time and make your work easier."

100 Best Products of 1992, Windows Magazine 2/93

"Ami Pro is the kind of program that I'd like to go out and buy right away. It's that easy and it did that much."

*#1 Rating, Software Digest Ratings Report (Vol. 9, #6, 9/92)**

"Ami Pro 3.0... ups the ante in the fight among the Big Three: Ami Pro, Microsoft Word 2.0 and WordPerfect® for Windows. It's full of clever features that make your work easier and faster."

Award of Distinction, BYTE 9/92

"Beg or borrow time on a system running Ami Pro, and you'll soon see what a word processor should be."

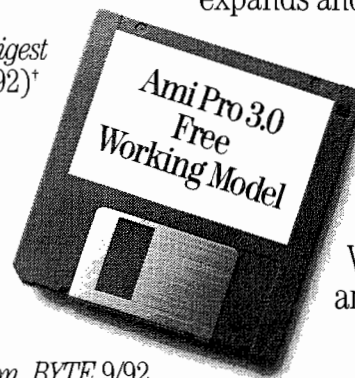
PC World 6/92

"Ami Pro Version 3.0... is the most graphical, colorful and in many ways the most powerful word processor on the market... no other package can match its ambition, its range of functions or the sheer pleasure of using it."

Best Products of 1992, PC Magazine 1/93

"You can learn to use Ami Pro... in about a day. Put the manual in a drawer as a first step. There are no required control codes, no deeply nested menus, no command words. This friendliness greatly expands and sharply changes the market."

Forbes 2/93



"In the Windows word processing world, Ami Pro 3.0 comes close to being perfect... it stands above Word and WordPerfect both in its function and in its speed."

Editor's Pick, Home Office Computing 1/93

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Word Processor for Windows

*Among all word processors tested. Reprints of report available upon request. *Offer expires 9/30/93. Call for a list of eligible word processors. Education-priced Lotus products not included. Offer valid in U.S. only. Not to be combined with any other offer. Have your current word processor and credit card ready when you call. ©1993 Lotus Development Corporation, 55 Cambridge Parkway, Cambridge, MA 02142. All rights reserved. Lotus and Ami Pro are registered trademarks of Lotus Development Corporation. Windows is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation. WordPerfect is a registered trademark of WordPerfect Corporation. Software Digest is a registered trademark of NSTL, Inc., a McGraw-Hill Company. Adobe Type Manager and the ATM logo are registered trademarks of Adobe Systems, Inc. In Canada call 1-800-GO-LOTUS.



Installing DOS 6.0

by Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.

There are a few tips to remember if you are installing the new Microsoft DOS. This is a new, more powerful operating system (OS) and installation should be handled with respect, if not care. Make at least one full backup set before installing DOS 6.0. Also, make a copy of your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files on a floppy disk that has been formatted via your existing DOS as a bootable disk. Be sure to include any other files necessary to operate your PC, such as disk-driver files, CD-ROM driver files, etc.

Before you install DOS 6.0, defrag your disk volumes one last time if you have a defragging utility.

Make sure you have at least 5M free space on your C: drive for the installation. When DOS is installed, it will make a back-up DOS directory and an "Uninstall" disk so you can reverse the installation if you wish (or need) to return to your previous DOS version. The "old" DOS will remain and the extra space is for the new DOS. You'll get it back when you feel safe removing the old DOS files.

Disk #1 of the upgrade set will contain a number of .TXT files. They're very important and should be read before you begin the installation process. I usually print them out so I can make notes in the margins if/when I run across something that refers to my hardware/software. Reading these carefully can mean the difference between a smooth upgrade and a lot of time on the Microsoft technical support line(s).

You'll be a lot happier if you read the documentation that comes with your upgrade set as well. Don't worry about the size since a lot of what used to be in the printed documentation is now in the DOS HELP utility and the printed DOC's will be minimalist (at the time I'm writing this note).

Don't be afraid to "play" with DOS 6.0's features -- especially use of [F5] and [F8]. Be careful with DELTREE and MOVE, though. There are traps for the unwary since each of these new utilities is very powerful and can lead to trouble if used incorrectly.

If you have any version of Norton Backup installed, be sure to "protect" your configuration information.

The new DOS will re-configure NBACKUP if you install the new backup utilities. The new backup utilities are "minimalist" and don't include all the features of the full utility, so you may "lose" some capabilities unless you are careful.

Your best bet will be to install DOS 6.0, run MEMMAKER in "Express" mode (you can always UNDO it if you don't like the results) and get your system stable BEFORE attempting to run DLSPACE.EXE. Allow a lot of time for this. Allow even more time when you install DBLSPACE since this often runs for hours on a large, mostly-full disk volume.

You might even keep notes on what you've done for future reference, perhaps taped to the side of your monitor. This is imperative if you install DBLSPACE since you'll notice drive reassignments, etc., as part of the process.

One last tip: You can install DOS 6.0 from a directory on your hard disk. Just copy the files from the floppy disks to one large volume and type SETUP at the DOS prompt. Remember to make sure the "hidden" files, IO.SYS and MSDOS.SYS are copied along with the rest of the files. This is a lot faster than installing from the floppy disks themselves.

Reagan



NTPCUG membership breaks 2K In frantic March explosion

March 23. March meant "explosive growth" for the NTPCUG this year.

Really -- 313 New NTPCUG members in March -- so far. And we still have the DOS 6.0 rollout ahead of us...

We'd like to take all the credit, but Microsoft's offer of \$10 off the new-member dues for participants at the March 20 *Access* and *FoxPro 2.5* introductions at Infomart helped too. And it isn't finished (at time of this writing) since the offer holds for the March 30 *DOS 6.0* Infomart rollout as well.



Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.

The Variety Store

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

Falling, falling, falling -- PC Prices Plummet in March -- Price Wars Redux!

I'm afraid to buy anything. I just know what I pay today will be at least 15% less next week if the PC Price War(s) continue unabated. We all read in the media that this bloody "Clash of the Titans (and not so 'Titan')" was over with a general agreement that the industry just couldn't take much more.

Ha! Not the Houston Clone-Maker (Compaq), not Dell, and not IBM (although they may wish...). If I didn't know better, I'd think these folks want to put all the "marginal" makers out of business.

Intel scores big-time

People making out in all this? Intel. Intel is now in the driver's seat as far as PC prices go with the CPU chip alone accounting for the majority of the cost associated with the motherboard in any PC. Yeah, Intel is feeling some heat from TI/Cyrix and AMD, but the 486DX is the standard and Intel has a lock on the 486DX. For now.

Meanwhile, the P5 or 586 has been delayed (again) by Intel with a lot of speculation in the media concerning reason(s) for the delay(s).

Conspiracy theories

First of these is that the price of the 486 chips has "held" pretty well and Intel is selling all of these chips they can produce. Introducing the P5 or 586 would do two things (according to this conspiracy theory), both of which are "bad" in the short term.

First (bad) effect would be to drive the price of 486 CPU chips down and, hence, lower profits. Second is that introduction of the P5 would "steal" some Intel production capacity (now blasting out 486s) with same result as above. Don't know if I fully "buy" either theory. Intel is a very, very bright group of folks. They've recently embarked on a huge expansion project, and I seriously doubt they haven't taken this into account.

More likely is the old semiconductor arch-demon, HEAT. Rumors persist that Intel hasn't been able to solve the heat-related gremlins in the 5-volt CPUs at higher speeds (66 MHz and up) and isn't ready to produce a 3.3-Volt series yet. Time (and advertising) will tell all.

Meanwhile, disk prices Plummet faster than PC's

Largely unnoticed in all this is that component prices have been dropping faster than complete PC prices. Hard disk drives are a good example. Almost every vendor is selling hard disks well below prices quoted only a month ago. Example -- 200M IDE drives that cost \$450 three months ago and \$600 this time last year are now available for \$325 (maybe lower by the time you read this).

Also, try to find a simple IDE interface board without I/O ports. The cost for a two-drive, two floppy, two serial, one parallel port IDE card is in the \$15 - \$20 range now as opposed to \$30 - \$45 prices quoted four months ago.

The only exceptions seem to be large SVGA monitors, CD-ROM drives and DRAM. Both the monitors and CD-ROMs have held steady over last month or so and DRAM prices at *Super Saturday* and *First Saturday* have actually gone up. The DRAM price hike may be vendors estimates that the new, more protectionist, Clinton administration will have a "positive" effect on DRAM pricing.

That means "negative" for end users.

Variety

Microsoft Loses One On March legal front

This is a "quickie." Microsoft has been (at this late date?) trying to trademark the term *Windows*. Redmond lost the first round as a "generic" decision handed down in early March precluded (for now) the funny looking little "R" with a circle around it attached to each mention of *Windows*. They'll appeal this one.

The funny part is that we all thought Microsoft must have had this all locked-up years ago. Is Gates fallible after all?

Don't believe everything You read in the media -- or Here about *DOS 6.0* & Stac

I've been following the media closely about the impact of the Stac action(s) on the release of *DOS 6.0*, i.e., will *DBLSPACE* ship with this release. By now you know it did.

A lot of the media hinted (or strongly suggested) it wouldn't. Some media seemed happy to announce that "most" of *DOS 6.0's* "potential appeal would be lost as a result" of the legal issues. These are some of the same folks who predicted *OS/2 2.0* would take the industry by storm and have been angry at Microsoft for IBM's atrocious marketing that hobbled the new OS.

Another stumble? -- WFW sales lackluster New WFW beta in works?

Windows 3.1 for Workgroups (WFW) supposedly is far behind Microsoft projections ac-

ording to at least one media source. Sales of the new *Windows* with peer-to-peer networking simply haven't lived up to expectations in spite of a massive send-off.

The answer, according to the media, is a new and improved WFW beta effort with "user friendly" additions at the version's heart. Not a bad idea, but what will the new version be named? Obviously, Microsoft wants to stick with 3.1 or 3.X as long as possible for licensing reasons.

This fits in with some comments from Microsoft personnel when WFW previewed for NTPCUG. I expected a new beta project anyway, but not this quickly. What's really interesting is the media didn't infer what would be in the new version, but other sources have.

Across from the vacuums -- PCs finally arrive!!!

Ah! PCs have arrived at the consumer level. Nestled in among the vacuum cleaners, bread makers, leather jackets and food dehydrators, PCs have made the general purpose catalogs. Really neat.

Now I can order a new (name brand) multimedia PC, a canvas boat cover and carpet cleaning machine all at the same time and from the same source. I can also get an oriental rug, a body pillow, a cappuccino maker and an electric tooth brush from the same catalog.

That's style and convenience.

Back to Comdex -- DMS's, VESA/Local Bus, Glass disks, awesome sound, 100's of fonts And, Modem-maker beta's neat *Windows* package

This is the wrap-up on Fall Comdex '92. Not sorted in any particular order such as importance, the following caught my eye (or ears) and seemed worth a word or two here. The first may actually be the most important in some respects, though.

PC DOCS -- scores with Real document management

Saw this at the Microsoft area and was highly impressed. *PC DOCS OPEN* is a Document Management System (DMS) for the *Windows* interface that facilitates data exchange between a number of word processing, spreadsheet, E-mail applications and client/server SQL databases.

PC DOCS OPEN was demonstrated with a very nice full text searching capability that was impressive. According to the publishers, other, more powerful full-text products may be used within the system for relevancy ranking and conceptual searching.

Again, the publishers claim the DMS is independent from the underlying network or database platform and allows flexible design of interfaces and configuration. What I saw was a very tight, well designed system that was fast (almost everything at Comdex gives that impression whether "real" or not), efficient and well thought out from a

Variety

document creation and control standpoint.

Everybody has VESA or some Other Local Bus option now

I didn't see a single motherboard vendor at Comdex who wasn't showing and touting some form of Local Bus or VESA option this year. For a change, board vendors were also showing product, particularly video boards with various combinations of Windows acceleration claims.

Privately, a number of vendors were warning that not all Local Busses are equal, and not all LB boards are "universal" and fault-free. I heard a lot of horror stories about bus timing problems with video boards from a number of makers on some of the faster (50 MHz) motherboards and word seemed to be "Try before buying."

Diamond and Hercules video boards looked very fast and stable as shown. Some others didn't and some vendors were even showing their product under *Windows 3.0*, perhaps indicating problems with drivers for later versions.

Areal shows miniature, Big glass hard disks

Areal was showing 130M and 260M, 2.5" disk drives for laptops and notebooks this year along with a 1.44G fault-tolerant, disk array with nine (9) of the A180 drives in a 5.25" form-factor package.

The new A130 and A260 drives are IDE interface while the 1.44G and 720M arrays are

RAID 5 under SCSI-2 interface. MTBDL (Mean Time Between Data Loss) estimates for the array drives were listed at 20 billion hours. (Let's wait and see on this one.)

Average access times for the new A130, A260 and AA9180 (array) were given as below 15 ms and 100,000 hour MTBF figures were quoted for the small units. All use Areal's glass substrate media.

You can't buy QSound Your vendor can and should

One of the few really impressive demonstrations at the Comdex Multimedia Showcase at Bally's was at the QSound Ltd. booth. QSound describes this as a multi-dimensional, sound localization technology which is licensed to vendors of multimedia equipment.

It's awesome and shows what DSP (digital signal processing) and psycho-acoustics research can do with formerly-mundane sound technology. Imaging was excellent and startling from such small, limited-range speakers. QSound called this "virtual audio" and was showing primarily for equipment makers, not end users.

Like everyone else at Bally's, the volume was cranked-up a little too far, but it wasn't as objectionable as a result of the QSound quality.

TrueType fonts hit the masses Selection explodes at Comdex

I love fonts. Anybody who regularly reads this column knows that's a fact. Comdex was won-

derful for font lovers! *TrueType* fonts were everywhere this year. This may have been *Windows 3.1's* real gift to users since font prices have dropped below the basement while selection has exploded.

Monotype designs magnificent

If you like the *Windows 3.1 TrueType* fonts, thank Monotype. Microsoft evidently went for the best when the Monotype faces were selected as the "standard" fonts for the new product. They are sharp, beautifully designed, and print quite well on most printers.

Monotype has converted a large portion of their typeface library to the TrueType format and PostScript Type 1 format over the last year. Most interesting is a release of 57 Monotype fonts for \$69. I received a flyer on this recently and will probably buy it for the *Baskerville*, *Century Gothic* and *Bodoni* faces included.

Data-Cal's WorldFont

Data-Cal was showing an impressive array of foreign-language fonts in both *TrueType* and *PostScript Type 1* packages ranging from Arabic through Ukrainian with Estonian, Katakana and Latvian in between. More popular languages were available in a variety of serif and stroke styles similar to English sanserif and roman type faces.

Data-Cal also featured their language fonts sets for *WordPerfect 5.1* with similar pricing to that for Windows fonts -- \$199 per font set.

Variety

Agfa shows Discovery TrueType Pack

Agfa seems to have discovered *TrueType* this year as well. A venerable type house, Agfa has begun converting a large portion of their type design library into TrueType and Type 1 font packages for PC use.

Their new Discovery TrueType Pack featured "46 essential text, headline and decorative TrueType fonts" and included over 1000 clip art images as well. Retail price on this package wasn't given at Comdex. Samples of the Agfa faces shown were absolutely first rate although somewhat mundane.


Multi-Tech -- premier Modems -- plus a neat beta

Multi-Tech is one of those vendors who does Comdex "right." While I think they make some of the best modems available (at premium prices), they also have released a beta of what could be one of the better Windows communications packages. The betas were Comdex giveaways along with premium flashlights.

MultiExpress is a full-featured, Windows communications package. It does everything you might want while handling modem chores excellently (for a beta version). The version I re-

ceived has yet to do a major crash and I suspect it really isn't a "beta" version after all. One nice feature is that it fits on a 720K, 3.5" diskette with room to spare.

For free, I didn't receive documentation or a really-extensive HELP facility, but it works and works quite quickly for a Windows-based program. I may dump my other Windows communication package. I know I'll buy the "full" version when it's available.

Reagan... 

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EasyCAD 2

A review by John Kline

If you are looking for a slick, easy-to-use Computer Aided Drafting program and you do not need the really advanced features of a \$3,000 CAD program, then EasyCAD 2 is the program for you. Having been in the market for a simple CAD program for quite some time, I had been downloading numerous shareware CAD programs to find out which one would do the job I needed to get done without my having to spend the next month wading through piles of manuals. EasyCAD 2 came to the rescue.

The program is menu-driven with an uncluttered interface which makes learning nearly effortless for the novice. If you really want to fly and you are a frequent user, there is also a command line for typing in most commands. My project was to redesign my existing business space into a more efficient work area. I started by drawing the current floor plan and then modifying that drawing to the new, improved plan. It was a fairly simple project by most standards, but most of us hunting a low price CAD program don't need too many bells and whistles to slow us down. The fantastic thing about this program is that it DOES have most of the bells and whistles for the advanced user if you need them...all at an affordable price.

The EasyCAD 2 interface contains a Lotus-like menu bar which arranges its categories of features in a very logical system. Main menu headings include File, View, Draw, Edit, Copy, Spec, Modify, Calculate and Actions, all subject to the click of the mouse. The File menu allows the user to manage drawings and files. The View menu controls what you see in the drawing window with features like zoom and layers. You can save up to 8 different views of your drawing and they are only a mouse click away at any time. Controlling layers is not at all complicated: a second menu bar of various layers and their colors is visible at all times down the left side of the screen. The Draw menu allows easy access to the usual circle, line, point, arc, oval, square, polygon, etc. Fillet, chamfer and tangents are also readily available. The Edit menu allows you to modify existing drawings. Erase, move, rotate, scale, mirror, break, bend, trim and stretch are just some of the choices here. The Copy menu offers some of the more powerful commands available in the program. You can define "parts" which are various entities you create and can

plug into any drawing automatically drawn to scale. I drew and defined a part called "door" and anytime I wanted to insert a door into my drawing I just selected Insert Part from the copy menu and clicked on "door" and inserted it into my drawing. Anything could be defined as a part and called up in a similar manner. The Copy menu also allows you to define symbols and call them up as needed.

The Spec menu allows you to define fill styles and patterns, line styles, text specifications, dimensioning formats and units of measurement. Grids, snap, ortho and tracking are also controlled in this menu. The Mod menu allows the user to find reference points on entities such as center, midpoint, endpoint, % along, degree, parallel, perpendicular, angle to, tangent and intersection. The Calc menu allows easy calculations of bearing, distance and area.

Dimensioning was intuitive. After you define the snap to grid, just line up one end of the cursor on an endpoint and drag it to the other end and the dimension lines and text appear. You have complete control over what the line and text look like through the Spec menu. There is also a macro feature that lets you record a series of keystrokes and later execute those keystrokes by pressing a simple key combination.

EasyCAD 2 imports from and exports to other CAD programs through the .DXF file format you may share drawings with others who may have the "high dollar" programs. The manual is VERY thorough and well laid out. The only things I would like to see in the program from my limited use of it my project are: 1) multiple layers of UNDO and 2) color printer support. The program does not require a math coprocessor, yet the speed of redraws is very fast. With my 386SX-33, full screen redraws took just a fraction of a second.

If you need an easy-to-learn, yet very powerful, inexpensive CAD program, EasyCAD 2 is a wise choice. With a list price of \$200 and a street price much less, you would be hard pressed to find a better CAD program for the money.

Please join us in the Software Review SIG.

John

■

(Editor's note: Pioneer CAD programmer, Michael Riddle, author of AUTOCAD, sold that company and product before he was age 30, retired, became disenchanted with his carefree existence and got back into the fray by creating FastCAD and its major subset EasyCAD. The two programs are written in assembler which produces the rapid redraws. His story parallels that of Jose Hurtado who started DAC Easy, sold it, then came up with Pacioli 2000. If there's a lesson here, it might be "The best never rest.")

New dBASE IV v2.0 gets you home for dinner

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dBASE IV outfoxes the competition

	dBASE IV	FoxPro
Industry standard	Yes	No
Designed for users	Yes	No
Designed for programmers	Yes	Yes
Queries optimized for stand-alone & networked computers	Yes	No
Instantly accessible visual design tools	Yes	No
Full cross-platform compatibility	Yes	No
Transaction processing	Yes	No
Multuser ready	Yes	No

Borland
Power made easy

The Dallas Fax 2496 Fax/Modem/VC board and software

A review by Pat Henley

While there are many competitors in the arena of voice/fax/modem hardware and software, it's hard to imagine smoother operation or simpler installation than the Dallas Fax unit. Communications is a new genre for me with only 20 calls to a BBS in the past 6 years. This should cheer the faint of heart to take the leap of faith I did upon opening the case, installing the board, paging through the documentation then hearing the squeaks and squawks of data communications. Reading the documentation word by word is the key to using the software. The hardware was less demanding. Set the dip switches, plug-and-play.

The system Dallas Fax offers comes in two versions, Voice Wizard and Voice Wizard Pro. The list price on the top package is \$309 and the only way to go. The better package allows you to send and receive faxes, perform modem communications and, most importantly, set up as many as 1000 mailboxes for unattended fax receptions or voice transmissions with pager notification or message or fax forwarding. Dallas Fax's sister operation, Silversoft produces its own voice software. The manuals are clearly written, strictly "made in USA", which is to say good typography, spelling, grammar and occasional wit which Americans can understand. The fax/modem portion is covered by Smith Micro Software in their program Quick Link II. The AT codes in the Smith package were wrong for my computer and/or board which necessitated a quick call to Tech Support. A humor-impaired tech who must have had jalapenos in his Swiss Miss that morning gave me good advice and cured my problem.

Next came the coding and set up in my six mailbox system. The process might be very intuitive for someone with heavy communications experience, but for me it was cookbooking all the way. If I can do it, you can. If you do, you will rejoice at being able to have a competent receptionist take your fax or voice calls in your absence and beep you to let you know an event has occurred. I use the mailboxes to differentiate between several types of business calls or faxes we might receive and personal calls for the family. This system admittedly will intimidate some

callers, which is partly its purpose. It is amazing how the telemarketing traffic has dropped since the full operation has been working. Yet for friends and business associates who don't mind punching a couple of telephone buttons, it has been a boon.

Very techy readme's accompany the documentation, nearly none of which had an immediate impact though all of it was nice to know. In essence, the programmers had encountered obstacles and overcome them. One of the funnier aspects of it was the series of daunting references to the necessity for CAS drivers (Communication Application Software) on numerous Silversoft pages, all of which was nullified by a single line of the readme. Had I read that line first, I would not have spent several minutes in terror unable to locate the vital drivers. As it apparently happened, Silversoft decided at the eleventh hour to incorporate the needed features in the basic software. Good move, Silversoft!

Potential conflicts with popular software hot keys have been averted by Silversoft's programmers. In two different WordPerfect modes, [CTRL]+[ENTER] would have been useless. Before I embarrassed myself by dialing Silversoft's Tech Support, I came across the six alternative combinations already available in the program in the aforementioned lucid manuals. It is refreshing to read instructive materials published by the people who manufacture the product. How many times have I had to buy third party books just to understand what my legal, registered hardware or software was all about?!

Two prominent features I was unable to test, which are parts of either the Voice Wizard or Voice Wizard Pro, are the distinctive ring and the ID Master. Distinctive ring allows two (in some areas) or four (in some areas) different ringing patterns to signal the intended receiver on a single party line. Without a rotary phone, you can know in advance of answering the phone for whom the call is intended. (We don't subscribe to that feature yet, though we may in the near future.) ID Master is a feature which is only available in a few states as I understand it. Incoming calls are identified by the incoming caller's phone number. The caller's number triggers a database/rolodex-like screen so that you know who the caller is and what your prior contacts may have been with the caller. It allows you to block such calls if that is desired. The caller must have previously agreed to have his ID number transmitted through the system. Several privacy issues exist with this one.

Smith has a feature in its fax software Silversoft should adopt. An outgoing fax may be set up for automatic redial ad infinitum with various delays between trials. This may even be accomplished in the background while the user runs other applications. The Silversoft fax procedure is manual, hands on and, in a word, cumbersome. That is my sole negative comment about the entire package of hardware and software. Three cheers for Dallas Fax. When you consider voice/fax/modem for your home business ... and you will, you should consider this one.

Pat

□

Image_In

A review by Neal Berkowitz

Image-in is a program of superlatives. It has the most features of any image processing program. It has more filters than its competitors. It provides more ways to output files for printing. It also provides greater control of masking for image overlaying.

Unfortunately, Image-In also shows the other side of the superlative coin. For example, it is the most processor hungry graphic program around bringing even a 486-33 to a crawl. It also demands a great deal in the areas of memory and disk. With all files processed as 24 bit graphics, expect to use large amounts of memory - a 600 by 800 picture will require about 1.5 meg of memory just for the image, a 1024 by 756 picture will require almost 2.5 meg. The biggest disadvantage of the program is the cost. At \$795 it is twice as expensive as most of its competition.

Obviously, Image-In is not for the casual user who wants basic image editing. It is instead geared for the industrial or commercial user who needs the capability to fully control image manipulation and image output. To do this Image-In provides a wealth of tools. The standard set of tools is augmented by a number of additional enhancements to permit "industrial strength" manipulation. For example, most line drawing and shape construction tools provide options to adjust density, pressure, and fading as well as the more typical options of color and thickness.

Cutting and pasting are similarly enhanced over most of the competition. A paste can incorporate a degree of transparency, permitting the original image to show through. This permits ghosting and similar effects. The various other controls present further improve the overlay function. The user can select to process only selected features of the overlay, for example tint or brightness. This permits other effects. For example, if the option to only process brightness is chosen, overlaying a pale green area with a dark blue area will result in the overlaid area becoming dark green.

The most spectacular operation involves masking. In addition to the area masks found in most other graphics editors, Image-In also provides the ability to use a template mask. A gray scale image can be used to determine the amount of transparency that is to be applied when one image is copied over a second. By taking the picture that is to be masked, converting it to gray scale, then lightening and darkening the areas to be overlaid, the exact areas to be blended can be laid out. Doing this, the user can do subtle manipulations of overlays with a single mask.

As mentioned, areas can be marked off as masked or unmasked in a picture. While the user cannot convert a mask into a shape with moveable anchor points, Image-In provides a method to change a masked area. After constructing a mask, the operator can construct additional masks. These can be either added to or subtracted from the overall masked areas. By building multiple masks for either inclusion or exclusion, the operator can adjust the masked areas. This method of building complex masks is in many ways easier than that used in Picture Publisher although it can lead to a clutter of masks over the image. An option also exists to take the inverse of the masked area. This is useful since it is sometimes easier to determine the area to exclude rather than include.

One of the most interesting features being included with imaging programs are filters. Image-In has an extensive set of these including sharpen, blur, black hole, sphere, motion, embossing, and remove noise. Additionally, the operator can build his own filters. Setting up a filter is simple. All the user needs to do is enter numeric weight factors in the matrix representing the filter to be processed. The documentation with the program gives additional technical information on the operation and gives the algorithms showing what the entered values will do. While quite a bit of information is provided on the theory, the prac-

tical aspects are glossed over. It is almost mystifying to see what different values in the filter do to the image. It would have been nice for Image-In to describe the changes to specific parameters from a practical standpoint.

While loaded with features, the program is easy to use do to a few well thought out tools. The most important of these is the functional right mouse button. Depending upon which tool is selected, the right mouse button provides additional functionality. For example, the line draw tool provides options for transparency, weight, and fade. Equally important is that the selected options are remembered for future selections of the tool. This means that the number of operations needed to change repeatedly between two utilities is kept to a minimum. Going between the magic wand for area selection and the line drawing tool is a matter of one move and click.

Another well thought out feature is the presentation of a thumbnail sketch of an image as it is read into the program. As the image is read, the part that can be displayed at the time is shown in the thumbnail. This provides almost immediate feedback to the operator. If the wrong image is selected, the user can abort the read without having to wait for the entire file to be read. For large files, this can result in a significant saving of time.

The ability to read files has several other nice features. First there is a wealth of import formats. GIFS, TIFFS, both 3.0 and 3.1 Windows BMPs, PCX and JPEG are all supported. Also supported is the format RAW. With this format, the user describes the row/column layout to Image-In. Image-In also provides hooks for third party developed format translators. One of these -- made available by Image-In -- is the Kodak CD-ROM format. Image-In makes every effort to process an input file in the selected format. Unfortunately this can cause problems. Corrupted files sometimes caused the program to abort as Image-In attempted to process data incorrectly.

Image-In also excels with the processing of output. Naturally CMYK color separation is provided but Image-In goes a few steps beyond this. Since all pigments have a trace of other colors within them, Image-In allows the operator to compensate for this when the color separations are made. The color correction is adjustable. This feature is not needed by many, but when maximum control of the output is desired, this could be important. For less demanding

output, the program allows calibration of the output device.

There are numerous other gems in this program including vectorization and OCR capabilities. Scanning is naturally supported as is support for the TWAIN standard.

I got off to a rocky start with the program. Image-In has an installation type copy protection. The user must have the serial number provided in the documentation to install the program. Not too difficult, but there is a separate installation for each of the add ons and each requires its own serial number. This was annoying but not critical.

A more serious problem popped up during initial testing. Every time I attempted to load a file into the program, Image-In aborted. Figuring that a bug of this scope would probably have been detected during alpha testing, the problem was probed into a bit deeper. Eventually it was isolated to the concurrent running of Image-In and Central Point Backup. Interestingly, similar problems occurred when I would use Colorado Jumbo tape backup. No other program, either DOS or Windows based, clashed with Image-In and no other Windows program has exhibited these symptoms.

On the less serious side, a few of the features of the program were a bit surprising. Image editing can only take place in 24 bit color mode. GIFS for example, have to be read into the program, translated to a 24 bit color format then saved again as GIFS. While not difficult, it can result in some color shifting and forces the operator into using a few more steps. In addition, it does require the operator to have large amounts of processor memory even if the picture would not normally require it.

For the average user, Image-In is not a good choice. It takes a long time to master all the features due to the number and complexity. It also demands a great deal in the area of hardware. On the other hand, its list of features is impressive. It might take a while to figure out how to do something but the ability to do it is there. For someone who needs the strongest graphics processor available, Image-In is a definite contender as the program of choice.

Details: Image-In 3.1 by Image-In Inc., 406 East 79th St., Minneapolis, MN 55420. List price \$795

Neal





Inside North Texas PC Users Group

NEW MEMBERS - The life of any organization is based on its ability to attract new members. Our president, Doug Gorrie, and I discussed why people join the group. The following list of membership benefits came out of that meeting:

- 1) This monthly newsletter with group details and articles
- 2) Topical instruction class for PC newcomers
- 3) A local 24 hour bulletin board system for D/FW
- 4) Shareware (try before you buy) programs with comments and reviews by our own group members
- 5) Over 40 Special Interest Groups (SIGS) one hour meetings
- 6) Monthly vendor presentations on the newest releases of hardware and software, often with special user group pricing and drawings for free software
- 7) Newsletters from other User Groups bound in easy to handle volumes
- 8) Access to others with similar interests and experience in computer related subjects (a valuable aid in debugging programs and optimizing performance)
- 9) Volunteer opportunities to work within the Users Group, meet other members and exchange ideas

PLEASE remember to say thanks to our volunteers!

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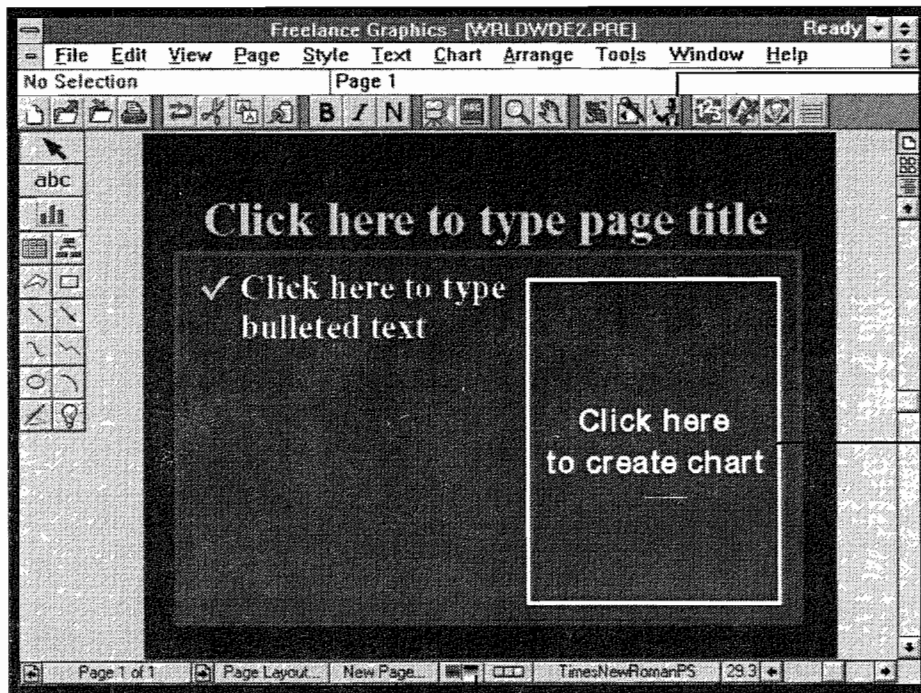
1. Via BBS: (214)387-2751, (214)387-2752 or (214)263-9036 (metro). Sign up on the Volunteer Conference - make the subject matter your area of interest.

2. Meeting day: Sign up at the Information Booth or DOM Booth to work those areas in a coming month.

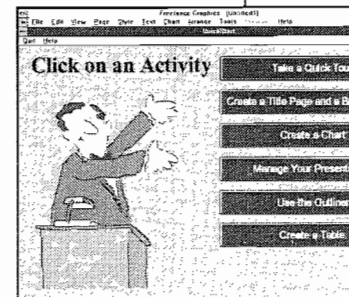
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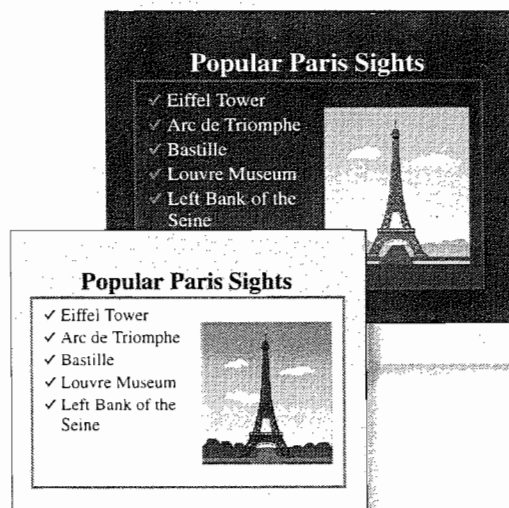
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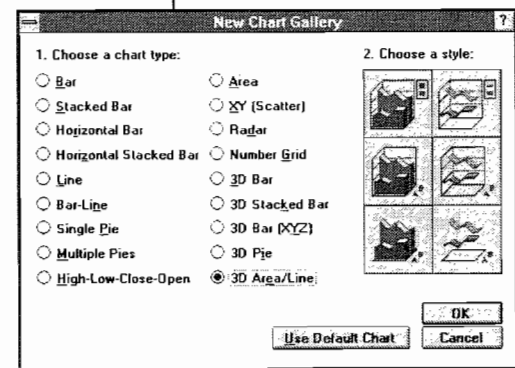
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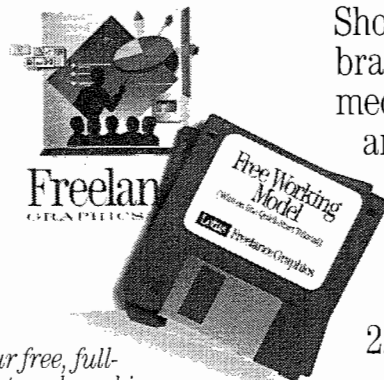
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Lotus Freelance 2.0

Presentation Graphics for Windows

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)

From the SIG Coordinator

As technology changes, so do our needs and therefore our SIGs. The following are proposed changes/additions that the NTPCUG has been asked to consider.

Groups Under Consideration:

Access
New Groups Recently Formed:
WordPerfect for Windows at 10:00 a.m.
Mitch Milam - Leader
Groups Looking for Help in Leading their SIGs:
Desktop Publishing
contact Lewis Graber (214) 335-9103
Hardware Solutions
contact Peyton Weaver (214) 462-7980
Spreadsheet & Spreadsheet Developers
contact Mark Gruner (214) 964-8174

The requirements for forming a SIG are:

Leadership - at least one individual willing to lead the SIG and hopefully an assistant
Membership - at least eight individuals will attend the SIG fairly consistently.

If you have a group that meets these qualifications or would like help in finding others that might share your interests, please contact me at (214) 517-7430 (H) or (214) 953-4970 (W).

NOTE: Please be sure to try other SIGs that you might have an interest in and don't ever feel you're too much of a beginner and wouldn't fit in. Remember, we all started out as beginners.

Alex Lilley

ACT SIG

The ACT SIG is continuing to examine the use of built in macro capability to automate repetitive tasks. The ACT SIG is also devoting a part of each meeting for a SIG member discuss the specific way they are using ACT in their business.

Each meeting brings new ideas about using ACT and ways of configuring the options to improve its effectiveness as a business tool.

We have been in touch with Contact International and requested they help us with a demonstration of ACT for Windows. I am expecting a follow up soon so we can firm a date. I will keep you posted on our progress.

The ACT SIG continues to solicit your input to make sure that the meetings are a productive use of your time. I will see you at the next meeting.

Jim Thompson

Assembler SIG

The Assembler SIG Meeting for March featured a comparison of DOS vs. Windows executable structures. The Windows programs, were for the most part, DLLs designed to be used by Visual Basic. This topic was suggested at our February meeting. We are constantly looking for meeting topics of interest to all members and welcome suggestions (without obligation) from everyone.

Any last minute changes or notices will be posted on the club BBS. Hope to see you at the meeting.

Frank Cavallito

Beginners GW-Basic & QBasic SIG

Step-by-step program writing with small sample programs. Six to eight page instruction sheet each meeting. Questions and answers on any subject at any time.

To be covered this year:

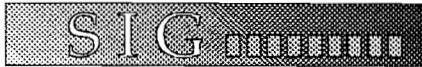
Editing techniques, Debug & testing, Error traps, CRT & printer code, ASCII table explanation, Bit/hex/decimal conversion, memory and disk exploration, shareware gems, screen design techniques, data input and correction, sort algorithms, report design, programmer's tools, general ledger programs, payroll programs.

Come join us.

Charles Jacobus

Visual Basic SIG

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL FOR BEGINNERS STARTING APRIL 24!



Can you believe an 8:00 AM class? I (Jim Carter) know the time is unreal, but I would like to invite the Beginners in Visual Basic to attend a special session prior to the regular meeting of the Visual Basic SIG. We will meet in Room 7011 (or whatever room the Visual Basic SIG is scheduled to meet in). I hope to cover the basic elements of Visual Basic for those of you considering the purchase of Visual Basic and those who have purchased it but have not started into serious Visual Basic programming. The primary focus will be on VB for Windows but if you have questions about VB for MS-DOS, come on and join us. If there is enough interest, we will continue to meet each Super Saturday (at 8:00 AM) and do some actual (but simple) programming in Visual Basic For Windows Version 2.0.

Microsoft is putting together a plan to offer coupons through the SIG for substantial discounts on the purchase of Visual Basic. Details have not been finalized as yet, but stay tuned for further developments.

The regular portion of the April 24th meeting of the Visual Basic SIG will continue Woody Pewitt's description of the source code for the Clock program. Members will be requested to offer suggestions for enhancing the program.

There will be a question and answer session (Bring your questions!) to help everyone with their coding problems. More Microsoft software will be given away in a drawing. Be there!

Jim Carter

Business Applications/ DAC Accounting SIG

The program for the April 24th meeting of the Business Applications/DAC Accounting SIG is unresolved, as of this writing. We are considering a demo of DacEasy Payroll 4.3; a program we have never seen. Even in its earlier versions, we have never had a demo of Payroll, but I'm sure that there are a large number of members who have more need for a payroll program than they do for an accounting program.

With more than two or three employees, a business can spend many hours getting payroll ready, not to mention tax reports and W-2's. It occurred to me that the average business spends much more time on payroll than on general accounting.

In addition to their payroll program, there is a third-party program to handle time cards. All of this indicates that we have been neglecting an important segment of computer users with accounting needs.

We will do every thing that we can to see if we can get someone from DAC Software to demonstrate the features of DacEase Payroll, version 4.3 at the April meeting at 1:00 pm. Watch the NTPCUG BBS Bus/DAC Mailbox for confirmation of this.

Communications SIG

Our agenda for the next couple of months will be centered around discussions of a somewhat technical nature. Our topic for April will be the RS-232 specification and how it relates to serial com-

munications with PCs and other hardware. Anyone who has used modems or serial devices on their computer systems has had to deal with this elusive specification. So it would be appropriate for us to cover this in greater depth than "plug it in and hope it works". And there is no one more qualified to do this than Mr. Fred "I covered this once before didn't I?" Williams, former leader emeritus of the Communications SIG. Besides, Doug and I are going to be out of town that weekend anyway so we thought we would let him take over and harass everyone for a while.

Assuming Fred doesn't clear the room with his prose, we'll continue this in May and discuss asynchronous communications protocol as well as general questions and answers from the group.

We are still trying to get Datasform, the producers of ProComm communications software, to present their product line in a special morning session in the auditorium along with a technical session at the Comm SIG meeting later that day. The tentative schedule for this event will be in June. Please keep in touch with us for further details.

So plan to attend our gala affair at 12 noon and check the overhead projector in the lobby for the room location. Also, plan on staying for the BBS SIG, which usually meets at 1 pm after the COMM SIG in the same room. With luck, we'll talk Fred into leading that meeting as well. It'll be an experience you'll soon forget...

See you there.

Bill Green and Doug Gorrie



C++ SIG

In March, Robert Adams talked about temporary objects, overloaded operators, and assignments. Robert discussed how assignments and overloaded operators are implemented, and showed us how he uses them in his work in signal processing, numerical analysis, and simulation. He paid particular attention to the techniques he has developed for getting around some of the built-in inefficiencies of C++ code.

Jim Hoisington is tentatively scheduled to speak at the April meeting. His topic will be the implementation and uses of finite-state machines. Jim has already warned me that his talk may get preempted by another commitment. If that happens, I'll be talking instead about the cfront translator, and the C code that it generates from a C++ program; otherwise, we'll discuss cfront in May.

Kent Cobb and Tom Cook

DOS SIG

DOS 6.0 should be on the streets by the time you read this. We'll be looking at the new DOS at the April DOS SIG Meeting and comparing its features to the competition, i.e., DR DOS 6.0.

For some timely tips on installing DOS 6.0, refer to the article on page 5.

Be sure to attend the April DOS SIG Meeting. We'll have a lot to talk about and you may get some tips/information that can save a lot of time troubleshooting after the installation. Note: This month all late night/early morn-

ing calls for help with DOS problems should be addressed to Jim Hoisington who enjoys such challenges immensely.

Reagan Andrews

General Genealogy SIG

There were over 70 present at the last meeting. The General Genealogy SIG is one of 4 genealogy SIGs that meet each Super Saturday at the Infomart. There is a disk and a hardcopy library for the combined SIGs.

The topic of the presentation was on-line services. This is the terminology commonly referred to when talking about the on-line connect charge (fixed or by minute, or combination) of the bulletin board services available to the home and small business computer groups - America-On-Line, CompuServe, Delphi, GENie, Prodigy. The ones most useful to the genealogist are CompuServe, GENie, and Prodigy). CompuServe and GENie have real time genealogy conferences, messages, and libraries of genealogical information. Prodigy has messages and on-going files, and the ability to print but not download this information. Each of these services must be accessed by modem.

The general types of services available on most, or all, are messages (E-Mail, files, hobbies, business, interests, etc.), commercial (product listings, merchandise comparison, merchandise education, how to's, educational courses, etc.), business (Dow-Jones & other retrieval services, stock brokers, money markets, how to start, plan, and run a business, networking with others in same interests, business), EASSY Sabre (look up flights, schedules, prices, order tickets), news (cur-

rent local, national, international), sports (up-to-date scores, schedules), Conferences (real time), downloading & uploading of files, messages, etc., games, etc. For recent write-ups see February PC Magazine, February Home Office Computer magazine, and February issue of Computer Genealogy Notebook.

The April presentation will be by Dewayne Lener of the Preservation Emporium (how to preserve your genealogy data and what materials to the genealogist are available locally). The May program will be "TSGS on-line services" and will be brought by the Texas State Genealogy Society which now has a BBS (open to all of us) in Lubbock. The June program will be brought by Rita Evans and will tell how to write a book on genealogy using a word processor.

Al Sanford

PAF SIG

The PAF SIG meets from 10 to 11 on Super Sat at the Infomart. At the Feb meeting there were 55 people present. PAF (Personal Ancestral File) is one of the most popular and cheapest (\$35) genealogy software programs. This program is available for both the MS DOS compatible and the Macintosh computers. It is also available for the Apple II computers but this program is no longer updated or supported.

Joe Waldrop, the SIG leader has started a series on how to best enter data into the PAF program. The actual program is proceeding slowly as there have been many side questions, and the main purpose of the SIG is to answer questions and help members. Therefore any questions at any time are welcome and time will be taken



to try to answer these questions. The primary question of the last meeting was about the GEDCOM file. GEDCOM (GENealogical Data COMmunication) is a software program that allows the genealogical data to be put into a controlled ASCII file. This GEDCOM file can then be exported by disk or by modem and imported into another computer that has GEDCOM compatible software. The GEDCOM version 5.2 protocol has a new GEDCOM format that has recently been released.

Most users of PAF select item 4 (Pedigree Search) from the PAF main menu and use this form for data entry. This is as opposed to using item 1 (Add Records), 2 (Modify Records) etc. Almost every event can be entered by using the menu at the bottom of the Pedigree Search page. Another advantage of working in the Pedigree Search mode, is that expanding the pedigree chart with the Large notation, allows the use of a mouse to quickly cover five generations. The use of the Pedigree search mode popularity evolved as users of PAF version 2.1 and earlier versions of 2.2 made known to the makers of PAF how they were actually using their existing software.

Because of its versatility of printouts, especially the graphs, boxes, and book form, a genealogy program called Brother's Keeper is widely used among members of the PAF SIG. Joe Waldrop teaches both PAF and BK to senior citizens at a junior college in Fort Worth. He can, therefore, can generally answer questions readily.

Al Sanford

Networking SIG

We had a lively question and answer session in the March meeting. Hopefully all your burning questions got answered one way or another. For April we will have a presentation on network access methods (CSMA/CD, Token Passing, etc.) and network topologies (Ethernet, Arcnet, and Token Ring). There are some new developments in these areas that we all need to be aware of - some of them may even turn out to be practical.

Hope to see you at 10 a.m.

Bernie VanRoekel

Personal Users SIG

There will not be any Personal Users classes during the month of April as the March classes finished up the series of 16 classes.

The class schedule will start over on May 15 with:

9:00	Start Up
10:00	Diskette Sizes & Formatting Each
11:00	Copying & Backing Up Files
1:00	Personal Computer Hardware

Please be sure to attend any and all of the classes when they start over in May, whether or not you own a computer, just beginning to use a computer at home or at work, or consider yourself an intermediate user.

Bob Presley

Quicken SIG

Apparently there are a lot of pent-up questions out there. Could this have anything to do with tax season? After all, tax season brings personal, business and investment accounting together for transfer to tax forms. Yes, sometimes this may be easier by hand

rather than by computer as not a few irascible souls point out. But how do you know unless you try? So we'll gather together each month to share our experiences in a question and answer session.

Come and join us as we explore not only the latest WINDOWS version but QUICKBOOKS (a small business bookkeeping program which includes invoicing).

A number of reference books are being published to supplement the manual; "Understanding Quicken 6 for DOS" by Steve Cummings is an example. How many of you know how to use home budgeting or the calculators Quicken provides? This one looks like a tutorial which can be a great hands on tool for learning: "10 Minute Guide to Quicken 6?" by Linda Flanders. "The First Book of Quicken 6" by Paul McFedries is another guide for beginners.

Will there be a Quicken presentation in the auditorium in the near future? Could be....

Jo Johnston

Spreadsheet SIG

At the April meeting, the Spreadsheet SIG will discuss basic formatting capabilities of the 1-2-3 add-in WYSIWYG which stand for What You See Is What You Get. While WYSIWYG does not improve the accuracy of the numerical calculations in a 1-2-3 spreadsheet, it does improve the appearance of the output. In many cases, the quality of the output is just as important as the accuracy of the calculations. As a financial analyst, I find the emphasis on pretty or slick quality output unfortunate, but it is a reality

dBASE IV, The Review

By Fred Williams

Back too long ago Doug McQuaid asked me to write a review of dBASE IV version 1.5. At the time I was working on the first dBASE project that I had done in

quite a while, so I thought that the review would "fit right in".

Well the dBASE III project rapidly expanded to fill all available time. What precious spare time I could find to devote to dBASE IV proved that dBASE IV version 1.5 is definitely a major change of direction. After installing dBASE IV, and scanning over the documentation, I rapidly became aware that dBASE IV was certainly not what it use to be when they called it dBASE III. ►



in many circles. So if you would like to learn more about creating nice, or even slick output, come on by in April.

One other major bit of news is that Betty Brooks is moving back to Houston in the near future and will not be able to participate in the Spreadsheet SIG. Betty has been an asset to the user group and the Spreadsheet SIG. Betty has been responsible for getting most of the outside speakers to speak at the SIG. Her contributions will be missed.

Since Betty is leaving, I will need someone else to help with the SIG and I would prefer that this individual have experience with 1-2-3 and perhaps other spreadsheet programs and be willing to give presentations and/or lead discussion at the SIG. If interested, please let me know.

Mark Gruner

Spreadsheet Developers SIG

At the April meeting, the topic will be linking multiple spreadsheets and consolidations. Mark intends to discuss linking and consolidations in 1-2-3 version

2.4, 1-2-3 version 3.4, Excel 4.0.

Each program has different capabilities and features with respect to linking files and consolidating files. Linking spreadsheets enables the developer to breakup a large application into multiple files so that the user can work with smaller and hopefully easier to use spreadsheets. Consolidations is generally a financial function where several division or groups within a corporation are added together or consolidated to see the total picture.

One other major bit of news is that Betty Brooks is moving back to Houston in the near future and will not be able to participate in the Spreadsheet Developers SIG. Betty has been an asset to the user group and the Spreadsheet Developers SIG in particular. Her contributions will be missed.

Since Betty is leaving, I will need someone else to help with the SIG and I would prefer that this person participate by giving presentations, or by leading discussions at the SIG. If interested, please let me know.

Mark Gruner

Word SIG

April's MS Word SIG meeting will be devoted to looking at additions to Word. Microsoft has been

expending some effort toward penetration of the legal community with Word for Windows 2.0 and has produced a legal resource kit that's pretty interesting.

Microsoft's Legal Resource Kit is built around a Lexis 2000 software set that allows users to connect directly to the Lexis/Nexis services without leaving Word. The new resource kit is accompanied by a brief, "Self Guided Tour of the Legal Features in Word for Windows 2.0," and a printed Guide to the disk guide.

The theme is enhanced integration capabilities within the Word for Windows platform that facilitate production of typical legal documents. There's also a set of Word templates, BRIEF.DOT and CONTRACT.DOT, and an improved Table of Authorities MACRO that will be discussed in the April SIG Meeting.

At the end of the session, we'll indulge in the usual gossip/rumor/Q & A session where SIG leaders and SIG members will hash over what's happening -- or seems to be happening -- with both versions of MS Word in day-to-day word processing tasks.

Reagan Andrews

In the past, with each new release of dBASE additional "user friendly" interactive services are made available. The traditional dBASE programming language and old "dot" prompt become buried ever deeper under these clumsy "friendly" layers.

If there is a real weakness with dBASE IV it would be that the dBASE heritage shows though these tacked on modern conveniences like a cheap shiny suit. The paradox (pun intended) of dBASE is, it began life as a pure database language; But, because of progress in the rest of the PC world, was forced to take on the trappings of a more end user oriented product. All this was done in an attempt to maintain a "modern" image.

dBASE IV version 1.5 is really Borland's first attempt at producing dBASE. The main effort expended on version 1.5 was to actually release a working copy of dBASE. Statements from Borland indicated no substantial attempt was made to address any areas other than major bug fixes.

The next dBASE release is to be dBASE for Windows. Let us hope that Borland will once again be able to "Borlandize" yet another acquired product and produce something better than what they got from Ashton Tate.

There truly is a reason that the number one selling dBASE product is still dBASE III. What needs to be done with dBASE? Well, after all, this is suppose to be a short review.

The Clipper's and FoxPro's of the world have "done the right thing" with xBase. They have held true to the heritage of dBASE and continued to introduce ever improving releases of a true software developer's environment. With current releases of either Clipper or FoxPro a database developer can produce very robust, tight, and fast data base software products.

Ashton Tate set out to slay the Paradox dragon and ended up falling on the sword. The Paradox like features of dBASE are so weak that they are a major nuisance more than a convenience. There is still no way to compile dBASE code to other than p-code. So what we now have is a product that is no way near a Paradox, and can't hold a candle to either Clipper or FoxPro.

If Borland doesn't end up choking to death on both dBASE for Windows and Paradox for Windows, I would hope that dBASE for Windows will at least

present a consistent, easy to use release of dBASE. Let us also hope that dBASE for Windows will actually have a real developer's environment and a true compiler.

I think now that both Paradox and dBASE are under the same roof, there is no burning need to make dBASE a Paradox clone. Let Paradox satisfy the end user's interactive needs, and let dBASE provide database developers a real development environment.

Several related things are happening at Borland that gives me hope that dBASE will improve. Borland is working on a true Windows release of dBASE. Rumors have it that Borland recently purchased one of the small players in the dBASE compiler market. The company's major product is a dBASE compiler marketed under the name "Quicksilver".

With the move to Windows all of dBASE's tacked on user friendly features should become history. The purchase of Quicksilver indicates a continuation of direction toward a serious dBASE compiler. What should emerge from all of this would be a very real dBASE product worthy of carrying on the original dBASE product's early traditions.

Both dBASE and Paradox are undergoing major internal rewrites. Both products are receiving a common database "engine". When the Windows products are released, both will contain a common implementation of the "Interbase" client database engine.

This will give both products full inter operability. Either product will be capable of accessing dBASE or Paradox files (tables). Whether the data requested by a user is resident in a dBASE or Paradox file will be totally transparent to the user.

How much longer Borland will continue to develop "parallel" database products, only Philippe knows. I personally feel that in the future dBASE and Paradox will be "merged" into a single product. If Borland continues along past lines this will bring the best of both products to the user in a single database product.

The real sleeper in all of Borland's recent database efforts is truly the Interbase Database. I have only had a glimpse at this one. But that glimpse was more than enough to make me want to learn all I can about the future of database products from Borland.

Fred

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Bylaws Changes

by Andy Oliver

The North Texas PC Users Group Board of Directors wishes to amend the current Bylaws. The main change in our bylaws is to increase the number of voting members on the Board of Directors from five to seven. Other changes are grammatical, or concern naming conventions that have changed since the last revision of the Bylaws. Below, I will list each section as it currently reads and the revised section. This notice in the NTPCUG News will serve as official notice that these changes will be voted on at the April 24, 1993 business meeting, 11:00 am, Alexandria Auditorium, Infomart, Dallas, Texas.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP - Section 2.2 - Membership Classifications - Subsection (d)

Emeritus membership shall be granted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors to a current member of long standing whose distinguished service to the organization over a period of years requires permanent recognition. The rights and privileges of an Emeritus Member shall be a lifetime membership with the full rights and privileges of a Regular membership, the inclusion of the member's name in an Emeritus Member list on the officers' page of the Newsletter, and such other rights and privileges as shall be granted by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall be constrained to the granting of a maximum of a single Emeritus membership per calendar year.

Revised text:

Emeritus membership shall be granted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors to a current member or members of long standing whose distinguished service to the organization over a period of years warrants permanent recognition. The rights and privileges of an Emeritus Member shall be a lifetime membership with the full rights and privileges of a Regular membership and such other rights and privileges as shall be granted by the Board of Directors.

Section 2.4 - Suspension or Expulsion - Subsection (3)(b)

PROCEDURE. Except for failure to pay dues, suspension, or expulsion shall be by a majority vote of the membership of the Board of Directors, provided a statement of charges is mailed by registered mail to the member under charges at his last recorded address at least fifteen (15) days before final action is taken thereon; this statement shall be accompanied by a notice of the time, when, and place, where the Board of Directors is to take action. The member shall be given an opportunity to present a defense at the time and place mentioned in said notice.

Revised text:

Remove the "," after the word suspension in the first sentence.

Change the word "when" to "date" in the second to last sentence.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS OF MEMBERS - Section 4.3 - Special Meetings - Subsection (a)

PREREQUISITES. A special meeting may be called by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, or upon written request submitted to the Board of Directors by not less than ten percent (10%) of the membership, such written request is to contain the subject or subjects to be covered.

Revised text:

Change the comma "," to a semicolon ";" before the word such.

ARTICLE V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS Section 5.2 - Number, Tenure and Qualifications

The Board of Directors will consist of five (5) members, including the President, President-Elect and three (3) members elected at large by the members at the annual member's meeting. Each of the three (3) at large Directors shall hold office until the next annual meeting of members and until his successor shall have been elected and qualified.

Revised text:

The Board of Directors will consist of seven (7) members, including the President, President-Elect and five (5) members elected at large by the members at the annual member's meeting. Each of the five (5) at large Directors shall hold office until the next annual meeting of members and until his successor shall have been elected and qualified.

Section 5.3 - Chairman of the Board

Remove one occurrence of "of the" from the phrase "of the of the Board of Directors."

Section 5.6 - Special Meetings - Subsection (a)

PREREQUISITES. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by or at the request of the President or any two Directors. The person or persons authorized to call special meetings of the Board may fix any place for holding the special meetings of the Board called by him.

Revised text:

PREREQUISITES. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by or at the request of the President or any three Directors. The person or persons authorized to call special meetings of the Board may fix any place (in the greater D/FW area) for holding the special meetings of the Board called by him/them.

Section 5.6 - Special Meetings - Subsection (b)

NOTICE. Notice of any special meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given at least two (2) days previous thereto by written notice delivered personally or sent by mail to each Director at his address as shown by the records of the Users Group. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited with the U.S. Postal Service properly addressed, postage prepaid. The Directors may waive notice of any meeting.

Revised text:

Change the last sentence to read: "The Directors may waive notice of any meeting by telephoning the Secretary of the NTPCUG and following up with an electronic message to the Secretary on the NTPCUG Bulletin Board System (BBS)."

Section 5.7 - Quorum

Three-fifths (3/5) of the Directors present in person or by written proxy at any meeting shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Board. If there is less than a quorum, then the only business the Board may conduct is to adjourn from time to time until a quorum is present.

Revised text, first sentence:

Four-sevenths (4/7) of the Directors, present in person or by written proxy shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Board.

Section 5.9 - Informal Action

Any action which may be taken at a meeting of Directors, may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, will be signed by all of the Directors voting in favor of the Motion with respect to the subject matter thereof, and all Directors have been notified of the subject in advance. Action by telephone conference call is specifically allowed, but shall require written confirmation to be sent to all directors following such conference.

Revised text:

Change "Motion" to "motion" in the first sentence.

Change the last sentence to read: "Action by telephone conference call is specifically allowed, but shall require confirmation by either written document or electronic mail on the NTPCUG BBS, to be sent to all directors following such conference."

Section 5.11 - Nominating Committee

It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint a three (3) member nominating committee at least ninety (90) days prior to the annual meeting of the members, the function of which committee shall be to propose a slate of nominations for the positions of the three directors at large and President-Elect. Said slate of nominees shall be published in the Newsletter at least thirty (30) days prior to the said annual meeting of the members.

Revised text:

Change ", the function of which committee shall be" to "; the function of said committee shall be" in the first sentence.

Change "three directors" to "five (5) directors" in the first sentence.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS - Section 6.4 - Duties - Subsection (a)

PRESIDENT. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all membership meetings of the Users Group, to sign all Certificates of membership, to appoint and/or remove all committees ordered by the Board of Directors. He will be a member of the Board of Directors. He will make a monthly report to the general membership at

each regular monthly meeting. He will also be empowered to outline the necessary work for and give instructions to all committees.

Revised text:

Remove "to sign all Certificates of membership" in the first sentence.

ARTICLE VIII - SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Section 8.1 CREATION

The President or Board of Directors may create special interest groups ("SIG"). Creation of a SIG will require the documentation of the area of Special Interest that will be addressed by the SIG. Each SIG will have a Group Leader. Each SIG may adopt rules for its own government not inconsistent with these Bylaws or with rules adopted by the Board of Directors.

Section 8.2 SIG LEADER

The SIG Leader shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the President. The SIG Leader shall be responsible for all SIG activities and affairs. The SIG Leader, or his appointed alternate, will preside at all SIG meetings.

Revised text:

Section 8.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the User's Group Special Interest Groups (herein after referred to as "SIG") shall be to provide an organization and common meeting ground for sub-groups of the general membership. The purpose of these SIG's will be to provide for and encourage the sharing of information, insight, and technique related to the sub-group's designated field of special interest.

Section 8.2 SIG COORDINATOR

The SIG Coordinator shall be appointed annually by the Board of Directors. The SIG Coordinator shall be responsible for all SIG activities and affairs. The SIG Coordinator shall report directly to the President.

Section 8.3 SIG CREATION

The SIG Coordinator may create special interest groups (SIG's). The creation of a SIG will require the documentation of the area of special interest that will be addressed by the SIG. Additionally, a minimum of eight (8) Users Group members of like mind must be ready and willing to participate in the proposed SIG. Each SIG must have a SIG Leader. Each SIG may adopt rules for its own government not inconsistent with these Bylaws or with rules adopted by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE X - NEWSLETTER - Section 10.2 - Publication

The Users Group newsletter is to be named "North Texas PC News." The Users Group newsletter is to be published monthly and is the responsibility of the Newsletter Editor. The Newsletter is to be mailed to the general membership no later than five (5) days prior to the regular scheduled monthly general meeting.

Revised text:

Change "Editor" to "Publisher" in the second sentence. ➤

Section 10.4 - Newsletter Editor

The Newsletter Editor will be appointed annually by the Board of Directors.

Revised text:

Section 10.4 - Newsletter Publisher

The Newsletter Publisher will be appointed annually by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XIV - FISCAL MATTERS - Section 14.2 - Executive Authority

No member of the Users group shall be authorized to make purchases in the name of the Users Group except as provided by Users Group rules governing such matters. No member (or officer) of the Users Group shall be authorized to obligate the credit of the Users Group beyond its current free credit balance in the Users Group's bank account(s). Expenditures by any officer in the name of the Users Group in the excess of \$25.00 must have prior approval of the Board of Directors. All checks, drafts, or other orders for payment of money, notes or other evidence of indebtedness issued in the name of the Users Group in the excess of \$100.00 shall be signed by two duly authorized officers, except that the Treasurer shall be permitted to pay for routine, regularly occurring expenses as approved by the Board of Directors.

Revised text:

Change "\$25.00" to "\$100.00" in the third sentence.

Change "\$100.00" to "\$500.00" in the fourth sentence.

ARTICLE XV - AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

The Board is responsible for proposing amendments to the bylaws. Members may propose amendments by submitting them in writing, with rationale, to the President for consideration by the Board of Directors. Any member may propose an amendment to the bylaws upon collecting the signatures of ten (10) per cent of the membership in favor of the proposed amendment. These Bylaws may be amended, repealed, or altered in whole or in part by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all members present and voting or by

written proxy at any regular or special meeting or by mail ballot adhering to the same voting requirements. Notification of the general membership of an upcoming vote shall be made at least five days prior to the scheduled date of the subject vote.

Revised text:

Section 15.1 - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BY THE BOARD

The Board of Directors, by majority vote, may propose amendments to the bylaws.

Section 15.2 - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BY MEMBERS

Members may propose amendments by submitting them in writing, with rationale, to the President for consideration by the Board of Directors. Any member may propose an amendment to the bylaws, for consideration by the membership, upon collecting the signatures of ten (10) percent of the membership in favor of the proposed amendment.

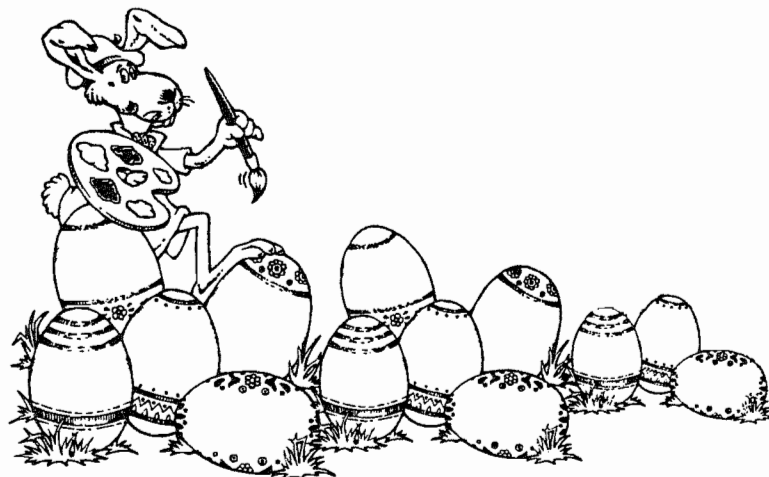
Section 15.3 - NOTIFICATION AND VOTING

Notification of the general membership of an upcoming vote shall be made at least five days prior to the scheduled date of the subject vote. These bylaws may be amended, repealed, or altered in whole or in part by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all members present and voting or by written proxy at any regular or special meeting or by mail ballot adhering to the same voting requirements.

All occurrences of President, President-Elect, Directors, Officers, and other official titles will be capitalized for consistency throughout the revised document.

Marked copies with these changes will be available to members before the business meeting on April 24, 1993.

Andy



The Visual Basic Corner

by Jim Carter

I know you would expect this column to spend little effort describing the latest and greatest offerings from Microsoft in "C++", but the recent announcement of Visual C++ has raised many questions about the impact that Visual C++ will have on the Visual Basic programming environment. I reviewed several days worth of comments on CompuServe in both the MSBASIC and the MSLANG FORUMS to get a feel for the reaction amongst both VB and C/C++ programmers.

What is Visual C++?

I received a flyer from Microsoft this week with my upgrade offer as a registered owner of QuickC for Windows. The following features are taken from that flyer.

Visual C++ is available in two editions, the Standard edition and the Professional edition. The Standard edition is portrayed as the successor to QuickC for Windows and the Professional edition will be the successor to the C/C++ version 7.0. Both editions operate in an integrated development environment under Windows that includes an editor, debugger, source code browser, App studio, Wizards, Quick Win libraries, precompiled headers, and the Microsoft Foundation Class Library. Both editions are extensible through a variety of add-on utilities, including the .VBX files from Visual Basic.

The Professional edition adds tools and information from the Microsoft Windows Software Development Kit (SDK) for testing and debugging Windows-based applications. The Standard edition of Visual C++ generates applications for Windows only. You must use the Professional edition of Visual C++ to generate applications for MS-DOS or Windows.

The flyer contains more detail than I can include here. I found an interesting table on the last page of the flyer that gave some intended uses for the two editions of Visual C++. The Standard edition is intended to be used to (1) Explore C/C++ and programming for Windows, (2) Create non-speed-critical applications or utilities for Windows, (3) Create applications that use OLE to exchange data, and (4)

Create DLLs. The Professional edition is intended for the same four uses stated for the Standard edition plus four more. They are to (5) Create applications for MS-DOS or Windows, (6) Fine tune applications using the tools and documentation in the Windows SDK, (7) Create sophisticated, size critical applications for distribution, and (8) Create sophisticated, speed critical applications for distribution. Remember, these are Microsoft's intended uses.

Visual BASIC Programmer's View

Most of the VB programmers that compared Visual C++ to VB were beta testers for Visual C++ so they had significant experience with the product. Several were published authors on VB as well as programmers.

When an application tests the capability limits of Visual Basic, most serious VB programmers rely on the rich repertoire of Third-Party Add-ons to enhance their applications. It is their opinion that it is a rare application that cannot be served with VB and a few good Third Party Add-ons. Many serious VB programmers have C/C++ programming skills, but they prefer VB for most applications because it is fast to program (typically 1/6th the time to program in C/C++) and the application performance is equal to that of one written in C/C++.

One VB programmer believed all Microsoft languages are going to become object oriented, Visual C++ provides an integrated development environment with a push to C++, and the feature of .VBX support will create more requirements for C/C++. However, Visual C++ is not a better/faster C/C++ in the same sense that Visual Basic has become a better/faster Basic. Visual C++ still has a very steep learning curve (months) while Visual Basic can be learned in a few days.

Another VB programmer considers himself a serious C/C++ developer yet he prefers VB for any small or intermediate application. He believes that all smart C/C++ developers will be using VB to stay competitive in their business.

Visual C/C++ Programmer's View

A programmer that prefers Visual C++ has significant experience with VB and has published articles on VB in computer journals. He thinks Visual Basic is

GREAT but points out that (1) VC++ produces true executables with no run time DLL, (2) Microsoft Foundation Class Library 2.0 is included with VC++, (3) OLE and Print Preview with Microsoft Foundation Class Library 2.0 is a significant improvement, and (4) the Visual Workbench will provide the integrated development environment necessary to reduce application development time.

Conclusions

It is too early to tell. Visual Basic does an excellent job of providing an excellent user interface and event driven programming. There isn't enough data on Visual C++ yet as to how it will fit in. Microsoft intends that Visual C++ will be the development system for C/C++. They will no longer manufacture QuickC for Windows or C/C++ version 7.0.

Pricing

The following prices were from Microsoft on March 5, 1993.

Visual C++ Standard Edition \$199
Visual C++ Professional Edition \$499

Upgrades:

C/C++ version 7.0 to VC++ Std \$79
C/C++ version 7.0 to VC++ Pro \$139

QC/WIN to VC++ Std \$79
QC/WIN to VC++ Pro \$199

For more information on Visual C++, attend Art English's Windows Programming SIG at 11:00 AM on Super Saturday.

Jim

■

Freelance Graphics for Windows Release 2.0

by Betty Brooks

By the time you read this, Freelance For Windows 2.0 should have been shipping awhile. As I write this, it is not yet shipping, but I have had the pleasure to play with a pre-release version. Even though version 1 was considered extremely easy to use, this version is even better. When you first start up Freelance there is an initial screen where you choose to work on an existing presentation, create a new one or run the tutorial. Once you make a choice, you will be able to start your work right away. Usability has been the focus of Lotus while creating this latest version of Freelance and it shows. The new features, which include two new chart types (text charts and organization charts), are very easy to use. This is especially important when building the organization chart, which in many other programs can be a rather complicated project. In Freelance this operation is

done with the guidance of dialog boxes and help screens. I really liked how easy it was to do, even for someone who had never tried to do it before.

Freelance 2.0 now has 65 different SmartMasters each of which allows 11 different pages layouts. This gives tremendous flexibility and ease when preparing a presentation. The SmartMaster designs go from extremely simple to dazzling. There is a design for everyone's needs. There are even some multimedia SmartMasters where the title screen has a moving picture embedded. These SmartMasters are set up with fill in the blanks for the titles and information such as graphs. The colors for background and fonts and type sizes are all embedded in the information for each of the SmartMaster sets, thus making it easy to create a great looking presentation in a short amount of time. It is quite easy to make changes in the SmartMasters, in fact, much easier in version 2 than in version 1. So, if you need to change the colors, fonts, type sizes or add some additional clipart to the SmartMaster, it can be done. When the change is made, it will be reflected throughout the entire presentation created with the SmartMaster set.

This new version of Freelance now has a toggle for color to black and white palettes which helps

the user see how their presentation will look on any type of output device. The black and white palette is very useful for developing handouts. While on the subject of handouts, the speaker note functions have been improved by allowing you to type in the speakers information which will be printed below a copy of the accompanying slide. You can also print out audience notes which print a copy of the slide on the top of the page and blank lines on the bottom where the people can write their own comments. This flexibility in the type of printouts will be very welcome.

Freelance has four different ways of viewing or working on the presentation. The current page which is in the WYSIWYG environment and is probably the one used most by people when developing their first presentation. You can use the fill in the blanks method on the current page and immediately see what the final output will look like. The outline view has a yellow legal pad look where the user can input the text needed for each of the pages of the presentation. This text from the outline flows automatically into the new presentation pages and fills in the blanks where the click here prompt appears on the presentation pages. Release 2.0 has added drag and drop, expand/collapse the outline levels, print the outline, Microsoft Word import with formatting included, and you can assign page layouts from the outline view. The page sorter view allows a light table approach which allows the user to move the pages of the presentation around until they are in the order needed. The SmartMaster page layout view allows the user to make global changes in the page layouts such as adding a company logo to the pages.

Some of the other new features Lotus added to Freelance 2.0 include the ability to automatically create a series of new slides to highlight a progression of bulleted points. It will create a new page of each of the points with each new point being highlighted while the previous points are shaded. The user can import a symbol from the library to be used as a custom bullet style. The library has been expanded to include some special bullet symbols for this purpose. The user can also import their own symbol to use if they desire, too. Many drawing programs allow text to be curved around a shape and now Freelance allows this also. There is a gallery which displays the choices allowed by the program. There are many different file formats supported for import-

ing data to create charts: 1-2-3, Symphony, dBase, ASCII, sylk, and Excel. Release 2.0 has enhanced the import operation by using an improved file viewer with step by step guidance through the use of dialog boxes.

The drawing functions of Freelance have been improved by adding the freehand drawing tool, drop shadows and an onscreen ruler. The user can also control the contrast, brightness and sharpness of imported bitmap files. They can also crop the bitmap image if needed.

There are some sound files included with this new version which help enhance a presentation which is developed for being presented on the computer. The user can now add buttons to the page which will allow the presenter to go to selected pages or launch another application or play the sound files. There are 35 different transitional effects which give the user a wide range of options such as fades, curtains closing, wipes, dissolves and paintbrush swipes. The presenter can also do onscreen drawing at the time of the presentation to highlight a key message or point out a particular part of the page.

If you need to create slides from the presentation, there is now an Autographix Slide driver included in the Freelance 2.0 package. It is easy to set up and create pages that are optimized for the part of the page which will fit on the slide. There is even a special program where you can call Autographix and send the .pre files in to be made into the slides. In my opinion, this is a very welcome addition, since we use slides all the time when we create a presentation. The aspect ratio is different for slides and many times the presentation would not come out as expected with the older version of Freelance. Now there should be no problems of getting just what we see on the screen.

If you are looking for a great presentation graphics program you will find that Freelance is the best of the lot by far. If you already own Freelance Graphics for Windows 1.0, you will definitely want to upgrade.

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.

The Adventures of PC Tech

by Ben Thar

Chapter 17

Mary was really ticked off. She kept a "list" in her head, and you do not want to be on that list. "Presuming that we are all human and do make mistakes," Mary thought, "I don't put some one or some place on my list for the first or even the second mistake, unless it is so truly gross that it falls into the category of Heroic Screwups. But, companies have a way of slowly edging on the list because they hire some of the most inept people."

Take the new computer store in town (please). CompuTown opened with commercials, newspaper ads, and promises of being the best computer shopping experience. Mary Margaret felt that it was nice to have competition for the other superstore so she went in to check it out. Software company representatives were present to answer questions and demonstrate their products. "I bought this detective game based on the good selling job of the company rep," Mary told the checkout person. However, when she returned to a much less crowded store three weeks later, no one would wait on her. After 25 frustrating minutes, she left. She figured, "Maybe they are having a bad day. I need a new computer system for the office and CompuTown carries the brand that I have been buying, so I'll drop in on their other store and see if I can make a deal."

The clerk did not know the difference between RAM memory and hard disk capacity, and he stood there and argued with PC Tech that this machine indeed had 4 megabytes of hard disk space (because that is what it said on the sign). MM said, "Son, go find someone who knows what they are talking about." She wasn't used to calling someone only a few years younger "son," but all of a sudden she felt very old. The salesman finally brought back his supervisor who noticed that Mary had powered up the com-

puter and CHKDSK showed the disk capacity. He very courteously asked if he could help with anything else. Mary said that she left her business card at the other store in anticipation of them contacting her about a corporate account, but had heard nothing from them. After leaving her card at this location, she decided that the service from her current vendor was much better in light of what she'd experienced, and she proceeded to order the new computer from her reliable supplier.



Back to the list..... not hearing anything about a corporate account from either location in six months led MM to believe that this place did not want her corporate business, and they earned a spot on the list. She decided to do her personal computer shopping elsewhere also.

The need arose for a new hard disk drive in one of the PCs at work and MM picked it up at the Original Superstore. Form factors change and this drive was tiny. "Now I've got to go back and get a mounting kit to put this little drive in the big drive bay," Mary told her assistant. The next day being Saturday, she popped in and asked about the mounting kit. "You have to get that at the Parts window," she was told. She went to Parts and they tore off a scrap of paper and wrote a number on it, telling her to take that to the checkout, pay for it, bring the receipt back, and they would give her the part. She asked the checkout person, "So here I have to stand in line at Parts to get this piece of paper, stand in line at the checkout to pay for it, go back to the line in Parts, all for a \$4.99 item, but you let me carry around these \$25.00 backup tapes that are half the size of the \$5 part? You people have your priorities screwed on backwards."

"Okay, I can't put every place on my list, or I won't have anyplace to shop," she decided. But it did not get any better. The next time, she sent her assistant to pick up a power supply. They were locked away with the expensive monitors, and everyone with a

key was at lunch. On a subsequent trip, she purchased a personal organizer for one of the vice presidents, and the store gave her the empty box for the display unit. It had the manual in it, so it felt heavy enough. She discovered the error only after driving back to the office. Two weeks later, a different person tried the same thing, but Mary learned to open the box and look inside before she left the store. She spoke to the manager, explaining her difficulties and ended the conversation with "If your stock holders ever do business here, you'll be driven off the New York Stock Exchange."

Others on the list: a software company whose technical support line is almost always busy, and when you do get through no one can answer your question on how to install their "networkable" product on a network. How about a network interface card vendor, whom you've asked for an evaluation card, and they say, "Just fill out our form and fax it back to us," but every time they fax the form it has the wrong company name and product listed on the form? Once is an honest mistake, twice is sloppy if you've called and pointed out the mistake, the third time promotes them to the Bozo category. Mary said, "I will pay a higher price rather than deal with these clowns."

Mary bought program to audit the software on a person's hard disk drive. The box claimed to be "A thorough picture of the major programs on your system." It did not find half of the software that she had on her system, so she called their tech support. The explanation that she got was, "We are a small programming shop. Currently, our programmers are working on another one of our programs, so no one is available to work on this program. We should be able to get to it in about 6 to 9 months though, and we really appreciate your comments." ON THE LIST. Additionally, the product is SHELFWARE in Mary Margaret's office.

Our heroine remembered that the PC users group meeting was coming up, and she always looks forward to these. She happened to have breakfast with the Special Interest Group Coordinator and asked him, "Based on what's happened to me, what about starting a Griper SIG." He mused, "Hmmm, I bet we'd have a large turnout."

Stay tuned. Better days are coming!



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NTPCUG On-Line

By Fred Williams
Sysop, NTPCUG BBS

We have added a new Community Service support area to the BBS to assist Alex Lilley and all of his hard working and energetic volunteers. It is hoped that the BBS will serve the group with an electronic mail connection and also as a key distribution point for course literature and other documents required to support each ongoing and new service.

I encourage all the NTPCUG members to periodically check in on the Community Service area and see if there is anything that might perk your interest in offering a helping hand. I'm certain that no offer of assistance will long go unanswered.

Due to a rash of wayward messages of late, I'm going to attempt to explain when to use carbon copies and distribution lists to route a message. What has happened recently is several messages with carbon copy lists have been posted to various "public" conferences. For the lack of a better corollary, this is very similar to scratching several copies of the same graffiti on the public restroom wall.

Any message posted to a public conference may be read by all users with that conference in their "combined" conference list. There is no real need to use either carbon copies or distribution lists with messages posted in public conferences.

If you do post a carbon copy or distribution list routed message in a public conference, one copy for each recipient in the message routing list will be posted to the target conference. This means that if the message was routed to ten people, it will appear ten times in the conference.

For the average BBS user there are no "private" message conferences other than E-Mail. E-Mail messages are the only type of messages that require either carbon copies or distribution lists if the planned audience for a given message is greater than a single individual.

If you wish to insure a particular set of individuals receive a message, it should be sent as E-Mail addressed with a carbon copy list or distribution list which includes all of the individuals in the intended audience. This will insure that each named recipient will receive his personal copy of the message.

In a similar vein, I have noted a great decrease in the number of messages that are posted to multiple conferences on the BBS since switching to TBBS. There have still been several instances of this practice occurring.

I would assume that the main reason this is done as an effort intended to insure the widest distribution. The message does get wide exposure, but the result can be quite annoying to those of us that have most or all of the conferences in our "combined" list.

No matter how witty the content, the same message gets more than a little boring after about the fifth read. By convention, the "ALL" conference is there to serve the purpose of insuring the widest distribution of a posted message. I would guess that pretty close to all BBS users have the "ALL" conference in their "combined" conference lists.

We have had a couple of lively, bordering on acrimonious, discussions being carried on in the Politics conference. Seems that those who have served in the military and those who have not are not really seeing eye to eye on a rather contemporary subject.

Also federal and state increased "contributions" for government "investment" is getting batted about pretty intensely. I can't say much more about either this subject or the previous for I don't think it fair to risk letting my own beliefs on the subjects show though in this column!

I do urge all of the NTPCUG members to come join us in these and other lively topics of discussion. It's fun, and if you get to feeling like your loosing ground, you can always follow Payton Weaver's lead and post what looks like a memory dump as a response message. I'm sure that one had his antagonists scratching their heads for a bit!

Fred

♣



(See page 1 for description of programs.)

Special Interest Groups

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

PC Tools for Windows

Central Point Software David Wainwright, Regional Manager

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Lucid's Product Offering for 1993

Lucid Corporation David Hayden, Director of Public Relations

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

NTPCUG Business Meeting

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Paradox 1.0 for Windows

Borland Corporation Dewayne Gimpel, Systems Engineer

Special Interest Group Meetings

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

9:00 - 9:55

BASIC Programming-Visual
DOS
General Genealogy
Hardware Solutions
Personal Users
Quicken
Software Review
Windows Applications
WordPerfect

10:00 - 10:55

BASIC Programming-Adv.
CAD
Fox Pro Database
Networking
PAF -Genealogy
Paradox
Personal Users
WordPerfect/Windows
Unix/Xenix

11:00 - 11:55

BASIC Programming-Begin..
Assembler
Brother' Keeper Genealogy
MS Works
Roots III - Genealogy
Spreadsheet Developers
Windows Developers

11:30 - 11:55

Orientation

11:30 - 1:00

TI Pro

12:00 - 12:55

Alpha Four
C++/Advanced C
Communications
Desktop Publishing

12:00 - 12:55 cont

Investors
OS/2 for End Users
Personal Users

1:00 - 1:55

ACTI
BBS
Business Apps./DAC Easy
Middle C
OS/2 Developers
Personal Users
Spreadsheet
Startext
WORD

2:00 - 2:55

Advanced Programmers
Community Services

SIG Coordinator	Alex Lilley	(214)953-4970 w (214)517-7430 h
ACTI	Jim Thompson	(214)487-0085 w (817)261-6159 h
Alpha Four	Ron Jackson Mac McKeethen	(214)276-3661 h (214)556-1352 h
Assembler	Frank Cavallito	(214)423-9221 h
BASIC Prog-Adv.	Mike Firth	(214)827-7734 h
BASIC Prog-Begin.	Charles Jacobus	(817)379-6840 h
BASIC Prog-Visual	Woody Pewitt	(214)230-3485 w (214)283-2292 h (214)235-5968 h
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C++ / Advanced C	Kent Cobb	(214)343-3862 h
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	Reagan Andrews, Ph.D.	(214)828-0699 h
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North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

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

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



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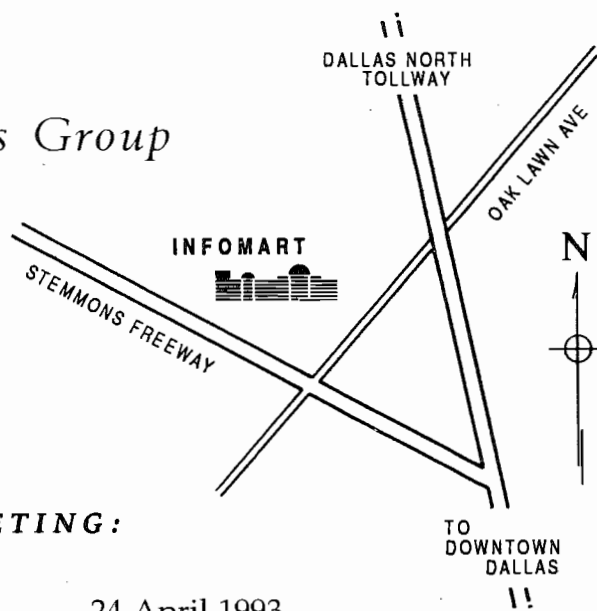
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