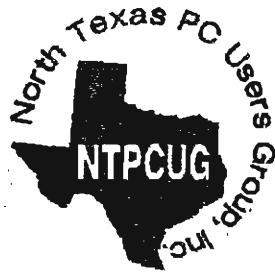


North Texas



PC NEWS



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March, 2000
VOLUME 19 NUMBER 3

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North Texas PC NEWS circulation was 1,170 last month.

Member distribution was 900; 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 97. This issue of North Texas PC NEWS was composed using Corel Ventura 8.0, Corel Draw 9.0, Arts & Letters Express 6.01, Adobe Photoshop 4.01, Micrografix Picture Publisher 8, Microsoft Publisher 2000 and HP Scanjet 6200C.se. Repro was printed on a HP LaserJet 4M. Principal typefaces include: Times, Palatino, Helvetica, A&L Cafe, French Vogue, and Lithos.

DEADLINE
Copy deadline for April
North Texas PC NEWS:
March 27, 2000

Meeting Dates:

March 18 – 3rd Saturday
April 15 – 3rd Saturday



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Submit Newsletter articles to: newsletter@ntpcug.org
Visit the North Texas PC Users Group Web page:
<http://www.ntpcug.org>

Submitting Articles and Stories to the Newsletter

The North Texas PC NEWS is going online—and it's more important than ever that the NTPCUG newsletter contain timely and informative content of interest to our members. We will welcome pertinent "How to do it" articles, book reviews, software reviews and other materials that would be helpful and interesting to NTPCUG members.

For prospective authors, there are a few, but very important, "Do's and Don'ts" involved in article submission to the newsletter, first of which is accuracy. Be sure of your facts (unless you report them as "rumors") and always remember to report the source(s) as well.

Please don't submit articles that are taken from another source without crediting the source in your article, i.e., if you excerpt something from the Microsoft (or other) Web site, please state that in the article.

Remember to "sign" your article/story at the bottom. A simple "by Your Name" will be quite helpful,

particularly if the editors have questions or suggestions about the story.

Please don't submit the article or story in HTM or .PDF format. It can make editing and formatting quite time consuming and difficult.

We can accept MS Word 97, most WordPerfect files and ASCII .TXT files. The absolutely latest version of any word processor may not convert gracefully to our format and may have to be rejected as a result.

Graphics should be submitted in one of the "standard" formats, i.e., TIF, .EPS, .GIF, .PCX or .JPG files. While "native" CorelDraw (CDR) files are also OK, other graphics editor native formats may not be convertible.

Again, we want your articles and thank you in advance for your input and cooperation.

Reagan Andrews

PROGRAMS & PRESENTATIONS . . . VINCENT GAINES

MAIN PRESENTATION

10:00 AM – 10:55 AM and
 11:00 AM – 11:55 AM (2 sessions— 2 drawings for prizes)

“Virtual Training Company Tutorial CDs”

Virtual Training Co – www.vtco.com

Martin Hellar-owner, H & H Publications, Inc. – www.sedantimestar.com

VTC produces training CDs that provide six to twelve hours (depending on the particular CD) of instruction on a particular Windows or Mac application. These CDs are also usable as a help file. Over 80 CDs are currently available with more being added each month. Typical subjects are Word, Excel, Access, Visual Basic, CorelDraw, PhotoShop, Macromedia apps., most of Adobe products and MetaCreations products.

There will be a drawing for free products.* There will be catalogs and order blanks at the show. NTPCUG members will receive a 20% discount for orders placed at the show. Later orders from NTPCUG members will be at 15%.

12:30 – 1:00 PM

NTPCUG Business Meeting

*Tickets for drawings will be given out from 10 minutes before until 15 minutes after the start time of the meetings to attending NTPCUG members who show proof of current membership.

MARCH 18

SIGs SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP MEETING SCHEDULE

| Time | Room | SIG | Time | Room | SIG | Time | Room | SIG |
|-------|------|---|-------|------|---|-------|------|-------------------------|
| 8:00 | A | - | 10:00 | - | Ctd. | 12:00 | - | Ctd. |
| | B | Microsoft Networking | | E | Introduction to the PC | | G | AppleCorps/Beginners |
| | C | - | | F | Visual Basic – Advanced | | H | Games |
| | D | AppleCorps | | G | - | 12:30 | C | NTPCUG Business Meeting |
| | E | Hardware Solutions | | H | Dallas Corel (continued) | 1:00 | A | Lotus Notes & Domino |
| | F | Excel/Spreadsheets | | - | - | | B | FrontPage |
| | G | - | | - | - | | C | - |
| | H | - | 11:00 | A | Investors | | D | - |
| 9:00 | A | WordPerfect for Windows | | B | Internet – Beginning | | E | Introduction to the PC |
| | B | Word for Windows | | C | Main Presentation – “Virtual Training Company Tutorial CDs” | | F | - |
| | C | DOS/Operating Systems | | D | AppleCorps | | G | AppleCorps/Beginners |
| | D | AppleCorps | | E | Java | | H | - |
| | E | Quicken | | F | Access | | | |
| | F | Visual Basic – Beginning | | G | ACT! | | | |
| | G | Alpha 5 | | H | Professional MIDI & Audio | | | |
| | H | Dallas Corel | | | | | | |
| 10:00 | A | WordPerfect for Windows (continued) | 12:00 | A | AppleCorps/ClarisWorks | | | |
| | B | Communications | | B | Internet – Advanced | | | |
| | C | Main Presentation – “Virtual Training Company Tutorial CDs” | | C | - | | | |
| | D | AppleCorps | | D | AppleCorps/FileMaker | | | |
| | | | | E | Introduction to the PC | | | |
| | | | | F | ActiveX | | | |

SIG meetings are listed by time and location for the March 18 meeting. Times and locations may change and members are advised to check the NTPCUG Web site for latest listings.

Evolution

As you have noticed, the *North Texas PC News* is now distributed online instead of by snail-mail. This is part of the changes we have been forced to implement in our effort to keep your dues from being increased to cover rising costs. We know this can be inconvenient to some members, but they can get help from fellow members by just asking. We have delayed this transition as long as we could, and almost all the members who voted in our last election approved this method of cutting costs. The newsletter will continue to provide you with timely news and commentary that you will find nowhere else.

The function of the North Texas PC Users Group has continually evolved as personal computing has become increasingly prevalent in our society. Personal computing devices are used by most people in their work and personal lives, and are no longer restricted to businesses and hobbyists as costs plummet and features expand. Unfortunately, technical support availability still lags be-



hind our needs. This is one of the areas where the User Group can continue to be beneficial.

Our User Group offers something for everyone. Members of the User Group range from the experienced professional to the overwhelmed beginner, all seeking to share our experiences and learn more. We gather monthly to teach and learn from each other, and we gain contacts and friendships there that benefit us all. This once-a-month meeting is not the only way in which we can benefit from our association, however. Daily contact and communications have become more necessary as personal computing technology becomes more integral to our daily lives. This new technology can be a functional tool rather than a burden if we learn how to manage it better. The User Group Web site and online communications can provide the resources to serve us better on a daily basis.

NEW MEETING LOCATION

The March meeting will still be at the Big Town Meeting Hall, but we may have a much better facility to meet in by April. Negotiations with a potential location in North Dallas look promising, and we hope to have the details finalized soon. Our goal is to provide a regular monthly meeting date with suitable resources at a location that will not change for a long time.

VENDOR SHOW

We announced in December that the DFW Xchange Super Saturday computer show would not continue in 2000 due to a number of reasons, but some people have been understandably unhappy about it not being present at our February 26 meeting. The new 3rd Saturday Computer Show was formed by an NTPCUG member, Peyton Weaver, who has generously provided free admission for members of the User Group and who was there at Big Town Exhibition Hall on the 3rd Saturday of February.



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PREZ SEZ... CONTINUED

Unfortunately, the User Group meeting was on the 4th Saturday to accommodate the schedule of the Palm presentation, where members of the NTPCUG and ACD won several free products. There will be no computer show in March, and the April show time and location has not yet been confirmed. For more information, there is a link to Peyton's 3rd Saturday Web site on the NTPCUG Web page, or the 3rd Saturday Web page is at www.3rdsaturday.com.

The DFW Xchange computer show was a major benefit to members and non-members for many years when it was located at Infomart. Managed and supported by NTPCUG and Apple Corps of Dallas volunteers, the computer show used to be profitable enough to provide monthly meeting space for many user groups. The forced move from Infomart and the decreasing cost of hardware and software at local stores has resulted in lower attendance and fewer vendors at the computer show.

The 1999-year losses have forced us to change our focus. About 70% of the people attending

the computer show were not even members of any of the user groups sponsoring the show, and operating it at a loss was beneficial to more non-members than members. Those who were members of NTPCUG and paid attention to the news-letter and meeting announcements were aware of the change. It may be possible in the future to start the DFW Xchange computer show back up, but we need the right conditions for it to be valuable to our members.

FEEDBACK

This is YOUR computer User Group, and the more you get involved, the more you will profit. We are concentrating our efforts to provide more member benefits and services at our monthly meetings and via the Internet, and your feedback and assistance will guide us. Keep tuned in to the Web site, send us your comments, and we will develop better ways to serve you, based upon your needs. If you can also suggest solutions and provide help in implementing them, we will progress further and faster.

Timothy

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The Answer Man

We've weathered a number of crises with NTPCUG, and from each one we've come out with a wealth of teamwork and more experiences to talk about. Those shared experiences are among the fond memories I have accumulated during the years since we started back at SMU. The whole environment has changed since then, and we are looking for a home for the meeting place once again. Heraclitus told us in 800 BC that the nature of life is change, so we are carrying on an old tradition.

I've retired from Microsoft, so we have to come up with a new name for the column. "Tips and Tricks" is already taken. I scanned the Excel newsgroup yesterday, and it appears that there is a wealth of ideas there for a column that answers the questions people are asking. Let's try that for a beginning; since my real love is Excel, and many people are interested in that application, it seems natural to make that my centerpiece.

One question in the newsgroup that interested me was a charting question: "How can I plot y as a function of x ?" That is written $y=f(x)$. When we say that y is a function of x , what we mean is that

for each value of x , there is a solution to the equation that relates y to that value of x . Depending on the degree of the equation, there may be multiple values of x that will produce y , but generally we are interested in the positive real values that solve the equation. In Excel, we refer to the function, or equation, as a formula. Formulas are written one to a cell in the Excel worksheet, and may be copied into succeeding cells for as many times as we have values to relate. The values of x are called independent values, and the values that result from the formulas that refer to the x values are the dependent values, called y values for short.

Let us take an example function, $y=3x^2$, read y equals 3 times x squared. In column A, I put my values of x , the independent variable, starting in cell A1 and going to A6. We can use 1,2,3,4,5,6 to begin with, and play with them later to see how the different values affect the line on the chart. In Cell B1, I type the function: $=3*A1^2$. This calculates the value of y that is the result of the value 1 for x . I use the drag and fill handle to copy the formula down to B2 through B6, and there are the results of the function for all the values of x in column A. Now, insert a chart from the tool bar to invoke the chart wizard. Choose x,y scatter for the chart type, and make the range A1:B6. The line on the chart now gives us the value of y for each value of x that we reference. The fun part is that we can now change the values of x to whatever we like, and the values of y will change automatically to read the value of the function $y=3*x^2$. The curve we see on the chart is a parabola. This is the curve associated with the effect of gravity on a bullet or a cannon shell as it passes along its trajectory, where y is the height at any given point along the horizontal distance x , at regular intervals of x .

Please let me know whether this is the type of column I should write, or if you have questions that you would like to have answered. I will try to respond in future columns, or in email if the question is something you need right away.

Bob Russell
Member #105
bobruss@airmail.net

[Editor's Note: Bob Russell is a long-time member of the NTPCUG, and was the original Membership Director back in the days when all the membership information was stored in a version of the ShareWare PC File program.]

NTPCUG TRAINING VIDEOS

Check out the new NTPCUG Multimedia Rental LIBRARY

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High OCTANE Help

Reagan and I are very grateful to Bill Parker, our new SIG Coordinator, for volunteering to take on the job of collecting and editing the SIG notes for publication in our monthly newsletter. Elder care for Reagan's mother has been taking its toll on us. Things are more stable now, but we have spent more than one newsletter production weekend at the hospital in the last few years. It has been a tremendous burden to deliver the newsletter on time certain months.

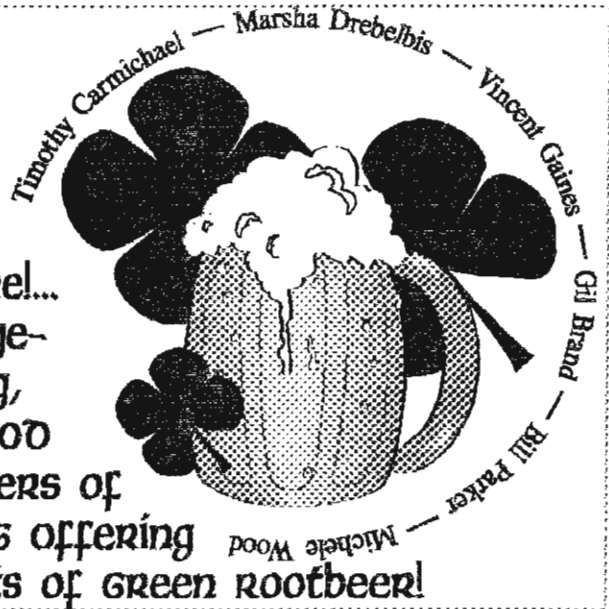
Our Board of Directors and our User Group community has been very supportive and we are grateful. Recently, Timothy Carmichael has actively recruited volunteers to make sure that we have help. Enter Bill Parker, one of our new Directors, our new SIG Coordinator, and a hell of a nice volunteer. He has stepped in to help and has devised some new methods for SIG Leaders to deposit SIG notes for the newsletter online.

I really do miss the interaction with SIG Leaders I have enjoyed up to now working on the newsletter. Our SIG Leaders are a special breed of volunteers and I admire them immensely for their contributions. I have learned many things in attending SIG meetings and know that they are the heart of our User Group.

Many thanks to all of our SIG Leaders for the work they do and many thanks to Bill for stepping in to help streamline newsletter production.

Connie

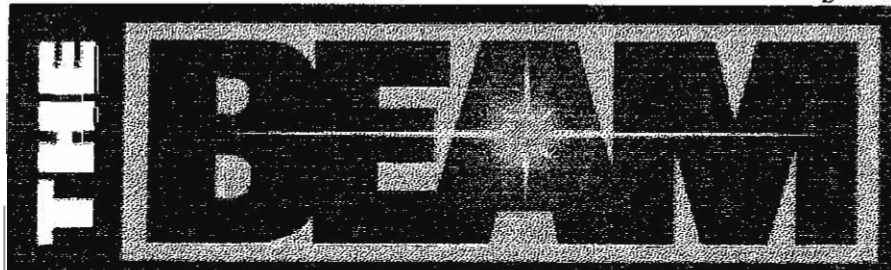
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How to Join the NTPCUG "MEMBERS" Mailing List

[Editor's Note: I am running Doug Gorrie's tutorial on joining the "Members" Mailing List again this month to assure NTPCUG members have access to this NTPCUG member service.]

Beginning this month (March), we expect to be delivering your monthly newsletter to you electronically, on our Web site (www.ntpcug.org). This change has huge financial benefits to the User Group. However, since the newsletter will not be arriving by paper mail, a different vehicle is needed to ensure that members are aware of where the newsletter is stored and how to retrieve it. In addition, other issues relative to the User Group may need to be covered as well, such as special presentations, local NTPCUG supported events, changes in meeting location, etc.



High Speed Wireless Internet!

NTPCUG operates a ListServer. A ListServer is special software that relays information via e-mail on any number of separate topics. For each topic, the ListServer stores the e-mail address of interested readers, such as yourself. Through the ListServer, members can stay informed about User Group events and issues between newsletters. This would also include re-

ceipt of instructions on where the newsletter is located on our Web site. Our ListServer currently maintains several mailing lists.

As an NTPCUG member, you may "join" one of these lists, called MEMBERS. By joining the MEMBERS list, you are ensured of receiving an announcement when each monthly newsletter is released, where it is located, and how to view it.

Again, to receive this information, you must join the MEMBERS list. To do so, merely send an e-mail message to the ListServer. PLEASE NOTE that your e-mail message must come from the e-mail account where you want your announcements sent to. In other words, if you join the list from an AOL account, our announcements and information will be e-mailed to your AOL account. You cannot join from one account and expect to receive e-mail at another.

The format to join is as follows:

Address an e-mail message to listserv@ntpcug.org.

The Perfect Gift!

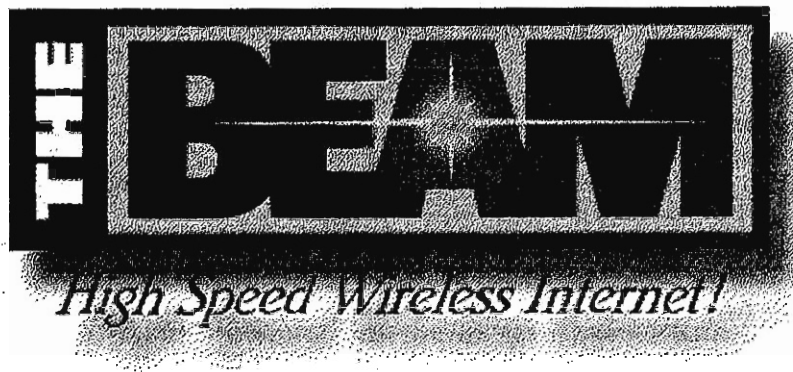
Looking for a last-minute gift that's quick, easy and keeps on giving for the entire year? Take a tip from Doug Gorrie and consider giving a one-year membership in the North Texas PC Users Group. This is an especially appropriate gift for a friend or relative who is new to computing and interested in learning how to use and enjoy the PC.

Point out the Genealogy SIGs to people who are collecting information about their families, tell friends how much the Internet SIGs can help in easing their way into really using the Web, and the benefits of friendly, early computer lessons in the Introduction to the PC SIG.

More experienced users would appreciate value of vendor presentations in making important software and hardware decisions during the year.

If you have a friend or relative who constantly "borrows" your copy of the latest *North Texas PC News*, a gift membership might be especially welcome.

Doug Gorrie



The subject can be anything -- it is ignored by the ListServer. But in the body of the message, enter the following three words:

`subscribe members your name`

where your name is your name as you want to be known by the "members" list on our ListServer. An example entry here would be

`subscribe members Fred Flintstone`

When your request to join is processed, an automated response will be returned to you confirming that your e-mail address has been added. Please be aware that your request to join the list may be "moderated", meaning that all such requests will be verified against membership records before being accepted.

Should you have a problem getting onto the MEMBERS list or in reading your newsletter online, NTPCUG has individuals available to assist our members. If you find you need such assistance, please send e-mail to postmaster@ntpcug.org. Someone will contact you by e-mail or by phone.

Also, don't forget that NTPCUG membership also includes the option of having an e-mail account on our own mail server. While it does not allow "surfing the net", it can meet the needs of those needing only local e-mail access. Again, if you feel that this limited service meets your needs, send e-mail to postmaster@ntpcug.org.

We hope this method proves satisfactory in getting NTPCUG announcements and accessing your monthly newsletter. We are prepared to make it work for you.

Thanks.

Doug Gorrie
(972) 618-8002

ARE WE HAVING FUN NOW? Web & Y2K Provide INTERESTING TWISTS & TURNS AS TALES Y2K 'HOAX' Hits 'POPULAR' Media, IPO Frustration Catches CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION, LINUX 486 Routers Rise

MS v. Everybody just keeps churning ...!

Ahhh The rumor mills are churning and burning this month with hints and innuendo about the "probable" non-resolution of the Microsoft v. DOJ and Everybody Else in the known universe antitrust case. I don't think I'll add my 2 cents since I've already voted for an MS appeal rather than settlement.

You don't know how much willpower this consumes.

Y2K A 'HOAX'? Media Mourn Lack Of BANNER HEADS ON JANUARY 1, 2000

Was Y2K a hoax? If you follow the non-techie, non-computer media you might get that feeling. I know that a lot of people are beginning to believe just that as a result of the massive IT efforts and resulting success in preventing a possible catastrophe.

Catastrophe didn't happen, not even in the areas that seemed most likely to be afflicted, as a result of late starts in correcting the Y2K problems. Produced a giant yawn for the media talking heads and other pundits who were counting on banner (144-point) headlines and tales of woe (if their presses worked) to brighten January 1, 2000, editions.

That's a shame. Herculean tasks completed by tens of thousands (?hundreds? of thousands) of programming and database professionals added up to a non-event. And that's how it should be—nobody's life disrupted or significantly inconvenienced except for the professionals involved in the Y2K fix.

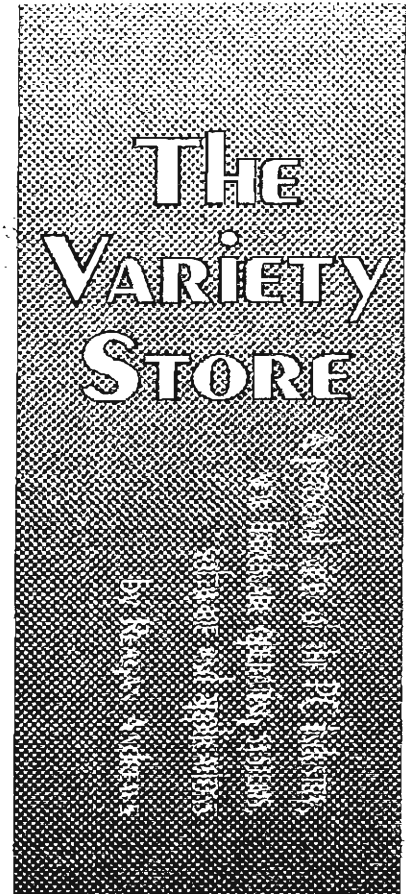
Are we free and clear now? Hardly. There are still many, many opportunities for small yet irritating glitches to appear over the next several years. The media is still treating these as "freak" events in

spite of warnings to the contrary, but more knowledgeable folk knew they would pop up and were not surprised at their appearance.

If it didn't explode, it's not "news."

Exploding? GOTTA be CPU's As Intel & AMD ANNOUNCE 1+ GHz CPU's in MARCH

CPU clock rates are rapidly going into the stratosphere as both Intel and Amd (Advanced Micro Devices) have been showing/demonstrating



1+ GHz CPU's over the past month.

I expected both to hit the 1 GHz level, but somewhat later this year. We are talking 0.18 micron devices from both vendors and both promise production quantities before year's end. The AMD chip is a K7 CPU and marks the heated race between both vendors to be at the top of the CPU "speed" mountain.

Achieving such clock rates is not without substantial problems. Heat is the source of most of these difficulties. These chips are built on CMOS technology and there is a direct relationship between clock speed and heat buildup.

THE VARIETY STORE

There are already 1+ GHz AMD powered PC's thanks to cryogenic coolers that keep the chips at a reasonable temperature and allow the high clock rates. It is similar to having an air conditioning/.refrigeration unit inside the PC case just to cool off the CPU. It does increase power consumption and I'd think definitely takes the PC well out of the "green" category.

Question arises as to benefits users may accrue from this blistering speed. The CPU clock rate is but one factor in perceived PC "speed." Ability of the PC's disk drives, SDRAM and video cards to keep up with the CPU's capabilities are essential aspects when looking at the performance of the machine. Probably biggest gains will be for gamers at this stage of the affair.

Intel recognizes this fact and has announced a plan to "tailor" their CPU's performance for specific tasks rather than a shotgun approach for general use. The industry (including Intel) has done this in the past, but usually at the higher end of the CPU spectrum. According to some media reports, Intel will be optimizing (some) of their CPU's for general business applications. This marks a step away from a single CPU trying to be all things to all users.

Makes some sense to me, but not sure how chips will be benchmarked and marketed.

FURTHER Explosions – IPO's CONTINUE TO ROCK MARKETS IN THE TECHNOLOGY ARENA

What's also exploding is tech-related IPO's and mergers/acquisitions. Now there's a cry of "unfair" over the way large brokerage houses are handling "hot" tech IPO's and favoring large and institutional customers with initial stock allotments while shunning the smaller investors. For the small investor who sees him/herself denied access to the wild price escalations following IPO's, this must be maddening. I keep reminding myself that life is very rarely "fair," but feel this trend can only serve to hasten the urge to apply some regulation(s) to the market to assure equal opportunity for all. (No, I'm not one of the people squeezed-out.)

Red Hat tried to alleviate this situation for the programmers/users who had pushed LINUX to the fore last year. Problem was that their efforts were essentially in vain since many of these folks couldn't make the broker financial minimums to participate in the Red Hat IPO. If I could only travel in time

INTERNET FoiblesSOMETIMES YOU GET THE BEAR, AND, SOMETIMES THE BEAR GETS YOU

Internet and WWW become truly interesting—for all the wrong reasons this month. First, there's the "DoubleClick Debacle" where a Web commercial organization plans to divulge mucho personal user information in a manner that attracted Congressional/Senatorial attention. Wow! Just how much do they know about me—and you?

That's the \$Xx,xxx,xxx question for many Internet users who were blithely unaware that "Big .COM" was watching them on the Web. Yes, we all have read about "Cookies" and some of us have even taken steps to halt the information flow to the "wrong" hands. May not have been enough, though. Unlike the various governmental agencies, FOI's (Freedom of Information Act) disclosure requests may not apply in this case.

There's some hope. DoubleClick has backed off the prospective database sale idea and may be in retreat from Congressional scrutiny as this goes to press (Web.)

HMMM This is INTERESTING Old 486 PC's HAVE A FUTURE As LINUX-POWERED ROUTERS

Saw this in a recent PC publication and had to consider the potential for home as well as commercial (IT) shops. Seems that "obsolete" PC's powered

by 486 CPU's may have another lease on life/usefulness in spite of the profusion of near-1 GHz Pentiums and AMD K7's. Add LINUX and turn the old PC into a router (with appropriate LINUX router software.)

May have significant impact on the network router vendors who typically ask \$300 plus for their boxes. Quotes I saw indicate a 486 PC with minimal memory and hard disk space can do this task quite well with addition of a couple of NIC's (network interface cards) and be booted off a floppy disk. Would be the perfect place for a home users' firewall if attached to either a cable modem or DSL modem with their "always on" and fixed IP vulnerabilities.

I plan to go (someday) to high speed Internet access, but have been worried about the security vulnerability involved. Might be a perfect solution since I do have a few "idle" 486 boxes lying around.

Actually, I've got two 486 PC's and a couple of sub-300MHz



THE VARIETY STORE

x86 mainboards lying fallow in shelves in my credenza. Could one (or more) of these form the basis of a home protection network?

If I have the time to configure one of these to LINUX for the purpose I may try it. Real soon now.

IS INTERNET INFO VALID? USENET NEWSGROUPS RAISE MANY QUESTIONS

Just how valid is information gathered on the Web? Answer seems to be: "Actually, not very." Several years ago, I used the Usenet news groups quite a bit for glimmers of information about microprocessor and software developments. More recently, I've been using my favorite search engine, Google.com, to seek other areas of concern (mainly mental health related) and have come across a number of sites I consider questionable if not actually dangerous.

Problem is unmonitored nature of many of these sites. Even when monitored, many of the sites have "monitors" who are not terribly knowledgeable about the field although very interested in controversial aspects of health care. Donning my professional hat for this exploration I came to several conclusions, first of which was many of the participants (not "lurkers"

such as myself) had existing biases that appeared to blind them to reality.

Major bias appears to be a blind conviction that any medical "authority" is part of the conspiracy (on whatever subject) and not to be trusted. Germination appeared to be similar to the rumors (years ago) that a carburetor had been invented that produced 100-mile to the gallon (of gasoline), but the inventor had been bought off by the major oil companies. Fact is (now) that any automobile producer would kill for such a device to get the EPA, et al, off their back.

Number of writers appear to be unconvinced by hard facts and see all MD's, Ph.D.'s, "experts," etc., as the "enemy." I see similar biases in non-medical and technical arenas as well on the Web, which tends to bring into question the validity of anything I see on the Net. That's somewhat tragic since this could have been a tremendous force for education and illumination.

Tak Zha'!

That's a close (maybe) transliteration of 'sorry 'bout that' in Russian and the end of this column for the month.

Reagan Andrews

INSIDE THE NORTH TEXAS PC USERS GROUP COMMUNITY
VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION  *by Claude McClure*

A Mild Winter Meeting

There were no complaints by the hundreds of club members who took part in the fourth Saturday meeting of the NTPCUG, as the sun shown after a very stormy previous night. There were also no complaints for the lack of volunteers to take care of the many details such a meeting demands. Their help made it a perfect meeting.

Note of thanks to **Jim Wehe** who signed out one of the newest Newsletter exchange bound volumes, and returned it with full cross-indexing that makes looking up other clubs news letters easier to find. There was even an USA map with geographical points showing the location of contributing user groups. In an evolving computer society the newsletter format may take on a new face. What will other clubs do? How will they handle

the distribution of user group news? Will the electronic Web-based newsletters clubs are using help us keep in touch with those clubs?

A drawing for devices and accessories followed an extraordinary demonstration of Palm VII. It has been a long time since I have seen that much interest in those red drawing ticket stubs. The Investors Group was busy charting the market downturn of the last two weeks. **Tim Foster** told me you really haven't lost or gained until you sell your stock. I hope some members of the SIG Group were able to take part in the IPO, which Palm was in the midst of that week. Good timing is everything.

Membership cards were mailed out for those members who missed picking them up at the Information Desk. **Randy Durham** neatly stuffed them in window envelopes and mailed them to those members we missed

seeing at the February meeting. Thanks Randy, for the many months of volunteering to do that very important task. Those cards were printed in response to new and renewal applications received by your club Information Booth volunteers, and accounted for by **Cinda Lovil**.

Thanks to all those member volunteers who are mentioned here and elsewhere in this month's Newsletter and the volunteers' who are named below.

Big Town Liaison
Mark Mills

Auditorium Presentations
Vincent Gaines

Information/Registration Booth

Statistician:
Connie Andrews
Ralph Beaver (Assistant)
Scheduler:
Claude McClure
Anchors:

Roger Bopp
Vernon Cates
Cinda Lovil
David Martin
Bob McNeil (Double)
Ken Sauter
Fred Toulmin
Booth Crew:
Randi Boucher

Randy Durham
Eteta E. Eta
Tim Foster
John McNeil (Double)
Linda Moore
Oscar Tyler
T.J. Wickliffe

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

1. Via the Internet: Send me an E-mail at CMcC1248@aol.com and make the subject matter your area of interest.

2. Meeting day: Sign up at the Information Booth to work that area in a coming month.

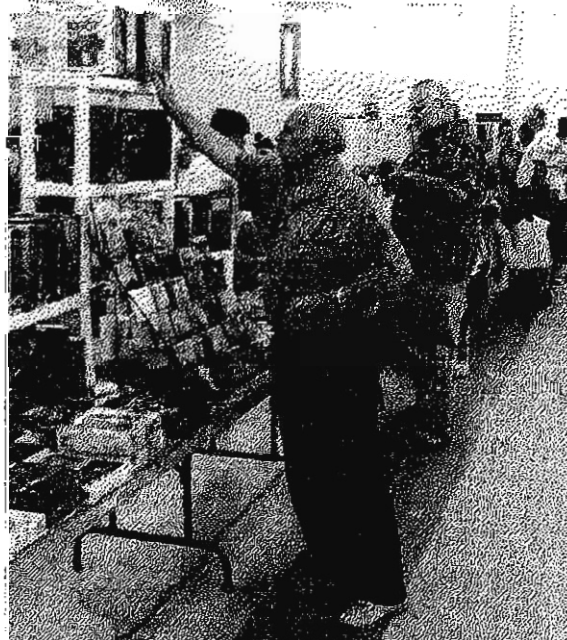
3. By phone:

Auditorium Presentations

Vincent Gainesl (972) 721-2770 (w)
 (972) 234-3231 (h)

Information Booths and General Information

Claude McClure..... (972) 887-0978 (h)



Selected SIG Reports

News and meeting notes of Special Interest Groups
 (Material for this column should be sent to Bill Parker at Sig_coordinator@ntpcug.org before the PC News monthly deadline listed on the inside cover.)

Access

Coming in March: **Carol Reed**, Director of Child Nutrition, and **Barbara Hoffman**, Buyer, of the Richardson ISD to discuss how food service ordering and purchasing requirements differ from those of a restaurant or other food vendor, the specifications for a food service application built for them by **Jim Wehe** using Access, and their experiences using that application. Be sure to come for this exciting presentation of a real-world application, and for the latest news about our future meeting place and some possible changes to our meeting schedule.

In February: SIG Leader **Larry Linson** presented "More about finding records in Microsoft Access". He demonstrated making his own *Find Dialog* for

one specific field and another *Find Dialog* to search more than one specific field, showing combo boxes with one dependent on the selection in the other. He suggested that Access 97 and later versions provide a toolbar option, *Filter by Form*, that is even better and simpler to use than a *Generic Find Dialog* that we might create.

Coming in the future, but deferred for now: SIG Leader **Larry Linson** will discuss ActiveX Data Objects (ADO) starting with the basics. ADO is Microsoft's data access method of choice for the future - in time, replacing DAO, RDO, ODBC Direct, the ODBC API, and others in the alphabet soup of methods available in recent years. Already, Access 2000 and Visual Basic 6 have the ability to use ADO as the underlying, behind-the-scenes data

FROM BILL PARKER, SIG COORDINATOR

The following are changes/additions/needs that the NTPCUG has made to the SIG's. Please notify me of any changes in contact information for existing SIG Leaders.

New SIGs:

—No new SIGs were added this month.

Groups Looking for Help in Leading their SIGs:

— **Introduction to the PC** [Contact Spike Smith at spike3@home.com, 972-231-0730 H]

The requirements for forming a SIG are:

Leadership — at least one individual willing to lead the SIG, and an assistant.

Membership — at least eight individuals willing to attend the SIG fairly consistently.

If you have a group that meets these qualifications or would like help in finding others who might share your interests, please contact me at (214) 369-5889 (H), or e-mail to sig_coordinator@ntpcug.org.

SIG LEADER LISTINGS

SIG Coordinator

Bill Parker at:

sig_coordinator@ntpcug.org

Access

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 Neel Cotton (214) 904-0011
 Jack Atkinson . . . (817) 481-6623 h
 Dianna DeCicco . . (972) 446-0839 h

ACT

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jtrd@ieee.org
 Deborah Bean . . . (972) 475-7463 h
 (972) 475-8124 w
dbean@misresource.com

Alpha 5

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 Ron Jackson (972) 276-3661 h

ActiveX Developers

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 Linda Moore (214) 342-8833

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 Giff Smith (972) 960-8227 h
 1 (888) 740-8730 w
bsmith@swbell.net

Dallas Core!

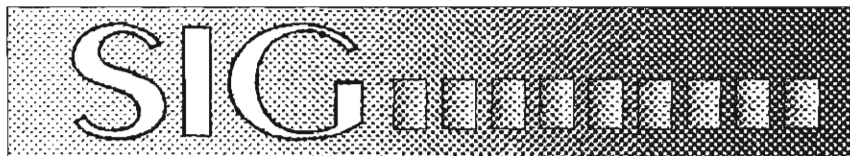
Marsha D'ebelbis (214) 951-0266
mdreb@lfrgraph.com
 Susant Biggs (214) 340-7784

DOS/Operating Systems

Heagan Andrews (214) 828-0899 h
reagana@swbell.net

Excel/Spreadsheet

Ed Foerster (214) 357-7602 h
ed.foerster@ntpcug.org
 Michael Bodner



source for bound forms and data-bound-controls, as well as the ability to use it in VBA code much as we've previously used Data Access Objects (DAO). DAO was usable only with the Jet database engine, but ADO can be used with any data source that has an OLE DB Provider.

Available on the Web: In addition to the "Images in Access" examples now available for both Access 97 and Access 2000, SIG Leader Larry Linson has posted copies of his reviews of *Programming Microsoft Access 2000*, by Rick Dobson, and *Designing Relational Database Systems*, by Rebecca Riordan, to his Web site at <http://home-stead.deja.com/user/accdevel>. Both reviews were originally published here in the *North Texas PC News*. You must have script execution enabled in your browser to view the site and download the material.

Service Releases from Microsoft: Visit Microsoft's site, <http://support.microsoft.com> for the final form of Service Release 2B for Access 97 and the Y2K patch for Access 2.0, implementing a form of date windowing.

Larry Linson

ActiveX Application Developers

In March: SIG Leader Larry Linson will continue with Part II and conclude "Introduction to Relational Database". We'll discuss the practical rules and considerations in implementing a relational database. We'll particularly emphasize normalization, usually implemented only through Third Normal Form, but further defined. Again, we'll be using Rebecca Riordan's book, *Designing Relational Database Systems*, as our primary resource. Larry reviewed and recommended it in the *North Texas PC News*. It's published by Microsoft Press and available at

well-stocked local bookstores and most of the online booksellers.

In January: SIG Leader Larry Linson began with Part I of "Introduction to Relational Database". We talked about some history and definition of basic terms of Dr. Edgar Codd's relational model. We also covered corresponding terms used in relational databases which implement that model.

Likely future topics: Here are some topics we've considered: (1) More on Office 2000 (seems it is an inexhaustible subject), (2) Reviews of a book pertinent to the interests of the SIG, or two or three, as time permits, by Dan or Larry or both, and (3) A tutorial on Microsoft Front Page 2000 or detail review of a sample chapter or two of one of the Microsoft Press self-study books on Front Page. If you have topic ideas or especially if you will volunteer to speak at a future SIG meeting, send an e-mail to linlison@yuhon.com or dogden@gte.net.

The ActiveX Application Developers SIG addresses issues of developing applications under the Component Object Model (COM) using ActiveX Controls and other ActiveX components. Just because so many of our attendees work in Microsoft Office and other software using it, we have considerable emphasis on Office and VBA issues. But, don't forget, ActiveX components and VBA are not at all limited to Microsoft products - there's a long list of products now using VBA as their programming (that used to be called "macro") language. Visio was the first to do so. A surprising addition to that list was Corel's WordPerfect. We still ask and answer a few questions about Open Database Connection (ODBC) technology, too, but the questions now are concentrating on ActiveX Data Objects (ADO) because it is new and because Microsoft is touting it as the replacement for all previous data access methods. As hot as the Internet is, our topics

Front Page

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Genealogist - The Master

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Introduction to the PC

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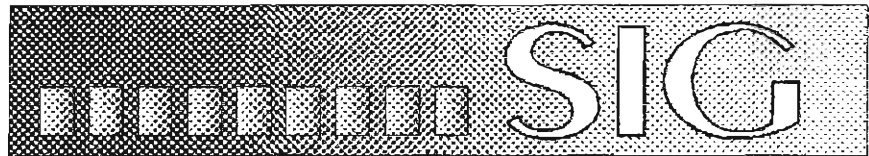
JAVA

Don Benish (972) 705-9512
dbenish@airmail.net

Lotus Notes & Domino

B.J. Shultz
bjshultz@juna.com

aren't necessarily about *Internetting*, since ActiveX controls work equally well on the desktop and in client/server environments as in Internet applications. That's one of the attractive features: one type of control, usable in many environments. Many of the topics we cover are of interest to developers using other tools, working in other environments - for example, some such subjects we have covered in the past were "Pros and Cons of Different Types of Contracts", "Documenting System



Specifications", and "Structured Analysis and System Specifications".

Come join us in March, if you're interested in computer application development. We hope to have some exciting news about our new meeting place, schedule, and perhaps even some change of focus for this SIG. We'll do the best we can to make it an interesting and productive hour.

Larry Linson

Alpha Five

The February meeting took a slight detour, in that we showed the basics of building a database for some users new to Alpha Five. The scheduled topic of designing a customer contact database was started, but since not all of the handouts were available, the discussion will be completed in the March meeting.

Even though many such applications exist, and one comes standard with Alpha Five, this type of application shows many of the design issues that will arise in other applications. For this reason, we will develop a customer contact application from start to finish so users can see the entire process.

Bill Parker

COMMUNICATIONS

In the March meeting we will be discussing Windows CE handheld devices used for communication purposes. There are approximately four million Windows CE devices in the hands of consumers today. The number of people owning Windows CE devices is expected to grow to eight million within two years. We will talk about Windows CE 1, 2, & 3 and other support software. Handheld devices with Windows CE are similar in function to desktop operations but there are differences in the actual hardware.

We will talk about the usefulness of the devices and the support hardware you need to connect. We will have log on, configuration and connection information for all the major carriers. If you wanted to take your laptop on a business trip or vacation, the connection and configurations would still apply. We will talk about multiple ISP's, browsers and e-mail with a handheld. We won't cover any material on Palm devices in this meeting but we will cover this subject in April or May. Handhelds is a subject you need to know, so plan on attending our meeting.

Birl Smith and Alan Brosz

Dallas Corel

March 2000

Paper for Successful Inkjet Printer Output

Dick Clappitt of Red River Paper Company will show us the latest supplies and equipment available to successfully print your CorelDRAW and other graphic computer files on your desktop color printers. New papers, archival inks, and latest technology printers make lasting photographic results a reality no longer just a dream. Can you say "giclee"? Dick will tell us what it is and lead us through the many industry refinements and advances in the past year, since his popular last presentation to our SIG. Check out the paper samples for yourself. To get a jump-start...

NOTICE TO SIG LEADERS

We would like to be sure the information we list for you in the SIG Leader listing is current. Please take a minute to review your listing/s and let us know if there are any corrections or additions that need to be made. Please send changes to Bill Parker:

sig_coordinator@ntpcug.org.

Micrografx (Graphics)

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 Paul Sloane (214) 528-2234 w&h
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 Timothy Carmichael
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Quicken

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 Phil Faulkner (972) 229-0561 h
philfaulkner@prodigy.net

Visual Basic — Beginning

Jim Carter (972) 235-5968 h
jim.carter@ntpcug.org

Visual Basic — Advanced

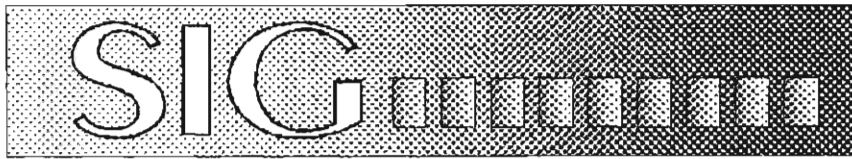
Stephen Johnson (214) 532-9788
stephenj@flash.net

Word for Windows

Michelle Wood
mwood@flash.net
 Sherry Cover
sherryinc@ix.netcom.com

WordPerfect / Windows

Cindy Adams (817) 481-1300 wM
 Fx: 817-481-1303
cadams11@flash.net
 Diane Bentley



for this session, visit <http://www.re-driverpaper.com>. NTPCUG members will be eligible for a valuable door prize.

February in Review

Mary McWilliams Johnson presented "How to communicate effectively with streamlined Web graphics and content". Whether we are veterans or newbies at Web site design, Mary believes we should jump into the fun now. Use the space available with your e-mail account to experiment! She had placed demonstration files on her own Web site and accessed them online to make her points to us. Since she designed and recently launched our new NTPCUG Web site, <http://www.ntpcug.org>, you have probably already seen a sample of her work. Her "Wordsmith Workshop", <http://www.superconnect.com/wordsmith>, and "Mary's Tips on Designing Web Sites", <http://www.superconnect.com/marystips>, won industry awards. With a background as technical writer, graphic designer and multimedia producer, Mary became enthralled with Web development several years ago. She clearly enjoys this dynamic new medium and encourages us to use Corel's Web-ready features, and those of other graphic programs, to develop our own inviting sites.

April

Rose Anne Ellison will address a joint meeting of Dallas Corel SIG and Word-



Dallas Corel Is A SIG Of North Texas PC Users Group

Perfect SIG in April. Rose Anne's topic will be Corel Presentations 9. As a professional Presentations designer, she will again bring us tips and demonstrate how to make effective on-screen presentations with Corel software, including DRAW, PHOTO-PAINT, and PRESENTATIONS. To learn more about Presentations 9, a module found in the Corel WordPerfect 2000 Suite, join us in April.

Get the New Corel® KnockOut for \$99

Create digital photo composites with stunning realism—in a fraction of the time—using Corel KnockOut masking software. Available for either PC or Macintosh®, this extraordinary application now makes it easy to produce seamless composites that preserve fine details, such as hair transparencies, smoke, motion blur and shadows. Also, import and export files from photo-editing programs effortlessly. Formerly costing users several hundreds of dollars, Corel purchased it recently, but did not include it in DRAW 9. This powerful product takes the tedium out of masking objects with irregular edges, giving you more time to expand your creative boundaries. Corel Knock-Out masking software—an essential part of the professional designer's toolbox. <http://www.corel.com/corelknockout/index.htm>.

Corel Seminar Dallas May 2-3

Rick Altman will bring his popular seminar for CorelDRAW users to us in Dallas, TX May 2-3, 2000. Referred to as an off-season traveling seminar, this event is smaller (reservation seating for 45 people) than the full Conference, but packed with information and learning opportunities. Geared for CorelDRAW users low-intermediate and up, it features two days of engaging topics and presentations. For full details and reservations,

visit <http://www.altman.com/seminars>. We who have attended his seminars in the past give them rave reviews. Remember when he made a surprise visit to our SIG meeting a few years ago?

CorelWORLD 2000

CorelWORLD 2000 Conference is scheduled for September 10-15, 2000 in San Diego, CA. Rick Altman and many additional Corel graphics luminaries will be featured presenters. This conference offers the Corel graphics software user a full course of learning options. Find details at <http://www.altman.com/corelworld>.

Recent Programs at Dallas Corel SIG

- ◆ Mar/99 – DRAW & PAINT Q & A
- ◆ Apr/99 – Scanning For Success
- ◆ Jun/99 – Member Showcase
- ◆ Jul/99 – Virtual Corel Training on CD
- ◆ Aug/99 – Corel Large-Output at Service Bureaus
- ◆ Sep/99 – Corel and the Entrepreneur
- ◆ Oct/99 – Filters and Plugins, Part I
- ◆ Nov/99 – Photographic editing Plugins
- ◆ Dec/99 – Filters and Plugins, Part III
- ◆ Jan/00 – Masks in PHOTO-PAINT
- ◆ Feb/00 – Web Site Development Tips

Marsha Drebelbis

DOS/OPERATING SYSTEMS

Are you protected? Are you sure?

We're rolling into Spring early this year with blossoming flowers, verdant greenery, birds and butterflies. And, don't forget the usual siege of really nasty, sometimes violent and always dangerous thunderstorms for the unprotected.

That's the theme for the March DOS/Operating Systems SIG, making sure our machines are protected from the elements, including "hackers," and malicious computer-virus artists in addition to the weather's dangers. Protecting ourselves from most of these is initially, relatively simple.

Surge Protection Isn't 'Forever'

It's the long-term where most of us stumble. Why? Because we tend to assume that "protection" lasts forever and doesn't require ongoing maintenance. Wrong!

Take the simple surge protectors most of us have between our PC's and the wall sockets for example. The cheapest of these (around \$5.00) are usually nothing more than a single MOV (metal oxide varistor) across the two "hot" lines. More sophisticated units may include MOV's between both line and the "ground" line. Problem with simple MOV protection is that MOV's degrade over time with repeated line surges. They can also be destroyed by

IMPORTANT COREL ADDRESSES & PHONE NUMBERS

Corel Corporation
1600 Carling Avenue,
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◆ Technical Support Representatives..... 888-267-3548

◆ G1 Release, CD-Rom only (latest "fixes" and patches for Corel products) 800-772-6735

◆ Customer Service Representatives 800-772-6735

◆ IVAN (Interactive Voice Answering Network) 613-728-1990

◆ 24 Hour Automated Fax System 613-728-0826 Ext.3080

◆ Technical Support hours are 4AM to 8PM (EST) excluding holidays

◆ To obtain our catalogue please request document #2000



a major lightning hit—often without the user being aware that the MOV is "blown."

Better surge protectors are much more expensive since the circuitry includes chokes (inductors), capacitors and sensing circuits that indicate when the unit is no longer protecting the attached equipment. These units also filter out high-frequency line noise in addition to providing surge protection.

UPS's Prevent Power Loss

Good surge protectors will (generally) protect the attached equipment, but don't protect data in case of a power outage. As little as a 60 millisecond drop in line voltage can force many PC's to reboot, thus losing any data in memory. (That's a good reason to "save" often.) Better yet would be an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) with sufficient battery backup to allow saving data and exiting the programs and Windows. Prices on UPS's have dropped considerably and the typical user could find a unit capable of providing 10 - 15 minutes power to allow saves for less than \$150. These units also have surge protection built in and do double duty. Several interact with Windows via a serial or USB port will and inform the user if batteries are low, etc.

Don't Forget the Phone

If you are using a modem to connect to the Internet, don't forget phone-line surge protection. Telephone lines are very susceptible to generating powerful inductive spikes from nearby lightning strikes with sufficient energy to destroy many of the modem and mainboard components. Many of the better surge protectors have telephone line surge protection in addition to power line protection. However, simple phone line protection is available at most RadioShack stores at a moderate cost in case the

power unit doesn't have this capability.

Virus

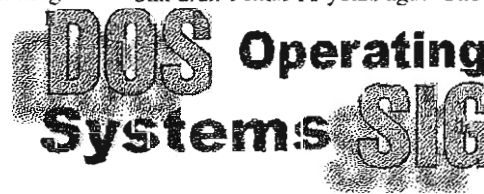
Anti-virus software is much more "user friendly" than in the past and users need to establish a regular schedule for updating their virus data. Monthly updates may not be sufficient in the present environment. I usually suggest weekly updates for most home users and more frequent updates in business settings. During the Y2K weeks, I was updating daily.

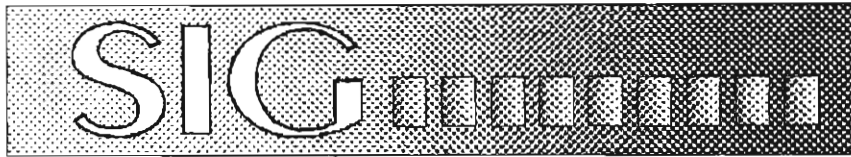
"Hackers" on the Internet

This is a new one and it's directed to those users who are blessed with cable or DSL connections to the Internet. Problem is that they are always "on" and have fixed IP addresses instead of the dynamically-assigned IP's used with PPP modem connection to the Net. Media experts are suggesting that any user with a cable or DSL connection equip themselves with a personal "firewall" to prevent external mischief from entering their systems. *BlackICE Defender* is one of the more frequently recommended products and is available as a download from NetICE for \$39.95 at www.netice.com Another Firewall receiving very positive press notice is ZoneAlarm 2.0 which is a free download from Zone Labs at zonelabs.com.

And, of course, Backups

A recent backup set won't protect the user from lightning hits or malicious "hacker" attacks, but it can save a lot of time and effort in rebuilding important data after such an event. Although I still prefer high-speed tape backups, there are many other options available that didn't exist 10 years ago. One I'm





using frequently is saving to CD/R disks, which have become relatively inexpensive over the last two years at less than \$1/disk. ZIP disks are another avenue and particularly suitable for data-only backups. The important thing here is to backup frequently regardless of the medium. It can save a lot of headaches and foul language later...

Reagan Andrews

EXCEL/SPREADSHEET

The subject for the March meeting will be Data Consolidation. This is a request from a SIG member with a specific example. I have no previous experience with this subject, so I may need a little help from the assembled group.

At the February meeting we had a demonstration of Web Queries followed by a description of the design of a Web Queries. Web Queries allow you to query data from a specific site on the Internet or an intranet server and receive the information directly into Microsoft Excel. Web queries are text files with the file extension .iqy containing three or four lines of text and can be easily generated. Any table on the Internet can be imported or updated directly into Excel.

Thanks to all members who were involved in the acquisition and installation of the Internet connection. It sure came in handy for this demonstration.

For those of you who missed the meeting there are some examples available in Excel for Microsoft Office 97. Try the following example to see how easy it is. If you have a dial-up Internet service, you must have a connection to your ISP running in the background. In Excel go to the "Data" Menu. Click "Get External Data" and then "Run a Web Query". Select "Detailed Stock Quote by PC Quote, Inc.iqy" and when requested for a stock symbol, enter your favorite stock or enter "msft" for microsoft. Observe the results.

If you want to see what a query looks like, open the file using a text editor. The file is located in the Program Files\Microsoft Office\Queries\ subdirectory.

If you want to try your hand at Web Queries, load the "Get More Web Queries.iqy" and follow the link to "Microsoft Excel Web Connectivity Kit". There is a Word document in the Kit detailing how you can create your own Web Queries.

If you have an interesting application that you want to share with the group, give me a call and I will schedule you at a future meeting.

Whether you are a beginning or experienced user, bring your problems to the next meeting and we will try to find a solution to your problem. I say "we" because SIG attendees answer most questions. If your problem is not easy to explain in words at the meeting send me an example of your .xls file to *ebfoerster@ntpcug.org*.



er.ster@ntpcug.org. This will give me a chance to work on the problem ahead of time and make for a smoother presentation.

Eb Foerster

GAMES

SIG Leader: Chris Carmichael, *chris.carmichael@ntpcug.org*, H 214-331-6303

SIG Asst. Leader: Timothy Carmichael, *timothy.carmichael@ntpcug.org*, W 972-566-4626

This SIG will focus on computer games and how to play them, whether

role-playing games (RPG), action games, or educational games. We review current and upcoming games, discuss strategies for specific games, and share opinions and learning experiences. Bring games to swap with others, and bring PC game magazines to add to the library. If you want to learn more about what games you and your parents would like to buy, come join us.

Chris Carmichael

GENEALOGY - THE MASTER GENEALOGIST

We meet off-site on a different day than on our User Group meeting day. Check the Web page for the TMG Users Group meeting time, date and location at www.pioneerinfo.com/tmg/.

Jeri Steele

INTERNET - BEGINNING

Our February 2000 meeting included a lively discussion on Internet security, as begun by **BirI Smith** in the previous hour's Communication's SIG. Why do we care? Recent denial-of-service attacks brought down several major Internet sites, pointing out weaknesses that can impact all of us. The perpetrators used the machines of unsuspecting users around the world to unknowingly attack AOL, YAHOO, Amazon.Com, etc, rendering these commercial sites largely useless for lengthy periods.

These unsuspecting machines could be *yours and mine* !! Were they used like hundreds of others to initiate the attacks? Chances are slim, but you just can't be sure if your system is unprotected. And if your PC could be accessed and made to attack YAHOO, it could be accessed to steal your sensitive data, install viruses, or even FORMAT your hard disk. Not Good !!

With the advent of higher speed Internet connectivity using ISDN, ADSL, and cable, users are online and accessible much more of the time. The "Always On" aspect of these connections is like leaving your front door open for long periods, and you may not be close by to review who comes in !!

So how do you protect yourself ?? First, make sure you run (and keep updated) a virus program -- McAfee, Symantec, or others. This will help protect you from viruses and some malicious programs that arrive in routine e-mail, or which you download accidentally.

Second, evaluate the status of your current machine to see where its weaknesses are. One great Web site that can assist in reviewing your security is www.grc.com (Gibson Research Corporation). From this site, you can examine your system remotely and have the results reported. It will test your Internet connection security, then test your "ports".

We tested **Birl Smith's** PC during our February meeting, and found some actual or possible weaknesses. Good explanations accompanied each test, helping users evaluate the significance of each one. I would recommend that ALL users connect here and test their systems.

So what if you find that you have some "holes"? Unless you are running some form of network security program, you DO have holes, whether you see them or not. And if you are online on DSL, ISDN, cable, or even via a modem, you are at risk.

Two programs being touted in the press lately are **ZoneAlarm** and **BlackICE**. ZoneAlarm is a free product available from Zone Labs (www.zonelabs.com). It runs on Windows 95/98/NT/2000. The recently released Version 2 provides needed enhancements, making the product a definite "must see".

ZoneAlarm is simple to install. Once in place, it begins developing a list of applications running on your computer that are accessing the Internet. For each, you can specify whether that application or service gains access, is denied access, or if you are to be asked each time. You can lock out Internet activity from all processes except those you approve.

As noted on their Web site, ZoneAlarm includes a Firewall, Application Control, Internet Lock, Security Levels,



and Zones. I suggest you read over its features, then download and install it.

In fact, how about a little "before and after" test. First, test your PC at Gibson's site above, and note (or even print) the results. Then, install ZoneAlarm and rerun the test. I'll bet you are very impressed at what ZoneAlarm can do to protect you, and all at no charge.

The other great product is BlackICE, from Network ICE (www.networkICE.com). Although not free, its \$40 download price is very reasonable. Like ZoneAlarm, it provides firewall security when online. But unlike ZoneAlarm, it provides details on each attempt (or possible attempt) to hack into your computer. For each hack attempt, you can double click and get additional detail about that type of attack. I'm told you can even send evidence of an attack to the Internet Service Provider of the hacker, asking that he be disconnected for his actions.

Doug installed both products and ran Gibson's test on each. The results were remarkable. In both cases, my system was reported as being nearly invisible to outside access attempts. Ports were not just OPEN or CLOSED, but were observed to be in STEALTH mode. Stealth mode was described as one that "eats" malicious packets, making your PC invisible as though you are not connected (but you are !!).

At present, I can't recommend one over the other. I plan to run both over time and compare the results. But I do know this -- I will run one of them ALWAYS from here on out.

In fact, plan on our demonstrating one or both of these programs at the March 18th meeting.

If you have specific issues you wish to see presented in our Internet SIGs, please send e-mail to doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org

and we will try to cover it.

See you on March 18th !!

*Tom O'Keefe, Pat Hykkonen
& Doug Gorrie*

INTERNET - Advanced

At our February 2000 meeting, **Pat Hykkonen** continued his series on TCP/IP protocols, as begun in November. This would encompass the Network, Transport and Application layers of the OSI model. It included an overview of such protocols as Telnet, FTP, SMTP, SNMP, and good old HTTP.

In March, we anticipate a Q&A session. We've had excellent luck with these in past months, as use of the Internet always creates new questions and issues. Come join us on March 18th at Noon, in Room B.

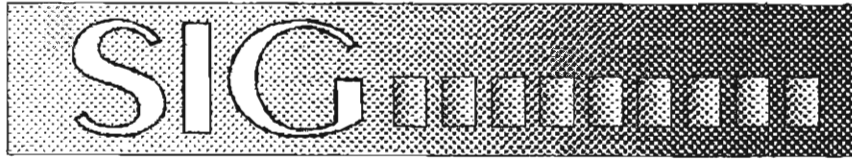
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See you on March 18th !!

*Tom O'Keefe, Pat Hykkonen
& Doug Gorrie*

INTRODUCTION TO THE PC

Our special program for seniors last week was a success for bringing in some new potential members. We were a bit troubled with malfunctioning equipment and replacements of not so representative of home use. Our LAN connection with The BEAM, ISP worked admirably for Internet demonstrations. This Seniors Program used a Microsoft videotape *Opening New Windows on the World* as an introduction. The video was slanted toward senior citizens in that the moderator was Oscar Goldman, a seasoned actor who



older persons relate to. This in no way detracts from its use for introducing the basic parts of the PC system which can be enjoyed by all family members.

Continuing *seniors* or *family* programs may be a strong consideration for future ongoing Introduction programs.

One major change to be made in all future programs is presenting less technical information and having at least one desktop for a demo unit. Technical handouts may still be used for those serious learners.

The March programs synopsis:



**Class 10. 10:00 AM
PC Printers**

PC Printers range from around \$150 through well over \$20,000. We will look at color as well as black and white. Cost comparisons and output quality vs. laser jet, ink jet, bubble jet, ribbon, and dot matrix. Interface methods are SCSI, parallel, serial, and USB.

Some are fast, some are small and their dpi (dots per inch) is important in both performance and being able to "out-spec" your neighbors.

Which type is best for you? (I have four of them, one LaserJet, one ink jet, one color ribbon, one dot matrix)

**Class 11. 12:00 Noon
Networks & Such**

Networks have become a vital part of not only the office environment but within the home too. Networks provide a means for users to share vast resources and virtual files everywhere. The home business or pleasure user today makes wide usage of dialup networking. Remote banking, bill paying, and especially the Internet are all examples.

Wired networks allow offices to share printers, other peripherals, and common files. Networks can create complex workstations for large tasking and sharing major resources.

files and lets you see and print the original data.

FTP stands for (TCP/IP) file transfer protocol. A low cost (and free for personal users) program is Ipswitch, Inc. "WS_FTP". This allows you to transfer text and binary files over telephone lines or LANs. This is useful for getting your Web site onto the Internet. It is also useful to send to an ftp server a picture of your firstborn or grandchild so that ALL of your relatives can access it.

Would you like to capture what is on the screen? How about capturing objects and put them onto the screen? I would!

Harold (Spike) Smith

INVESTORS

In February we had **Kevin Green**, a Financial Advisor from Morgan Stanley Dean Witter as a speaker. Kevin spoke on the topic "Information and Knowledge." He highlighted the power of the research available through Morgan Stanley. Kevin offers a consultation to anyone who is interested and can be reached at 214-265-4440 or e-mail at kevin_green@msdw.com.

March - come one! Come all! We want input, questions, and participation. We also need your e-mail addresses to add to our roster.

Kathryn (Kathy) Kirby & Dick Richtman

JAVA

We had a really good turnout for **Jamie Nettles** presentation on his Spirals application. He explained the concepts of mutation and how it applies to genetics and how the various randomly created spirals in his population inherit characteristics from previous generations. He then showed us examples and how his application used various objects to represent genes and chromosomes.



Whenever he does manage to send the application to me I will post it on the SIG page.

There was also a good turnout for the main presentation on the Palm computing devices. If anyone has done any kind of programming on any of these pocket computers, let me know.

I am extremely busy at work and may not have a lot of time to get much of a presentation this month. I will try to get a demonstration of my swing calculator set up. If anyone has anything they would like to demonstrate, let me know.

Dan Benish

MICROSOFT NETWORKING

Next Meeting: March 18, 2000, 8 AM

In March, SIG co-leader **Paul Sloane** will give a presentation on his experience implementing Microsoft Proxy Server for his home office network.

Don't forget to arrive early to be eligible for the software freebies!

Here are the tentative topics for the next few meetings. We are still looking for volunteers to assist with future presentations.

Upcoming Schedule:

- April - Microsoft Proxy Server
- May - Black Ice Presentation
- June - Win2K demo and discussion
- July - Continuation of Win2K demos and discussions
- August- Open for suggestions (email gil.brand@ntpcug.org):
NT Security, NT Monitoring, etc.

Site-of-the-month:

Dec 99 - www.grc.com. This site will give you a report on just how much information your computer system exposes to the Internet. Give it a try.

Previous meetings:

February, 2000

In February, SIG member **Jim Thompson** gave a demo of a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection. We connected the demo system in Room "B" (running W98) to the server at one of his clients (running NT4 Server) located on the Internet.

Our connection was via the high-speed satellite link provided by the Beam, one of our User Group sponsors. Check out their products at www.The-Beam.com.

January, 2000

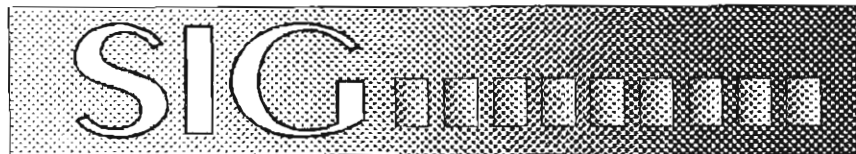
Paul Sloane gave a presentation on the relative advantages and disadvantages of "Upgrading from WinNT to Win2K, or Clean Install Win2K". See the SIG area on our Web site to view the related handouts.

December, 1999

We held a round table discussion on "Windows PC Vulnerability Assessment and Patch Implementation". Many of the attendees have had no significant problems with viruses or system attacks, and therefore take little or no preventive action.

The most commonly mentioned steps were:

- ❖ Keep virus definitions updated (at least twice a week);
- ❖ Subscribe to security newsletters (such as Microsoft, NT BugTraq);



- ❖ Obtain software to detect a port-scanning attack on your system (e.g., Black Ice).

November, 1999

Kathy Schmitt and **Michael Bentley** of JC Penney gave a presentation on the Windows NT Resource Kit. Now that you know everything about these handy tools, you can really cause problems for your company NT administrator! See the SIG area on our Web site to see the presentation.

October 1999

At the October meeting, **Allen Childress** of Microsoft gave a presentation on "Choosing the Right Operating System," a comparison of Windows 98, Windows 2000, and Windows CE operating systems. See the SIG area on our Web site for a copy of the presentation.

September 1999

SIG member **Rodney Loos** gave a presentation on using Win98 Internet Connection Sharing (ICS) with a cable modem. See the SIG area on our Web site for a copy of the presentation.

August 1999

Doug Curran of Microsoft gave a presentation and demo of MS Proxy Server. See the SIG area on our Web site for a copy of the presentation. Also, look for the Microsoft Internet Information Server (IIS) presentation. Doug presented this topic and demo on Wednesday, 8/25, at the MS Technical Mixer at the Westin Park Central Hotel.

July 1999

No formal presentation this month; only Q&A. We also discussed the need for volunteers to assist with developing future presentations and some NT technical tasks that need to be addressed on

the User Group NT server. If you have some experience maintaining an NT server and would like to help, send email to gil.brand@ntpcug.org.

May 1999

Several die-hards stopped by even though there was no official SIG meeting in May. Suggested topics for future meetings were: Windows 2000; High speed Internet connections: DSL, cable, satellite; NT security; NT Resource Kit tools; SMS; MTS; NT performance monitoring.

January-April 1999: No meetings

Purpose of the SIG:

To technically showcase Microsoft Networking products, including Windows 2000, Windows NT Server/Workstation, Systems Management Server, Exchange, SNA Server, Internet Information Server, and Windows 95/98.

The SIG highlights the capabilities and features of these products for all users, from individual end-users to corporate users, small and medium size businesses, and beginning to experienced administrators. We present the various options within Microsoft's networking products line and help members understand how they are positioned to solve their computing, connectivity and business needs. We help members understand how these products interoperate with other third party and legacy products.

The strength of an effective users' group is the opportunity to share common experiences and learn from others. We try to end each meeting with an open question and answer session.

By staying informed of the activities of other NTPCUG Special Interest Group's (SIGs) and area Users' Groups with common interests, we answer

members' questions and help them identify other resources available in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Gil Brand

Professional MIDI & Audio

SIG Leader: Alan Lummus, alummus@airmail.net, W&H 972-733-4141

SIG Asst. Leader: Timothy Carmichael, timothy.carmichael@ntpcug.org, W 972-566-4626

Our SIG focuses on the variety of uses of computers by both professional and amateur musicians and recording engineers.

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) has been around since before the IBM PC started supporting it, and is used by many musicians to control and synchronize multi-instrument musical performances. The PC can use MIDI, connected to electronic keyboards, synthesizers and a host of other devices, to compose and play music, produce musical scores, and teach students how to play keyboards and other musical instruments.

Audio engineers use computers to record and edit live musical performances, restore, clean up, and improve the sonics of older recordings such as LPs, cassettes, 8-track, reel to reel, and wire recorders; compile and arrange different recordings, and record live or edited performances and transcriptions onto CD, DAT, or DVD. We examine the entire range of audio engineering from microphone selection and placement through the entire chain of recording to DAT or computer hard drive, transcription to computer hard drive from other recording formats, digital editing, and CD or DVD burning or mastering for commercial production.

We discuss hardware, software, interfaces, interconnects, signal cabling, controllers, instruments, synthesizers, and all related devices, from amateur to professional levels. Come and share your experiences and learn more about these two interrelated fields of MIDI and Professional Audio.

J. Alan Lummus

Visual Basic - BEGINNING

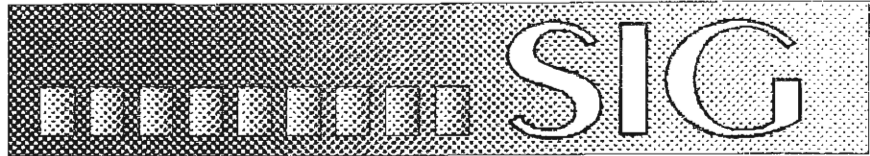
March's meeting will be the semi-annual "For Beginners Only" session where we introduce Visual Basic to those with no (or very little) experience with Visual Basic. This presentation is updated and given twice each year to help beginning programmers get started in Visual Basic.

The major topics of the presentation in March will include a brief history of Visual Basic, descriptions of resources available for beginners in Visual Basic, an introduction to the Windows environment, discussion of Visual Basic 6.0, and demonstration of the new integrated development environment (IDE) made a part of Visual Basic 6.0. Everyone is welcome to attend, of course. If you have a friend, relative, neighbor, etc. who would like to see what Visual Basic is about, this meeting would be an ideal one for them to attend. This would be a great opportunity for you to introduce the NTPCUG to a potential new member.

The Beginning Visual Basic SIG was formed within the North Texas PC User Group in May of 1993 to serve the needs of those members that were just beginning in Visual Basic. We often have members attend our SIG meetings that have not purchased Visual Basic yet. They want to find out what it is about before they take the plunge. Our purpose is to provide a forum where Beginning Visual Basic programmers can ask questions without feeling intimidated. Our goal is to help them learn enough to participate in the Advanced Visual Basic SIG. A number of advanced Visual Basic programmers attend the Beginning Visual Basic SIG for the specific purpose of helping the beginners with their programming problems.

Bring your questions on Beginning Visual Basic to our meeting beginning at 9:00 AM in Room Fon Saturday, March 18, 2000 at the Big Town Mall. Check the NTPCUG Web site for any changes in meeting time or place. I look forward to seeing you at this month's meeting.

Jim Carter



Visual Basic - Advanced

During the March 2000 meeting of the Advanced Visual Basic SIG, I'll continue with my discussion on Class Modules. In the January 2000 meeting, I showed several reasons why you would want to use a Class Module. In February, I showed you several ways of creating and maintaining them. I discussed the manual method, the Class Builder Wizard, and my own Wizard implemented as a Visual Basic Add-in.

This month I will have the third (but not last) installment of Class Modules. I will demonstrate several Real World uses for Class Modules. I will show several Applications that I have written and how Class Modules were used in those applications. Some Class Modules are universal (used in several, if not all, applications), and some are specific to the applications. I will address the differences. I will also demonstrate the use of a Class Library (DLL).

At the February meeting, I passed out a questionnaire asking for subjects that you wanted to discuss. You can find out the results of that questionnaire by accessing my web site. You can also get any handouts and examples from the meetings on my web site.

You can e-mail me at stephenj@flash.net. If you have an intermediate problem, you can call me at 214-532-9788; however, your best bet is via e-mail. You can get access to my Web site by entering the address www.flash.net/~stephenj/ntpcug from your browser.

The Advanced Visual Basic SIG was formed in the North Texas PC User Group (NTPCUG) in the summer of 1992 and has made the transition from the Infomart to Big Town with the NTPCUG. The SIG membership contains a mixture of new, intermediate and highly skilled Visual Basic programmers who meet monthly to ex-

change ideas on Visual Basic programming. The meeting generally includes introductions, question and answer session, and a presentation on a particular subject of interest to the group. The main purpose of the SIG is to provide a forum for Visual Basic programmers to exchange views and share experiences.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the meetings.

Stephen Johnson

Word for Windows

Meeting time and place: 9:00-9:55 in Room B

Whether your documents consist of a few lines of text or they are complex productions with graphics and tables, you're sure to learn some tips and skills in the Microsoft Word SIG.

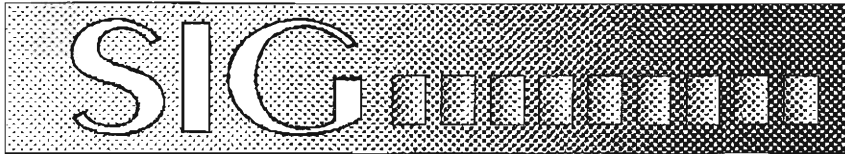
Although we're an informal group, we usually present a planned program with handouts. We're always happy to cover any questions and topics you want covered, as well as share your knowledge and good ideas. Word often provides several methods of achieving the same end result, and we'll all discover different ways of doing things in Word from each other.

We want this SIG to help you solve your Word problems and discover how to do things you didn't know you wanted to do.

*Michele Wood
(mwood@flash.net) & Sherry
Covert (shervinc@ix.net-
com.com)*

WORDPERFECT FOR WINDOWS

This month, Diane will demonstrate using the Card feature of CorelCentral to create records. The Card File view helps you keep track of personal information, inventories, reference materi-



als, and anything else you want to organize. She will show the Card Files she has created (listed below), as well as create a new Card File during the session:

- A list of Mystery Books including the copyright date (so she can list them in the order in which they were written). They are grouped according to authors and the main character.

- A list of all my computer books, videos, manuals, handouts and my personal notes grouped by software. You can create additional groups from the original groups.

- An ongoing list of Christmas presents given; each year you can review what you gave to each person the previous year(s).

- A list of office equipment, software and supplies. The list includes date, place and amount of purchase, date and version of latest update/drivers, phone/fax/email information to reach customer service.

Just to give an idea as to how it can be used. Diane will also show the pre-designed Card Files that are included: Food, Literature, Music, Office, Personal, and Wine.

Everyone keeps lists of something-or-other. Why not keep them here?

Tip of the Month (from **Putt Shaw & Tipworld**) – **IMPORTANT WORDPERFECT FILES TO BACK UP**

You probably back up your important WordPerfect documents on a regular basis. But what about the WordPerfect tools you worked so hard to build - your toolbar, QuickWords, custom word lists, and so on? You should back those up as well. If something should ever happen to your installation of WordPerfect, you can quickly restore your tools without skipping a beat.

Back up the following files to a floppy or zip disk and keep it in a safe place. Here's what and where they are:

! **Default template**__The default template holds your toolbars, menu bars, default document settings, and styles, among other objects. It's the most important WordPerfect tool in your arsenal. The file is called `wp9xx.wpt` where "xx" is the abbreviation of the language version you're using (e.g., North American English versions would be `wp9us.wpt`). The file is stored, by default, in the folder `C:\Program Files\Corel\WordPerfect Office2000\template\Custom WP Templates`.

! **User word list**__The user word list contains both the list of spell check exceptions you've indicated and your list of QuickCorrect words. This file is called `wr9xx.uwl`, where "xx" is the abbreviation of the language version you're using (e.g., `wr9us.uwl` for the North American English version). The file is stored by default in the folder `C:\Program Files\Corel\Shared\Writing Tools\9.0\Corel User Files`.

! **QuickWords template**__All your QuickWords are stored in a separate template. The file is called `qw9xx.wpt`, where "xx" is the abbreviation of the language version you're using (for North American English, it would be `qw9en.wpt`). The file is stored by default in the folder `C:\Program Files\Corel\WordPerfect Office 2000\template\Custom WP Templates`.

! **Your custom macros**__Macros that you create are stored by default in the folder `C:\Program Files\Corel\WordPerfect Office 2000\Macros\WPWin`. Back up

all files that have a `.wcm` extension.

! **Custom templates**__Templates you've created are stored by default in the folder `C:\Program Files\Corel\WordPerfect Office 2000\template\Custom WP Templates` and have a `.wpt` extension.

! **Address Book entries**__One of the easiest ways to back up your Address Books is to export each book to a file that you can later import. Open an address book, then choose **File, Export** from the menu. The prompts guide you through the process of creating the export TXT file (note that in the Columns dialog box, you must be sure to select all the columns that have data in your address book. When in doubt, select them all). Repeat for each separate address book you use. Then, copy the TXT file(s) you created to your backup disk. In a future tip, we'll show you how to import the TXT file into your Address Book.

If you need to restore these files, simply copy the file to its original location, or in the case of the Address Book, import the file directly into the Address Book. You can also transfer your tools from one computer to another by copying these files into place.

Cindy Adams



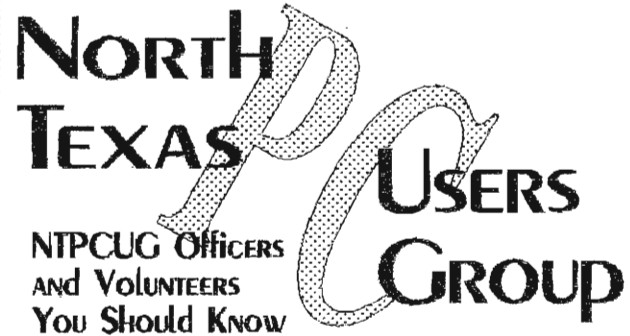
North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

P.O. Box 703449, Dallas, TX 75370-3449

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To e-mail all members who have joined the Members mailing list: members@ntpcug.org

To enroll in NTPCUG Newsgroups, send e-mail to: postmaster@ntpcug.org

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

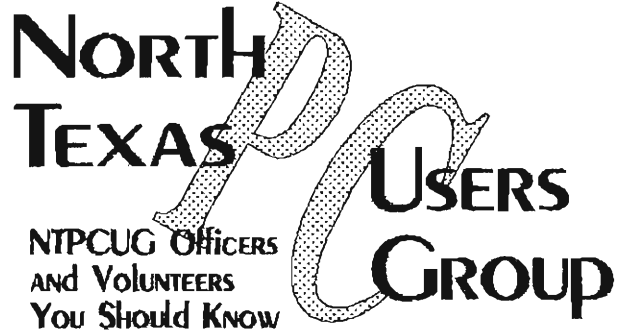
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