

North Texas



PC NEWS

The Winners!!!
NTPCUG President
President-Elect & BOD
Position Winners After
January Elections
See Page 5

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DEADLINE
Copy deadline for March
North Texas PC NEWS:
March 9, 2001

Meeting Dates:

February 17 - 3rd Saturday
March 24 - 4th 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

9:00 a.m. - FREE Internet-based training sites will be demonstrated at the February main meeting. Our own **Vincent Gaines** has discovered a few useful sites and will visit them so that you can see them also. If you have found some sites that you would like to share with your fellow Club members, send an e-mail to *programs@ntpcug.org* (live link on back page of this issue) and they may be incorporated into the Main Presentation.

Future main presentations will be on Internet phones, MP3 Players, getting music via the Internet and the new generation of Internet appliances.

Focus SIG

The focus SIG this month is **Professional MIDI and Audio**. Their program will be on software that “cleans” the audio from analog sources in preparation for digital storage on CD. There will be drawings for \$1,200 worth of software.

SIGs SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP MEETING SCHEDULE

Time	SIG	Dallas Corel (continued) WordPerfect for Windows The Master Genealogist (continued)	1:00	AppleCorps/ClarisWorks AppleCorps/Beginners e-CommerceSIG
8:00	Microsoft Networking AppleCorps Hardware Solutions Excel/Spreadsheets The Master Genealogist			
9:00	Communications Main Presentation – FREE Internet Training Sites AppleCorps DOS/Disk Operating Systems Introduction to the PC - File Types Alpha Five Dallas Corel Microsoft Word The Master Genealogist (continued)	11:00	Internet – Advanced AppleCorps Professional MIDI & Audio (continued) Introduction to the PC - Files (continued) Quicken Linux WordPerfect for Windows (continued)	meetings are listed by time for the February 17 meeting. Times may change, and members are advised to check the NTPCUG Web site for latest listings. Room locations will be posted at LHFC on the day of the meeting. The following SIGs are meeting at separate locations, and are not included in the schedule above. Check the SIG notes for time and location.
10:00	Internet - Beginning AppleCorps Professional MIDI & Audio Introduction to the PC - Files (continued) Web Content Committee	12:00	NTPCUG Business Meeting AppleCorps/FileMaker Investors Java Microsoft FrontPage	Meets on 2/10 Access Application Developers Issues Visual BASIC - Advanced Visual BASIC - Beginning
		12:30	Visitors Orientation	

A NEW YEAR, A NEW BOD And, A New PERSPECTIVE

This starts a new year, from the standpoint of a newly elected Board of Directors. And I ask myself – how did I end up as President of this great organization? The reality is that it has been hard to get people to run for the leadership of the Club and our membership has been declining. The new Board has three first-time members, and only one member that has been on the board more than a year. What that should tell all members is that if you would like to make a difference, or just have input into the future direction of the Club, this is a great time to be heard!

First-time members to the Board are **David Williams**, **Bob Russell**, and **Martin Hellar**. Returning members are **Gil Brand** and **Timothy**



Carmichael. Vincent Gaines is President-Elect. We will add pictures to the contact page on the Web site so you can figure out who we are! Catch us in the hall or in the Business Meeting to share your ideas.

I want to thank **Marsha Drebelbis** and **Michele Wood** for their work last year on the Board. We will still need their help this year!

Current membership stands at 550. People move, change job environments, discover they know it all, etc., and no longer attend. What we need to get better at is attracting new members that don't know we exist. New board member Bob Russell will be the new Publicity Chairman. Publicity will be a big factor in reaching the people who most need to become members of the club. Let him know the ideas you have and offer to help. Bob's e-mail is *bobruss@airmail.net* (live link on back page of this issue).

NTPCUG has always been a volunteer organization, so this year I want to encourage **more** people to help in ways big and small. What is the hot word in Washington now, communitivism? If we develop a stronger sense of community, I think it will naturally lead to members offering their time and expertise.

We have tons of ideas for things we would like to do to benefit the Club, but we probably have not hit upon the one idea that will have the big-



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gest benefit to the Club. YOU probably have it! Here are some that are currently planned or being done by members.

One of the Club's hardest workers, **Spike Smith**, started developing a member survey that the Board has been refining. Watch for it in an e-mail box near you very soon, possibly before the next meeting. This will ask for demographic information to help us better understand the type of members we currently have. There is a Comments Box, so be sure to give us your ideas for improving the Club. There is one particular need that we have before the survey is tabulated. The survey is being done through e-mail. We have not found an inexpensive software package that will read the e-mails and strip out just the responses to the questionnaire. **Tom Browning** will write a program to do this if needed, but it would be nice to find software that has already

PREZ SEZ...

solved this problem. If anyone can help with this, please contact me or contact Tom, tombrowning@prodigy.net (live link on back page of this issue). Yes, I know that a Web-based form would solve all the problems of collecting the data, but this first one will be an e-mail form.

Through the generosity of **Canon USA**, **Bob McNeil** currently prints some color copies of the newsletter, which I take to several local libraries, along with half-page flyers that people can take with them. It would be a big help if you would volunteer to take a single newsletter to a library near you, and keep them stocked with flyers that advertise the Club. We will have flyers that can be downloaded from the Web. (Want to help create them?) Most Dallas libraries now do basic Internet instruction in how to use the new Internet-based catalog. The librarians I have talked with appreciate being able

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to refer people to a group such as ours for more in-depth help and training.

Spike Smith developed a Web site for NTPCUG that is provided free on <http://community.dallasnews.com> (live link on back page of this issue). This was a significant effort on his part. Spike's site has a calendar showing both MSDev and main meetings for the rest of the year, something we have not been able to do on our own site! Spike found the opportunity to get this free site, brought it to the Board, and developed it himself. Thanks to Spike for taking the initiative to do this.

I'm sure you have noticed the coffee that magically appeared in the atrium in November. **Lee and Tom Lowerie** saw a need, brought in brewing equipment and served coffee to the group at their own expense. Snack Attack, a vending company where my wife works, now provides some sundry things for the coffee bar. We could certainly use some thank you's to Lee and Tom, and some volunteers to help with this effort. Clean up some spilled coffee, or make a fresh pot if you see it is needed. We are very fortunate to have a facility with a natural "café" area that lends itself to informal conversation and networking. Start building our "community" over a cup of coffee.

We hope to attract other user groups to merge with us, and increase our membership. I am talking with some groups now, but please think of groups that might fit well with NTPCUG and mention them to the Board.

Look at the Volunteer Section on the Web site for ideas of how you can help, but don't let that list limit the ideas you have. One of the open volunteer positions is SIG Coordinator. I have to admit that this was a big job when we were moving to LHFC and getting the SIG notes system going, but it is now quite manageable. Main duties are sending the SIG notes to the newsletter and coordinating the SIGs on meeting

PREZ SEZ...

day. When doing this job last year, I was still able to attend the SIG sessions I wanted, with only an occasional interruption. Just think, if there is a scheduling conflict between SIGs, you get to resolve it in a way that lets you go to both! Write to me at bill.parker@ntpcug.org (live link on back page of this issue) for more info or to ask questions.

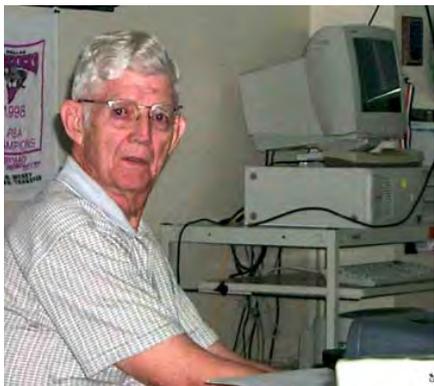
A continued plug for WebBoard. See the SIG notes under Internet for **Doug Gorrie's** explanation. WebBoard is a great way to build our community and get your questions answered between meetings.

There are so many good things going on that I could ramble for quite a while longer. However, in the past I never thought of Prez Sez as a column that would change my life. So I have probably lost some of you by now! The point is, YOU all are the ones that will change NTPCUG into a more vibrant organization. I think we are already seeing the seeds of change.

As this goes to press, I have learned that **Mary McWilliams Johnson**, the creator of our web site, has had a heart attack and quadruple bypass surgery. She is progressing on schedule and expects a full recovery.

True to form, one of her first thoughts was to call Marsha Drebelbis about a SIG presentation she was scheduled to give. I am sure Mary would appreciate the cheer of Get Well notes. Until about February 20 you can send cards to her at Lake Pointe Medical Center, 6800 Scenic Dr., Rowlett, TX 75088.

Bill Harper



The 2001 Winners!
From left, clockwise,
Martin Hellar, Vincent
Gaines, Bill Parker, David
Williams, Timothy
Carmichael, Bob Russell
and Gill Brand



High Speed Wireless Internet!

!!! Mark Your Calendar !!!

Future Newsletter Deadlines and Meeting Dates

Our main meeting [presentation(s) and most SIGs] will be at Lake Highlands Freshman Center usually on the **third Saturday** of each month. However, in **March** it will be on the **fourth Saturday**.

The **newsletter deadline** each month will be **fifteen days before** the main meeting.



High Speed Wireless Internet!

See the schedule below for a listing of those dates.

Newsletter Deadline	Meeting Date
March 9	March 24 (4th Sat.)

Off-Site SIGs

The North Texas Microsoft Developers SIGs (Beginning Visual Basic, Advanced Visual Basic, Access, and Application Developers Issues SIGs) will meet the second Saturday of each month at Microsoft Corporation's South Central District office at 5080 Spectrum Drive, Suite 115E in Dallas.

Up-to-date Information

Make it a habit to check our Web site at ntpcug.org for any last minute changes. Keep informed through our Web site and newsletter for all current developments.

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

A NEW PC NEWS FEATURE!!

Check the back page of this issue for a listing of all the Web Links mentioned this month in the newsletter. The links are "live" within Adobe Acrobat and will be Web sites or timely articles.

On Complexity

No. 85 in a Series

This is a tale of the frustrations of using *Windows Update*. For those of you not using the latest Windows Operating system, there is now an entry on the *Start* menu labeled *Windows Update*. If you click it, your computer goes to a Microsoft site on the Internet and gets the latest updates for your version of Windows. Sounds good, right? Don't do it!

I switched from Windows NT 4.0 to Windows 2000 (Win2K) last spring as I upgraded to a new computer. I had very few problems with Win2K until I applied Service Release 1 (SR-1). At that point, about half of my installed software stopped working. Over the next two months, the makers of the software gradually fixed their incompatibilities with SR-1.

In early December, I read about some Internet vulnerabilities in Win2K and decided to use the *Windows Update* feature to get the patches from Microsoft immediately. Big mistake!

After the update, Win2K told all my software that my E: drive formatted as NTFS2 had no more room. In fact, it had over 16 gigabytes of free space.



Jim Hoisington took this shot of Jeffery Rayfield of No Magic, Inc. at the February meeting of the Java SIG.



For the next two weeks, I worked off my C: drive formatted as FAT16 and copied files over to the E: drive when I finished with them. (The COPY command must not check the destination to make sure the file will fit before initiating the copy process.)

On December 31st, I ran *Windows Update* again and the drive space problem disappeared. Good news! But the update created other problems.

My guess is that Microsoft uses *Windows Update* to quickly transmit patches of reported problems. These patches are probably not tested with other Microsoft software products and definitely not tested with software products from other vendors. The service pack SR-1 was supposed to be tested with both sets of software products before its release and it shut down half of my installed software. I should have learned not to trust Microsoft from that experience.

The trade press says that Microsoft wants to shift from sending you a product on a CD to a subscription service which will constantly be updated over the Internet. Just say NO! I can imagine an environment where product features constantly work differently or not at all depending on the last update. If you don't like surprises, don't *Windows Update*!

Caveat dictus!

jim

A 'Think Piece' AND NO MICROSOFT v. DOJ THIS MONTH AS FOCUS SHIFTS TO PSYCHOLOGY INVOLVED IN RECENT MARKET & USER BEHAVIOR

DRAM PRICES CONTINUE FALLING

There was a rather obvious decline in demand for PC's over what should have been the prime selling season, i.e., Christmas. Almost all the PC makers/vendors reported less than expected sales of new units in spite of massive advertising blitzes before the holidays. Most PC-related tech stocks tanked and even the most stalwart among the "golden" tech companies (except IBM) reported reduced earnings and anticipated revenues for the coming quarter. What does it all mean?

For one thing, it's all a "house of cards" and when one of the supports is withdrawn, the entire structure is vulnerable to collapse. Look beneath the rapidly-expanding Web at the support structures underneath, i.e., the banks of servers, ISP's, backbone companies, etc., and imagine the market this appeared to be for servers, switches, routers and other WAN components during its wild growth over the past five years.

Then look at the corporate IT market and see a similar situation—apparent massive prospective growth if the trend held and companies didn't blow their IT budgets prepping for Y2K.

Finally, look at the home PC market. What caused this market to dwindle so rapidly at the end of 2000?

Psychology 101?

Actually, I'm tempted to go back to my graduate school days and learning theory for a partial explanation. For the better part of the 1990's leading into 2000, the mar-

ket (and users) were pretty much in a "constant reinforcement" learning mode. What that means, with lab rats for an example, each time the rat presses a bar in its cage, a food pellet is deposited, i.e., the rat is always reinforced for pressing the bar.

The opposite side of reinforcement is extinction, that is, nothing happens when the bar is pressed until the rat quits pressing the bar entirely. Behavior conditioned under "constant reinforcement" is the fastest behavior to extinguish. Most difficult behavior to extinguish is that conditioned under "variable reinforcement"—which is why the casino slot machines are so very profitable.

When people lose the expectation that whatever they do in the market will result in making lots of money (reinforcement), they tend to become much more conservative.

I DON'T THINK WE UNDERSTAND THE WEB

Let's take the Web "crater" first, since that's what's dragging down a lot of the formerly successful high-tech companies. Undoubtedly, the Web (generic and plural) is an unparalleled intellectual and social phenomenon. It has and is altering the structure and texture of social interaction in ways that may take decades or centuries to fully comprehend—and understand.

Personal and familial interactions have been subjected to both subtle and massive shifts as a result of the Web's availability for human interactions at a level unprecedented in the past. **Jim Hoisington**, past NTPCUG President and Membership Director,

is an example with a new H-P digital camera. He speaks glowingly of instantly transmitting family photos across the Web in a manner that assures adhesion between children and siblings and in a time frame that would have been unthinkable in the past.

Information is so widely available via a good search engine (I prefer Google) that my use of "former" reference material (books) has become minimal and primarily reserved to find data so obscure it isn't on the Web, or (more important) to verify data I found on a "suspect" Web or USENET site. This last is particularly true when browsing the medical information sites, or some PC technology sites for that matter.

ADVERTISING/MARKETING ALONE?

Yet, many entrepreneurs saw the Web almost solely as a source of unparalleled advertising and marketing opportunities. This narrow view quickly led to the dismay of many, many "Dot.COMS" that rushed into the Web frenzy over the past two years—only to discover the rules of good business/ marketing remained much the same, but the game had changed, and wasn't the gold-egg-laying goose many had assumed.

YES, THERE ARE SUCCESSFUL WEB SITES

Surprise! The most *numerous*, successful Web entrepreneurs are still those behind the "adult" porn sites. And this, I was informed by several long-time, home electronics dealers, is a repetition of the early VCR experience (and maybe even camcorders as well)—access to sexual material without having to drive over to the "sleazy" side of town to sit in a dark theater with sticky floors. It triggered sufficient early sales of the machines to assure success of the format as prices dropped from \$1,500 to more affordable levels. "Time-shifting" and inexpensive movie rentals came along somewhat later.

Less sensational (notorious?), but equally-successful e-commerce sites are those that are well thought-out, carefully tailored to a definite customer base and don't rely on a "shotgun" approach to marketing. Most are catalog sites that offer helpful purchase information, "real" 800 number staff and courteous sales staff—just as you would expect in a "real" bricks & mortar store. L.L.Bean, Lands' End, Victoria's Secret and PCZone are good examples, Amazon isn't as a result of its Byzantine menu systems.



Big QUESTION: IS THE WEB SAFE?

All the recent "hacker" exposes have provided some serious chuckles when one of the "mighty" gets stricken, but haven't done much to help e-commerce either when it's revealed that customer credit-card listings have been stolen from the site. I usually don't mind shopping on the Web—if the site has an 800 telephone number I can call to place the order and pay by credit card.

If I think they might be keeping a Web-accessible customer database, that gives me some second thoughts, though. A number of recent events have reinforced this view in addition to raising many privacy concerns that will provide a thorny challenge to local, state and federal authorities.

UNCERTAINTY, ENTROPY AT THE IT LEVEL

At the corporate IT level, uncertainty may rule. Also recall that there were huge amounts of money thrown at the Y2K problem, much of it spent on upgrading entire networks with 1000's of systems along the way.

IT managers are evaluating a number of possible factors in their decision to upgrade/expand their systems, not least of which is a tendency to pull away from high-cost "improvements" that offer little if any real productivity enhancement. I suspect this may be similar to the situation in many home PC decisions, but instead of thinking about one PC, look at it from the perspective of 1,000's of PC's, servers, etc.

Psychology is also a factor. If the public is uneasy over the country's economic prospects in coming months/years, they may hold off both major and minor purchases. This in turn will reduce sales and need for increased production.

This is already being seen at the "luxury" item level and may also be edging into the upper-scale housing market in some parts of the nation. Corporate managers display similar tendencies and tend to reduce any unnecessary spending as part of the cost-cutting

The VARIETY STORE

needed to keep the "bottom line" healthy for share holders/investors.

Is HOME PC MARKET SATURATED?

The Christmas crunch meant a lot of people didn't buy PC's this year. I think there are a number of factors in addition to economic uncertainty at play here, not least of which is possibility that most of the people who want PC's already have them. (I don't know about this factor, since I heard something similar in the late 1980's—before Windows 3.0 was introduced.)

What I do believe is that the upgrade market has dwindled and existing PC users don't see any real benefit from upgrading existing systems. May be similar to Detroit's blunders in the 1970's that nearly gave the auto market to the Japanese and German makers.

AMERICAN MAKER FOLLIES

Detroit had become accustomed to adding a few more inches and pieces of chrome to existing auto lines and convincing the public it was a good idea to purchase a new car every two - three years. That worked pretty well since most of the Detroit iron only lasted that long and maintenance became pretty expensive much beyond.

Along came cars that were dependable, had fewer defects on delivery and were designed with the idea of 10 years' service as "normal." I see more 10+ year-old cars on the road now being driven by original owners than I saw five year-old cars being driven by anybody in the 1970's and I think PC ownership may be following the same trend. That may mean big problems for PC makers down the road.

Example, I'm doing this piece on a 300 MHz Cyrix-x86 powered PC that is basically six years old (the case) updated over time. Has it reached the end of

its useful life? Absolutely not! Will I continue the same pattern of upgrading? No, it's an AT form factor case and the motherboard/ mainboard is definitely becoming obsolete for my purposes. (Good news for PC makers.)

I think I'm in the same situation that lots of other PC users are in. Unlike the switch from an 8088 system to a 80286 PC and later to 80386 PC and 80486 system, there's no real benefit to upgrading beyond my (almost) new 650 MHz Athlon system. If the basic PC architecture and operating system changes, that may dictate further upgrading, but not now.

There just isn't enough real improvement in performance to justify the price of the newer high-end PC's for my purposes. Since many media sources claim it's the existing user base that provides the market for the high-end system upgrades, that may be very bad news for PC makers.

CAN USERS BENEFIT FROM THE PC CHRISTMAS TANK?

I think we could (at least in the short term) benefit from the poor Christmas PC season with significantly lowered CPU prices, hard disk prices and memory prices. If you follow the adds for Best Buy, CompUSA and Fry's, you are bound to observe the rapidly falling prices for all the above. Intel has already announced "significant" CPU

price reductions and AMD will probably follow suit.

In the long run, though, this may hurt PC users since number of vendors producing PC components may dwindle to a precious few—and see a subsequent increase in prices due to less competition and a decrease in genuine innovation. One example is to be found in the hard disk arena. Maxtor purchased Quantum last year and this is reason users are seeing such low prices for Quantum drives via local vendors. That's a pity since I have felt that Quantum produced a superior product and I can only hope that Maxtor will use the Quantum technology to enhance their drives.

Reagan Andrews



Selected SIG Reports . . .

News and meeting notes of Special Interest Groups
 Further background information about a SIG is available from the SIG's
 Web page at www.ntpcug.org

ACCESS

We will be meeting at 12:00 Noon on Saturday, February 10, 2001, with the North Texas Microsoft Developers SIGs (of the North Texas PC User Group) at Microsoft's Addison facility at 5080 Spectrum Drive, Suite 115E, Dallas, TX 75248. We'll be meeting along with Beginning Visual Basic SIG, Advanced Visual Basic SIG, and the Application Developer Issues SIG (formerly ActiveX Application Developers). North Texas Microsoft Developer SIGs will meet on the second Saturday to avoid conflict with the date of NTPCUG's other SIG meetings. Meeting times are:

- 09:00 AM -- Beginning Visual Basic
- 10:00 AM -- Advanced Visual Basic
- 11:00 AM -- Application Developer Issues

12:00 Noon -- Microsoft Access Database

For more information, visit <http://www.ntmsdevsigs.homestead.com> (live link on back page of this issue). You'll find a schedule, be able to click-through to a zoomable map, get driving directions, and link to separate sites for each of the four SIGs. You must have script execution enabled in your browser.

February 10, 2001: SIG Leader **Larry Linson** will discuss "Creating Realistic-Looking Test Data -- Lots of It" using data gathered from various sources, re-arranged, and recombined. In describing how to process the data into usable tables, Larry will talk about the File System Object of the Windows Scripting Runtime. It performs many of the

FROM BILL PARKER, PRESIDENT

The following are changes/additions/needs for the SIG's. Please update SIG contact information through the SIG Leaders' administrative area on the Web.

The following SIGs are meeting at a location different from the main NTPCUG site. Check SIG notes for details: **Access**, **Visual Basic – Beginning**, **Visual Basic – Advanced**, and **Application Developers Issues**.

Volunteer Needs:

SIG Coordinator — not too tough a job, and you are part of the inner workings of the Club. See the newsletter and Volunteer Section of Web site for more details.

SIGs Looking for Assistance:

– **DOS/ Operating Systems**—Contact Reagan Andrews [(214) 828-0699 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

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DOS/Operating Systems

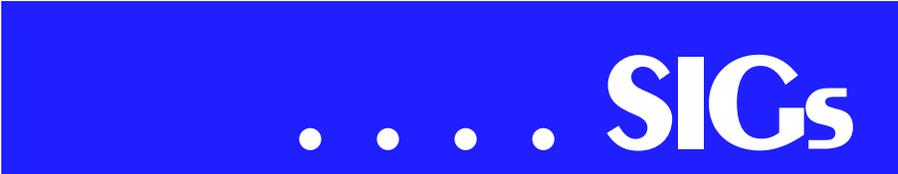
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e-Commerce

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 Michael Bodner



SIGs

same functions as classic BASIC File I/O, but it is object-based and some think it is easier to learn and use. We'll compare the two so you can draw your own conclusions. We will also see some examples of using the Split Function, new to Access 2000, which parses a delimited text list into the individual tokens and returns them in a variant array. As usual, pertinent notes and demo databases will be uploaded to the Application Developer Issues SIG's download page, <http://members.tripod.com/appdevisues/downloads.htm> (live link on back page of this issue).

In January, 2001: Brian Moore, Developer Tools Specialist from Microsoft's South Central District Office (and the local Microsoft developer guru replacement for **Thomas Lewis**), presented an overview of the Microsoft .NET Framework and services. Brian discussed the features and function of developing solutions in the .NET world. His presentation predominately used VB.NET and C# in the examples and demonstrations and will focus primarily on the new features of ASP.NET, Web Forms and Web Services. Brian's presentation covered both the hour allocated to Application Developer Issues SIG and the hour allocated to the Access SIG. Many thanks to Brian for an excellent explanation of a subject of great interest.

We had another nice assortment of goodies in January drawing: all attendees remaining at the end of the .NET presentation received updated CDs of the .NET Framework and Software Development Kit betas, and included in our drawing were T-shirts as well as two consumer software packages donated by our hosts, **Greg Nicholson** and **Brian Moore**, of Microsoft's local office.

We definitely will have a drawing again in February for valuable prizes, too, at the end of the Access meeting. Come for the meeting! Stay for the

drawing for valuable prizes! Just remember that value, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

Coming soon to the Access SIG:

Our congenial Microsoft host, Greg Nicholson, was originally scheduled in January to demonstrate and discuss Access 2000's "Data Access Pages (DAP)": This is the Access interface to databases for use on an Intranet or a special Web site where all the users will be using Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0 or later. Greg has been preparing demonstrations and examples for Microsoft customers in this area. He will demonstrate Data Access Pages working and give a tutorial on how to prepare them. To allow Brian Moore's two-hour .NET presentation, Greg agreed to defer his presentation on Data Access Pages to a later meeting date, to be announced.

Access Data Projects (ADP): ADPs use ADO to provide access via OLE DB or ADO Data Providers directly to Microsoft SQL Server. This eliminates the overhead of linking through Jet and translation by ODBC drivers. The drawbacks include no Access security on your application and no provision for local tables.

Simple Web Interface: What's the hot database topic these days? It's Web interfaces to databases. One of the easiest tools for creating simple Web sites, Microsoft Front Page, can interact with Access (and also some server databases) to provide a user-friendly and inexpensive "Web database interface." We will cover at least two approaches to using Front Page with Access. Why do I call it inexpensive? Street price is under \$100, and it comes free with some editions of Microsoft Office 2000.

ActiveX Data Objects (ADO): ADO is Microsoft's newest candidate for Access Method of the Future. We'll take a

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look at where it is (not quite as complete as DAO just yet), where it pays to use ADO, where it pays to stick with DAO instead, and demonstration of ADO in Access. Perhaps we can also discuss the different model of the successor Access Method, currently in beta test along with various other .NET components, ADO+.

This space is reserved for *your* presentation. Won't you volunteer to talk to us about something interesting that

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Visual Basic — Beginning

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SIGs

you've done or some interesting Access subject that you've learned?

Larry Linson

Alpha Five

Alpha Five's powerful field rules allow you to define table lookups in a popup window, fixed list lookups in a dropdown list, cascading lookups, etc., just by specifying the lookup parameters at the table level for the field. Another powerful capability is that the lookup can fill in as many fields as needed, based on that one lookup. For example, in an order entry application the user enters a Zip code and the lookup rule automatically fills in the city and state from the Zip code lookup table. If there is no match on the Zip code, a lookup table automatically pops up with Zip code, city and state in a browse so the user can select the correct entry. All this is done by setting a few parameters in the field rules.

Alpha also provides a 'find by key' capability that lets the user quickly jump between records based on the current primary index. For example, in a phone book application, set the index to last name and do a find on 'par' to jump to last names starting with that string.

However, there are always times when you want to take complete control and customize the way things work. This month **Martin Cole** will show some of the techniques he is using in his application for hearing aid dealers. These are customized ways to find records quickly and easily. These techniques become an integral part of his application.

Come see some of the great standard features of Alpha Five, and the way they can be customized to do virtually anything you want.

Note! - Alpha Software has launched their new Web site and has released Alpha Five version 4.5. Version 4.5 is an

interim release until version 5 is released in the 2nd quarter. The nice thing is that the full price of version will be applied to the subsequent purchase of version 5 when it is released. The new Web site provides better navigation to the pages that will be of interest to you. As always, Alpha's message board is outstanding, and a wonderful place to get answers to your Alpha questions.

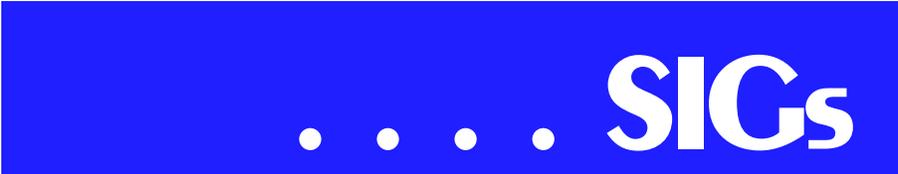
Bill Parker

Application Developers Issues

SIG Background

The Application Developer Issues SIG focuses on providing information to developers that assists them in (1) developing applications that use Microsoft tools and technologies, (2) engineering applications through various design methodologies, and (3) staying abreast of legal developments and industry trends that affect developers. We are one of the four NTPCUG SIGs that make up the *North Texas Microsoft Developer SIGs* (live link on back page of this issue), along with the *Beginning Visual Basic SIG* (live link on back page of this issue), *Advanced Visual Basic SIG* (live link on back page of this issue), and the *Microsoft Access SIG* (live link on back page of this issue), which meet at on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the South Central District offices of Microsoft Corporation (5080 Spectrum Drive, Suite 115E, Addison). Our SIG meets at 11:00 AM.

Downloads of past presentations, free-ware apps and sample code are available at members.tripod.com/appdevisues/downloads (live link on back page of this issue). For more information on our SIG in general, including meeting updates, details on past meetings and directions, please visit our Web site, members.tripod.com/appdevisues (live link on back page of this issue)



SIGs

February Meeting

Have you ever wondered whether it is best to use Visual Basic or Access for development of database applications? The leaders of the Advanced Visual Basic and Access SIGs, **Stephen Johnson** and **Larry Linson**, will present a panel discussion on "Visual Basic vs. Access - Which One Should I Use for Database Application Development?" Stephen and Larry will each discuss what they consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of using Visual Basic and Access to develop database applications as well as those instances where it is preferable to use VB, Access, or both, as the case may be. They will also discuss which database development tool they personally prefer to use. Following their presentations, there will be ample time for questions and answers. Both of these Microsoft database development tools are popular and widely used. Come and find out which one is best for you.

January Meeting

Brian Moore, Developer Tools Specialist from Microsoft's South Central District Office (and the local Microsoft developer guru replacement for **Thomas Lewis**) presented an overview of the "Microsoft.NET Framework and Services." Brian discussed the conceptual framework of .NET, particularly the Common Runtime Language (CRL), the use of XML and the Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP). He also demonstrated Visual Basic.NET and how it fits in Microsoft's .NET strategy. Following his presentation, which spanned both the Application Developer Issues and the Microsoft Access SIGs, Brian answered several questions from concerned developers regarding the direction of Visual Basic in the .NET world. All attendees also received the Visual Studio.NET beta. To view more information on some of the changes that Visual Basic.NET will make from Visual Basic 6.0, go to msdn.microsoft.com/library/default.asp?URL=/li-

brary/techart/vb6tovbnetnet.htm (live link on back page of this issue).

December Meeting

SIG Co-Leaders **Larry Linson** and **Daniel Ogden** led a discussion of general issues of current interest to developers. Some of the topics discussed were trends in the Microsoft developer's platforms, Access and VB development issues, and Microsoft's plans for Visio. Our Microsoft host, **Greg Nicholson**, also assisted in leading the discussion on several of these issues. Once again, we are grateful to Microsoft, and particularly to Greg, for continuing to enthusiastically support the North Texas Microsoft Developer SIGs and our meeting at their South Central District facilities.

November Meeting

As a follow up to our September meeting's focus on "Using Windows 2000 as an Application Development Platform," **Gil Brand**, SIG Leader of the Microsoft Networking SIG, spoke to us on "Setting Up a Small Developer LAN for Business or Home Use." He gave an overview of the evolution of a small network from sharing files and printers using a crossover cable to installation of a network hub. Gil also discussed integrating Internet connection sharing on a LAN and implementing Internet security using both software and hardware router firewalls. Gil's presentation also generated some lively discussion as several attendees discussed their experiences with networking and Internet security. Thanks to Gil for his taking the time to share his experiences with us.

Daniel Ogden

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications SIG will be talking about the AOL Instant Messenger in our February meeting. AOL's AIM (AOL Instant Messenger) service

boasts 80 million users and is the largest instant messenger service available. AOL also owns the ICQ messenger service which also has millions of users. AIM does not directly link directly with ICQ but Compuserve's Instant Messenger does. Behind the scenes Microsoft and AT&T have sought to link their service with AIM to increase their own usability and connectivity. The AIM service is open to any individual who wants to sign up. The issues with the instant messenger services is advertising and the impact of millions of additional users accessing AOL's servers.

We will discuss configuring AIM 4.3 for personal preferences and security. Joining AIM gives a user access to Netscape's WebMail and My Netscape. AIM can be used to play games interactively. A user can share family pictures or sound files. AIM includes Instant Stock Buddy, Stock Ticker Enhancements and E-mail alerts. Stock Alerts make it easy to track individual stocks or market conditions. There are Buddy Alerts to alerts to let you know which buddies are online and available for chat. The E-mail alerts notify the user of incoming mail without having to visit multiple sites. Using AIM 4.3 a user can have a conversation with family and friends through the computer. And, you can access your personal portal from any computer that has at least AIM 4.2, Netscape 4.xx or Netscape 6.

Birl Smith

DALLAS COREL

Streamlined Web Graphics and Content

The following presentation information had to be cancelled at the last minute before *The North Texas PC News* deadline. **Mary McWilliams Johnson** experienced significant cardiac difficulties in mid-January and will be unable to attend the February Meeting. She will be at the Lake Pointe Medical Center at 6800 Scenic Drive in Rowlett, TX, 75088, until February 25, 2001.

Award-winning Web designer **Mary McWilliams Johnson** will present "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. Since she has designed and maintained the NTPCUG Web site at <http://www.ntpcug.org> (live link on back page of this issue) for the past couple years, you can readily see samples of her work. Also check out her 'Wordsmith Workshop' <http://www.superconnect.com/wordsmith> (live link on back page of this issue) and 'Mary's Tips on Designing Web Sites' <http://www.superconnect.com/marystips> (live link on back page of this issue). 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 will teach us at the February Dallas Corel SIG to use Corel's Web-ready features, and those of other graphic programs, to develop our own inviting sites. Don't miss it.

Access Dallas Corel's full Web site and archives (live link on back page of this issue)

January in Review

Marsha Drebels lead a group discussion about CorelPHOTO-PAINT and computer graphics in general, with SIG attendees bringing insightful solutions to questions. Then we demonstrated several procedures on-screen.

SIGs

IMPORTANT COREL ADDRESSES & PHONE NUMBERS

**Corel Corporation
1600 Carling Avenue,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1Z 8R7**

- ❖ 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

CorelDRAW 10

Since 10's enclosed manual and online tutorials are skimpy, **Susan Biggs** recommends the paperback *CorelDRAW! 10: The Official Guide (Osborne)* (live

link on back page of this issue) by Steve Bain, available at www.amazon.com (live link on back page of this issue) for \$39.99 or at Borders Books for \$49.99 (includes a CD-ROM). Read **Rick Altman's** review of 10 at <http://www.altman.com/articles/1200.htm> (live link on back page of this issue).

Designer.com

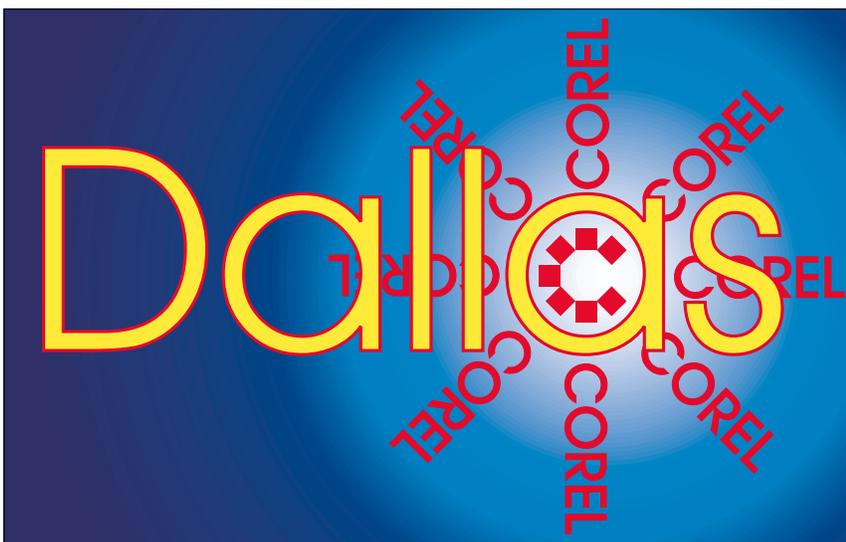
For Corel graphics Tips and Tricks, visit http://www.designer.com/forums/learning/draw_tips.htm (live link on back page of this issue).

Recent Programs at Dallas Corel SIG

- ❖ Feb/00 – Web Site Design/Development Tips
- ❖ Mar/00 - Paper for Inkjet Printer Output
- ❖ Apr/00 – Presentations 9
- ❖ May/00 - Member Showcase
- ❖ Jun/00 - Virtual Corel Training on CD
- ❖ Jul/00 - Customization and Utilities for Corel
- ❖ Aug/00 - Tips and Tricks in Corel 9
- ❖ Sep/00 - KnockOut 1.5 and PHOTO-PAINT
- ❖ Oct/00 - QuickTimeVR and PHOTO-PAINT
- ❖ Nov/00 - Motion Graphics in Corel
- ❖ Dec/00 - DRAW 10 Introduction
- ❖ Jan/01 - PHOTO-PAINT Tips
Marsha Drebels

DOS / Disk OPERATING SYSTEMS

The February DOS/Operating Systems Meeting may be a bit different. Most of the meetings in the past have been focused on providing a safe operating



SIG of North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

... SIGs

environment and protecting against data loss. Destroying data—not saving data—will be main topic for the February DOS/OS session at LHHS Freshman Center.

Topic comes from charitable urge.

After years of almost constant PC upgrading at home and work, I'm awash in old PC's, parts of PC's and other "valuable stuff I might need some day." There are standard PC cases, tower cases, motherboards, still usable keyboards and mice, CPU's, DRAM DIP's and SIPP's, miscellaneous power supplies, cables, drives, old CD-ROM's, etc., filling every inch of my available storage space. I'm drowning in this sea of PC stuff.

I'd thought about taking a table at 3rd Saturday and selling it, but I really wouldn't know how to price it, or have time away from the NTPCUG meeting to do it. Answer (I thought) was Bob Langford's **Texas Center for the Physically Impaired** who take this kind of material, assemble systems and get them to disabled people who really need PC's.

A small obstacle

Remembered a small obstacle in simply selling or just giving all this away—most of the drives probably had data I

wouldn't care to distribute for public view. Raised the question of how to properly destroy and secure the data on these drives. (This doesn't mean I don't trust Bob Langford's group, but does mean I wouldn't want to take the risk of inadvertent disclosure.)

Simply deleting the data via DOS or Windows 9x *wouldn't* work, since it's far too easy to recover via third-party software. The easy way is definitely "out" where real data confidentially is concerned.

Reformatting each drive (partition) provides a little more security and for most users would probably be sufficient for non-critical data. What you are really doing here is making the effort to retrieve the data more trouble than the data itself is worth to the individual. Just remember that a lot of hidden/temporary files may still be left behind even after reformatting.

Don't stop there

My approach would be to do the above, reformat each drive/partition, then run FDISK from a bootable floppy and then re-partition and reformat the drive(s) involved. That would definitely stop most folks except really determined technicians after very critical and/or valuable data.

If the drives contain any critical/highly-valuable data, I'll follow the above with one of the overwrite programs available on the Web such as *DiskWipe* or *BCWipe* to do a final cleanup on the drives. (Do a Google search for Web sites—I'm too lazy to type in the URL's.)

An alternative approach would be to do a new, *low-level* reformat of the hard drive itself which is (relatively) easily accomplished with most SCSI and IDE hard disks. There are several low-level reformatting program utilities available from the Web or from disk vendors themselves to accomplish this. However, it shares the same disadvantage as use of the utilities above in addition to being an operation never intended for the casual user.

Time is a major problem

There's a small problem with these approaches, given the size of contemporary hard disks. On a "small," 500 MB drive, this cleaning with one of the utilities above can take as much as two hours. Imagine how long a 5 G disk might take to clean and secure. Then think about some of the 40 G - 60 G drives in circulation now. This has delayed my getting this stuff to Langford for several weeks.

Note that this isn't the "final solution." Data (with the right equipment and enough technical expertise and effort) can still be retrieved from the supposedly "clean" drive. Real, "highly-secured data" would dictate disassembling the drive, removing the platters and physically destroying them, i.e., melting them down. This would be my choice if I were a drug lord, a bookie, the NSA or AEC, running from the FBI or IRS, or Bill Clinton.

It should be a fun meeting

Reagan Andrews

E-COMMERCE

In February 2001, we will continue our exploration of both enterprise and entrepreneurial e-commerce Web sites and the particular components generally common to each. We will focus



not just on the technical aspects, but also the business decisions that drive the technical design and implementation of each site.

As usual, we will meet at 1:00 p.m. in the Freshman Center at Lake Highlands High School. Check the NTPCUG Web site for the exact address, driving directions and maps. Be sure to check the room assignments when you sign in at the front door.

Note: Please mark your calendars for the month of March! We will be meeting in March on the 4th Saturday of the month, not the 3rd as usual. The March meeting will be on March 24th, not the 17th!

Check out past and current topics and discussions on our Web site at: www.imageworks.net/ecommerce (live link on back page of this issue). See you at the meeting.

Alan Lummus

INTERNET - BEGINNING AND ADVANCED

In February, we have a formal presentation planned by co-leader **Pat Hykkonen**. The topic is "Wireless Internet Connectivity," and will include a brief history and introduction to the basic technology of the field, as well as definitions of some of the access methods presently available. Pat will also discuss cost versus speed versus coverage and how this equation will change with time.

The final part of the session will cover expected future developments and we'll take questions. All told, we anticipate this session taking more than a single hour, so we will begin at 10:00 AM in the Beginning Internet hour and proceed into the Advanced Internet timeframe as much as necessary.



Those of you that know Pat are aware that he REALLY knows his stuff. So if you have been curious about your wireless alternatives, Pat can bring you up to speed.

Separately, I want to remind that the User Group's information sharing tool, **WebBoard**, is up and operational. Questions about Wireless Internet will be asked and answered in WebBoard in the days and weeks after our February 17th meeting. So if you miss Pat's presentation, or have additional questions afterward, WebBoard will be the place to enter your questions and opinions.

Instructions for accessing and using WebBoard were in the January newsletter, but an e-mail version is available as well. Just send an e-mail to webboardinfo@ntpcug.org (live link on back page of this issue), and a text version of instructions will be returned to you automatically by our listserver. In your e-mail, subject and content are ignored. Your return e-mail address is extracted from the message headers automatically.

As usual, if anyone has any problems or questions concerning WebBoard, just send an e-mail to *Postmaster* (live link on back page of this issue) and we will get you and answer.

See you at 10:00 AM on February 17th !!

Doug Gorrie, Tom O'Keefe & Pat Hykkonen

INTRODUCTION TO THE PC

What did we do in January?

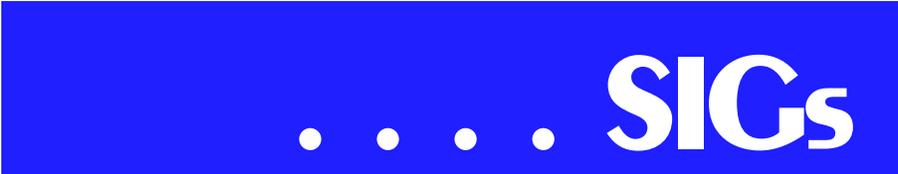
We were prepared for everything one needed to know about scanners. Well, except for that one little "stinker" wherein somebody years ago, no doubt out of a desire to amuse himself, had assigned the official title on scanner imaging standards as 'T W A I N.' Naturally, when one sees these characters T W A I N staring in their face, one is sure to ask, "Just what do those letters really stand for?" Aside from this unwelcome question, everything else went forward with timed precision. Including our projected images displayed from the Data Projections, Inc. projector. We covered over ninety per cent of what I had prepared and we were even able to leave the classroom before the FrontPage class arrived.

Now we know that scanners can be handheld, drum, pen, and flatbed styled. An excellent utility model recently had sold at Fry's for only \$29.00. Moving from this great bargain we can expand into even higher quality functions, usefulness, and ultimately to the levels of the Fujifilm FineScan 5000 (which costs more than the digits in its name).

We now realize that two \$50 scanners may be sold for different prices. One for \$49.99 with just usable software. The other for \$69.95 with an excellent, easy-to-read and understandable software program. We would still have to go to external sources though to find excellent software with already printed user's manuals to go along with the low-priced models.

We now know enough to save trips to the copier shop. Also, not to "over scan" so that our acquaintances do not disown us for sending huge bloated files to them via e-mail. Yep! File compression may save friendships.

Introduction to the PC Class		
<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Breakdown</i>
<i>9:00 A.M.</i>	<i>Introduction</i>	<i>introductions, prerequisites, needs, uses</i>
<i>10:00 A.M.</i>	<i>Concepts</i>	<i>typical uses, examples, formats</i>
<i>11:00 A.M.</i>	<i>Applications</i>	<i>products, set-ups, applications, techniques</i>



Did we mention that you need to optimize your computer for viewing on the monitor and differently for printing? And that the color on the Mac is not the same as the color on the PC?

To their disbelief, we did tell the class that TWAIN stood for - Title Without An Interesting Name. To placate any lack of real excitement while revealing this mystery, a three-page scanner glossary handout was presented to all.

What will we do for February 17th?

What to do about files

This subject may not sound as exciting as taking the "red eye" out of Aunt Agnes' image and making her appear 22 years younger. But, what if we show you how to manage those JPEG image files? File maintenance does not require as much esoteric knowledge with Windows operating systems as a short time back when we primarily used the "command line" system, however, we have many more types of data files today than ever imagined.

9:00 A.M.

- ❖ What is a file?
The file's name - long vs. the short of it.
Do we really need to know?
- ❖ How do we manipulate files?
Copy
save
move
sort
organize.
- ❖ How to file?
Can best answered by how to retrieve a file
Its category
its name
purpose
how long you will remember
how long you need to keep it.

10:00 A.M.

- ❖ Can a directory (folder) be too large or too small?
OK then can there be too many directories?
- ❖ Directory organization.
Where did you put it?
What is its name?
Which are better ways to name your files?
- ❖ When new applications installation makes a data folder for you should you keep it?
erase it?
rename it?
- ❖ When should we archive?
What is an archive?
- ❖ Folder Options.
Show all or hide some?
What file types automatically launch a program?
How to correct this problem when the wrong program is launched.

11:00 A.M.

- ❖ How does the PC use files?
And the Internet, too?
- ❖ An '.AVI' file is for listening and so is a '.WAV' file.
- ❖ What makes database files do different?
What is a database?
- ❖ What has happened to user's manuals?
Are there substitutes?
[All of this and much more in Room A211 in February at the Intro to the PC SIG.]

Enjoy!

*Spike Smith, SIG Leader
Pamela Carmichael,
Assistant Leader*

INVESTORS

Our next meeting will be on February 17, 2001. We meet at 12 noon in the Orchestra Room, but please check on the day of the meeting for possible room changes.

It is tax time. Here is the Web address of the Internal Revenue Service and some publication numbers that may apply to you if you are an investor.

<http://www.irs.gov> (live link on back page of this issue)

Publication 550
Investment Income and Expenses

Publication 551
Basis of Assets

Publication 552
Recordkeeping for Individuals

Other interesting, possibly helpful tax sites

<http://www.taxplanet.com> (live link on back page of this issue)
This site has a New Tax Law section.

<http://www.taxesites.com/> (live link on back page of this issue)
A directory of tax and accounting sites.

<http://www.fairmark.com> (live link on back page of this issue)
Tax Forms and Publications - you can get them from the IRS Web site, but find them easier with Fairmark's Fast Form Finder. Also a place to find tax rates, standard deductions and other figures.

Something to note - On Monday, January 29th, conversion to using decimals (instead of using fractions) occurred on the NYSE and the AMEX exchanges. The NASDAQ is scheduled to convert to using decimals on April 9, 2001.

Please join us and bring your investing ideas. We would like to hear from all level of investors.

Kathryn (Kathy) Kirby

JAVA

We had a very good meeting in January. **Jeffery Rayfield** of **No Magic Inc.** gave a marketing presentation on their MagicDraw UML modeling tool. He explained the origins of the tool and how it compared to the other similar tools in the market. He then gave a demonstration of the tool and explained how you might use it for design purposes. He had a number of demo CDs available for attendees. I have several extra. If someone would like one, send me an e-mail and I will bring them to a future meeting. If you or your company are considering using UML for design I believe this would be an excellent alternative and certainly is affordable enough for anyone wishing to learn.



The February meeting is not completely settled. I will likely be going over the desired goals of our Web site redesign project. If you wish to be part of this task and have ideas in mind you would like to try, or are looking for Java projects you can undertake for learning purposes, please come and volunteer.

Don Benish

MICROSOFT NETWORKING

In February, we will continue our discussions on security/hacker tools. If you have some favorite products for analyzing the security of your home or corporate network, join us at the MS Networking SIG.

SIGs

Gil Brand

MICROSOFT WORD

Upcoming Topics:

February -- Save, Close and Open Documents; Organize Your Files

March -- Copying and Moving Methods

February

Besides looking at the obvious ways to save, close and open documents, we will identify some not-so-obvious ways. Have you ever wondered about all the buttons and features on the Save and Open dialog boxes? Do all your documents exist in one l-o-n-g list? We will organize your files by deciding on a *system* and creating folders for that system. You will be able to locate those documents from the information stored in the Document Properties.

March

Springtime is moving time, and you will learn many shortcuts for copying and moving text. Have you ever wanted to copy text without the formatting of its original location? Do not throw away that document scrap; we want to use it again! Excel spreadsheet information often needs to be included in Word documents. Do you understand the difference between linking and embedding?

Although these topics may seem somewhat basic to you, it is guaranteed you will gain new insight and timesaving shortcuts, as well as learn about features you did not even know existed.

Stick with us and by the end of the year, we will have worked our way through navigation techniques, printing, page formatting, character formatting, paragraph formatting, tabs, tables,

headers and footers, page numbering, section breaks and even into styles!

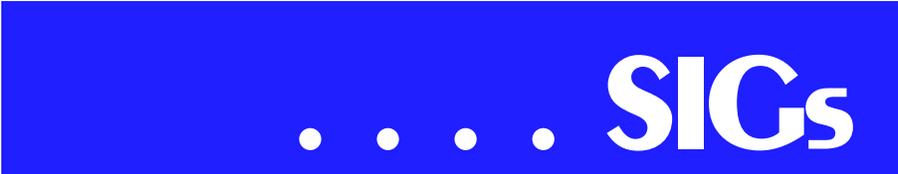
Diane Bentley

PROFESSIONAL MIDI AND AUDIO

In February, we will be continuing on the subject of cleaning up the sound of older analog recordings in preparation for recording onto CD or other digital format. We will continue with a review of some additional capabilities of the Cool Edit Pro software and then move on to look at a software package designed from the ground up specifically for audio restoration, Diamond Cut MILLENNIUM.

Special Announcement

Tracer Technologies, distributors of Diamond Cut audio restoration software products, has graciously agreed to make available to our SIG one copy each of their most powerful audio restoration software, Diamond Cut MILLENNIUM and Diamond Cut LIVE. These two copies will be awarded as door prizes at our SIG meeting in February! LIVE retails at \$995, and provides real-time signal processing for use in TV and radio production and broadcasting, law-enforcement, and live, real-time forensic investigations. The MILLENNIUM version retails for \$199 and provides virtually all the capabilities of the LIVE version, but without the real-time processing capabilities. Check out either or both versions on the Web site of Tracer Technologies at www.tracertek.com (live link on back page of this issue), where you can also download demo versions. Then, you must be in attendance at the February SIG Meeting, with your current NTPCUG membership card in hand, for your chance to win! And...whether or not you win a free copy, everyone in attendance will be a winner as we announce a special purchase offer we have arranged just for members of NTPCUG. Tell your friends who are in-



SIGs

terested in audio restoration and bring them along. You, and they, will really be glad you did!

In March, we are looking forward to **Jim & Gary Carter** continuing their explorations of MIDI in general and CakeWalk Pro Audio, v.9.0 in particular.

Note: The March meeting will take place on the 4th Saturday of March rather than the 3rd. So mark you calendars for our meeting on March 24th rather than March 17th!

As usual, we will meet in the Choir Room of the Freshman Center of Lake Highlands High School from 10 am to 12 noon. Check the NTPCUG Web site for map and driving instructions.

J. Alan Lummus

Visual Basic - Advanced

This month we will discuss the possibility of a "Group Project." At the last meeting I asked the group to think of some kind of project they would like to do (if any). If you have any thoughts, being them to the meeting and suggest the idea. I will take all of the suggestions and decide what we will do.

The only "Rule" that I will impose is that the project will be written exclusively with "Class Modules" (and Forms). The only "General Modules" allowed, will be a module containing "Sub Main" (if used), Global Constants, Global Objects (e.g. Public m_pref as CPreferences), and any required "Callback" functions required by API's.

The object of this project will be the use of "User defined Objects," via Class Modules. My intent is to get you familiar with creating and using objects (and your own object Libraries). I intend to show you how to properly define and use objects. Some with obvious uses (CTextBox, CPrefer-

ences/CRegistry, etc.) and some not so obvious (possibly a CDatabase object if necessary).

In addition, I would like anyone who has installed Visual Studio.Net (.Net), and has worked with it to discuss their thoughts. I've worked with it some. I converted an existing application (with several Class modules (in a Library), ADO to multiple AS/400 databases, and printing) to see how the 'VB6 Conversion Wizard' performs. The results were less than I expected or hoped. I'll discuss my results; especially Printing which was *not converted*. I have also been reading some of the discussion groups and their thoughts on .Net. I will also discuss this subject.

Next Month, I will announce what the project will be (if any), what the Guidelines will be, and how we will communicate with each other about the project. I will also have a session on Class Modules: "How to create them, use them, and why you would want to" for those of you who were not here when I presented it last year, for anyone who wants to sit through it again, and/or for anyone who would like to add to my discussion with your own experience.

See you at the meeting. Don't forget to bring your Project ideas and your .Net experiences.

Stephen Johnson

Visual Basic - BEGINNING

The February meeting of the Beginning Visual Basic SIG will be held at the facilities of Microsoft located at 5080 Spectrum Drive in Addison, Texas. For further information on the facilities and a map to get to these facilities, please visit the www.ntmsdevsigs.homestead.com Web site (live link on back page of this issue).

The topic for this month's meeting will be "For Beginners Only" and will in-

clude a description of what Visual Basic is, a brief history of Visual Basic, a description of some resources available to beginners, and a description of the Integrated Development Environment (IDE) used to develop applications in Visual Basic.

Last month, the SIG Project entitled "The Millennium Credit Union" was discussed with comments on the entries (both good and bad) programming techniques. The First Prize (a copy of Visual Studio.Net when released) went to **Bill Carpenter**. Second Prize (a copy of Visual Studio 6 and support software) went to **Martin Polen**. Third Prize was the same as Second Prize and went to **Steve Rapp**. The balance of the entrants received their choice of game/support software and the ever-popular Microsoft T-Shirts were awarded to all entrants.

I want to personally thank Microsoft (particularly **Greg Nicholson**) for their support in providing the prizes for the winners. It is hoped that future SIG Projects will attract more entries and give our members more opportunities to expand their Visual Basic experience.

As I have mentioned at the last several meetings, this meeting (February 2001) will be my last meeting as SIG Leader of the Beginning Visual Basic SIG. My successor, **Randy Whitaker**, will be leading the SIG starting next month. I want to thank all of you that have helped me run this SIG over the past 8 years. There really are too many to mention without fear of leaving off someone that really saved my bacon! I am forced to mention my unsung hero, **Connie Andrews**, who did a great job of getting my SIG Notes into the newsletter even when I was late in submitting them. Thanks, Connie.

Bring your questions on Beginning Visual Basic to our meeting beginning at 9:00 AM on Saturday, February 10, 2001 in Suite 115E at the Microsoft facilities on 5080 Spectrum Drive in Addison, Texas. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Jim Carter

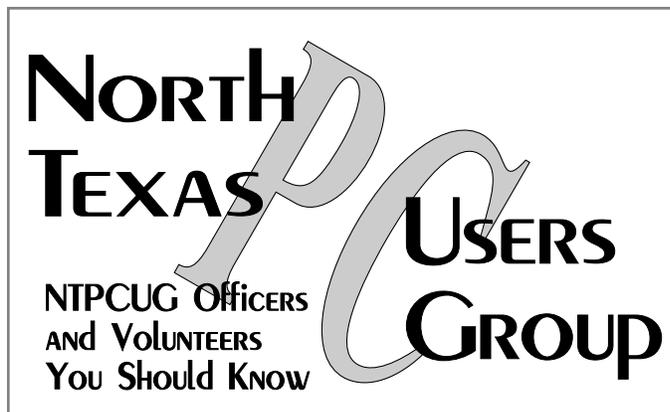
North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

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

Phone (214) 327-6455 for recorded information about the North Texas PC Users Group and scheduled meeting date times and locations. Please leave a message if you would like specific information about the Group. Or, visit our Web Page at: <http://www.ntpcug.org>

The North Texas PC Users Group, Inc., is a non-profit, independent group, not associated with any corporation. Membership is open to owners and others interested in exchanging ideas, information, hardware, predictions, and other items related to personal and compatible computers. To join the Group, complete the application blank found on the NTPCUG Web site, <http://www.ntpcug.org>, and send with \$30 membership dues to the Membership Director — address shown below. Subscription to the newsletter is included with each membership.

The Group meets once each month, usually on the third Saturday. See inside front cover for date, time and place of the next North Texas PC Users Group meeting.



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Web Links in This Issue

Web Links in This Issue

The following Web links are those placed by SIG Leaders in their SIG Notes for this month.

When looking at the newsletter in Adobe's Acrobat Reader, the cursor will change from the little "hand" to a small box with a "W" inside. A left-button mouse click should open your browser and connect to the Internet automatically.

Links in this Issue

Main Presentation

programs@ntpcug.org

Prez Sez

bobruss@airmail.net

tombrowning@prodigy.net

<http://community.dallasnews.com>

bill.parker@ntpcug.org

SIG Notes

Access

<http://www.ntmsdevsigs.homestead.com>

<http://members.tripod.com/appdevissues/downloads.htm>

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[Developer Issues website](#)

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members.tripod.com/appdevissues/downloads

members.tripod.com/appdevissues

msdn.microsoft.com/library/default.asp?URL=/library/techart/vb6tovbdotnet.htm

Dallas Corel

<http://www.ntpcug.org>

<http://www.superconnect.com/wordsmith>

<http://www.superconnect.com/marystips>

Web site and archives

[CorelDRAW! 10: The Official Guide \(Osborne\)](#)

www.amazon.com

<http://www.altman.com/articles/1200.htm>

http://www.designer.com/focus/learning/draw_tips.htm

e-Commerce

www.imageworks.net/ecommerce

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<http://www.taxplanet.com>

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