

README.DOC

\$2.00

A monthly newsletter of the
Orange Coast IBM PC User Group

This month's General Meeting features:

WordPerfect Corporation

previews

WordPerfect 5.0

and

Steve Gibson introduces

SpinRite™

Inside: Columnist Steve Gibson

Library Features

Virus Update

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Articles may be submitted via modem to the OCIPUG BBS or on paper or an IBM format diskette (5-1/4" 360kB format preferred). We will accept them in any of several formats, although we strongly prefer "pure ASCII" files. Other acceptable formats include DCA, Microsoft Word, Multimate, WordPerfect and Wordstar. Submissions on paper should be double-spaced and typed. All items submitted for publication are subject to editing.

DEADLINE:

Articles and advertising must be received by the twentieth (20th) of the month prior to publication.

ADVERTISING:

All advertisements must be camera ready and prepaid; rates and deadlines for commercial advertisements are available on request. Classified ads are free to members, but cannot be used for business purposes. Deadline for classified advertisements is the same as for articles.

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README.DOC Newsletter

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PAST EDITOR TOM SUTRO 1985-1987

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Members are allowed to place an advertisement for personal items in the *README.DOC* newsletter at no cost. There will be a limit to the amount of advertising placed in the newsletter; all submissions will be placed on a first come, first served basis.

Commercial advertisements, from members and others, is also welcomed. For information concerning advertising rates and requirements, contact:

Kathy S. Halbardier (714) 838-5206 or write to Advertising Manager, OCIPUG, P. O. Box 6100-211, Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the ORANGE COAST IBM PC USER GROUP is to provide a forum for members to share information and experiences that will help other members obtain maximum benefit and enjoyment from the use of their IBM PC and compatible personal computers.

March General Meeting
Saturday, March 26, 1988 9 A.M. to Noon
Orange Coast College, Science Building Lecture Hall

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

Tim Smith

This month's general meeting will feature two popular topics of interest to all our members. WordPerfect Corporation will unveil it's newest release of WordPerfect 5.0. This program was initially shown briefly at Fall Comdex 87 in Las Vegas last November. All who saw the demonstrations were quite impressed with some of the new features. The question was asked of WordPerfect Corporation; "Is it wordprocessing or is it desktop publishing?"

Glen Grosbeck is the local Marketing Manager for WordPerfect. He will be presenting one of the first local looks at this new product. I'm sure that he will put it through it's paces and show us all the new features. With our large overhead projection system, I'm sure that it will be quite a show.

Also on the program for the March general meeting will be our regular irregular guest speaker Steve Gibson. Steve will introduce us to his newest creation in the software market; SpinRite. Last year Steve told us briefly about this project he had in the works. "Letting you everything you ever wanted to know about hard disks, but were never told", is Steve's motto.

With these two excellent speakers planned for the meeting, I'm sure that you will want to be there early to get your seat. Also, remember all the other benefits that come with being an OCIPUG member. See you at the meeting.

MARCH PRIZE DRAWINGS

by Steven Dela

This month's prizes already scheduled to be given away are really quite something. We have a class seat in each of two classes offered through Orange Coast College Community Services. The first class is one Desktop Publishing, and the other is on Computer Repair.

MicroSoft Corporation has donated a MicroSoft Windows program and MicroSoft's Excel Spreadsheet program. What a combination! Thanks to the people at MicroSoft for their generosity.

With WordPerfect coming as our guest speaker on WordPerfect 5.0, maybe they will have either the program ready for release or a certificate for the program when it is released.

I'm sure by the time the general meeting arrives, there will be additions to the list. Plan on attending; everyone has an equal chance.

FEBRUARY RAFFLE PRIZES

John Goodman

The raffle goes on. Once again we ended our general meeting with a raffle that kept folks in their seats and sometimes on the edges of their seats.

Thanks to several generous donors we were able to give away 9 fine prizes. Dan Likins' new raffle program did the same good job it had last month, picking winners from among the list of all our paid-up members (and making sure no one won more than a single prize this month).

The winners (their prize and the prize's donor) were: Gene Carter (Calendar from Ashton-Tate), Mark Burrell (Graph Writer Demo from Lotus), Roger Mendenhall (his choice of any program from SilberSoft), Carol Wheelock (a Peter Norton T-shirt), Jean Middleton (AM-Tax 87 from AM Tax), Arthur Boughey (Turbo Tax from ChipSoft), Dave Wyatt (Norton Guides from Peter Norton) and Theodore Gilmore (Norton Utilities from Peter Norton).

Congratulations to all our winners, and a great big thank you to all our donors.

PUBLISHER'S NOTEBOOK*Steven Dela*

Well, two issues down so far. It seems that we are learning a little more each time. Sorry that some of you did not receive your README.DOC before the February general meeting. Now that we understand how the Post Office treats bulk rate mail, we can plan ahead for such occurrences.

We are making every effort to improve the newsletter a little each month. Last month, it was a little short on style. We have recently purchased a LaserMaster printer board for club use. That will help with the printing and continue with the good looking fonts that we have been using. I will writing an article detailing our experiences about the product in next month's newsletter.

I would like to remind all those who

send us reports or articles. The deadline for the newsletter is the 30th of each month. This will help us get that month's issue out early, if everyone cooperates in meeting this deadline. Our goal is to get each month's issue in our members hands by the 15th of the month.

WANTED!

We are still in need of several people who can fill key positions on the newsletter staff. Our Editors are looking for people that can assist in helping review articles for publication, rewrite and correct articles, and help prepare the articles for printing. If you are experienced or have a desire to learn, please give one of our Editors a call or see them at the General Meeting.

We have several key positions that must be filled, in order to help OCIPUG continue to grow. There is a need for several people with marketing or advertising background, to set up and run an advertising department. You will be responsible for contacting businesses and organizations to offer ad space in the newsletter. It will require heavy correspondence and telephone contacts. The reward will be the knowledge that you have a direct hand in helping OCIPUG grow.

We also have openings for several people to start the VIP (Vendor/Product Information Program) that was outlined in the February issue. If you have experience with public relations and would like to serve our membership better, contact me for further details.

Since OCIPUG is a volunteer organization, we need volunteers like you. If you have any questions, contact anyone on the newsletter staff or one of the club officers and we'll be happy to provide you with more details.

BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

We at Orange Coast IBM PC User Group, wish to thank the following company for their sponsorship. This will enable us to better serve our members by providing the necessary support through donations such as this.

Garden of Eden Computers

Westminster, California

If you or your business would like more information on this program, please give one of the following people a call:

Steven Dela	775-8373
Rick Halbardier	838-5206

From the Editors Desk*Rick K. Halbardier*

The Editor is on vacation this month, but will return next month.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are preparing to bid a "bon voyage" to our past President BUD HUGHES and his wonderful wife DARLENE as they prepare to head for their retirement home in Arizona. Trying to prepare ourselves for the vacancy they would leave, we were very sorry to accept the resignation of FRANCINE SHEPARD from her position on the Board of Directors. Francine has been so busy with her vocation that she had been struggling to fulfill her position on the Board. As she looked ahead to the coming months she realized that she was going to be even busier at work so she felt it would be better to take the additional strain off by resigning her position. We are sad to see her leave the board but look forward to her attending the meetings. To replace her on the Board I have selected, and the Board has unanimously ratified the appointment, DAVE LORENZINI to fill the remainder of her unexpired two year term. This was done in compliance with the By-Laws. Dave has served the organization from almost the very beginning and has always been a great asset with his knowledge and dedication. We look forward to serving with him again.

Speaking of the By-Laws, we had intended to vote at the last meeting on the amendment which would add two more

directors to the Board. Although they are urgently needed, I did not feel that we should proceed with the election, since the Post Office had delayed delivery of so many of the newsletters which contained notice of the election. Even though the "letter of the law" had been met, I did not feel the "spirit" had. We will be voting on the amendment at the March General meeting. I did take a "straw poll" of the members at the February General meeting. If the amendment is approved, would anyone object to the President appointing the two new directors, with the ratification of the Board of Directors, which is in compliance with the current By-Laws. Or should we wait and go through a special election to fill the proposed vacancies. The vote was unanimous to go ahead and appoint the new directors so they can get to work right away. We really need them!! The current Directors are greatly overloaded and if they don't get some help they might "burn out" as a few did last year.

Your Directors really do work hard serving you. Sometimes they work until early in the morning on some of the projects and I'm sure that most of you will never know all the many hours they have put in. So, the next time you feel that something isn't going the way you'd like it

to, why not offer to pitch in and help. None of us receive any monetary compensation for our efforts, just the feeling sometimes that we may have helped someone a little bit.

If any of you would like to be considered for the position of the two appointed Directors please send me a little note or leave me a message on the Bulletin Board telling me a little about yourself and how you'd like to help. I must tell you that it does take more time than just attending the General Meeting and the Board Meeting each month. We need some people willing to work on various projects who are not just looking for an "office" but want to help this great organization get even better.

In case you haven't heard, the membership has increased to the point that our badge numbers went over the one thousand mark sometime this month. Three years ago the club started with about 10 people. I hope that you are all attending at least one S.I.G. every month and getting as much from the meetings as I am. Remember, it's more fun when you participate.

Happy Computing!!!!

STAN H. SABIN, OCIPUG
PRESIDENT

GENERAL MEETING CALENDAR

General Meetings are held on the last Saturday of the month except in the months of May, November and December. In those months the meetings are held one week earlier because of the holiday falling near the end of each of those months. These special meeting dates are marked in the list below with an asterisk.

OCIPUG General Meeting dates for 1988

**January 30th
April 30th
July 30th
October 29th**

**February 27th
May 21st(*)
August 27th
November 19th(*)**

**March 26th
June 25th
September 24th
December 17th(*)**

REPORT ON FEBRUARY 1988 OCIPUG GENERAL MEETING

Linda Leydekkers

In his opening remarks President Stan Sabin announced that our Past President Bud Hughes was leaving the area, and had resigned from the Board of Directors. Stan thanked Bud and his charming wife Darlene for their great services to the Club and wished them well in their new location. He also announced that as Francine Shepard had resigned for business reasons, we were now in effect four directors short. He had accordingly appointed Dave Lorenzini to fill the rest of Francine's term, an action permitted under our by-laws. We will vote at the March meeting on a change in the by-laws to increase the number of Directors by two. Stan requested that, should this action be approved, because of the urgent need to bring the number of directors up to strength, the Board be allowed to proceed to fill these positions. The General Meeting agreed to this request by a show of hands.

The Science Hall was filled almost to capacity for this meeting. Stan stated that membership numbers have now passed the 1000 mark, with over 800 active members to date. CONGRATULATIONS OCIPUG! Consider coming early to assure yourself a good seat. The period before the General Meeting is a nice time for people to chat and exchange information on an individual group basis, much better than trying to do so during the meeting when it can be very distracting to the people around you. As the club grows there are sacrifices, one of which is the close camaraderie that a small group provides. We still have this in the SIGS, but not everyone is able to make all of the SIGS, or needs to do so. This is the advantage of allowing a little social time before the General Meeting. Don't be shy, smile and make new friends too. There are also vendors on the patio area and lobby that are worth a look-see. Literature (members bring publications they wish to give away), brochures, and flyers are free for the taking on a first-come first-serve basis. Now to get on with the rest of the meeting.

The topic may have been partly responsible for the large crowd. Tax is a subject that is on all our minds this time of year no matter how hard we try to forget it. Our speaker, Walter Drew, CPA and OCIPUG treasurer, said the first income tax was levied in 1913. It amounted to about one or two percent. It was the great-uncle of a myth of Congress known as flat tax, or perhaps as "simplification".

In any case, income tax, as put forth by both federal and state governments for tax year 1987 now has the whole country in a snit (and rightly so). Permit a little bias here as I make a living writing tax and have a few grumbles of my own about what has been laid in our laps. Walter displayed a recent Wall Street Journal article demonstrating the fact that even IRS does not know how to prepare tax returns correctly. His point was that you should not feel bad if you do not know either. With all the recent changes and lack of guidance, tax law is so unclear that even professional preparers differ on how the laws should be applied. Walter did a marvellous job, with as little bias as possible and avoiding the subject of the tax laws themselves, getting right into the software designed to help us. With the use of the overhead projector outlining the topics of his talk, and the wonderful projection system that shows the computer screen on the wall for all of us to see, he went over the attributes and draw-backs of several public domain programs and of TurboTax, a modestly priced commercial program.

Who should plan to prepare their own tax return on a micro computer? Any computer literate person who currently prepares their own tax return by hand. Will using a computer speed up the preparation of the return? Not actually, unless you are already familiar with the program, it will take longer. If you undertake the challenge of preparing your own return, you should consider using one of the following tax programs:

PCTAX87 is a terrible program. Don't bother down loading it if you haven't already. Walter took three hours to do a return that he could do by hand in fifteen minutes! Besides being totally frustrating and aggravating it also had a bug in the math. He believes that if this program does not drive you to a professional preparer, nothing will.

AM-TAX is available through the BBS or through Bonnie, the club librarian, but the shareware version is actually a teaser. You cannot do a tax return on it. The full version must be ordered from the distributor, price \$45. It is a good program, but comparable in price to TurboTax, which Walter (and I), think is a better program.

SHARE-TX 1040 is the only shareware program worth getting. It will prepare both the standard forms and many of the more complex forms and schedules. Not as many as TurboTax, but not everyone needs general business credit, estimated

payments, lump sum distributions, investment interest to name a few items that this program lacks. TURBOTAX is a great value for the money. There is also a California module available for a modest additional price, that automatically transfers data from the federal return data file. Rockbottom, Egghead or the mail order houses charge about \$50-55 for the federal and \$30-35 for California (which will also work independently). TurboTax really shines when it comes to depreciation in comparison to all the others. Investment interest is a particularly important form to have this year, more people will need it: TurboTax is one of the few that will handle it. It also handles lump sum distributions that many people have received from their retirement plans.

If you have rental property, or limited partnership interests you are in for a proper treat this year. Congress has really done it for us this time. These forms are so complex, well, we just hope that wisdom will prevail (!) and they will be revised next year, but now we have to live with them. TurboTax does offer a great deal of help with these forms as well as the new form 8598 for home mortgage interest. Walter recommended that IRS buy a copy of this program just for a good example of how a clear and concise user manual can be written.

A number of pin feed 1040 forms (and 540 forms with the California version) are provided with the TurboTax software. If you have a dot matrix printer (even a 9 pin) TurboTax can generate a complete IRS acceptable 1040 (without the use of the preprinted forms). Everyone was impressed with the appearance of these forms when Walter showed the transparency he prepared.

TurboTax is very user orientated with many useful functions such as a calculator, what-if, and tax planning for 1988. Walter's demonstration, assisted by a few people in the audience who also have the California module and use both, was very well done. He provided a most informative and interesting session which was enjoyed by all.

As to what happened next at the General Meeting, guess what folks...no not Peter Norton himself, but Kraig Lane and J. J. Schoch of his tech support department were able to make it to the meeting. Admittedly they had Tim Smith pacing the lobby for a while, but this time they made it. Moreover they were kind enough to bring a few nice prizes for the raffle, and some brochures on the products of Peter

Norton Computing, Inc. which will be available at the next meeting. Kraig went over the attributes of The Norton Utilities and The Norton Utilities Advanced Edition with a demonstration of how data recovery and disk management works. The Norton Commander, a hard disk organizer called "Tops in its class" by InfoWorld, was discussed and J.J. gave us a tour of The Norton Guides developed to make a programmer's life easier. There are five On-Line Databases available to go with The Norton Guides depending on what language you work with. They are OS/2 API, Assembly, Basic, C, and Pascal. These various programs are priced separately as follows

- ADVANCED EDITION \$150.00
- The Norton UTILITIES
version 4.0 \$100.00
- The Norton COMMANDER \$75.00
- The Norton EDITOR \$75.00
- The Norton GUIDES (Assembly, Basic, C, Pascal) \$50.00 each
- The Norton GUIDES (OS/2 API) \$100.00
- Instant access program \$50.00

For phone-in orders call 1-800-451-0303 Ext 40 ; if you want to talk to the Tech Support team call (213) 453-2361.

As the meeting had by now well exceeded its time allocation President Stan Sabin closed it immediately after the usual raffle which followed J.J.'s presentation .



The OCIPUG Board of Directord wishes to thank the

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Arthur Boughey

Despite our many different attitudes, needs and skills we in OCIPUG have at least one thing in common. We have joined this user's group in order to explore one aspect or another of IBM & compatibles microcomputing. We all have needs that we believe can be met by some computer product, be it hardware, software or whatever, if only we could define and recognize that product.

User groups all share such an objective, but this characteristic is not unique to them. Manufacturers of computer products, again be it hardware, software or whatever, would dearly love to have a reliable crystal ball in which they could glimpse both our short and longterm needs as computer users. In the absence of such magic, they guess as best as they can, then wrap their product in sufficient hype to make it what they consider a market attraction.

At this point we can become very confused. Happily for us, the *scope* of some software products is readily discernible. Walter Drew made an admirable presentation last month of *TurboTax*, which has the specific limited objective of helping us to write our tax. Our BBS carries *Procomm Plus*, the latest version of the *communications* program which many of in OCIPUG use. In both these instances we do not need to undergo any soul-searching. We either need a tax program, or a communications program, or we do not. If we do, we can turn to README.DOC for assessments of what is currently available.

It seems appropriate that we include at this point the review of some further Tax software by Linda Leydekkers. Linda is herself a tax-preparer, and she has extended the coverage of tax programs provided by Walter Drew last month.

With other types of software programs the issues are not so clear cut, decisions are less easily made. Hardware products may present even more of a problem. Steve Gibson in his article in this issue continues to explain, for those of us who would like to know, the theory underlying some of the hardware choices which are already open or about to be opened to us. At our March General Meeting he will

present to us *SpinRite*, a utility program which his theoretical understanding of computers has permitted him to design. In the same way such knowledge enabled Peter Norton to produce the Norton Utilities and Guides about which we heard last month.

Selection of this kind of utility program that relates to hardware developments is thus not too difficult for us either. Likewise we may be able to perceive the advantage to ourselves of a hard disk, a modem or an EGA monitor and board. When it comes to how much memory we should install, and in what form in relation to our hard-ware, we again however encounter difficulty. Our memory choices are becoming more difficult instead of easier. This is why OCIPUG has paid considerable attention to this topic. By way of clarification we have reproduced in this issue the table showing the several kinds of memory presented to us by Roger Andelin last month, redrawn by John Goodman. A production error omitted it from the February README.DOC.

There may be some limit as to what we have to understand right now in respect of memory and other such technical concepts. A recent article in *Computer Updates*, a Boston Computer Society Publication stated that for most small and medium-sized businesses home and educational users, it is not abundantly clear that OS/2 will offer significant advantages in the near future.

It is not the same with applications programs. We cannot afford to ignore them for several years. Unfortunately, what was once a firm separation into word-processing, spreadsheet, data-base, graphics and utility programs is now rapidly disappearing. New spreadsheet programs are provided with considerable data-base functions, and vice-versa. Graphics capabilities and utilities are added to word-processors, and so it goes on. This is not even to consider *integrated programs* such as *Symphony*, *Ability* or *Works*.

State of the Art

How do we thread our way through this maze of competing programs? How can we decide what enhancements or new products we really need to install? Many of us have the uneasy feeling that some of the enhancements now almost routinely added to applications programs are mere

selling points. Our only recourse is to recognize the real value of the current *state of the art*. We have to decide for ourselves whether we should stay with this when it becomes yesterday's state of the art, or move up to the new today's.

The need for such decisions is pinpointed by the presentation at our next meeting of *WordPerfect 5.0*, and the announcement from Ashton Tate regarding *dBASE IV* in the news note printed here. What advantage will you gain with version 5.0? Why not stay with your old dBase III Plus, dBASE III, or dBASE II yet, save the \$795, and have a holiday for two in Hawaii instead?

In OCIPUG we try to provide you with the exposure to such updates that may help you to answer these questions. Our program committee strives to obtain presentations by the manufacturers of these new programs. We publish reviews. In this column you hear from time to time of some program which has been found satisfactory in personal use.

Word-processing Programs

Few of us at any level can avoid using word-processing programs. Some of the options provided with such programs by way of upgrades may be still little more than toys. For example none as yet offer a companion thesaurus with the scope and depth of the average book volume. For those of you who wish to write well and need an on-line facility which will supply something more like a book caliber thesaurus, try *Webster's Electronic Thesaurus* put out by *Proximity Technology* 3511 N.E. 22nd Avenue Fort Lauderdale FA 33308.

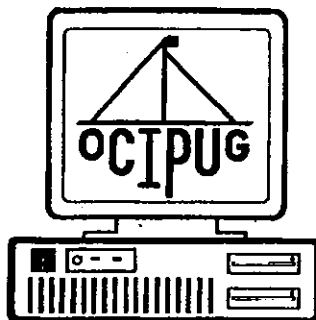
The advantage of the W.E.T. program over the thesaurus provided by a front-running word-processing program such as *Word Perfect 4.2* is readily determined. Take a simple word like *dog*. You will get no synonym for *dog* from *Word Perfect 4.2*. W.E.T. supplies no less than 26 synonyms at the primary level, and a veritable host of other choices at other search levels if you persevere. W.E.T. informs you, as indeed does *Word Perfect* if it happens to cover a word, of the particular participle of speech involved. W.E.T. provides a definition of the word in each of its usages. This assists the search process. It is possible to follow *dog* in the sense of a noun, as in *I bought a dog*, or a verb, as in *dog his footsteps*, even *dog* as in the sense of some of the tax programs

mentioned earlier, or in the expression *Hot Dog!* It remains to be seen whether the thesaurus provided with Word Perfect version 5.0 comes any closer to this kind of performance.

It is possible that W.E.T. may be incompatible with some of your other T.S.R. programs. I found that I could not run it with Smartkey installed as a resident program. You may have to make allowances for this kind of interaction.

W.E.T. can be set up for recall within your choice of word-processing programs, or used as a stand alone program. I used it here in this article for final editing with the Norton Editor. It is just as simple to access as any on-line thesaurus furnished with a word-processing program. Moreover, if you are unsure of the precise spelling of a word, you can have a stab at it. W.E.T. will then hazard a guess as to the correct word that you are feeling for. Indeed the new on-line power that this gives to any user who must strive to hit upon words with the greatest impact is incredible. In many instances you can simply scroll through synonyms until you locate *le mot juste* as the French would say. There are 40,000 different entry points, accessing some 470,000 responses taken directly from *Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus*.

Should you be working with a style program such as the *RightWriter* mentioned last month, it is possible to discover with the use of W.E.T. the synonyms which best conform to the intent of your meaning and the writing style at which you aim. Should you have youngsters around your home, you might like to let them use W.E.T. to try to improve both their term paper grades and their vocabulary. For whatever reason, examine W.E.T., you might then never again reach for your well-worn thesaurus volume. You may for the moment have met at least one of your outstanding computer needs by the use of a state of the art program.



Linda Leydekkers

Now that our Club has become so much larger, on a given date little more than a quarter of our membership is present at a General Meeting. Under these circumstances, how do we preserve the family feeling that has characterized our User Group since its early beginnings? Many members believe that one way to do so is to provide a full report of the General Meeting in README.DOC.

One of us who holds this belief very fervidly is Linda Leydekkers. Did you ever wonder how those General Meeting reports come to appear so regularly in README.DOC, and why they are so accurate? If you look around the audience at any of our Saturday meetings, you will see Linda sitting there quietly. If you look further, you will see that she has a tape recorder on her lap.

Linda's task only begins with this taping of the proceedings. She has not only to work on the transcript, but must verify many items in it. Speakers names, affiliations, technical terms, telephone numbers and many other details have to be carefully checked. Moreover, with the new README.DOC there is an interval of only a few days to do all this before the dead-line for the copy. While our README.DOC pages are not exactly engraved in stone, we could nevertheless suffer much inconvenience and some irritation if Linda did a sloppy job. But such is not her nature.

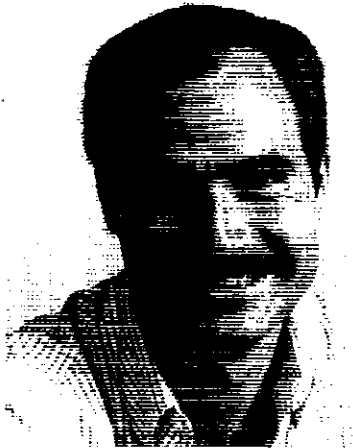
It is about six years since Linda first got into microcomputing. That places her in the veteran class. She joined OCIPUG

in July 1987, switching from a local Apple user group. By profession she is a Real Estate Broker and a Tax Preparer. You will find her review of some further Tax programs in this current issue. She is interested in Creative Writing and Portrait Painting. Although she regards herself now almost as a native Californian, having been here since she was six years old, she was actually born in Miami, Arizona.

Linda lives in Fountain Valley. Her husband Bill plays computer chess - he says the program cheats! Her two teenage children are interested in computers, not yet quite enough I suspect to Linda's liking. Many of us seem to experience a little discouragement in transmitting our enthusiasm for these powerful little machines down to younger generations. *Maybe we should try to establish a Teenage SIG.*

The tax season being upon us, and tax law this year being what it is, Linda is pretty busy right now. When things ease a little and she emerges from the turmoil of the tax trenches, she would like to help in the formation of a Writer's SIG group. More power to you Linda, we look forward to your return from the fray to provide us again with your reliable reports and your personal homilies as to how the better to use our club.

A.B.



Unravelling the Expanded/Extended RAM Nightmare

Steve Gibson

< Part 2 of 2 >

EXTENDED MEMORY

You'll remember that last month we saw how the page swapping approach used to create *EXPANDED* memory overcomes the 8088 microprocessor's 1 megabyte memory addressing limitation. Gone forever are the days when a running application can assume that it owns all of the system's resources. This now includes EMS *EXPANDED* memory.

It is clear why software must be deliberately written (or rewritten) to be able to use EMS memory at all. There's nothing natural about it, since it requires the program's logic to be moderately accepting of the limited 16k page size and overall 64k which is available at any one time. Still, it is a system which works. It has allowed our lowly 8088 micros to access many more megabytes of memory than their own non-paged architectures allow, and has done so within the narrow confines of the original IBM PC architecture.

The 8088 uses *EXPANDED* memory by "swapping" small pieces of the EMS card's memory into a 64K byte region which resides below the 1 megabyte limit. Let's continue our exploration of PC memory expansion and extension.

If the world had stayed with the 8088

microprocessor forever, the expanded memory page swapping mechanism would have been our only recourse for adding memory to our personal machines. However as we know, the 8088 has been largely superseded by the 80286 and 80386 microprocessors. These micros made possible an entirely new expansion approach known as **EXTENDED MEMORY**.

(History will record with a shrug of annoyance the unfortunate similarity between the naming of these two approaches. Only after careful and repeated use is it possible to separate and remember which is which.)

It would have been nice if the term **EXTENDED** had never been created, since the simpler term *MORE MEMORY* is exactly correct and far easier to remember. As the 80286 and 80386 micros do not share the 8088's 1 megabyte addressing limitation, the 80286 is able to address directly 16 megabytes of physical memory, while the 80386 directly addresses up to 4 gigabytes (4 thousand megabytes!). These two chips are so powerful, none of expanded memory's page swapping tricks are needed.

The original IBM PC memory layout allocated the first 640K bytes for program RAM, and the remaining 384K (totalling 1 megabyte) for memory mapped peripherals and the system's BIOS ROM. Therefore extended memory begins immediately after this first megabyte and "extends" upward for up to 15 megabytes.

Remember that 8088 can NEVER make use of extended memory since extended memory is always located above the 8088's 1 megabyte upper limit.

So now that we've got a 286 or 386 with all this extended memory up there, what can we do with it? The answer to this question has been dramatically complicated with the advent of OS/2 and the incredibly flexible 80386, so let's take it one step at a time.

MS/PC-DOS application programs cannot make use of extended memory in the same casual way as they use the low first megabyte of memory. In this sense extended memory is a bit like expanded memory since they both require the application to be deliberately modified for its use. Additionally, since the 80286 and 80386 must be running in their "protected mode" in order to gain access to any extended memory located above 1 megabyte, this inherently conflicts with the "real mode" compatibility of DOS and

its application programs.

Consequently, the most common use for extended memory within the MS/PC-DOS environment is for use as disk caching, print buffering, and other specific and restricted uses.

However this all changes within OS/2. Since OS/2 is an operating system which is designed to run in the 286's and 386's protected mode, all system memory, both low and high, is directly and completely available to any and all OS/2 applications, just as the extension of 512K to 640K was once available to DOS applications. This is why the simpler term "more memory" would have been so much better than "extended" memory.

For 286's and 386's running OS/2, extended memory is simply more "linear address space" for the operating system and applications to use.

Lastly, the memory management power built into the 80386 processor further complicates the scene with its support of multiple "virtual 8086" tasks from within protected mode. In effect this provides existing non-protected mode, real mode DOS applications with some of the best of both worlds. In a "behind the scenes" sort of way, the 386 is able to "remap" the system's actual physical memory from above the 1 megabyte point into the lower address space below 1 megabyte where our current standard DOS applications can gain access to it.

This is exactly what my favorite memory managing software, 386-to-the-Max, does for Steve's Dream Machine. It utilizes the 386's built-in memory manager to move 225K bytes of high extended memory down into the "twilight zone" above the 640K byte point for use by any resident TSR programs and disk caching software. It emulates the EMS Cards's *EXPANDED* memory hardware to allow DOS applications which utilize EMS to have as much EMS memory as they could want, and it can even instantaneously and electronically "bank swap out" the lower 640K byte system memory to support DOS real-mode multitasking with systems like *Windows/386*, *DesqView*, and *TaskView*.

Although none of this is as straightforward, simple, and clean as it could be, we're certainly getting a lot of bang for our bucks!

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TAX PROGRAMS

Linda Leydekkers

This seems an appropriate time to describe a little research I have done when shopping for tax software. There are several programs out there in the commercial world geared for the individual as well as the professional tax preparer. I have relied for several years on a program called *TaxPlanner* by Proforma Software out of Costa Mesa (714) 641-3846. It has been a very nice tool in checking the accuracy of the federal returns and doing tax planning for the following year. It is priced well enough for the individual to use. Upgrades are available each year at a reduced price.

When I checked with retail stores such as Egghead and Rockbottom, most sang the praises of *TurboTax*. Here are a few others that were also mentioned. J.K. Lasser's *Your Income Tax* (\$69.95 reduced to \$58.99) comes with the text

by the same name and is geared for the individual non-professional. It has no California version. *Timeworks* at \$69.95 produces Sylvia Porter's tax program. According to my source it isn't a very big seller and is really more of a Financial Planner for budget management, as the name implies. There is no California version of this one either.

If you really want to put the bucks into a very high grade tax program, then **HowardSoft's Tax Preparer** is recommended. It retails for \$295 (\$209.95 discounted) and for an additional \$125 (\$99.95 discounted) you can get the *California State Supplement*. In my opinion you would do better to hire a preparer if you have just one return. If you do taxes for a living, HowardSoft has built a very good reputation and also has a ProSeries for individuals, partnerships, and corporations at \$495 each. A *Real Estate Analyzer* to weigh the pros and cons of duplexes, triplexes and

multi-unit complexes is available.

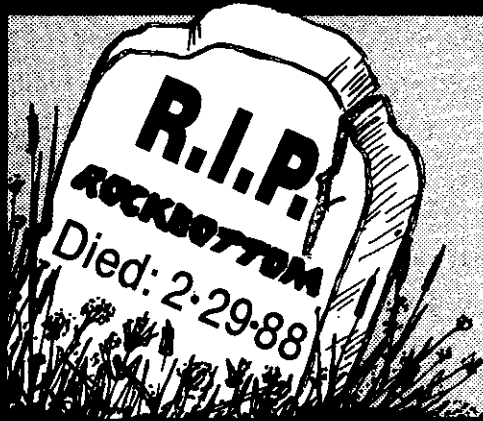
Also on the high end is a program developed by Independent Preparers Services, Inc. called *Tax Answer*. This sells in the neighborhood of \$300. It seems to have a slight bug in the California portion. *Taxworks* from Hollingworth Business Services in Pacific Palisades has an individual package for \$115, Self-employed for \$215, Professional for \$600. If you want to use these programs with a laser printer an additional \$300 will buy you that privilege.

Quite honestly, I don't know if any of these high end programs with their high end prices really are any better than *TurboTax* by ChipSoft of San Diego. In any case, good luck with the 1040 and especially the 540. We are all going to need a lot of luck this year and for the future too if all indicators are correct.

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LIBRARY NOTES

Bonnie Ulanovsky

I recall a computer club meeting a couple years ago where a Rep from a certain prestigious printer manufacturer was demonstrating a state-of-the-art printer, someone in the audience asked "What is the best way to address envelopes"? The Rep's candid reply was "With a typewriter." Since her company didn't manufacture typewriters, we had to credit on honesty! Her remark may have been true at the time, but ingenuity prevailed and now we have *ENVLJ* for the LASER JET, and *GRAB* for those of us with lesser printers. *PC-MAGAZINE* reviewed these two programs in the March 15th issue (Volume 7, Number 5) on page 54. I have described them below, along with a few others. They do, indeed, fulfill a need in computerdom. Just as *PC-MAGAZINE*, itself, has fulfilled our needs as we alternately fly and flounder through the information age.

I have placed both *GRAB* and *ENVLJ* on the same disk. *GRAB* is a memory resident program that will allow the user to point at the address in a letter and print the envelope. Not only does it print the address for whom the letter is intended, it will also print the return address, which it knows once its config file has been set up. A menu permits the selection of default envelope size, and position of address and return address. Hot keys, which are user selectable, speed up the process. Author is *Paul Mayer* of *ZPay Payroll System*.

ENVLJ is a program that prints envelopes on the LaserJet, LaserJet+, and LaserJet Series II or any printer which can emulate the HP command set. It does not require a font cartridge; it uses the internal landscape 10-pitch font. You do not require any special envelope trays or paper feed apparatus. *ENVLJ* uses whatever fonts you specify or *ENVLJ* will use the printer's default landscape font. This is usually "Courier", at 10 characters per inch and 6 lines per inch. Certain cartridges (i.e., "F") may change the default font. The LJ+ and LJII allow the user to load other fonts into the printer's memory and assign them identifying numbers. You can instruct the printer to use one of the soft fonts by defining the

appropriate setup strings in the data file and selecting "Options/Font" from the menu. If you haven't defined any envelopes in *ENVLJ.DAT*, the program defaults to a standard legal size envelope on a LaserJet. The default selection for the envelope can be changed. Appendix A in the user manual on the disk provides information for defining other envelope types.

CLASSICAL CLASSIFIER, AN OUTLINE PROCESSOR can be useful whenever you are organizing ideas or concepts into a formal structure. It simplifies the development of outlines and other structured notes. It shares many features with word processors, but both genres have their distinctive capabilities. While word processors are tools for the entry and development of complete formatted texts, outline processors are tools for evolving a well-organized and comprehensive structure for a document. **CLASSICAL CLASSIFYER** can be used as an idea manager (scratch pad or design tool), as an activity planner appointment scheduler, or todo lists, as a document planner (table of contents, or thought organizer), a classification tool (cataloging and inventory), or as a program development tool for structured languages such as Pascal or "C", or utilize it for system documentation. **CLASSIFIER** lends itself uniquely to classification tasks, with its built-in decimal and classical labelling notation that automatically adjusts to changes in the structure. It also is an ideal source-code development tool for structured languages, including the popular Pascal and "C" programming languages, since the labels can be turned off completely. Other features:

Detailed information in the structure may be hidden or revealed as required. Levels may be counted as decimal (3.2.4) or as classical (the familiar Roman numerals, Caps, etc). Outlines are stored as standard ASCII textfiles. Entire substructures and blocks of contiguous structures can be moved freely through the workspace as conceptual needs require. Decimal or classical labels adjust automatically to changes. Labels can be suppressed if desired.

Author *David Toliver*.

ARCHITECTURAL SYMBOLS from Builders Design Service in Huntington Beach is a collection of more than 350 data files which are compatible with Curve Digitizer, a

CAD program product of West Coast Consultants, San Diego, California, also in the library. The **SYMBOL** command (S) of MENU 5 (F5) is used to bring already stored data into a plot. The data files are divided into categories and a disk subdirectory for each category is provided. They are Architectural plan symbols, architectural elevation symbols, electrical symbols, mechanical symbols, plumbing symbols, miscellaneous symbols and words of text.

MYSTAT is a statistical program and the personal version of *SYSTAT*. **MYSTAT** is designed for educational use and offers: full-screen spreadsheet data entry, 32,000 cases, 50 variables, unlimited transformations, basic statistics, exploratory and analytical graphics, correlations, multiple regression, polynomial regression, residual analysis, regression diagnostics, non parametrics, cross-tabulations, chi-square and association statistics, multiway factorial and unequal-n analysis of variance, and analysis of covariance.

MYSTAT can be operated in three modes: Interactive analyses with a menu, which is the default, interactive analyses without a menu, or in batch mode, where **MYSTAT** reads a series of commands from a file. From *SYSTAT*, Evanston, Illinois.

DOCKETMINDER, THE LAWYER'S ASSISTANT is menu-driven, and is generally divided functionally. That is, the choices presented at any given point are those that a person working with a docket would want to have at any given point -- for example, when you are looking at a docket entry, you can page forward or back to the next or previous entry, or you can copy, edit or delete that entry, or you can go back to the main menu. Due dates are fully validated, including calculation of weekends and federal holidays, with the option to move the due date to the next business day.

Edit a record (or add a new one) by adding a stated amount of time to a date (for those tired of trying to figure out the date 30 days hence). Browse through the docket to see one-line extracts from 15 entries at one time arranged by client, due date, attorney or reference number. Create a new record quickly, using everything from the old record except the due date and action, which you are prompted to enter. Change or delete all entries with a chosen client, matter or attorney. Create a string of entries with common basic information but different actions and due dates, related to a common date (e.g., a pretrial calendar).

Context sensitive help screens are available to guide you. Old entries may be purged and saved in a docket history file for reference. Author *David E. Root, III.*

This is just a preview of some of the disks that will be available at the March 26 General Meeting. *I would like to cut back a little on the number of titles pre-copied* for the general meeting, so if there are titles you are particularly interested in, please call me in advance to prepare your selection, however, you will need to call before the Thursday prior to the meeting. Mornings, after 9:00 a.m. is the best time to reach me: 646-5230. See you the 26th.

New members look for the library handout list in the lobby at the general

dBASE IV

Ashton-Tate has announced the release of dBASE IV by July 31, 1988. This is the latest version of what this company says is the World's No. 1 database management software, and a linear successor to the familiar dBASE II, dBASE III and dBASE III Plus programs. Ashton-Tate states that it has sold more than 2 million copies of these programs since dBASE first appeared in 1981.

dBASE IV is designed for both OS/2 and MS-DOS-based personal computers. Thus it takes a quantum technological leap over its predecessors. This is a leap that must be made by all applications programs if they are to take full advantage of the new PS/2 series of IBM PC's and comparable machines.

According to the news release, this latest version has an automatic program compiler which is 10 times as fast as in dBASE III Plus. It has new automatic record and field locking capabilities which provide for easy networked multi-user operations. Some 245 enhancements have been used to create the new dBASE/SQL language and permit easy-to-use memory variables, two-dimensional arrays, multi-child relational capabilities, data validation, multiple display windows and many new financial and statistical functions.

dBASE IV carries a suggested retail price of \$795, the Developer's Edition also to be released by July 31 is \$1,295. It is hoped that our Program Committee can arrange for a demonstration of this important new program. Meanwhile further information can be obtained by writing Judy Marie Merrill at Ashton Tate, 20101 Hamilton Ave., Torrance CA 90502-1349 or calling (213) 538-7321 or (213) 822-4669

A.B.

Explanation of Memory Types

	EMS	EEMS	EMS 4.0
Page Registers	4	64	64
Maximum Page Frame	64 kB	1024 kB	1024 kB
Page below 640kB	NO	YES	YES
Alternate Map Registers	NO	YES	MULTIPLE
DMA Access	NO	NO	YES

Orange Coast College Community Services Presents Two Seminars

DESKTOP PUBLISHING: BUYER BEWARE!

Mistakes are costly. We don't want to scare you, but we do want to show you options and pitfalls you may never have thought of. Several consultants with lots of ideas to SAVE YOU MONEY, will be present, in this combination hands on and small group lecture.

Saturday April 30, 9am to 1pm. 2 day pre-registration required. \$35. Carol Slasher, Instructor. 714-432-5880.

COMPUTER REPAIR MADE EASY

There are many quick and easy tests that you can do yourself to spot computer breakdowns. This is a hands-on seminar for people who want to do their own repairs.

Saturday May 14, 9am-4pm

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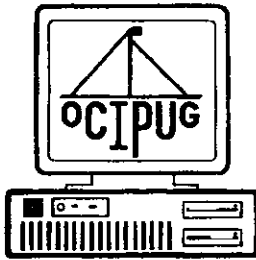
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The Orange Coast IBM PC User Group SIG / GUIDE

A Calendar of Monthly Meetings and Events edited by Dave Lorenzini and Robert Siegenthaler

GENERAL MEETING

WORDPERFECT 5.0 presented by Glen Grosbeck

This is what many people have been waiting for, and it's being presented by Wordperfect's Regional Sales Manager for Southern California.

SPINRITE™ presented by Steve Gibson

Steve has been working on Spinrite for a long time and this will be an exclusive premier introduction.

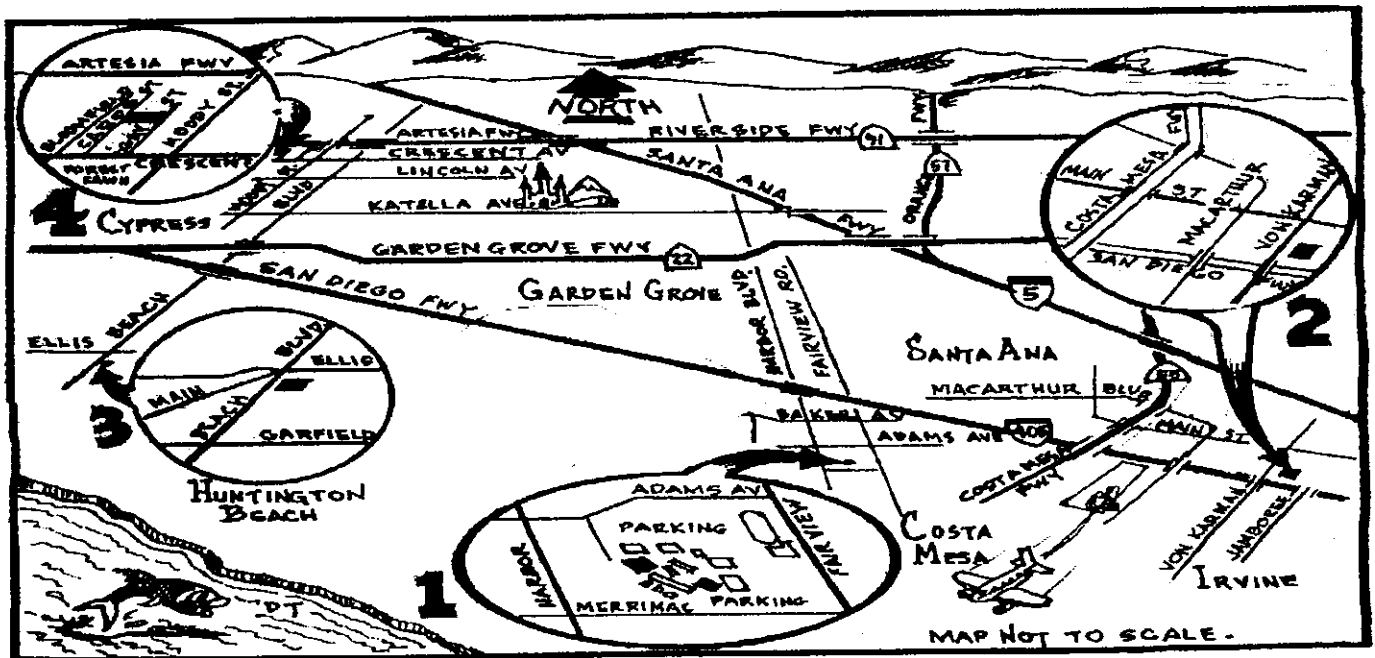
Join us Saturday - March 26, 1988
9:00 am at OCC Science Hall.

LATE BREAKING NEWS

Before attending a SIG meeting or other event, you might want to check with the OCIPUG Bulletin Board or our voice Hotline for last-minute changes in time or location.

Voice 714-898-7998

BBS 714-964-2034



LOCATIONS

Inset Map 1: Orange Coast College

General Meeting & WordPerfect SIG: Science Hall (next to Chemistry Bldg).

Other SIGs: Room 106, Admissions and Counseling Center (next to Fine Arts).

Inset Map 2: New Horizons Learning Center, 17900 Von Karman, Suite 100, Irvine (near Main, north of San Diego Freeway).

Inset Map 3: WEH Computers, 18682 Beach Boulevard, Suite 150, Huntington Beach (between Ellis and Garfield).

Inset Map 4: Montessori Children's House, 8271 Gay Street, Cypress (park on Carob Street and enter through rear gate).

ACCOUNTING

Coordinator: Ed Halsted (714)840-7027
 Coordinator: Karen Swanson (714)846-2059

Come to this SIG if you want to know more about how to use your PC in a small business or home accounting application. Mr. Kendall Johnson will be showing us AXCENT, a business accounting package which is strong on Accounts Payable.

Monday 18 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, Orange Coast College [Inset Map 1].

BBS SUPPORT

Contact Person: Richard Sabin (714)968-3539

The system operators (SYSOPs) still need help sorting through all the uploaded files we get. Bring blank disks and take home copies without needing to download them!

Monday 11 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, at New Horizons Learning Center [Inset Map 2].

C LANGUAGE

Coordinator: Mark Roberts (714)951-2193

We will be continuing the 4th session of our C tutorial led by Joel Charbonnet. We will also be hearing from Steve Schustack, author of the book "Variations in C".

Tuesday 19 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, at New Horizons Learning Center [Inset Map 2].

CAD/GRAPHICS

New Coordinator: Richard Moser (714)541-6801 (Welcome!)
 New Coordinator: _____ (714)____-_____ (Welcome!)
 Designated Guru: Dave Lorenzini (714)852-8663

CAD (Computer Aided Design) comes in many "flavors." This group covers all CAD and graphics programs, as well as specialized hardware of interest to our members. We have arranged to have a complete demo of Versacad, one of AutoCAD's most serious competitors.

Thursday 14 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, at New Horizons Learning Center. [Inset Map 2]

DATABASE

Coordinator: Bob Schmiedeke (714)536-1178

Come to this group to learn more about dBASE IV and other database programs. Programming in database languages is also covered. Join us as we cover low-cost database programs such as Rapidfile.

Tuesday 12 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, at New Horizons Learning Center [Inset Map 2].

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Coordinator: Richard Villa (213)439-8110

Preparing attractive documents is the primary purpose of Desktop Publishing. We had a sneak preview of the new Pagemaker last month. This month we will be answering questions on Pagemaker, Ventura Publisher, and others.

Wednesday 6 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, held at WEH Computers [Inset Map 3].

DOS

New Coordinator: Steven Pierce (714)631-2120 (Welcome!)
 Designated Guru: John Goodman (714)895-3195

Come to this group to learn more about how your PC works and how to get it to do what you want. Dan Likens will present "The BASIC Language Explained for Beginners." Do not miss this one as we may be continuing it the following month.

Wednesday 13 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, at Community Room, 1540 Placentia

Avenue, Newport Beach [NEW LOCATION].

EDUCATORS

Coordinator: Anne Perrah (714)995-2054
 Coordinator: John Lunsford (714)995-0947

Due to the wealth of Apple software available for education, we will be reviewing Apple to PC emulation and conversion software and hardware. *Note: This may be the last meeting unless we get a larger turnout. Come and show your support for this important subject.*

Thursday 21 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, at Montessori Children's Home [Inset Map 4].

HARDWARE

Coordinator: Dan Likens (714)953-5663
 [New Coordinator needed soon. Call Dave Carroll to volunteer.]

This SIG includes explanations of every aspect from trouble-shooting a sick PC to designing your own home automation system. You are welcome even if you have never tried to read a schematic diagram or solder a circuit board.

Thursday 28 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, at New Horizons Learning Center [Inset Map 2].

INVESTORS

Contact Person: Ralph Minarich (714)494-2209

This group explores the world of software designed especially to help investors, whether they invest in stocks, bonds, commodities or something else. This month will be a continuation of our March workshop, but stay tuned for late-breaking announcements.

Wednesday 20 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, at New Horizons Learning Center [Inset Map 2].

MODEM

Coordinator: Terry Currier (714)774-2018
 Designated Guru: Richard Sabin (714)968-3539

Reach out and access the whole world of information through telecommunications. Our focus this month will be on *GTPowercom*, another excellent communications program.

Thursday 7 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, Orange Coast College [Inset Map 1].

NETWORKING

Coordinator: Jim Mansfield (714)751-2243
 Coordinator: Andy McGill (714)731-2951

Come to this SIG to see a demonstration of VIANET, a moderately priced peer-to-peer network system developed by Western Digital Corporation.

Thursday 14 April 1988, 7 to 9 pm, at the Costa Mesa Center, Coastline Community College, 2990 Mesa Verde Drive East (corner Baker Street), Costa Mesa.

**NEW MEMBER /
NEW USER**

Coordinator: John Goodman (714)895-3195

This is a best SIG to attend first. The meetings run on a three-month cycle, presenting an orientation to OCIPUG the first month and then for two months giving a beginner's introduction to the IBM family of personal computers (as well as to the so-called "clone" computers). This month is number one in the cycle.

Saturday 2 April 1988, 10 to 12 am, at New Horizons Learning Center [Inset Map 2].

REAL ESTATE

Contact Person: Stan Sabin (714)968-7307
 Contact Person: Tom Sutro (714)650-1121

If you are a realtor and think you might like to use a personal computer, you will really appreciate this SIG. Jointly sponsored by OCIPUG and several local Boards of Realtors, this is one of our largest SIGs. We will be looking at a new software package called "Real Estate Strategy".

Tuesday 26 April 1988, 8:00 am (in the morning!), at Newport Harbor-Costa Mesa Board

SPREADSHEET

Coordinator: John Alesi (714)770-1130
 Designated Guru: Neil Carmen (714)964-1901

Learn tips and tricks from the professionals. This group covers Lotus 1-2-3 and other brands of spreadsheet programs, including shareware products for both beginners and advanced users. We will be showing and discussing Microsoft Excel as well as non-mathematical applications.

Thursday 5 April 1988, 7 to 10 pm, at New Horizons Learning Center [Inset Map 2].

WORDPERFECT

Contact Person: Jim Perratt (714)969-4782

Wordperfect is both suitable for beginners and capable of serving the needs of a demanding business. This month we will be continuing our preliminary look at the new version.

Saturday 26 April 1988, 12:15 to 2 pm, at OCC Science Hall (after the general meeting).

APRIL 1988

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>Television Shows Tuesdays 6:00pm Channel 50 Computerworks Tuesdays 7:00pm Channel 18 The Computer Show Saturdays 11:00am Channel 50 Computerworks</p>					1	2 10 am to Noon New Users New Horizons
3	4 6:30 Board Meeting UAC	5 7pm Spreadsheet New Horizons	6 7pm Desk/Pub WEH Computers	7 7 pm Modem OCC, Admin. & Counseling Bldg, #106	8	9
10	11 7pm BBS Support New Horizons	12 7pm Dbase New Horizons <i>Real</i>	13 7 pm DOS	14 7pm CAD New Horizons 7 pm Network- ing Location TBA	15	16
17	18 7 pm Accounting OCC, Admin. & Counseling Bldg, #106	19 7pm C Lan- guage New Horizons	20 7pm Investor New Horizons	21 7pm Educators Montessori Children's House - Cypress	22	23
24	25	26 8am Real Estate NH-CM <i>SOFTWARE PRESENTATION</i>	27	28 7pm Hardware New Horizons	29	30 9 am OCIPUG General Meeting, OCC Science Hall 12:15 WordPerfect

MARCH 1988

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

MAY 1988

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

SIG REPORTS

HARDWARE

Kevin Moser

The Hardware Special Interest Group met at 7:00 p.m., February 25th at New Horizons Learning Center. Twenty members attended. Dan Likins, the SIG's coordinator was out of town, so the meeting was conducted jointly by Dave Carroll and John Goodman.

Dr. Goodman opened the meeting by soliciting questions for random access to be answered after the break. In some cases John clarified or broadened a question so that a response would be meaningful not only to the questioner but to all in attendance. After gathering this material he turned the meeting over to Dave Carroll.

Dave discussed hardware trouble shooting in light of his experience as chief of small computer maintenance at a major accounting firm. Some 500 individual PC's were in the hands of operators proficient in running their programs but generally ignorant about hardware.

He discussed strategies for trouble shooting when dealing with non technical users. He stressed the importance of the user's keeping an accurate and complete log of any failures. In order to make that easy to do, he suggested each user first make note of how their machine behaves normally. Write down everything which occurs after power up: presence or absence of the cursor, character of beeps, other sounds from the computer, screen appearance, error messages, keyboard response, and the like. Given this information plus the log of how the computer's behavior differed when the trouble occurred, the trouble shooter can more easily direct his or her attention to the most probable source of the failure. Most problems encountered by non technical users could be traced to simple sources, such as plugs, cable connections, or screen controls. Less prevalent were failures of major components.

Dave discussed how SIG members might use methods he developed to isolate hardware problems they may encounter after doing work on the innards of their machine.

After the break Dr. Goodman opened

random access with a blackboard description of the physical layout of the PC motherboard, cards, ports, and cables. He related specific questions back to this starting point. He briefly explained Intel CPU addressing and pointed the questioner to Ray Duncan's book *ADVANCED MS DOS* for further reference. A question on RAM versus disk memory brought out a discussion of various methods of external storage (hard and floppy disks, optical disks and tape) and internal storage (RAM). He outlined RAM size limitations, extended memory, expanded memory, RAM and disk caching.

He discussed the organization of hard disk file storage and the purpose and nature of the File Allocation Table (FAT) using a "crates in a warehouse" analogy. This discussion included mention of the several different sizes of FAT table entries in different version of DOS.

This was followed with answers to questions about (1) power supply upgrades, (2) the DOS imposed limitation on the number of drives, (3) physical orientation of drives, and (4) adding hard drives. These topics provoked some give and take by members and a further discussion of hard disk formatting and use of DOS commands SUBST and JOIN to make a path on one drive look like a virtual other disk drive or make a real drive act like a subdirectory of another drive.

NEW USER / NEW MEMBER

Anne Perrah

"THE NEW USER'S SIG...AS SEEN FROM THE TRENCHES".

But seriously now folks, there really are quite a few of us new PC users who feel besieged by the necessity to become at least marginally informed about how the one-eyed beasties work. Basically, as any raw computer recruit can tell you, its us against them. From the point of view of at least one "hooked" new user, speaker John Lunsford and the designated DOS Guru John Goodman provided us with quite a bit of ammunition for the fray. We were given some powerful computer jargon for use in hand to hand combat with the salesmen in the computer and software shops, not to mention its value for impressing the green troops around the water cooler at

the office. With some computerese in our arsenal, our confidence started to build... and then it got real!

What our guru told us about these one-eyed enemies of social sanity is that they only do what you tell them to (how diabolical can you get?). Survival meant that we would have to learn the rules of this game. Then, when we thought we were about to be overrun, our two fearless leaders brought out the big guns: some inside intelligence on the enemy's equipment and command structure. They showed us how to tell a bit from a megabyte, a CGA card from an EGA card, and a modem from a mouse. Firmware, Software, Hardware, even Vaporware - we're ready for all of 'em. They guided us through the minefields of DOS, across the no-man's land of utility programs, and into the (relative) safety of applications software. We were beginning to get a sense of control over these creatures. Then we were shown the two secret weapons of every lifer computer jock: the AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files. Now we really know enough to be dangerous!

Okay, enough of the silly metaphor already. This was, in reality, the third of an ongoing series of New User SIG presentations, each dealing with basic aspects of PC usage that every computer neophyte needs to know. The first of this series, back in January, introduced both new PC users and new members of OCIPUG to the facilities and services available to them through the club. The 15 other SIGs were introduced and their purposes explained. The club bulletin board service, with the wealth of information and software available there was described, as well as the value of the general meetings. This first session concluded with some useful tips on proper care and feeding of the computer for the beginner.

The second session included a look inside the PC at the different component parts that, when assembled, create a computer. We learned about the different kinds of memory chips (ROM and RAM), types of disk drives (floppy and hard) and even what the CPU is. We found out about connecting computer peripherals (remember that comment above about jargon?) through expansion slots and even got an object lesson about "expanded memory" versus "extended memory".

The amount of material presented in

this series was extensive and extremely valuable. The opportunity to ask questions provided each participant with a chance to clarify the points of the presentation that were most important to him and to get the input that he came for. What would really round out this series would be a fourth session devoted to specific common DOS usage (with demonstrations and error recovery techniques) and a long random access period for detailed questions from the participants. After feeling somewhat overwhelmed in the general meetings, the New User SIG was a comforting reassurance that I really can get my computer to do what I want it to do. I'm well on my way to learning the game and becoming a PC veteran.

INVESTOR'S

Ralph Minarich

On February 17, we were fortunate to host two guests from Prudential Bache from the Beverly Hills office...they were...Mr. Bob Fall & Mr. Marshall Field. (Seen daily on Channel 22, KWHY-TV...at 1:05 PM)...213-550-3231 collect.

Due to traffic conditions and the distance traveled, we were fortunate to have Gordon Savage, fill-in the time until they arrived. His software program is called TELE-SCAN. If anyone is interested in a DEMO of this program, please see me at the next INV/SIG. He provided a flow-chart which he designed, to illustrate the features, the scope and purpose of this 'inexpensive program'...\$55 plus a registration of \$20. Many of the members were surprised to see, just how complete this software package really is. As with all programs, its impossible to be all things to all people, but there's a lot to be said for this product and very little against it.

We were active in our, Q & A session with Gordon and considering what many investors require from this type of software...(with apologies to the RAGU people) we found it to be...'IN THERE'!

The March 16th Sig, will be another Work-Shop, where we will make available several past programs, which YOU can play with AHEAD of PURCHASE,(TELE/SCAN-WINNING on

W/S-METASTOCK-DJ+/ etc.

Our guests expertise is in the Municipal Bond Market, along with Government & Corporate Bonds, which their company also markets. Mr. Bob Fall, led off the group with a defined explanation of these investment vehicles and the reasons why investors choose them so often. He talked of tax considerations for the fixed income members, as well as those of us that realize income and gift-tax-strategies for young family members. This company is projecting lower interest rates. Only time will tell of their accuracy. These are very difficult times, especially during an Election Year.

As always we were made aware that the opinions expressed are strictly-those of our guests and PAST SUCCESS IS NO GUARANTEE OF FUTURE PROFITS...Many thanks to Bob & Marshall both!

DOS SIG REPORT

Kevin L. Moser

The DOS Special Interest Group met at 7:00 p.m. on March 9th, 1982, in room 106, Counseling and Admissions Building at Orange Coast College. John Goodman introduced the new SIG Coordinator, Steven Pierce, to 17 attendees. Since there were several newcomers in the group, including some new to the club and to computers, introductions were made all around to identify the level of expertise and particular interests of members attending. Steve Pierce announced that he had arranged for this SIG to hold future meetings in the community room of the Ebb Tide Trailer Park, 1560 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, a move which will provide a comfortable meeting space and ample free parking for the group.

Dr. Goodman solicited random access questions which were discussed in detail. As is often the case some questions by different members were interrelated and lead into rather wide ranging explanations of certain phases of DOS. There were three kindred questions on use of utilities and analysis of disk contents. The response discussed the directory and how to analyze it, subdirectories and how to navigate through them, filenames and the extensions ".BAT", ".COM", ".EXE", ".DOC", ".TXT", the file "READ.ME" and its derivatives. This lead into presenting "READ.ME" on the screen and printing it, piping, the use of the DOS command MORE, and how make an executable file run. Question: What could

cause a "Disk full" message when the floppy disk should have plenty of unused memory? The response discussed CHKDSK, bad sectors, lost clusters, the "F" parameter, and formatting modes which yield different disk capacities.

There was a comprehensive discussion of the use of PROMPT to modify the familiar DOS prompt "A" so that it would display path, date, time, or a message, and how to place PROMPT in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. There was a question on how to reset the clock. Various timer programs for XT multifunction boards and the Setup program for AT's were briefly addressed. One member wanted to eliminate the gaps printed in vertical lines by some printers. Cause: some printers use "|" for ASCII character 124 while some use a solid vertical bar. This brought up a discussion of ASCII characters 128 to 255 as applied to dot patterns by different printer manufacturers and lack of an industry standard for these characters. In response to a question on how to handle ARCing programs Dr. Goodman gave a brief history of file compression methods and described how to unARC a file using PKXARC. This program is available on the club RBBS under PKX35A35.EXE. Other uncrunching programs mentioned were ARC51, NARC, and ARCMaster, also on the bulletin board.

Lastly there was a question on the use of BACKUP and RESTORE. Problems caused by attempting to backup certain copy protected programs were discussed. The meaning of the archive attribute "a", and how to examine it by means of XTREE or similar program was explained. Limiting of backup to files changed was recommended. Briefly discussed were FASTBACK and INTELLENT BACKUP, two commercial programs which offer convenience and flexibility not equaled by the DOS backup routines.

While C Language has its own Special Interest Group, the "DOS SIG" embraces a wide interest in other computer languages and how they interact with the IBM based family of PC's. Next meeting will feature a presentation on BASIC FOR BEGINNERS by Dan Likens of the Hardware SIG.

Reviews

PC WORD POWER

MARY RABE

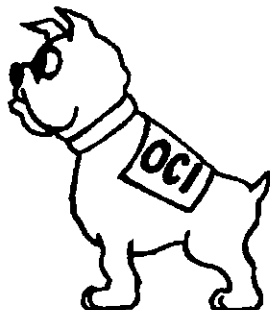
Sure I was surprised when I won PC Word Power at the December club meeting. I was even more surprised when I realized I promised to write this article, but here goes.

PC Word Power is a pleasant way to increase your vocabulary and have fun doing it! The program requires 190K of RAM space, and works well with a color monitor. As the difficulty level of the words changes, the color changes. The disk is copy protected, however you can make one copy to a hard disk.

As few as one or as many as thirty-two people can play at one time. The menu driven program asks you how many people are playing and gives you the option of returning to the operating system. If you are playing by yourself, PC Word Power asks for the correct date and your name. The program removes any scores over thirty days old and if it recognizes your name it will ask you if you want to continue the old game or begin a new one.

Each player is asked his or her name at the beginning of the game, and is identified by that name throughout the game. The player is asked the meaning of the word to be defined and given four choices, A, B, C, or D. They enter their choice and PC Word Power tells them if the answer is right or wrong. A menu at the bottom of the screen asks them if they want the next word, the score displayed or to exit the program.

The difficulty of the words is measured from level one to level six. By the time you get to level six you better have a good dictionary handy or a degree in English to understand most of the words. How about the word STRABISMUS? If you can define that, you're ready for level six.



ERRATA

A production "glitch" last month lopped off the end of the article on Paradox by Pat Cline. Here is the part that you missed last time:

Do I work for Ansa Software, you ask? No, I only promote Paradox as a labor of love, in appreciation for an excellent product. There are several OCIPUG members who share my passion for Paradox, and some have told me they are willing to serve as a Paradox resource person if you need any technical assistance, or have any questions about the Orange County Paradox User Group—an exceptional organization for business professionals. These OCIPUG members are:

Jim Samuelson: Sirius Computer Service, Inc. (714) 472-9821 (H), (714) 895-2229 (W)

Joe Holtz: The Lehnert Group (714) 532-2263 (H), (714) 957-8575 (W)

Pat Cline: St. Joseph Hospital (714) 771-8054 (W)

You can get some idea of the character of the developers of Paradox from the name they chose for their company. At a Paradox User Group meeting, Richard Schwartz (one of the two developers of Paradox) was asked why the company was called "Ansa Software". His reply: You ask Paradox the question; and it will give you the "Ansa"—now I call that unique!

As the Paradox Introduction manual says:

Frederic:

A paradox?

King:

A paradox!

Ruth:

A most ingenious paradox!

We've quips and quibbles heard in flocks,

But none to beat this paradox! ...

Frederic:

How quaint he ways of Paradox!

Ruth, King:

A most ingenious paradox.

(Gilbert & Sullivan, The Pirates of Penzance, Act II)

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From the Technical Editor's Desk

John M. Goodman, Ph.D.

Thank you. It is gratifying to see that my words here have such an impact.

In January I called for reviews of products and letters to the editor. Shortly thereafter I received two reviews and my first Letter to the Technical Editor. In addition, in direct response to the Random Access question in January about the program FLASHBAK, Lionel Dyck not only wrote an extensive review of the program (which appeared in our February issue), he also uploaded the program to our BBS so all of you can enjoy it.

The Letter to the Technical Editor sets out a puzzling problem facing one of our members. I have tried to answer the questions he posed, but perhaps one of you will have even better answers. If you do, please write them down and send them in.

One of the two reviews I received was published last month; the other one, on PCWORD, is being published in this issue.

Last month we published an article on "Disk Caching." These are programs that hold in RAM memory copies of information that is on its way to or from a disk drive. Because information that is in RAM can be accessed so much faster than that on the disks, much time can be saved (so your disks appear to run faster) by intelligent use of a cache. Last month's article pointed out, however, that some such programs can in certain situations cause more problems than they solve.

This month I wish to share with you a personal experience I recently had with a very popular commercial cache program.

I wrote an article for the last issue on computer viruses. This turns out to be a

very fast developing field and so I have updated that report for this issue.

In addition to these items we have my by-now usual column of Questions and Answers on technical topics and a section on OCIPUG On-line, in which we will explain some of the mysteries and delights of our electronic remote bulletin board system.

Any time you have a notable experience with your computer it could become an article for us all to benefit from. I want stories of frustration and descriptions of delightful episodes as well. Don't worry if you feel your abilities as an author are too limited. Just put down the facts and how you felt about them and we will attempt to help you form them into a readable article.

Whatever you do, please do keep writing to us. It is a pleasure to know that I have something to write about that is actually something that at least one person out there wants to understand.

Users of *Lightning* Disk Cache Program Beware!

John Goodman

I had been a very happy user of the *Lightning* disk caching program published by the Personal Computer Support Group for several years now. In all that time I never lost any files because of a cache error.

Recently I upgraded my computer system from a PC/XT to an AT-clone. In the process I also upgraded my DOS from version 3.2 to version 3.3. Mostly I have been very pleased by the change, but I have noticed a number of annoying and puzzling things about my new system which have taken me quite some time to

track down and explain or otherwise make go away.

One source of trouble, I finally determined, was that my *Lightning* program was sometimes messing up the files I was working on. Nothing very serious, I thought, but certainly annoying.

Uncertain what I might do to improve matters, I called up the Personal Computer Support Group in Texas. The technician there was very helpful. As soon as I told him I was running DOS 3.3 and version 4.53 of *Lightning* (which I had bought from a distributor only last April), he said with some concern in his voice, "We released version 4.8 last May. We don't recommend using any version prior to 4.8 with any version of DOS from 3.0 on. Under some circumstances the prior versions would trash FAT tables."

Now that is serious business.

"I am a registered user of *Lightning*," I protested. "Why haven't I been told about this?" "I wish we could have told our users," he responded, "but our president decided not to do so."

Our conversation continued covering such things as cost to upgrade, etc. Here too I was less than pleased. It turned out I would almost have to buy the product over again to get the current version. (More recent purchasers of *Lightning* can upgrade to the latest version for only \$10.)

You can bet that minutes—no seconds after I hung up I had removed *Lightning* from my AUTO-EXEC.BAT file and I don't think it is going back!

A word to the wise....

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Letters to the Technical Editor

HELP!

I have a Leading Edge Mode D, running DOS version 3.1.

As I was using my word processor program I attempted to enter one of several documents (files) on my floppy disk. Immediately the A prompt popped up with the message "Damaged document, error number 1022."

None of my several DOS reference books helped with this particular message. The other documents on the disk appear to be OK. I made a copy of the disk and then tried the Norton Utilities and CHKDSK. Neither uncovered any problem. Norton and several of my references refer to the RECOVER command and this plus use of EDLIN may be a solution, but it is beyond my capability as a relatively new user.

So, I do have a backup copy of the entire disk and I deleted the damaged file from my working copy. Still I would like to get back the text from the damaged file.

Perhaps more disturbing is this from one of my references (DOS, by Kris Jamsa), "...note that bad sectors on your disk are an early warning of serious problems. If your disk had bad sectors, back it up immediately and recover any files that you can. If your system continues to develop bad sectors, have it serviced immediately...."

What should I make of all of this?

Ed Judy

Let me see if I can be of some help to

you.

You did not tell us which word processor program you are using. Is it the Leading Edge word processor? Many popular word processors store their files (documents) in a specially encoded form in order to include both the text of the document and the formatting codes, etc., that are needed to make the document look on screen and on paper just the way you want it to.

Sometimes they can tell when attempting to open one of their document files if it is not quite the way it should have been left. Your word processor seems to be one of that sort.

No wonder the DOS books you checked could not help you with that error message. It did not come from DOS. I am almost certain that it came instead from the word processor.

There well may be nothing wrong with your disk; only something about the data on that disk is amiss. For example, you could have accidentally passed a magnet (or magnetized paper clip, screwdriver, etc.) near the disk and in the process altered one or more bits of information stored there. That could be enough to make the word processor refuse to work with that document.

The RECOVER command is a very powerful, automatic and none too smart program that attempts to do something similar to the Norton File Unerase

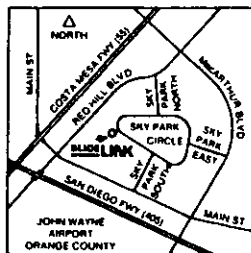
command. It is so powerful and so difficult to control that I strongly recommend that you do not use it at all. It easily could do more damage than the original accident did, all without necessarily helping you recover the data in that damaged file.

I am very much pleased to read that you have good backup copies of all your disks. I am puzzled, if this is so, why does matter to you whether or not you can recover data from the damaged file?

Perhaps your last paragraph reveals the essence of your concern. I think you have taken the quoted author somewhat out of context. If not, then I believe that author is being a bit of an alarmist. It is true that disks, both floppy and hard, do wear out eventually. It is also true that when they are starting to die, sometimes you will get a hint from the appearance of ever increasing numbers of bad sectors. These will show up when you test the disk with CHKDSK or the Norton DiskTest program. When you see that sort of problem it is a good idea to replace the disk in question (or if it is an expensive hard disk, get it tested and perhaps reformatted by an expert). That is not what you reported in this case, however.

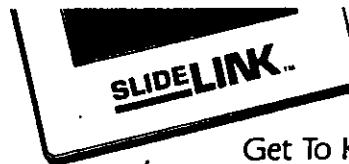
I trust that this has been a helpful answer. If others have additional or different suggestions, I hope that they will send them to me. If I get any which are strikingly different I shall report on them here.

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John M. Goodman, Ph.D.

Last month we had so many questions and space in the newsletter was limited. As a result, several questions did not get answered in this column that time around. I have given those answers below and in addition have attempted to answer some of the new questions handed at the February general meeting.

DOS

"How can I change where DOS will look for COMMAND.COM?"

A lot of you have PCs with no hard drive. A common problem you may encounter is that you will boot your computer from a DOS disk, then run some application program from a disk that does not have COMMAND.COM on it. When you exit that application often DOS will need to load a fresh copy of COMMAND.COM.

Unless you have specially told it otherwise, DOS will look in the root directory of the disk in the A drive.

Where else could it look? If you have enough system memory (RAM) in your computer I think the best solution is to create a small RAM disk (also known as a virtual disk since it is not really a disk drive, but just memory masquerading as a drive). Then put COMMAND.COM on this virtual drive.

If you are using DOS version 3.x you can create such a RAM disk by using the VDISK program which you will find on one of your original DOS diskettes. Include that program on your working boot disk (the one you insert when you start your computer each day). You will have to modify or create a file called CONFIG.SYS in the root directory of that disk to include a line that reads:

```
DEVICE = A:\VDISK.SYS xxx
```

Here xxx is the number of kBytes you wish to have in your RAM disk. It could be just a bit larger than COMMAND.COM if you have little memory to spare or, if you have a lot, it could be much larger and you can then use that RAM disk for other purposes as well. (I have assumed you put VDISK.SYS in the root directory of your boot disk. If not, use the actual path by which DOS can find it in the above line.) There are some other options you can also specify on this line; see your DOS manual for details.

RANDOM ACCESS

If you are using an earlier version of DOS you may be able to use one of the public domain virtual disk programs to get the same effect.

If you have only one or two floppy drives and no hard disk, this line in CONFIG.SYS will cause DOS to create the virtual disk as drive C.

Now in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file on that same boot disk add these lines (or, if you don't already have an AUTOEXEC.BAT file, create one with a line that just says DATE, one that just says TIME and then these two lines):

```
COPY A:\COMMAND.COM C:\
SET COMSPEC=C:\COM-
MAND.COM
```

You must reboot your system from this disk after you have made these changes before they will take effect.

Once these commands have been executed you may remove your DOS disk and run any programs you like and you will never again get the message "Insert COMMAND.COM disk in drive A: and strike any key when ready."

DISPLAYS

"When I bought my computer I was told to get a Hercules Graphics Card. I did. Now some programs, especially public domain ones, will not work on my computer. What can I do?"

The IBM-PC family of computers is blessed(?) with a number of different graphic display standards. First we had the MDA and CGA, then MGA (also known as Hercules Graphics), EGA and PGA, and now MCGA and VGA (mainly with the PS/2 line, but soon to be available in PCs as well).

Each of these different display adapters must be sent information in a different way. Some programs only know how to "talk" to one of them. Public domain game programs, in particular, often only know how to address the CGA adapter. If you had an EGA or one of the even more modern display adapters most likely it could accommodate such a program by making itself "pretend" to be a CGA card.

In your case, however, you have a card that only knows how to do monochrome text and graphics.

All is not lost. Get the program SIMCGA from our bulletin board or librarian. Run that program before you run

your public domain programs and see if they work. Most of them will, I suspect, although you may have a few that still refuse to display properly. Let me know how this works for you.

PRINTERS

We always seem to get a bunch of questions about printers. More, in fact, than about any other topic. Do we need a Special Interest Group just on printers? Anyone want to start one? Here are three questions in that category.

"I have a Gemini 15X printer. It prints about one page just fine, then starts missing characters. Why?"

I wonder if the program that you are using to send information to your printer has not been installed properly for that printer. Another possibility is that your printer is not able to signal the computer when it is about to get "indigestion"—that is, when it has received all the information it can hold. Normally the printer will send some signal to the computer and then the computer will refrain from sending data till the printer signals that it is again ready to receive data.

Without knowing a lot more about the details of your system, I cannot make even an intelligent guess beyond that. A couple of questions that come to mind are: Does your printer communicate with the computer over its serial or its parallel port. Does the problem occur only when using certain programs on the computer?

I suggest that you take this problem, along with answers to the above questions, to one of the stores in this area that we have recommended before. One of those is The Computer Printer Store in Anaheim, another is Printers-R-Us in Tustin.

"What software technique will let me switch printer assignments so what used to go to LPT1 will go to LPT2 and vice versa? I have looked at the MODE and PRINT commands and cannot find a way to do this."

You are correct. The makers of DOS did not give us an easy way to do this little trick. Or actually, they did make it sort of easy, but only if you are comfortable writing and running simple BASIC programs. What if you are not? Fortunately for you somebody else has written just the utility you need. Look on our BBS for the program LPTSWAP.ARC or ask Bonnie if she has it or a similar one in our library. If you would like to know how that little trick

is done so you could write your own program, come to the DOS SIG and ask.

"I have heard it said that even on 24-pin dot matrix printers when they are printing dot-graphics, as opposed to simply printing characters, they only use 8 of the 24 pins. Is that true? Are there any exceptions?"

I sure can understand why this is important. If you do a lot of graphics printing, for example from AutoCad or Harvard Graphics, etc., and you have only a dot-matrix printer, you will be spending quite a lot of time waiting for your pictures. If the printer could use three times as many pins it ought to be able to do the job in one-third the time.

To do this, however, the proposed 24 pin printer would have to receive all the dots that would have been used in an 8 pin printer for three full passes across the page before it could begin to print the first pass. It would then have to dole out those data to the print head in an unusual manner. It could be done, I presume, but it may be so non-standard as to have seemed not worth doing to the manufacturers of the popular (and thus reasonably priced) dot matrix printers.

The alternative would be to make up a new version of GRAPHICS.COM specifically for that new printer and to ask each and every software producer who wished to print graphic images to make a new printer driver as well. Only a few printer companies sell enough machines that they could exert that much influence over the industry.

The foregoing are my speculations. What does one of you know for sure about this topic? Send me a letter and next month we may all find out the real answer.

OTHER HARDWARE TOPICS

A final question from Oscar, our red-badge man:

"I realize that you get what you pay for, but without spending hundreds of dollars, what is the best surge protector I can buy?"

If you are at all handy with tools (mainly a screwdriver and a soldering iron), buy yourself an inexpensive three wire ("U-ground") power distribution strip. Also go to Radio Shack and buy three MOV surge suppressors. These will look like little plastic or ceramic disks with a pair of wires coming out of each one. They come in various power ratings, but all are so cheap you may as well buy

the biggest ones they have.

Now open up the power strip. (Need I remind you to do this only while it is NOT plugged in?) Connect one of the MOV devices across each pair of wires coming from the power line (Black to White, Black to Green and Green to White). Close up the strip and you are done! Cost? Probably less than a quarter of the cost of a commercial version of the same thing. Also you know that you have a fully "three-way protected" outlet strip. A number of the less expensive commercial ones only have the MOV device across the Black and White wires and that leaves your equipment vulnerable to surges coming down the ground wire (Green).

WHERE DO I FIND IT?

And to close, a couple of quickies:

"I want a plug-in card for my AT that has a monochrome (or monographics?) display adapter, two serial one parallel and a game port. Any ideas where I can get this?"

"I use VersaCad, Version 5.2, Release 2. I am missing a graphics driver called IMA.COM for high resolution. Do anyone have a copy?"

IT'S YOUR TURN!

I don't know the answer to either of these questions, but if you do, contact me and I will put you in touch with the questioner.

AN OFFER TOO GOOD TO REFUSE and OTHER LEFTOVERS

In January's column one question concerned moving files from 5-1/4" disks to 3-1/2" ones. Thurston Wade has offered to do this for any OCIPUG members. His drive for the 3-1/2" disks is the higher-capacity kind, allowing up to 1.44 MegaBytes per disk. Thank you Thurston.

In the January column I answered a question about a Gemini 10X printer that was dropping the first and last characters in each line. Sidney Weisblat tells me he has the same type of printer and had the same problem. In his case the solution turned out to be replacing the print head, which cost him something over \$45. Thank you Sidney for sharing that information with the rest of us.

If your question was not answered here, please feel free to call me to discuss it or, even better, take it to one of our Special Interest Group meetings.

See you next month.

"Your computer caught a VIRUS?"—Part Two

John Goodman

In last month's README.DOC I told you about computer viruses. Unfortunately a production error kept the end of that article from appearing in the newsletter. Further, I have heard some more news about viruses since I wrote that article.

In this article I would like to finish the story, or at least bring you up-to-date on these nasties.

You will recall from last month's article that a computer virus is an insidious program fragment that gets inserted into some other program. Then when that other program is used the virus code gets copied to yet another program. Eventually the virus code does something worse than merely replicating itself, sometimes erasing all the files on a disk or doing some other horrible thing.

The specific virus that I mentioned last month always "lived" inside of COMMAND.COM. In this article I am going to discuss that virus and also several others. To be clear what we are talking about, I shall give each virus a name. Since the virus I discussed last month was first spotted at Lehigh University, I shall call it the virus LU1.

When the LU1 copies itself to another copy of COMMAND.COM it does so in a way that allows DOS to change the date and time label on the file. This means you can see if a copy of COMMAND.COM has been "infected" simply by looking at the date and time of last alteration and comparing that to the date and time on a known to be ok copy of that version of COMMAND.COM. (Look on your original distribution DOS disk. *You do have such a disk, don't you? You don't ever use that disk except to make a working copy, do you?!*)

Another virus has now been spotted, this time in Israel. This one can infect any executable program. Unlike the domestic virus I described last time, this one can alter files that have been supposedly made "read only" and when it does infect a file it does not change the date or time attached to that file. It does, however, reveal itself in a different way. It increases the length of the file by about 1800 bytes.

I shall call this virus, first spotted at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, HUJ1.

A difference between HUJ1 and LU1 is that HUJ1 affects the infected programs by slowing down their operation, not right away, but fairly soon. It also is set to do some other, and much worse, things on

Friday the 13th (the next one of which will be May 13th).

The computer scientists at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have developed both an "antidote" and a "vaccine" for this virus. The first is a program to repair infected programs. The second is a program which can help prevent infection from occurring.

That is the good news. The bad news is that they also uncovered two more viruses, let us call them HUI2 and HUI3. The computer scientists were able to modify their "antidote" and "vaccine" programs to deal with all three viruses, but there is no guarantee that they will be effective for other viruses that may be discovered in the future.

The viruses HUI2 and HUI3 will infect any .COM or .EXE file, respectively. They are set to do damage if any file is executed on April 1st or when the DOS date is 1-1-80, as it will be on most PCs if you don't set it to something else.

A bulletin board in our area (or more than one) has a program called FLU_SHOT which is supposed to prevent infection by the Lehigh virus, LU1. As last month's article ended I was just about to explain why the program FLU_SHOT might actually cause you more trouble than it would prevent.

Just as I was writing this article another anti-virus program was uploaded to our BBS. I will discuss it in a moment.

Continuing, now, where I left off....

FLU_SHOT is a terminate-and-stay resident program which attempts to watch any and all attempts to modify COMMAND.COM and prevent them. It may well work, but I definitely recommend that you not use it. Why? Because there is a much simpler way to achieve the same effect and because FLU_SHOT itself may cause more grief than it prevents.

What is that easier way to protect

yourself? I already outlined it in last month's article. Just use ATTRIB (if you are running a recent version of DOS, or XTREE or some other such "DOS shell" program if not) to make your copy of COMMAND.COM read-only.

This will work against LU1, but not against HUI1. I am not sure whether or not it will protect against either of the viruses HUI2 or HUI3.

How could FLU_SHOT hurt you? Two ways. I have heard that there may also be a version of FLU_SHOT that is actually a computer virus or Trojan Horse itself. Using that version would be like getting an inoculation against polio with what purported to be the killed virus and having it turn out to be virulent and thus give you the very disease it was supposed to protect you against.

The other way that FLU_SHOT could hurt you is more subtle. It is a TSR (terminate-and-stay-resident) program. Like all such programs it uses up some of your precious 640 kB of system RAM. Also like all such programs it may at some unpredictable time interfere in some obscure way with the operation of another program in your computer. It doesn't take any malice on the part of the program's author(s) to have this happen, just normal human fallibility and lack of omniscience.

Now for information on that most recently uploaded anti-virus program. It is contained in a file called CRCDOS.ARC. That file also includes Turbo C source code for this program.

To use CRCDOS you first create a list of files you wish to protect. (The authors suggest your DOS files, but I think the same strategy would work for many other executable files.) Then running this program on known good copies creates a reference list of the checksum of each program on your list. Later on you run this program from your AUTOEXEC.BAT file and it checks each of the listed program's checksum against the reference value. Any

change means the program has been altered. That is not always going to mean the program is infected (many programs routinely alter themselves), but it is almost certainly true that if a virus does infect a program its checksum will be changed.

In skilled hands CRCDOS may be a very valuable tool. Used without an awareness of which of your programs are supposed to be self-modifying may only cause you needless fear and upset.

As I said above, computer scientists are still studying the best way to protect oneself against such attacks. One approach is to develop "broad-spectrum vaccines." That approach is being pursued, among other places, at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

In the interim, perhaps the best solution is the same as it has always been for protection against all manner of data disasters: **Keep good backups.** In this case let me offer a small additional bit of advice: Keep your old backups separate from the newer ones. That way if you happen to back up a recently infected program you will not overwrite a "healthy" older copy. It is somewhat wasteful of diskette space to keep multiple backups of your programs, but that is ever so much better than being unable to recover from a viral attack.

As more is learned about computer viruses I believe we will learn better and better ways to cope with them, but it may be that we will have to fight a never-ending battle against these human-created diseases of our computers just as we do against the natural viruses that infect our bodies.

Do not let yourself give in to panic or despair. The common cold is a great nuisance, but it is not usually fatal. Similarly, computer viruses are likely to be a significant annoyance (if they continue to be perpetrated by the clever but antisocial few among us), but with luck and a bit of care, they too will not be fatal to our computers or our data.

STAN H. SABIN

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OCIPUG FINANCIAL REPORT

Cash Balance January 31, 1988 \$6220.57

February 1988 Changes in Cash

Cash Receipts

Membership Dues	\$1365.00
Library Fees	300.67
Interest	23.29
Advertising	1104.00
TOTAL	\$2792.96

Cash Disbursements

Printing	\$908.60
Postage	181.00
Meeting Expense	1632.70
Telephone	50.82
Supplies	76.23
TOTAL	\$2849.35

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Prepared by Walt Drew, Treasurer

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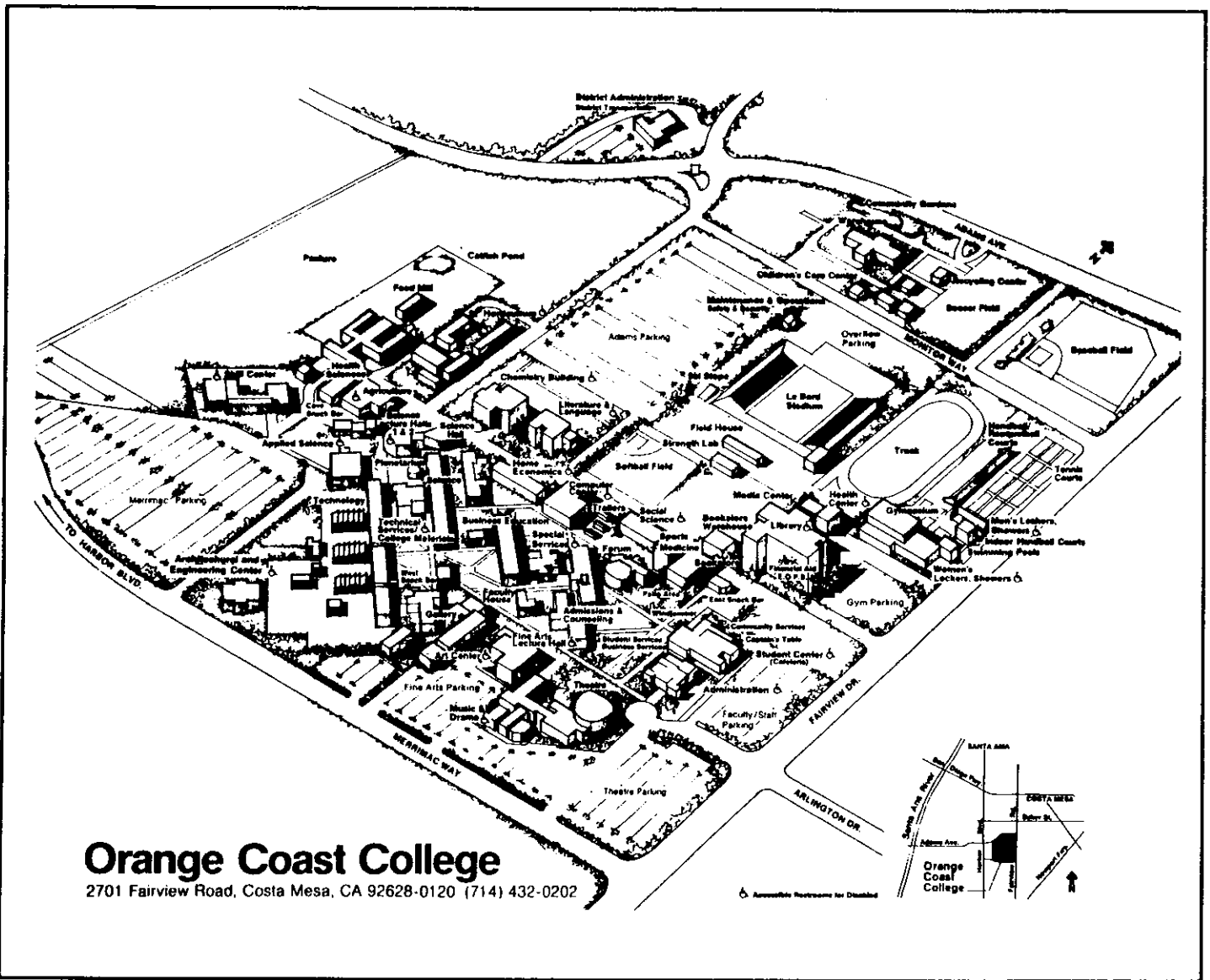
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