

README.DOC

A monthly newsletter of the Orange Coast IBM PC User Group

\$3.00

**Lotus 1-2-3, Version 3
and
Lotus Agenda**

**Also, Club Photograph, Raffle and
Other Good Surprises**

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GENERAL INFORMATION

README.DOC is published monthly by the ORANGE COAST IBM PC USER GROUP, P. O. Box 6100-211, Costa Mesa, CA 92628. The group's recorded message phone number is (714) 898-7998.

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Articles may be submitted via modem to the OCIPUG BBS, on paper or on 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-RFT, 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.

The User Group does not intend to endorse, rate, or otherwise officially comment on products available, and readers are cautioned to rely on the opinions presented exclusively at their own risk.

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README.DOC Newsletter

Created by:

Publisher Steven Dela

Co-Editors John M. Goodman, Ph.D.
John Lunsford

Associate Editors Dave Lorenzini

Copy Editors William Bonnycastle
Jim Mansfield

Graphics Don Taylor

Proofreading Pat Mellino
Anne S. Perrah
Jean Stevens
Khoi Tran
and many of the others
listed here in other
categories

Production John M. Goodman, Ph.D.
Dave Carroll
John Lunsford
Dave Lorenzini

Distribution Jennifer Dela
Melissa Dela
Gordon Lewin
Christine McDonald

Contributors Greg Cimarrusti
G. Walter Coles
Terry Currier
Paul Curtis
Walt Drew
Steve Gibson
Harold Howarth
Kevin Knoepp
Linda F. Leydekkers
Dan Likins
Jim Mansfield
Steven Pierce
Stan Sabin
Peter Sivgals
Tom Sutro
Bonnie Ulanovsky

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Past Editor: Tom Sutro 1985-1987

ADVERTISING POLICY

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, are also welcome. For information concerning advertising rates and requirements, contact:

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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.

TRADEMARKS

The mention of the names of various products in this publication without indication of Trademark or Registered Trade Mark status does not imply that these products are not so protected by law.

Lotus 1-2-3, Version 3 and Lotus Agenda

Also, Club Photograph, Raffle and Other Good Surprises

Best selling spreadsheet in long-awaited debut of new version

Mike Stephens of Lotus Development Corporation will demonstrate the eagerly awaited Release 3 of their venerable 1-2-3 spreadsheet. Lotus 1-2-3 is one of the best known, best selling application programs available for the PC.

When it was first released six years ago, it set new standards for spreadsheet power and user interface design. In the years since, "Lotus type menus" have been incorporated in hundreds of applications programs. Few spreadsheet publishers have been able to resist comparing their products to 1-2-3. With this kind of product history, Lotus has had an uphill climb to continually upgrade an already widely accepted package.

We saw what they did with Release 2. Now it will be very interesting to see what they have done with Release 3.

A spreadsheet was the very first successful application for a personal computer. One of the latest areas where PCs have been applied with great success is found in products called "personal information managers." More than an outliner, these programs offer the ability to put many diverse scraps of information into both a hierarchical order and also into

multiple categories. Then, when you need to view that information you may do so from the perspective of any one of these categories. Lotus's *Agenda* is their entry into this field. Zygmund ("Zyg") Furminiak of Lotus Development will show how you may be doing your personal business next year.

OCIPUG to make history at Le Bard stadium

After the break, we will reassemble at Le Bard Stadium on the east side of the Adams Street parking lot at Orange Coast College for a club picture. This project is an excellent opportunity for each of us to contribute directly to OCIPUG and all we have to do is show up (preferably in our new OCIPUG golf shirts!). These pictures will be sent to MicroSoft and Lotus for use in their advertising and public relations campaigns. The beneficial fallout for OCIPUG is national exposure at the cost of taking the picture. With luck, we may be able to provide each of you with a copy of the picture at a later time.

Why do we want national exposure? Well, for starters, being known outside of Orange County makes it easier (read that as possible) for the program committee to attract speakers from the companies whose hot new products you really want to hear about. It is also one of the reasons why a company like *PRODIGY* would offer OCIPUG's entire

membership free software and free six month memberships in their new information service. The club will, we are sure, get a lot of benefit from each of you showing up for our group picture.

That is why we want you there. Here are some more reasons you won't want to miss it:

Microsoft Press has given us copies of their very popular book, "Running MS-DOS" by Van Wolverton. We will give you a FREE copy just for being in the picture.

Once we have finished taking pictures we will hold our usual raffle, this time by using a laptop computer to pick the prizes and a bull horn to call out the winners' names. Remember, one of the largest computer companies in the world, Lotus, will be our speaker and you know what that might mean!

Finally, if you did not yet get a FREE copy of *PRODIGY*, your last chance will be at the close of this month's meeting, right after the raffle.

During the meeting and photo session, we will be videotaped by a local cable TV channel for broadcast at a later date. Let's show them what a spirited group we are!

—John Lunsford



Editorials

*John M. Goodman, Ph.D.
Editor (One last time)*

This will be my last month as your Editor and even this month I am sharing that role with my Co-Editor, John Lunsford. I will continue to contribute to the newsletter, both by writing articles and by working with the editorial and production staffs, but it is time I let others take the lead in those areas.

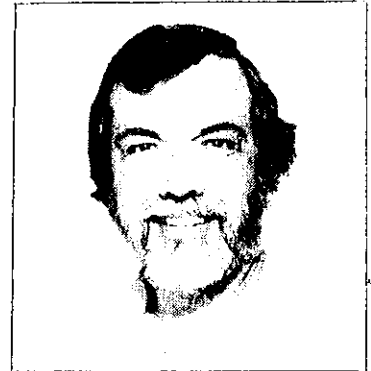
In addition to John's moving up, we have other new people in new positions this month. We have a new person working with Bill Bonnycastle in copy-editing, and we are adding more proof-readers. Also you will find more people listed as "Contributors." These are our writers. Without them we would have nothing to edit or proofread! (In fact, when I showed a recent copy of our newsletter to a member of another Orange County Computer User Group he said,

"Goodness! You have more people on your masthead than we have members.")

We still are finding our way. This month, in response to the comments by some of our readers, we have switched to some new fonts. We think this will make the newsletter easier and more fun to read. Let us know if you agree or disagree, please.

I have enjoyed being your Editor. It has certainly taken a lot of work, yet it was very rewarding too. I leave this post confident that John Lunsford will do the job at least as well as I.

He does want and will need your help; anyone would. So if ever you thought you might enjoy seeing your name on our masthead (inside the front cover) and doing the work which that implies, please step forward and volunteer. We have many tasks that need doing, ranging from writing and copy editing to helping stick labels on



John M. Goodman
OCIPUG Vice-President
and
README.DOC Co-Editor

the finished copies. Let us know where you will fit in.

This is not goodbye—just "see you next month, but from a different vantage point."



Passing the Standard

*John Lunsford
Editor Apparent*

In many ways, taking over as the README.DOC editor from John Goodman is a bit like being invited up on stage to tap-dance after a performance by Mikhail Baryshnikov. How *do* you follow an act like that?

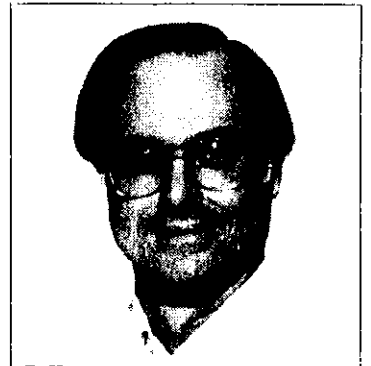
The answer is that you spend a lot of time at the master's elbow watching the process and even more time being guided through it. I have shared an increasing number of the tasks and responsibilities of the job with John through the last two issues. I have worked my way through this issue with John's ever vigilant guidance and his invaluable assistance with *Ventura Publisher*.

Still there is more to assembling the newsletter than the mechanics of electronically pasting articles together. A great deal of creative thought and genuine feeling for the subject matter, not to mention some skill with the English language, are required to bring all of the diverse talents of our contributors together as a coherent whole. Yes, I did say genuine feeling in

reference to a computer club newsletter.

What makes this newsletter worth reading is the fact that it addresses the contact point between people and their computers. A dry recitation of the technology involved is available from the mountain of technical manuals generated by the PC industry each year. A technical manual, however, is little comfort to someone who is trying to get their modem to work for the first time and has no idea what a carrier detect signal is. One of John's principal contributions to README.DOC has been his ability to mix technical expertise with human insight. He has an uncanny knack for translating and explaining technical details to people who just want answers to their problems.

That ability combined with John's vast technical knowledge makes for a large pair of shoes to fill. My comfort in this undertaking is the knowledge that being aware of a challenge is the most essential part of dealing with it. I will be consistently seeking the involvement of you, the OCIPUG membership, in the creation of the newsletter. This is your newsletter just as much as OCIPUG is your club. If



John C. Lunsford
README.DOC Co-Editor

there is something you want to see, an article you would like to contribute, a production service you want to perform, I *really* want to hear from you. And rest assured that I will be maintaining the human touch as well as the technical content to continue the direction of my illustrious predecessor.



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Stan Sabin
President, OCIPUG

With our club having grown so much and with the great people we have, the opportunities coming our way are just wonderful. Previously, I wrote about the great meeting the User Group Presidents had at the Lotus conference in Boston. As a result of that trip I met the President of the Atlanta User Group, one of the first "Founding Members" for the *PRODIGY* program. When he was asked who in Southern California would be a desirable contact to introduce the program, he recommended our group. As a result, members attending the August meeting were given the opportunity to try out the program free. *[If you missed that opportunity, your last chance to get a free copy of PRODIGY will be at our September General Meeting.]*

We have received our shipment of the Special User Group Edition of *Running MS-DOS* by Van Wolverton and will be passing it out at the September General Meeting. It will be necessary for you to pick your copy up in person as we have just one copy for each member of the club. The first half of the meeting will take place in the regular meeting location (the Science Hall) where a program will be presented by LOTUS on *Agenda* and the new *Lotus 123*, Version 3.0. During the break we will all go over to Le Bard stadium where the books will be passed out and the club pictures will be taken. You won't want to miss this meeting. These books were published by Microsoft Press and are a gift to our club members from Microsoft. We

sincerely thank them for their generosity.

This month DAVID LORENZINI and I traveled to a special conference of User Group Presidents, Microsoft Word advocates and representatives from Microsoft. The meetings were even better than I expected, and I hope to give you a more complete report on the trip in a future issue of *README.DOC*. But for now let me just say that the trip was very productive for all parties. We were able to have open discussions with the executives and senior programmers from Microsoft. We were under very strict anti-disclosure requirements regarding products being developed by Microsoft. By agreeing to these conditions we were privileged to see some great new products which they are developing. We were also able to give our input on possible modifications and features to be included. It was obvious that they realize the importance of direct input from user groups. The user group Presidents had a separate meeting where we discussed future goals and objectives for our clubs. We also discussed working together as an unofficial association of user groups to accomplish these objectives more efficiently. Together we represented almost 200,000 computer users.

The highlight of the meetings with Microsoft was the preview of the future given us by Bill Gates, President of Microsoft. I was greatly impressed with his foresight and detailed knowledge of every major development currently being researched. His grasp of the truly important issues as distinguished from the extraneous ones was remarkable. We taped his opening remarks and



Stan H. Sabin
OCIPUG President

Dave is planning on writing a report for you after editing out what we promised not to disclose. For competitive reasons some products and features have to remain secret until Microsoft is ready to release them.

We are currently investigating the possibility of obtaining a regular SIG meeting place of our own and I hope to have the details for you in the next issue. We all should be grateful for the efforts DAN LIKINS and DAVE LORENZINI have expended toward this goal. They are putting in many hours working out a suitable location that we can afford and that will meet our needs.

We have been having some equipment problems with our BBS and as a result it has been out of service a few days this month. The public line has been down even longer. We are presently discussing the possible donation of equipment with representatives of several vendors. We are reluctant to use club funds to buy equipment that we believe we can get contributed as we need those funds for other activities. I hope you can bear with us while we work this out. In the meantime if you can help us out in any way please let me know. Remember this is *your* club and we all need to work together.

In the meantime, keep attending the SIG meetings where the "rubber meets the road" in gaining additional knowledge and helping others also to do the same. Happy computing!!!

Tim Smith Memorial Fund

In memory of our recently deceased program chairman, Timothy W. Smith, OCIPUG has established a memorial fund. It will be used to fund a scholarship for a deserving student pursuing studies in computer science at Orange Coast College.

As you will see on page 20

of this issue, we now have \$1,290.00 in that fund.

Contributions (which are tax-deductible under both Federal and State tax law) are still being solicited. We will include a report on the progress of this fund in the financial report each month at the back of the *README.DOC*.



General Meeting Report

PIXIE, AST's VGA-Plus, GRASP, and PRODIGY

by Linda F. Leydekkers

If you missed this general meeting, you really missed a lot! It was an exciting, action packed program presented to a capacity crowd. President Stan Sabin opened with announcements and a review of the meeting agenda. Director, Dave Lorenzini, asked for nominations for the upcoming Board of Directors election.

If you are interested in running for election as a Board Member or one of the Officers, contact Dave as soon as possible. Last year there were campaign posters, flyers and enthusiastic participation by the nominees; here's your opportunity. The Board meetings are listed on the SIG

Guide calendar and all OCIPUG members are welcome to attend. Come to the board meeting if you want to know more about the position, or call any of the board members. Dave Lorenzini in particular will be glad to hear from you. His committee's nominations will be presented at the September General Meeting; the election will be at the October General Meeting.

Club coffee mugs (\$4) and OCIPUG golf shirts (\$20) were available for sale to members on the patio.

Those who have bought these shirts are asked to wear them for the club photo to be taken at the September General Meeting. All our members are encouraged to participate in this group photo session (even if you don't have one of the special shirts) which will be held at OCC LeBard Stadium located next to the Adams parking lot as the second half of the meeting. Don't miss it. If you are there you will get a free

copy of "Running MS-DOS", by Van Wolverton, from Microsoft Press. (Is this a bribe, folks? Hmmm, sure, but it's a nice one). Paul Curtis, who is handling arrangements for this event, would like to talk to anyone with professional photo equipment in a larger format than 35mm. His number is listed on the inside back cover of this issue.

Our OCIPUG Librarian and newly appointed Director, Bonnie Ulanovsky, gave a short account of the software available this month. She then introduced Dave Lorenzini who demonstrated *Automenu*, a very popular shareware program by Marshall Magee. Dave has been using *Automenu* to create application menus for his clients who use hard disk based systems. If you find it as valuable as Dave does, you are expected to send the author a registration fee of \$50. Paying this fee entitles you to continue using the program and you will be notified of updates when they become

Seventeen OCIPUG Members Win Over \$1600.00 in Prizes

Dan Likins

The August meeting was without question *impressive*. How could our raffle match the excitement of such a program except by having hundreds of dollars in prizes? That is exactly what we did!

As has often been the case, our speakers and their companies were very generous to us. This month our program featured high quality graphics programs and the hardware needed to use them to best advantage. Our raffle prizes reflected this emphasis.

We had a demonstration of the presentation graphics program, *PIXIE*, and its manufacturer, Zenographics, gave us two copies

of it to give away.

Doug Zeffler of the Graphics Group demonstrated *GRASP*. This program is distributed by Paul Mace Software who generously donated two copies for the raffle.

While RIX Software in Irvine was unable to send a representative to demonstrate their products at our meeting, they did contribute one copy each of *ColorRIX* and *EGA Paint 2005*.

And of course our most special thanks go to AST. They not only provided us with the use of the hardware needed to demonstrate these products and Roger Andelin to explain their new *VGA-Plus* video display card, they also donated one of these very valuable cards.

We get donations of raffle prizes from many others in addition to our speakers. Our members Kim Betterley and Terry Currier were among this month's donors. Further, some of our area computer stores have added to the raffle's riches. In July, Egghead Discount Software in Santa Ana gave

us several games and other prizes. This month the Costa Mesa Egghead store did likewise. Very likely another of the Orange County Egghead stores will have prizes in our next raffle. Toshiba America, one of our Business Sponsors, The Mug Merchant and RK Productions also contributed prizes given away this month.

Congratulations to the following winners: Jim Allen, Lou Applequist, Dale Budlong, Yates Catlin, Michael Earl, Louis Giberson, John Johnson, Joe Judith, Robert Klein, Ron Knaus, Raymond Mendoza, James Mitchell, Stan Sabin, Jorge Schulz, Thurman Wade, Herbert Wolfson, Katherine Yarosh.

Be sure to attend the General Meeting each month. Maybe you'll be listed in our next raffle report.



available. Marshall Magee usually has a booth at the COMDEX show and is an officer of the Association of Shareware Professionals. Dave is working on having Marshall as a guest speaker at our General Meeting in about six months. We are looking forward to hearing from him.

Dan Likins, another newly appointed Director, announced up-coming swap meet notices and publications that he has made available as handouts for the club membership. Dan also secured the prizes for our raffle. (Boy, does he ever do a great job! He would like some help. Just ask him how.)

Our Vice President, Dr. John Goodman, introduced the Western Regional Marketing Manager for Zenographics, Marcela Widrig. Marcela gave a very impressive demonstration of Zenographics' new product, *Pixie*. This Windows-based presentation graphics program makes it very easy to create good-looking charts and drawings which can then be output to color printers, slide film recorders, and laser printers. For dealer locations or product information call (800) FON-PIXIE.

After a brief break, Dave Carroll, the OCIPUG SIG Coordinator, made location and program announcements for the Special Interest Groups. One item you should specially note: The SIGs that were meeting at New Horizons in Irvine will now be meeting at ValCom in Santa Ana. See the SIG Guide for detailed directions.

Dan Likins then welcomed Roger Andelin, of AST Research. This was a return visit for Roger, since he addressed us first back in January, 1988. He gave a delightful demonstration of the AST *VGA-Plus* video card with a computer run video show developed by Doug Zeffer of GrafX Group. The VGA-capable video projector he used was loaned to us for the day by AST and its installation was funded by Prodigy. Thank you both for making it possible for all who were present to enjoy these fine presentations on a large screen.

Roger told us in detail about what goes on inside a computer monitor. He began with the Monochrome Display Adapter (MDA) developed back in 1981 and progressed through the Color Graphics Adapter (CGA), Enhanced Graphics Adaptor (EGA), Hercules Graphics Card (HGC), and the 1987

development of Video Graphics Array (VGA). The difference between analog and digital signals was clearly illustrated and the speed with which the graphics card functions was amazing. The AST *VGA-Plus* video card is a 16-bit card that has backward compatibility with all of the previously developed display modes. He demonstrated how this card gives a wider and clearer view in spreadsheet and desktop publishing programs as well as offering superior displays for still and animated pictures.

Doug Zeffer, of the Graphics Group, followed Roger with an impressive demonstration of *Grasp*, a graphics editing program, and *Pictor*, a program that comes with *Grasp*. The latter program is used to capture a video image and present it on a computer

One item you should note: The SIGs that were meeting at New Horizons in Irvine will now be meeting at ValCom in Santa Ana.

monitor screen for direct editing by *Grasp*. The demo began with a cute little fellow that gave the impression of a human figure walking across the screen. Much to the amusement and amazement of the audience, Doug proceeded to explain just how he uses these video graphics images to produce computer video "commercials" for various companies. His grand finale was the use of a video camera and a new, lower-cost video capture board to take a picture of the audience. This picture was then edited in *Grasp*, adding a goatee to one member's visage and creating some startling special effects. Perhaps we should have Doug work his magic at our club photo session next month! A comment I overheard from a club member in the audience was, "This certainly brings the high technology of tomorrow to the PC user today." *Grasp*, version 3.1, is being marketed by Paul Mace Software at a retail price of \$139.

Stan Sabin introduced John Squires, who represents another of our newest corporate sponsors, the Prodigy™ Services Company. Their product, *PRODIGY* is an interactive personal information service that has been developed as a joint venture between Sears and IBM. With the assistance of a 1200 or 2400 baud Hayes compatible modem the PC user is able to contact the *PRODIGY* service

for news, investment information, banking, auto insurance quotes, travel booking and information, catalog and on-line shopping, and much more. The special part of this for our club members is that *PRODIGY* offered their \$49 software package and six months of on-line service **FREE** to any member willing to give them feedback on the usability of the program and the service. Prodigy, in conjunction with Hayes, offered our members a simple to use 1200 bps modem for just \$79. This modem functions with only a limited number of software packages.

John Squires' demonstration of what *PRODIGY* had to offer was impressive enough to cause a stampede as soon as the last raffle prize was awarded! For no more than presenting a completed registration slip or membership badge, each member was given an identification number and a fully documented package of *PRODIGY*. We are very fortunate to have been selected as the largest West Coast test group and to be given the opportunity to evaluate this package. If you were one of the hundreds who received a free evaluation copy at the general meeting or later at the Modem SIG, please be sure and fulfill your part of the bargain by providing feedback to the Prodigy Services Company. If you missed these opportunities to get a copy, your last chance will be at the September General Meeting.

I understand that some of our members have already been on-line with *PRODIGY* and have generated some very productive comments on this system. Most importantly, these members have dutifully placed their comments in the electronic mailbox (using the ID number HELP99A) on the *PRODIGY* system or given them directly to John Squires at the Modem SIG. Members have purchased airline tickets, gone catalog shopping, and obtained advice from the experts available on the information section. If an OCIPUG member wants to continue the service after the six month trial period, a special reduced rate of \$49.95 for one full year is available. This is a tremendous benefit to OCIPUG members, so don't forget to contribute your feedback. This will support *PRODIGY* in becoming a viable information service, that we as users, will have helped make more useful by our comments.



Library Corner

Bonnie Ulanovsky, Librarian

One of our members called me last month to set aside disks for her. Since it is difficult for her to stand in line at the Library table, she wanted to pick them up after the meeting. It occurred to me that other people may have a similar problem and I want to encourage you to call ahead for disks.

Please call several days before the meeting; the Thursday or Friday before the general meeting is too late. If I'm not able to come to the phone, please leave your request on the answering machine. Be sure to leave both your name and your phone number, just in case I need to call you back. All I need is the titles of the programs you want and they will be waiting for you in a Baggie™ with your name on it; ask for the disks reserved in your name.

You can pick up disks before the meeting. I am in the auditorium around 8:30 AM to set up and give the early birds a chance to look at the library handout prior to the call to order. Disks can also be mailed to you, if you don't mind paying the shipping cost.

With the photo session at the end of the September meeting, you might want to get your new disks early.

Here are three new additions to the library that look very appealing:

PRESENT, Version 6XE is a Slide Presentation System consisting of three main programs and three utilities to turn your Personal Computer into a full-featured "Slide Projector." (It will, of course, display its images on a color monitor rather than on the wall. You can save screen images of numerous programs with the *CAMERA* program. The *PREPARE* program permits arrangement of screen images or pictures into a "Slide tray file" to which you may add special effects. *PRESENT* uses compressed picture files, but includes utilities to enhance compatibility between it and other programs that store screen images in BASIC's BSAVE format. Version 6XE also provides a utility to allow "slide trays" from previous versions.

CONTEXT and *SNIPIX* by Asysta Consultants are two utilities for the graphic presentation of information. *CONTEXT* will read ASCII text files

and convert them into sequentially numbered (16K) BLOAD format files which may then be processed with *SNIPIX* to superimpose graphic images onto the text for desktop publishing or using the PrintScreen options to prepare posters or cue cards. These BLOAD format files may also be

I want to encourage you to call ahead for disks. You can pick them up either before the meeting or afterwards and avoid the line. Please call in your requests early. Thursday or Friday is too late.

used with *PRESENT*, a slide show presentation utility (described above). The second utility in this package, *SNIPIX*, allows one to cut and paste icons or all or a part of a whole screen from one graphic file to another.

BIBLIO-FILE, Version 2.0 by Dean Madar, M.D., Ph.D. is a citation management system originally designed to be used in keeping track of medical literature references. However, the program's menus and screens are universal enough to be used for any type of citation. Looking at the screens, it appears an ideal system to keep track of articles in scientific or technical journals, or for that matter articles in our computer magazines.

Dr. Madar makes these comments about his program: *BIBLIO-FILE* differs in approach from other citation management packages by providing you with the automatic capacity to file citations by subject matter in addition to using key words. The package was written to accommodate the way most of us collect and create our journal files. That is, we start with a broad topic, collect a few citations in this category and then realize we need to subdivide the file folder into separate and more precise headings. *BIBLIO-FILE* follows this same concept, and allows easy reclassification of articles originally filed in a broader category.

BIBLIO-FILE is menu driven, and uses multiple windows to provide for easy and consistent entry of



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information. All key words, authors and journals can be added during citation entry, or they can be added independently using the appropriate included utility function.

BIBLIO-FILE uses B+ tree indexes into the citation for authors, journals, key words and subjects. This provides for unparalleled speed of retrieval on any combination on these index fields.

Context sensitive help is available in many fields by pressing the F2 key. The active function keys are displayed on the last line on all data entry screens. A prompt which varies from field to field will appear on lines 19-24 as the cursor is moved between fields. Comments (up to 400 characters long) may also be entered.

BIBLIO-FILE is slick, very easy to use, and appears to have anticipated everything for the bibliophile. It will run on floppies, but a hard disk is recommended.

See you early Saturday, September 24th.

SUPPORT YOUR SHAREWARE AUTHORS

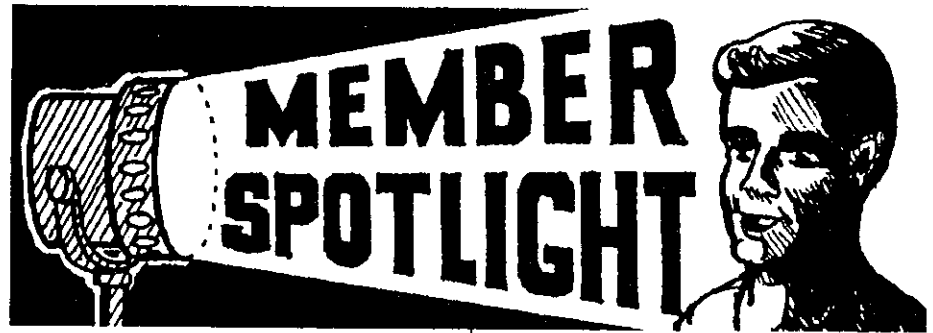


Hurry, Hurry!

**OCIPUG
Golf Shirts**

This is your last chance to get your official OCIPUG shirt for the club photograph at the September meeting.

Call Dave Lorenzini at (714) 852-8663 for details.



Stan Sabin

Linda F. Leydekkers

Impeccably dressed and smiling, Stan Sabin is a familiar face to everyone in the club. He serves as President of OCIPUG and contact person, along with Tom Sutro, for our Real Estate SIG group. Stan contributes many extra hours, as you can well imagine, for meetings, travel, and public relations work for the club.

Richard Sabin, Stan's son, was instrumental in introducing his father to OCIPUG in the beginning of 1986. Stan became a member in April of that year. Soon after joining OCIPUG, Stan was asked to help rewrite a portion of the Bylaws for the club. Within six months of joining he was nominated to run for President.

Born in Boise, Idaho, Stan moved to Long Beach just in time to experience an earthquake. This did not send him running back to Idaho, no sir! For you see, Stan had met a lovely lady named Joy at church in Redlands. Many love letters kept the romance going while the Navy sent Stan all over the world. He served in Korea, including three invasions and two evacuations, and met General MacArthur there. Joy and Stan have been happily married for 37 years. The Sabins have two children besides Richard: daughter Linda Joy and son David. They are also proud grandparents to Jennifer, Christopher and Adam.

Stan worked at Sears for 19 years before suffering a permanent shoulder injury. He has been a realtor for 14 years and owns Sabin Realty. Active in many roles in California realty circles, Stan was the founding President of the California Realtors Computer User Group. His realty affiliations have led Stan to testify before Congress four separate times. He has been privileged to meet Presidents Nixon (at a luncheon meeting), Ford, and Reagan several times.

He began computing with a Texas Instruments computer. He built his first IBM compatible from a kit and has built several others since. Stan uses his AT in his real estate business. Joy has an extensive genealogy and family history she has put together with their XT computer. She is also the friendly voice on the phone when you call Sabin Realty and a very capable assistant in the family business.

WordPerfect is the word processor of choice for the Sabins, although Stan is also familiar with WordStar and a few of the others. He is very familiar with dBase, Lotus, and Q&A along with the real estate program that works with it. Recently he added a 30 Mb hard disk to a system that already contained a 20 Mb hard disk. This gives him room for the data base

Stan's goal is to create as many SIGs as the membership will support and to be instrumental in assisting OCIPUG to grow as well as to have quality programs.

necessary to run his business.

Needless to say, OCIPUG is very fortunate to have members such as this very kind and giving gentleman. It is Stan's goal to create as many SIG groups for the club as the membership will support. He wants to be instrumental in assisting OCIPUG in growth as well as in quality programs. This is a goal we can all applaud and it will take the continuing participation of all of us to achieve it. I think Stan will agree that the rewards for giving come back in riches far more valuable than the monetary kind. Stan, we thank you wholeheartedly for all you have done and plan to do for OCIPUG.



Our Members Speak Out

Real-World Solutions to the Viral Threat

Steve Gibson

This is my final column, of four, on the topic of software viruses. The first three discussed fundamental technology, reproductive action, and anti-viral countermeasure issues. This column will discuss specific viruses, and specific anti-viral countermeasures.

There's a terrific group of people in Santa Clara, California who have dedicated themselves to catching, analyzing, and disseminating helpful and specific information about software viruses. This non-profit organization, the National BBS Society (NBBSS), can be contacted at (408) 727-4559.

The NBBSS has identified 39 different strains of software viruses, and more are being found continually. For example, the latest virus, which the NBBSS has preliminarily named

the *RETRO-VIRUS* was just submitted by one of their members on April 19th. This virus infects and lives inside *any one of three* popular shareware programs. It reproduces by attaching passive carrier clones of

I believe that the virus problem is less widespread than the popular press has indicated, but ... that it has far more potential for damage than is commonly believed.

itself to other executable files in the hope that the infected executable file will make its way to another system which contains one of its three target "infectable" host programs.

It was named the *RETRO-VIRUS* because it continually communicates with its infected clone-carrier executables via a clever "flag" hidden within the system. When any of its viral clones executes, this flag is turned ON. Then when one of the

three internally infected hosts executes this flag is checked, then turned OFF. If the flag was already OFF, the host determines that the system must have been swept clean of its viral carriers. Then, after quietly waiting for several months, the host *reinfects* several of the system's executable files. The system user *thinks* that the system was virus-free... but then the same virus reemerges "from out of nowhere."

As you can see from this example, we're dealing with some extremely sophisticated programming... which is specifically intended to *defeat* attempts at removing the viral code from the system.

So exactly what measures can be taken to deal with the spread of software viruses? The good news is, there are several. Viruses can either be caught "in the act" of spreading their seed, or located while they're lying dormant on a disk.

The "catch'em in the act" approach provides the best anti-viral protection currently available since the reproducing behavior of many viruses is quite similar and can be somewhat generalized, then readily spotted. Such solutions have the negative side effect of requiring continual RAM residency, with all the problems which that implies. Also, they can sometimes erroneously alert their owner to questionable but benign behavior of non-viral software. Even so, these programs are innocuous and are highly recommended when using new software "submissions" on any system which falls into a viral infection high risk group.

The two most effective virus detection monitors available today happen to be the least expensive of any available. FluShot+ is available as shareware, with a \$10 fee requested, and C-4 is a commercial product retailing for just \$29.95.

FluShot+ catches 22 of the known 39 viruses, providing *far greater* protection than other currently available virus fighting agents which retail for hundreds of dollars. FluShot+ may be downloaded from CompuServe (in the IBMSW Forum in DL0) or from the IBM SIG on The



968-7307

ANYWHERE IN ORANGE COUNTY

including

ANAHEIM	NEWPORT BEACH	MISSION VIEJO
CYPRESS	BUENA PARK	WESTMINSTER
IRVINE	HUNTINGTON BCH	SANTA ANA
LAGUNA	GARDEN GROVE	FOUNT. VALLEY

20322 Camfield Lane • Huntington Beach, CA 92646

Source, or from its author's bulletin board system in New York (1200/2400 Baud: (212) 889-6438) under the name FSP12.ARC. It may also be requested directly from its author Ross Greenberg, at (212) 889-6431.

C-4 derives its name from Cybernetic Xylene. Since Xylene inhibits the growth and spread of carbon-based viruses, it is the best commercial viral inhibitor available. Though you might have trouble believing that \$29 could buy much, C-4's publisher is dedicated to stopping

software viral spread and even intends to offer continual upgrades at near their cost. As a result of Interpath's association with the NBBS, C-4 is the *only product today which stops the spread of every one of the NBBS'S 39 known viral strains!* It may be purchased from: Interpath, 4423 Cheeney Street, Santa Clara, CA 95054. (408) 988-3832.

Over the last four weeks it has been my goal to address this issue directly and frankly. I now know that these viruses exist. I believe that the

problem is less widespread than the popular press has indicated, but I also believe, based upon an analysis of the reproductive mechanisms involved, that it has far more *potential for damage* than is commonly believed.

Please exercise some form of self-protection, even if it's just altering some software trading habits. In the mean time I'll keep you posted.

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Steven M. Gibson
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How to stump a computer salesman

Part 3: The Software Package

Kevin Knoepp

When I am evaluating a software package, one of the most important points that I always look for is whether or not it can exchange data or graphic files with other programs. There are two reasons that this is important.

First, unless you are running an integrated package, the chances are your spreadsheet is made by Company A, your database is made by Company B, your word processor is made by Company C etc. If these packages can all read and write each other's files then you can integrate them yourself and produce documents with tables from your spreadsheet and database, mixed in with graphics from your charting program, and fonts from your word processor.

Second, if you ever change to a new program (which you probably will sooner or later) having programs that exchange data will save you from having to start completely over and re-enter all your data into the new package. Most good programs have the capacity to allow you to read and/or write certain industry standard file formats such as ASCII, DBF (dBase), DCA (IBM), WKS (Lotus), or PCX (Paintbrush). I would hardly consider one that did not at least support ASCII. A database should read and write dBase III files and fixed or comma delimited ASCII files. A spreadsheet or accounting package should read and write Lotus WKS or WK1 files. Most good word processors will read (and many can also write) ASCII text files. Graphics and CADD

are a little trickier because there are a lot of different formats out there and few packages can use formats besides their own. Luckily there are programs out there that can translate from one format to another.

Some other questions to ask and

A good salesman will explain both the good and bad points of a program and let the customer make an informed decision.

consider regardless of the type of product are the following:

What are the limitations of the program and what are its weaknesses?

All computer products represent some design compromise whether it be between ease of use and power, price and performance, or price and support, etc. In each class of software product the top three or four choices are usually excellent but each will have its strong points and weaknesses. A good salesman will explain both good and bad points of a program and let the customer make an informed decision. If you don't wish to accept what he or she tells you then ask for a current review from an impartial magazine (*PC Magazine, PC Week, InfoWorld*). You may find a review just on that specific product or you may be able to find one comparing a number of different products in its class.

Does it integrate with anything else?

Certain companies market a line of products that are designed with a similar interface and the ability to exchange data easily. Software Publishing's PFS Professional series (Professional File and Professional

Write) is a good example of this. They have a very similar look and command structure and they can exchange data for mail merge and form letters very easily. In this way they can be almost like using an integrated software package (multiple functions in one program), although as with the integrated programs you may not find each module to be the best one of its type for your needs.

What else do you need to buy to use it?

Some accounting packages require that you buy their forms if you want to print invoices, checks etc. while others will allow you to align the output to print on the forms that you already have.

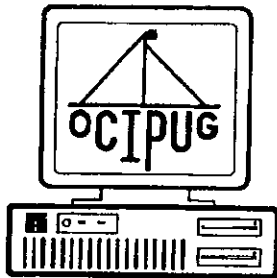
Is there an aftermarket of third party manufacturers of add-ons for the product?

If you are spending a lot of money on the product it is always nice to be able to buy enhancements and add-ons to give a product a capability that it doesn't have. An example of this would be a spelling checker for Lotus 1-2-3 or a mouse interface for WordPerfect.

Are there books on it?

What happens when you have worked your way through the tutorials and manuals and you want to know more? Most popular programs have at least a few books available on how to effectively use them. Some books are quite a bit better than the manuals and a lot go well beyond where the manuals leave off. Compared to consultants and classes they are very inexpensive and a great resource. The availability of books is also a good indication of how widely supported a product is.

Are there classes at the local col-



The Orange Coast IBM PC User Group

SIG GUIDE

A Calendar of Meetings & Events edited by Dave Lorenzini and Robert Siegenthaler
 For more information on membership, write to OCIPUG at P.O. Box 6100-211, Costa Mesa, CA 92628. Call Voice Line at (714) 898-7998 or BBS at (714)964-2034.

GENERAL MEETING

LOTUS 123 Release 3 & LOTUS AGENDA

Mike Stephens and Zyg Furminiak of Lotus will be here to present two of their newest and most exciting products.

PHOTO DAY

Be sure to wear your OCIPUG shirt and a big smile. We will go to Le Bard Stadium after the break for additional festivities.

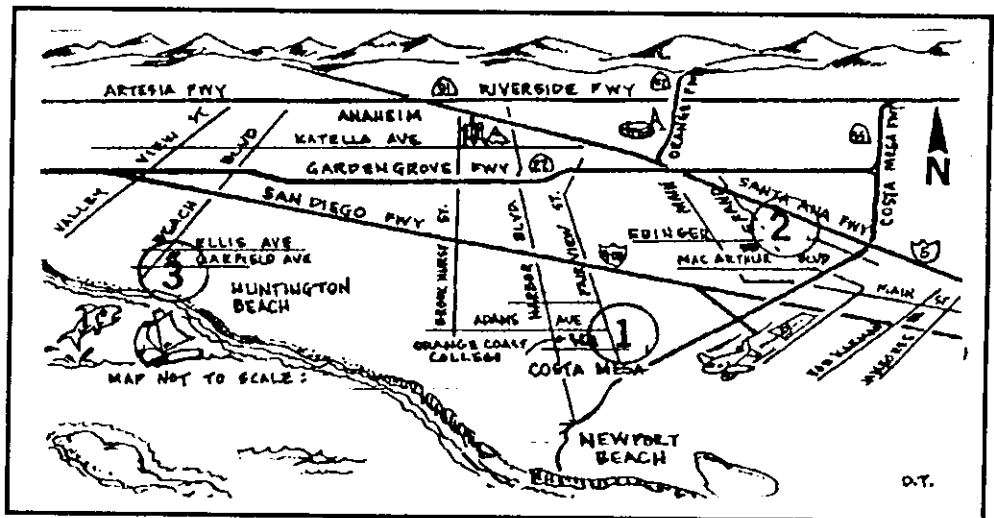
NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

You will get a chance to nominate your favorite member for office.

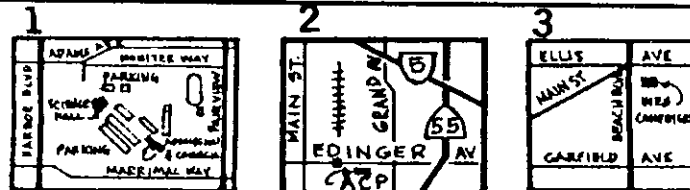
Saturday SEPTEMBER 24, 1988 at 9:00 am
at OCC Science Hall.

FOR ANY LATE-BREAKING NEWS:

Call our 24-hour Hot-Line Number
(714) 898-7998



LOCATIONS



Inset Map 1: Orange Coast College -
 General Meeting & WordPerfect SIG: Science Hall (next to Chemistry Bldg).
 Modem SIG: Room 106, Admissions and Counseling Center (next to Fine Arts).

Inset Map 2: Advanced Computer Products (ACP), Val-Com Computer Center,
 1310-A East Edinger Avenue, Santa Ana, (between Main & Grand, west of 55 Freeway).
 Park in front.

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

NETWORKING

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

Come to this SIG and see a new networking system demonstrated each month. **This month's program will include a discussion and demonstration of workgroup productivity software, including EMAIL, meeting schedulers, menu programs, and desktop organizers for Local Area Networks.**

Thursday 20 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at the Costa Mesa Center, Room 7, Coastline Community College, 2990 Mesa Verde Drive East (corner Baker Street), Costa Mesa.

**NEW USER /
NEW MEMBER**

Coordinator: John Lunsford (714) 995-0947

This is the best SIG to attend first. The meetings run on a 3-month cycle and this month is number ONE in the cycle. **You will be introduced to OCIPUG and its services, as well as learn the basics about computers.**

Saturday 1 October 1988, 9-12 am, at ACP, 1310 East Edinger, Santa Ana [Inset Map 2].

P-CAD

Contact Person: Dan Likins (714) 953-5663

[Coordinator needed soon. Call Dave Carroll at (714) 775-3130 if interested.]

P-CAD is an electronic circuit board design graphics program, and this SIG is also a local P-CAD User Group. **CHECK THE HOT LINE FOR LATE BREAKING NEWS.**

Tuesday 11 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at OLEC Company, 16761 Hale Avenue, Irvine (near Barranca).

REAL ESTATE

Contact Person: Stan Sabin (714) 968-7307

Contact Person: Tom Sutro (714) 650-1121

Jointly sponsored by OCIPUG and several local Boards of Realtors, this is one of our largest SIGs. **Check the Hot Line for topics.**

Tuesday 25 October 1988, 8 am (in the morning!), at the Newport Harbor-Costa Mesa Board of Realtors Boardatorium, 401 North Newport Blvd., Newport Beach. (Coffee at 7:30am).

SPREADSHEET

Coordinator: John Alesi (714) 770-1130

Designated Guru: Neil Carman (714) 964-1901

This group covers popular spreadsheet programs, including shareware products for both beginners and advanced users. **This month learn how to use Macros to create custom menus and how to use financial forecasting models.**

Tuesday 4 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at ACP, 1310 East Edinger, Santa Ana [Inset Map 2].

WINDOWS

Coordinator: Richard Villa (213) 439-8110

[Contact Person needed. Call Dave Carroll at (714) 775-3130 if interested.]

This new SIG will cover the techniques of using software running under the Windows environment, including Pagemaker for the PC, Write, Excel, Micrografix Designer, and many others. NOTE PAGEMAKER DESKTOP PUBLISHING ISSUES ARE COVERED UNDER DESKTOP PUBLISHING SIG.

Wednesday 26 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at WEH Computers. [Inset Map 3].

WORD

Coordinator: Winston Jewson (714) 544-4330

Contact Person: Jim Samuelson (714) 895-2229

We will discuss possible topics for future meetings, including style sheets and fonts. Random access will follow. Bring your WORD problems.

Monday, 24 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at SIRIUS COMPUTING, 14600 Golden West, Suite A-101, Westminster, (just north of 405 Freeway on right).

WORDPERFECT

Coordinator: Jim Pieratt (714) 969-4782

Coordinator: Taoward Lee (714) 646-5557

WordPerfect is suitable for both beginners and advanced users. **This month's topic is on forms and styles.**

Saturday 29 October 1988, 12:15 to 3 pm, at OCC Science Hall (after the general meeting). [Inset Map 1].

ACCOUNTING

Coordinator: Ed Halsted (714) 840-7027

Coordinator: Karen Swanson (714) 846-2059

Data Access Corporation will demonstrate their software on Property Management.**Monday 17 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at PC Rentals, 7372 Prince Drive, Huntington Beach (Near NE corner Warner & Gothard).****C LANGUAGE**

Coordinator: Joel Charbonnet (714) 856-1591

We will be implementing suggestions received at our September meeting, starting with data structures. Now is a good time to learn C from the beginning.**Tuesday 18 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at ACP, 1310 East Edinger, Santa Ana [Inset Map 2].****CAD/GRAPHICS**

Coordinator: Richard Moser (714) 541-6801

Designated Guru: Dave Lorenzini (714) 852-8663

MTI College will present their CAD training program and give us a tour of their new facilities. Dave Lorenzini will give us a preview of *AutoCAD* Release 10. NOTE NEW LOCATION.**Thursday 13 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at MTI College, 2011 West Chapman, Orange. (Use first floor rear entrance).****DATABASE**

Coordinator: Bob Schmiedeke (714) 536-1178

Contact Person: Jerry Smith (714) 847-1431

Both beginning and advanced database topics for a variety of powerful and low cost products will be covered in this group.

Tuesday 11 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at ACP, 1310 East Edinger, Santa Ana [Inset Map 2].**DESKTOP PUBLISHING**

Coordinator: Richard Villa (213) 439-8110

This SIG covers all desktop publishing topics in general during the first part, and specializes in *Ventura Publisher* and other advanced topics in the second part.

Demonstrations are made on actual equipment and software. NOTE: INSTALLATION OF PAGEMAKER UNDER WINDOWS IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN THE WINDOWS SIG.

Wednesday 5 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at WEH Computers [Inset Map 3].**DOS and LANGUAGES**

Coordinator: Steven Pierce (714) 631-2120

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. **Dave Lorenzini will lead a hands-on session in customizing *Automenu*.****Wednesday 12 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at ACP, 1310 East Edinger, Santa Ana [Inset Map 2].****HARDWARE**

Coordinator: Dan Likins (714) 953-5663

[New Coordinator needed soon. Call Dave Carroll at (714) 775-3130 to volunteer.]

This SIG is one of the most popular, judging by the strong attendance. The topics are determined by the interests of the members. This will also be an organizational meeting for the proposed new Advanced Hardware SIG.**Thursday 27 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at ACP, 1310 E. Edinger, Santa Ana [Inset Map 2].****INVESTORS**

Coordinator: Ralph Minarich (714) 494-2209

Contact Person: Gordon Savage (714) 533-3986

This group explores the world of software designed especially to help investors of stocks, bonds, and commodities. **This month we will see a demonstration of the Schwab *Equilizer* program.****Wednesday 19 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at ACP, 1310 E. Edinger, Santa Ana [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. **This month we will be looking at *Procomm's* Host Mode. Run your own mini-RBBS.****Thursday 6 October 1988, 7-10 pm, at Orange Coast College [Inset Map 1].**

OCTOBER 1988

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 9 am to Noon New Users
2	3 6:30 Board Meeting UAC	4 7pm Spreadsheets A.C.P.	5 7 pm Desk/Pub WEH Computers	6 7 pm Modem O. C. C.	7	8
9	10 Columbus Day 7pm BBS Support @ 19651 Sanderson lane, H.B.	11 7pm Dbase @ ACP PCAD 16761 Hale Irvine OLEC	12 7 pm DOS @ A.C.P.	13 7pm CAD/ GRAPHICS @ MTI	14	15
16	17 7 pm Accounting 7372 Prince Dr. H.B.	18 7pm C Language @ ACP News letter deadline	19 7pm Investor A.C.P.	20 7 pm Network- ing @ Mesa Verde Center, C.M.	21	22
23	24 <u>NEW!</u> MS Word 7:00 @ Sirius Computing	25 8am Real Estate NH-CM Board	26 <u>NEW!</u> Windows 7:00 @ WEH Computers	27 7pm Hardware A.C.P.	28	29 9 am OCIPUG General Meeting, OCC Science Hall 12:15 WordPerfect
30 Time Change	31 Halloween					

SEPTEMBER 1988

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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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	

NOVEMBER 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		

leges or training centers that teach the product and are there consultants who can be hired to set it up?

This is important if you are considering an elaborate or expensive package that you may need help to learn and set up. It also tells you whether or not a package is very popular and widely supported.

Does it realistically require an AT class machine, EGA board, mouse or anything else?

Some programs don't specify that you need an AT class machine but really require one to be useful. Some examples are the old version of Microsoft Windows and Ventura Publisher. Personally I think that running some of these new programs on a 4.77 MHz IBM PC is about as much fun as watching grass grow and about as productive.

Does it take advantage of your hardware?

If it is a graphics program are there drivers available for your video setup (EGA, VGA, 800x600 etc)? If you have an AT class machine can the program handle its speed or would you have to slow the machine down? If you have a 386 find out if the company has or plans to create a 386 version of its product. Also see if it supports your printer directly. Making a program work correctly with a printer that it does not support can be a real headache and is best avoided at all costs especially where graphics are concerned.

Is it copy-protected and if so what is the installation procedure?

Thank God, the trend in software is definitely away from copy protection! Copy protected software is to be avoided like the plague, but if for some reason you decide to buy protected software you should find out if it can be installed on a hard drive and if you can make or buy any backups.

Is there something in shareware or public domain that can do the job?

If money is an object (as it always is with me) or even if it isn't, you should check out what is available in shareware or public domain. Some of the best utilities I have are shareware that I registered for very little money. Many times you can find things in shareware that you can't get off the shelf.

Finally, and most importantly, you should find out what your friends at OCIPUG think of the product. Chances are you can find at least a few people out of our 1000 or so members who have used just about any program you come across. Talking to someone who isn't trying to sell you something can help a lot. The club BBS is a great place to ask for opinions of a product and to share both your good experiences and your horror stories.



An Expensive Computer Lesson

G. Walter Coles

[The following article is based on a letter from Mr. Coles. We asked Paul Curtis to write a response, which you will find on page 11, in order to give you some additional perspective on the issues raised by Mr. Coles.]

One of the main reasons for joining OCIPUG is to learn from the experiences that other members have had and are willing to share. I have been fooling around with computers for about eight years and I am fairly proficient with my 386 clone. Even so, I am constantly in a position of having to ask questions and reread manuals.

Like most of my fellow OCIPUG members, I try to research a new purchase very thoroughly before handing over my hard-earned money for software or hardware products. Because there are dozens of choices in just about every category, most of us peruse computer magazines and ask other users about their experiences. Also like many other members, I tend to shop for bargains because I can't always afford the prices charged by the big-name manufacturers and dealers. We all want the most productive tools possible for our money.

When my business expanded and opened a new office in Atlanta, I was faced with the need to purchase a second system. I decided to send the 286 clone we already had to Atlanta and purchase a 386 for our Huntington Beach office.

I spent weeks working out my choices. Our \$3,400 budget meant that we would have to get a clone machine. Which was the best motherboard, hard disk and controller, floppy drives, video card, etc? Who had the system we wanted for a price we could afford?

The vendors turned out to be much the same. All of them were storefronts, or advertised out of their home-shops. Few, if any, had been in business more than a year. Many advertised in *Micro Times* or *Computer Currents*, two giveaway magazines distributed in Orange County. For our budget it was either one of these operations or a folding table at the computer swap meet. I finally settled on a place in Costa Mesa.

For the next 2 months I had constant problems with mysterious system crashes and memory errors. The system was returned three times for repairs, leaving me computerless for several days. Finally the owner and his technician admitted defeat and reluctantly agreed to a refund. The refund check bounced three times and I have had to resort to legal proceedings

to try and collect. It will be three months or more before I see that money again, if I ever do.

The moral of this story is that vendor research is just as important as checking the performance and reliability of the hardware and software. Unfortunately, making wise decisions about vendors is much more difficult.

I haven't found any comparison reports pertaining to local vendors. Perhaps this is an area for discussion by the OCIPUG board of directors, as a possible undertaking. Beyond that, it may be worth our time to spend part of a monthly meeting on the subject of "Where to Purchase." In my experience it's no less important than the choice of "What to Purchase." I am now a humbler, but, I hope, a wiser computer user.

An Inexpensive Computer Lesson

Paul Curtis

I sympathize with your quandary and frustration. On the other hand, I think you actually had a pretty in-expensive, albeit painful, computer lesson. Let me explain why I think this.

There are three steps you should take whenever you buy anything. You

first need to ask "What result do I wish to obtain?" Next, "What device or system must I buy to get this result?" Finally, "Who should I buy it from?" You can't get realistic answers to question two before number one is answered, nor to three till you have answered both one and two.

How do you really figure out what your needs are? You can read a lot of thick, confusing books—after you learn a new language: computerese. Or you can ask someone you *trust*, who also knows the answers to your questions. To get the answers during your own lifetime, we'll skip the first source of information and go right to the second.

By joining OCIPUG, you have taken a major first step toward answering your questions. Next, find someone in our group who has had a problem similar to yours. Having endured the experience, this person will probably be delighted to share it with you. If their problem is still unsolved, you have at least found someone to join you in your quest for answers.

Ask the leaders of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) concerned with the applications that you are using. Often they can answer your questions directly. In those instances where they can't, they can very likely direct you to someone who can.

If you choose, you can seek the advice of a computer professional. Where do you find one you can trust? Retail stores are a good place to start. They are easy to find and advertise in user publications as well as the Yellow Pages. But how do you know which ones to believe?

Realtors say the three most important things about any property are its location, its location and its location. Of similar importance about a professional consultant is his or her references, references and references.

Before you retain someone to help you solve your problem or decide on a purchase, check their references carefully. You may well wish to check not only the reference you are given directly by that professional, but also others suggested to you by those references.

Anyone can say anything to you or print it in an advertisement. The question is, do they keep their promises?

A good company or consultant knows the value of a good reputation and will make every effort to avoid promising what can't be done and to fix problems when they do arise.

If a dissatisfied customer voices a complaint against any company in the OCIPUG Random Access session he or she has a whole auditorium full of people listening. Not everyone in the

hand, if you are not spending very much money and are not going to invest a lot of your own time in this project, you probably don't need a consultant.

Once you have identified the specific software and hardware products you are going to buy, where are you going to buy them? Remember that word *trust*? Remember the person you attached that word to? Go find that person and ask him where he purchased his software and hardware. Ask him if he has had any problems with either the retailer or the

manufacturer. Ask him if the problems have been solved in a satisfactory manner. If the answers to these questions are all YES, go buy the products there. You have received a sterling reference.

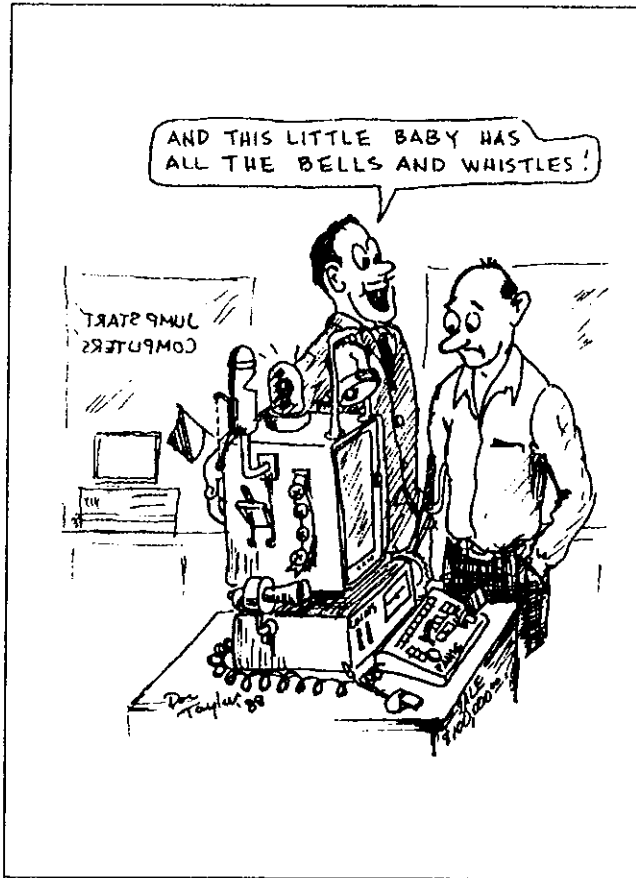
Avoid surprises.

Before you buy, find out specifically what you are entitled to and for how long in the way of system configuration, training, telephone support and warranty repair work. Find out if what you are planning to purchase is all that you will need to make your system work. If not, find out what else is needed, how much it will cost, and what its availability is.

Remember that you are dealing with very complex systems which require a high level of user sophistication and understanding. There will be problems. Allow for the fact that the answers to these problems may take longer to determine than you anticipate. This comes with the territory. If you understand this and

prepare accordingly, that will go a long way towards the early resolution of your problems when they occur.

For references to do you any good, they must include people or companies who have purchased the same system in the same configuration that you are considering. I strongly suspect that if you had asked the Costa Mesa retailer referred to in your letter for such references you could have avoided a lot of grief.



audience will have seen the offender's advertisement, but everyone present is interested in computers and has now heard about the problem. They will be wary now that they have heard this person's sad story.

If you are hiring technical expertise to assist you with a high dollar purchase, get a second opinion. Be certain that the person giving you selection advice has no economic interest in the outcome of the transaction, else you may be buying the product that pays your advisor the highest commission. On the other

SIG Reports

DOS

Steven Pierce

The DOS SIG met in the Community room of the Ebb Tide Trailer Park at 1560 Placentia in Newport Beach. With 20 people in attendance, Stephen Schiro from Borland International spoke on *Sprint* and *Sidekick Plus*.

The first subject Mr. Schiro took up was *Sprint*, a menu driven product with pull down menus that contains interfaces that emulate other word-processing programs (including *WordPerfect*, *Word*, etc.). Thus if you are already familiar with a word-processor you don't have to learn a whole new system. Furthermore, users can create their own interfaces if they wish from a programmable set of instructions.

Files are saved in a special Borland format, but can be imported and exported to many other file formats. Up to 24 files can be opened at the

same time with up to 6 of them displayed in on-screen windows. Information can be cut from one window and pasted elsewhere in that window or in another window.

There is an Auto-Save feature so if the power goes off in the middle of a document you will not lose all the work you have done. There is a 100,000 word dictionary and thesaurus included as well as a macro capability.

Stephen's next subject was *Sidekick Plus* which can be either a TSR program or a stand alone program. As a TSR it can be unloaded at the DOS prompt in order to free up memory if needed.

The file manager is similar to *XTree™*, allowing file, directory and disk maintenance.

There are 9 note pads available, each in a different window. Also there is a time planner with a calendar, an appointment book, a calculator and an alarm clock plus a phone book

function.

According to Mr. Schiro this is not just an upgrade to *Sidekick*, but a whole new program.

A big thank you to Steve Davis for a good job of taking notes at the meeting on his laptop computer.

Next month on September 14th John Goodman will talk about DOS 4.0. We also will have a Random Access time for your miscellaneous questions. I hope to see you there.

Hardware

Peter Sivgals

On Thursday, August 28, the Hardware Special Interest Group met at New Horizons Learning Center for the last time. The September meeting will be at the Advanced Computer Products, ValCom Computer Center, 1310 East Edinger Avenue in Santa Ana. In addition to Dan Likins, the SIG leader, 27 persons attended this

What is a SIG and why should I care?

John Lunsford

SIG stands for Special Interest Group. What's so special about it? SIGs are where *most* of the real activities of OCIPUG happen. The General Meetings represent three hours of presentations per month. Our SIG meetings collectively go on for nearly 60 hours each month. A General Meeting is directed toward several broad interest topics, but a SIG meeting is by design specifically focused on one area. General Meetings are attended by hundreds of people, the typical SIG meeting by ten to thirty.

Most importantly, a SIG meeting gives our members the opportunity to talk directly to

others who are active in their main interest areas.

If you are new to computing, we have two SIGs you will particularly value. The New Users SIG is a three month series of presentations on what the neophyte needs to know about getting started in the world of PC computing. Plenty of good basic information is presented. You also will find ample opportunities to get your questions answered. The DOS SIG is for those who want to find out more about how the Disk Operating System works. Since DOS is the one program that we all use every time we turn on our computers, the DOS SIG is the logical next step from the New Users SIG. It may also be a place you will choose to attend over and over again from then on.

Whatever your interest in computing there is an OCIPUG SIG that is focused on giving you

useful information. If you find a topic you are interested in for which we do not yet have a SIG, simply gather a group of people who are interested in the same aspect that you are and start your own SIG. That is where all of the others came from: Members who wanted to know badly enough to ask for help and others willing to give it.

That brings up a key point. If you are already an expert in some area please consider attending the SIG on that topic, not because you will learn a lot, but because they need *you* to share what you know. OCIPUG is an all-volunteer operation. Folks who need to learn depend on those of us willing to teach.

Besides, it's fun!



meeting, but there were only 25 chairs in the room!

Dan opened the Hardware SIG meeting with questions from the audience. These included:

How do I use memory above 640K?

Dan discussed the basics of Extended and Expanded memory, bank switching, and the differences among the various microprocessors.

Can one have both an RLL and an MFM formatted hard drive in the same system?

The general conclusion was that combining these drives in the same system was not advisable, but several opinions were offered on how it might be done.

Which is the better buy, the Compaq 386-SX or the AST 386?

This question brought about a discussion of system performance limitations due to processor speed, bus lines, disk access times, seek times, etc. There is a trade off between speed and cost.

Do all modems have a built in self diagnostic capability?

The conclusion was that most modems do have a self-diagnostic capability, but not all.

Can a 80386 microprocessor be exchanged for a Motorola 68000 series microprocessor?

Dan gave a short history of the separate evolution of the Motorola and Intel microprocessors, suggesting that the 68000 would have been a better choice for a PC.

What is an uninterruptable power supply?

Dan gave a short presentation on different types of UPSs and explained in more detail the mysteries of surge protection, metal oxide varistors, RF filters and other components of these devices.

How can I avoid reading/writing problems using 1.2 MB and 360 kB floppy drives?

The safest way is to use 1.2 MB disks in 1.2 MB drives and 360 k disks in 360k drives. It is OK to read 360 kB floppies in the 1.2 MB drives, but one is well advised not to write them there if you can avoid it.

The Officers and Board of Directors of OCIPUG thank the
New Horizons Computer Learning Center

for their generosity in housing many of our past SIGs and we wish them well in their new location:

**1231 East Dyer Road, Suite 140
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For the rest of the meeting, Dan discussed how printer ports can be identified, added or swapped by using a simple BASIC program. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Investors

Greg Cimmarrusti

The August 17th meeting at New Horizons featured John Ryan of PC PRO in Huntington Beach and host of Computerized Investing on 1600 AM MONEY Radio. He spoke in front of a sold-out crowd of over 40 people. The topics of discussion included computerized models of technical indicators for determining either market direction or an individual stock's direction of movement.

John Ryan discussed two indicators that were of particular interest to him, "stochastics" and "relative strength." When a stock's 5 day moving average price crosses its indicator, he regards that as either a buy or sell signal, depending on its direction of crossing.

Since the evening ended with a question and answer session which ran over the allotted time, John was kind enough to agree to join us again in September. He will then bring several market charting programs to demonstrate to the SIG. That meeting will be on September 21 at ACP computers on Edinger in Santa Ana.

Hope to see you all there; we always welcome new recruits. As Confucius said in reference to technical analysis of the stock market, "I know of no way of judging the future but by the past."

PC Networks

Jim Mansfield

The PC Networking SIG met at Coastline's Mesa Verde Learning

Center on August 18th. Andy McGill talked about the Unix Operating System and computer networking options available to the Unix user.

As part of his presentation, Andy demonstrated the interconnection of two Unix-based PC systems using the UUCP program. The PCs he used were an Everex 286 with an Opus co-processor board especially designed to run Unix and a Zenith 386. Both machines contained several megabytes of memory—a necessary prerequisite to run the Unix operating system.

Andy pointed out that, unlike the interconnection of two PC-compatibles, the networking of Unix machines often involves communication between systems of totally different internal architecture.

Much of the discussion centered on the similarities and differences between Unix, MS-DOS, and OS/2. The general conclusion was that Unix and MS-DOS really are two different cultures that are only beginning to talk to each other.

Real Estate

Stan Sabin

With an attendance of 45 people the August meeting was held at the Huntington Beach-Fountain Valley Board of Realtors Boardatorium on Tuesday August 30, 1988. The program was presented by George and Mary Tharp who are affiliated with Saletrac 2000 which is located in South Laguna, California.

The software program was curiously entitled "Howard and Friends" and written by Howard and Sandy Sanderson. The program is a "Real Estate All in One" for the Individual Sales Person. It consists of a People File for farming, target

marketing automatic past buyer follow-up and prospecting; a Daily Plan which keeps you organized and gives you a prioritized agenda for the day and or month; a Calendar for easy time management; a Goals section where you have instant access to past and projected earnings and tracks where actual business comes from; a Listings area with weekly reminders to check on listings and an automatic reminder of listing expirations; a Closing (Escrow) section to keep all pertinent info at your fingertips; a Referrals section to keep track of all referrals given and received; and a Correspondence section that prints up postcards, letters, labels, envelopes, forms (all on file for instant printing) plus word processing with a mail merge facility.

The program has been endorsed by the Residential Sales Council, CRS Division of N.A.R. and also by the Women's Council of Realtors. There was an active question and answer session after the presentation, a short Random Access session and the meeting was capped off with a drawing for two packages of DESQview software before the meeting adjourned.

The meeting was productive and we invite all interested members to attend the next SIG meeting which will be held September 27th from 8 AM till 10 AM at the Huntington Beach-Fountain Valley Board of Realtors. This location is a correction to the typo in the September Calendar. It is not at the Newport Harbor Board location until the October meeting. See you at the next meeting!

Microsoft WORD

Harold Howarth

The WORD SIG's initial meeting was held on Monday 8/22/88. Those present discussed:

- their experience with MS-Word,
- the format and possible topics for future meetings,
- tips for using various features of MS-Word.

Dave Lorenzini talked about his recent participation in Seattle at the Microsoft Word SIG Summit. This SIG is off to a great start thanks to Dave and Winston Jewson, who is serving as the Word SIG contact person. Thanks also to Jim Samuelson of SIRIUS Computer Service for the use of their

Facilities for our meetings.

The next MS-Word SIG meeting will be held at 7 pm on Monday, September 26, at Sirius, 14600 Golden West, Westminster. Be sure to bring a portfolio of things that you've done and things that you are having problems with!

WordPerfect

Linda F. Leydekkers

Jim Pieratt began the August meeting with an audience of 36 people. After announcing the formation of a subgroup to develop macros for WordPerfect, he described a publication by a WordPerfect SIG in Baltimore called the *WordPerfectionist*. Several of us plan to subscribe. There are group rates available for this very informative publication. If you would like to sign up for a group rate, please call Jim or Taoward as soon as possible. The more we have, the better price we are able to get. Anyone using, or planning to learn *WordPerfect* would benefit from this publication so give a call now, while you are thinking about it!

Bob Yolles, of Yolles Development, was our guest speaker. Bob has developed mouse drivers for *WordPerfect* as well as other software. If your mouse is compatible with the mice from Logitech, Microsoft, or Mouse Systems (MSC Technologies) then his program, *Point-n-Shoot*, will work with it. Some of its special features, when used with *WordPerfect* version 5.0, include 19 parent Menus, 7 Child menus or Help screens, Macros menu, Cursor speed menu, Window menu, Quick entry and Exit from DOS shell, Special "Quick-Key" generic menu, and many more. Only 20 kBytes required. It is a RAM resident program (and therefore it may or may not have some bad interaction with other TSRs you have in your system). All normal *WordPerfect* keystrokes are still effective so you can choose which functions you want to use at the keyboard and which you want to use with the mouse. Bob stated that it was most effective when editing documents. Yolles offered a special introductory price of \$39.00 which he further discounted for the SIG group that ordered at the meeting. If you would like to write for further information: Yolles Development, 124 H Blossom Hill Rd, #3200, San Jose, CA 95123 or call (408) 270-0934. This

program is reviewed favorably in Susan Kelly's book, "Mastering WordPerfect 5.0."

Jim Pieratt gave a demonstration of using macros for merge functions within documents. This technique will be taught in the macro classes mentioned above. Questions on printer drivers from *WordPerfect* inevitably came up. There seems to be a great many problems with most of the drivers. *WordPerfect* is working hard to fix this and has put out corrected printer driver disks. Unfortunately, they do not send them out automatically, so if you are having trouble with your printer, give their friendly help line a call. They ship updates on request. Keep asking and letting them know of any difficulty you have experienced or features you would like incorporated. This how we get things done. In this case it is certainly true that "The squeaky wheel gets the grease."

A review of the *WordPerfect* file manager and how to use it to organize your hard disk answered many questions and triggered still more which then were discussed. With the aid of the overhead projection system the routines were displayed as they were reviewed.

The macro subgroup held its first meeting on September 3rd. Ten people showed up. Jim has announced that during the next two months this group, which is now closed, will be creating a manual of *WordPerfect* macros and a mouse driver specifically designed to ease the creation of *WordPerfect* macros.

Jim has also announced plans to form another subgroup in the near future focusing on the use of the Hewlett-Packard Series II LaserJet with *WordPerfect* 5.0. Be sure to attend the September SIG meeting if you wish to join this group.



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OCIPUG On Line (BBS)

Procomm Plus vs. GT PowerComm

Terry Currier

In this article I will compare two data communications software products: *Procomm Plus* and *GT PowerComm* version 14.00. *Procomm Plus* is certainly more "user friendly" than *GT PowerComm*. With all the context sensitive help that *Procomm Plus* provides, it's a breeze to set up. Setup for *GT PowerComm* is not really difficult though it is not nearly as easy as *Procomm Plus*. Each of the programs includes default settings for a Hayes modem. Other functions such as selecting the COM port, adding new numbers to the dialing directory, or changing other setup parameters are handled differently by the two programs.

Press ALT-Z, and *Procomm Plus* provides information about the current screen. *GT PowerComm*, on the other hand, has only one help screen. It shows the user which keys are assigned to each command. With *Procomm Plus* there are default settings for each setup parameter. If

***Procomm Plus* is certainly more "user friendly" than *GT PowerComm*. With all its context-sensitive help, *Procomm Plus* is a breeze to set up.**

the user doesn't know which alternative to select, pressing the Enter key prompts *Procomm Plus* to select a "best" choice. With *GT PowerComm* if the user fails to make an explicit selection, the program simply leaves the parameter blank.

As one would expect, each of these programs offers the capability to enter a long list of phone numbers in its dialing directory. A selected number can be entered manually for dialing, retrieved from a menu list, or placed in a ring buffer with others for continuous dialing until one answers. *Procomm Plus* offers the added feature

of allowing the user to copy the phone list to the printer.

When adding or modifying a telephone number, *GT PowerComm's* logic works a bit better. Press A to add a number, and it moves directly to the next available opening. Press C to change a number and *GT PowerComm* asks which one. *Procomm Plus*, on the other hand, uses R (revise) for both adding and changing numbers.

With either program the user may choose the desired terminal emulation and script when adding (or changing) a number. A new feature of *Procomm Plus* allows the user to sort the dialing directory alphabetically. *GT PowerComm* also sorts the directory alphabetically and can sort by date and time logged on, elapsed time, or baud rate as well.

So, with the exception of *Procomm Plus's* excellent help screens, the programs are much the same. What I like most about *GT PowerComm* is its package of extra features in the areas of the dialing directory and logging. With *Procomm Plus* pressing T while in the dialing directory results in a display of the call history. This includes the total number of times connected, the last date connected, the terminal emulation used, and the script used. *GT PowerComm* shows all of this information and more. It displays the hours the BBS is open (you put that in), the number of times connected, the elapsed time of the last connection, the number of uploads and downloads performed, and the password for each.

Macros are created in *Procomm Plus* by pressing ALT-M and then typing in the commands on the entry form presented. Ten macros can be defined and each is keyed by pressing ALT and a number key (1-0). With *GT PowerComm* the ten function keys are programmed to perform the desired commands. A macro is then executed by pressing the corresponding function key. It's nice not having to press the ALT-M command to load the macro (as in *Procomm Plus*); however, with *GT PowerComm*, the number of macros is limited to ten.

Additionally, *GT PowerComm* has

the capability to string commands together. For example:

```
F1 = TERRY | -CURRIER | -%P |
```

will send my first name, delay 1 second, send my last name, wait, then send my password—all by simply pressing the F1 function key. Also, as you can see from this example, with *GT PowerComm* the user can program a time delay into a macro. With *Procomm Plus* they can't. Finally, the % symbol tells the macro processor that a password follows. *GT PowerComm* responds by not showing the password on the screen. This comes in handy when you are showing someone a BBS or, even more sensitive, a commercial

Script files appear to be easier to create in *GT PowerComm* than in *Procomm Plus*. However, the *Procomm Plus* script file language does provide many more features.

online service and you don't want that person to know your password. Macros can also be programmed to record all the keystrokes in a file or in a captured screen for future use.

I like the capture mode in *GT PowerComm* better than the one used in *Procomm Plus*. With *Procomm Plus*, pressing F1 brings up a window asking the user to name a capture file or use the default log name. A user who didn't start the capture mode before logging on, typically will want to get this screen out of the way and rename the capture file after the session. With *GT PowerComm* I press ALT-C and the capture begins right away (no pop up window). At the end of the session, *GT PowerComm* asks me if I want to save the capture file and what name I want to use.

Both *GT PowerComm* and *Procomm Plus* allow the user to view files. *GT PowerComm* also allows the user to press ALT-8 and view a memory buffer of the capture file contents without having to type in the file name. *Procomm Plus* automatically captures the last 6 screens without using the F1

command, and that does come in handy when I forget to turn on the capture mode. The capture mode lets you store everything that appears on your screen during a session in a disk file. Both programs also provide an automatic call logging feature. This stores in a special disk file a record of all the calls you have made showing the number called and the time spent, etc. plus *GT PowerComm* records files up- and down-loaded, protocol used and time taken for those file transfers.

Script files appear to be easier to create in *GT PowerComm* than in *Procomm Plus*. However, the *Procomm Plus* script file language does provide many more features.

Another of the things that I like about *GT PowerComm* over *Procomm Plus* is the ability to toggle the beeps off or on with the ALT-9 key sequence. When it is late and the kids are asleep or I'm at the office, this feature is really great. You can shut off the beeps in *Procomm Plus* also, but only by changing the setup options, and this is somewhat more involved.

I like *GT PowerComm's* displaying the time I have been online continuously.

The file up/downloading process is easier in *Procomm Plus* because it indicates the amount of time it will take for the file transfer. Unfortunately *GT PowerComm* does not provide this useful feature. With either program the user doesn't have to retype the name of the file for up/downloading. I did notice, however,

I like the capture mode in *GT PowerComm* better than the one used in *Procomm Plus*.

that when I downloaded a file named SMG-COLS.ARC file with *Procomm Plus*, it shortened the name to COLS.ARC whereas *GT PowerComm* handled the full name. With either program the user can specify where the downloads will be stored, but with *GT PowerComm* the user can also indicate where the program should look for upload files.

Both programs allow the user's computer to be setup as a host computer (mini-BBS). *GT PowerComm* is much more complete in this area. Some have used it to set up their systems as full BBS facilities. On the

other hand *Procomm Plus's* host capability is good and much simpler to set up.

The biggest drawback with *GT PowerComm* is that the author hasn't been keeping in touch with the registered users to notify them of updates. *Procomm Plus's* authors do keep their registered users informed. To help remedy this situation, a network of BBSs has been organized to connect *GT PowerComm* registered users. Otherwise, users (even registered ones) have to track updates by watching club libraries, catching an update on a BBS, or calling the authors. The biggest advantage of *Procomm Plus* is the fact that so many people are using it. There are plenty of people to turn to for help.

Finally, remember that neither *GT PowerComm* nor *Procomm Plus* are "free". If you use *GT PowerComm*, please register your copy. To obtain *Procomm Plus* you will have to buy it from either Datastorm or a retail dealer.



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Technical Corner

Some Interesting and Useful Facts About PC Disks.

John Goodman

This material is taken mainly from the presentations at the Hardware SIG meeting held on July 28th of this year.

In less than eight years, the speed at which the micro-processors in our personal computers run has increased by a factor of at least six. Just being able to compute faster is not enough, though. The information on which the computations are being made must make its way to and from our hard disks and so we want that process also to be made faster in proportion to the speed of our processors.

This speed, called the bus speed, has in fact increased right along with that of the CPUs. Making these vast improvements has been challenging not only for the makers of our CPUs, but also for both disk and controller makers.

The original PC runs at a clock speed of about 5 million cycles per second (5 MHz). Some of the newest machines, using the Intel 80386, run with a clock speed of 25 MHz and furthermore they can handle information in 32-bit chunks, as opposed to the early PCs which only knew how to transfer information 8 bits at time. To keep up, disk sub-systems have had to get twenty times faster along the way.

The original PC used a communications standard between the disk controller and its disk developed by Seagate and called ST506. This standard uses a data encoding technique called MFM (or Modified Frequency Modulation).

Nowadays, we often use Run Length Limited encoding (RLL) which allows one to put approximately 50% more information on each disk track. Since the disks still turn at the same rate this allows one to write or read information 50% faster than with MFM encoding.

In order to make the disk systems run even faster a new protocol for

communication is required. One that has received a lot of attention lately is the Small Computer Systems Interface or SCSI (pronounced "scuzzy"). In this system the computer sends information out on a secondary bus (the SCSI bus) and the disk controller takes it off of that bus and passes it along to the disk drive. This same bus can also be used, more or less at the same time, for communication to other devices including laser printers, scanners, and even other computers.

The newest way to interface a computer and a hard disk is now the Enhanced System Device Interface (ESDI). This protocol allows bus speeds of at least 15 MHz, a speed limit that will be raised shortly as this technology matures.

According to Louis Columbus of Toshiba America, 90% of the disk drives being manufactured today conform to the ST506 standard, 3% are SCSI drives and the remaining 7% are ESDI drives.

Of course as our computers (and their disk drives) become ever faster, we are able to do tasks that require manipulating much more information. A simple example is Windows and other graphical user interfaces as replacements for a simple command line. Another example is a graphics workstation. In either case, as we manipulate more data we also wish to store more data. Thus we demand that our disk drives not only become faster, we also want them to be larger in data storage capacity.

This makes especially interesting another related development which Mr. Columbus shared with the OCIPUG Hardware SIG: that of the perpendicular recording floppy disk drive. Using this technology, in which the magnets that hold the 1s and 0s that are our data are aligned perpendicular to the disk surface (unlike the magnets on the floppies you and I use today), Toshiba has been able to put 4 Megabytes of data on a single floppy. This requires a special



floppy disk with a magnetic substrate as well as a special drive. As this technology matures, we can expect to see floppies holding at least 16 MB. Hard disks using a similar strategy will also be built, but Mr. Columbus had no information to share with us on what capacities or speeds they will be able to offer.

Putting ever more data into the same space on our disk drives means we demand more of the systems that put it there and get it back.

As Oran Marksbury, of Western Digital, explained it, this is a function of the accuracy of the read-write head position mechanism and of the electronics that creates and interprets the electrical signals going to and from the drive. In part that electronic circuitry is located on the drive itself and in part it is on the disk controller.

One issue that was not addressed until very recently is that of the vulnerability of the so-called "low-level format" on a hard disk. When the drive is first prepared to hold data, each sector (each place that can hold data) is written on the disk complete with an identification section that tells the drive controller which data holder this

one is. Normally that information is never again written. Over time the information may become faint, much as a painted sign may fade, or it may shift relative to the path followed by the read-write head. Steve Gibson's *SpinRite* is one product that addresses these points, as it can refresh these ID segments for you without requiring you to backup all your data and redo

We can expect to see floppies holding at least 16 Megabytes in the not too distant future.

the low-level formatting.

Another concern is the existence of defects in the surface of the recording medium. Such defects can make the disk unable to record faithfully the signals sent to it in that area. This is the source of what we call "bad clusters." To minimize the problem, redundant data is stored in each sector. These Error Correction Codes (ECC) allow the drive controller to infer what should have been stored there even in the presence of quite a few individual bit errors. Any such correctable error is called a "soft error" and DOS is so designed that it will not

tell us they even exist at all.

Steve Gibson believes that oftentimes soft errors are precursors of unrecoverable, or hard errors. For that reason his *SpinRite* program finds these soft errors and declares the sectors that contain them to be just as bad as those containing hard errors. At the same time he allows the ECC to recover the data that should have been there and then moves it to another, safer location on the disk.

Almost all large hard disks have a number of these bad areas and so the use of some program such as *SpinRite* can be very valuable.

The state of modern floppy disk manufacturing is so good, on the other hand, that it is quite practical to demand perfection. Oran told us that he simply throws away diskettes that format with any bad sectors at all.

Both Oran and Louis noted that hard disks should not be subjected to large temperature gradients and that the hard disks should be brought to room temperature for at least half an hour before using. Thus, when going to Boston in the winter, bring your portable to room temperature before turning on the system. Louis recommended that a temperature gradient of no greater than 20 degrees per hour should be experienced by your hard disk.

Don't forget the warnings about the need to park your hard disk's heads each and every time you turn off your computer. (See last month's Hardware SIG report.)

Finally, a useful tip to protect yourself against human error: If you are using a version of DOS later than 3.2, its *FORMAT* program will not allow you to reformat a hard disk that has a label without giving that label to the *FORMAT* program. If you didn't have a label on the drive, though, it will format it for you just as easily as any earlier version of DOS. So protect yourself. Use the /V option when you first format your hard disk. If you did not do so, you can add a label with the *DOS LABEL* command. Either way, make sure your disk is labelled. Someday you will be very glad you did!



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An Introduction to MIDI

Frank & Grace Harris-Smith

The Origin Of Music

Once upon a time in an obscure cave in France, a not so bright Neanderthal discovered that when he beat on sticks of various lengths an interesting effect occurred. The sticks all sounded different and with practice, he could even endure the racket for a while. History has been resplendent with brave tales of such manly feats of endurance, as the means of producing such noise has become increasingly more sophisticated.

Recently, the digital revolution has encroached into the area of music and musical instruments with the advent

Simplicity of use is the main feature of MIDI as the average MIDI user is not computer literate.

of digitally controlled synthesizers, digital samplers, drum machines and a slew of other high-tech noise makers.

Introduction to the MIDI Concept

The Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) is a well defined system of communication designed to make it easy to connect all these devices. The MIDI Specifications 1.0 is a concise definition first developed in late 1983 and shortly thereafter incorporated into the first instruments. The pioneering companies in the earliest days were Roland and Sequential Circuits.

The Basics of MIDI

MIDI is a serial 31.25 Kilobaud loop with a total of 16 device addresses or, in MIDI terms, channels. This allows the control of 16 individual instruments at once, playing 30 notes per instrument per second. Each instrument can both transmit and receive MIDI data in a manner equivalent to full-duplex operation; thus each instrument can both play other instruments and be played by other instruments.

Several types of data are sent over the MIDI loop. The main types are "performance events," clock messages, and "system exclusive" messages. Each

performance event is a unique real-time occurrence of a musical event. These events can be notes played, pitches "bent," or basically any operation of any instrument function. In a 100% MIDI interfaced instrument all performance events will be transmitted to the MIDI loop. When, for example, a note is struck on a synthesizer, three bytes (24 bits) of data are sent to the MIDI loop: the sending device channel, the note value, and the measured velocity with which the key was struck.

Clock messages synchronize all parts of the system and "system exclusive" messages activate various macro functions of the system such as defining what sound a specific instrument will make.

Yet even with the complexity of the MIDI system's operation, connecting MIDI devices together is a simple matter of daisy-chaining INs to OUTs and selecting the channels you wish the device to respond to. Simplicity of use is the main feature of MIDI as the average MIDI user is not computer literate.

The PC and MIDI, or "The Connection"

Some confusion now exists in the area of "Electronic" and "Computer" music. Attempts at using computers to compose music in the '60s and '70s were disasters. All computer compositions came out sounding mechanical and dull. Composing music was definitely not the computer's "forte."

Not all is lost, however. A computer may be a big zero in creativity, but for the nuts and bolts of music, like putting musical notes on paper, the computer has no equal. With MIDI the

tedious part of arranging music is now done with a system that processes music in a manner similar to the way a word processor handles text.

With the assistance of a synthesizer, a MIDI interface, the right software, and a modest PC the modern day composer can create excellent music in a less time consuming manner. Additionally, in concert situations where interpretation and dynamics may be secondary, the

A computer may be a big zero in creativity, but for the nuts and bolts of music, like putting musical notes on paper, the computer has no equal.

MIDI/PC combo can be used to play instruments with timing precision unparalleled by even the best musicians.

Many other uses of the MIDI/PC combo are possible. The only limits are those of available software. The interested reader will want a good introductory book that will define in depth all the concepts and applications of the MIDI interface. "MIDI Made Simple," by Joseph Gadoury, is available from Synergetics in Meriden, Connecticut. The *MIDI 1.0 Specifications* data booklet is available from the same source.

Back in the late 1970's BYTE magazine published an article about the possibilities of using a micro-computer to play a player piano. Things sure have come a long way....



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	Murray Boobar	Roger Conant	Betty Johnson	Reg Roberts	Christine Tilley
	Clyde Botzmer	Tony De White	Cortland Johnson	Ron Rock	Edmond
	Sharon Broderick	Joe Edberg	Joe Judith	Chuck Rumbold	Tromanhouser
	Robert Bryan	Dezso Fokos	Wendy Keough	Susan Schopp	Gayle Wayne
	Dale Budlong	Gary Gengler	Laurine Love	Myrdith Sheron	Susan Weisner
	Russell Burns	Ken Goodnight	Charles Lovin	Jeff Sinn	Robert Williams
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	Diane Buzerak	Robert Hanson	Mike Moon	Ron Staley	
	T.J. Cash	Ronald Harold	James Piperata	William Stites	
	David Cheaney	Gary Holtz	Pano Rezinis	Phillip Suematsu	

<p>The following persons' memberships expire this month (September):</p> <p>James Anderson</p>	Tom Arnold	Franklin Eastman	Gary Jones	David Raber	Jim Young
	Mark Artesan	Walter Flewelling	Conrad Kimes	Sherry Shea	Annemarie Zihlmann
	John Bennett	Jim Gorum	David LaGier	Robert Siegenthaler	
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	Dennis Dyer	Robert Hawkins	Claude Prettyman	Carl Sufall	

<p>The following persons' memberships expire next month (October):</p>	Jack Appleman	Jackie Davidson	Josie Jellick	David Perry	Janet Tolson
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OCIPUG Financial Report

Walt Drew, Treasurer

OCIPUG August, 1988 Changes in Cash:		Unrestricted Funds	Tim Smith Fund
Cash balance, July 31, 1988		\$8,782.98	\$824.00
Cash receipts			
Membership dues	\$4,955.00		
Advertising	190.00		
Interest	25.65		
Contributions, Tim Smith Fund			466.00
Library fees	208.00	5,378.65	
Cash disbursements			
Meeting expenses	340.72		
Printing	1,081.35		
Equipment purchases	0.00		
Postage	195.00		
Supplies	106.09		
Telephone	61.40	1,784.56	
Cash balance, August 31, 1988		\$12,377.07	\$1,290.00

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** Technical difficulties beyond our control have made it necessary to suspend service on this line temporarily.*

OCIPUG Information & Message Line 898-7998

Future OCIPUG General Meeting Dates (1988-89)

Our General Meetings are held on the last Saturday of each month except when there is a conflict with a major holiday (asterisked months in list below).

September 24	October 29	November 19 *
December 17 *	January 28	February 25
March 25	April 29	May 20 *
June 24	July 29	August 26

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