



PRinT SScreen

The Newsletter for the
Stanford/Palo Alto
PC Users' Group

November 1989

Volume 7, Number 11

Relief

Ware

**Come Help Us
Help Others**

*A Special Auction to Assist
The Earthquake Recovery Efforts*

See page 2

CLUB NEWS

ReliefWare Auction To Aid Earthquake Victims

While many of us have supported the October 17 earthquake recovery efforts personally, SPAUG was unable to coordinate a proper response last month simply because of the chronology of the events — the quake occurring after the planning meeting and only one week before the October meeting.

But it is never too late to stretch out a hand, and this month SPAUG calls upon all of its members to participate in ReliefWare '89: An Auction for Action.

Its success depends upon you, the people who will donate computer-related items and buy them. All donations are tax deductible, as are all purchases, whose proceeds will be sent directly to the American Red Cross South Bay Headquarters.

Depending upon the quantity of donations that we receive, we may run a portion of the proceedings as a "silent auction," where members browse the items on their own and make written bids on a sheet next to the item. The highest bidder at the end of the evening gets to purchase the item.

Several of the vendors who have visited us over the past year are interested in making donations. So bring your unused hardware and software (good condition only, please), your check books and your warm hearts.

October Meeting

Our meeting started out with a demonstration of the Disk of the Month. Our president demonstrated three programs. The first, VCD, allows you to visually change directories by moving the cursor around a

Nov.-Jan. Calendar

Nov. 27	Word SIG	7:30	Next Meeting
Nov. 29	Group Meeting	7:30	Date: Wednesday, Nov. 29
Jan. 9	Users SIG	7:30	Time: 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Planning Meeting	7:30	Place: Polya Hall, Turing Auditorium (Rm. 111)
Jan. 29	Word SIG	7:30	Stanford University
Jan. 31	Group Meeting	7:30	

All members are welcome to attend the monthly planning meeting, where we make decisions on the future of the group. Call Beverly Altman, 329-8252, for the location of the next meeting.

graphic tree structure. ZDIR displays a directory listing that indicates how much space the files take (unlike DIR which only tells you how much space is remaining). DIRNOTES gives you a way to append comments to filenames, and then view these comments.

Several representatives from Technology Concepts demonstrated their unique product called Fax Line Manager. This hardware device enables you to use a fax, a modem, and an answering machine on a single phone line. With this product, you do not have to pay for the expense and hassle of installing a dedicated telephone line.

The Fax Line Manager automates the answering and detecting process and routes the call accordingly. After the first ring, the device picks up and listens for a tone. If it hears the fax tone, the call will be routed to the fax machine. If it hears a touch tone, it will be routed to the modem. If no tones are detected, the answering machine picks up. All of this happens in 2-3 seconds.

You can also use this product to call your computer remotely. However, you will need special software to do this.

The Fax Line Manager comes in two varieties. The Model 103 is a three-line device and retails for \$199. The two-line Model 102 retails for \$159. They are available for a discount at Frye's and The Office Place (around \$169 for the 103 and \$119 for the 102).

Technology Concepts is located at

—see page 9

This Month

This Meeting Features Us!

In somewhat of a break from tradition, this month's guest will be the inanimate objects that make up the heart and soul of our group: our bulletin board, and if all goes well, our newsletter.

Now that SPARC has received a facelift, it is time to show it off, and in conjunction with our Disk of the Month, you will be treated to a tour of the bulletin board and all of its nooks and crannies. Those of you who are a bit shy of SPARC, come out and see how easy it can be.

If the necessary hardware can be delivered to the auditorium, members will also get to see how PRinT SCreen is put together, all on computer.

Disk of the Month

ProComm, the phenomenally popular shareware telecommunications program will be demonstrated, as the perfect companion to SPARC. The disk will be available for \$1 or you may use your Goodie Coupon.

The Giveaway

Due to our Reliefware efforts, there will not be a giveaway this month—all products received will be donated directly to the ReliefWare auction.

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

Bashing PageMaker Could Be Hazardous to Your Health

by Rick Altman

(This article originally appeared in Ventura Professional magazine, and while its specific content may not be relevant to the entire membership, we all have our favorite software, and we probably all know people who love their favorites programs to the point of arrogance. Maybe you will recognize a piece of yourself here...)

Later this month, I am sponsoring a two-day seminar, devoted entirely to Ventura Publisher. It will be a virtual celebration of the product, and I'm sure that hundreds of Ventura lovers will be present. And while there is little that could excite

me more, I'll tell you what I am not looking forward to: the drubbing that I expect PC PageMaker will take over those same two days.

You see, Ventura users seem to hate PageMaker almost as much as they love Ventura, and they show their hate almost as much as they show their love. This column may prove unpopular with many Ventura fans, because I intend to defend PageMaker—or at least convince you that you've got better things to do than slam dunk the program at every opportunity.

The focus here is not on why you should respect PageMaker as a desktop publishing program, although to deny it its merits is foolhardy. The cold fact is that there are tens of thousands of professional publishers for whom PageMaker is the clear and obvious choice. Its simple elegance, straightforward interface

and close analogy with an illustrator's paste-up board open up creative avenues that Ventura Publisher doesn't approach. But again, I'm not here to ring the bells of virtue for PageMaker. Yes, you would be incorrect to declare the program a total failure, but more importantly, such an attitude is pointless and possibly damaging to the greater reputation of Ventura Publisher users.

PageMaker bashers usual-

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ly come in three flavors: 1) those who sincerely don't like the program and are hell-bent on telling the world why; 2) those who have never used the program but know that it is somewhat fashionable to assault Ventura's chief rival, and 3) those who actually feel threatened by the program, as if Ventura's success rests primarily on PageMaker's failure.

Admittedly, these are rather sweeping characterizations here, and what's more, they can be applied to far more than the rivalry between two desktop publishing programs. Microsoft Word and WordPerfect users follow the same battle lines, as do 1-2-3 and Excel users and dBASE and Paradox users. But as a Ventura user, I've seen it with my own eyes: we have earned a reputation for more than just praising the program that we love. We have become hate-mongers.

While I was hanging around the Xerox booth at the Seybold Desktop Publishing Exhibition, I was asked three times why Ventura users seem to have it out for PageMaker.

"They just don't think it is as good," was my standard and somewhat weak answer.

"Yeah, but they sound like fanatics, ready to go to war," was how one person responded.

What could I say—I agreed with her. All too often, Ventura users go beyond poking friendly fun at the rival program—they sound vehement, vindictive, and yes, fanatical in their zeal to bash PageMaker. In conversations with PageMaker and other Macintosh users, I find that Ventura users are

often characterized as short-sighted and narrow-visioned. Others whose professional fortunes rest on PageMaker simply conclude that Ventura users who bash PageMaker are not very professional.

These characterizations are just as false as those that are launched at PageMaker, but they are directed not at the inanimate piece of software, but at the users of same, and in many cases, we Ventura users deserve it.

The other day, someone called the Ventura conference of a local bulletin board, because he wanted to know if a PageMaker document could be converted for use with Ventura. "I know this may be a dirty word around here," he carefully began, "but can PageMaker export to a Ventura-compatible format?"

The poor guy didn't know what hit him. "Are you kidding? Ventura would spit it back out in a second," was the first answer, not entirely incorrect, but perhaps a bit overdone in the disgust department. The second answer was no friendlier: "There is no way to convert a PageMaker document, and it serves you right—you should have started with Ventura in the first place."

Geez, the caller didn't even get any credit for wanting to convert it to Ventura. Can you imagine the reaction if he had asked how to convert a document away from Ventura?

While this is a funny story, the ethnocentrism exhibited by Ventura users does not serve them well in the greater DTP community. It is fre-

—see next page

Software Bashing

from previous page

quently viewed as a sign of insecurity or ignorance. After all, if PageMaker is really as bad as we Ventura users say it is, why do we bother to talk about it at all? Why not let it just crawl away and quietly die somewhere? You know the old saying, "I don't care what you say about me, as long as you spell my name right." Sometimes I think that PageMaker reaches a level of exposure and notoriety that it wouldn't otherwise were it not for the enthusiastic dissent of Ventura users. Maybe there is a subconscious fear that PageMaker really isn't as bad as they say it is, and the minute they stop saying it they'll be forced to realize it.

Of course, the expert who illustrates with PageMaker for a living won't concern himself with this psycho-babble. He'll just write off the belligerent Ventura users, saying that they don't know what they're talking about. End of discussion.

It is even more disturbing when I see fellow consultants attacking PageMaker as part of their argument for potential clients to choose Ventura Publisher. Not only does it imply an inappropriate bias, but many of them come from Category No. 2 from above—those who don't know PageMaker but bash it anyway. If you were to hire a consultant, whom would you choose: the one who loves Ventura and uses it exclusively, or the one who understands both Ventura and PageMaker and appreciates the differences between the two?

I make my living in desktop publishing and, when asked, I am candid about my preference for Ventura Publisher. And in the privacy of Ventura user group meetings, I have enjoyed poking innocent fun at Ventura's rivals as much as the next user. But maybe that's not such a good idea any longer, because it appears that we don't know when to stop. It appears that Ventura users use the same insular arrogance at trade shows, on bulletin boards and in other larger circles where there are DTPers present who neither share nor appreciate this single-minded fervor for Ventura Publisher. Without a minimum of discretion, the book on Ventura will be: a very professional program, with users who are not.

Listen, if Ventura Publisher is so perfect, then the other programs don't matter, and if PageMaker is so horrible, then it's not worth being mentioned. But like it or not, the truth is somewhere in the middle, and Ventura users had better realize this before they antagonize any more members of their own community.

Users of Ventura Publisher have taken the time and the effort to learn, and in some cases master, a very powerful program—perhaps the most complex one on the DTP market. For that, they can be immensely satisfied and proud. I'm just asking that they show their pride a little more quietly. By its nature, desktop publishing brings exaggerated awareness to the process rather than the finished product. How about if we just let our finished products do the talking for awhile? ¶

PRTSC POTPOURRI

Saving a Hard Disk

John Dvorak in his November 19th San Francisco Examiner column wrote about an East Bay company that performs disk drive repair and data recovery. A representative from The Drive Service Company said that a hard disk should last for at least six years with heavy use, though some drives (the Seagate ST225 in particular) fail as often as once a year. When a drive has problems, it's usually the electronic components that fail, and it's simply a matter of swapping or repairing boards.

The Drive Service Company can be contacted at (415) 430-0595.

All About Arcs, Arks, and Lawsuits

by George Taylor
CBUG Newsletter

I decided to do some research on the history of arcing and here is what I've come up with. Arcing goes way back to a guy named Noah. He had to get a lot of data in form of binary animals into this big ship he had built since God told him it was going to rain for a long time and there would be a flood. So he and his family and these animals had to be preserved for civilization to continue.

He looked at these pairs of animals and said to his wife, "Hey, I've got to ark all these creatures."

She said, "What do you mean ark?"

So he finally squeezed them all in

and got his family on board too. They all felt compressed (and maybe depressed for awhile). But they survived the flood and were able to continue civilization.

From then on, whenever lots of people or files had to be squeezed together in a small space, it was called "arking," after Noah. Then someone came along and began to call it "arcing" and changed Noah's original Ark program to Arc, so he got sued.

After that, I don't know what happened. I think people started making their own arks but called them disks and tried to get more and more data onto each one so that their own concept of civilization could survive other floods.

Typewriter Emulation Through DOS

by Hy Bender
New York PCUG

Most people are familiar with COPY CON filename.BAT as a quick way of writing a batch file to disk. Fewer are aware that there's also an on-the-fly method for writing to the printer: COPY CON PRN. This command is handy for banging out a short memo or an envelope.

At the DOS prompt, type COPY CON PRN and press Enter. Now type what you want, a line at a time. If you make a mistake on your current line,

—see next page

Coping with Crashes

from previous page

you can edit it with the backspace key. When you are done with a line, press Enter to go to the next line.

When you are totally done and want to print out your work, press F6 and Enter.

The Future is Here... Almost

PCUG of the Redwoods

Just when everybody was sure it would be mid-1990 before any 486 machines hit the market, IBM has shocked the industry by announcing a 486 system that is expected to be in the stores by late this year. The 496/25 Power Platform is actually an upgrade for the high-end Model 70, which transforms the 25 MHz 386 into a 25 MHz 486. The \$3,995 upgrade is expected to more than double the power of the Model 70 and easily surpasses the speed of the most recently announced 33 MHz 386 machines.

Industry analysts have been expecting the 486 announcements for some time now; ever since Intel announced the impending availability of the new powerhouse chip. What they didn't expect was the first machine would come from IBM.

Wait States

PCConnection Hawaii PCUG

Q. What are "wait states" and how do they affect my PC?

A. While a program is executed, as the microprocessor (8088, 80286, etc.) initiates data transfers, it attempts to read or write data as soon as it prepares for the transfer. The processor expects the other device to acknowledge (handshake) completion of the transfer. When this handshake doesn't come, the processor will become idle until it receives the acknowledgement message, and this idle stage is called the "wait state," slightly slowing program execution.

A zero-wait state is when the speed of the processor and the RAM are matched, allowing access to RAM as soon as the transfer is set up. A one-wait state machine will wait one bus cycle before it can read or write the contents of RAM. Faster RAM can be used to shorten the access time and more closely match it with the newer, faster processors, but the price of RAM is related to speed.

Since a program can issue millions of instructions in a second, the number of wait states will effect the speed of execution. It is a trade-off, speed vs. cost. RAM is produced in various speeds. At one time 200 nanoseconds (millions of a second) was considered very fast; today's microprocessors use RAM faster than 100ns. This "access time" is the amount of time between execution of instructions of an address and other signals from the processor and the actual moment when the contents can be read from or written to RAM. ¶

Club News

from page 3

951-2 Old County Road, Suite 150, Belmont, 94002. The phone number is 349-0900.

Raffle

Ira Gold was the grand prize winner of the October raffle. He won the hardware that was demonstrated at the meeting: a Fax-Line Manager. The following members won various Epyx computer games:

Vladimir Starov
Glen Roberts
Arthur Galla

The above winners would like to thank the following members who were not at the meeting (they would have won if they had been present):

Robert Cronin, Gustav Haas, Dirk Van Der Linden, Michael Christie, Richard Becker, Albert Dien, Jim Dinkey, Norm Rossen, Martin Packard, Ronald Seltzer, Henry Hollwedel, Kathleen Dunlap, and Del Philpott.

PRinT SCreen Looking for a Few Good Members

The tandem of Rebecca and Rick Altman will soon be offering the reins of the monthly newsletter to a member or group of members who are interested in carrying on the PRinT SCreen tradition. Becky has been the faithful editor for over five years, and Rick steered the newsletter into the desktop publishing age. In early 1990, the baton will be passed.

PRinT SC Editor is not necessarily a two-person job, although there are two clearly defined areas of responsibility: 1) creating and compiling editorial copy, and 2) layout and production. Each area requires about three to four hours per month, although a capable desktop publisher could cut layout and production time in half after a month or two.

The editor is responsible for reporting on past meetings and future meetings, and either attends the mid-month planning meeting or has a conscientious note-taker there. Some editors like to write and bang out the whole thing themselves, and others serve as liaisons between themselves and other writers.

Production doesn't necessarily have to be performed on the computer, although it would be an excellent entre for someone interested in learning the revolutionary field of electronic publishing.

If all goes well—i.e. a volunteer or two or three step up soon—there will be a comfortable transition period, so any member interested in exploring the power of the pen should talk to Becky, either at the upcoming meetings or at 326-8605.

No December Meeting

Because of the holidays, the club traditionally does not meet in December, nor is PRinT SCreen published. Expect your next PRinT SCreen at the end of January.

—see next page

Club News

from previous page

Membership Renewals

For the two months preceding the expiration of your membership you will find a renewal envelope enclosed in your newsletter. Use this envelope to promptly send in your \$25 check (\$10 for students) so that you won't miss an issue of the monthly newsletter. A membership card will then be sent to you in the next PRinTScreen.

Goodie Coupons

Remember, the "Goodie Coupon" attached to your membership card is presently good for one free disk: the library catalog, Disk of the Month, or a blank disk. Trade in your coupon for a disk at a future meeting.

Floppy Disks For Sale

Xidex Precision disks are available for \$6/box. High density floppies are \$10/box (10 disks). The catalog and the Disk of the Month will be offered for \$1 a disk. If you wish to purchase disks at the meetings, you will need to present your membership card, so be sure to bring it with you.

Free Ads

Don't forget that as a member you are entitled to free classified ads in PRinTScreen. If you have old/unused hardware or software, place an ad here. Members have reported good responses to their ads. ¶

The SIGS

The Users (Novice) SIG

Six members of the Users SIG, previously known as the Novice SIG, met on November 14th. Ralph Muraca discussed TSR (Terminate and Stay Resident) programs and explained memory usage in the different IBM personal computers. Ralph brought his portable computer to demonstrate. Nancy Helmy provided refreshments.

The Users SIG meets on the second Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be held on January 9th at 7:30. (There will be no meeting in December.) The meeting will be at Larry Weinberg's condominium club house at 255 South Rengstorff in Mountain View. For information and/or directions, call Larry at 969-2292, or Nancy Helmy at 326-1911.

Word SIG

The next Word SIG meeting will be Monday, November 27th. For more information call Jan Altman at (408) 243-5955.

Lotus SIG

If you are interested in the Lotus SIG, please call the SIG's leader, Jan Altman at (408) 243-5955.

The SPAUG Resource Center

Club Officers

President	Rick Altman	962-9270
Vice President	Corwin Nichols	494-8640
Treasurer/ASSU Rep	Jared Nedzel	854-2732

Managers

Financial Manager	Beverly Altman	329-8252
Newsletter Editor	Becky Altman	326-8605
Production Editor	Rick Altman	962-9270

Library

Public Domain Software	Les Weil	321-5541
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Software

Accounting-Computer Assoc.	Larry Mehl	326-6037
Foxbase	Marie Hooper	325-1206
Framework	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
	Richard Orser	408-425-0474
Lotus 1-2-3	Bruce Codding	367-8642
	Arthur Naman	408-879-9900
Microsoft Word	Jan Altman	408-243-5955
	Hunter Jackson	408-446-4097
Q & A	Elaine Meyer	325-8057
R:BASE	Jack Kahoun	349-4696
	Tony Pabon	408-866-4815
	Larry Mehl	326-6037
Symphony	Sally See	941-1378

Languages/Operating Systems

BASIC	Ralph Muraca	365-1659
C	Corwin Nichols	494-8640
Fortran, Pascal	John Watson	325-7632
Hard Disks	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
Toshiba Printers	Paul Berry	494-2043
Epson Printers	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
Panasonic Printers	Van Maulis	966-1306
XT/AT Systems	Van Maulis	966-1306

**The Stanford / Palo Alto
PC Users' Group**



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Club information

Membership

Louise Greer Bolitho
322-3850
\$25/year fee (Students \$10)

**Bulletin Board
Newsletter**

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