



# P R T S C

A newsletter for the Stanford/Palo Alto User's Group for the IBM PC

PRinT SScreen

October 1986

Volume 4 Number 10

## NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, October 29  
Time: 8:00 p.m.  
Place: Polya Hall,  
Turing Auditorium (Rm. 111)  
Stanford University

## A G E N D A

8:00 PM General Club Business  
8:30 PM Speaker: Carolyn Grossman, Xerox  
Paul Pease (member)  
Topic: Desktop Publishing  
9:00 PM Discussion and Random Access  
10:00 PM Conclusion

Desktop Publishing is the theme for the Oct. 29 meeting. Carolyn Grossman, the Market Planning Manager for Xerox in Sunnyvale, will be talk to us about the much-anticipated (in the Desktop Publishing world) Ventura Publisher. The Ventura Publisher formats complete documents in multiple column format, generates Tables of Contents and Indices, and much more. In addition, our own member Paul Pease will show us some of the work he has done on a more elaborate system by Advanced Vision Research which includes a graphics scanner.

## P L A N N I N G M E E T I N G :

All members are welcome to attend the monthly Planning Meeting, where we make decisions on the future of the group (e.g., speakers, topics). Please call Beverly Altman, 329-8252, for the location of the next meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, November 12th at 8 p.m. If you can't reach Beverly, call any Club Officer.

## CALENDAR

Oct. 29....Group Meeting.....8:00  
Nov. 4.....Novice SIG.....6:30  
Nov. 6.....Power Users SIG.....7:30  
Nov. 12....Planning Meeting.....8:00  
Nov. 26....Group Meeting.....8:00



# ELECTIONS...ELECTIONS...ELECTIONS...ELECTIONS...ELECTIONS

Since November is election time, we are now seeking nominations for our club officers. The elected positions are President, Vice President, and Treasurer. The Treasurer must be a currently registered Stanford student.

Elected officers will serve from January to December, 1987.

Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the October meeting. Please notify and get prior approval from those you nominate. YOU MUST MAKE SURE THE PERSON(S) YOU NOMINATE ARE WILLING TO RUN FOR OFFICE!!

Written nominations will also be accepted. Send by November 15th to:

Beverly Altman  
1670 Oak Avenue  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

At press time, the following individuals have agreed to run for office:

## PRESIDENT

Kathy Carroll  
Jay Fox

## VICE PRESIDENT

Jack Kahoun  
Corwin Nichols

The election will be held at the November 26th meeting.

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The following paragraphs are excerpts from the club's constitution regarding election procedures:

### B. Election of officers:

1. In October of each year the Group Board will appoint a temporary office of elections and notify all members, both regular and associate, of the opportunity to submit nominations for elected officers prior to November 15.
2. The election of officers will take place at the last general meeting prior to December 15, with all members present eligible to vote. During said meeting, and prior to the start of voting, the officer of elections will announce all nominations received and accept additional nominations from the floor. A majority vote of those members present is required for election.



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## SEPTEMBER MEETING

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At the September meeting our speaker was Gordon Eubanks, Chairman of the Board of Symantec Corp., developers of Q&A, a database and word processing package with an English language interface.

The demonstration focused on the "Intelligent Assistant" (IA) part of the program which responds to questions about a database. For an employee data base, for example, it was asked: What is the average salary of the employees whose department is sales? And more complex questions containing calculations can follow up the original question. It can produce a report to requests such as: Show name, salary, accrued vacation times and salary divided by 280 for employees who are eligible.

The IA has a built in vocabulary; in addition, the user "teaches" it words and synonyms for the language used in connection with the particular application. In each case the IA proposes what it will do, and the user can accept that response or reword the query. The audience suggested questions and the IA did surprisingly well.

Q&A's database is very flexible; it is designed by using the word processor, and can be modified the same way. It has a table view where 17 records can be seen at the same time. The program reads in Lotus, Symphony, and dBase files, and imports and exports ASCII files.

No, it won't make decisions for us that are value judgements -- but it will read your database and select, sort, compute, etc. like a good computer program.

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## CLUB NEWS

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**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 so that you won't miss an issue of the monthly newsletter. A current membership card will then be sent to you in the next issue of PrtSc.

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.

Xidex Precision disks are available for \$7/box. 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.

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### BULLETIN BOARD

A printed listing of all the files currently available on SPACE (Stanford Palo Alto Computer Exchange) will be distributed at the October 29th meeting.

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### POWER USERS SIG

The Power Users, a new Special Interest Group, had their first meeting earlier this month. The next meeting will be held Thursday, November 6th at 7:30 PM. Please call Jay Fox for details: 965-3000, or leave him a message on the bulletin board.



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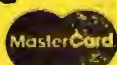
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## NOVICE SIG

Don Baird

BULLETIN: NEXT NOVICE SIG GROUP MEETING - TUESDAY 11/4/86, 3785 Farm Hill Blvd. Redwood City, Call Don Baird 415 365-6822 for information. Meetings are always held on the Tuesday following the main group Wednesday meetings - regular attendees will be notified in case of late changes.

Thanks to those contributing to refreshments. This is quite optional, but certainly appreciated.

We are still seeking the best format, and it might be a loose agenda with interspersed random access. Having persons, as they arrive, enter on a list, what they would like to discuss, may insure an equitable hearing for all, and still mesh with an agenda suggested in the newsletter.

It was enlightening to see what happened to Jim Savlan's question on how to use SIDEWAYS. Fortunately, he had brought it on a floppy. Displaying its directory via SDIR taught some the use of that utility (which, it should be warned, does not show subdirectories). Then, since our central topic was "extensions", we discussed the fact that no helpful DOC or README file was provided. Only an EXE file, and one with an arbitrary extension, comprised the SIDEWAYS package.

Via FILELOOK (like TYPE, except it can scroll and exhibit codes like end-of-file markers), we saw that the file having the arbitrary extension possessed useful comments, but was not a usage procedure. It had some routines which made us suspect that it might be addressed by the EXE file for parameters.

We guessed that running the EXE file by merely typing SIDEWAYS, might tell us something (because many proper EXE & COM programs include text that "early-on" lead into unambiguous operation). All we

got was: INFILE: Guessing rightly that this was asking for a file to operate on, we choose a DOC file that happened to be on the floppy. VOILA; the DOC file did print out sideways at a line length of about 14 inches, expanded line spacing, and with a custom font.

Even though we almost lost the way amid a welter of other questions (some of which remarkably got answered), the foregoing demonstrates how one question can spark other answers, provided we don't get too far afield.

Not everyone has or uses their modems, but this time when bulletin-board & modem questions arose, they promptly got covered with an impromptu down-load of DD11.ARC from SPACE. This was just an exposure for some, but combined with comments, questions and answers for each step-of-the-way, maximum info probably was imparted.

Downloading naturally led to de-ARC'ing (most SPACE bulletin-board files are compressed by the ARC program to minimize transmission times). It was first shown how, by merely typing ARC, comprehensive usage text is displayed. Then by invoking ARC L DD11, we got DD11.ARC's listing. Invoking ARC E DD11 extracted (& decompressed) all the DD11.ARC files.

An inside look at one aspect of bulletin board workings came as the DD12.ARC download request was rejected by a "file not found" message. Before DD12.ARC could be re-tried, it was magically entered as DD11.ARC. The SYSOP (Perhaps Jay Fox) was monitoring and thus was doing an on-the-spot correction for a file that was incorrectly listed.

If someone can loan a keyboard, a switch-box will be constructed which will allow a remote keyboard to be shared by persons seated around the table. Another monitor also would help (black/white is ok, and with composite input [RCA type connector]).



## SURVEY RESULTS

Elaine Meyer

At our meeting on August 27, we distributed a questionnaire asking our members a number of questions about what they are interested in, what directions we should be taking, and what they like and don't like about our club activities.

Forty-five people turned in questionnaires. Following are the percentages of people who said they like the indicated activity. Note that very few people said they disliked something. They just left that part of the question blank. Listed in order of "liking":

### Percent Who Said They "Like"

Speakers	88 %
Newsletter	80
Random Access	80
Software Library	73
Bulletin Board	62
Resource People	62
Special Interest Groups	55
Discounted disks	55
(& other group purchases)	
Free publications	53
Mail call	24
Club business	22

The answers to the question, "Is there a subject on which you would like a SIG formed?" were as follows:

- o spreadsheet (supercalc3), Dollars and Sense
- o Symphony, communications
- o novice - comprehensive
- o communications
- o PC Jr.
- o Framework
- o Enable
- o Symphony
- o dBase
- o Lotus
- o AI; also Windows and its many uses
- o scientific applications
- o utilities, tools

## GOING BEYOND THE 32 MB DOS BARRIER...

The first full-featured utility software capable of fully integrating Winchester hard disk drives with capacities as high as 320 MB into PC, XT, AT or compatibles was announced this summer.

Called SpeedStor 4.0, the software allows users to break the 32 MB storage capacity limitation imposed by DOS.

Also included with SpeedStor is an extensive set of disk drive diagnostics for fast and easy fault isolation. You can determine problems before taking your system in for repair.

SpeedStor is available from Storage Dimensions for \$99 by calling (408) 370-3304, or writing Storage Dimensions at 14127 Capri Drive Suite 1, Los Gatos, CA 95030.

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### GET PUBLISHED: WRITE FOR PRINT SC

Please contact Rebecca Bridges if you are interested in writing for PRINT SCreen.

It does not matter what your level of computer experience is; each of you has some information, knowledge or opinion that would be of interest to your fellow members. Review your latest software or hardware purchase. Tell us how you use the PC in your work and play. Help others avoid or solve problems you have encountered.

Please submit the articles:

- o In WordStar or ASCII format.
- o Single-spaced.
- o Double-spaced between paragraphs.
- o Any right margin.
- o By the 15th of the month.



# WHAT I DO WITH A COMPUTER

R. F. Muraca

A users club, such as SPAUG, is set up to encourage use of personal computers. Most club members own a computer and would like to expand its use by finding out what others do with their computer. Club meetings, however, do not seem to offer a convenient mechanism for exchange of information. One of the impediments is the natural shyness of members; after all, when all you hear is technical jargon from those who seem to know so much, your activities fade away. Moreover, many members don't like to address a large group, and after a formal presentation by an invited speaker, small talk seems so out of place. Finally, many members feel that if they stand up and tell what they are doing, it borders on bragging; so nothing is said.

Here is a suggestion to promote exchange of information:- Please send in short articles on what YOU are doing with your computer. If you say so, your name will appear in Prt Sc with the article; if you want to remain anonymous, it won't. If someone would like to know more about the subjects in an anonymous article, let the inquirer state name and phone number at a meeting and request the contributor to call. The author can remain anonymous throughout the phone conversation or simply refuse to call. THE WHOLE IDEA IS -- TELL WHAT YOU DO!!

I'll start the ball rolling by saying a few things to set the scene and then go on to the part that interests you. I've worked with computers since 1945; I've built a large analog computer and several S-100 8-bit systems up to 1984.

I use a PC/AT with a monochrome screen and enhanced color display that is operated from an IBM EGA. A Tall-Tree Systems JRAM-AT provides extra memory for a total of 2.56 megabytes, usually configured as two RAM-drives, one of 1.1 megabytes and another of 420 K-bytes.

The hard-disk is, of course, standard at 20 megabytes.

A PROMETHEUS modem is external to the system. It can operate at 300 or 1200 BAUD; when on standby, it will receive and store about 64K of messages even when the computer is not operating! Recently, a mouse has been added, but it isn't used for more than playing with PCPAINT. A switch permits transfer of the AT serial port from modem to mouse or to a SUMMAGRAPHIC 12- x 12-in digitizing tablet (0.01-in resolution).

Hard-copy is provided by an ANADIX 9501 18-in-carriage printer that operates at 150 to 200 characters per second and has graphics at 72 dots per inch. Some day I'll put back into action a 9-track tape drive for data storage (shades of the S-100 days).

I do a lot of programming in BASIC because it's easy to use and it does permit exploitation of IBM features.

(continued on next page)



"Since we got the microcomputer, Graham spends an hour every night balancing the checkbook."



WHAT I DO  
WITH A COMPUTER  
(continued)

I've written assembly language routines that allow BASIC to correspond with the EGA, and this allows plotting of many mathematical functions or data. For highest speed of operation, the BASIC programs are compiled; thus the LIBCAT and LIBRACAT programs for the SPAUG library were written in BASIC and compiled.

Recently, I've undertaken to rewrite the LIBRACAT program in C because the BASIC version is so full that even one more line will prevent its being compiled. I started with DeSMET C but changed to MICROSOFT's version to gain the large-model facility. The switch was painful. Additionally, since C does not support the many screen functions available in IBM BASICA, I had to write them in assembly language and append them to the C library.

A recent project involved writing in C a reference-finding program. The program sets up a data file of journal references containing keywords that describe an article's content. Keywords are sorted, duplicates removed, and stored separately. The data file can be searched for keywords to locate that article I remember seeing -- but where?

About six computer journals are regularly indexed along with a number of others. The intent is to reference only articles of interest to me -- not to build a comprehensive index.

Often, I write small programs to do something of interest; following are some examples: a cubic spline-fit for plotting data; the entropy of English prefixes

and suffixes; convert 80-character text to double column format; a rapid two-level indexer; inventory control for business; MAT commands for BASIC; fractal graphics; word puzzles.

Actually, most of my time is spent writing words with a disgustingly simple editor that I wrote in BASIC (and hope to rewrite in C).

The item that makes possible broad use of the computer is programming. I urge all club members to learn BASIC -- don't pay any attention to those who say BASIC is no good. The BASIC interpreter allows you to sit down and write a program in a few minutes and debug it just as easily. None of the "programmer" favorites such as C, assembly language, FORTH, or PASCAL permit easy entry of a program; they're just too much trouble to use for anything except highly complex, long programs. And compiled BASIC is very fast.

Above all, don't let "structured unstructured" polemics interfere with your use of BASIC; a good BASIC program is just as cleanly structured as one in any other language. As you now realize, I usually write a program in BASIC and then, only if necessary will I rewrite it in another language.

Once you understand programming, your mind dreams up uses for the computer. I'm not suggesting you undertake writing large programs like a spreadsheet or a word processor; purchase them. Please take my suggestion -- I'll bet you'll have a new lease on life, and you'll stop looking for commercial or public domain software to solve your problem. Also, since programming is an engrossing operation, you'll find yourself spending many happy hours at the computer, doing and learning something useful!



**CLUB OFFICERS:**

President:	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
Vice President:	Rebecca Bridges	326-8605
Financial Manager:	Beverly Altman	329-8252
ASSU Representative	Curt Carlson	941-5680
Speaker's Bureau:	Kathy Carroll	325-0824

**SIGS:**

FrameWork:	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
Novice:	Don Baird	365-6822

**LIBRARY:**

Public Domain Software	Les Weil	321-5541
Soft Copy	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
	Ralph Muraca	365-1659
	Turley Angle	369-1981

**RESOURCE PEOPLE****Application Packages:**

WordStar	Jonathan Steibel	494-0122
MicroSoft Word	Jeanie Treichel	851-8828
Lotus 1-2-3	Bruce Coddling	367-8642
Framework	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
Financial Software	John Van Deman	854-1167
Perfect Series	Stefan Unger	321-7319
Q&A	Elaine Meyer	325-8057

**Languages/Operating Systems:**

Pascal, DOS 2.0	Jeff	321-5930
	Jonathan Steibel	494-0122
"C"	Corwin Nichols	494-8640
	Jonathan Steibel	494-0122
APL	Paul	968-8283
	Stefan Unger	321-7319
	Paul Berry	494-2043
PC-LAN	Paul Berry	494-2043

**Hardware:**

Expansion Boards	Curt Carlson	941-5680
Columbia computer	Stefan Unger	321-7319
Hard disks	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
	Jonathan Steibel	494-0122
Epson printers	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
Toshiba printer	Paul Berry	494-2043



## CLUB INFORMATION

**MAILING ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 3738  
Stanford, CA 94305

**MEMBERSHIP:** Louise Greer Bolitho 493-0979  
\$25/year fee

**BULLETIN BOARD:** Jay Fox, System Operator  
964-9039, 24 hours a day  
Protocol: 300/1200, N,8,1

**NEWSLETTER:** Rebecca Bridges 326-8605  
P.O. Box 982  
Palo Alto, CA 94302  
Deadline for submissions: 15th of each month

## ADVERTISING

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