



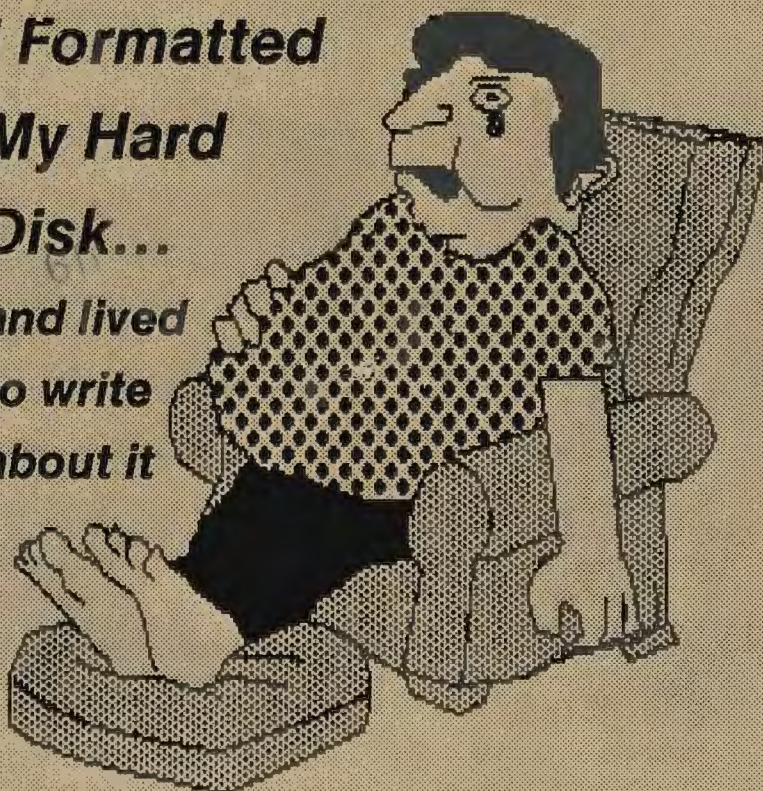
PRinT SScreen

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

January 1988

Volume 6, Number 1

***I Formatted
My Hard
Disk...
and lived
to write
about it***



CLUB NEWS

New Meeting Place

The good news about our new meeting place is that there is no new meeting place. Last November, there were vicious rumors that we would no longer be able to meet in Turing Auditorium because of class scheduling conflicts. Fortunately, we are now scheduled to use the Auditorium for Winter Quarter, and most likely the rest of the year.

Disk of the Month

Since text editors are the main topic for this month's meeting, we thought it appropriate to have a public domain text editor offered as the Disk of the Month. Micro EMACS will be available at the back of the room for \$1.

November Meeting

A representative from Intel, Dave Taylor, came down from Portland, Oregon to demonstrate the new Inboard 386. With this card your PC can calculate 10 times faster, and with disk caching software, your hard disk will run 5 times faster. In other words, "Don't throw those old boxes away" – you have an alternative. You control the processor speed (up to 16 MHz) with keyboard commands.

The card is guaranteed to work on IBM, Compaq, and Tandy computers (or your money back). It will only work in 8088-based PCs, not 8086 machines such as the AT&T 6300. Nor does it work on the Zenith.

While the Inboard's hardware will support OS/2, you will need additional software to run this operating system.

January Calendar

January 27	Group Meeting	8:00
February 8	MS Word SIG	7:30
February 10	Planning Meeting	8:00
February 24	Group Meeting	8:00

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.

Next Meeting

Date:	Wednesday, January 27
Time:	8:00 p.m.
Place:	Polya Hall, Turing Aud. (Rm. 111) Stanford University

Though most of us are familiar with word processing, not all of us are as well-acquainted with what text editors can offer us. At the January group meeting, several different text editors will be discussed and demonstrated: Personal Rex, Epsilon, and Brief.

Intel will provide this software at a later date.

The Inboard 386 for the AT retails for \$1595 while the PC version sells for under \$1000 with 1 MB of memory.

Elections

Elections for club officers (President, Vice-President, and Treasurer) are coming up in March. Please contact one of the current officers if you would like to run for office, or if you would like to nominate someone.

The Evolution of PRinT SCreen

Let us know what you think of the new PRinT SCreen. We have been trying a variety of formats over the last few months, using Ventura Publisher, a powerful desktop publishing program. If you have any comments, suggestions, or opinions regarding the newsletter please contact the editor, Becky Bridges at 326-8605 or the production editor, Rick Altman at 581-7563.

Bulletin Board

If you have been unable to connect with SPARC, the club BBS, it's because the bulletin board's modem wasn't working properly. It's been replaced recently, so please try again. You are sure to have more success now.

New members: Your password is your phone number without the area code. Be sure to use a dash after the prefix. For example, 321-1234. Your password will be your home phone number if we had one listed for you; otherwise, we used your business num-

ber. You will probably want to change your password once you have successfully logged onto the bulletin board. The main menu has an option for changing your password.

Library Additions

The following files have been added to the SPAUG library. All files are in sub-directory format.

NAME	DESCRIPTION	Disk
KNOVICE	Artificial Intelligence development tool	120
PC-BOOKS	Gen. Ledger system	122
CASHMSTR	Financial programs for home/business	11F
BOYAN	Comm. package (like ProComm)	00D
HOMEMGR	Excellent system for Home Mgmt	123
P&S	Point & Shoot Files Manager	123

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 current membership card will then be sent to you in the next PrtSc.

Goodie Coupons

Remember, the "Goodie Coupon" attached to your membership card is presently good for one free disk: the

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THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

To Mac or Not to Mac: That is the Question

by Corwin Nichols, Club President

Ok, I have a confession to make. I've been thinking that perhaps it wouldn't be so bad to have a Mac to play with. Perhaps I might even be able to do some useful work with it. Yes indeed the Mac II looks like a respectable computer. It has slots for expansion boards. It comes with enough memory and a hard disk. It has a nice, fast processor and a screen that is readable from a distance. (I like my screen about 4 feet away.)

I like to think that I have an open mind on these issues. I have used a Mac in the past. But it was the original Mac expanded with 512k, but no hard disk. It was so painfully slow that I gave up on it. Most of corporate America did too. But after reading about the newer machines, the SE and Mac II, and the fact that business is starting to accept the machine, I began to wonder again about it.

I have seen some remarkable demos done with Hypercard and have been impressed. My office neighbors use only Macs, but do have a token PC that's

used for file conversion. They cry when they have to use it.

What to do? Ah ha! The MacWorld Expo in San Francisco. Why not check out the state of the art, vis-a-vis Mac, at a show? Inspect close up the latest in hardware and software for the Macintosh. So I did.

And what did I find? To be honest, not a lot. With the exception of Hypercard (which I like a lot), there is no real significant software for the Mac which is not available for the PC. The Mac appears to be about a year ahead of the PC in the area of graphics software, although the PC is catching up rapidly. In other areas of application software, the Mac and PC seem roughly equivalent. The big difference is that there is still a lot more variety in the PC realm, and anything for the PC is less expensive than it is for the Mac.

It seems to me that the PC is actually ahead of the Mac in the area of graphics hardware. As far as any other add-on hardware, the PC is way out in front. The Apple booth had a display of third party add-on boards for the Mac II and SE (they are completely different from each other) and together there couldn't have been more than 100 boards. Contrast that with the PC which has thousands of third party add-on products available.

Of course Mac devotees will claim that I miss the point. It's ease of use that really sets the Mac above the rest. The "desktop" metaphor, use of icons, standardized user interface all go toward

making the machine so easy to use that anyone can use it. In theory, it's a valid argument. In practice, Macs are only slightly easier to use than PCs. The main difference is at the operating system level. Once you enter an application, the distinctions fade away. Excel is Excel. Some products are still hard to use from sheer complexity. Pagemaker, for instance, although

blessed by a fine user interface on both the PC and Mac, still requires an investment in learning time.

So, on to the Mac world? Not for me, not at this time. The PC is continually evolving and improving, and its fairly cheap to upgrade. Now, if someone would just implement Hypercard on the PC...

Cheers and happy computing in '88.

Club News

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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 4 disks for \$5. 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.

Become a Writer

Please contact Becky Bridges (326-8605) 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:

- WordStar or ASCII format.
- Single-spaced.
- Double-spaced between paragraphs.
- Any right margin.
- No centering or tabs.
- By the 15th of the month.

Free Ads

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

Wanted: Ad Salespeople

Please contact Becky Bridges if you would be interested in selling ads for PRinT SCreen. Call Becky Bridges at 326-8605 if you are interested.

News From the SIGs

The Novice SIG

Everything About Computers In 20 Minutes: The last Novice SIG meeting was held December 8th. We had a short discourse on all levels of computer languages: starting with binary notation and Boolean algebra, and then went on to microprocessor CPUs with a look at some assembly programs and comments about the more common of the 800+ high level languages. There also was time to describe analog computing, in addition to pneumatic, hydraulic, optical, mechanical, and eventual molecular computers (I forgot chemical). We then had a quick history of the evolution of digital computers.

Please understand that some things were omitted (like the planimeter, Babbage's analytical engine, the abacus, Pascal's desk calculator, and a few other details), but we did explain the basic flip-flop concept and how the earliest electric "and" and "or" gates were just relay switches, later becoming electronic vacuum tube types with a "revolutionary" 3-inch cube size. (A classmate of mine, Gene Amdahl, tried to reduce this size via a disk which rolled from side to side as actuated by a magnetic field--it didn't work.)

After such a warm-up, we discussed mundanes like ProComm, RAM-drives (e.g., how to change the sizes via a multiple CONFIG.SYS file scheme), how to get questions answered by using the bulletin board, and how to catalogue one's own library. SNIPPER (PC mag's latest utility) was demonstrated.

The next Novice SIG group meeting MEETING will be arranged by an incoming leader. Thanks again for such a fulfilling involvement, particularly to all the participants. Enough have expressed that it was all worthwhile.

—Don Baird

Editor's note: Many thanks to Don Baird for the wonderful job he has done with the Novice SIG over the last year. It was apparent that he devoted a lot of time, energy, and enthusiasm as the SIG leader. He's a hard act to follow—but any volunteers?

Microsoft Word SIG

The Microsoft Word SIG did not meet in January, but the next meeting will most likely be Monday, February 8th at 7:30 p.m. For details on the meetings call Jeanie Treichel at home (851-0100) or work (326-7438).

THE ANSWER MAN

My Batch Files Always Get Me Lost

QUESTION: *I've started to use batch files more often, and I like the way they combine DOS commands and save me time. What I don't like is how they often leave me in a subdirectory that I don't want to be in. Is there a way for a batch file to return me to the subdirectory that I was in before I started the batch? I would be willing to pay up to \$100 for a utility that would do this for me.*

ANSWER: Save your money – there are two solutions, and both are free. First off, there is a public domain program called NEWDIR.COM that is on SPARC, the club bulletin board (723-7995). NEWDIR observes the current directory and remembers it. Also, NEWDIR creates a batch file called OLDDIR.BAT which returns you to that directory that NEWDIR observed. So if you make NEWDIR the first command in your batch file and OLDDIR the last, you will always end up where you started.

For those who do not have modems, don't despair – DOS offers a solution also. It involves the making of three very small files – one that you make and keep permanently; two that are generated automatically. The first step

is to make a tiny file called CHANGE, using the COPY CON method of creating text files:

```
C:> COPY CON CHANGE
CD ^Z <Ret>
1 file(s) copied
```

You can generate the <Ctrl-Z> by holding <Ctrl> and pressing Z or by pressing <F6>. Make sure there is a space after the CD. The next step is to start your batch files off with the following two lines:

```
CD >OLDPATH
COPY CHANGE+OLDPATH<space>
OLDPATH.BAT >NUL
```

The ">NUL" in the second command is optional. The first command stores the current directory information in a file called OLDPATH; the second command combines the CD characters in CHANGE and the current directory information in OLDPATH into a batch file called OLDPATH.BAT. Now finish your batch file with the command OLDPATH, and your batch file will automatically return you to the place where you started. The important thing to remember is to store the three files – CHANGE, OLDPATH and OLDPATH.BAT in an accessible directory. Store CHANGE in a permanent directory, like your C:\BAT directory. The best place to generate the other two files is in a RAM disk, if you have one. That will speed up operations and not litter your hard disk with

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The Answer Man

From preceding page

files that are useless to anything other than this task. Here is what a Lotus 1-2-3 batch file might look like, incorporating OLDPATH, and using a Drive D: RAM disk:

Echo off

CD \D:OLDPATH

COPY \BAT\CHANGE+D:OLDPATH

D:OLDPATH.BAT >NUL

CD \LOTUS

123

D:OLDPATH

When you exit Lotus 1-2-3, OLDPATH will whisk you back to the directory from which you started this batch file, rather than just dumping you in the C:\LOTUS directory.

My FORMAT Won't Format Anymore

QUESTION: Ever since I upgraded my hard disk, I have been unable to format a floppy disk. When I run FORMAT, I receive an error message telling me "Track 0 is bad or unusable". What does this mean, how did it happen and what can I do about it?

ANSWER: It sounds to me like you not only upgraded your hard disk but you also upgraded your operating system, perhaps from DOS 2.1 to DOS 3.1 or 3.2. Furthermore, I'd bet you a dime that after you formatted your new hard disk and installed DOS 3.x onto it, you restored all of your data from floppies.

The problem is that when you restored your data, you put all of your old DOS programs (like DEBUG, EDLIN and yes, FORMAT) back onto the hard disk, even though they are part of your old DOS, not your new DCS.

Some of those old programs will work, some will not work at all, and some (like FORMAT) will try to work. The DOS 2.1 version of FORMAT will not issue you an immediate "Wrong DOS version" error message; instead, it will try to work. But it will be so confused trying to operate in a DOS 3.x hard disk that it won't work properly.

The solution is to replace all of these old programs with the new, proper ones. Assuming that you keep all of your DOS programs in a directory called C:\DOS, the safest way to do this is to delete everything that is there and copy your new DOS disks into that directory:

CD C:\DOS

DEL *.*

(place DOS No. 1 into Drive A:)

COPY A:*.* C:\DOS

(place DOS No. 2 into Drive A:)

COPY A:*.* C:\DOS

Now try FORMAT – it should work. If not, your dime will arrive in six to eight weeks.

Send your questions to: The Answer Man, P.O. Box 3738, Stanford, CA 94305.

DISCOVERIES

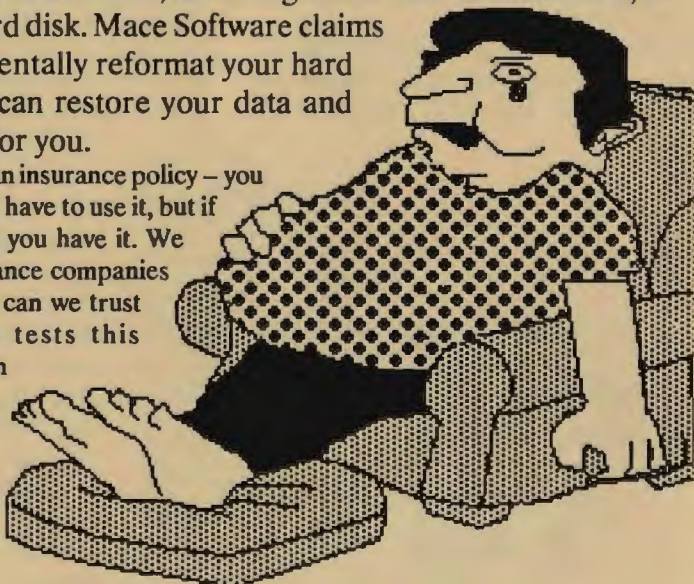
Formatted My Hard Disk... And Lived to Write about it

by Rick Altman

My copy of the latest release of Mace Utilities arrived the other day. Page 1 has a big headline that reads "EMERGENCY HELP" and the first section of the booklet is entitled "Someone formatted a hard disk." Indeed, Mace's latest program, Recovery, is devoted entirely to disasters, including the all-star disaster itself, formatting your hard disk. Mace Software claims that if you accidentally reformat your hard disk, Recovery can restore your data and your programs for you.

Recovery is like an insurance policy – you hope that you never have to use it, but if you do, you're glad you have it. We trust that our insurance companies will protect us, but can we trust Recovery? Who tests this program, other than Paul Mace, the one trying to sell it to us? Perhaps the more appropriate question is who would be dumb enough to actually format his hard disk just to see if the program does what it promises? Answer: this writer.

What a concept – format your hard disk on purpose. The first thing I did was just kind of stare at the program for a few minutes, mentally preparing myself for this ultimate heresy I was about to commit. Then I wondered if I should stage some sort of accident, as if Recovery wouldn't work properly if it knew that I formatted my disk on purpose. Then I came to my senses and backed up my hard disk. Twice.



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Diskoveries

From preceding page

Recovery offers two kinds of protection – a full recovery of your data and your directory structure, provided you installed the program first, and a data-only recovery, if Recovery was not installed when disaster struck. I sought a worst-case scenario, as if I did not own Recovery when I made my mistake. In fact, for the sake of authenticity, I did not copy the Recovery diskette or even take it out of its sleeve until after the deed was done.

The first thing I discovered is just how hard it is to actually make this gigantic mistake, especially with DOS 3.2 or 3.3.

What a concept — format your hard disk on purpose. First I just stared at the program, mentally preparing myself for this ultimate heresy.

Trying to imagine the way people would do it, I logged onto my hard disk and typed `FORMAT` without a drive specification. DOS said that a drive letter must be specified. So I typed `FORMAT C` (without the colon) and DOS

again told me to get lost. Finally I bit the bullet and typed the dreaded command `FORMAT C:`.

DOS answered with "Enter Current Volume Label:" Who remembers his Volume Label?? I had to abort and run `DIR` to find out. Only after supplying DOS with the correct volume label did I arrive at the infamous all upper-case message: "WARNING, ALL DATA ON NON-REMOVABLE DISK WILL BE LOST! PROCEED WITH `FORMAT (Y/N)?`"

I took a deep breath and pressed `Y`. I half-expected to hear all sorts of terrible garbage disposal noises – instead there was a loud silence. The hard disk light was bright and constant, but there were no disk sounds whatsoever. Two minutes and seven seconds later, my `C:\` prompt returned, as if nothing had happened. I performed a `DIR` and feigned horror at the "File not found" message.

I placed the red Recovery diskette in Drive A: and typed `UNFORMAT`. I was asked to choose a drive letter (C:) and to specify whether or not Mace was installed prior to the backup (no). Then

Recovery did its own thing, while counting on the screen how many directories it was able to salvage. The unformat process took one minute and 58 seconds, nine seconds *less* than the for-

mat. When finished, I had yet another innocent-looking C:\ prompt.

But this time DIR returned more than a "File not found" message. It displayed 17 top-level subdirectories – precisely the number I had – labeled SUB000 through SUB016. All lower-level subdirectories were correctly named and every single file was present for roll call, except for the three files in the root, COMMAND, AUTOEXEC, CONFIG and the two hidden system files. Essentially what I was left with was a fully-recovered non-bootable hard disk drive.

This is exactly as claimed by Recovery. In order to resurrect the system, all my files would have to be backed up onto floppies and the hard disk reformatted and reinitialized with DOS. Then the files could be restored. No small task, but to anyone who formats a hard disk, this is a small price to pay.

Curiously, DIR said "0 bytes free," although there were 4 megabytes of available disk space, and when I tried to create a file, DOS refused. But when I tried to delete a file, DOS not only obliged but also corrected itself and from then on displayed the correct number of bytes free. Had I really been a desperate soul trying to recover all of my data, this quirk would have been insignificant. The fact is, all of my data was salvaged.

Now, here's the catch: This process was performed on a disk that was completely contiguous – no fragmented

files at all. Had there been severely fragmented files, Unformat would not have been able to salvage all files completely – some files would have only their

What Mace left me with was a fully-recovered, non-bootable hard disk drive — exactly as the program claimed. All of my data files were saved.

beginnings and not their endings.

If you're really scared that you or someone else might format your hard disk, you can buy Mace and install it before anything bad has happened. Once you install Mace, it keeps track of your hard disk directory structure, so if you suffer an accidental reformat, Mace can resurrect your entire hard disk – directory structure, system files and all.

Even if Mace is not installed – even if you don't own the program when the disaster strikes – it can help you. It seems that Recovery does do what it claims to do: unformat a formatted disk. You need further proof? You want to see it for yourself? Give me a call – I'll show you how to format your hard disk. I'm now an expert...

PRinT SCreen Potpourri

Directory of Congress

Ever wanted to write your congressmen? You can now purchase the 1988 Directory of Congress on Disk. The directory can be used with most database managers, word processors and spreadsheets, and is available in a variety of data file formats. For each elected Senator and Representative, the directory lists the full name, party, district, Capitol address, telephone number, full committee codes, chairmanships and offices.

Our club members can purchase the directory at a 25% discount off the \$19.95 price. Send your check for \$14.95 to: Gabriel Publishing Company, 1469 Rosena Avenue, Madison, Ohio 44057. You need to specify the file format (dBASE, 1-2-3, WordStar, WordPerfect, DIF, PRN, SYLK, text editor, or fixed length) and disk size (5.25 or 3.5 inch). Be sure to mention Stanford/Palo Alto IBM PC User's Group to get the discount. The offer is good through April 30th, 1988.

DOS File Tips

Spaces in Filenames: DOS 3.x allows the use of the second 128 ASCII characters in filenames. To enter such characters, hold down the Alt key and type the relevant number on the numeric keypad (e.g., <Alt-155> will give you ¢.) In general, this may not sound that useful; however, <Alt-

255> is a space. This means that a hidden space can be included in filenames or subdirectories. OK, I hear you saying, so what?! Well, try making a text file:

```
MY<Alt-255>FILE.TEXT
```

You will probably find that such a simple trick is sufficient to keep most prying eyes away from your files and subdirectories.

This same technique can be used to ECHO a blank line between comments in a batch file when using DOS 2.x or 3.x.

Reprinted from PCock, PC Users' Group of Colorado, August 1987

Blank Lines in Batch Files: To ECHO a blank line in your batch file, just type ECHO followed by a space and <Alt-255>. Since ASCII code 255 is a blank, nothing will appear on the screen when you enter <Alt-255>.

To test it, create the following batch file called TEST.BAT:

```
ECHO OFF
ECHO COMMENT 1
ECHO <ALT-255>
ECHO COMMENT 2
```

Now try it.

```
A>TEST
Comment 1
Comment 2
A>
```

by Grey G. Whipple, Diablo Valley PC Users Group, December 1987

Thoughts on Illiteracy

You know you're computer-illiterate when:

1. You think an Apple is the fruit that caused discord in the Garden of Eden.

2. You call the drug abuse center when your kid tells you he has a blown memory.

3. You think a nanosecond is the length of time Grandma promises to stay with you next summer.

4. You think a head crash is the result of sniffing too much Duco Cement.

5. You think serial communications has something to do with Snap, Crackle, Pop, and parallel communications means you and someone else see eye-to-eye.

6. You think BASIC is simple and Pascal died during the French Revolution.

7. You think a boot is useful only when dealing with manure or bad weather.

by Richard T. Rodgers, Tucson IBM PC Users Group

Club Information

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 3738
Stanford, CA 94305

Membership

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

Bulletin Board

723-7995

Newsletter

Becky Bridges
326-8605
P.O. Box 982
Palo Alto CA 94302

Advertising

If you are interested in advertising in *PRinT SCreen* send camera-ready art or copy to P.O. Box 3738 Stanford CA 94302 before the 8th of the month. All ads are payable by check in advance. Rates per issue are:

Full Page (4 3/4 x 7 1/4) \$45

Half Page (4 3/4 x 3 1/2) \$30

Quarter Page (2 1/4 x 3 1/2) \$15

Classified ads are free to paying members.

The SPAUG

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Treasurer/ASSU Rep	Mark Woodward	493-9150

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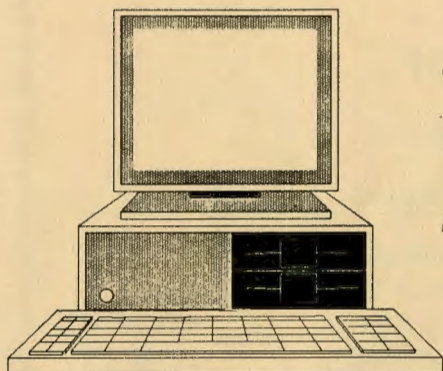
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C	Corwin Nichols	494-2043
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XT/AT Systems	Van Maulis	966-1306



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