PRinT SCreen

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

Prodigy

Coming Soon to a Meeting Near You

You may have read about it in the Wall Street Journal, or heard rumors about it at your favorite computer swap meet. At the April 27 meeting, you will be able to find out what all the fuss is about, as members get a sneak preview of the latest entry into the electronic personal service race.

Elections
This Month

CLUB NEWS

Time to Get Political

Okay, all of the back-room deals have been made, all of the power- brokering is done, the handshaking, the baby-kissing, the promises, the platforms, everything.

Now it's time to vote.

Perhaps this is not as big as the other presidential election going on in the country right now, but the group votes in new leaders this month and your presence is requested at Turing Aud. this coming Wednesday evening so that you can perform your civic duty and vote. Besides, two very worthy and able candidates are vying for top dog (or is that head chip?) in the names of Ralph Muraca and Richard Orser.

The tag-team duo of Bev and Rick Altman will be presiding over the elections, and any questions concerning the proceedings should be sent their way (329-8252).

The humble editors of PRinT SCreen hope to see you there...

Disk of the Month

This month we have the program named LIST by Vernon Buerg. It is a very fast ASCII listing/reading file. Instead of using the DOS TYPE command, use LIST to view your ASCII files. With LIST you can:

• scroll up/down/right/left/top/bottom, and move the cursor in the file
• change colors at any time (without resetting)
• scan or find exact text
• wrap long lines
• toggle printing on and off

This program will be demonstrated by Corwin Nichols, lame duck outgoing

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April-May Calendar

April 27	Group Meeting	8:00
May 9	Microsoft Word SIG	7:30
May 10	Novice SIG	7:00
May 11	Planning Meeting	8:00
May 25	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, April 27
Time:	8:00 p.m.
Place:	Polya Hall, Turing Aud.
	(Rm. 111)
	Stanford University

James O'Connell will be meeting the group to show off Prodigy, a bulletin board service offering subscribers just about every piece of information under the sun. This is a must-see for all members with telecommunication software.

President. Copies will be available for $1.00 each or use your "goodie coupon".

March Meeting

Former club president, Jim Caldwell, demonstrated several fascinating programs at the March meeting. Jim, who used to guide tours in China and is fluent in Chinese, is marketing two Chinese software programs. One program is a Chinese word processor. You type the Pinyin (i.e., Roman characters) of the Chinese words and the program translates them into the Chinese characters. Since many Pinyin words have multiple meanings, the program displays the alternatives at the top of the screen so that you can choose the correct character. If the program doesn't contain a character you need, you can even create new symbols using a simple graphics editor.

The second program Jim demonstrated is designed to teach how to write Chinese characters. It covers both theory and technique.

Though probably not too many members have personal need for these products, it was still remarkable to see the sophisticated technology in this field.

Bulletin Board

The club's bulletin board, nicknamed SPARC, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The number is 723-7995. Use the following communication settings: 300, 1200, or 2400 baud; no parity; 8 bits; and 1 stop bit.

For your own security, phone numbers will no longer be operative as passwords. If you have not changed your password from your phone number,

please call a Sys Op to do so. The System Operators are Ralph Muraca, Turley Angle, Beverly Altman, and Mark Woodward. Their phone numbers are listed on the SPAUG Resource Center list.

Library Additions

by Turley Angle, Librarian

The following programs have been added to the software library during April, 1988. Copies may be obtained from Les Weil.

FILENAME	DISK #	DESCRIPTION
DDLABEL	136	Menu driven mail list manager
FASTBUCK	137	Home finance manager
HDMIII	138	Hard disk menu, DOS shell program.

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 library catalog, Disk of the Month, or a blank

Club News

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.

Classified Ads

Diablo 630 letter quality printer, dual-bin sheet feeders, and sound cover. Best offer. Call Becky Bridges at 326-8605.

20 MB hard drive with controller, $200. Call Becky Bridges at 326- 8605.

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 S-Creen. 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. The job would entail contacting local computer stores, repair shops, etc. to see if they would be interested in advertising on a regular, periodic, or one-time basis. Call Becky Bridges at 326-8605 if you are interested.

News From the SIGs

The Novice SIG

> Wise men come ever promising
> The riddle of life to know.
> Wise men come...
> Ah, but over the sands,
> The silent sands of time
> They go...
>
> *— Kismet*

Report on meeting of 4/12. This writer is imbued with discovering ways of using a PC. The Novice SIG meetings offer additionally, a glimpse of the myriad uses others put the PC to. We all begin by learning just enough of the operating system (DOS, in this case) to be able to run all sorts of applications programs and to do some file management. However, it's easy to get deluded into believing that advanced computer use is merely using more of the same, but perhaps with more sophisticated or exotic programs. Creating templates could very well be the ceiling for many.

Engineers and scientists, who program, experience the thrill of achieving little break-throughs in algorithm development which can give a real personal sense of accomplishment. Everyone can share in this if learning enough programming to produce programs customized to one's own needs. If one can withstand the snobbery against BASIC, this useful language is advocated as a place to start, and the next meeting will use it as the central topic.

NEXT NOVICE SIG GROUP MEETING - May 10 (2nd Tuesday of the month). 7 p.m., refreshments, at 3785 Farm Hill Blvd. Redwood City (on south side of street with Emerald Hill as closest cross street). Watch for blue & red light. (415) 365-6822. Four calls are minimum before May 5, otherwise meeting will be canceled and those-calling notified by May 7 (leave phone number).

— Don Baird

Microsoft Word SIG

The Microsoft Word SIG meets the second Monday of every month. The next meeting will be Monday, May 9th at 7:30 p.m. For details on the meetings call Jeanie Treichel at home (851-0100) or at work (326-7438).

PRinT SCreen Potpourri

WordStar Classic, Release 5

The new WordStar upgrade, scheduled to ship next month, contains over 200 new features and improvements. Some of these enhancements are:

- Automatic text reformatting
- Optional pull-down menus
- Newspaper columns
- Laser printer support
- Windows
- Footnotes
- Fill-in-the-blank forms for MailMerge

Current WordStar owners can upgrade for $89.

Uno, Dos, Tres...QUATTRO!

by Peter Foiles

Quattro is one of the new spreadsheets on the market which is trying to knock Lotus 1-2-3 from the top of the sales charts. Despite all of the hoopla in the ads, Quattro is not a revolutionary product. What it is is Borland's version of What Lotus 1-2-3 release 3.0 should be.

Working with Quattro is much like working with 1-2-3: you use the "/" key to activate the menus. However, the menus appear in a window rather at the top of the screen. The innovation with Quattro is that the menus can be customized. You can even completely rework the menu tree structure or add your own branches.

The principal improvement with Quattro's macros is its "learn mode" so that writing your own macros is much easier than with 1-2-3. Also, Quattro will display the complete name of each keystroke so that you no longer have cryptic lines like "/fin" for File Import Number.

Graphics are another area that is much improved in Quattro. To start with Quattro will print graphs directly, no more exiting to an external printing program. The print quality is very good. On screen the graphs look much better than in 1-2-3.

The final feature that I will mention is the SQZ program which is built in. This program compacts your spreadsheet files to save disk space. I found that the savings were substantial, averaging between 50% and 80%.

In general I am very pleased with Quattro. It is not the major improvement to spreadsheet that Excel is, but it is highly 1-2-3 compatible with a number of nice improvements, no copy protection and half the price.

Computer Magazine with A Centerfold??

Pictures of Playboy magazine's Miss May inadvertently appeared in a computer magazine, but nobody's system has crashed because of it. The computer magazine, PC Clone, is printed at one firm and bound at another, both in Wisconsin. The latest issue includes "five pages of Miss May, very nude," said Michael F. Billings, president of Peach Communications of Titusville, FL, which owns PC Clone.

"We're keeping a sense of humor about the situation, as are our readers," said Billings. Good thing it happened to a computer magazine. They understand how such things can happen.

DOS 3.3

Those who are considering upgrading to DOS 3.3, may be interested in finding out what its new features are. Read ahead...

You can now have up to 255 files open simultaneously (though most programs will have to be rewritten to work with this feature).

The new APPEND command provides for data what the PATH command provides for programs.

BACKUP will now format floppy disks on the fly.

DATE and TIME can update the internal clock/calendar.

FDISK now supports multiple DOS partitions for disks of more than 32MB.

The new REPLACE command selectively replaces files on the target drive with files of the same name on the source drive.

The @ symbol in a batch file causes the executing line not to be displayed on the console.

The CALL command allows for nested batch files and the use of DOS environment variables.

DOS 3.3 sells for $125.

The DOS Prompt Command

The traditional DOS prompt of "A" or "C" is intimidating to the new user and boring to the old timer. But you can easily change it to anything you want, for example:

HI BOSS, THE TIME IS NOW>
or
HELLO, GOOD LOOKING>

To change the prompt, you type in the word PROMPT followed by the message you would like to be greeted with, and/or special parameters. The PROMPT parameters are characters preceded by a dollar sign:

$T   Time
$D   Date
$P   Current directory
$G
$N   Default drive
$H   backspace

$_ (underscore) begins a new line. For example, entering "PROMPT $T" will replace the "A" with the current system time. If you have a hard disk drive and need help remembering what directory you are in, you can use a prompt like this: "PROMPTTHHHPG". "$T" displays the current system time, "HH$H" backspaces over the fractional seconds. "$P" tells it to display the current drive and directory, and "$G" closes with the traditional character. Be sure to leave 1 or 2 spaces on the end of the line so your typed input is separated from the prompt.

Another use of the prompt command is to enter Escape Code sequences when using ANSI.SYS to change screen colors or enter keyboard macros.

Once you find a prompt you like, put the command into your AUTOEXEC.BAT file, and you won't need to enter it each time you start your computer. ¶

Prodigy: Coming Soon To A Meeting Near You

There are probably about 150 of these service bureaus across the country today, but what might set Prodigy apart is the breadth of information available to you. In the same phone call, you can find out how your stocks did, see if George Brett hit any homeruns today, book your round-trip flight to Florida, check the weather there, order a new swimsuit for your stay there, and call a restaurant critic for advice on where to eat while you are there.

Trintex, the company behind Prodigy, has rounded up a not-so-small list of experts to address your questions on topics ranging from Hyundais to zucchini. Stuart Alsop is on-line to address computer questions, Jane Fonda will work the fitness field, Sylvia Porter is there to manage your money, Howard Cosell will be speaking of sports and Gene Siskel will be happy to trash the latest movies for you.

"The service is perfect for true novices as well as experienced users," maintains James O'Connell, Trintex' marketing manager and guest at this week's meeting. "Each person in a family can easily create his or her own personalized service that enables a selection of special interest areas to automatically come up without each person having to search or use menus."

Of particular interest is the cost of using the system, which sounds suspiciously low. A subscriber pays a monthly charge (said to be in the $10 - 15 range), pays no additonal on-line time and gets to make a local phone call.

Prodigy doesn't expect to turn a profit from its subscribers – instead it sells electronic advertising space. While you

> *Stuart Alsop is on-line to address computer questions, Jane Fonda will work the fitness field, Sylvia Porter is there to manage your money, Howard Cosell will be speaking of sports and Gene Siskel will be happy to trash the latest movies for you.*

are trying to buy your airline tickets, American Airlines might be trying to sell you its new around-the-world tour. While you might be checking the weather for your ski trip, Subaru may give you the big pitch for its four-wheel drive cars.

Finally, Trintex claims that this will be the most entertaining bulletin board you'll ever be on. And indeed, the graphical interface and its color support is no less than dazzling.

Early versions of Prodigy have been met with criticism by focus groups chosen by Trintex to evaluate the product. But to the company's credit, it has been unusually responsive to these focus groups, holding exhaustive meetings to hear comments and criticism. If this new version of Prodigy reflects these efforts to poll its users, Trintex may have a winner on its hands.

Club members will have the opportunity to see a pre-release version of the program, and who knows, maybe be offered a special group rate... ¶

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

Club Officers

President	Corwin Nichols	494-8640
Vice President	Kathy Carroll	325-0824
Treasurer/ASSU Rep	Mark Woodward	493-9150

Managers

Financial Manager	Beverly Altman	329-8252
Newsletter Editor	Becky Bridges	326-8605
Production Editor	Rick Altman	581-7563
Speakers' Bureau	Jim Wampler	323-7365

Library

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

Software

Desktop Publishing	Rick Altman	581-7563
EZ Business Systems	Larry Mehl	326-6037
Framework	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
Lotus 1-2-3	Bruce Codding	367-8642
	Arthur Naman	408-879-9900

Resource Center

Microsoft Word	Jeanie Treichel	851-0100
	Hunter Jackson	408-446-4097
Q & A	Elaine Meyer	325-8057
Rbase System V	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
DOS 3.x	Rick Altman	581-7563
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
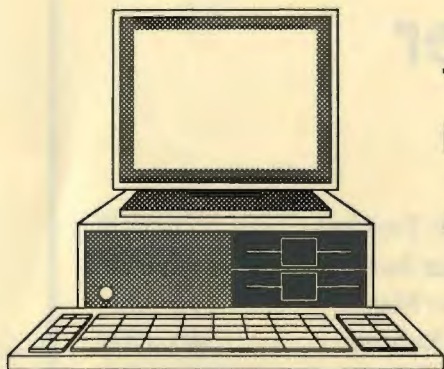
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