PRinT SCreen

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

Who is our speaker?

Next.

No, this month.

Next.

Who is our next speaker?

That's right.

What is??

No, what is in October.

CLUB NEWS

The BBS is Back!

We know many members have been (im)patiently awaiting the resurrection of the club bulletin board, and by the time you read this, SPARC will be very close to operational. It has been removed from a basement at Stanford University, and now resides at Corwin Nichols' office.

The new phone number is

424-0812

Make sure to change your auto-dialers. We will be installing new software that will make SPARC much easier to use, and soon we will be uploading over 30 megabytes of brand new, fully tested public domain and user-supported programs. We hope the wait will have been worth it.

To avoid the problem of the past few months, we intend to never be dependent on just one SYSOP. Therefore, we will be forming a BBS special interest group, for which volunteers are being accepted immediately. This group will meet at Corwin's office and be trained by experienced BBS operators. If you are interested in learning how a bulletin board operates and being one of a few system operators, talk to Rick or Corwin at the meeting.

Once the BBS is up, we will devote a meeting to introducing its new features to the membership.

Last Meeting

The dynamic duo from Computer-Care in Mountain View informed and entertained us through their favorite PC horror stories. See Becky's full report on Page 7.

Sept.-Oct. Calendar

Sept. 27	Group Meeting	7:30	**Next Meeting**
Oct. 9	Lotus SIG	7:30	**Date:** Wednesday, Sept. 27
Oct. 10	Novice SIG	7:30	**Time:** 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 11	Planning Meeting	7:30	**Place:** Polya Hall, Turing
Oct. 25	Group Meeting	7:30	Auditorium (Rm. 111)
			Stanford University

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.

Raffle

Dave and Beverly Altman were the grand prize winners at the August raffle; they won WordPerfect 5.0. Other winners included Laddie Hughes who won a poster and Glen Rupp who won ViewLink.

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):

Susan Anderson, Ann Benson, JoAnn Conners, Eric Johnson, Glen Roberts, Charles Clark, Randy Melon, and David Rahn.

Lotus SIG

The next action-packed meeting of the Lotus SIG will be held on October 9th at 7:30 p.m. If you have any questions about the SIG, please call Jan Altman at (408) 243-5955.

Novice SIG

The Novice SIG meets the second Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be held on October 10th 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Larry Weinberg will be hosting the meeting. Give him a call at 969-2292 for directions.

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 PRinT SCreen. ¶

This Month

Who's on First??

Next Computers will visit with us to show us what many industry analysts call the successor to the PC. While we won't be graced with Steve Jobs himself, we will get to see the very latest version of the software and lots of visual examples of what it can do.

Most of us know only that the Next computer is targeted for schools — after all, it has the Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus, the entire works of William Shakespeare and the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations on disk. The Next also boasts the most accurate screen display of any computer on the market today.

This meeting is a must for any user with an eye to the future.

Program of the Month

Several handy utilities for comparing files in different subdirectories will be demonstrated at the September meeting. The disk will be available for $1 or you may use your Goodie Coupon.

The Giveaway

Our raffle this month features the two top-selling word processing programs: WordPerfect 5.0 and Microsoft Word 5.0. All members who are current with their dues and who are present at the meeting at the time of the drawing are eligible to win.

DISKoveries

Did You Know...?

by Rick Altman

DID YOU KNOW that there is a significance to the single and double dots that you see on your subdirectory displays? They stand for the current directory and the parent directory, respectively, and they are not just useless indicators telling you what you already know.

You can use them in many DOS commands, and save yourself several keystrokes. The most obvious and immediate benefit is that you can use "." in place of "*.*" for all of your DEL and COPY commands. You can also use ".." in CD commands and save potentially dozens of keystrokes. Here are a few examples:

COPY . D:
(copy all files in the current directory to D)

DEL .
(same as DEL *.*)

CD ..
(back out one level to the parent directory)

CD ..\NEWSUB
(back out one level and then go down to NEWSUB)

COPY .. .
(copy all files from the parent directory into the current directory)

CD .
(change directories to the current directory...oh well, so much for saving keystrokes)

DID YOU KNOW that you can use CHKDSK to search your hard drive for a particular file? If you don't have a file search program, or if you are on someone else's computer, you can tell CHKDSK, in conjunction with FIND, to find a file for you. If you're trying to locate the file called GODZILLA.AGG, type the following:

CHKDSK /V | FIND "GODZILLA"

You can use any portion of the file name (so "GODZ" would work also), but

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For your perusal, a collection of both useful and useless DOS tips.

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be sure that you use all caps. Also, make sure that there aren't any lost clusters on the hard drive, because then CHKDSK would wait for you to answer yes or no about recovering them and would not show you GOD-ZILLA. To be sure, run CHKDSK/F before performing the search.

DID YOU KNOW that you can write a quick note to yourself and automatically attach it to a file of notes, without having to use any editor at all? You can use the COPY command to add a typed comment onto the end of a file. Assuming you have a file called NOTES and you want to attach a few lines of text to the end of it, type the following:

COPY NOTES+CON NOTES

Now type your text and press <Ctrl-Z> when you're done. COPY will append your text to the end of notes. When you're typing your text, you will be able to edit only the current line, so make sure each line is right before pressing <Enter>. Those who use this technique often could create a simple batch file called NOTE:

1. echo off

2. echo Enter the desired text and then press CTRL-Z

3. copy notes+con notes

DID YOU KNOW that you can take a picture of a directory and store it on disk? If you want to know exactly what files were in a subdirectory on, say, May 22, type the following:

DIR > DIR_522

That will redirect the DIR display into a file called DIR_522, which will then serve as a permanent record of what that directory looks like right now.

DID YOU KNOW that you can place a colon in front of any command in AUTOEXEC.BAT or CONFIG.SYS and DOS will ignore that command? If you are experimenting with your system — adding and removing TSRs or device drivers — don't bother deleting the entire line, only to have to retype it later. Just place a colon in front of it. Colons embedded at the beginning of AUTOEXEC commands will be passed over altogether; colons in CONFIG.SYS will result in "Unrecognized command" error messages during boot time — just ignore them.

DID YOU KNOW that in DOS 3.3, you can place "@" in front of any command in a batch file and the command will not display on the command line (only the result of running the program will display). So if you begin batch files with "@echo off", your screen will remain completely clean, as even the "echo off" will not appear.

DID YOU KNOW that you can run a batch file from within another batch file? If you have DOS 3.3, it's easy — just type CALL before the name of the batch file, and when it's done, control will be returned to the original batch file. For versions of DOS below 3.3, you can do it by loading a second copy of COM-

DISKoveries

MAND.COM into memory. To run BATCH2 inside of BATCH1, the command would look like this:

```
COMMAND /C BATCH2
```

DID YOU KNOW that you can instruct XCOPY to copy only those files that have been modified since a specified date? If you want to archive all files since St. Patrick's Day, type:

```
XCOPY *.* A: /S /D:3-17-89
```

DID YOU KNOW that you can sort a directory by any column number, using the SORT filter. To sort a directory by first name, type DIR | SORT. To sort it by extension, type

```
DIR | SORT /+10
```

and to sort by file size, type

```
DIR | SORT /+14.
```

If the directory takes up more than one screen, you may want to finish each command with "| MORE" to stop the scroll after each screen. To capture the output to a file, end the command with "> filename". Remember, that every single line of the directory display gets sorted, so the header and the footer to the directory display is sorted right along with the filenames.

DID YOU KNOW that you can turn any subdirectory into a logical disk drive by using the SUBST command? If you do a lot of work in C:\DOCUMENT\WORD\LEGAL \DRAFTS, you can use SUBST to turn that subdirectory into, say drive E. To do that, type the following (all on one line):

```
SUBST E: C:\DOCUMENT\
WORD\LEGAL\DRAFTS
```

Now you can change directories to it simply by logging onto E.

DID YOU KNOW that you can copy a file to oblivion by sending it to NUL? Yes folks, if you type

```
COPY <filename> NUL
```

you will be copying the file to nowhere. I just thought your lives might benefit from that valuable piece of information...¶

DID YOU KNOW *that you can take a picture of a directory and store it on disk permanently?*

The Twenty-One Commandments

Or How to Avoid "$50 Parts, $75 Labor"

by Rebecca Altman

At the last meeting, two experts from ComputerCare offered loads of tips for saving time, aggravation and money with your computer. ComputerCare is a well-respected computer repair company in Mountain View. They suggested the following DOs and DON'Ts:

> **Tip No. 1:** *Buy components from manufacturers you know. Do not buy no-name cards without full documentation.*

Tip No. 1: Buy only quality components and stick with manufacturers you know. Do not buy close-outs or no-name cards without full written documentation.

Tip No. 2: Keep your manuals and utility disks; repair technicians may need them.

Tip No. 3: Do not buy cheap surge protectors. They recommend "Mini-Micro" with a remote on/off switch. It sells for around $39 at Fry's.

Tip No. 4: Once a year, clean out the dust inside your computer with a vacuum.

Tip No. 5: Do not place anything on top of your monitor; you will block the air vents.

Tip No. 6: Stay away from internal modems. They can get real hot and cause overheating problems.

Tip No. 7: If your hard drive is not self-parking, park the head before you move the PC. Also, when transporting, put the computer on the floor of the car (so it doesn't go flying if you stop suddenly) and put an old disk in

DOs and DON'Ts

from previous page

the floppy drive to keep the heads from touching.

Tip No. 8: Make COMMAND.COM read only. Before copying from a floppy make sure COMMAND.COM isn't on it. It could be a different version than one you're using. "COMMAND.COM is a virus if it's the wrong version." Different versions, especially if they are on your PATH, could cause problems such as hanging.

Tip No. 9: Print copies of AUTOEXEC.BAT, CONFIG.SYS, and an AT's setup.

Tip No. 10: On an AT, buy a new battery every year—before the battery dies. So that you don't lose your setup, remove the cover, turn on the computer and then change the battery.

Tip No. 11: Use Norton Utilities 4.5. Once a month, run Norton Disk Doctor and Speed Disk to make contiguous files.

> **Tip No. 10:** *On an AT, buy a new battery every year.*

Tip No. 12: Stay away from DOS 4.0.

Tip No. 13: Don't unplug the printer cable when the printer is on.

Tip No. 14: So that you don't have to bring your entire computer system to the repair shop when something goes wrong, try to figure out which component is bad. If available, switch cables, printers, monitors, etc.

Tip No. 15: Don't skimp on printer ribbons, else you will have to replace the print head more often ($150 plus labor).

Tip No. 16: Don't wind mailing labels backwards in the printer—they will get stuck and the printer will have to be disassembled.

Tip No. 17: Back up! The rule is simple: whenever you have information you don't want to lose, make a backup.

Tip No. 18: Don't bother trying to fix a keyboard. It's cheaper to buy a new one (go to Frye's).

Tip No. 19: Use screen saver software. If you must disable the screen saver because of software incompatibility, turn the monitor off or turn the intensity down when you aren't using the computer.

Tip No. 20: Reformat your hard disk if you change its position (i.e., from horizontal to vertical).

Tip No. 21: Learn the following DOS commands, if you don't already: BACKUP, RECOVER, CHKDSK/F, MODE, PATH, PROMPT, ATTRIB.

ComputerCare is located at 2455 Old Middlefield Road, Unit M in Mountain View. Their telephone number is 967-8186. ¶

PRTSC POTPOURRI

Write or Wrong Protection
Derek Watson
Pinellas PCUG

I was recently reminded of an obscure little problem that can catch software houses unaware. There has been an increased tendency for new products to be copied onto brightly colored, write protected, no-notch disks. Unfortunately, if these disks are not made with materials that take into consideration the write-protect sensing in modern drives, they may not be as write-protected as one would wish.

In the early days of floppy drives, when a disk was inserted there was a distinctive clink from a microswitch within the drive as a lever fell onto the write-protect notch. This would allow the writing circuitry of the drive to function. If there was no notch, or the write-protect tab was in position, the switch would be held off, protecting the disk.

Modern disk drives use a different system. Within the drive is an optical sensor and a light source. When there is an open write notch, the light from an LED shines on the sensor. The sensor then triggers the write-gating circuits of the drive. If the notch is in position, no light shines on the sensor, and the write circuits are disabled. However, if the plastic disk jacket fails to block the light completely, either the disk will not be write-protected at all or enough light may pass through to produce a jittery write-protect.

The problem is not as obvious or as easy to judge as one might think. To start with, the light source is not usually visible light but infrared, which means that a jacket appearing at first glance to be opaque may actually be quite clear at infrared light frequencies. This make some colors, in particular red, more susceptible to this kind of fault. Further difficulties may arise, depending upon the model of drive involved. If the drive has a strong light source, it is more likely to produce problems.

There is a lesson in this for all of us. Don't use scotch tape for write-protecting; even white paper labels could present problems. Ideally, silvered or black write-protect labels are

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Today's pretty colored diskettes may not be as write-protected as you might think.

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best. Even so, always test a blank disk with a write-protect label.

CONFIG.SYS Q&A
Preston Hill and John Goodman
Orange Cost PCUG

Question: What goes into my CONFIG.SYS file?

Answer: The purpose of your CONFIG.SYS file is to tell DOS how to customize itself for your special needs. By changing it, you can, in effect, change the "personality" of your computer.

One of the most useful, but least used, options for CONFIG.SYS (in versions later than 3.1) is the SHELL command. This tells DOS where to find the command processor and what that program is called, but it also can be used to give the command processor (normally COMMAND.COM) some instructions about how you want it to work. One thing you can do is expand your DOS environment area. To avoid the error message "Out of Environment Space," if you have DOS 3.2, 3.3 or 4.0, you might add to your CONFIG.SYS file the line

CONFIG.SYS gives your PC a personality.

SHELL=C:\COMMAND.COM /P/E:512.

DOS uses some temporary data parking areas in RAM to store information on its way to or from the disks. These are called "buffers." The default number is only 2 for PCs and XTs and 3 for ATs — way below the recommended amount. Programs will run much faster if you increase this number, although the optimum number is hard to specify. You can tell DOS to use up to 99 buffers, although a good guess is usually between 20 and 30. The tradeoff is RAM: each disk buffer takes 528 bytes of RAM.

Similarly, you can specify in your CONFIG.SYS file the number of files that DOS can keep open at one time. The default value is often too small; many programs call out an entry in your CONFIG.SYS of "FILES=20" or larger.

Perhaps the most common use of a CONFIG.SYS file is to tell DOS how to customize itself for special hardware, by the "DEVICE=" directive. In addition to "DEVICE=C:\DOS\ANSI.SYS" (for extended keyboard and screen handling) this can apply to mouse support, to an EMS or network card, or to any accessory which comes with special software.

Another useful CONFIG.SYS directive is LASTDRIVE. Setting LASTDRIVE=x, where x is a letter from A to Z, tells DOS to allow for that many drives. Remember that the DOS SUBST command can be used to create useful pseudo-drives. ¶

The SPAUG Resource Center

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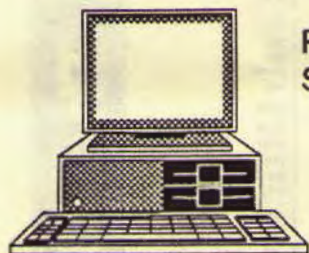
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