

SPAUG

Stanford  
Palo Alto  
Users Group

# Print Screen

## The Newsletter of Stanford/Palo Alto PC Users Group

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 7 AUGUST 1991

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### JULY MEETING

*Last Wednesday: July 31st 7.30pm at Turing Auditorium*

### GET THE INSIDE SCOOP ON YOUR PC

Learn about PCs from the inside with Roy Worthington, President of Octave System of Campbell. Roy, who's been teaching people for years how to build their own PCs, will give us a tour of a PC motherboard, and show us how to install various components.

And for a SPAUG *first*, the evening will be videotaped! For info on getting yourself a copy, contact President Paul.



## The President's Piece

The group was recently given a valuable resource. Ralph Nelson is a physicist at SLAC who also has written a shareware program called Letus A-B-C. It's a reference database of every article, review, story, etc. from all the major PC magazines, starting with their first issues. He gave us an entire set of disks with all the abstracts from 1983-1990. This will be loaded onto the bulletin board so as to be available to everyone. I urge everyone to take a look at this, especially if you're in need of specific info, such as a current review.

Mr. Nelson also gave us complete sets of several magazines - PC Magazine, PC World, Byte. We'll probably try to sell these for the group, though not immediately. So, we need a place to store them for a while. They take up a space approximately 36"x60"x36". They're in my garage at the moment, but my garage is not secure. Does anyone have a corner of their garage to donate? They'd be excellent tenants, no pets, no parties. Let me know if you can help.

### BBS

By the time you read this, the BBS will be back up and running. The new drive is in, and everything is back together. Bob Bottini has been working very hard pulling the BBS back into shape. Thanks Bob! He has some great ideas for the BBS, so watch for new features. If any of you have any shareware or freeware that you'd like to have considered for inclusion on the BBS, talk to Bob. We're looking for truly useful software, something that would be useful to our members and to others.

I'd also like to extend thanks again to Roy Worthington of Octave Systems for the new

Maxtor hard drive that now illuminates our BBS. Roy has been very supportive of SPAUG at a time when we really needed it. Thanks again, Roy!

And a hearty thanks goes out to our own incorrigible Les Weil. Les donated his hard won copy of DOS 5.0 from last month's raffle to the BBS. Thanks, Les!

### Novice SIG

Henry Holwedell has been working on setting up a series of classes for a new novice SIG. He's preparing a curriculum that we can use whenever there is a need for the classes. We want to start these classes soon.

At this time we're trying to locate a space to hold the class. An ideal location would be centrally located on the peninsula, free, with a computer available. If you know of any possible sites, give me a call.

### Public Relations

The PR firm of Franson, Hagerty & Associates, Inc., has generously offered to do pro bono promotional work for us. Lori Naragon has been assigned to us and will be assisting us with promotion of a few key events, such as the sidewalk fair. We're very pleased to have Lori working with us. She's planning to attend this month's meeting, so please make her feel at home. (See next page.)

### Fun in the Sun!

Hey! How about a picnic? The suggestion has come up to have a SPAUG picnic this summer. It sounds like a great idea to me, as long as we keep it simple. I'll bring this up at the meeting, so give it some thought.

### Summer Sidewalk Fair

It'll be on us before we know it! The fair is scheduled for Sept 25, starting at 6 p.m. So, dig through all that old hardware/software that you're not using anymore, dust it off, and plan on bringing it by to sell. Also, spread the word with your fellow workers and computing friends. We're expecting a large turnout this year.

### Software Reviews

We have three new software releases that we would like members to review.

1. **File Shuttle Xpress** - a high speed File Transfer program that transfers files from one PC, or laptop, to another, using either DOS or Windows.
2. **Immunity** - a Hard Disk Mirroring system which provides fault tolerant computing on systems with two hard disks by continuously duplicating information created on one disk on the other - the perfect back-up. Disks of differing sizes can be used.
3. **Maximizer** - a Contact Management program that stores, tracks, classifies, logs client contacts and targets specific group profiles. I comes with a full feature word processor and scheduler.

Naturally the reviewer of the program gets to keep it. Whether the review is favorable or not!





**A PROFILE OF  
FRANSON, HAGERTY  
& ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Formed in 1980, Franson, Hagerty & Associates, Inc., is a leading independent public relations company. They specialize in providing services for technology-based companies and related organizations in the areas of corporate marketing, financial, and policy communications

These services include research, counsel, positioning, strategic planning, program implementation, communications materials, analyst, media and government contact, and event planning.

The agency works with start-up, pre-IPO and public companies to help differentiate and position them, and their products. It has excellent relationships with important influencers - business, general, technical, and consumer media; industry analysts; government officials; and the financial community.

The company offers its clients worldwide public relations services including an affiliation in Europe, with a marketing communications firm having offices in Paris, London, Munich, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Madrid, and Milan. The agency services the rest of the world through other affiliates.

Franson, Hagerty & Associates, Inc., are located at 181 Metro Drive, Suite 300, San Jose, CA 95110 (408) 453-5220.

**A BIG WELCOME TO THE  
FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS**

Phil Kardys	Santa Clara
Martin Rosenblum	Los Altos
Vladimir Silverman	Palo Alto
Larry Turpen	San Jose

**Renewals**

Ben Adelman	Milpitas
Donald Brookman	Palo Alto
Edward Doherty	Hillsborough
Ron Johnson	Mountain View
Floys Kessler	Palo Alto
Bob Mitchell	Redwood City
Raymond Odell	Redwood City
Larry Weinberg	Mountain View
Morris Williams	Sunnyvale

# THE BBS IN PRINT

**BOB BOTTINI**

*Bob is the BBS Sysop*

## Adventures in BBS Land - II

*A chronical of adventures on the road to setting up of our new, wonderful, grand, BBS.*

Paul Staley pulled a rabbit out of the hat and we got ourselves a 200 MgB hard drive. However it was not quite as inexpensive as we had originally believed. We had to spend an additional \$190 dollars to buy a controller card. We are still below our budget by about \$350. Don't be too overjoyed. I just came from spending about 6 hours working on the BBS only to discover that our modem is shot. It will take only incoming calls. Well where does all of this leave us? In the same place we were a few months ago when the hard drive went out.

What I am trying to do is to get all the pieces lined up and together. We now have DOS 5.0 so that we can get away from partitions. We need the new Wildcat software so that we can get away from the altered version of Wildcat that we now enjoy. I would also like to have the new computer, modems, etc., so that everything can be done at the same time and just once. The time that a BBS demands is huge. I don't feel that I can afford the time it takes to keep doing things over and over.

Wildcat is about to release a vastly superior upgrade of their BBS software on August 1, 1991. The upgrade will cost only \$50 dollars. However if we switch to a 10 line system, we will have to come up with an additional \$140 dollars.

The new program will have the following features:

A - A full screen editor to process the ANSI emulation codes that some terminal programs like Telix use when a user hits an arrow key.

B - Quoting of messages is fully supported in the line editor as well as in a full screen editor. Quoting is done automatically for every reply and is configured by the user. The text may also be quoted line-by-line during the editing.

C - Chatting can be done on a split-screen for both local and remote and with word wrap.

D - A conferencing structure has been added to the message database system. There are 1,000, conference areas available, each with a single message database and multiple file areas. Think of the conference section as a separate BBS with its own menus, bulletins, message base, file listings and security alterations.

There is very much "to" this new version of Wildcat. This was just a small sample. It should provide us with room for growth.

# (415) 321-4497

**THE NEW BULLETIN BOARD NUMBER**



# IT CAN'T HAPPEN TO ME

— or —

## HOW TO TRASH YOUR HARD DISK WITHOUT EVEN TRYING

FLOYD S. KESSLER

I have a 386/20mh clone with a 40mb hard disk that I used more or less successfully since March 1989, with very few problems other than my own inexperience. I installed DOS 4.01 immediately and in June 1990 installed PCTOOLS Version 6.0. We three got along fairly well together. The shell made it easy (when configured) to start programs using the program name on a list and PCTOOLS did good things easily like BACKUP, DISKFIX and COMPRESS. I almost never had to use the DOS command line.

When DOS 5.0 was announced I had to have it even if the only advantage over 4.01 was the memory saving and the TASK SWITCHER. I of course needed PCTOOLS Version 7.0 since they claimed close collaboration with MICROSOFT in the development of DOS 5.0. Both were installed and "working" a few days prior to the last general meeting (DOS 5.0 presentation). The next day I decided to do a hard disk compression that I had done successfully many times with PCTOOLS Ver 6.0.

The first strange event was a message that the disk didn't need compressing when I could see the gaps all over. When I tried to run CHKDSK at DOS I got a message "WRONG DOS" which I didn't understand. I finally got COMPRESS to start and then the fireworks began. PCTOOLS 7.0 scrolls the file names as they're being moved around the list seemed to be going both ways at once and ran longer than usual as I sat and watched disaster occur before my eyes.

When it was all over I got a message telling me that my disk had cross-linking beyond belief. And then PCTOOLS "locked the barn door" with a message that said "TURN OFF TASK SWITCHER" - would you believe? I couldn't access any programs with files open in TASK SWITCHER, DOS 5.0 allowed COMPRESS to move and overlay unrelated files any place and every place on the hard disk.

When I tried to reboot, the system hung. I spent about four hours on the phone to Central Point in three sessions over two nervous days. Eventually I had to clean (format) my hard disk and reinstall PCTOOLS and DOS (using 4.01) since 5.0 is only an upgrade and cannot be installed alone.

I must commend the Central Point tech support person who stuck with this "bear pawed" user. He was very patient and understanding. On the other hand I have nothing but brickbats for the management and designers of PCTOOLS Version 7.0. They have touted their relationship to Microsoft during the development of

DOS 5.0 but apparently it didn't extend to technical interfacing on the use of the possible problems using both programs simultaneously.

There is nothing in the documentation (that I can find) from either company that even alludes to conflicts. But why should I (or countless thousands who have this combination on their system - it holds for PCTOOLS 6.0 also) expect the software companies to compensate for my inexperience to classify TASK SWITCHER as a TSR or as a suspect TSR? The system printout from PCTOOLS didn't. There's not word one in the README file.

Some thinking people seem to have recognized the potential problem. If I can believe the July 2, 1991 issue of COMPUTER CURRENTS, L. Magid in an article titled "BATTLE OF THE DOS UTILITIES (NEW VERSIONS OF NORTON AND PCTOOLS)" states (on page 26) that "Norton has been modified so that it works safely with DOS 5.0 TASK SWITCHER." Too bad the great Central Point/Microsoft collaboration team missed a most important operating conflict! At this point I'm probably lucky my backup set was only ten days old and it included the program software as well as the data.

I don't, at this writing, know the cost of four hours of telephone time but I intend to pursue this with Central Point as soon as I find out.

The bottom line is - it can happen to me - and it did. I also purchased Central Point's Virus program but my newly found caution prevents me from installing it until I read an independent, detailed product review somewhere.

One more thought about the General Motors of software (Microsoft), they don't do anything unless forced to, so I don't expect any support from them. Can it be possible that this never happened once to their seven thousand Beta testers over a year's time?

### BETTER MAGAZINE RATES

Ziff-Davis has a discount offer on several of their computer magazines for SPAUG members. Call 1-800-777-2547, tell them you want the user group rate and they'll set you up. The following are available:

P.C. Magazine	\$24.97/yr
P.C. Computing	\$14.97/yr
Computer Shopper	\$14.99/yr
P.C. Sources	\$12.97/yr
Mac User (?)	\$13.50/yr



## MY STORY

The software he won works perfectly! Jim won a copy of Lotus 1-2-3 2.2 the night of Spreadsheet Wars. I had been using Version 2.01 for our personal accounts, money management as presented by Nick Maffei, a previous speaker; the list of books read by my book club, data base lists (alphabetized) of my bridge club and board members of my favorite organization, the amortization schedule for a loan someone was paying to us, a similar schedule prepared for a friend who was buying a lot in Michigan...you name it, there was a Lotus file for it.

With some misgivings we converted to V 2.2 and I like it even better. My favorite enhancement is the menu of files; no longer do I have to scroll through the menu bar to locate the file in the middle, I can call it up with fewer strokes from the tabular menu.

Sideways is an add-in I find very useful. I track a portfolio of stocks on a weekly basis and print out the list monthly. It's too wide to print regularly, but Sideways does a great job. I keep the file less than 55 lines long so the printout is two plus pages "wide" and one page "long." There are format commands in Sideways to adjust the size of the characters, print them out bold (or double strike), and install headers, footers, or titles.

We've even done useful work with the combination. Last winter, using Lotus and Sideways, we developed a matrix listing various machines Jim works with and potential vendors for service contracts on them. The final printout was three pages "wide" by three pages "long" and made quite an impression.

**Rosalie Dinkey**

## TELL US A STORY

Why did you buy your computer? What's your favorite program? And why? When was the last time you felt like throwing the damn thing through the nearest window? Why? Everybody's got a story to tell. So, tell us yours and we'll print it here. How about your computer wish list? What about that free software you won? Did it do what it claimed it could? We need fresh input from some fresh voices. It doesn't have to be fancy or long, just real. Tell us your story.

### PLANNING MEETING

**August 12 (2nd Monday) at 7:30pm**

*The location*

**1670 Oak Avenue, Menlo Park**

Help us to make decisions about the club. All members are welcome. You don't have to be a club officer to get your views heard.

## WINDOWS UTILITIES

**Bob Chieger**

**WINCRASH** - Deliberately crashes your computer (not needed if you have Windows 3.0).

**WINDISK** - Puts all your fonts and swapfiles on one 40 Mb hard drive and all your DOS 4.0 and Windows 3.0 files on another.

**WINBLASS** - For the fashionable, a clip art collection of lovely icons from Bill Blass.

**WINZIP** - Compresses all of your Windows files into just 7 megabytes - and then deletes them.

**WINPAK** - Makes your computer work with Windows. Includes four megabytes of RAM, a 486 motherboard, a tutorial, QEMM 5.1, Hyperdisk, a complete set of Windows programs (WordPerfect, Paradox, Lotus - \$200 upgrades of all your favorites), a 200Mb hard drive, a full-page color monitor, dozens of screen fonts, and the entire McGraw-Hill computer reference library - all for the bargain price of \$9,999.

**WINMANUAL** - Microsoft gave you that blue and white thing, now get the operating manual and documentation!

**WINTRANS** - Translates icons into English.

**WINONE** - Creates icons to replace the numbers on your wall clock.

**WINASTRO** - An astrological program that tells you the best influence under which to install and configure Windows.

**WINTRASH** - Instantly trashes all the programs that conflict with Windows, non-Windows programs, and all those programs and files for which you won't have room after you install Windows.

**WINSLOW** - For you diehard Windows fans, makes Windows run slower.

**WINAMUSE** - Strips all those boring, serious programs out of your computer and installs hundreds of games! **ENHANCE** your fun by **VIRTUALLY** turning your 386 into a **REAL** amusement park.

**WINDRIVE** - A complete set of Windows drivers to run your kitchen or other household appliances (except full-page, dual-page, or super VGA monitors).

**OUTTHEWINDOW** - A place for the serious computer user to put their copy of Windows.

*Reprinted from the March 1991 Silicon Forest Gazette  
Portland PC Users Group*



# OOPS ANOTHER FAD?

BRUCE W. TONKIN

Here's a provocative piece from the latest issue of the TNT User's Newsletter written by the old pro, Bruce Tonkin. Maybe some of our knowledgeable members would like to comment.

## "OOP IS A TERRIBLE MISUSE OF SYSTEM RESOURCES ON ANY PRESENT COMPUTER"

Every so often, the computer industry subjects its followers and practitioners to another fad. This time, it's object-oriented programming (OOP). There's nothing fundamentally wrong with OOP, just as there's nothing wrong with the fads of past years. The problem is that the fads are oversold, not that they're completely misbegotten.

The idea behind OOP is easy. Instead of writing routines that contain only logic, or a mixture of logic and data, OOP routines contain logic, data, and rules. The rules describe how the data may be manipulated and what messages may be passed between the routine and the caller.

The good thing about OOP is that the approach simplifies constructing re-usable software, especially for things like screen graphics. OOP's problem: it's best used to simplify graphical interface programming. Sorts, data management, and numerical processing are exactly the wrong use of OOP; OOP constructs are slow because of all the computing that must be done every time an OOP module is called.

In a compiler, a program is turned into machine code directly executable without run-time interpretation. That's why compiled code runs faster than interpreted. In programs using object-oriented design, the "objects" must be deciphered at run-time. The run-time interpreter decides what resources the object needs, how the object should link with others, and how to pass messages from object to object, or between an object and the main program.

Deciphering and message-passing takes time. The more time it takes, the less attractive OOP looks. A program that uses a lot of objects and requires a lot of communication between objects will be painfully slow on all but the very fastest machines. Hardware manufacturers will love the prospect of an increased demand for their fastest machines, and those same manufacturers will support OOP. To the extent that OOP can make high-resolution graphics and mice popular, the manufacturers should like it even more.

OOP is a terrible misuse of system resources on any present computer. As you may have guessed, I think graphics are silly, anyway, so anything designed to make graphics programming acceptable is something I don't like. Still, if you're going to do graphics you may as well make it fast — present graphics crawl, even on fast machines. I don't think that software that takes two seconds to re-display a graphical page on the screen is something that needs slowing down, and that's the time Jeff Duntemann quoted in a recent issue of Dr. Dobbs as being "state of the art" on a new fast Mac.

Jeff has decided to concentrate on faster text displays because of that and I think he's right. How much slower an OOP approach will be depends on how small the objects are and how much communicating they need to do. I'd bet the objects will be small: one to draw a circle or part of a circle, one for rectangles, one to fill regions with color, and so on. Larger objects will be built from smaller

ones, which will simplify the software developer's task of creating new objects (and is really the whole point of OOP in the first place).

Lots of small objects means a very big slowdown, probably something like the difference between interpreted and compiled BASIC. Depending on what you do, the interpreted BASIC slowdown is somewhere between 0 (for very simple things like disk reads or writes) and 150 times (for integer adds and other things easy for a compiler but having a lot of overhead for an interpreter). Most of the time, the difference is a factor of about 5 or 10. I predict the two-second screen display will take one to three minutes with OOP.

Notice that I said "I think OOP is a terrible misuse of system resources on any present computer". I can think of future computers for which OOP would be perfect, and we may see such computers within the next five years. Those computers will have many separate processors, and each one will share the load of the objects used. Ideally, each object will have its own processor; some objects may require multiple processors for best performance.

This approach makes good sense. Even now, we're seeing special-purpose chips for enhanced graphics, floating-point calculations, voice recognition, and so on. If a compiler could take a chunk of code and pass it to a separate processor with the instruction "manage this object and use this chip to do to," there wouldn't be any overhead for OOP; the increased efficiency would more than make up for any performance degradation caused by passing messages.

Of course, there are no affordable computers like that now. All the chips aren't available. Present compilers don't support this kind of program design. It will be at least 1994 before all the pieces are in place and OOP will be feasible. After that, it will take another five years for software tools to catch up. Until then, OOP will muddle along and get nowhere. In the meantime, there will be a whole lot of press for OOP. There will journals for OOP, and press releases for OOP "toolboxes," and a gradual evolution toward OOP compilers. We've already seen some of that with Microsoft and Borland; both have released OOP Pascals.

The media hoopla would lead you to believe that something really exciting has happened. There's only one problem. Apple has had an OOP Pascal available since the Lisa. In all that time, have any commercial applications used it? Has there been any excitement over Apple's advance? Have developers flocked to the Mac and to Pascal so they can take advantage of its incredible feature? No, no, and no. Apple's OOP Pascal has been a complete non-factor in the market over the last five or six years. If it had been any kind of important advance, something would have happened by now. It hasn't. It may become an important advance some day — I can't rule out the possibility. But, so far, it's nothing to worry about and nothing you can use. Just like OS/2.

*Reprinted from the June 1991 Issue of Diablo Blue. The Newsletter of the Diablo Blue Valley PC User Group*



# BATCH FILES

# MACROS

1.

## BUY A MACRO PROGRAM? YOU MAY NOT NEED TO...

Once upon a time, a "macro" was considered to be a magical thing that few people knew about. It was supposed to turn you into a more productive computer operator, a wizard at the keyboard, and who knows, perhaps a better parent and more responsible citizen.

Today, everyone uses macros and most programs have macro processors built right into them. But if you want macros while at a DOS prompt, the conventional wisdom requires that you buy a stand-alone macro program, like Superkey or ProKey, and reserve a chunk of your system RAM. If you need that RAM for a mega-program, you need to always remember to disable your macro program first. Then you need to remember to bring it back. In trying to save keystrokes, macro programs often cost a few keystrokes themselves.

No, macro programs are no longer hot items, as most people are satisfied to use the macros built into their favorite application programs. But this common scenario neglects the erstwhile users who want macros for their DOS activities.

To them, the solution is on their system disks, and the solution is free.

## ANSI.SYS: MORE THAN JUST PRETTY COLORS

It's a good bet that most of you load ANSI.SYS into memory during your startup because a piece of software instructed you to, or because someone told you that it was a good idea. Maybe you know vaguely that it allows you greater control over your screen and its colors or video attributes.

What you may not know is that it also gives you tremendous control over your keyboard; in effect, ANSI.SYS allows you to define macros and store them in memory, just like a commercial macro program. Not super-duper macros with pauses and branches and conditional statements—just simple definitions for keys that you don't otherwise need for DOS activities. And it does this for free.

Eschewing the sleep-inducing details, you can send ANSI.SYS commands to the keyboard that will redefine any key, in any shift state, to be any combination of keystrokes. For instance, you could instruct DOS to perform a "DIR/P" every time you press Alt-D. Furthermore, you can store these commands in a batch file and load them into memory just by running the batch file. All it takes is knowledge of DOS' so-called "scan codes" and a bit of practice with the PROMPT command. Oh, and ANSI.SYS, which is loaded into memory by a line in CONFIG.SYS that reads "DEVICE=[path]ANSI.SYS".

## USING ESCAPE TO...ESCAPE

ANSI.SYS requires that you tell it the key you want to define as part of an "escape sequence," a technical term designed solely to intimidate DOS users. In effect, you tell DOS: "Don't use

the normal key definition (escape from it); use this new one instead." You do it with the following syntax:

**PROMPT \$e[ <keystroke> ; <redefinition> p**

Now here's the catch: How do you identify these keys? Would that it be so easy as to just type the key, but hey, that's DOS. Every keystroke that you can issue is assigned a special identification tag, called a scan code. A capital "B" is 66, a small "q" is 113, Ctrl-T is 20 while Alt-F6 is 0;109. Naturally, DOS banishes its table of scan codes to the optional Technical Reference Manual, and not all of the books on DOS have them. The box on page 9 shows a partial list; for a complete list, hunt down a public domain program called SCANCODE.COM.

The scan code for Alt-D is 0;32. If you wanted to redefine Alt-D to be DIR/p and then <Ret>, the syntax would be:

**PROMPT \$e[0;32;"DIR/p";13p**

After the PROMPT, the "\$e[" tells ANSI.SYS that the command is to be an escape sequence. The "0;32" is the scan code for Alt-D and the semi-colon after it is the separator between it and the redefinition. The "DIR/p" is the literal redefinition and therefore must be in quotes. After the semi-colon, the "13" is the scan code for <Ret> and the "p" ends the command.

If you issue this command, the first thing that you will notice is that your DOS prompt disappears, requiring that you re-issue the PROMPT command in your usual manner (for instance, "PROMPT \$PSG"). Now press Alt-D and see what ANSI.SYS has taught your keyboard.

While you wouldn't want to use "QWERTY" keys, ANSI.SYS permits you to redefine virtually every key on the keyboard, in every shift state. With a few exception, these macros are only active at DOS; as soon as you enter an application program, they are disabled. A few programs listen to ANSI.SYS commands while running and might be interfered with by your redefinitions. Those programs will require that you disable your definitions (more on this later). To return Alt-D to its normal state, type:

**PROMPT \$e[0;32;0;32p**

Here are a few examples of key redefinitions that will aid any DOS user:

**PROMPT \$e[0;30;"DIR A:/p";13p**

(Make Alt-A "DIR A:/p")

**PROMPT \$e[0;48;"DIR B:/p";13p**

(Make Alt-B "DIR B:/p")

**PROMPT \$e[4;"DEL \*.BAK";13p**

(Make Ctrl-D "DEL \*.BAK")

**PROMPT \$e[3;"COPY "p**

(Make Ctrl-C "COPY " and no <Ret>)

One of my biggest peeves is that the colon is a shift key and the semi-colon is not. After all, I use a colon about 50 times more often. So I switched them:

**PROMPT \$e[58;59p**

**PROMPT \$e[59;58p**

I also use an ANSI.SYS macro to turn an unused key into the combination of :<Ret>, which I use at the end of commands all the time (like DIR A:).

## NOW THE BATCH PART

These ANSI.SYS commands can be entered at any DOS prompt anytime. Most importantly, they can be ganged up and entered from a batch file. To do this, create a file called KEYS.BAT



in your favorite text editor, or the non-document mode of your word processor and include all of your PROMPT commands, using the syntax described above. Finish the batch file with the PROMPT command that sets your favorite system prompt. When you run KEYS.BAT, the PROMPT commands will whiz by the screen and all of your macros will be in memory.

The KEYS.BAT can easily be edited and then rerun as many times as you want. The DOS environment does have a limit to the number of keystrokes that can be used as redefinitions, ignoring any keystrokes that are beyond that limit. Once you have KEYS.BAT just right, make it the last command in AUTOEXEC.BAT.

## UNDEFINING KEYS

The vast majority of application that you run will simply ignore your ANSISYS macros, but there are a few that will not. To play it safe, you need an easy way to disable your macros. Create a second batch file, called UNKEYS.BAT, and read in KEYS.BAT (so at the moment the two files are identical). But at the second part of each statement, delete your redefinition and repeat the scan code instead. In other words, you are redefining each key to be itself again. Then whenever you need to disable your macros, type UNKEYS.

## SAVE MONEY, MEMORY AND MADNESS

My ANSISYS macros are a tremendous boost to my productivity as a DOS user. I don't need super-fancy macros at DOS—just a quick and clean method of entering all of the repetitive commands that I encounter. ANSISYS is free, takes up a minimum of memory and is very well-behaved.

## 2.

### YOUR VERY OWN FUNCTION KEYS

Because the keystroke <Ret> can be part of the redefinition (represented by the scan code 13), entire DOS commands can be entered by pressing one key. In fact, you can program a keystroke to contain not only one command, but a sequence of commands—perhaps a sequence that you perform regularly.

For instance, let's say that you are a regular WordPerfect user, and before you start the program, you load a memory-resident thesaurus. The thesaurus can only be loaded from the current directory, requiring a CD command, so you use a simple batch file to automate this. You also have a batch file that starts WordPerfect, perhaps one that first takes you to the directory in which you store your documents.

This is the perfect place to use an ANSISYS command: A regular two-step process that can be turned into a single keystroke. And for the sake of the dramatic, let's make the <F1> key your personal Word Perfect key. Let's say that the two batch files that you regularly issue are "THES" and "WP." Here is the ANSISYS command that you would enter:

```
PROMPT $e[0;59;"THES";13;"WP";13p
```

After the PROMPT, the "\$e[" tells ANSISYS that the command is to be an escape sequence. The "0;59" is the scan code for <F1> and the semi-colon after it is the separator between it and the redefinition. The "THES" is the literal redefinition and therefore must be in quotes. After the semi-colon, the "13" is the scan code for <Ret> and after the next semi-colon, the WP batch file is executed. The "p" at the end finishes the command. Remember that you will need to reissue your normal PROMPT command to reinstate your DOS prompt after redefining keys.

Granted, you could build one large batch file to perform this, but an ANSISYS macro is a much cleaner solution. Also, it

gives you the exciting feeling of having a personally tailored system—to start Word Perfect, press <F1>. What could be easier than that?

You can build upon this theme, by reserving a function key for each of the major applications that you run. Those who rely upon the DOS editing keys will have to pass on using <F2> <F4>. The <F6> key is normally used for closing text files opened with the "COPY CON" routine, but you can redefine <F6> and then close your text files by pressing <Ctrl-Z> instead. Also, you can use the function keys in any of the shift states.

## DOS MACROS HELP MEMORY MANAGEMENT

While you may find that you like executing even simple batch files with the touch of a function key, ANSISYS macros can help solve the more serious issue of automating memory management. In today's world of mega-programs that consume volumes of memory, there is a pressing need to be able to easily remove programs from memory before starting others. There are programs designed to purge memory, but the problem is that you can't use a batch file to do this, because when you purge memory, you also purge the batch file, stopping it in its tracks. Typically, you must perform two operations instead of one. The answer is an ANSISYS macro.

Let's say that you are a regular Windows user. But because you also use a few memory-resident programs outside of Windows, you must be sure to clear out your memory before you start any Windows session, otherwise DOS grinds to a slow, deliberate death. Using a memory manager such as PopDrop, the best that you have been able to come up with is a two-step process of issuing the PopDrop command that purges memory and then issuing the Windows command. Again, you would not be able to put these two commands into a single batch file because PopDrop would remove the batch file from memory before it finishes.

But ANSISYS stores its macros in an area of memory that is not affected by PopDrop's tricks. So you can create the following ANSISYS macro, using <F2>:

```
PROMPT $e[0;60;"POPDROP  
CLEAR";13;"WINDOWS";13p
```

Again, how simple and elegant it would be to press <F2> and instantly have your memory cleared and have Windows kick into gear. What this is, in effect, is an invisible menu: Your applications are available at the touch of a key, yet you have a DOS prompt and full control over it.

## 3.

### MAKING YOUR BATCH FILES STOP AND WAIT

So far we've used ANSISYS to redefine the keyboard and as the replacement for a commercial macro program. Now we switch gears. The next step toward automating your system is giving your batch files a very special capability—that of true interaction.

Typically, batch files can only pretend to be interactive, in two ways: 1) with replaceable parameters, entered only when the batch file is started, and 2) by placing a PAUSE in a batch file that merely suspends the batch file until a key is pressed.

But a third capability, less commonly known, is considerably more powerful: a tool that can stop a batch file in midstream, query you for input, and then branch one of several different ways, depending upon your input.

You might think that this capability would be part of DOS; you might as well believe that the Internal Revenue Service will file Chapter 11. Instead, several programs have been written by



benevolent soles and placed in the public domain, under a variety of names—QUERY, REPLY, ANSWER, WAITFOR, INPUT, SAYWHAT. In order to put to use the ideas in this column, track one of them down on a safe bulletin board or library.

[Those of you who have Norton Utilities can use the ASK command that is part of the package. Ed]

## HEY USER, WHICH WAY SHOULD I Go?

QUERY.COM, the one used in the following examples, is a program designed to be run only in batch files. It suspends execution of the batch file, and optionally, displays a message. During the pause, anything you type gets placed in the DOS environment as the parameter %ANSWER%. From that point on, you can do any of the usual if-then checking for that parameter.

### Example

You use Lotus 1-2-3 to track your investment possibilities. Your luck is so good that half the time you leave 1-2-3, you go right to your telecommunications software and issue instructions to buy. The other half of the time, you merely exit and go onto another task. You can't use an ordinary batch file, because you don't know which decision you are going to make until you are already in Lotus (i.e., you have already started the batch file). This is a decision you will make in midstream.

This is a job for QUERY. Here is what the batch file would look like:

```
1. echo off
2. cd\lotus
3. 123
4. :START
5. query Do you want to buy today? (Y or N)
6. If %ANSWER%==Y goto MODEM
7. If %ANSWER%==N goto END
8. echo Try again
9. goto START
10. :MODEM
11. cd\modem
12. smartcom
13. :END
14. cd\
15. echo Bye
```

This batch file uses three "labels"—think of them as place markers so the batch file can know where to go next. They are the three lines that begin with colons. Some of the lines in this listing are indented for readability.

Lines 1-3 comprise a typical way to start Lotus 1-2-3. Line 4 is the first label, and its purpose will become clear shortly. Line 5 executes QUERY and asks the user whether or not to buy stock. QUERY forces the batch file to wait for keyboard input and a <Ret>. The user can answer in upper or lower case.

Lines 6-7 evaluate the response. QUERY takes your input and stores it in a parameter called "ANSWER." The syntax shown here, with the percent sign and the pair of equal signs is simply DOS' cryptic rules for batch file programming. If the answer is yes (or Y), the batch file jumps to the label called MODEM. If the answer is no, the batch file goes instead to the label END. If the response is anything else, the batch file continues to lines 8-9, telling you that you goofed and then jumping back to the START label. If you were to keep answering incorrectly, the batch file would indefinitely loop back on itself.

Lines 10 is the MODEM label and lines 11-12 are typical instructions to start a telecommunications program. Line 13 is the END label which is the place marker for the simple ending to this batch file. Note that if you instruct the batch file to jump to MODEM and start your modem program, when you exit, the batch file continues executing right through lines 13-15, ignoring the END label.

When QUERY asks for input, you can type anything you want, not just one letter or number (QUERY waits for <Ret> before it lets the batch file continue). Therefore, you can type a complete word or phrase and make it part of a command, just as you do with a replaceable parameter. For instance...example No. 2: You need to carefully and painstakingly delete several files on a very full directory, requiring that you examine the directory constantly. Each time you must enter a DEL command, and after a few such commands, the directory scrolls off the screen, requiring that you perform another DIR. QUERY can help as part of the following batch file:

```
1. echo off
2. :START
3. dir/w
4. query What file do you want to delete?
5. del %ANSWER%
6. query Another? (Y/N)
7. if %ANSWER%==Y goto start
8. echo Done
```

Right after the START label, a wide directory is displayed and then QUERY asks you for a file to delete. Your answer gets placed directly into the next line as part of the DEL command. You can include wildcards. Line 6 is another QUERY, this time for a simple yes or no. Your answer quickly takes its place in the ANSWER parameter, and if the answer is yes, then the batch file loops back to the beginning of START and redisplay the directory and asks you again for a file to delete. If you don't answer yes, the batch file is over.

A program like QUERY is one of the best ways to get introduced to the fundamentals of batch programming. It gives you the feeling that you are piloting your batch files: type one thing, the batch file turns left, type something else and the batch file turns right. Used effectively, QUERY can take care of some major league tasks for you.

### SCAN CODES FOR THE ALPHA-NUMERIC KEYS

Key	Ctrl	Alt	Key	Ctrl	Alt	Key	Alt
A	1	0;30	N	14	0;49	1	0;120
B	2	0;48	O	15	0;24	2	0;121
C	3	0;46	P	16	0;25	3	0;122
D	4	0;32	Q	17	0;16	4	0;123
E	5	0;18	R	18	0;19	5	0;124
F	6	0;33	S	19	0;31	6	0;125
G	7	0;34	T	20	0;20	7	0;126
H	8	0;34	U	21	0;22	8	0;127
I	9	0;23	V	22	0;47	9	0;128
J	10	0;36	W	23	0;17	0	0;129
K	11	0;37	X	24	0;45		
L	12	0;38	Y	25	0;21		
M	13	0;50	Z	26	0;44		



**Q** After linking some information from one Excel spreadsheet to another, I would now like to break the links. That is, I want the cells to keep the same information, but I no longer want them to be linked to the original worksheet. So far, I've just been retyping over them to get rid of the links, but I was wondering if there was an easier way.

**A** When you use the Edit Paste Link command, Excel creates what are called "hot links." (Makes you hungry, doesn't it?) A hot link means that the dependent worksheet automatically updates when the supporting worksheet is changed.

To sever a link after you've created one, do the following: select the cells on the dependent worksheet whose links you want to sever. Choose Edit Copy. Without disturbing the selection, choose Edit Paste Special. Select "values" and then OK. You copied and pasted over the same cells, but since you only repasted the *values*, you'll find the external references are now gone.

**Q** What is a Windows "swap file"?

**A** Swapping is a clever way for Windows to simulate additional memory on your machine. It sets aside an area on the hard disk, and moves information between this area and memory, providing more memory than actually physically residing on the system.

The swap file is the hidden file that actually reserves the space used for swapping. Though there are two types of swap files, permanent (stays in place until you remove it) and temporary (created each time you start Windows and deleted when you exit), a permanent swap file is the preferred method of swapping.

To set up a permanent swap file in Windows, do the following:

- 1) Start with a newly-compacted hard disk, if possible.
- 2) Start Windows in real mode.
- 3) Make sure that Program Manager is the only program currently running, and choose File Run. Type "swapfile" and choose OK.

(You may see a box telling you that a swap file already exists on your system. If so, choose Cancel, and settle back with a cup of coffee. If not, continue on...)

- 4) Until you are familiar with the way swapfiles affect system performance, accept the recommended swap file size, and choose Create. A permanent swap file will be created. Once you do feel comfortable and would like to change the size of the swapfile, choose "File Run swapfile" again.

**Q** Is there an easy way to count the number of words in a Word for Windows document?

**A** Word already keeps track of the number of words (among other things) for every document you create. To find the number of words for the currently open document, choose Edit Summary Info. Click on the Statistics button, and then the Update button. The number of words will be counted and displayed at the bottom of the Statistics box.

To do the same for a file *not* currently open, choose File Find, and click on the desired file name. (If you don't see the file name listed, click on Search and change the path in the Search List box.) After selecting the correct file, follow the same instructions as above (click Statistics and then Update).

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## THE SPAUG RESOURCE CENTER

*This is a list of club members who have volunteered their services. If anyone would like their name added to this list, please get in touch with Paul Staley or Jan Altman.*

### OFFICERS

President	Paul Staley	(415) 493-1583
Vice President	Jan Altman	(408) 243-5955
ASSU Representative	Alex McMillan	(415) 322-4543

### MANAGERS

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Pascal	John Watson	(415) 325-7632
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## CLUB EVENTS IN AUGUST

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	3	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### August 12 Second Monday - PLANNING MEETING

7:30 PM Beverly Altman, (415) 329-8252 or Paul Staley, (415) 493-1582

**August 14** The **WORD FOR WINDOWS SIG** meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm to talk about Word for Windows and general Windows issues. On Wednesday, August 14, we will discuss:

#### "STYLES AND TEMPLATES"

Location is Infotec Training Institute, Techmart, 5201 Great America Parkway, Suite 254, Santa Clara. The group is led by Jan Altman, a Certified Trainer in Word for Windows.

For more information, please call Jan at (408) 243-5955.

**August 26** The **MICROSOFT WORD FOR DOS SIG** meets the fourth Monday of each month at 7:30 pm. The group alternates between discussions of Word 5.0 and Word 5.5. On Monday, August 26, we will discuss: issues relating to Word 5.5.

Location is Infotec Training Institute, Techmart, 5201 Great America Parkway, Suite 254, Santa Clara.

For more information, please call Harold Santos at (415) 573-8786.

### August 28 Last Wednesday - Genaral Meeting

#### "MUSIC NIGHT"

7:30 PM Turing Auditorium, Polya Hall, Stanford University

## JULY MEETING

*Last Wednesday:  
July 31st, 7:30pm  
at Turing Auditorium*

## GET THE INSIDE SCOOP ON YOUR PC

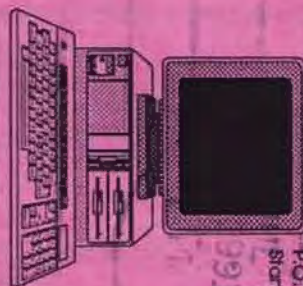
Learn about PCs from the inside with Roy Worthington, President of Octave System of Campbell. Roy, who's been teaching people for years how to build their own PCs, will give us a tour of a PC motherboard, and show us how to install various components.

And for a SPAUG first, the evening will be videotaped! For info on getting yourself a copy, contact President Paul.



## The Stanford/Palo Alto PC Users Group

P.O. Box 3738  
Stanford, CA 94309



## Club Information

### Meetings

Paul Staley  
(415) 493-1582

### Membership

Beverly Altman  
(415) 329-8252

\$25/year (Students \$10)

### Bulletin Board Newsletter

(415) 321-4497  
Tony Allen  
(408) 739-2953

## THE JULY MEETING

*Last Wednesday: July 31st, 7.30pm at Turing Auditorium*

### GET THE INSIDE SCOOP ON YOUR PC

Learn about PCs from the inside with Roy Worthington, President of Octave System of Campbell. Roy, who's been teaching people for years how to build their own PCs, will give us a tour of a PC motherboard, and show us how to install various components.

And for a SPAUG first, the evening will be videotaped! For info on getting yourself a copy, contact President Paul.