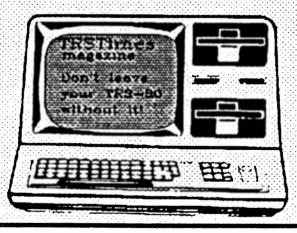
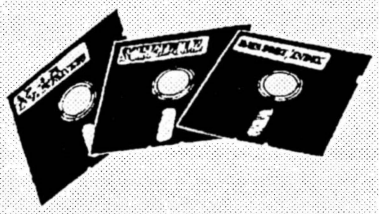
THE INTERFACE

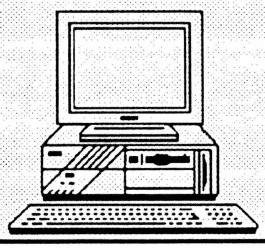
NEWSLETTER OF SAGATUG

THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY TANDY USER'S GROUP

THE CLUB FOR TRSDOS, MS-DOS, CP/M AND LAPTOP COMPUTERS







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If we are going to have a talk this month, I sure hope that someone will bring an MS-DOS machine. The only one I have is an old IBM-PC XT with a monochrome screen. If I were to bring it, it would be the second computer I was taking out to the San Gabriel Valley. That's too much. However, if there is some sort of PC at the meeting, I will be demonstrating the method I used to convert the non-ASCII text I talked about in my article for this Interface issue into an ASCII file that Word Perfect, or almost any other word processor on any machine, can read. It can all be done with shareware utilities and programs that are readily available. If you put it all together you can make it look as though you cooked it yourself. Come to the June meeting of SAGATUG for the recipe.

The June SAGATUG Meeting will be held Friday, June 12, 1992 at 7 PM
in the Arcadia Park Senior Citizen's Center
405 South Santa Anita Avenue, Arcadia

- SAGATUG meets the second Friday of every month -

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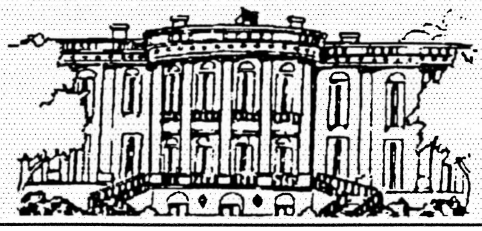
Contribute to the INTERFACE and Club Disk Libraries

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



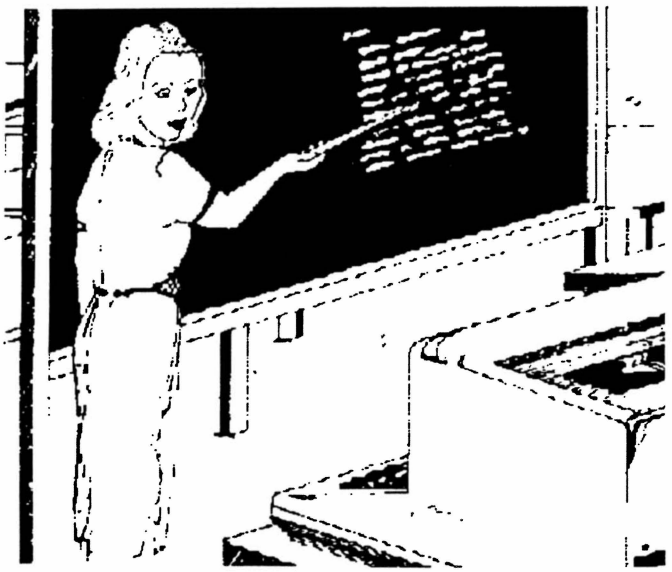
BY
Allen Jacobs

This is our long awaited accounting of the SAGATUG finances. This is current to June 1, 1992. However, you may notice that the INTERFACE expenses are very low. That is because I have been lax in turning in the bills to Fred. Be prepared for a somewhat lower margin of "profit" by next month.

INCOME	
DUES	143.00
DISKS	
DONUTS	46.22
DONATIONS	14.50
OTHER	157.00
INCOME TOTAL	360.77
EXPENSES	
RENT	90.00
INTERFACE	32.47
DONUTS	15.10
COFFEE	3.00
DISKS	0.00
OTHER	24.50
EXPENSE TOTAL	165.07
1992 YTD PROFIT	195.70
1991 CARRY OVER	397.37
1992 BANK TOTAL	593.07

FILEOSOPHY 101

BY Allen Jacobs



To me, the MS-DOS world seems to discourage most users from programming. That's because virtually everything we need to do has already been done. This may be good for people who use computers only for a specific task, or for those hobbyists who only like to work with specific applications on their machines. However, for COMPUTER hobbyists from the "golden age of computing", (ie., the beginning -- or whenever we decide when the golden age was or will be), the inevitably sorry condition we have always dreaded is upon us. That is the time when virtually every task we will ever need to program has already been done; not really but just seems that way.

To explain, I was presented with a problem at work. A person I know had difficulty with some word processing files. He lost access to the word processor he used to create them. It was called WRITE ASSIST and I believe it was from IBM. Anyway, Word Perfect wouldn't read the files and Word Perfect was the only word processor he had. Thus, he was at a loss to recover them.

I decided to try recovery with the tools I had available. I was carrying around a copy of Q-Edit which would read the file. I had the old version, however, that did not include a displayable ASCII character list so I could not identify the actual values of the characters I was looking at. The file appeared to consist of about 50% graphics characters. I knew that these characters were non-ASCII because the values were above 128. The problem is in determining if these characters are flagged text or strictly control characters.

I remembered that QDOS has a Wordstar filter that simply displays the high bit (7) in a reset condition. With that, I could read the characters as ASCII test, only to see that they were repeating patterns of various types, but not words. I therefore assumed that I could remove them without sacrificing any actual text. Also, I knew that the file could be edited. However, I didn't to spend hours cleaning up that file and about twenty others like it, by hand. There had to be a better way.

I was going to write a BASIC program to read each character from a file and write it to another file, only if it was 127 or below. I was going to pattern the utility after a Lewis Rosenfelder program I looked up in his book.

Instead, that night I mentioned what I was going to do at a TUG-NET meeting. A Word Perfect user told me about a utility in the program for just this problem. It's called Convert. I was sure that my problem was solved. I was surprised and pleased that such a program existed. When I tried CONVERT, it asked me the format of the file I would like it to work on. After trying one of the two reasonable file types, Convert told me that the file type was incompatible. The other file type selection converted the file instantly, without an error message and promptly wrote the destination file out to disk. It was one of the fastest file writes I have ever seen Word Perfect perform; for good reason. The file was ZERO bytes long. Nonetheless, I am grateful for TUG-NET's advice. How could they have known?

So, it was back to the "BASIC"'s. Then, I remembered that I had a shareware disk from Best Bits and Bytes entitled, ASCII FILE MODIFIERS. I thought that I might as well check it out before I started writing. Well, wouldn't you know it. There was MODIFILE, a utility that was almost exactly what I had in mind. It had a couple of additional features I hadn't yet thought of; and it was written in compiled BASIC. I can only guess its lineage but it does CR to CR/LF conversions and back. Guessing what type of machine the programmer who wrote the program had, before he wrote this utility is easy. He called the conversions TRS-80 to MS-DOS. Even though the file conversion I had in mind was between MS-DOS editors, it took a program of TRS-80 lineage to do the job. Of course, it worked.

I was happy that it did; and I was happy that a TRS-80 person did it. But also, I was a little sad to find out that there wasn't anything for me to do, but watch it run....

PC HINTS & TIPS

compiled by Lance Wolstrup

PC TOOLS

To run Compress from PC Tools 7.1 without having to go through a menuing system, use this batch file. Because the batch file is also colled COMPRESS, first rename the .EXE file by typing REN COMPRESS COMPRSS at a DOS prompt in the appropriate subdirectory. The batch file specifies the parameters of full compression and sort order, runs Compress, deletes the .BAK file and returns to the menu. The replacable parameter (%1) lets you run the program on any of three logical hard drives.

```
@ECHO OFF
CLS
COMPRSS %1 /CF /OF
ATTRIB -R %1 \MIRROR.BAK
DEL %1 \MIRROR.BAK
```

PARADOX

If you store your Paradox 3.5 data files in a different directory from your program files -- and you shouls -- change your settings to load that subdirectory automatically. Tp change the default settings, run the Custom Configuration Program (CCP). To start CCP while running Paradox, choose Scripts, Play from the main menu. Select the Custom script. Choose SetDirectory from the Defaults menu. Type the name of the directory you want to load, press Enter to choose it, then press Return to get back to the CCP menu. Press F-2 (DO-IT!) to save changes, and exit CCP.

DBASE III PLUS

dBASE doesn't provide an option int its reports to count the number of records listed, but you can simulate it with this trick. Specify a new column in the report with the value "1" as its contents. Set the column width wide enough to hold the number of records and specify that the field should be totalled. When the report is generated, a "1" will print on each line and a "total" that is actually a count will appear at the bottom.

WORD PERFECT

Move a word quickly in WordPerfect by pressing Ctrl-Backspace to delete it. Place the cursor where you want to insert the word, then press F1 (Cancel) and R to restore the deleted text. You don't have to move the cursor to the beginning of the word -- this will work no matter where the cursor is in the word.

MAGELLAN

When searching for an item that contains numeric characters, Magellan also lists files that have individual occurrances of those numbers. For example, JUN91 could also turn up files with separate occurences of 9 and 1.

To solve this problem, you need to modify the Separators Table in the file MAGELLAN.SYM. Change each of the ten 0's that appear in the Separators Table to A's. Next, change the 0 that follows the word SEPARATORS to a 1. Finally, Rebuild all your indexes (Alt-F5,R). This causes Magellan to treat the ten numeric characters the same as alphabetic characters.

WINDOWS

It's easy to transfer a graphic from Paintbrush into a Windows word processing program. Choose one of the scissor tools and outline the area you wish to transfer to your word processor. Then choose Copy from the Edit menu (or press Ctrl-Ins). Open your word processor and press Shift-Ins or choose Paste from the Edit menu.

WORD FOR WINDOWS

If you find that Word for Windows 2.0 displays graphics considerably slower than your old version, add a flag to the WIN.INI file to increase the amount alloted to the graphics cache. Increasing memory will speed screen redraw of any document with graphics when you scroll through documents.

Open WIN.INI in NOTEPAD, and scroll to the section entitled [Microsoft Word 2.0].

Add the entry "BitmapMemory = n, " where n is the size of the graphics cache. Don't enter a unit after the number; it's already recognized as K. The default size is 256K, so to improve speed, try any higher number, but bear in mind that you can't allocate more cache size than you have RAM. If you have enough free memory, a setting of 1024 will provide a noticeable performance enhancement.

MORE WORD PERFECT

If you use WordPerfect for desktop publishing, you'll sometimes need to reserve space on a page for pasteups (ads, photos, and so on). Here's how to do it:

Press Alt-F9 and choose Text Box/Options. Set the Border Style to None on all sides and set Gray Shading to 0%. Press Enter to select the settings.

To create space for a pasteup, press Alt-F9 and choose Text Box/Create. Set Anchor Type to Page and Numeber of Pages to Skip to 0. Setting the position is easy if the reserved space goes within a column (you can, for example, specify the bottom of column 2). If the box overlaps two columns, however, you must type in the precise position.

QUATTRO PRO

Quattro Pro versions 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 enable you to document cell values and formulas directly in the cells. Simply put a semicolon (;) at the end of a formula or value and type a note of up to 255 characters. This is quite simple to do when you are working on a cell for the first time or when you are editing existing information (just move the highlighting to the cell and press F2).

Because 1-2-3 doesn't recognize this technique, Quattro Pro will strip out the comments if you save the file in 1-2-3 format. The comments appear on the cell contents line at the top of the screen and on the spreadsheet if the cell is formatted to TEXT and the column is wide enough. They will also appear on a CELL FORMULAS printout.

MICROSOFT EXCEL

Don't forget to document worksheets as you construct them. You or your collegues may not find the assumptions you made while you were building a complex worksheet model quite so obvious a couple of months down the line.

Use the Cell Notes feature of Excel to add annotations to formulas that need further explanations. If you don't want to see the markers that show which cells have notes attached, turn them off with the Options, Workspace dialog box. To add a note to a cell, position the mouse pointer in the cell and click on the Formula menu's Note option. A dialog box will pop up for you to complete.

WINDOW SPACE

by Rob Malone

It's probably somewhere in the manual, but I either forgot it or never saw it. I'm sure most of you know this, so this is just a reminder - never boot up Windows without having enough free disk space.

There's so many new programs coming out for Windows, and so many of my old programs that have been re-written to take advantage of its benefits, that I can't help myself from buying them. Problem is, as we all know, they all take up beaucoup disk space. Well, My drive has shrunk to just a few top-priority programs. I'm using what I thought was the biggest and last drive I could possibly need (68megs.), and now I'm sitting here with 3 or 4 brand new programs still shrink-wrapped, begging for a home in a very competitive real estate market.

When I prepare to add a program I have to eliminate one of the others. The last time I did this, I ended up with 4096 bytes free. I hadn't noticed this when I booted up Windows 3.0. Everything was fine and I called up the Accessory Group. I updated a Card File and when I went to save it, it wouldn't save - not enough memory. Ok, time to get out of Windows and do some more clean-up. I, still don't do my housekeeping from inside.

As I tried to exit the Accessary Group, I got another error, can't save its .grp file. Well ok, just get me out! I left Program Manager, noticing the check box for "save changes" was grayed out.

Back in DOS I saw how little space I had left. I quickly eliminated about half a meg. and went back into windows. Ugh oh, guess what, no Accessory Group! more errors, and when I went to quit, the save box was still gray!

Back to DOS. Go to Windows directory to survey the damage. Wallah! the Windowsa.grp and the Accessor.grp files have 0 bytes!

So that's the problem. No problem here, I just did what all of you would have done. I went to my cupboard, pulled out my latest backup and restored the two files. Now everything is working fine!

I'm sure there are more ways to solve the problem, but the backup was the easiest for me. Just remember to always have enough space available and you won't have the problem to begin with. How much is enough? I don't know, I guess I'll have to go back and read the book.

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-- FIRST CLASS --