

COMPUTER CONNECTION

Monthly Newsletter of the
Rockland PC Users Group

Volume 17 Number 8
August 1997

FOURTH ANNUAL SWAP MEET BRING YOUR WARES AND WALLETS

Everyone loves a bargain. One person's white elephant is another's good fortune. Each August, members and friends come to buy, sell, swap or simply browse at RPCUG's annual Swap Meet. There are

always terrific deals in hardware and software. Sellers are looking to recover a bit of their investments in computer-related products that they have tired of or outgrown.

Maybe you're a long-time WordPerfect user whose new computer arrived with MS-Word installed. Now you've got one word processor too many. Keep one, sell or trade the other.

Slower RAM chips can do wonders for a laser printer's ability to handle large files, or even enhance a SoundBlaster's ability to produce weird and wonderful sounds. An old 386 or 486

computer with a 14" monitor, a 150MB hard drive and a dot matrix printer can be exactly what a high schooler needs for term papers, college applications or preparing a résumé for a vacation job.

Many of us have recently upgraded our computing environments. Our systems no longer support certain worthwhile applications. It is a real shame to have perfectly good equipment or software sit a garage or basement when it could be humming along in someone else's computer

room. So scan your closets for unwanted but serviceable

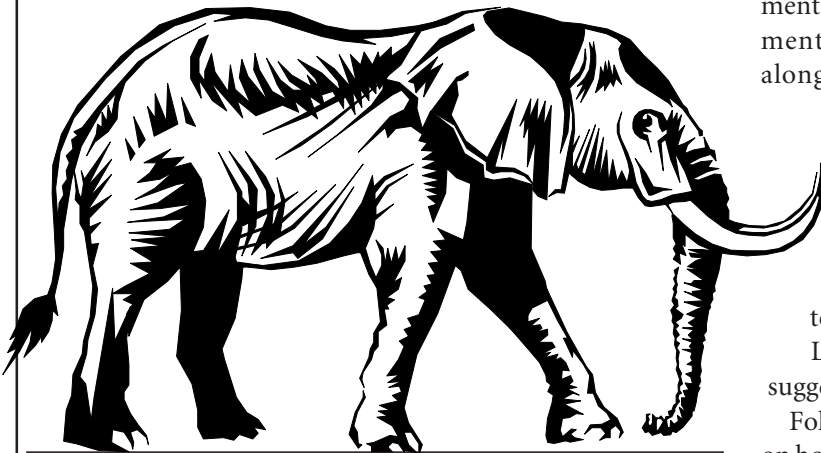
hardware, software, computer books, floppies and other items that have outlived your need for them.

Someone else will pay *something* for them, and you can use those new-found dollars to buy something tempting on the next table.

Look for important Swap Meet guidelines, tips and suggestions on pages 2 and 10 of this newsletter.

Following the Swap Meet, Stan Smith will lead a discussion on how to get technical support without spending lots of money or hours on hold. We'll find out when and how to request a senior technician, what to do if a charge for support is unjustified, how to get toll-free support when there is no toll-free support number, and how to use your fax and e-mail capabilities to resolve computer problems.

Our meeting place is air-conditioned, so a summer heat wave won't spoil our fun. See you on August 12 at 7:30 p.m., and don't forget to bring those wares, that wallet and your checkbook. ■



Rockland Conservatory of Music 7:30 P.M.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Tuesday, August 12 – Swap Meet

Tuesday, September 9 – Intel

Tuesday, October 14 – Parsons Technology
(All are welcome)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Stan Smith



Last month I reported that **Computer-Connection** had won “Honorable Mention” awards in the User Group Coverage and Best Columns categories at the Inter-galactic 10 Regional User Group Conference in Manhattan in June.

Well, I understated the award. Both awards were Runner-Up awards. To my mind, that is significantly more prestigious than a mere Honorable Mention.

So, again, congratulations to our editor and all who have been participating in the newsletter process.

Last Call For Secret Guide

We have so far delivered forty copies of the newest edition of Russ Walters' popular *Secret Guide to Computers* to our members. We also took orders for several more. If you are interested in reserving a copy of this popular title, telephone Gerry Lee, our secretary, at 354-3286. Each copy costs nine dollars. We will not be ordering a large number of copies beyond the pre-paid, reserved orders. So don't plan on making your decision later. Think ahead; these books make excellent birthday or holiday gifts for your computing family and friends.

Our Great Volunteers

This month we feature Bert Mantell and Gary FitzGerald.

Long-time member **Bert Mantell** keeps active in computing. He recently purchased a new high-performance computer. He is active and energetic and directs some of his energies to help RPCUG—which, considering his age, is wonderful. Bert is 85.

He regularly attends our monthly meetings and mans our sign-in table, distributing and maintaining control of those ever-valuable raffle tickets. (If you haven't won a door prize recently, ask Bert for a winner at the next meeting! <g>)

During the summer when the Clarkstown South High School students, who usually prepare our newsletter for mailing, are on vacation, Bert frequently assists in completing the newsletter mailing activities.

Gary FitzGerald joined RPCUG in 1992 and immediately became an active member and volunteer. He served as our vice president for several years, and organized the first Beginner's Special Interest Group (SIG). Gary's analysis and opinions have been seen in **Computer-Connection** as a product reviewer, and he was a great hit as the leader of our Question and Answer sessions. Also, he participated in several member panels at our meetings. Unknown, except to board members, Gary also prepared detailed meeting attendance reports so that the board could determine attendance trends. (These reports are still prepared from the meeting sign-in sheets—so sign in!)

Gary's work with the Beginner's SIG is especially noteworthy. He developed the curriculum, provided handouts to attendees, taught the twelve-month course, and assisted SIG attendees in matters beyond beginning topics. His efforts were rated by his students as spectacularly successful.

(Gary is recovering from recent serious surgery. He is progressing every day. We wish him a continued and full recovery.

His spirit and determination will help him conquer this ordeal. We hope that he will be able to return to active RPCUG participation very soon.)

Thanks Bert and Gary for your participatory spirit and assistance. We have even more volunteers to recognize, so next month we will continue with these recognition paragraphs. Will you be next to be featured?

Meeting Notes

Amy Lui, from Adobe Systems, Inc., staged a stellar presentation at our July meeting. She covered Adobe's Photoshop, PageMill, and Acrobat. Everyone that I have spoken with about this meeting has stated that they learned of new capabilities in Adobe's products from Amy.

Using PageMill as a “process assembler” makes developing a Web site easy. (Of course, the graphics, content, and overall design work must already have been completed. These tasks are not trivial.) Most everyone present was amazed at the capabilities of Adobe Acrobat. And the Photoshop demonstration showed the power of this industry-renowned and award-winning package. Thanks, Amy, for such a worthwhile, interesting, and informative presentation.

Next Meeting

We will hold our fourth annual swap and sell meeting on August 11. All prior years' events were a financial success for many, an opportunity to obtain new (reasonably priced) items for many, an opportunity for informal discussions and social interaction for many, and an opportunity to dispose of unwanted or no-longer-needed items for many.

The rules and guidelines are printed on page 10. Come join us. Clean out those closets, those shelves, those bookcases,

(continued on page 10)

THE EDITOR'S DESK

I've been listening to the questions asked during Q&A at our monthly meetings and at SIG meetings, and I'm wondering: Has this newsletter been meeting the needs of readers who are new to computing? Is **ComputerConnection** of any value to the older hands among us? For all I know, newbies and oldies give it a quick look, and toss it into the wastebasket.

I am certain we need more articles geared to helping beginners. So many of us have taken up computing since we retired. Now we find, to our dismay, that our years of experience in business, industry, government or the arts have not prepared us to deal with technology—machines and software—designed by know-it-all youngsters.

Product reviews dominate the pages of our newsletter. Some of the products are so esoteric that few among us will ever need to deal with them. In this issue you can read about flowcharting software, drafting software, a program that reads text aloud, a simulated golf package, a program that complicates the simple task of scrawling a Post-it reminder. How many of us will read these reviews? I wouldn't if I didn't have to. (Truth be told, I am weary of reading reviews—even the ones I write myself.)

How about our reviewers? Very few of us

remain willing to try our hand at it. Is it because software has become so cheap that a chance to own a review product is no longer worth the effort of preparing a report? Is it because, in the Windows environment, installing a new product can overwrite files and put a smoothly-working computer out of commission? Is it because so many of us lack confidence in our writing skills? Whatever the reasons, our few remaining reviewers are tiring of the task.

If we were to cut back the number of reviews in each issue, we might deal with such questions as: What will it be like to use a computer when Microsoft's last few competitors bite the dust? Will our personal computing soon be totally Internet-oriented? How much processing power do we really need for home or small office use? What has accelerated the release of faster processors and bulkier applications? What things should we consider when purchasing or upgrading a machine? Are we stuck with Windows 95, 97, 98? Are there, or will there be, alternatives to these troublesome operating systems? What is all this coffee stuff we're reading about: Java, Java beans, JavaScript? How can online costs associated with Internet use be reduced? How can we use our browsing and messaging online



time more efficiently? How risky is it to shop on the Internet? Are there ways to protect ourselves? Should I be encrypting my messages? How can I get started?

Short of implementing any or all of the above ideas, I propose a smaller newsletter of enhanced quality and relevance—and not simply because it would mean “less work for mother.”

I am eager to hear what our readers think about the future direction and emphasis of our monthly **ComputerConnection**.

Please send me your thoughts, suggestions and ideas. (No phone calls, please.) You will find my postal and e-mail addresses listed below. ■

The Rockland PC Users Group, a tax-exempt educational organization, meets monthly, usually on the second Tuesday. Meetings begin at 7:30 P.M. The Rockland PC Users Group supports the computing interests of the community as well as the interests of its own members. The latest information about meeting programs and dates is available to all on the RPCUG BBS at 359-6178 and on the Internet at <http://www.rpcug.org>.

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Advertising rates: full page insert \$120. Display ads: half page \$75, quarter page \$45, eighth page \$25, business card \$20. 15% discount for the same ad in three or more consecutive issues. Members receive a 10% per issue discount. There will be a typesetting charge for non-camera-ready ads. Ad deadline is the third Tuesday.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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Review Coordinator Stan Tishler

DESIGNCAD 97

by John Iurica


I have found that every graphics program is better at certain tasks than its competitors. In the past, I placed CorelDRAW, which I regard as the king of glitz and flash, at one extreme, and AutoCAD, which is specifically designed for technical, engineering, and architectural work, at the other. Micrografx Designer fell somewhere in between. Now along comes **DesignCAD 97** for Windows 95 or NT, which is targeted to the same people who use AutoCAD, the difference being that **DesignCAD** sells for \$499 and AutoCAD sells for \$3,000. (If you had gone to this year's PC Expo you could have bought **DesignCAD** for \$149.30 at the ViaGrafix booth.)


CAD stands for computer-aided design. Architectural and engineering blueprints made with **DesignCAD 97** can be accurate to fifteen decimal places—an absolute necessity when the output is likely to be used in precision-manufacturing.

DesignCAD 97's program files alone are fairly compact, requiring a mere 7MB of hard disk space. The Help files, sample drawings and symbols libraries add 52MB. The compact size of the base program may be due to the fact that it was originally designed for older machines with limited storage capacity. In 1988, a fellow who worked in the next office at the U.S. Army Satellite Communications Agency had a version that ran from a single floppy on his 8MHz 80286 computer. The current version of DesignCAD is fast and robust. It includes the powerful BasicCAD programming language so that ambitious users can add their own unusual twists and special requirements to the program's capabilities.


Getting started with **DesignCAD 97** was a little difficult for me—not because the program is poorly laid

out. Rather, it was because there were so many options and choices. Take drawing a circle: I could draw a circle by specifying three points, or by locating the center and the outside, or by specifying the center and the radius, or by specifying the center and the diameter, or by specifying a radius and two tangent lines, or by specifying the circle to be tangent to three lines. The dimensioning command was even more overwhelming. I could dimension lines, arcs, angles, baselines, chamfers, coordinates, diameters, distances, and radii—each one in a multitude of ways.

 At first, I was unnerved by the way that the pick tool selected an object. The familiar eight-handled box did not surround the object. Instead, DesignCAD provided a method that significantly sped up operations when doing precise technical drawings. The pick tool provided a target at an object's mid-point, or its center of gravity, or end point, or at the intersection of lines. This was a great time saver when I wanted to draw something perfectly.

 Other neat features allowed me to add or subtract objects, even in 3D mode. This was a really easy way to indicate cutouts or holes in my designs. The parallel line command was quite handy for showing wall thickness when I was finalizing architectural drawings. My favorite was the bearing command, which let me draw lines from their bearing or automatically label the bearing of a line. Unfortunately the bearing label and the line weren't dynamically linked; if I rotated the line slightly, the bearing label didn't update automatically. There were so many specialized commands that it was quite difficult to find some of them. But there was a saving grace. The program lets me add commands to the tool bar or even create addi-

tional tool bars. Thus, the commands that I was using most frequently were available on the screen for ready access.

 Actually, I got a fix on how to use the program by watching the ViaGrafix presentation at PC Expo. The young woman doing the presentation was one of the best presenters I had ever seen. She made **DesignCAD 97** look easy. I thought, "If that young woman can do it, so can I." (I wish some of our guest speakers could watch her in action and see how quick and easy a good presentation can be. Moreover, she even interjected a sales pitch without lengthening her on-target presentation.)

If you are in business, don't worry too much about **DesignCAD 97's** learning curve. The excellent reference manual provides lists all of the commands and tells you how they function. In response to a heavy demand from users, ViaGrafix is now writing a user's guide that will be completed about the time this review is published. The guide will be shipped free to all registered users. The company supplies unlimited free technical support and also offers fee-based seminars that teach the use of the program. ViaGrafix's main business is computer training on a great variety of their own and other companies' products, and so, as you might expect, they sell four interactive CD-ROMs (\$49.95 each) or two instructional video tapes (\$49.95 each) that can also provide excellent teaching.

DesignCAD has been a PC Magazine Editor's Choice. It certainly is a good value. I suppose it is greedy of me to wish that the 2D and 3D clip art libraries of Professional Symbols (\$179 and \$199 respectively) had been included or at least offered at a more attractive price. Maybe, if I'm lucky, next year ViaGrafix will also discount them by placing them on their seventy percent off list at PC Expo. ■

INDISPENSABLE UTILITIES

by Sy Ribakove

On my Windows 95 desktop, in addition to the My Computer and Recycle Bin icons, I have fifty-two shortcut icons. Why so many? It's because my computing almost always involves running three or more applications at a time and I hate starting them by searching the Programs menu and its multitude of submenus. While working on this newsletter, for instance, I'm likely to be using PageMaker, WordPerfect, Windows Draw, Photoshop, Adobe Type Manager, FontMinder, Netscape Communicator and Dial-Up Networking. I am also copying, renaming, moving, and deleting files on my C, F and G drives.

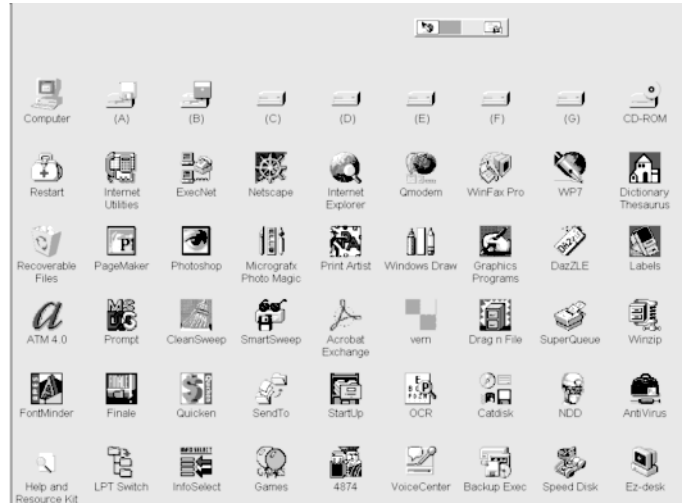
This is a lot of windowed activity to cram onto one desktop, even at 1024x768 on a 17" monitor. To rescue me from terminal screen clutter comes **Vern**, a \$20 shareware utility I simply can not compute without.

Vern stands for Virtual Environment Resource Navigator. It allows me to have many programs running at once, each occupying its own virtual screen. Aside from the convenience of having four or five major programs open at once, each on its own invisible (until I click on it) desktop, **Vern** actually speeds up the look and feel of Windows 95. When a program occupies an area of VernSpace that is not currently active (ie., visible), Windows 95 does not have to waste time redrawing it. Each segment of VernSpace can contain one full-screen application or multiple Window-ed applications.

For instance, I'm writing this in WordPerfect (third cell from the right). PageMaker is open (second cell from left. but at the moment invisible) and waiting for me to finish. HyperSnap is loaded (hidden in the third cell from the left) and waiting to take a screen shot of my desktop. InfoSelect (far right cell) is open so I can quickly locate an address or a snippet of information I've stored there. Photoshop is also open (second from the right) so that, if I wish to, I can modify linked graphics without waiting for it to load. And Vern's leftmost box contains only my "home" desktop, with its fifty-four shortcut icons. I return there for any file management chores I must do while working on the newsletter. (Sometimes, I also have a pinball game running in its own cell, but please let this be our secret. It's for the times when I grow weary of my current project.)



Vern's control center can be configured to float inconspicuously on top of every one of your virtual desktops. It can include itself



This is my "home" desktop. Vern can be seen floating above the top row of icons. The TaskBar is docked on the left. It is configured to AutoHide, and is visible only when the cursor touches the left side of the screen.

in your Startup folder, and so be available every time you boot into Windows 95.

You can try Vern yourself by downloading it from <http://www.cam.org/~oneguy>. Watch out, it's easy to get hooked.

Paper Saver

I also want to tell you about **Fine Print**, a Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 printer driver which prints one, two, four, or eight pages of any multi-page document onto a single sheet of paper. This can save significant amounts of paper, toner or ink. Fine Print works with any printer you have installed in Windows; it prints to any standard size of paper. It can be used for printing readmes, spreadsheets, presentations, Web pages, e-mail messages, Adobe Acrobat (PDF) files, graphics, software source code.

Any Windows 3.x or 95 application that has a Print function can use **Fine Print**. It will work with inkjet, laser, or PostScript laser printers. It supports all standard Windows print options, including fonts, graphics and page size. I believe its ability to produce legible text ends at the four-up mark. All you have to do is select **Fine Print** as your printer.

I use **Fine Print** for printing complicated installation or configuration instructions and online documentation. It's great to be able to print one hundred pages onto only twenty-five. Most of the time, though, my savings are half that. Two on a page is more comfortable for my bleary eyes.

You can download **Fine Print** from ZD Net. Point your browser to www.hotfiles.com, scroll to the bottom and type in the word Fine. Or request it from our shareware library. ■

GREG NORMAN GOLF

by Charles Wendler



I am not a golfer. Have never played a real game before in my life. But **Greg Norman Ultimate Challenge Golf** from Grolier Interactive (\$37.95) may change that as I learn what the sport really is about. I never realized that golf had so many interesting variables—wind, slope (oops, in golf it's called lie), condition of the grass, types of woods and irons. A whole new sports vocabulary for me.

The **Ultimate Challenge** is really a whole new kind of outdoor adventure game and it's educational to boot. (Be prepared to turn down the sound when the special effects opening starts.) I began with Greg's informative speech on a specially-designed fantasy golf course. Then on to the Lesson Tee where "The Shark" and cohort Michelle explained golf terms and techniques under actual playing conditions—putting, roughs, spin, stance, chips, hit height, green reading, lob wedges, woods and irons, bunkers. There was even talk of wind and temperature conditions.

I learned that virtual golf is not a just a simple computer game: many complexities had to be mastered before I could possibly hit the ball from here to exactly there. And because the challenge was interactive, I not only got to try to emulate the masters—I also learned from them.

Once the rules, techniques and strategies were explained, the next step was Playing Golf.

There were three modes: Sim, Arcade and Sim vs. Arcade. In the Sim mode you have time to contemplate, time to change the adjustables to your advantage. But in Arcade mode, the whims

of nature can constantly change the variables and timing is all important. And of course in Sim vs. Arcade you can override some of nature's quirks (rain, wind, temperature) but not all.

This **Ultimate Challenge Golf** interactive game is as demanding for the seasoned fairway player as it is to the duffer. You can play alone, be paired with Norman, set up a foursome, or even challenge Norman yourself! To the novice golfer, the sheer number of variables presented at the outset can be overwhelming. A simpler "for dummies" golf program might provide a more congenial method for learning the sport's basic principles. **Greg Norman Ultimate Challenge Golf** is really for the experienced player who wants to improve by coming to grips with the many factors that affect the way a knowledgeable golfer plans and plays the next shot.

The program comes with a 66-page paper manual and CD-ROM. You need to be running Windows 3.x or 95 with at least 8MB RAM, 15MB available hard disk space (50MB if you want speed between the frequent screen redraws, 64K color SVGA to enjoy the spectacular graphics, a sound card and a mouse (no joy stick needs here).

There are no mosquitos on the virtual course, so have fun, play along with the best, improve your game. Fore! ■



FLOWCHARTING PDQ

by Joe Reeves

FlowCharting PDQ from Patton & Patton Software Corp. is a useful program for preparing flow charts, organization charts, computer network diagrams or Web site maps. It's kind of fun to use—it sure beats the old IBM Templates for logic diagrams. It comes on six floppy disks: three for Windows 3.x and three for 32-bit 95 or NT. It also comes with a well-written 100-page Users' Guide.

Installation is completely automatic. (I used the 3.x version.) If you put the wrong version disk in, it tells you that you should try the other version. Before it installs files on your hard disk, it warns you how much space they will take and how much you will have left after installation. On my computer it took about three minutes to copy the files to my hard drive.

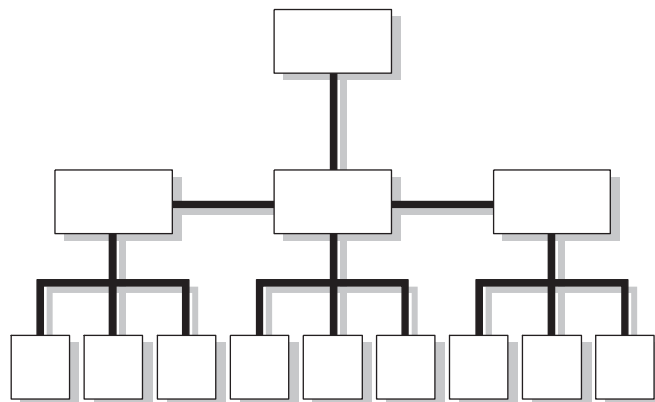
The Main Application Window looks like a large piece of graph paper. This is the framework in which you create and edit your diagrams or charts. Basically, you add shapes, selected from Templates, lines to connect the shapes, and text, entered inside or outside the shapes. On the left side of the screen is a five-button Command Tool Bar that you use constantly as you create a chart. These five buttons provide immediate access to Shapes, Lines, Text, Showing or Hiding the shape Template, and Selecting a shape from the Template.

The Template—really twenty-eight separate Templates of related shapes—is the heart of the program. These range from the old, familiar IBM Standard Flowcharting template through Organization Charting templates to a World Wide Web Mapping template. There must be five or six hundred different shapes, but you would normally only be working with one template at a time, depending on your application.

I started by creating an organization chart. I selected shapes from the Template, interconnecting lines to show relationships, and text to describe the positions or activities. When I was done there were about twenty boxes or shapes reflecting four levels of management.

Shapes were dragged and dropped from the Shape Template. I didn't have to worry about exact placement because I could easily move or realign them later.

Connecting lines was even easier: click the Line Tool button, click where a line should start, and double-click where it should end. I could select the type of line I wanted: square, curved, free, thin, thick or dotted. I could select end caps, such as arrowheads, and their color. I could use "sticky lines" so that if I moved or resized the shapes, the lines would remain attached to their shapes. Another option was "quick connect": highlight a shape, drag its Quick Connect handle to the next shape. Double-click that shape and the line was drawn.



To add text I clicked the Text Tool, then clicked in the chart or box where I wanted it to appear. I could choose the font, size, justification, underlining, etc. With the features chosen, I clicked a Snapshot button to memorize them as I moved from box to box. (At first, I didn't think to do this, and had to reset the attributes when I moved to the next box. Most of the normal features of a word processor were available, including word wrap, spell check, color, and justification.

FlowCharting PDQ really shines when it comes to modifying a chart. In the days before computers and word processors, changes were so frustrating to make. You would present something to your boss, and he or she would say "That's great! Now let's make these changes." With **FlowCharting PDQ** it's simple! You just click on a shape to move it or resize it. You just click in a box to change the text.

FlowCharting PDQ supports OLE, both as a provider (or server) and as a container (or client). It supports cutting and pasting to and from the Clipboard. It supports dragging and dropping to other applications. It supports importing and exporting graphic images to incorporate company logos or pictures of personnel in organization charts. It allows you to create hyperlinks to facilitate jumping from one part of a chart to another, or even from one chart to another.

In summary, this program is well worth \$118.95, even if you don't do a lot of flow charting. If you are a heavy flow charter, you'll find it to be priceless!

Its requirements are a 386DX or better running Windows 3.x, Windows 95 or NT; 4MB RAM; 5MB hard disk space. ■

THE SHAREWARE CORNER

by Stan Tishler

This month's subject is better than shareware—it's freeware.

If you're using Windows 95 and are not aware of Microsoft's free additions you most certainly should be. All programs listed below are available at their Web site (www.microsoft.com/msdownload/default.asp) and from our own software library if you don't have Internet access.

First and foremost is **PowerToys**. This is a group of individual programs, written by Microsoft programmers (although they are not supported) that make it easier to use Windows 95. Included are my two favorite Toys: *Send to...Any Folder*, which changes the right-click menu to include the ability to send files to, yes, any folder, and *Tweak UI*, which adjusts your Windows user interface in undocumented ways, including menu speed and window animation.

Other applications which are part of the group are CD *Autoplay Extender*, which lets Autoplay work on any non-audio CD, *Shortcut Target Menu*, which lets you see the properties of a shortcut icon by a right click, *QuickRes*, which changes the screen's resolution right from the Taskbar without your having to reboot. There are at least ten more. Very worthwhile.

Microsoft has also published a downloadable **Service Pack for Windows 95** that includes some bug fixes and a listing of new and improved drivers not included in their original installation software. You can also get the programs that were on the CD-ROM but were not included on the diskette version of Windows 95. All for the asking from the Internet address above.

Windows Magazine's Web site (www.winmag.com/win95) has volumes of information on tweaking Windows 95. You will find more than 2,500 tips for all Microsoft Windows applications (95, 3.x, NT) with the bulk being for Windows 95. These tips can be downloaded and read at your leisure. In addition if you like getting e-mail you can sign up for Windows Magazine's Tip of the Day at no cost. Just send a message to tips@winlist.winmag.com and include the words "subscribe tips" in your message. They'll note your e-mail address and start sending you the information.

Some of these tips are useful, some are dumb and some are priceless. I like the service. But don't forget to clean out your mailbox regularly. Once the tips start, they come five days a week, every week.

Windows Magazine also has a good deal of shareware available, items that have appeared in one of their regular issues. Some of their utilities are very good and I'll cover them in future months. If you subscribe to the magazine you can read about the programs and then download them. If you don't subscribe, each of the programs includes a short description. This is another very worthwhile source of information.

Also, don't forget to check out www.rpcug.org—our own Web site. It has links to some of the better shareware resources on the Net and they're available to you with just a double click. ■

Software Post-its

by Bob Weiss

You have to admire a company that has its cake and gets to eat it too. The 3M company came up with the idea of adding a gummy substance to the back of a piece of paper to make it stick to objects or other pieces of paper and still allow for its removal and reuse, and then came up with a software application for printing the resulting Post-it notes.

System requirements are very modest for any flavor of Windows and installation from the two floppy disks was trouble-free.

Post-it Software (\$19.95) provides a memoboard that acts like a file folder or cork bulletin board. You create dated notes, to-do lists, appointment lists, reminders. These notes then become part of your customized bulletin board and can be called up whenever you want to see them. In Windows applications, say, your word processor, a tiny icon appears on the title bar. Click on it and you can create a Post-it right there.

You can also set daily, weekly, monthly or annual alarms to remind you of recurring tasks and special occasions. When the set time occurs, an alarm sounds and a blinking button appears.

Printing your notes and reminders is pretty simple. You can print some or all of your saved notes on plain paper or on the provided Post-its for inkjet or laser printers; just check the appropriate boxes and select a layout from a list. Each Post-it's area is roughly 3" x 4". You can purchase sheets containing 150 blank Post-its for \$18.99. Shades of safety razor companies and replaceable blades—not a bad business.

The software also makes it possible to transmit your notes. Names can be selected from an address list and notes can be sent with a compatible version of cc:Mail (2.1 or greater) or Microsoft Mail (3.0 or greater).

3M has taken this concept a step further. You can use **Post-it Notes Design Software** (\$24.95) to make professional-looking signs and announcements with different fonts and graphics.

At some point in time, you have to stand back and put everything into perspective. Would you boot up your computer, access Windows, start **Post-it Software** and print your note(s), or would you take a regular Post-it note or any handy piece of paper, write your note, stick it on the fridge and be done with it? ■

32-BIT MONOLOGUE

by Steve Weinberg

How about an application that can read text—aloud!—from the Windows clipboard? **Monologue 1.0** for Windows 95 or NT (\$49.99 from First Byte) will speak the text using one of several voices with variations of speed, volume and pitch. This unusual capability can be applied to tasks such as eyes-free proofreading, reading numbers from spreadsheets, reading e-mail and more. An exception dictionary saves preferred pronunciations of words and abbreviations. The **Monologue** male SpeechFont for US English is supplied, but British English, German, French, Latin American Spanish, Italian and US English Female SpeechFonts are also available at additional cost.

Installation was simple, except that there were two sets of male English SpeechFonts supplied. With no instructions as to which I should install, I installed both and later retained only the one that provided superior sound quality. The manual was sketchy in some areas and prompted me to e-mail the manufacturer for clarification of what I could insert into the exception dictionary. First Byte's prompt response explained that there was no table of phonetic substitutions available even though it was alluded to in the manual.

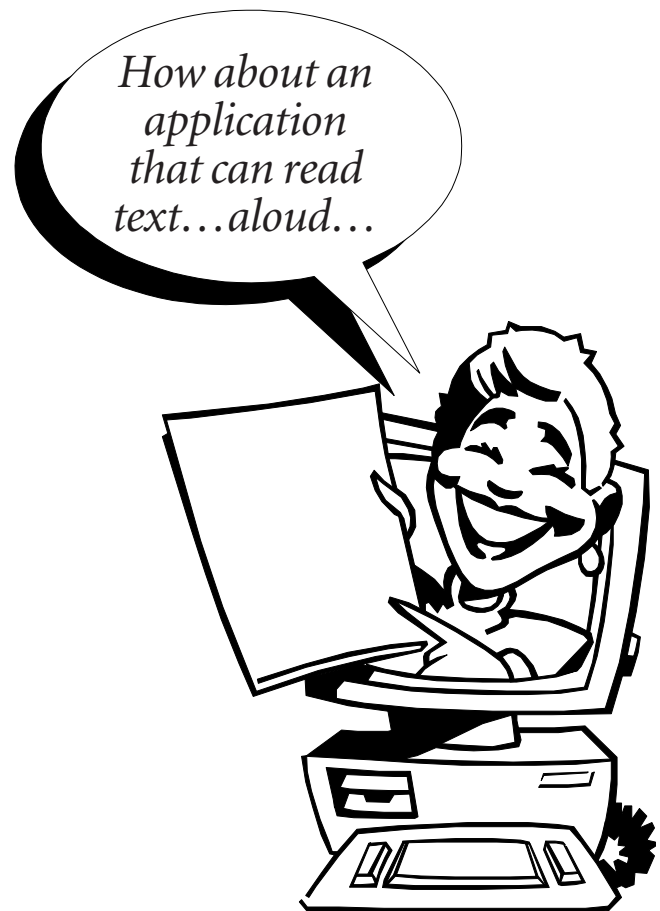
Surprisingly, many of my spoken documents were quite clear without the need for modification of the dictionary. The software even raised the pitch of the last word in a question and inserted appropriate pauses for commas, periods and other punctuation. However, proper names and certain words were spoken as a foreigner might, based on the spelling of the word. The exception dictionary accepted the two words *wine berg* as a substitution for my last name, *Weinberg*. It used *sigh* in place of *Sy*. Now, whenever these names were found in a document, they were spoken properly. On the other hand, there were several words that I just could not seem to get to sound right. The words *together* and *Stan* were two that I have still not been able to get right. Most complex words that were read back strangely could be broken down into two or more words, like *worthwhile* into *worth while*.

Many enhancements are built in. When a telephone number is encountered, the words *area code* are prefixed to the number. Many abbreviations prompted pronunciation of the complete name or phrase. For instance, *etc.* came out as *etcetera*. Mr. Gates might not be too happy to know that *MS-DOS* came out as *Mis-sissippi dos*. I intended *MB* to be megabyte, not *Manitoba*. *Windows* sounded fine, but *DOS* (the operating system) came out sounding as you would expect in *dos and don'ts*. I tried various replacements, but settled on, *D O S*, so that each letter was pronounced individually.

Now that I have finished this review, I will copy it to the clip-

board and click on the minimized **Monologue** icon to hear the computer speaking my review—a grand way to verify that the sentences and words I have written are appropriate and flow well.

Monologue 1.0 requires Windows 95 or NT, 2MB hard disk space, a sound card, and a mouse. ■



AND KEEP IN MIND

August

- | | |
|----|--|
| 10 | Computer Fair; 10–3; Holiday Inn in Suffern |
| 12 | General Meeting; Swap Meet; 7:30 P.M. |
| 14 | Investment SIG; 7–9 P.M.; Finkelstein Library, Spring Valley |
| 19 | Windows 95 SIG; 7–9 P.M.; Pearl River Library |
| 20 | OS/2 SIG; 7:30 P.M.; VMA Building in Congers |
| xx | Communications SIG; No August Meeting |

STRETCH YOUR DOLLARS



Here are the guidelines that have made the buy, sell, swap portion of our meeting successful each year. Find a table on which to display your offerings. You may have to share a table with others. You are responsible for safeguarding your goods and for carrying home or donating for door prizes any that remain when the swap portion of the meeting is over.

Software Rules

- Include all documents, disks and packing materials.
- It is illegal to sell, trade or give away software that you have upgraded to a newer version.
- Delete the transferred software from your hard disk. Retain no copies.
- Execute a Transfer of License Agreement (we will have some available at the meeting.)

Hardware Rules

- Decide on and put in writing your guarantee: Sold As Is; Guaranteed to Work According to Documentation; 30-day No Questions Asked Refund; Satisfaction Guaranteed or your money back.

- Include all cords, cables, accessories and supplies that originally came with the item.

General guidelines

- Price items far below discount.
- Know the price you expect for each item. Use Post-its to mark items.
- Be open; do not withhold information.
- Bring cash for buying or making change and your check book.
- Sellers should have pen and paper on hand.
- Each seller is responsible for NY State sales tax and compliance with license terms.
- Don't bring too much stuff. We are allowing about an hour for this activity.
- Remember, you will have to carry home or donate all unsold/untraded items.
- No commercial vendors are allowed; you may bring, but are responsible for, non-member friends. ■

Happy bargain hunting!

President *(continued from page 2)*

those boxes, those attics, and those garages. Even if you sell a working, old, slow, 230MB IDE hard disk for ten dollars, that's ten dollars that becomes available for something else you might want: perhaps for someone else's unused copy of Microsoft Access (for ten dollars). (Hint: If you don't want to carry your goods back home, consider the pricing suggestions I have given in the above examples.)

Why not donate those items that just don't sell at any price to RPCUG to use as door prizes or distribution to worthwhile or-

ganizations? Remember, you wanted to get rid of these items, so carrying them back home again would be counter-productive.

After the swap meet concludes, we will reorganize and set up chairs for a short meeting to discuss ways to receive technical support from hardware and software vendors. There might be a few suggestions that you have not considered to make your computing life less trying.

See you on Tuesday, August 12 at 7:30 P.M. at the Rockland Conservatory of Music, 7 Perlman Drive, Spring Valley, NY. ■

SUITES ON THE BOOKSHELF

THE COMPLETE REFERENCE—MICROSOFT OFFICE 97 by Steven L. Nelson and Peter Weverka; Osborne/McGraw Hill; 967 pages+CD; \$39.99; ISBN 0-07-882338-2.

Reviewing a reference book is different from most other kinds of reviews. You don't read it from cover to cover nor do you use all parts of it. You rely on the Table of Contents and the Index to find the answers to your questions. The ease with which you find what you want determines how useful the book is.

This book covers all the components of Office 97 Pro—Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and Outlook. It also includes an introduction to Microsoft FrontPage 97 as well as a CD-ROM that has examples, templates and some shareware utilities. This is a very good feature, since the examples supplement those supplied with the individual program tutorials.

There are separate sections for each application as well as a section on topics common to all of them. The Index is a composite of all programs except for a few references listed under each program's name. One of the first things I do when I install new software is set up the directory where my files are saved by default. I searched the Index and Table of Contents to find out how to do this in Word, Excel and Access. This subject was not covered under "files" or under "saving files." I could not find this very basic subject covered in the book at all. I then thought of looking under "folders." There was no reference to folders in the Index.

Nevertheless, the book covers its subjects in well-written, interesting prose. The beginning section on Office 97 is excellent and the section on Outlook is as good as the tutorial that comes with the program.

Since Microsoft no longer includes meaningful hard copy documentation with its software, you'll need some kind of third-party reference manual to supplement the online help. I've looked at a few and this one is as good as the rest. Still, if you are only going to be using one or two of the programs in the suite, I suggest looking for books dedicated specifically to those programs.

Reviewed by Stan Tishler

COREL WORDPERFECT SUITE 8: THE OFFICIAL GUIDE by Alan Neibauer; Osborne/McGraw-Hill; 813 pages; \$34.99; ISBN 0-07-882327-7

This BIG book, officially endorsed by Corel Corporation, arrived as I installed my children's academic version of the Corel WordPerfect 8 Suite. I keep hoping I can someday delete my old versions of WordPerfect (the word processor), and maybe even Wordstar, but until I figure out why WordPerfect 8 crashes here and there, and I'll keep 6.1 on my system.

To test this book, I started by looking for answers to some of my favorite WordPerfect issues, for instance, the meaning of the terms used in descriptions of the Sort function, and an easy way to find the keyboard replacement for Home-Home-Down Arrow, which in good old WordPerfect for DOS scrolled to the end of a file.

I found some answers, but not easily. The description of Sort was based on sorting a database—not much help for sorting name-and-address label text. How to navigate through a text document with the keyboard had to be inferred from a screen shot of the Keyboard Shortcuts dialog box.

Most of us pick up third-party books when we have reached our wits' end, expecting to find answers there. In that regard, this book doesn't provide much that isn't somewhere in the suite's online help. However, for those who are really using Corel's WordPerfect Suite for its designed purpose, and who need to take advantage of integrated software applications, the book is a useful tool. I especially liked its concise material on the Address Book and the PerfectScript macro creation tool.

The book covers Corel WordPerfect (word processor deluxe), Corel Quattro Pro (spreadsheet), Corel Presentations (slide shows), Corel Photo House (graphics editing), Envoy (Corel's Acrobat wannabe), and several of the other goodies (such as Bitstream Font Navigator) scattered throughout the suite. (My suite 8 package came with Corel Central, not covered in the text.) As owner of an academic version of the software, with no printed manuals at all, this Official Guide is a welcome edition to my library. *Reviewed by Marian Baade*



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