

What's New

By Bob Ward—Secretary

Lynda Orban from Knowledge Adventure brought out a little of the kid in all of us at the last meeting. She dazzled us with Space Adventure, Knowledge Adventure, Dinosaur Adventure and more. Now we know the difference between a Styracosaurus and an Edmontosaurus... or do we? Sounds like a incurable disease to me. Guess it was for the dinosaurs since they aren't around anymore to eat our children. The graphics coupled with sounds from a Soundblaster card made a great presentation. Unfortunately there was a memory conflict between Knowledge Adventure programs and the small TSR needed to make the video show on the overhead televisions. We'll anticipate this next time Lynda. After the meeting we gave away some Knowledge Adventure software to a couple lucky kids (actually the parents looked more eager than the kids) and a couple more tax programs to the grown-ups (aren't we lucky)!

Several of us went with Lynda to dinner at Margie's Diner before she hopped a plane back to LA. Now I know what you're thinking if you read last month's newsletter. Ok, so she ordered a sandwich with fries. Ya, the conversation about fries came up at the dinner table. Noooo, I couldn't control myself, but neither then could Kathy Yakal (-). We both munched down Lynda's fries. I'm beginning to become a "conna-sewer" of french fries. You need to try Margie's. They taste different... really good.

So what's happening this month? We have a great demonstration coming your way. Harriet Slatoff and Melinda Mayfield, two of Software Publishing's senior technical support representatives, will present Harvard Graphics for Windows, Harvard Graphics 3.0 for DOS and Harvard Draw. Harriett and Melinda have both been with Software Publishing's technical support group for over three years. Along with their presentation, Harriett and Melinda will be bringing copies of the products for door prizes and mind share gifts for all.

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Pizazz+ Plus

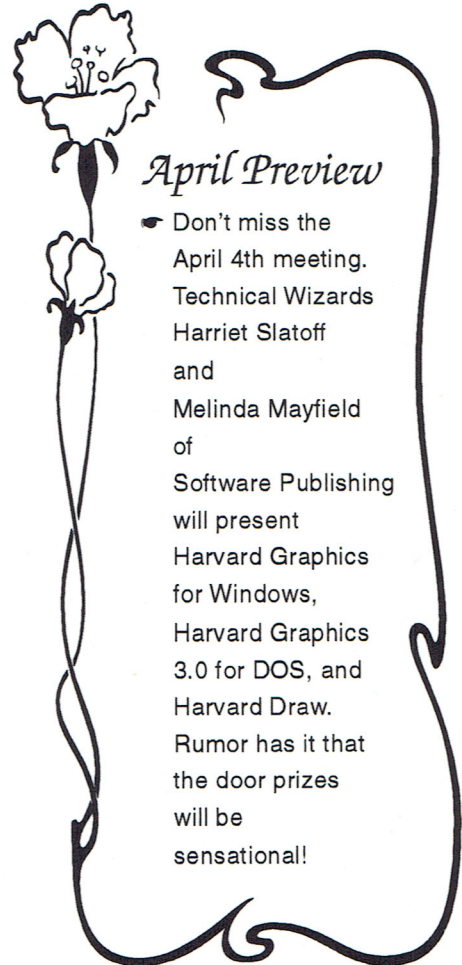
By DT Richmond—SLO Bytes PCUG

What is Pizazz+ Plus? "Pizazz+ Plus (is a software program that) lets you take just about any image which you can display on your computer, from virtually every application program, and print it better than you ever thought possible."

That is the opening statement in the Pizazz+ Plus manual. To review this program I will have to learn just how, and how well Pizazz+ Plus lives up to this statement. Step one will be to read, from cover to cover, all the printed material included in the program package. It doesn't matter that at this time I will understand only a fraction of what I read! I have found that, when I begin to work with a program things will fall into place.

There are several items of printed material contained in the Pizazz+ Plus Package they are: The Blue Book, a manual covering the Capture Screen and The Graphic and Printing modification phases of the program working in DOS. This is the heart of the program. The White Book, is the adaptation of the original program to the Windows environment, and the Pizazz+ Convert program. There are also included fourteen pages covering program updates, and a sheet covering

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April Preview

Don't miss the April 4th meeting. Technical Wizards Harriet Slatoff and Melinda Mayfield of Software Publishing will present Harvard Graphics for Windows, Harvard Graphics 3.0 for DOS, and Harvard Draw. Rumor has it that the door prizes will be sensational!

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XTree for Windows Gets It Right

By Teri A. Sorgatz—Member SLOBytes
PCUG and Redding PCUG

These days when someone asks me to review a software package, especially a Windows software package, I cringe. The thought of enduring another installation, and then de-installation (when I'm disappointed) is akin to the anxiety felt when facing a trip to the dentist. However, when I was asked to review XTree for Windows it was a lot like someone asking me to visit an old friend. XTree for DOS (now XTree Gold 2.5) has been putting a friendlier, more functional face on my DOS screen for many years now. The only time I use the naked DOS command line to manage files is when I am installing XTree.

If you use the Windows File Manager you are already familiar with many of the capabilities of XTree for Windows (XTWin). XTWin supports the usual file, disk and directory manipulation requirements (copy, move, rename, create directories, launch programs, format disks, etc.) and disk/directory statistics reporting. File management is accomplished by the use of multiple Tree and File windows, a standard Windows menu bar, and drag-and-drop mouse technique.

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS...

Unique and useful features are what makes XTWin stand out in the crowd of Windows file managers. Here are a few of my favorites.

File Viewers

XTWin gives you a peek at many spreadsheet, database, word-processing and graphic files in their native format without having to open the application that created them. It does this through the use of two viewing windows: the Document View window that displays the contents of any selected file, and the Auto View Window that displays the contents of the current file in the active Directory window. Supported file formats include: PCX, TIFF, PIC, MSP, MAC, GIF, BMP, ICO, WPG, DRAW, DRW/GRF, PCT, IBM, dBASE, Paradox, 3 major spreadsheets and 33 word processors.

I cannot emphasize enough how handy this feature is. Because DOS restricts us to filenames of only eight characters, we are often forced to be rather creative when saving our files. It usually isn't too long before we have forgotten just exactly what is contained in the file DBTEMP6.JAN or MOMLTR12.DOC. In XTWin you can open an Auto View or Document window and just look. If you are using the Auto View window,

the display changes to accommodate the different file formats as you move the cursor through the list of files in the active Directory window.

I use this feature a lot in managing Postscript Type 1 font files that sport such names as BDBI____.PFB. Type 1 files are text format files that when viewed reveal the name of the font and it's type foundry source in the first few lines. I also use this feature often to visually locate graphic files and to view Readme files on new program disks.

Zip Management

There is no avoiding file compression in these days of expanding program directories, shrinking disk real estate and costly telecommunications. There are many file compression schemes out there in the PC world, but none as popular and widely used as the Zip format. If you are a user of the DOS-based Zip program, you are familiar with it's confusing and arcane command line interface. XTWin makes Zipping and Unzipping files as easy as creating a new directory and dragging the files into it. XTWin treats Zip files just as though they were volumes. Create a new Zip or double click on an existing Zip filename and the Zip is displayed in the Tree window as if it were just another drive. Double click on the Zip volume and a window opens. Files can be copied, moved, or deleted as usual. In fact, whole directory structures can be dragged-and-dropped into and out of the Zip window. File compression is automatic and transparent. Best of all, you can open the Auto View window and view archived files from within the Zip file without having to extract them first.

Right Mouse Button Support

Mouse operations in XTWin are pretty much the same as in the Windows File Manager, but with one wonderful exception—the right mouse button. XTWin uses the right mouse button to select multiple non-sequential objects without having to hold down the control key at the same time.

File Marking

XTWin allows you to mark files across multiple directories and volumes by placing a check mark to the left of selected files. These check marks are not removed from, and are visible in, non-active windows. This allows you to select files for later manipulation without accidentally removing your selection by clicking in the wrong place or by refreshing windows. It also a great way to take advantage of XTWin's next feature.

Combined Directory Windows

Selecting the Open Directory As command from the File menu allows you to open a Combined Directory displaying the contents

Shareware of the Month

By Bob Ward, Librarian

We have 7 new disks for you this month. Several of these files came off the SIMTEL disk found on our BBS. If you haven't had the opportunity to scan our BBS for programs just log on and download the ALLFILES list or purchase either the text or database disk from our treasurer.

#530 added 2 free programs by OsoSoft OKFONT - checks for defective fonts in Windows. FONTNAME - displays true Windows font names.

#541 STORY1 - Storymaker 1.1 - makes stories, uses animation, soundblaster, etc. Disk 1 of 2. Put both on floppies and install. QINST16 - quick installation program. Create your own installations. DIRCLEAN - deletes empty subdirectories. FE-SUB100 - looks for empty subdirectories. FFF41 - File finder program ver 4.1.

#542 STORY2 - Storymaker 1.1, disk 2 of 2. KGMNU114 - Kids menu, easy for small children.

#543 EZBILL32 - E-Z Biller ver 3.2.

#544 AC30MUSC - Create music, print it, transpose it, play it. Can configure to sound card.

#545 GIFV28 - reads GIF files. Good slide shows. GBMENU10 - menuing system with on-line help, password protection, etc.

#546 - Windows programs by OsoSoft. FONTER - version 6.0. View & print windows TrueType and ATM fonts. ROCKFORD - version 3.0. Create your own business cards using ATM or TrueType fonts and PCX & BMP clipart. WINCLIP - ver 3.0. View & print a catalog of .BMP & .PCX clipart in Windows.

The above disks may be purchased from the treasurer for 90 cents each.

Updates:

FFF41 updated to version 4.1 and moved from #340 to #541 due to size.

#490 MLTLBL updated to version 3.0.

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Personal Tax Edge

By *DT Richmond—SLO Bytes PCUG*

Attention Members! It's that time of year again. Time to wrestle with your income taxes. Those of you who attended last month's meeting, and stayed for the presentation, by the representatives of PARSONS TECHNOLOGY, already know all about Personal Tax Edge. For those of you who missed the presentation, I will try to fill you in on the operation of Personal Tax Edge, the income tax preparation program that they discussed. (I wish that I had stayed for that presentation, I am sure it would be easier for me to write this review.)

First step study the manual. The manual, accompanying Personal Tax Edge, proved to be well written, easy to understand and to follow. It leads you through the extremely simple installation of the software to your systems hard drive. Then to the configuration of your printer. I encountered no problems and I learned a bit about my printers during this configuration process.

When installed Personal Tax Edge suggested that the user take the Quick Tour. This option takes you on a tour of Personal Tax Edge. It serves to acquainting the new user with the many features of the program. This will then help later, when the user make the selection of which method would be the most efficient in the preparation of their individual income tax return. Personal Tax Edge has three methods of entering data needed in preparing a tax return. Each has its advantages. If you are well organized you might select, Interview. This method asks questions, then, depending on your answer, uses the information gained to lead you through the completion of the correct forms and schedules to prepare your tax return. (This is the method Personal Tax Edge recommends for the average user.)

If you are not all that well organized, yet have saved all your receipts, bank statements, canceled checks, tax documents and all other items that could be useful in filing your tax return. The Tax Organizer option is designed for this "Shoe Box" filing system. Using this option the user will answer questions as they enter each item. Personal Tax Edge will then identify the documents where that data should appear. It will then transfer the data to these documents, and lists the documents in the Tax Organizer window. The user who has been doing his own income taxes for years and is confident in the procedures can choose to go directly to Forms. Here, the user has direct access to the forms they think they will need to complete their tax return.

Data and information can be imported to Personal Tax Edge from several money man-

agement programs. Personal Tax Edge recommends another PARSONS TECHNOLOGY product Money Counts but it will accept data from Quicken and Microsoft's Money or any other program that generates files in ASCII text.

Tools that are available during all these operations include: IRS Help: Easy to use on-line context sensitive IRS and Personal Tax Edge help.

Online Tax Tips and Saving Suggestions which are hints on how to use the program to provide the user with the most effective tax return.

Online Audit lets you know where you might have left out data and information and flags entries that trigger IRS audits. The Bookkeeper details receipts and supporting figures for each line item.

Comparison to U.S. Averages, an included feature, lets you compare your return to the U.S. averages. Here, you can verify if you are "in the ball park" with others in a similar income bracket. Pop-up math, financial, and depreciation calculators are a key stroke away at all times to assist you in difficult calculations. When all is completed the Final Check List reminds you of the last minute details. Like signing your return and including the proper mailing procedures.

When ready, Personal Tax Edge can print your return and its accompanying schedules on over forty commonly used IRS approved forms, schedules, worksheets and short forms contained in the program. (No need to rush all over town hunting the proper forms.) The IRS accepts "electronic" filing of tax returns. This is a swift and sure way to file your return. Complete the step by step instructions in the Electronic Filing option of Personal Tax Edge. Send your electronic return

along with \$10 to Parsons Technology and they will do the rest. This option is only available in the Final Version of Personal Tax Edge. If yours is an earlier version, the update to the final version is available free of charge to registered users upon request.

Conclusion: I have read the manual and studied the program. I find, Personal Tax Edge is as represented in the manual. A very useful tool to help the user prepare their tax return. I almost wish I had a more complicated tax situation then I could stretch the capabilities of Personal Tax Edge.

I believe, if a user has all the pertinent data available, is through and patient using Personal Tax Edge, they should be able to complete their tax return with a minimum of trouble. When completed they will experience the feeling of satisfaction, that comes knowing they have accomplished a difficult and demanding task. Even if a person who has been preparing their own tax returns for years, would find Personal Tax Edge to be a great help. One fact became apparent as I tested the different methods offered to prepare a tax return. Personal Tax Edge, will not let you continue with your return if the information entered is not entered correctly. However, I expected this would be the case. When worked with Personal Advocate, (a letter writing program also published by PARSONS TECHNOLOGY) that program also required all the facts and figures to be entered correctly to complete the letter you were writing. I believe this is a good quality. Hey! What good would a tax return be if all the information wasn't correct and in it's proper order?

Personal Tax Edge Parsons Technology
One Parsons Drive PO Box 100 Hiawatha
IA 52233-9904

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What's Up With That?

Nearly enlightening computer information column

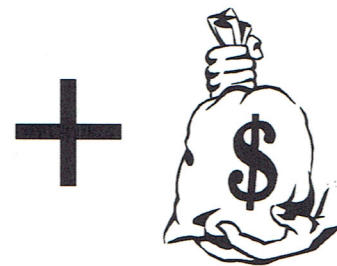
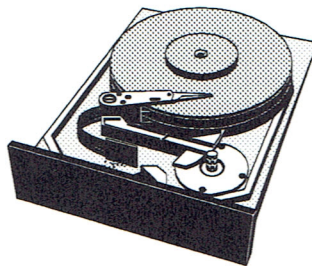
by John Davis

This is a Cache only course! (Pretty witty, huh?) You've gotta be quick to get my meaning because that's exactly what we're talking about today—moving data quickly. A cache is ... but first a story.

I used to live in Alaska (this is relevant). Out in the wilderness there is not an Albertson's/Smith's/Basha's every twelve feet—or even twelve miles! Bottom line: You socked up at the grocery store since you may be cabin-bound for days/weeks/months; sound exciting? Very high modem demand up there! (Jack London eat your heart out). Anyway, there is no way you could store all that food in your cabin unless you drew straws on whom to kick out in order to make room for the groceries. The solution: A cache, a small shed out back put up on stilts to protect from the varmints. The purpose for those not able to get this allusion staring you in your frostbitten face, is that while there is plenty of food at the store, and limited ability to store it at home, a cache helps one have quicker more immediate access to a moderate amount of grub.

Now back to silicon valley... A cache is a device used to provide us more immediate access to data than we would normally have without it. The bottleneck in computing is invariably data flow. I will address different kinds of caches that speed data flow in computing. Namely, there is disk caching and memory caching. They use the same term simply so that guys like me have something to impress chicks with at computer shows/tractor pulls. A disk cache speeds the transfer of data from a disk drive to RAM. Disk drives are normally speed rated in milliseconds (ms) from the Latin micros meaning "how much brain power goes into your decision to play Lotto." RAM is rated in nanoseconds (ns) from the Latin nanos, meaning "your odds of winning Lotto." The end result is that a disk cache will dramatically speed data access in your computer by taking it from a medium that works in thousandths of a second and making it accessible in billionths of a second. Take a minute to figure out the math—it's faster. A disk cache will use algorithms (not a new type of senatorial music) in its programming to read ahead from the hard drive what it thinks the CPU is most likely to use next. Also, a good cache will normally delay writes to the hard drive until it finds the free system time to do them. This allows you to move on to something after a disk save with no delay, which is what you are normally ready to do after you've saved your work—yes, actual

logic in software! For the wimpy at heart who fear a power failure during the time between the save and actual write to hard drive, most cache makers allow you to disable the write back delay feature. In actuality, most caches only delay a couple of seconds in the disk write so quit worrying. There are two types of disk cache available: Hardware and software. Hardware disk cache comes from Tru-Value—just kidding. It is normally a small memory buffer (storage) 32 kilobytes to a couple of megabytes depending on your budget, of RAM (more on the two types later) and a processor placed on the drive controller. The advantage is that the CPU does not have to work at all on caching the hard disk, since it has dedicated hardware, and no overhead comes out of your system DRAM. If you are shopping for a new hard drive for your home system, or a new system, it's easy to find an IDE (integrated drive electronics) hard drive with a 32k or better on-board cache. A software disk cache is better than no cache, even



with the bit of memory and CPU overhead. If you are already where you're going to be with your hardware, i.e., your wife is threatening you and/or the computer with an ax if you by one more component before that new bedroom set, software such as Super PC Kwik, PC-Cache, Norton's N-cache, or many others will serve you well. Even if you have hardware caching, software caches can help speed your computing by using much larger buffers of extended or expanded memory for large caches of disk information. Recent versions of most brands of caches work well, but if you're a jellyfish who will not buy without a recommendation, get Super PC Kwik or Norton's N-cache (bundled with just about everything Pete sells). If you have extra memory, this is one of the most productive uses for it short of mailing the chips to me.

Deep breath, change gears: Memory cache was labeled by computer nerds who lacked the imagination to think of a less confusing term for cache memory. We never heard of, nor needed cache memory when computers lumbered along at less than 20 megahertz (Latin for a big rental car com-

pany). Mathematically, memory speed should be the equivalent of one over the CPU speed (e.g., a 10 MHz machine needs 100 ns memory). Various memory setups such as interleaving—tag teaming banks of memory, will effectively allow slightly slower memory to exceed this ratio, but dynamic RAM is just not fast enough to keep up with today's CPU speeds without becoming the processing bottleneck. Enter SRAM or static RAM. Dynamic RAM these days ranges from 60-100 ns on 286, 386, and 486 systems. Static RAM is normally in the 25 ns range—adequate for the fastest CPUs. Unfortunately static RAM costs per megabyte are not economical for main system memory, so the best compromise is to use it as a fast memory buffer or cache for the slower DRAM system memory. You will see sizes vary from 16-256 kilobytes of SRAM memory cache. The question is invariably: How much is enough for my system? The answer is... it depends. All caches are not created equal, although the ACLU is working

on legislation...I digress. Memory cache is gauged in "Hit Rates" or the percentage of time that a CPU request for input is read from the cache vice system DRAM. Most experts agree that a hit rate in the mid 90 percents is most desirable. If the cache circuitry is sufficiently sophisticated, using set associative logic, then 64 - 128k is plenty. Any is better than none. Remember too, that the 486 chip has an 8k cache built into the CPU chip, although a larger external memory cache will naturally help performance. By the way, if your present system is uncached, then your only alternative for adding cache memory is a new motherboard, sorry. Hopefully, by reading this you now think you know more about cache management, as opposed to cash management, which I need a seminar in myself. The proper tools will make your computer run with the speed of Bill Gates' Ferrari.

This month's questions:

1. I get a "probable non-DOS disk" message on my D drive when I run CHKDSK.

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Beginner's Column:

The FORMAT Command

By Kenneth Johnson—Chicago Computer Society

This month we will continue our look at the basic DOS commands by considering one of the most powerful and dangerous commands in DOS: the FORMAT command. FORMAT is probably the most dangerous command that you use regularly, though as we'll see DOS 5.0 make it a little safer.

FORMAT prepares a disk for use by "initializing" the surface; creating the sectors, File Allocation Table (FAT), and directory; and checking for and marking bad sectors so they are not used. FORMAT can also be used to create a bootable floppy disk and to erase an old disk and check it for physical defects.

Starting with DOS 4.0, FORMAT will also create a volume serial number for each disk formatted. The serial number is created from the system clock, based on time the disk was formatted. DOS uses this serial number to keep track of disks, in particular floppy disks. (There were initially rumors that the serial number could be used in a copy protection scheme since two disks can have duplicate serial numbers only if formatted at the same exact time, but this has not occurred.) The volume serial number is displayed as an eight digit hexadecimal number by some programs and commands, including DIR and CHKDSK.

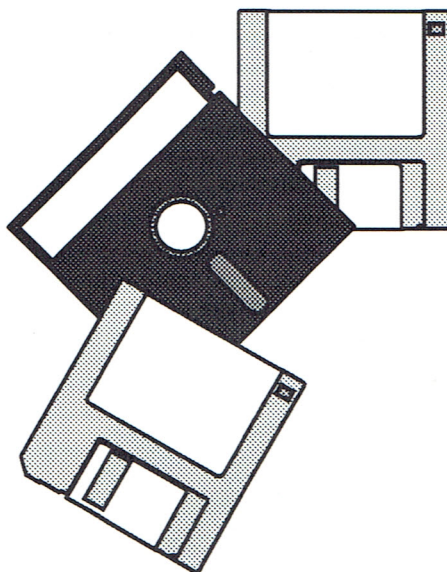
A good analogy for what happens during a format is to think about a developer building a new subdivision out in the country. An unformatted disk is like undeveloped land, with random hills, gullies, and maybe a few random dirt roads. The first thing the developer does is flatten out the property, subdivide it into regular-sized lots, and build a series of roads leading to each lot. The developer then builds an office, and puts a map of the development on the wall. Maybe a few of the lots have swampy land and can't be built on; these are crossed off the map so that they won't be sold. As people start purchasing the lots, the developer crosses them off the map one by one.

The disk from the factory is just one large surface with random bits and bytes on it. Formatting takes the disk and divides it into uniform sectors for use in storing files. The

random magnetic hills and valleys are smoothed out, and the underlying maps and structures (like the Directory and FAT) are created. Any "bad" sectors unfit for holding data are marked.

Continuing the analogy, reformatting a disk that currently contains files is like SERIOUS urban renewal: the bulldozers come in and flatten everything in their path. All the old buildings and roads are destroyed, and replaced with new vacant lots and new roads. A map of the area shows there is nothing left.

FORMAT's power is what makes it so dangerous. It can destroy data that already exists on the disk. You want to be particularly careful not to format your hard disk. Often the DOS 5.0 UNFORMAT program (or a similar utility from Norton Utilities or PC Tools) can recover some or all of the data lost in an accidental format but don't bet your career on it!



One of the best enhancements in DOS 5.0 is the "safe" format, which is now the default. If you format a previously formatted disk, FORMAT will save the FAT and root directory information in a hidden file (called the "MIRROR" file) on the disk. The FAT and root directory are then erased, but the data itself is not deleted or physically overwritten. The UNFORMAT command can use this MIRROR file to restore the disk if new data isn't written to the disk meanwhile. So with DOS 5.0 the rule is, if you accidentally format a disk, attempt UNFORMAT ASAP.

Since your worst nightmare is probably unknowingly formatting your hard drive, there are a couple of safety nets in FORMAT to discourage this from happening. Starting with DOS 4.0, you have to explicitly enter the drive identifier of the drive to format (no more using the default drive, might be C:). As far back as DOS 3.0 you got an error mes-

sage if you try to run FORMAT on a hard disk:

```
WARNING, ALL DATA IN
NON-REMOVABLE DISK
DRIVE C: WILL BE LOST!
Proceed with format (Y/N)?
```

You have to explicitly type in Y to start the format.

As an additional precaution, starting with DOS 3.3 must enter the volume label of the hard drive for the format to occur. Unfortunately, if your hard disk doesn't have a volume label and you simply press [ENTER] when prompted for the label, blank matches blank and the format will begin. So your first and easiest protection against an accidental format is to use the LABEL command (LABEL C:) to put a volume label on every hard disk in your system.

For even more protection, include the NULL character (ASCII 255) as part of the volume label. You enter NULL by holding down the ALT key and typing 255 on the numeric keypad. The NULL will look like a space, but is a different character to DOS. Anyone trying to maliciously format the hard disk will probably type in a space instead of the NULL since they appear the same. But the labels won't match so the format won't proceed.

Now let's look at the FORMAT command itself. The DOS 5.0 syntax is:

```
FORMAT drive: [/Q] [/U] [/V:label]
[/F:size] [/S or /B]
```

Drive: — is the drive with the disk to format. You must specify the drive identifier with FORMAT.

The FORMAT options include:

/Q — Performs a Quick format of a previously formatted disk. The disk's FAT and root directory information are saved in the hidden MIRROR file, then cleared. Other data is left on the disk, so recovery may be possible with UNFORMAT. The disk is not checked for bad sectors. If the disk has never been formatted, an unconditional format will be done. The /Q switch was added in DOS 5.0.

/U — Does an Unconditional, full format of the disk. The FAT is cleared, all data on the disk are deleted, and bad sectors marked. UNFORMAT cannot recover a disk that has been formatted with /U. Use /U for new disks, to prepare older disks for reuse, and to completely "erase" disks of all information. The /U switch was added in DOS 5.0.

/V — Specifies the Volume label for the disk. If you omit /V: you will be prompted for the label after the format is done. A volume label

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installation procedure. That is a lot of reading! The Pizazz+ Plus manual makes some "Basic Assumptions" which I found questionably amusing, again I will quote. "Pizazz+ Plus" assumes the following:

1. You are familiar with the basics of your computer such as how to turn it on and how to use its floppy disk or hard drive.
2. Your printer is connected and working properly.
3. You know your hardware configuration. Still quoting, "If this is not the case, we suggest you spend some time familiarizing yourself with the use of your computer before attempting to use Pizazz+ Plus."

After that put down, not sure I wanted to continue, I did press on. Installation on my hard disk was not complicated it might have taken fifteen minutes. When loaded, I found Pizazz+ Plus is a Terminate and Stay Resident (TRS) program. You only need to load it once, and it stays there waiting for you to call it by simply pressing <Shift> <PrtScr>. That sounds amazingly simple, lets give it a try.

Here is where two computers will come in handy. I will move this writing to my old faithful 8086 COMPAQ DESKPRO where I will write about the testing done to the program on my 386 20mhz IBM clone. I have two printers, a NEC Pinwriter P2200 24pin dot matrix printer, and an older Epson FX286 9pin that I will use to print the test products. Using this system, I am able to work with the program on one machine, and write about the process, on the other machine. Also by copying this document to a disk in Computer I and moving it from Computer I to Computer II, I will have fulfilled the first of the "Basic Requirements" i.e. How to use the floppy and hard disk drives of my computers.

Now I am writing in WordPerfect 5.1 on the COMPAQ DESKPRO. To test Pizazz+ Plus I will compose and color a prehistoric scene using Bert's Dinosaurs (A children's coloring program, I reviewed some time back.) To the 386 clone, to perform this task. Once I have the picture, I press <Shift> <PrtScr> and Pizazz+ Plus captures the screen. Now, I am greeted with the Pizazz+ Plus Main Menu where we find listed the Main Menu choices which are: Print, File, Crop, StYle, Shading, Width, Height, PosI-tion, View, Rotate, SMOoth, CopiEs, Top, Set-tinGs, FiX_Screen, Units and Quit. Select one of these Options and the menu box for that option will be displayed. In each of these menu boxes there will be found a reference to the page number (p.00) in the manual covering that option. (This was very helpful to me

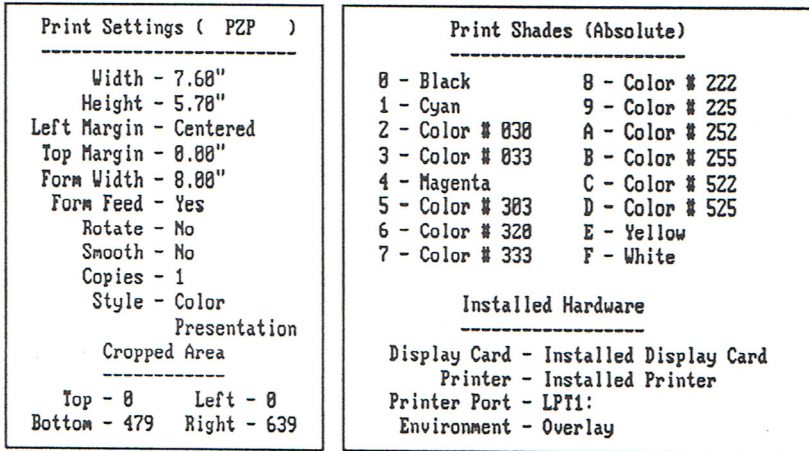
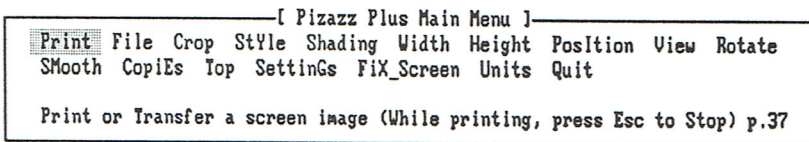


Figure 2-2. Pizazz Plus Main Menu

learning to use each feature.) These options cover the modifying operations available to be performed to the captured screen.

This menu also contains the status of the Print Settings, the Print Shades, the Cropped Area, as well as the Installed Hardware. Each time one of the Main Menu options is used this screen will reflect how changes made will affect the finished product.

To cover all these operational options in a program review would take far too much space. Enough to say, you can print the picture about anywhere on the page you might wish and change the size and appearance to suit your purpose. It was interesting to see the results of these changes, when printing the created scene. I was also able to convert the captured scene, using Pizazz+ Convert, to a WordPerfect Graphic (WPG) file which I later printed in WordPerfect 5.1 document.

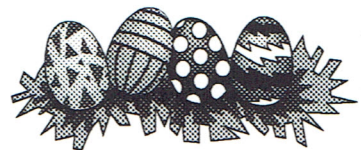
Having worked with the DOS version, let's see how Pizazz+ Windows 3 Screen Capture works. Here, I composed a poster in MSPublisher. The capture screen procedure is much the same as before, with the exception that using <Alt> <Shift> <PrtScr> I am able to capture only the active window. All the opportunities to enhance and modify the quality of the finished print are available here. The finished product can be saved as a file, in about any format you might wish, from either the DOS or Windows version of the program.

The Graphic File Conversion portion of the program enables you to convert between a variety of bit image formats. For instance if you are working in WordPerfect and you wish to use a graphic image file from a different format, Pizazz+ Convert will handle this task. Twenty-six input file types can be converted into Twenty-three output file types. During the conversion process the images may be

modified much as you can in screen capture phase of Pizazz+ Plus. Conclusion: Pizazz+ Plus is a very useful screen grabbing program, as they say in the manual: "If you can get an image on your screen Pizazz+ Plus will provide you with quality prints." (Limited only to the abilities of your printer. Unfortunately, I had to do with only black and white printing.) Although I found the manuals dated, as they frequently refer to "dual floppy operation," which I think the personal computer use has long since abandoned, they are very well designed. They tell you where to find applicable help for the menu box you are working with. This is a great help when you are learning to use the program. The Windows environment was not as easy for me work in as was DOS. However working with the program was a rewarding educational experience.

Pizazz+ Plus Application Techniques, Inc.
10 Lomar Park Drive
Pepperell, Massachusetts 01463

###



April Calendar

- April 4 Software Publishing demonstrates Harvard Draw and Harvard Graphics
- May 2 Richard Katz from Intuit will demonstrate Quicken and QuickBooks
- June 6 Claris demonstrates File Maker Pro 2.0 & ClarisWorks for Windows

XTREEWIN—
Continued from page 2

of several directories in one window. The dialog box that opens gives you the choice of opening a single directory, selected directories, selected branches, all directories on the current volume, or all directories on all volumes. You are also given the option of displaying marked objects only. This allows you to work at one time with files residing anywhere on your disk(s). I often use this feature to delete all those pesky .BAK files from my hard disk, or to move random files en masse into a Zip archive.

Tool Palette

XTWin sports a fashionable Button Bar or Tool Palette that makes quick work of the copy, move, delete, rename, view, select all, mark and unmark file functions. In all honesty though, this amenity does not come close to the convenient single-keystroke command interface of XTree for DOS. Many of the commands, however, can be accessed with control key combinations.

XTreeLink

Included with the XTree for Windows program is a nifty little utility called XTreeLink. It allows you to connect two computers to work with files and programs residing on either computer's disks. You can do this with either a serial or a parallel cable (not included).

XTreeLink runs as a full screen application on the computer whose disk(s) you are accessing (remote), and as a TSR on the computer at which you are physically working (local). It remaps the drives of the remote above the existing logical drive designations on the local. From the local you can access and manipulate files on the remote just as if they physically resided on the local's disk(s). Used in conjunction with XTree Gold or XTree for Windows this makes a very tenable file transfer system for laptop management.

You can even launch programs located on the remote. I experimented with launching WordPerfect 5.0 (from XTWin), creating a file, storing it on the remote disk, then printing the file to a printer connected to the local. The obvious limitation here is the remapping of the drives. If the program installed on the remote disk is particular about where it finds its files, it won't be able to locate them when run from the local since the drive designations have been changed. (What is C: on the remote may be F: on the local.) There are also problems relating to differences in the hardware setup of each computer.

IT'S A KEEPER

No program makes it past the revue stand without some criticism. I have been long spoiled by XTree for DOS which has one feature that I MUST have in a file manager: the ability to print a file or a list of selected filenames and their paths. XTWin requires you to open the application in which

a file was produced or Notepad in order to print it, including simple ASCII text files. Printing a list of selected filenames is out of the question. My request is that XTree Corporation develop a way to optionally bypass the print manager to send generic information directly to a selected port or file.

I would also like to see a Statistics menu choice that presents a persistent Statistics window with the information, clarity and large readable type of XTree for DOS. It should include disk (space remaining), directory, current file, selected files, and marked files statistics. The existing Detail Box on the Tool Palette and the Status Line at the bottom of the Application window is very hard to read on high resolution monitors.

That said, it looks like this is one program that has found a permanent place on my hard disk. The file viewers and Zip management alone are well worth the price of the ticket. I highly recommend XTree for Windows to anyone who is serious about file and disk management in the Windows environment.

XTree for Windows: \$99, upgrade \$39.95. Requires Microsoft Windows 3.x, 2 Mb RAM and 2.2Mb hard disk space. XTree Company (a division of Executive Systems) can be contacted at 4115 Broad St., Bldg. 1, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-7993, (805) 541-0604.

###

FORMAT—
Continued from page 5

can be up to 11 characters and, unlike DOS file names, can include spaces but cannot include a period. However, if you use /V: the label text cannot have spaces because DOS interprets the text after the space as an invalid FORMAT parameter. So keep your label in one "word." For example, /V:KEJPUBLISH will put the label KEJPUBLISH on the disk. The /V: switch was added in DOS 4.0.

/F — Provides an easy way to format a disk to a lower capacity than the default capacity of the disk drive. The size can be expressed in either kilobytes or megabytes: 360, 720, 1200 or 1.2, and 1440 or 1.44. So to format 3" disk to 720K in a high density (1.44Mb) drive, you would specify /F:720.

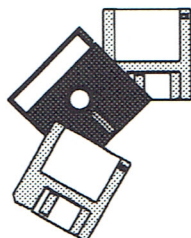
/F:size — was added in DOS 4.0 and replaces the older switches used to change the standard formatted capacity, though these switches are still available for compatibility:

/1 — formats 1-sided disk for use in one sided drives. **/8** — formats to the obsolete DOS 1.x 8-sector format. **/4** — formats a

360K Double Sided 5" disk in a high density (1.2Mb) drive. This is the same as using /F:360. **/N:sectors /T:tracks** Available starting with DOS 3.3, formats a disk to the number of sectors and tracks specified. The most common specification is probably **/N:9 /T:80**, which formats a 720K 3" disk in a high density (1.44Mb) drive. This is the same as using /F:720, which is a lot easier to remember!

If you forget these "ancient" switches, don't worry; using /F is much simpler.

A word of warning about /F:360: When a 360K 5" disk is formatted in a 1.2Mb disk drive with /F:360 or /4, that disk can only be reliably read in another 1.2Mb drive. You may get read errors when trying to use the disk in a 360K drive. This problem does not occur with 3" disks, going between 1.44Mb and 720K drives. To be on the safe side, al-



ways format 5" disks in the same capacity disk drive.

/S — Creates a bootable floppy disk, formatting the disk then copying the hidden DOS System files IO.SYS and MSDOS.SYS (or their generic equivalents) and COMMAND.COM to the floppy. You can use /S to create an emergency boot disk to allow you to boot up from the A: drive an important item every user should have. [See the sidebar, "Creating an Emergency Boot Disk" for more information.]

/B — Transfers the DOS system files to the disk but not COMMAND.COM.

With the new /Q and /U switches, it is important to understand the what is meant by a "safe" format, and a "verified" format. "Safe" means that the FAT and root directory information are saved in a hidden file on the disk for possible recovery with UNFORMAT. "Verified" means that the entire diskette is checked for errors and bad sectors marked so that they will not be used.

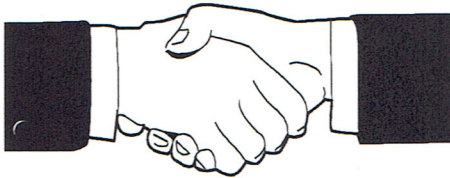
Without the /Q and /U switches, FORMAT does a safe and verified format. This is

Continued on page 8

What's up with that? Aside from the possibility that you inadvertently hooked up your old Commodore as your D drive, the most likely culprit is third party disk management software. Ontrack's Disk Manager and other like products often were used to low-level format and partition hard drives due to unique designs or features for the drives. If it doesn't effect the drive's performance, don't let it worry you.

- I added the "prompt \$p\$g" command to my AUTOEXEC.BAT, and now access to my floppies is slow as a technical support phone call. What's up with that? The "prompt \$p\$g" phrase has the handy result of providing of causing DOS to provide you the current drive's path as the prompt. Consequently each time you access a drive, DOS must do a directory read, just to display the prompt. On the hard drive, the lag is unnoticeable, but on a floppy, the lag each time you access the drive is 3-5 seconds. Worse, if you are brain-dead computing at 3 a.m. and type A: when you meant to go for the B drive, you're the proud owner of an "Abort, Retry, or Fail?" message, until you scramble and find a floppy for the misselected drive. Short answer: Live with it.

###



New Members

Welcome aboard to the following people. We hope you enjoy your membership with SLO Bytes and grow with the club.

Earle Balgeman	773-3095
Paul King	544-5857
Virginia Kocian	773-3430
Judie Onge Barry Smith	541-6844
Mike Underwood	

the safest option: recovery is possible and the diskette is completely checked for bad areas.

The /Q switch does a safe but unverified format. The MIRROR file is created for possible use by UNFORMAT, but the diskette is not checked for bad sectors (which is why the format is "quick"). You would use /Q for previously formatted diskettes that you know don't have any bad sectors. You can also use /Q to completely "erase" all files and directories on a diskette. It can be much faster than going into each subdirectory, deleting all the files (and changing attributes if any files are Read-only, Hidden, or System), then removing the directory.

The /U switch does an unsafe but verified format. The diskette is scanned for bad sectors, but the FAT and root directory information is not saved for possible unformatting. You can use /U to speed up the formatting of new diskettes since FORMAT doesn't take the time to check the existing format. Also use /U to rehabilitate diskettes with write errors (though personally I'll toss the bad disk my data is worth more than the price of a new diskette), and to reformat diskettes to a different capacity with /F.

Another important use of the /U switch is to truly erase diskettes with confidential information. Remember from last month's column that DEL and ERASE don't physically erase data from the diskette. Unless written over, erased files can be recovered with UNDELETE or a similar unerase program. Similarly, if you format a diskette without /U, the data remains and could be restored with UNFORMAT. If a diskette has sensitive information, reformat it with /U to write over the data.

[With the /U switch the data is overwritten and obscured to the normal person trying to read or unformat the disk. However, a data recovery lab could likely retrieve the information using sophisticated tools. For truly sensitive data, use a WIPE utility such as those available from Norton Utilities or PC Tools. WIPE programs perform multiple writes over the disk, following a government standard for deleting sensitive data.]

So what if disaster strikes and you format a disk accidentally? The key is to run UNFORMAT immediately. UNFORMAT will attempt to recover the disk with the MIRROR file if one exists; if not it will try to recover based on the data that remains. If the newly formatted disk is used (i.e., files are written to it), your chances of recovery drop signifi-

cantly. We'll look at UNFORMAT in detail in next month's column.

FORMAT is both a necessary and a dangerous command in our computing lives. However, with DOS 5.0 it has become a little more forgiving than in the past. Keep these points in mind when using FORMAT:

For the safest FORMAT, don't use either the /U or the /Q switches. FORMAT will save the recovery information in the MIRROR file, and check the disk for bad sectors.

Use the /U switch for unconditional formatting of new disks, to revitalize older disks, and to delete sensitive data on a disk. Remember though you cannot UNFORMAT after using /U.

Use the /Q switch to quickly format previously formatted disks that you don't suspect have bad areas. Keep in mind the disk is not scanned for bad sectors. /Q is a fast way to "erase" all files and directories from a floppy disk.

Label your hard drive (LABEL C:). Since the label must be entered to format a hard drive, this is the easiest way to protect against an accidental hard disk format. For added security, include the NULL character (ASCII 255) as part of the label. It will look like a space, but anyone trying to format the hard disk must enter the NULL in the label for the format to proceed.

Remember that 360K 5" disks formatted in a 1.2Mb drive with the /F:360 or /4 switch can only be reliably read in another 1.2Mb drive. Always try to format 360K 5" disks in a 360K disk drive.

Create an emergency boot disk with FORMAT A: /S. This will allow you to boot your computer and bypass the C: drive. [See the sidebar, "Creating an Emergency Boot Disk."]

Finally, in case of an accidental FORMAT, run UNFORMAT as soon as possible. As long as no new files are written to the disk, and that you didn't use the /U switch, the chances of recovery are good.

Author Information: *Kenneth Johnson is Training and Support Manager at the law firm of Mayer, Brown & Platt in Chicago. He writes a monthly Beginner's Column and is contributing editor for Hard-Copy, the Journal of the Chicago Computer Society.*

Club Information

The SLO BYTES Newsletter is a monthly publication of SLO BYTES PC User's Group located in San Luis Obispo, California. Information in this Newsletter is derived from both our own membership and other PC User Group Newsletters. The purpose of this publication is to inform our members of meetings and provide information related to the use of IBM PC's and compatible computers.

Membership: Dues are \$20 per year. Newsletter only is \$12 per year. Full membership entitles you to our monthly newsletter, full use of the public domain software library and discounts at local computer stores.

Article Submission: Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month. Articles should be provided in ASCII format without any type of formatting from your wordprocessor including tabs, indents, extra spaces, or highlighting. We prefer articles on disk but will accept hardcopies if necessary.

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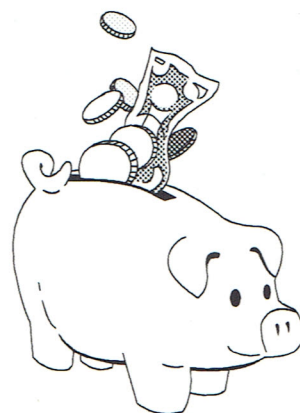
Meeting Times

General meetings are held the 1st Sunday of every month, unless noted otherwise in the newsletter calendar, at 2:30 pm in the Cal Poly University Biology Department, Fisher Hall 286. Special Interest Groups (SIGS) meet at 1:00 - 2:30 pm.

General Information SIG - F.H. 286

New computer user SIG - FH 292

Our Public Domain Library is in Fisher Science Museum. Hours 12 Noon till 5pm.



Treasurer's Report

SLO Bytes PCUG Expenditures—March, 1993

Beginning Balance:	\$1909.47
Expenses:	
Newsletter	- 131.31
Postmaster Bulkmail Deposit	- 200.00
PMP—Floppy Disks	- 120.00
Refund	- 17.00
Stamps	- 29.00
	<u>- 497.31</u>
Deposit — 03/09/93:	<u>538.50</u>
Balance — 03/09/93:	<u>\$1950.50</u>

FLOPPY DISKS 4-SALE at the meeting

DSDD 360K Formatted Floppy Disks with labels, tabs, and sleeves	55¢ Each
DSDD 360K Formatted Label Over Floppy Disks	45¢ Each
Generic High Density Formatted Floppy Disks (5.25" X 1.2 MEG)	70¢ Each
Generic 3.5" X 720K Formatted Floppy Disks	70¢ Each
Generic 3.5" X 1.44 MEG Formatted Floppy Disks	90¢ Each
New Library Disks	90¢ Each

All Disks fully guaranteed against defects.

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