

# HARD COPY

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE SAN LUIS OBISPO PC USERS GROUP

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## What's New, What's Old, and What's It!

By Bob Ward, Secretary

**B**oy, this month is a push. With a meeting held one week late and the first Sunday of May being the 1st, I hope this reaches you before the fact.

Last month John White from Stac Electronics gave us a demonstration of the latest Stacker for Windows and DOS. This company has been in the hard disk compression business for many years while other compression companies have come and gone, their EveryReady batteries just keep on coming. The latest version of Stacker breaks the 2:1 compression ratio. Double Space, which really doesn't exist anymore because of the lawsuit between Microsoft and Stac Electronics, would give you a maximum compression of about 1:1.9. This means if you compressed a 200 megabyte hard disk, you could expect 380 megs after compression. Of course this varies with the type of programs being compressed. We're talking in "averages" here. Now comes stacker with version 4.0 that give you an average ratio of 1:2.6. Suddenly that 200 megabyte hard disk which was double spaced to 380 megabytes becomes 520 megs.

Several years ago, I wouldn't have touched compression software with a 5 1/4" floppy disk. I think they have now been proven quite dependable. At least the failure rate is no worse than hard disk crashes due to hardware failure. Remember the problem with SMARTDRV and the write-back cache with DOS 6.0? Now here's something that was more widespread than hard disk compression crashes and it was brought to you by old reliable... Microsoft. All software and hardware comes with some risk. I guess it's just a balance between those risks and benefits one receives by using the product.

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## Seize The Day

Program Review

By DT Richmond—SLO Bytes PCUG

**S**eize the Day, is an illustrated Personal Organizer for Windows that was produced by Seize the Day INC. I quote from the description of the program from it's container: "We've done our best to create the first software that integrates exquisite beauty with effortless utility. Our goal for Seize the Day to be a joy to see and hear and use — every day. Inside Seize the Day you'll find everything you need to stay organized — To Do List, Project List, Appointment Book, Phone/Address Book, great-sounding Alarms, and a Daily Journal. And something that will inspire you — a daily quote and journal entry about personal success, a remarkable idea from this day in history, the sunrise or sunset in one of our 24-hour-a-day Living Worlds. What you will not find in Seize the Day is complexity. It is simple enough for novices but deep enough for experts. If you want a computer companion that is gorgeous and indispensable, look no further. There is no better value."

That what it says on the box! Well here

*Continued on page 4*

## CLUB CALENDAR

**May 1**

Knowledge Adventure is back showing their latest 3-D adventure educational software.

**June 5**

IBM is coming to town. See OS/2 do it's thing!

**July 3**

Phil Wagner will demonstrate SLONET—the local information highway to Internet.

**August 7**

AskMe MultiMedia will present SST Software.

**October 2**

MySoftware will be coming to town.

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## Where's The Crunch?

By Kathy Yakal—SLO Bytes PCUG

I'm not even going to mention the name of the restaurant we ate at last month after the user group meeting, because usually they have really good food. But don't ever order the specials. I ordered one of their specials for the second time (and should have learned after the first), and was woefully disappointed. It was supposed to be a baked potato with vegetables and salsa. Well, I pictured a potato from one of my favorite restaurants in Minneapolis, One Potato Two. I ate there a lot in college because you could buy dinner for less than \$2. Plus, I wrote a restaurant review of it once for the college newspaper, and the owner gave me a free cookie. Anyways, One Potato Two served these huge baked potatoes with crunchy skins. Remember those? Crunchy potato skins? From the days before restaurants used microwaves? (Guess I'm showing my age here.) You had your choice of meats and vegetables and cheese, and everything was really fresh and tasty. Nothing like the potato I had at this unnamed restaurant. The vegetables were cooked and mushy. The potato skin, of course, lacked crunchiness. And the whole thing was doused in salsa. Now, I'm usually one of the first people to say to myself, "Starving people would be happy to eat this meal," and make myself feel ashamed of myself for feeling sorry for myself over something so minor, but I felt like feeling sorry for myself that particular night. Didn't help that Hunt — after eating a delicious-looking omelet — had a huge piece of warm blueberry coffeecake delivered to him. I swear I could hear the butter melting. He offered me some, but I was in the mood to be a martyr, so I headed outside to smoke a cigarette. Maybe I was seeing things, but I thought I saw Ward's fork zooming over towards Hunt's coffeecake as I walked away from the table. Nah. Bob Ward wouldn't steal food from someone else's plate.

Speaking of things not being quite what you expect them to be, I was just thinking about 1983 a few minutes ago. I'm waiting for a software vendor in Chicago to call; he's arranged a three way phone conversation between him, me, and the developer of one of his newest products. The developer is 16 years old. I was trying to remember the last time I'd interviewed someone so young for an



**Kathy turns green and looks sick....  
Somebody, quick, feed her a crunchy  
potatoe skin!**

never made it onto the 16-bit computers. It was just a little house with three floors and many rooms; after you loaded the program, a little guy came walking onto the screen and rang the doorbell. When no one answered, he went off the screen and came back again with his dog and his suitcase and moved in. You could use keyboard commands to feed him and the dog and call him on the phone, and he did a lot of things on his own, like watch TV and read and work on his computer and do aerobics. If you didn't feed him often enough, he turned green and looked sick. One of the programmers at the magazine I was working at came into my pod one day and saw the little guy all green. He just about knocked me out of my chair trying to get at my keyboard to feed him). And of course, much of it needs to be grown up and serious, because there are an awful lot of grown up and serious applications. But there's still room for fun and frivolity and the unexpected (the good kind, not the soggy potato skin kind). Anyways, I guess that's one of the things I like about SLOBYTES, and probably one of the things you all do, too. There's lots of serious, expected stuff, but often, lots of fun, unexpected things, too. Who knows? Maybe we'll go out to dinner tonight and I'll actually get a baked potato with crunchy skin.

Next month: Kathy writes a column that has a logical path and doesn't ramble.

[ So she sez.... Anyone taking bets? I'll bet two potato skins for a hamburger bun. BW (-) ]



## LIBRARY NEWS

By Bob Ward, Secretary

Here's a couple new disks full of interesting programs:

### #601

WHOOOP & WHOOOP3 - Add sounds to Windows' icons. Supports AVI files also.  
WINZIP5A - nice Windows ZIP & UNZIP program.  
WOMTRV02 - Women of the World Trivia Pursuit.  
WW2TRV02 - World War II Trivia Pursuit.

I will also try and place all the latest versions of VSCAN, CLEAN, etc. virus programs on one high density disk and have available at the next meeting... time permitting.

### #602

All these programs are personal task managers and calendars for Windows. The first two are excellent. Try them all.  
2DOVIIB - 2DO Personal Task Manager.  
TC403A\_M - Time and Chaos calendar scheduler.  
TTRAX - Personal scheduler.  
MINICA - Mini calendar for Windows.  
ALM31 - Windows 3.1 Almanac.

## Body Works 3.0 1994 Edition

By Bob Ward—SLO Bytes PCUG

As a Biology major in College a few decades ago or more we had the typical skeletons and plaster models from which to learn. There was always Gray's Anatomy for more detailed pictures and color slides from Biology supply houses. But nothing quite like what is available today through the use of computers.

Body Works is no Gray's Anatomy, nor was it meant to be, but a well put together program depicting the main systems of the body. It would fit quite well in high school and beginning college Biology classes. This program can be installed either as a Windows program or a DOS program. I chose to load it as a Windows program so I could take advantage of the cut and paste of pictures and text to other Windows programs.

The various systems are depicted as icons across the top of the screen. There you can find all the systems of the body; skeletal, muscular, nervous, cardiovascular, respiratory, digestive, endocrine, lymphatic, genito-urinary and sensory. That alone would make the program worth the price, but Software Marketing Corporation gives you even more for your money by adding two other categories: 1. Process of Living & 2. Health & Fitness. Both these categories have many subcategories. For example under the Process of Living you can find birth rates, topics on childbirth, contraception, male pattern baldness (Now here's a topic on the cutting edge!), causes of death and more. By clicking on a category, the text appears in a box below it. Many words are highlighted in color and represent hypertext to other parts of the program... either anatomy or other text. For example, under causes of death you will find heart disease with the word heart highlighted. Click on this and you can hypertext to developing heart in pregnancy, heart view (external or internal), cardiovascular system (veins or arteries) and heart: health organizations with phone numbers!

Health Issues include calorie charts, common illnesses, exercise, 1st aid, dietary components, and a medical database with phone numbers representing the different health foundations.

The anatomy portion of BodyWorks takes advantage of both animation and a sound card. Next to those anatomical names that have sound blaster support for saying

the name, you will find a small speaker. Click on it and in clear, plain English the word is pronounced. I did find the pronunciation inaccurate in some of the words such as ichium.

When you first select a system you are given a gross anatomy picture with a list of words pertaining to that system listed on the right side of the picture. Either click on a word or a portion of the organ or system and a more detailed picture will appear with a new set of anatomical words listed. There is a small dialog box below the list of words which gives a paragraph or two about the selection you made. Again many words in the dialog box are highlighted which hypertext to other parts of the program.

BodyWorks 3.0 includes 3 different types of animations. There are animations of current images. For instance if you show the gross exterior anatomy of the heart a small movie camera appears in the upper right corner of the picture. Click on it and you get a picture of a beating heart including sound... thub-dub thub-dub. BodyWorks also has animation cut-a-ways. Since the muscular system is made up of layers of muscles the only way to see muscles under external muscles is with cut-a-ways. The third type of animation are actual movies. The blinking of an eye, the beating heart and more.

BodyWorks has made viewing many areas easier by allowing both side, top and bottom views. In the skeletal system, the skull is first shown as a front view. With function keys, back, top and side views are also possible.

This program has many other nice features under the tools menu at the top of the screen. If you want to take a more formal approach to learning about the human body, there are lessons you can take and quizzes to check your learning retention. You have the ability of placing bookmarks throughout your travels in BodyWorks. You can go back at a later time and browse bookmarks to find those hard to get at places in the program. There is also a glos-

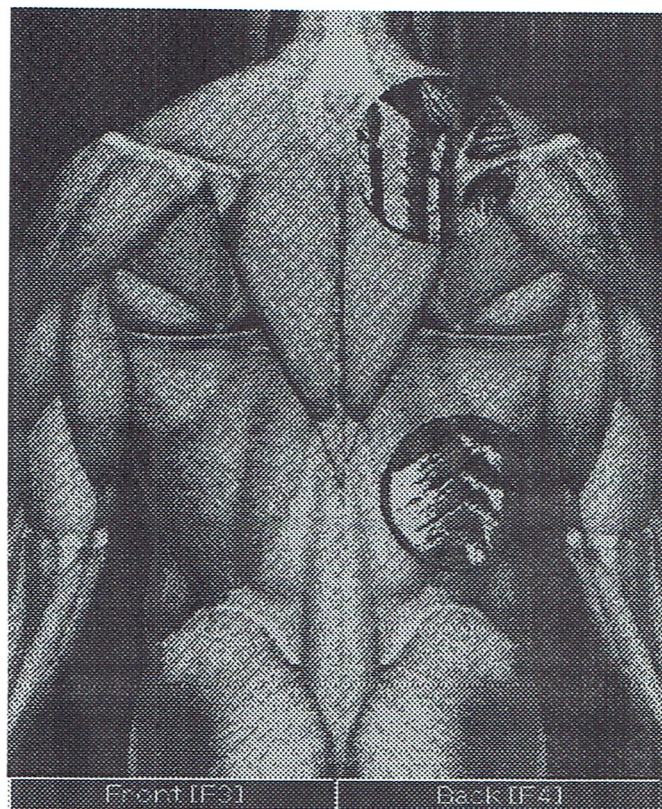
sary of terms and a database of pictures and movies from which to choose. If you're not quite sure of the spelling of a term, use the index and do a fuzzy search for the word. It works well and is fast.

If you are interested in keeping your medical records, BodyWorks can do this for you as well. In fact it will keep the medical records of several individuals. What a great way to remember your kids shot records.

Lastly, you might want to take some of that valuable text or detailed pictures and used them in a report. Just cut any picture and/or text to the Windows clipboard and paste it in your respective Windows wordprocessor or desktop publishing package. It's just that easy.

I was quite impressed with this program. You can run it without really looking at the documentation. Most areas are self explanatory. This program offers a wealth of information for those who want a basic anatomy program on the shelf without a book gathering dust. It does take a chunk of hard disk space, approximately 8.5 megs to be exact. But considering what this program can provide the user, it's a small price to pay for the information that's awaiting you.

**BodyWorks 3.0, 1994 Edition**  
**Software Marketing Corporation**  
**9830 South 51st Street, Bldg. A-131**  
**Phoenix, AZ 85044**

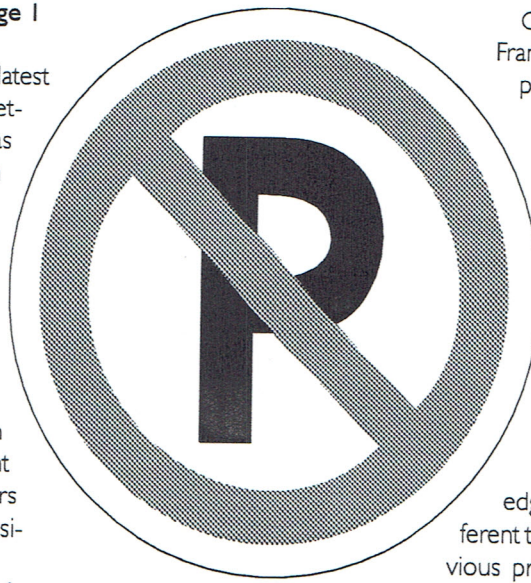


## What's New—Continued from page 1

I have heard of one problem with the latest version of Stacker which I read in a newsletter from another club. They said there has been several problems in using Stacker with Windows for Workgroups. So you might stay away from that situation before finding out if it's true. Because of all the variables involved in setting up a hard disk, this may just be a fluke, or may be for real.

A valid argument for not using Stacker was presented at the meeting by someone in the audience. The question was, "With the next version of Microsoft's DOS, might they be vengeful and lockout Stacker users because of the lawsuit?" This is always a possibility, although Stacker has signed with several large computer companies (AST, IBM, etc.) to bundle Stacker with their computers. Will Microsoft lock out AST users and others? Time will tell.

I received a message from John White who demonstrated Stacker to us at the meeting. Apparently the upgrade for \$49 does work on Double-Spaced hard disks and.... A previous version of Stacker does not have to be on your computer to use the upgrade. Guess this doesn't make it an upgrade afterall, just Stacker for \$49.00!



**NO PARKING**

**Free!**

Every meeting I get a question about parking on campus. Presently, **PARKING IS FREE ON WEEKENDS.** You need not buy a pass for \$1.50 to park. Special zones, such as 30 minute parking, loading, etc. are still enforced on weekends. Your best bet is the H-4 faculty/staff parking lot beyond the Fisher Science building. That's all for now. See ya at the next meeting.

On a lighter note, we received from the State Franchise Tax Board our tax exempt nonprofit corporate status. We are now pursuing the Federal tax exempt status which must be obtained within 9 months. Also we have finally obtained liability insurance, thanks to a tip from the Santa Maria computer club (thanks guys and gals). They found a carrier in Santa Maria who will provide insurance for computer clubs. This has not been an easy task, as I have been looking for an insurance company in SLO for a year without success.

This coming month we look forward to the return of Linda Orban from Knowledge Adventure. Their product line is much different that what you might remember from their previous presentation. Last year their programs were good but ate up lots of hard disk space. Now they are CD ROM based, some even with 3-D! Bring your children or your neighbor's kids to this one. It's always fun.

## Seize The Day—Continued from page 1

is what I found: Indeed Seize the Day is a well produced personal organizer that compares favorably with Lotus Organizer and some of the other personal organizer programs I have seen. It includes all the features that the user might need to keep their work day and personal life organized.

The opening screen contains "Your Minimum daily Requirements of Insight & Entertainment." from there you have access to these sections as described so well on the package; "An Ingenious To-Do List and Project List Creator", "A Perpetual Calendar and Daily, Weekly, and Monthly Planner", "A Fascinating Daily Journal & Personal diary", "A superb Telephone and Address Book", and "Twelve Stunningly Beautiful Animated Worlds".

What sets Seize the Day apart from the others are these two features: First Seize the Day Gallery. This is the animated graphic display. One comes with the program and there is a list of over twenty different Galleries that can be purchased separately. These Range from inspirational photographs and paintings to women body builders. Really something for every taste. Second, there is the Library

which is a theme based journal, (quoting from the box) "To provide motivating ideas and action items — One day at a time. "Experience this powerful, convenient and entertaining new pathway to insight, knowledge, and discovery." Again one Library comes with the program then there is a list of four additional Libraries that may be purchased separately.

My experience with Seize the Day: This program may very well live up to its promotional claims, however I found several things that tended to put me off even reviewing Seize the Day. First they elected to do without a manual. Oh there is a manual, but it is in the form of a "README" file. I personally have trouble getting anything substantial out of readme files. I usually print them to have a copy for my use when needed. With Seize the Day, while I am not a complete klutz, I have yet to be able to print the manual. (I gave up easily) You have to follow several steps to print the manual. Trouble is when you execute the first step you lose the instruction screen and I had trouble remembering what comes next. Another problem I encountered was that a 256 color display is

required to show the Gallery, of Seize the Day. I don't have my monitor set up for 256 colors and in attempting to perform the set up involved I crashed Windows and had to spend several hours getting my computer back to normal. As of this writing I have yet to experience the joy of viewing the gallery that is included in this release of Seize the Day. However I can visualize the effect they would have. While I never got into setting the alarms the WAV sound files included in Seize the Day were very impressive. I had a ton of fun playing with them in Windows Sound Recorder.

Conclusion: Seize the Day looks to me like it would be an enjoyable program for those of you who need a graphic display to brighten your work area. A draw back could be that Seize The Day demands a lot of hard disk space, over 8.5 MB, due to the many graphic files. The container states only 2 MB are needed but don't believe that.

**Seize the Day, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 833/Nizhoni Way**  
**Calistoga, California, 94515**  
**(707) 942-9391**

# Guide for Product Reviews

By Gary Pelphrey—Atlantic IBMers' PC Club

Reprinted from BYTES of Las Vegas who in turn reprinted it from the original Atlantic IBMers' PC Club newsletter.

Our PC Club is, fortunately, one which is in the loop of being allowed to review PC-based products. While reviews should be tailored to the individual product, and such tailoring should be done by the reviewer himself, it does seem that there are certain common items in every review. This guide is intended to offer a checklist of such items. Not as a way of discouraging creativity. Outline Check Off List for Information Needed Product identification

The product should certainly be identified sufficiently completely so that any reader interested in buying it would know precisely how to do that, and what it is likely to cost. It should include the name of the manufacturer with his address and phone number, as well as any local retailer who might be offering the product at a special price. If either the manufacturer or the local retailer is offering a club discount, tell us what that is, and how we can take advantage of it. Make sure you spell the product name right, i.e. WordPerfect, not Wordperfect. If the release level is significant, make that obvious, too.

**Functions:** It's a surprising, but frequently encountered fact of life, that the reviewer is so familiar with the product, and it's intricacies, that they forget to tell the uninitiated reader up front just what the product is, and, in general what it does. There are several cuts to this. First, what does the vendor say the product will do? Second, what so you think it will do? After using the product, what did it do - and how well?

**Guzinta:** An essential document in manufacturing is the exploded parts list for a manufactured product, commonly called the guzinta (goes int's). Since I like the word, I've used it for the reverse view of this important aspect of the product. What do you need to use it? 640K, DOS 3.0 or later, Windows, a special speech card,... Optional gadgets that this product can use (a mouse, a scanner) should also be indicated.

And an equally important facet of the guzinta; what does the product go into? What is the minimum system, earliest software release level, etc. Are there known conflicts with subsequent releases of other products?

**Placement:** There is not much point in talking about a product, for example a word processor, unless you can offer some comparison to word processors that the general audience is likely to be familiar with. If you are talking about a Menu program that costs \$600, it would probably be worth mentioning how it is better than AutoMenu, or something else.

One way of indicating placement is through price. Try to give both the list and street price, if you have them. If there is some promotional deal offered to our club members, also list that price, along with any other factors, expiration date, identification, germane to a member's taking advantage of the deal.

**What It Really Does:** This is where the experienced reviewer generally starts his writing. This is the meat of the review, but the preceding parts are important to enable the reader to keep up with the reviewer's expertise. This section should describe the special attributes of this product which makes it unique, and worth considering. In this section you should not only talk about the things the product can do, in whatever sequence you chose as the most appropriate, you should also discuss the supporting material - documentation, templates, tutorials.

**Support:** Maybe this fits into the previous section, but I think any good review has to include some discussion of how the manufacture supports this product, and how well. If there is some indication on the package reviewed, or, if the reviewer has some personal knowledge of how past and future releases of the product have been or are likely to be handled, these should be described.

**Schedule:** Naturally everything which is assigned for review is carries an unrealistic deadline. Without such a ridiculous time frame, journalists would lose their principal justification for doing such a haphazard job. We will continue this tradition by asking that you return a draft review within 30 days of your assignment to the review.

There is really some time sensitivity to products received for review. There is no longer much interest in an in depth review of EasyWriter, or DOS 2.0 The time sensitivity heightens if we're dealing with a leading edge product, and the manufacture has asked for a review keyed in some fashion to it's announcement. Since the best review results from the volunteer who knows what

they are biting off before they start, this is an estimate of the time\* required to prepare a review:

Install the Product .....	1 hr
Use the Product .....	8 hrs*
Outline the Review .....	1 1/2 hrs
Review of the Documentation .....	4 hrs*
Draft the Review .....	3 hrs
Confer with/Telephone the vendor .....	1 hr

\*(These times are obviously tasks which will depend on the complexity of the product and it's support materials.) These tasks, taking sometimes between 10 and 15 hours, are scheduled pretty much by the reviewer without any interaction with others. A draft of the review is prepared, it should be sent certainly to the editor for his or her input, and, and if the review contains unfavorable comments about the product, or if there are questions in the authors mind about certain feature, it shows courtesy, and makes good business sense, to contact the manufacturer and discuss these items with him. Depending on the reviewer, the editor, and the manufacturer, it may take several weeks to accomplish this. If the reviewer feels that some unfavorable comments are justified, the manufacture should be allowed the opportunity to respond. See review of the review section below.

After this first period of interaction the reviewer should then:

Rewrite the draft .....	1 1/2 hrs
Submit soft copy .....	1/2 hr

This close out effort, along with the preliminary review tasks, and potential interaction with the editor and manufacturer, probably means the "standard" reviewing task will take about 15-30 hours of effort. Since this is a volunteer effort, you can reasonably plan that it will take at least one month to find the time to do all this.

**Format:** Obviously, and format restrictions carry the potential for preventing a full demonstration of the power of the product. conversely, there are certain formatting requirements without which a review would be unusable.

Starting with the obvious, the review should be in English. Proper English may be a frill for most readers, but it is essential for some subset of readers, and there is no subset of readers for whom Bad English is essential, so it seems that it makes sense to

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## Epic Baseball

### A Game Review

OK, all you baseball fans. Here's a game that has a lot of potential, is easy to learn and is fun to play. Of course, with the shareware version of the game, the flexibility of the registered version isn't there, but it gives you a good idea of how the game works and what it can do.

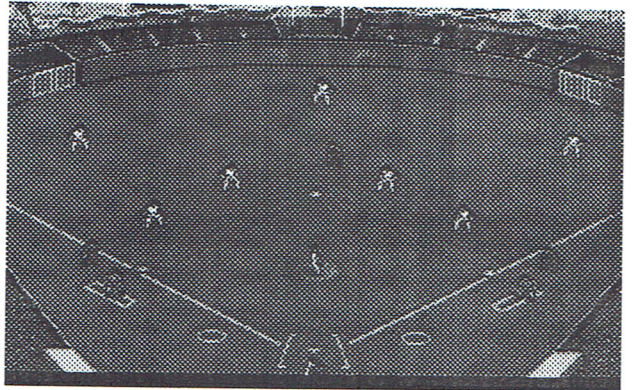
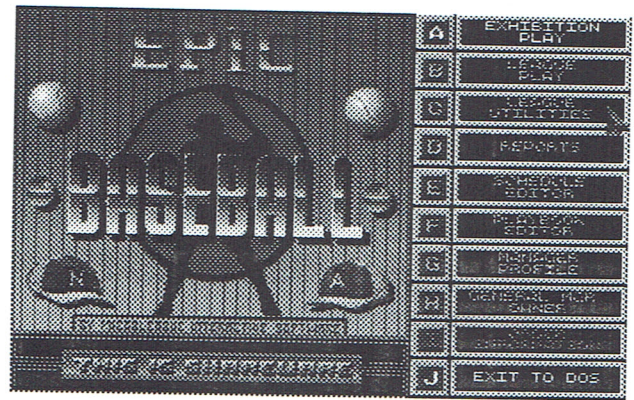
You pick the teams that will play. It's you against the computer. You can choose what your pitcher will throw, where he'll throw it, etc. This gives you a lot of flexibility when you're on defense. You can also pick the play you want your fielders to make, so it's really like being the manager of a team.

On offense, you choose how and what your hitter will do at the plate. It really opens up the game to a lot of strategy and real game play.

One of the really neat features of this game is the actual video of a pitcher pitching the ball to a batter that pops up at the bottom left of the screen when you're on defense. Talk about realism. This helps add it.

All in all, if you're a baseball fanatic and love the game, as I do, this might be a game worth checking out. Epic Megagames has done an admirable job on this one. It's the best shareware baseball game I've seen (and I download them all).

You'll find this on [a] board as \$EPICBB.ZIP. Check it out!



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## Product Reviews—

### Continued from page 5

conform to those of the general grammatical rules with which we or our programs are familiar.

The choice of word processors is less clear. WordPerfect is used by a clear plurality of PC users; whether or not it is a majority is debatable, but there are obviously many users who use something else. The most acceptable form for a review is ASCII. Almost all word processors can accept this form of data. Unfortunately, many formatting commands are translated in the ASCII file into characters which must be manually removed. Some of these commands are the [TAB], font shifts, dot leaders. For this reason, the authors should avoid relying on the exotic of formatting without first checking with the editor to ensure that the two are not working at cross purposes.

Graphics are, and will for the foreseeable future probably remain, a separate issue. Many authors feel that they cannot do without graphics. On the other hand, most of the distribution of newsletters is handled electronically on a system without any graphic standards. Consequently, graphics are rou-

tinely eliminated from articles distributed in this fashion. Authors need to be aware of this distribution channel, and should endeavor to consider both audiences in the preparation of a review.

Where graphics are included, as for example, screen displays, there should also be a companion description written for those distribution channels which will attempt to use the article without the illustrations.

**Review of the Review:** We have all seen PC products that don't do what they're supposed to, and, if that's the case with the product you're reviewing, that's what you should say. You should be precise, and point out specific areas where the product didn't perform as advertised, or expected.

While maybe not everyone has had this experience, some of us have actually made mistakes ourselves, or misunderstood the instructions (provided they were read) for something with a new product. To guard against that, and also to try to be fair to the vendor who supplied the product being evaluated, if your review contains any significant negative comments, a draft should be sent to the vendor, so that he can:

- (a) correct your misunderstanding of how to use the product,
- (b) correct his documentation to prevent the same mistake by future buyers,
- (c) correct the flaw in his product,
- (d) send a brief explanation or rebuttal of the shortcoming you found, or (e) cross you off his Xmas card list.

Since all 5 of these possibilities are of benefit to the vendor, and since 4 of the 5 are of a benefit to us, it just makes good business sense to always follow this essential step. It will add time to the review preparation, but it will also make the review that much stronger, and will go a long way to avoid retractions and hurt feelings.

When the review is published, a copy of the newsletter should be sent, along with a thank you letter to the vendor. Since the club's ambassador is the principal contact with each vendor, and was probably involved in the initial stages of the evaluation anyway, this task is the responsibility of the ambassador - but like everything else associated with the review, the author himself is the most likely person to initiate this action. Editors note: That's not exactly how it is done at Hard Copy but it would be nice.

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lication containing the reprinted article is sent to the P\*PCompAS Newsletter Editor. Also, please send a copy of reprinted reviews to the vendor(s) discussed.

P\*PCompAS Newsletter George Francis, Editor March 1994, Volume XIV, Issue 3 3013 Avondale Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80917 voice:(719)574-7295 BBS:(719)591-1453

## IS THERE A CD-ROM IN YOUR FUTURE?

*A review by Dick Immig, Contributing Editor, P\*PCompAS*

If you read the computer magazines there is probably a nagging little idea in the back of your mind that...yes, it would be nice to have a CD drive, but on the other hand... Most of us are like that and after reading about the latest and greatest new gadget month after month we all begin to weaken. Since the magazines depend on advertisements there is little incentive to discuss the issues of any new product in an unbiased way. I have nothing to sell so I will try to give you my personal feelings and experiences about CD ROMs. There are lots of people out there selling CDs; I'm not. The views expressed are mine and admittedly subjective.

Let's start from the beginning. CD-ROM stands for Compact Disk-Read Only Memory. To be correct I should add the word drive in many cases, but for ease of use let's just call it a CD for the rest of this review. A CD disk is basically a very large data storage device that often uses some of that storage for music/sound and pictures/animation as well as the usual written data. That gives us the "multimedia" that we keep hearing is the wave of the future. Read Only means exactly that. You can read it but you can't change it. It is possible to buy equipment that will write to a disk but that is outside of our discussion here.

A CD disk can hold approximately 65 megabytes of data. That's an attractive feature since few of us have a hard drive that is as large as we would like. But don't be fooled, most CD applications take up some space on your hard drive when they are installed. Others take up a lot; for instance one of mine occupies 6.3 megabytes.

The most important question you should ask before you buy a CD is what do you want to do with it. There are quite a few functions for business that are ideally served by CDs. Most obvious are businesses that must access large data bases that change infrequently, for example, the huge legal libraries are now available on CD. Medical and scientific data is also ideal provided that it is replaced and updated periodically. Aus-

tralia produces its telephone directories on CDs, ideal for businessmen that want to access both numbers and addresses. For the home/hobby user however, the possibilities are less obvious. An excellent encyclopedia is desirable for every home, as are a good dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, etc. Beyond that sort of everyday data the answer becomes less clear. There are relatively few "applications" because of the limited ability to interface with a Read Only disk, and the relatively slow transfer rate of CDs compared to your hard drive. There are CDs on history, literature and health, and an excellent atlas named Global Explorer. There are also some excellent graphic programs and clip art libraries. Perhaps in desperation for lack of valid subjects however there is a tendency in the industry to put anything on a CD in hopes that someone will buy it. That leads to the production of programs that are poor substitutes for other types of media such as VCR or plain old books. There are several "nature" type CDs on the market but they all suffer from a lack of depth in their detailed data. For in-depth knowledge there is no replacement for a good research library. For general knowledge of nature subjects you would be better served by watching PBS or the Discovery channel. A quick glance at the new magazines devoted to CDs shows that nine of the top ten sellers are games! The same games that are available on floppies although the video is somewhat better and there is less text in the CD version since the characters "talk" to you. I have not yet seen any of the fast moving flight simulators on CD probably because of the slow transfer rate. The price for many of these games remains quite high, although CD disk prices in general are falling as competition does its thing.

What about the visual quality of CDs? There are obviously wide variations but in general I have found that the man made graphics are as good as the ones you have always seen on "regular" computer applications. The photographs in several CDs I have

seen range from good to terrible; many of them have that overall gray tintype look. They occupy only about 3X4 inches on a 15 inch monitor. The animation clips from newsreel video and movies are generally atrocious. I watched several that were apparently clips of two black panthers fighting in a dark room. The animation clips usually run in a 2.5 X 2.5 inch screen. Blowing them up to full screen allows you to see what small pixels look like when they are enlarged too much...awful. There are reasons for these problems of course, and they include an effort to hold down disk space as well as lack of judgment in what users will accept in a CD disk. Cheap CD disks are not going to be satisfactory, and the manufacturers must learn to produce better products if they are going to remain in business.

Educational CDs have a great potential, particularly for children because of their attraction to PCs. Microsoft appears to be way ahead of the field in their thinking. Beside their Bookshelf they have produced an excellent CD about Musical Instruments and several on classical compositions. The one CD that I believe should be in every home is the Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia. It is based on the Funk & Wagnalls 29 volume encyclopedia and while it obviously cannot equal it in sheer volume it provides many features that simply can't be put on a page. It will provide you with answers to almost all of your questions and with its delightful style of presentation it will lead your children to search for more knowledge without their realization that they are being educated—Horrors. The presentation is completely logical and simple enough that your six year old will master it in a few minutes. The typical screen contains the Article Frame as well as a Category Frame that keeps things in context and a Gallery Frame with excellent quality graphics. Related subjects in an article are highlighted in red, and a click of the mouse button leads you along painlessly. In fact it is

*Continued on page 8*

## Computer Works

Review By DT Richmond—SLO Bytes PCUG

Software Marketing Corporation of Phoenix, Arizona recently released two new instructional software programs: COMPUTER WORKS and AUTO WORKS. These programs are very much like BODY WORKS, also released by Software Marketing, in that they all deal with how your body, auto and computer work.

As I wrote when I reviewed BODYWORKS these programs are well written and informative with very nice graphics. If you use these programs as intend, you may not be able to perform brain surgery, overhaul your cars transmission or build a computer from components. But you will definitely have a better knowledge and an understanding of just how each of the objects function. Program requirements for all three are very much the same:

- An IBM PC or compatible VGA graphics display
- A hard drive with (7MB Autoworks) (5MB Computerworks) space free
- A 5 1/4 or 3 1/2 floppy drive DOS version 3.3 or later
- A mouse is highly recommended
- No problems encountered in installations.

### COMPUTERWORKS

As we enter the world of Computer Works we find an opening screen that features a very nice graphic rendition of a mini tower computer, keyboard and monitor. At the top of this screen is the usual button bar to gain access to the four drop down menu boxes. They are File, Options, Tools, and Help. In the File Box you will find the Printer Setup, Print, Export and program Exit choices.

In the Options box you are able to select, Fonts, Color, and the Animation and Sound effects either on or off.

The Tools box offers the ability to set Bookmarks, Browse Bookmarks, the Index and a Note Pad.

The Help is simply an index of Help and About Computerworks. Nothing unusual here this is normal for most programs.

At the bottom of the opening screen is where we get into the meat of the Computer Works. Here you can select from two rows of eight icons. The top eight deal with the divisions of the computer system.

The First Icon, covers computer types

from Desk-top to Palm-top.

The Second Icon, describes the different Display Systems used with computers.

The Third Icon, lists and describes the various types of Storage Devices such as the hard drives, floppy drives, etc.

The Fourth Icon, covers Printers and Plotters.

The Fifth Icon, deals with Keyboards and input devices.

The Sixth Icon, Leads to a description of Circuit Boards and Internal devices.

The Seventh Icon, lists the many categories of Software.

The Eighth Icon, is titled Peripherals and Cables.

Where action can be displayed, as in the graphic display of the Hard Drive, functions are animated. Admittedly these animations represent only a suggestion of the mechanical actions taking place. After all there aren't that many moving parts to a computer, however they do assist in understanding the operation of the animated component.

The First Icon of the bottom row of eight icons is an Index of Files. Through this index you have access to the over 5MB that make up the Data Library files.

The Second Icon in this row is titled Related Topics like Computer Crime, Virtual Reality etc.

The Third Icon brings up the, History of Computers from the Abacus dated 500 B.C. to the 1945 WWII development the Enigma.

Press the Fourth Icon and you have a workable Note Pad in which you can write short notes and reports on Computer Works.

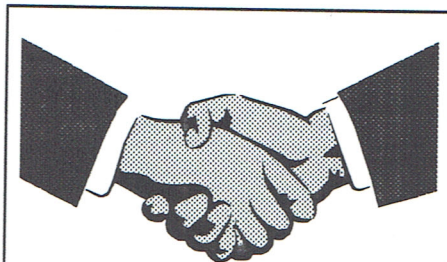
The Fifth Icon leads you into the learning section where you are presented with material and then quizzed to determine just how much knowledge you have gained from your study of Computer Works.

Seventh is the Help Icon.  
EXIT is Icon number Eight.

**Conclusion:** Computer Works is an interesting and educational program. Study of Computer Works may not equip you to challenge Bill Gates for leadership in the computer industry. However it will give the beginner and novice a better knowledge of what a computer is, the history of it's development, and what makes it tic. If you have been using a computer for some time perhaps the information may be a bit basic, but if you have a new user under your wing, Computer Works could be an excellent learning tool to help teach the basics of

the Personal Computer and it' peripherals to a newcomer. I found the program very interesting.

**Software Marketing Corporation**  
9830 South Fifth Street Bdg. A-131  
Phoenix AR 85044  
602-893-3377  
Fax 602-893-2024



### NEW MEMBERS

New members for the month of March, 1994. Welcome, and thanks for joining SLO Bytes PCUG

<b>Edward Chu</b>	<b>528-7129</b>
<b>Wayne Dempster</b>	<b>473-3085</b>
<b>Ethan &amp; Pat Hansen</b>	<b>466-3670</b>
<b>John Mazer</b>	<b>528-2432</b>
<b>J &amp; R Olmstead</b>	<b>528-5155</b>
<b>Marcia Torgerson</b>	<b>466-7980</b>
<b>Marylinda Wheeler</b>	<b>528-7353</b>

### CD-ROM—

Continued from page 7

quite easy to be led along a long path without realizing how long you have been at it. The animations are great and combined with the text many obscure historical events suddenly come to life; I stumbled into the Battle of Waterloo quite by accident and spent thirty minutes following the various threads.

There are eight hours of sounds skillfully woven into the presentations as well as 7800 illustrations and photos, 100 animations and video clips, an up-to-date Atlas, and a Timeline that puts events into a chronological context. Creating a report on a subject is made painless by their comprehensive instructions on how to research and prepare a paper using Encarta's Interlink features. You can spend many days just browsing through its many features. Encarta is available at several computer stores for \$89. For more information, call Microsoft at (800) 426-9400.



## Club Information

**HARD COPY** 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.

**Disclaimer:** Neither SLO BYTES PC User's Group, its officers, editors, or contributors to this newsletter assume liability for damages arising out of this publication of any article, including but not limited to the listing of programming code, batch files and other helpful hints.

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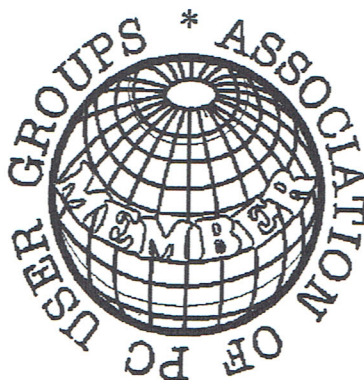
## Meeting Times

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.

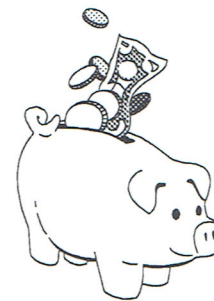
Special Interest Groups (SIGS)  
meet at 1:00 to 2:00 pm.

General Information SIG:  
Fisher Hall 286

New computer user SIG:  
Fisher Hall 292



Page layout compliments of  
Teri A. Sorgatz  
Computing Assistance



## Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance	+ 1737.67
Expenses:	
Newsletter 03/93	- 146.78
Library Hardware	- 50.00
BBS Phone Bill 03/94	- 9.00
Club Long Distance 03/94	- 19.11
Stamps	- <u>29.00</u>
	- 253.89
Deposit 04/12/94	+ 646.00
Dividend 03/31/94	+ <u>11.54</u>
	+ 657.54
Checking Balance 04/18/94	+ 2141.32

## Slo Bytes Officers

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Vice President ..... Sam Powers  
Treasurer ..... Marilyn Jenkins  
Secretary..... Bob Ward  
Editors ..... B. Ward & T. Sorgatz

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**and Message Section**

## Floppy Disks 4-Sale at the meeting

D5DD 360K Formatted Floppy Disks with labels, tabs, & sleeves ..... 55¢ Each  
D5DD 360K Formatted Label Over Floppy Disks ..... 45¢ Each  
Generic High Density Formatted Floppy Disks (5.25" X 1.2 Mb) ..... 70¢ Each  
Generic 3.5" X 720K Formatted Floppy Disks ..... 70¢ Each  
Generic 3.5" X 1.44 Mb Formatted Floppy Disks ..... 90¢ Each  
New Library Disks ..... 90¢ Each

*All Disks fully guaranteed against defects.*