SUSSEX INLET P.C. USERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

For the record,please note that the next meeting will be on the 3rd Monday of April,i.e. the 15th, to allow for the Easter break. This will give us all a change to recuperate after the usual hectic holiday period.
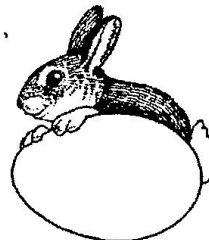
I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ray Cameron for the donation to the library of The Dummies book which will come in very handy, also thanks to Don Sanders for the donation of an instructional Video and the photostating of our first edition of a Newsletter. Thanks also to Tom Clay for the help in setting up a letterhead.

Whilst I am in a thanking mode, the presentation at the last meeting was courtesy of LASER COMPUTER SALES AND SERVICE and a big thank you to Gary Stephens and Katrina Parris,for showing us the different aspects of Windows 95 and Windows 3.11. Gary also lend us a converter kit for the big screen in the function room, alas we were unable to use this facility as it did not seem to be compatible with the R.S.L. setup.

Your committee tried various ways to get this kit to work, but at this stage it seems to be more suited to larger screen T.V.'s than to enhanced screens.

So if anybody has a large colour T.V. sitting at home doing nothing we would appreciate the loan thereof to try out the PAL converter.

The committee would also like to welcome the new members who joined at the last meeting, at the last count we had 37 members.

By now most members will have been "presented" at a small fee their name badges, so if you have not got yours yet see me any time now or at the next meeting and I will happily deprive you of a $1.00 coin to swell our coffers for the eventual purchase of our own computer equipment.

HAPPY EASTER TO ALL

Mark Byrne our local newsagent and member of the club has stored up on computer goodies so if you present your membership badge and talk to him nicely he will give you a discount of your computer purchases, so as they used to say "IT PAYS TO BELONG" YOUR 1996 COMMITTEE AS BELOW

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President	Harry Caris	412976
Vice president	John Peisley	411870
Secretary	Ron Neeves	412203
Treasurer	Don Sanders	410116
Librarian	Peter Chaffey	411545
Publicity	Peter Kemp	412975
Editor(Acting)	Harry Caris	412976

The presentation at the last meeting must have been informative for at least one of our members, the light in his computer room was still on long after he normally goes to bed , so J.J. no more stirring about me sitting up till 3 a.m. in the morning trying to get something down on paper for the next newsletter,as a matter of fact what ever you found out might be worth sharing with the rest of us.

Don't forget that if you have something to contribute to the success of our newsletter it will be more than welcome and make my "job" a bit easier, particularly if your contribution is in a format on disk that I can read on my programs. Haitch Cee.

Dates Crisis in 2000.

There are some possible problems some computer users or clients of computer users may have after January 1, 2000. It seems that some companies are already looking to avoid trouble
.

According to The Sunday Times, British Airways is concerned.
The problem is that computer systems use the last two digits in the year, to process dates
They are reprogramming at least 400 systems.

Other businesses that use older mainframes may have the same problem, such as banks, governments and oil companies. Bank cash machines, for example, might reject cards, thinking they had expired. In the case of BA the systems would revert to 1900. All ticket booking, payroll, check-in and catering systems would be affected, with the reservations systems finding that no flights were available when someone tried to book, because there were no flights on those days.
Originally when this problem was first aired it was assumed that most of the older systems would have been replaced by newer systems, but many mainframe systems have lasted well beyond their expected lifespan.
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(John Peisley)

READY-MADE P.C. PROTECTION.

It's quite some time ago that I read an article in a computer magazine relating to a file in MS-DOS V.6nn named VSAFE.COM. This item suggested that VSAFE.COM be inserted into the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. I believed it was something like McKaffee's VSHIELD where whenever a disk, whether it be a hard drive or a floppy drive was accessed, a virus check was made.

Well, I did what the good book told me and then forgot about it. Only recently my daughter brought home some games disks and without thinking I inserted the first floppy........ The screen advised me that the disk was infected with the MARIJUANA VIRUS and did I want to rid the disk of this malady. I said yes and finished up with a clean disk complete with the program intact.

The next disk came up with the same result. I did not clean the disk but stuck a Post-it label on the disk explaining to the owner how to clear the virus.

The next (and last as far as I was concerned) disk was inserted and the screen advised that the disk had the MICHAELAN-GELO VIRUS. Another Post-it label was attached.

The program as was written in the magazine is as follows:- VSAFE /1- /7+ Av

MS-DOS has a very comprehensive HELP file and the following information is extracted from the help file for VSAFE.
"VSAFE continuously monitors your computer for viruses and displays a warning when it finds one. VSAFE is a memory-resident program that uses 22K of memory.
"Do not use the VSAFE command when you are running Windows".
Use a + or - sign after the number to turn an option on or off. The following list describes the options you can choose.
Options:
1/ Warns of formatting that could completely erase the hard disk.The default setting is "on".
2/ Warns of an attempt by a program to stay in memory. The default setting is "off".

3/ Prevents programs from writing to disk. The default setting is "off".

4/ Checks executable files that MS-DOS opens. The default setting is "on".

5/ Checks all disks for boot sector viruses. The default setting is "on".

6/ Warns of attempts to write to the boot sector or partition table of the hard disk. The default setting is "on".

7/ Warns of attempts to write to the boot sector of a floppy disk. The default setting is "off".

8/ Warns of attempts to modify .EXE files. The default setting is "off".

The other switches are:-

/NE Prevents VSAFE from loading into expanded memory.

/NX Prevents VSAFE from loading into extended memory.

/Ax Sets the hot key as ALT + the key specified by "x".

/Cx Sets the hot key as CTRL + the key specified by "x".

/D Turns off checksumming.

/U Removes VSAFE from memory.

I have found that any disk or hard drive sub-directory that I have used since installing VSAFE has an additional file named CHKLIST.MS and when I access this with Xtree's "V" View command, it contains a list of all .COM and .EXE files. One must assume that this is the switch "/D", VSAFE's checksumming feature which would indicate if any .COM or .EXE file was different to that already stored. (Something like CP/M's CRC.)I had the need to alterWordstar's page length from 11 inches to 11.6 inches. When I went back to the Wordstar sub-directory, a window appeared in the middle of the screen advising that WSCHANGE had been altered and asked if I wanted to continue so VSAFE is monitoring all the time.

I use ALT + v as my hot key. Operation of the hot key brings up a table on the screen that lists the switches numbered from 1 to 8 and their current settings. These settings may be altered at this time. Just to be sure, I used my hot key in the middle of this note and the VSAFE table became a window over my writing. Let me say here that I do not have Windows on my 286.

If the reader is not aware of the safety factor that VSAFE provides, now is the time to give serious consideration to this little publicised program that has given me peace of mind particularly since I have seen it in action.

Windows users might access DOS whenever a disk from another party is inserted in their computer and invoke VSAFE to verify that the disk is clear of any nasties. It's better to be sure....

[John Peisley]

Now I know that there will be some questions asked about this particular piece of information from John, I certainly will be asking some of them, it sounds like good advise to me, I don't even know if I have this facility in my programs but intend to find out.

THOSE ABBREVIATIONS AND MYSTERIOUS TERMS.

Newcomers to computers must be confused by all of those mysterious initials, abbreviations and terms used in the world of computers, often without any explanation anywhere in the text which contains them.

Here are a few definitions that I have come across in my reading which may help other novices like myself to better understand this "strange language".

(486)DX   DX means that the CPU (Central Processing Unit) has a built-in floating point maths co-processor. This can speed up calculations considerably for complex graphics programs, as well as the more obvious spreadsheet number crunching.
CPUs designated as SX do not have this feature.

Cache.   The reference to the 256k secondary cache is vital. This is the part of the system that really speeds up the computer by saving frequently visited parts of main memory in a separate memory area that uses ultra fast RAM devices. Without this, the 496DX 2-66 can perform more slowly than a device with secondary Cache running at half the clock speed.

2 Serial Ports   1 is used for a mouse unless there is a specific port provided. The second port will be used for a modem if you get "on line". The parallel port is for the Printer.

V.G.A.   Video Graphics Array. This is an analogue system.
Super V.G.A. card is 1024 x 768 pixels.
Non interlaced (NI) stops flicker on the screen.

Auto Exec. Bat.   Is a small file containing instructions that are automatically executed on switch-on.

Win.Ini and   Are Windows initialising files.
System.ini.   DO NOT DISTURB THESE FILES.
ISA   Industry Standard Architecture
VLB   Video Local Bus
VESA   Video Electronics Standards Association
PCI   Peripheral Component Interconnect.

                                        Ron Neeves

As you can see from the above article Ron has been busy as well with those confounded or should I say confounding abbreviations and terminologies used by computer "experts", we will try to keep them coming if there is the interest shown by members like myself, who have been at this computer "game" for only a short time but are none the less keen to learn as much as possible in the shortest possible time. You never know when one of these explanations might come in handy. For example the "DX" and "SX" one might help with a choice to upgrade your motherboard, which is something that I am considering at this moment. I am getting some prices for an upgrade to a 486DX4/100 with a new C.P.U. and maybe a new 840 meg hard drive as well,but first my single speed C.D.Rom drive might have to go. At this stage it might be cheaper to sell my 386 and buy a new computer, will let you know how I get on. Haite Cee.

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