



**ABOUT THE COVER**

Is it a marriage of convenience or one of necessity? Access and Visual Basic each have their strengths and weaknesses and Roger Jennings uncovers the unlikely relationship on page 42. Photographic image inputs by Michael Carr. He also produced the 3-D rendering of the shotgun image—no real guns were used. Manipulation of images done with Adobe Photoshop. Design by Enigma Inc. “What We Do is Our Business,” and Designing Women.

Visual Basic Programmer's Journal (ISSN: 1066-5978) is published bimonthly with two additional special issues published in February and April for \$34.97 per year by Fawcette Technical Publications, 281 Second St., Suite 200, Los Altos, CA, USA 94022-3603. Tel: 415-917-7650. Fax: 415-948-7332. MCI, Fawcette. Application to mail at second class rates is pending at Los Altos, CA and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Visual Basic Programmer's Journal, P.O. Box 5887, Boulder, CO 80522-8872.

Customer Service: For subscription orders, inquiries or address changes, call 303-544-0610 or write to Visual Basic Programmer's Journal, P.O. Box 5887, Boulder, CO 80522-8872. Foreign and Canadian orders must be payable in U.S. dollars plus postage. The surface rate to Canada and Mexico is \$43.97, and for all other countries the air mail rate is \$59.97.

©1994 Fawcette Technical Publications, all rights reserved. “Visual Basic” is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation and is used by Fawcette Technical Publications under license from the owner. Visual Basic Programmer's Journal is an independent publication not affiliated with Microsoft Corporation. Microsoft Corporation is not responsible in any way for the editorial policy or other contents of the publication. All contents of Visual Basic Programmer's Journal are copyright ©1994 by Fawcette Technical Publications, unless otherwise noted. “Visual Basic Programmer's Journal”, “Visual Basic Inside's Technical Summit”, “VBITS”, and “Windows Programming” are trademarks of Fawcette Technical Publications, a California Corporation. James E. Fawcette, President. Rather than put a trademark symbol in every occurrence of other trademarked names, we state that we are using the names only in an editorial fashion with no intention of infringement of the trademark. Although all reasonable attempts are made to ensure accuracy, the publisher does not assume any liability for errors or omissions anywhere in the publication.

PRINTED IN USA

# VISUAL BASIC

PROGRAMMER'S JOURNAL

## FEATURES

- 21** **COPING WITH WINDOWS COMMUNICATION** by Carl Franklin  
Use these undocumented tricks, tips, and workarounds to customize your communications and serial-port programming. (File: COMM.RPL)
- 32** **HELP WITH MAKING HELP SYSTEMS** by Ted Kahn (File: HELP.RPL)  
Making help systems is often harder than it should be, because of archaic technology and inadequate documentation. Here's how to overcome the problems.
- 37** **SHELL SHINES IN DOS WINDOW** by Tony Elliott  
An assembly-language routine lets you SHELL to a predefined window for maximum control of your DOS user interface. (File: SHELL.RPL)

**Special Supplement: Access and Visual Basic (File: ACCESS.RPL)**

- 42** **THE MARRIAGE OF ACCESS AND VISUAL BASIC** by Roger Jennings  
What kind of marriage is this? A comparison of Microsoft's Access 1.1 and Visual Basic 3.0 shows how they match up as database development environments.
- 75** **SEARCHING FOR A UNIFIED THEORY**  
An interview with Roger Heinen, Microsoft's Senior Vice President of Database and Development Tools, explores Microsoft's programming tools future.

## COLUMNS

- 81 Windows Programming** by George Defenbaugh (File: WINPROG.RPL)  
Write your own Sort routines using C for Visual Basic.
- 85 OLE Expert** by Keith Pleas (File: OLE.RPL)  
OLE Automation is stronger, better than DDE ever was.
- 95 Getting Started with VBA** by Chris Barlow (File: VBA.RPL)  
Visual Basic for Applications lets you easily create user-defined functions.
- 99 Q&A** by Carl Franklin and Ethan Winer (File: QNA.RPL)  
Displaying AVI video files from Visual Basic.
- 102 Programming Techniques** by Mark Novisoff and Craig Leach (File: PROGTECH.RPL)  
Windows 3.1 API lets you add sound without resorting to a custom control.

## DEPARTMENTS

- 5 Publisher's Note** by James E. Fawcette (FILE: PUBNOTE.RPL)
- 6 Letters to the Editor** (File: LETTER.RPL)
- 10 Basic Heroes** by Robert W. Scoble (File: HERO.RPL)  
Sharkware gets the bite on its competitors by having an easy-to-use interface and a well-known personality. Ethan Winer, founder of Crescent software, honored.
- 112 Guest Opinion** by Jesse Berst (File: GUEST.RPL)  
Users should implement OLE 2.0 features at their own pace.