# Light relief

So farewell then, Tim Nott — but only from the 3.1 column. He's going to try his hand at other Hands On highlights, but before he goes he wants to regale you with tales of shareware known and loved. By the way — did you know he cheats at Solitaire?
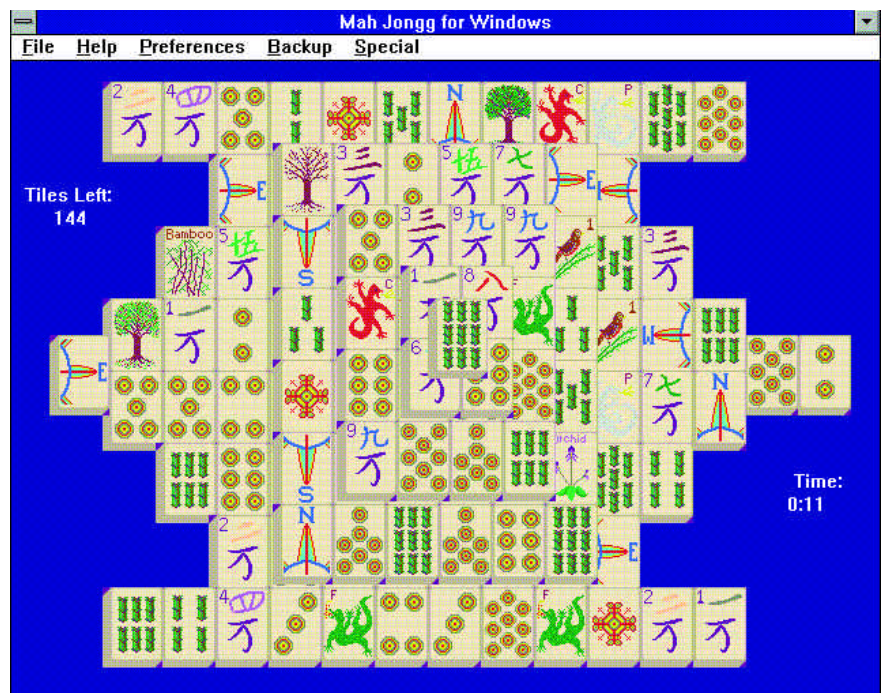
**M**y goodness, this recursion thing is a popular problem. You may remember this first saw the light of day in last November's column: the contents of a directory also appear in a sub-directory, and so on in an endless recursion.

Tony Hill showed how to replicate the problem with a disk sector editor and said that Scandisk would fix it. Well, I haven't tried this — I might be brave, but I'm not daft. Paul Harrison had it when, as he said, "I tried to run a DOS-only program under Windows" and was "pretty sure" that Scandisk would fix it, but reinstalled anyway. James Mackintosh had it doing something with Linux, Paul Butterwick blamed it on a faulty motherboard and Ray Girling on a faulty power supply. Robert Carrington-Jones encountered it several years ago on XT machines running DOS 3, which, he said, "…precludes any Windows influence and points to something more fundamental going on with DOS."

I'll leave the last word to the oddly-named Satanic Avatar (he seems quite a nice chap, in fact): "I think it may be related to a game installation. Lemmings had a curious pirate security; the HD disk had a directory n times replicated, which made it impossible for pirates to copy. I dunno what your readers have been doing, but…"

## Grovel

Several readers have pointed out that the Windows speaker driver which lets you play .WAV sounds through the PC speaker wasn't on last December's CD-ROM as stated. Sorry. It's such a tiny file it must have fallen through a crack in the online continuum. It should be on this month's disk in SPEAKER.ZIP (7,848 bytes).
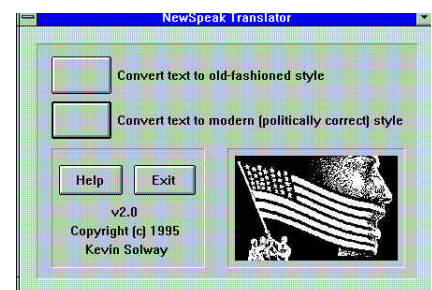

One of my all-time favourite time-wasters

## Hands off

Forty-two, besides being the answer to life, the universe and everything, is also the number of Hands On Windows 3.x columns I've written for *PCW*. In that time we've seen two new versions of Windows and covered subjects of fearsome technicality such as DDE, a blow-by-blow guide to the .INI files, and what the various types of memory mean and what to do when you run out of them.

We've done worthy things, such as weeding out redundant files and mastering the Object Packager. Since last April we've been dicing with DOS, too. We've also had a lot of fun customising Windows in ways the manuals don't tell you and playing with


Transform your prose with Newspeak

various shareware utilities and diversions.

Anyway, I'm moving on — not so much to pastures new, as to a field not far away. Business will continue as usual in the Windows 95 column, but as from next month you'll find this one in the capable hands of Panicos Georghiades and Gabriel

## Tim's top twelve favourites

And so, to tips. We've had hundreds over the past three and a half years — both from my own investigations and your feedback. So here is my all-time favourite dozen.

**1. Starting Windows** Change the Windows start-up screen by creating a bitmap (no more than 16 colours or 50Kb) in RLE format — say, newlogo.rle. You'll need something better than Paintbrush; Paint Shop Pro does the job well. Make a back-up of WIN.COM, quit Windows, and from the command prompt in Windows\System type:

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copy /b win.cnf+vgalogo.lgo+newlogo.rle c:\windows\win.com
```

adjusting paths to suit. If you want an easier way, back up the existing VGALOGO.RLE and save the new file over the original. Use Windows Setup (again from DOS) to change any aspect of the Windows configuration. This rebuilds WIN.COM, automatically. Now run Setup again to change it back; the new screen will stay in WIN.COM.

**2. Screensavers** To run a screensaver on demand, first edit WIN.INI and add "SCR" to the line PROGRAMS=COM EXE BAT PIF. Then create an icon for the screensaver module with, for example, the command line "MYSAVER.SCR /s".

**3. What the .DLL?** You can often find out more about a system file (like a .DLL, .DRV or .EXE) from File Manager's "File/Properties…". Alt + Enter is the keyboard shortcut.

**4. File and Program Managers** Once you have the windows and icons arranged the way you want them, press Alt + Shift + F4 to save the settings. Don't forget to turn off "Save settings on exit" to stop this being overwritten.

**5. Program Manager** You can restrict users of a PC (providing they don't know this trick) by editing PROGMAN.INI and adding a [Restrictions] section containing the following:
● EditLevel= 1 — can't create, delete or rename groups; = 2 — nor program items; = 3 — as 2, plus can't edit item command line; = 4 — can't make any change to groups or items.
● NoRun=1 — disables the File/Run... command.
● NoFileMenu=1 — removes the entire "File" menu.
● NoSaveSettings=1 — can't save settings.
● NoClose=1 — can't close Program Manager.

**6. Control Panel** Control Panel can be similarly restricted: add a [don't load] section containing the items you want to restrict. For example:
● fonts=1  ● desktop=1  ● drivers=1
Note that the right-hand side of the equation can be anything you like; "0" or "gerbil" will work just as well.

**7. Screenshots** Grab your own. The Print Screen key copies a screen image to the clipboard. Alt + Print screen copies the current window or dialogue box. You can paste these into any bitmap program (including Paintbrush) edit, and save them as files.

**8. DOS commands** For quick help on most DOS commands, type the command followed by "/?". For more information type "help command".
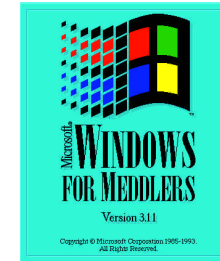
**9. Editing System files** There's a little-known utility, called SYSEDIT.EXE, which should be in your Windows\System directory. It loads AUTOEXEC.BAT, CONFIG.SYS, WIN.INI and SYSTEM.INI (plus others if you're mail-enabled) for editing and automatically makes backups with the .SYD extension.

**10. Your Program Manager** Silly, but it works. Create an icon for PROGMAN.EXE itself in a Program Manager (PM) group. In the "Description" box type what you will. Launch it and you'll change PM's title to your chosen description. Stick it in the StartUp group, and it will be there to greet you when you switch on.

**11. Control Panel** If you need quick and frequent access to a Control Panel item, cut out the middle man by creating items in Program Manager. "CONTROL.EXE MAIN.CPL FONTS" as a command line, for instance, will jump straight to the Fonts section without loading the rest of Control Panel. For an added touch of class, dig out the relevant icon by browsing the .CPL file.

**12. Fax Modems** It's a pain when you have to close Fax receive standby software to launch a comms session. And even more of a pain when you forget to launch it again afterwards? Try setting up two COM ports (say, 2 and 3) from Control Panel/Ports/Advanced. Set them both to the IRQ and address used by the modem. Point the fax software at COM2 and the comms software at COM3. It fools my system, anyway.

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Jacobs. The Lennon and McCartney of computer journalism, they should need no introduction to regular readers of *PCW*, but I'm giving them one anyway as I can't resist playing master of ceremonies.

### Oh, goodie...

We've seen weird and wonderful shareware and freeware over the past three and a half years. There was the Windows Non-Productivity Pack which contained essential desktop utilities such as the Virtual Cigarette and Elvis Detector. There was Bubba, the picture-based Windows shell for those who found Microsoft Bob too difficult.

For my final 3.1 column, I've included something old, something new, and made an extra special effort to find the ultimate in bizarre shareware.

First, the old. One of the first diversions I ever found for Windows 3.0 was Mahjongg, which I had lost, until today, when I stumbled across it in a shareware collection. It's a patience game based on the Mahjongg tile set: the object being to match pairs and remove them from the board. The tiles are arranged in a complicated pile, and you can only remove those that have a free space to the left or right.

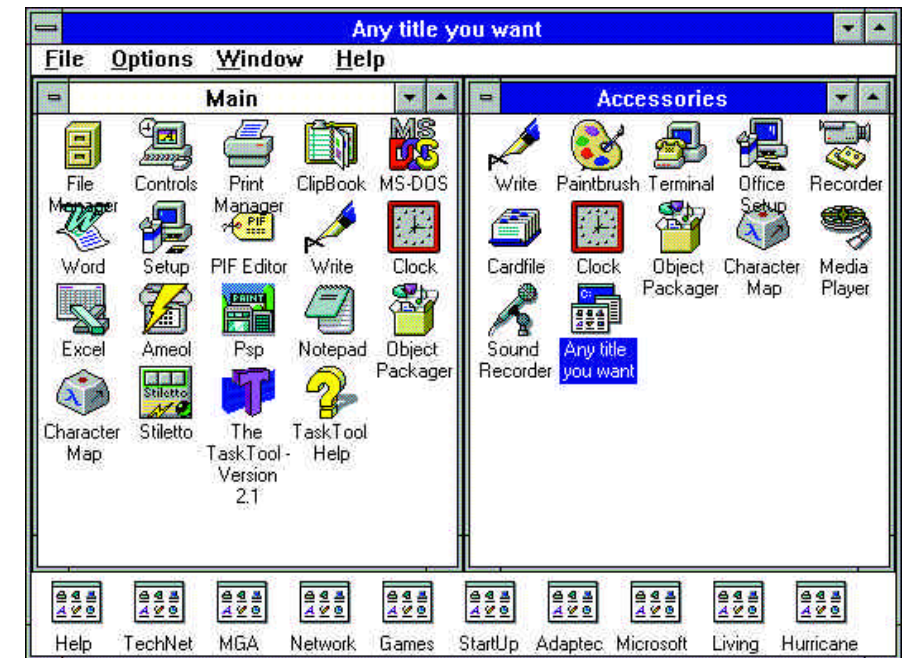It's quite tricky, very pretty, and has

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### Department of dishonour

Last month we found out how to cheat at Hearts. If you think that's sad, how about cheating at Solitaire?
■ Isn't it annoying when you've elected to turn over three cards at a time and you find yourself stuck with that vital card never making it to the top of the pile. Wouldn't it be nice to, just this once, turn over one card instead of three?
First, make sure no-one is looking. Second, hold down Shift + Alt + Ctrl as you click the deck, which will turn over just one card. Third, wallow in guilt, and if you've never, ever, won a game of Solitaire, persevere as there's a surprise in store.
■ Oh, and just to complete the set, here's the cheat for Minesweeper. Type "xyzzy". Hold down Shift as you waft the pointer around. Watch the top left pixel of the screen — yes, that's the whole screen, not the Minesweeper window. When you're on a safe square, it will light up (set your Desktop to a dark colour to see this better).

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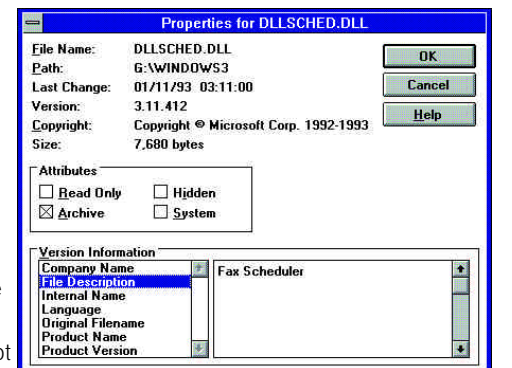**Aboveleft** Roll your own Startup screen

**Above** Adding a personal touch to Program Manager

loads of different tile sets. If you have a paint program that can save 16-colour .PCX files, you can create tiles using the supplied template and DOS utility. I'm convinced it's a major contribution to not getting any work done. You'll find MJWIN.ZIP on this month's cover-mounted CD-ROM.

A more recent, and considerably weirder offering, is Kevin Solway's Newspeak. This takes input from a plain text-with-linebreaks file and gives you the choice of converting it either to elegant old English or a politically correct version — or, to use the latter form, "experientially enhanced" or "culturally sensitive". On balance, feeding it bits of this very column, I think I preferred the former: "Thee'll needeth something better than Paintbrush — Paint Shop Pro doth the job. Amen!" has a rather fine ring to it that my usual prose lacks.

In *PC* mode, it not only replaces such howlers in the text as "short" or "animals" (with "vertically-challenged" and "non-human beings") but adds disclaimers such as "Of course, the above is only one of many different sides to this question" after every statement.

Do make sure that the line breaks are there, as I found Newspeak crashed without them. Most word processors will "Save as…" with line breaks but if you're

**Ah, that's what it is — getting information via File Manager's Properties**

using Notepad or Write you will have to put them in manually. The help file (which is actually twice the size of the program) contains several illuminating texts on the subject of political correctness which are both controversial and funny — although I wouldn't presume to cast doubt on the ideas anyone else has had on this issue.

■ *As from next month, Panicos Georghiades and Gabriel Jacobs will be writing about Windows 3.1. Tim Nott will continue to contribute the Windows 95 column. And also from next month, you'll find him writing Hands On Word Processing, too.*

### ●PCW Contacts

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