y Robert Stephens

What's up?

Well, the price of gasoline is. I know, the price always goes up around the holidays, and everyone pays it, but I still don't like it. I wish I could write a computer program to keep the prices consistent, if not lower. Maybe it could be something that could get into the computer network that sets the cost at the pump or something like that. What else is up? This month's rent. Time to scratch together another month's amount of green to keep the landlord happy. What else? The sky. Okay, I'll stop.

What's up, you ask? Well, I have some shareware items I'd love to share with you all, for this is, as you know, "Shareware: Sharing the Joy." These programs have been out for awhile. I find them fun, useful and interesting. That's it! I've been searching for a theme for this month's column, and that'll be it. Three items that are FUN, USEFUL & INTERESTING — A little something for everyone.

Fun (like dreaming up a gas price fixing program for all of us), useful (like something to remind me that it's time to pay the rent), and interesting (like a terrific way to study the sky)

That's what's up.

irst... FUN

Kali

Kali (v1.0b8a, Aug '97, 231Kb) is the largest Internet gaming system in the world with over 90,000 users and 250 servers in 23 countries. Kali also supports more games than any other system.   Games include Descent, Descent 2, Warcraft, Warcraft 2, Command & Conquer, Doom, Doom II, Heretic, Hexen, Apache, Rise of the Triad, Terminal Velocity, VR Pool, Super Karts, and several other games.   The Kali system runs in DOS, Windows 95, OS/2, and MacOS.   The Kali servers run on UNIX and Windows 95/NT machines and can each handle up to 400 users.

Kali runs differently at different times of the day, depending on the connection you and your fellow gamers have.   A 28.8 modem or ISDN are advantages and a fast internet provider is key.   If you can get a T-1 line then you are a true gamer.   Those of you lucky enough to have a cable company in your area offering cable modems should give that a try.   While Mac to Mac play can be obtained over the internet with a simple TCP/IP connection for many of these games, dropping in on Kali will give you all of the competition you desire.

I have played Warcraft II for awhile, and I thought I was pretty good, but the people of Kali live, breathe and dream these games. If you're in the mood for a challenge, morning, noon or night, then you might give Kali a try. The URL is http://www.Kali.net/. Kali is written by Brad Kollmyer, and requires a lifetime $20 fee.   Okay, this is not as good as keeping the price of gas down, but it is a fun way to spend your gaming time.

ext...   USEFUL

Consultant

Consultant (v1.48, April '97, 2.3Mb) is a polished, well-designed PIM (personal information manager). Consultant is feature-packed with dialers, multiple calendar views, and text-to-speech capabilities.   It has built-in Caller ID functionality, can translate sentences that you write for appointments to automatically schedule an event, print mailing labels, and more.   You can drag and drop activities in or between windows and it has nice linking abilities.

The professional look of Consultant is very attractive.   The "Tips" feature (serving as a manual and help) guide you through the program's inner workings. A "Gantt" graph helps you chart out time-line projects and the "Realhelp" feature is well designed, bringing up a hint window up at the

bottom of the screen should your cursor remain on an item (as if you were wondering what that something was for).

The "translate" feature is especially nice.   If you type "Meet Erica tomorrow at 3 pm," Consultant will create an activity at 3 pm, tomorrow, called "Meet Erica," and will automatically link Erica's contact record to the activity.

Multiple users are also available. If you create a file you can add a user through the "Administration Dialog." Every new user has their own username, password, and prefs, and each user can create PUBLIC or PRIVATE activities and contacts (public, being viewed by everyone in that file, private only by the user that created it).

The prefs are well-organized and for those of us who use a PIM (they're not for everyone), this one is worth a good look. The export function on the unregistered version is unavailable. The URL is http://www.chronosnet.com/. Consultant is shareware ($25) from Chronos Software and can be registered by phone, snail mail, or over their secure internet line.

nd last, but not least...   INTERESTING

Starry Night

Starry Night (v2.1.3, May '97, 8.4Mb) can simulate what the sky looks like from any location in the solar system. It is easy to use, fast, and fluid, quickly rendering photo-realistic scenes of the night sky. Starry Night is used around the world by educators, students, amateur astronomers, and those who simply have an interest in the night sky. Using Starry Night, you can place yourself anywhere at anytime and experience an accurate recreation of the sky.

Give yourself a lonely view of Pluto looking at our distant Sun.   Watch as Hale-Bopp or Haley's comet cruises past Earth for the unknownst time.   See the constellations displayed in an understandable, lucid format.   Starry Night is a beautiful program, and really must be seen to be believed.   It even has a plug-in (3rd party) that allows you to use your Mac to guide a Meade Telescope using the LX-200 protocol.   I wish Starry Night was around when I was studying in college.   It is so colorful and, dare I say, interesting.

Siennasoft has included some fine example files that will keep you up into the wee hours, checking out the stars and trying some settings of your own.

There is also a Japanese version.   An expanded version on CD-ROM is available for $89.95 US.   The URL to find this program is http://www.siennasoft.com/. Starry Night was created by Siennasoft, and is shareware ($34).

 correction... I mentioned last month that the "line by line-justistfication" feature in Tex-Edit would be in the next version.   I heard from the author, and what he said was that it will be in a "future" version.
Well, that's what's up for this month.   I hope to hear from you and let me know what some of your favorite shareware programs are.

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