April, 1995

Editor's View

Visual FoxPro Special Issue

And, announcing the FOXPRO ADVISOR CONFERENCE and CD-ROM

By Tamar E. Granor, Editor

Several months ago I talked about the challenges we developers face with a significant upgrade of a familiar product. I didn't realize how soon I'd be facing them as a magazine editor.

Putting this "Visual FoxPro Special Issue" together has been far more of a challenge than I anticipated. We began planning even before it entered beta testing. Our experts started testing for their articles almost as soon as they received a beta version. Several articles underwent significant revisions as the authors learned of changes in functionality, interface, or command set. (Don't ask Mac Rubel about .DBF headers any time soon.)

Writing about a product still in beta testing is something of a gamble. We want you to have expert guidance as soon as you get your hands on Visual FoxPro. So we risked that most of what we wrote will still be relevant when you read it. We'll let you know about anything significant that has changed.

We think the risk was worth it. In fact, when our experts started writing about Visual FoxPro—just the basics, what's new and different—they had so much to say that we couldn't fit it all into one issue. So look for lots more Visual FoxPro material next month—and every month. And remember, we will continue to provide plenty of 2.x guidance for as long as there's significant need.

Why be a beta tester?

Being a beta tester is a special kind of torture. No sooner do you get something working than along comes the next build. Then, either your carefully crafted code no longer works because something changed. Or the 300 lines you struggled over becomes obsolete, doable with two clicks of a mouse or one new command. Or both.

Since most of us can't afford to drop everything else, beta testing also means lots of late nights and weekends—not to mention endless rebooting, reinstalling, and recreating.

Nonetheless, most beta testers wouldn't give it up for the world. "Betazoids" (as they were fondly called during the FoxPro 2.5 beta—and with apologies to Star Trek) get a business advantage from being able to use a new product right away.

It's also an opportunity to shape the product. By beta time, most features are set, but here and there, testers influence changes. Also, enhancements requested during the beta period often make it into the next version. It's a heady feeling when your recommendation appears in the product.

Announcing the *FOXPRO ADVISOR CONFERENCE*

This Spring features regional conferences, such as the Southeast Virginia Fox User Group's workshop in Virginia Beach, FoxPro Users Conference in Minneapolis, and FoxTeach in Toronto. Look for their ads in *FOXPRO ADVISOR*. They are good places to update your skills.

I've saved the biggest news for last. Following last year's sold out debut, this year's *ACCESS/VISUAL BASIC ADVISOR CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION* is being held in Washington, DC, June 5-8, and again in Phoenix, October 15-18. The focus is on developing with Microsoft Access, Office, Visual Basic, BackOffice, Windows, and related products and technologies.

The even better news is that FoxPro's getting the same super treatment. The *FOXPRO ADVISOR CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION* debuts October 22-25 at The Pointe Hilton at Squaw Peak resort in Phoenix (see the ad in this issue). Providing technical education on Visual FoxPro and related products and technologies from Microsoft and other companies, this will be the conference that pulls it all together for you.

Since these conferences are produced by Advisor Publications, in close cooperation with Microsoft, you can look forward to learning from the same FoxPro experts who create our magazines—and from the Microsoft people who know FoxPro inside-out.

We are designing the conference seminars right now, so please let me know what your specific needs are. See you in Arizona!

FOXPRO ADVISOR on CD-ROM

How's your collection of *FOXPRO ADVISORS*? Do you have a good sized stack of magazines to store? Or are you missing some good stuff? Are you looking for those spare hours when you can type in all the code from articles?

By popular demand, *THE COMPLETE FOXPRO ADVISOR 93-94 CD-ROM* contains every article from the 1993 *FOXPRO ADVISORS*, and every page—articles, ads, the works—from the 1994 *FOXPRO ADVISORS*. The CD also contains all the files provided on the 1993 and 1994 *COMPANION RESOURCE DISKS*. It's a neat package, tiny, portable, and very slick to use. See the ad in this issue for details.

The magazine date mystery

This is the March 1995 issue of FoxPro Advisor—right? Since it is published monthly, the next issue will be April 1995. Wrong! The next issue, published just one month after this one, will be labeled May 1995 on the cover (and called April/May on the inside).

No, we aren't skipping an issue or a month of publication. We are just adjusting the "cover date" to better match the mysterious way newsstands display magazines.

This has no affect on you—you'll still get what you paid for, you'll get it every month, etc. Our customer service people are adjusting your expiration date to be sure you do. But I want you to know, in case you carefully file your magazines by the date shown on the cover and want to know whatever happened to April 1995.