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## Editor's View

### Welcome to the Candy Shop

#### Visual FoxPro 3.0 is incredibly exciting *and* reflects our input.

By Tamar E. Granor

A kid in a candy store. That's how I feel when I look at Visual FoxPro 3.0 for Windows. There's so much that's new and exciting that my mind reels with the possibilities and I don't know where to start. It seems I could spend days just trying out all the new tools, techniques, and commands, and still not get to everything.

It's also not a little overwhelming. Visual FoxPro changes the rules of the game, in big ways and little ways. It's not a "screen" anymore, it's a "form." No more READ CYCLE or READ VALID m.I Quitting, now it's READ EVENTS. A built-in data dictionary. Object-oriented programming. And so much more. Sometimes I'm so overwhelmed with the new stuff I almost forget that the FoxPro I've come to know and love is underneath.

How can we possibly learn everything we need to know to be productive with such a radically different product? We've all got some hard work ahead of us. Our job here at FoxPro Advisor is to help you (and ourselves) up the steep slope.

Drew Speedie's article in this issue introduces Visual FoxPro. Drew reviews the highlights of the product to give you some idea what to look forward to.

Next month, we'll have a special Visual FoxPro issue. It will feature a wide range of articles from many authors, focused on getting you started in Visual FoxPro.

In future issues, you'll find a mix of articles, some on Visual FoxPro only, some on FoxPro 2.x techniques, and others that apply to both. We'll mark each article clearly so you know whether it can help you. We hope you'll let us know whether we're giving you the right mix.

#### They do listen

As I read the Visual FoxPro documentation and work with the product, I'm quite impressed with the development team for two reasons. First, they listen. Second, they go way beyond just listening.

Visual FoxPro incorporates almost all of the significant changes users have been asking for. There's a data dictionary, a browse object that integrates with other input objects, transaction handling. Client-server capabilities have been vastly improved. There's even a way to create updateable views of FoxPro data (that is, a query that lets you modify either the query results or the original data). While not every item we've asked for over the years has made it into the product, so many of them are there that it's clear that Microsoft listens to us and respects what we have to say. That's important because we're out here on the front lines, trying to make a living (or run our businesses) using their product.

At the same time, much of Visual FoxPro goes far beyond the Enhancement Requests we've submitted. The incorporation of object-oriented technology gives us new ways of looking at our applications. With the new event model, we have incredible control over every facet of user input. Transaction handling goes far beyond rollback and commit. And on, and on.

It's clear that a tremendous effort has gone into both designing and implementing this product. Microsoft hasn't just glued new clauses and commands into the language. Instead, they've gone back and thought out how things should work. The result is an extremely powerful product that's also usable. Once we learn to use it, we'll be able to do amazing things with it.

Nonetheless, I'm sure most of us will find features we wish were there. After all, no matter how much we're given, we always want more. And that's when it will really matter that they listen.

## **Conference Season approaches**

By the time you read this, DevCon will be in full swing (or maybe even have passed). Many of you could not attend DevCon for any of a number of reasons. But you'd still like the opportunity to learn about Visual FoxPro in a conference setting and to mix and mingle with other FoxPro developers.

Don't despair. If this year is true to form, the coming months will feature a number of regional conferences. Many user groups and others sponsor low-priced one- and two-day workshops featuring both local experts and internationally known speakers.

I've heard rumblings already about several in the planning stages for this spring. The regional workshops held in the last year have been so successful that I'm sure more will come along. As I learn about these conferences, I'll let you know so you can find one close to you. Or maybe not so close - one conference I attended in Virginia last year had attendees from as far away as Utah and Washington state.

I expect to attend a few of these myself and you'll find other FoxPro Advisor authors there as well. We're always happy to meet our readers, so don't be shy.

## **It IS a small world**

I never fail to be amazed at how many people are working with FoxPro. I've known for quite a while that the father of one of my younger son's best friends is a FoxPro programmer. Then, I got a call the other day from a woman who had noticed my address in FoxPro Advisor and wanted some advice. She couldn't believe how close it was to her home. As we talked, we discovered that she literally lives around the block from me. More amazing, she's the older sister of a friend of the same son.

Is there a lesson here? Sure there is. If you work alone or you're the only FoxPro person in the company, there are plenty of peers out there for you. Try the local user group or a regional conference and you'll find lots of people nearby who do what you do. It makes a big difference to be able to pick up the phone and call someone who understands what you're talking about.