Review of May's general meeting

Corel 5 sans Ventura but with lots of giveaways

by Lynda Simons

Winner of 150 international awards, Corel has reached the million mark in sales of DRAW in sixty countries. Corel has worked hard to gain this reputation. Their international focus is such that they often offer local callers US prices before Canadian. So, are we home-town folks less important to them than all those millions of strangers around the world? Certainly not, if the treatment we received at the May meeting is anything to go by. Corel sent us not one or two, but six representatives equipped with a Pentium computer (for the back of the hall) and, for the presentation, a Toshiba 6600 (portable multi-media 486DX2-66) with 32 MB RAM a screen and hall-size speakers. There were banners and posters everywhere and they showered us with $3,600 dollarsworth of gifts (literally, with mouse pads thrown into the audience, as well as figuratively, with 50 photo CDs, four major products including a copy of CorelDRAW 5 and 2 Artshow coffee table books).

With version 5 of DRAW, Corel addresses some of the weaknesses in earlier versions: there's a new faster text engine and better technical illustration tools such as live dimensioning (object size automatically calculated on re-sizing). Corel also continues to pack in more power: what they cannot squeeze into DRAW itself they bundle with additional applications.

What you get with CorelDRAW 5

With this year's release (yes, they plan to make upgrading an annual event) you get six main applications. In addition to CorelDRAW itself, you get CorelPAINT, CorelMOVE, CorelCHART, CorelSHOW and CorelVENTURA. (Corel only purchased Ventura Publisher last fall and didn't quite have it ready for the May release so the package comes with a coupon for Ventura which is now due for a July release.) You also get 825 True Type fonts, 22,000 clipart drawings and symbols and ten utilities: CorelMOSAIC, Corel-TRACE, CorelCAPTURE, CorelQUERY, Corel DB Editor, Acrobat Reader, Ares Font-Minder, CorelKERN, Tag-Write, and Photo CD Lab)

Needless to say, there was no way Denise Zutrauen, who was giving the presentation, could cover all the programs

and utilities. Just describing what all the utilities do would take up more room than this article has. However, we did get to see some impressive new features in the six main applications.

CorelSHOW

The presentation began with a CorelSHOW multimedia over-

NEXT MEETING : TUESDAY, June 28, 1994 *details on p. 3*

view which included sound files and .FLC animation files. New features of SHOW include faster slide show generation, direct on-screen text entry for easy bullet point creation, speaker notes, and an enhanced portable screen show format.

Corel DRAW

Demonstrating DRAW, Denise showed us lens effects, clipping, welding and improvements to 3D extrusion. Lens effects are generally only available in image processing applications such as CorelPAINT. With version 5, CorelDRAW gives us the ability to apply lens effects in a vector environment. These include transparency, magnification, heat map, inversion, and grayscale.

Denise also showed us how we can clip pieces out of objects or weld objects together. She placed a circle on the screen and then placed eight or so small circles evenly spaced around the circumference. She then showed us that she could either weld the small circles to the big one to create a flower like shape or clip the small circles out of the large one to leave a cog shape. She continued by extruding the shape to create an actual cog and went on to demonstrate that 3D extrusion now offers three light sources.

Corel PAINT

This portion of the demo showed us how improved memory and file management in CorelPAINT allows users to partially load, resample or crop images when importing them.

We also saw new artistic filters which include vignette, glass block, wet paint, swirl and smoked glass. Transformations included 3D rotation. Fifty new custom brushes included oil, markers, pen, sponge, knife and flat brush. PAINT now allows you to import vector images directly without converting them first. PAINT converts them for you on import.

Corel CHART

Ten new chart types include GANTT, radar, polar and bubble charts bringing the total number of available chart types to 90. Over 250 new spreadsheet functions include mathematical, engineering, financial, logical and statistical functions.

CorelMOVE

One of the most impressive displays of the evening was the new morphing capability of MOVE.

The demonstration ended at 9 p.m. with the draw for prizes and the Corel representatives stayed on in the auditorium answering questions until 10 p.m.

Marketing matters

As we have come to expect of them, Corel put on a great show for us. Even so, marketing alone wouldn't sell us a poor product and, while it has its failings, Corel has a reputation for packing power into an easy-to-use product at a reasonable price. The turnout at the meeting attests to this. Despite problems with getting out last month's newsletter which resulted in some members not receiving their newsletter until after the meeting, the turnout

was about the same as usual. Members appear to be interested in what new features Corel is offering with DRAW 5.

Do you have enough power?

Morphing is one of the many new features that come with version 5 that require a lot of power to work smoothly. Your processor, bus, and video card are just part of the story. At the very least the CorelDRAW 5 box states quite clearly that RAM requirements for version 5 are exactly double those of version 4. It used to be RAM requirements were 4 MB minimum, 8 MB recommended: now it's 8 MB minimum and 16 MB recommended. This is why CorelDRAW 5 is not a replacement for version 4 or version 3. Both these products remain on the market and supported. Corel's plan is to provide users who want to take advantage of the latest technology the opportunity to do so which is the reason for their ambitious plan of a new release each year. The fact is that many of us may just not have the resources to keep up. Let's hope that Corel can. Producing this version really stretched their resources: staff were working 20 hour days towards the end and Ventura just didn't come out on time.

New technical support policy

For sure, Corel deserves an A+ for effort and they really care what users want and try to give it to them. Let's hope there aren't too many bugs in the

Database encounter session in Kanata

by Lynda Simons

Windows database software was slow in appearing, but now its here we are quickly becoming spoiled for choice. Choosing database software, perhaps more than any product, is a personal matter: the best tool for the job is not the same for everyone or every project. But finding out how the current offerings differ can be time consuming and costly. So we're making it easy for you.

At the June 28th meeting four vendors will be demonstrating how five different database products handle the same job.

The Products

The four vendors, Borland, DataEase, Lotus, and Microsoft will demonstrate how they would set up a simple business application with their product. The products are dBase for Windows from Borland, DataEase Express for Windows from DataEase, Approach Gold, version 3.0 from Lotus, and Access version 2.0 and FoxPro version 2.6 for Windows from Microsoft.
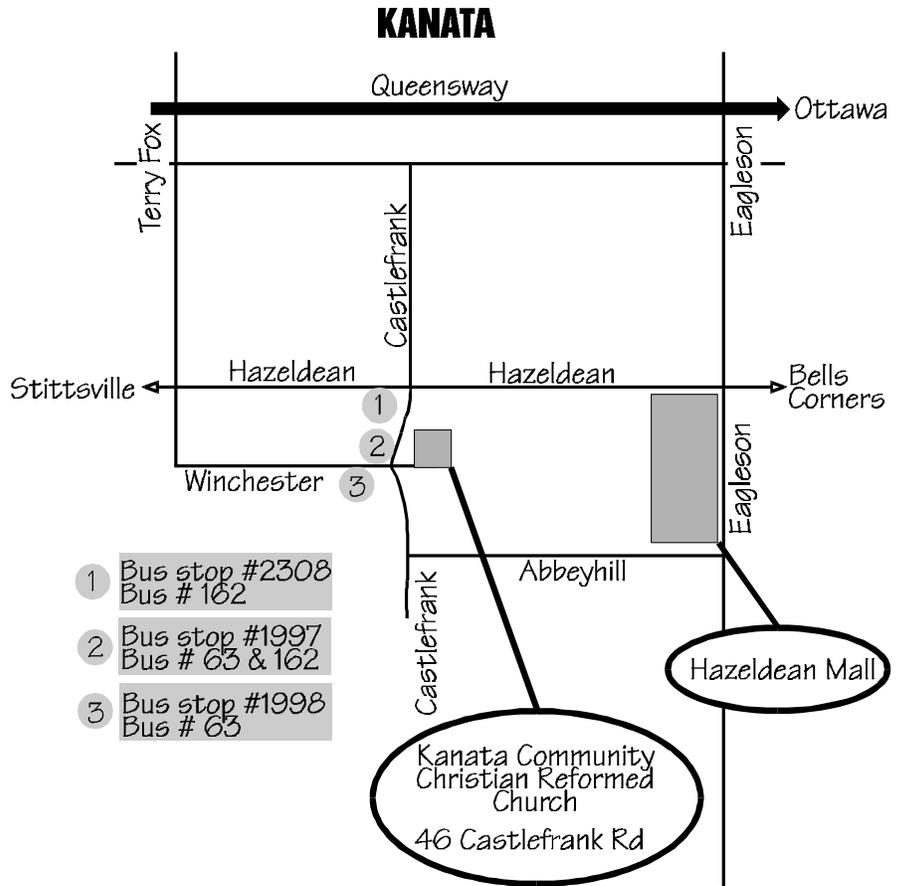
The Project

The database application comprises five interrelated databases for an automotive dealership: inventory, sales, sales staff, customers and invoices. Field types include numeric, character, date, logical (true/false) and memo (free-form text). The table on page 6 shows the structure of the system.

The Presenters

DataEase, a US company headquartered in Trumbull, Connecticut, is sending us Martin Lyne, the Regional Manager for Canada. DataEase, which hit the million mark for the number of copies sold sometime last year, also offers a wide variety of client/server modules as add-ons to their product. Martin, who is nor-

Calendar *(subject to change)*

June Meeting Location: Kanata Community Christian Reformed Church
46 Castlefrank Rd, Kanata

General Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Date and Time	Topic and Location
Tuesday , 28 June	See this page
July	No meeting
Tuesday, 30 August	Again in Kanata. Topic to be announced

KANATA

1 Bus stop #2308
   Bus # 162

2 Bus stop #1997
   Bus # 63 & 162

3 Bus stop #1998
   Bus # 63

Internet in northern Canada

by Jerry Gault, jgault@fox.nstn.ca

"Were sorry, but we are unable to complete your call as dialled. Please try your call again. This is a recording". Some fear that Northern Canadian residents are in danger of being left stranded on the shoulder of the information highway, that technological road that will link the world of the future. Joining telephones, computers, and televisions, this network will allow us to connect with people from all over the world, sending and receiving voice, pictures, print, and data. Imagine: video on demand; banking; shopping and researching done from your cyberdesk at home.

The key to these advances is the use of fiberoptic cables. Trouble free, thinner than copper, and with increased capacity to carry data, these glass strands are replacing the copper wiring used by telephone companies today. The information highway is supposed to be the answer to all of our needs. Stentor, the consortium of Canada's major telecommunication companies envision that "all Canadians will have access to a total information and communications world as easily as switching on a light, picking up a phone, or taking a trip across town". But will all Canadians living in Canada's more remote areas, the Northwest Territories and Yukon have easy access as Stentor envisions.

Polar Bear heaven BBS

The greatest barrier to improving Internet access is the lack of decent data communication services says Chris O'Neill, system administrator of the Polar Bear Heaven BBS in Rankin-Inlet, N.W.T. Chris has been operating his BBS in the north since 1989, offering Internet e-mail, newsgroups, and access to mailing lists. Chris says the only paved section of the info highway to reach the north will be a link to Yellowknife, a government site (inukshuk.gov.nt.ca) that is still under development. This in part due to the sparse population of the Yukon (27,797(1991)) and N.W.T (57,649(1991)), and the great land mass of both territories (1,509,570 sq mi). Anyone living outside of Yellowknife, Rankin Inlet, and Whitehorse,Yukon will need to use long distance and battle poor phone lines to reach an Internet service provider.

The phone lines in the north are unreliable, with often service interruptions and poor connections making data communications difficult or non-existent. Chris compares the phone lines to two tin cans connected by a string. He sees a need for small inexpensive satellite communications equipment, and an increase in the availability of private (non-telco-owned) data communication services at reasonable cost, including the use of fiberoptics. Chris believes that the Internet has an important role to play in the north for health, education, and generally improving communications to break the isolation factor of living in remote areas. The Internet gives him a sense of being connected to the rest of the world.

Can the Stentor vision be realized? Not without a very large financial investment to upgrade existing communications and develop further links to the more remote locations of the north. The Stentor companies announced on April 5th, '94 the "Beacon Initiative", a joint venture to upgrade local, regional, and national telephone networks over the next ten years—an investment of $8 billion. A further investment of $500 million is required for an enhancement program over six years to provide seamless national connectivity. But will it be financially feasible to upgrade and enhance networks in the north? With such a small population I can't see any return on investment. Surely people in remote areas would benefit greatly by these enhanced communication capabilities, services we take for granted in the south.

YukonNet Operating Society

NorthwesTel, the equivalent to Bell Canada in the north, has started to improve networks in the Yukon according to Richard Lawrence of the NeXT User Group in Whitehorse, Yukon. Richard is a founding

member of YukonNet Operating Society, a group comprised individuals from business and government. Their mandate is to become the CA*net regional service provider in the Yukon. According to Richard they have made some progress, but don't expect to see anything tangible until September at the earliest. CA*net is actively working with them and improvements by NorthwesTel have them excited.

NWT department of Education

As for the N.W.T, the only true Internet hub is with a government site in Yellowknife. A little over a year ago they connected to the Net. They currently allow 300 users onto their system although they have close to 4000 employees. The Department of Education has set up a BBS (north60.gov.nt.ca) that is connected to the main site. They mainly use e-mail and newsgroups, and allow students and teachers from Yellowknife access.

Achievements made by Chris at the Polar Bear Heaven BBS, NeXT User Group, and the N.W.T Government have given people in the north a communications boost, but they still have a long way to go. It will be interesting to follow developments to Canada's Information Highway and how it will effect residents of Northern Canada.

E-mail addresses

- NeXT User Group Yukon Territory: Richard Lawrence: richard@north.nugyt.yk.ca
- Government of N.W.T, Manager of Communications: Mark Hickey: admin@gov.nt.ca
- Polar Bear Heaven BBS, Rankin-Inlet, N.W.T.: Chris O'Neill, Sysop: coneill@polarbear.rankin-inlet.nt.ca

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High density Disk-of-the-Month

by Norman Dafoe

In keeping with the new Software Library policy that I discussed in my article last month, the OPCUG Disk-of-the-Month for May 1994 was on high-density media. Disk # 109 was available on 1.2 Mb 5.25 inch and 1.44 Mb 3.5 inch formats: both contained the same data.

As usual, the DOM contained a number of small utilities for both DOS and Windows, including the following:

- DUP.EXE: Text filter to produce a unique list of all duplicates in a sorted input file
- OTTB9405.TXT: Ottawa area BBS list for May 1994
- SWITCHER.EXE: PC Magazine utility to save & restore different Windows settings for wallpaper, buttons, screen saver etc.
- WINPRN.EXE: PC Magazine utility to print 1, 2, or 4 pages on a sheet of paper, using scalable TrueType fonts in Windows 3.1
- TXTRIS.ZIP: Variation of Tetris, in which falling letters must be formed into words: dictionary included
- MAYHEM.ZIP: Marble Mayhem logic game for DOS & VGA graphics with mouse

I also included several other archives, which would have previously been issued on Specialty diskettes. These included:

- CSHOW874.ZIP: V8.74 of CompuShow, a good DOS display program for GIFs and several other graphics types
- 2SHOW104.ZIP: V1.04 of CompuShow 2000, a new more graphical interface for the same display engine as above: also well recommended
- NOTEW30B.ZIP: Noteware, ultimate DOS & Windows notepad: lots of neat features. Runs as a DOS TSR (17k) or Windows icon
- SHEZ100.EXE: V10.0 of Shez, the DOS compression shell: supports most archive types, lots of features; very versatile

Because of its increased size, the Disk-of-the-Month will now be offered at $5 cash: holders of the DOM card can still get the larger disk at the older price (GREAT DEAL!).

I have had a little feedback from members concerning the dropping of the Specialty diskette production. Most people seem to understand my point of view. However, I would appreciate hearing your comments; please contact me on the PUB or by telephone (723-9345) evenings.

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mally based in Toronto, will be handing out an evaluation copy of DataEase Express for Windows to everyone at the meeting. While the evaluation copy is limited to thirty records, this is the only limitation. It is fully functional and contains no time bombs. There will also be a

cess and FoxPro for Windows. In these latest versions of these programs Microsoft has improved the use of the graphical user interface and provided more Wizards. Both products have also been made more visually consistent with Microsoft Office. While this would be expected of Access which is part of the suite comprising Mi-

FoxPro's Rushmore Technology.

The representatives from Borland and Lotus will be Steve Finner and Kim Adams respectively.

No SIG meetings

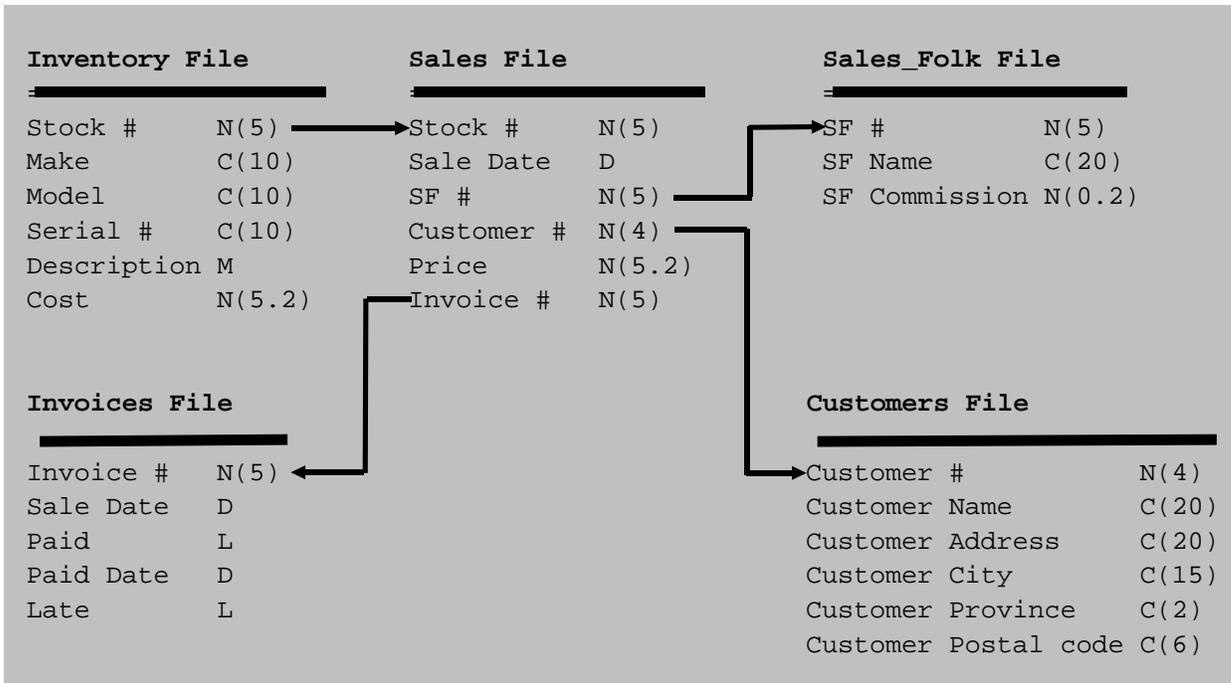The running order for the evening will be decided by pulling straws. Two presentations of 30 minutes each will run before the break and two after. As there will be four presenters there will be no SIG meetings after the 9 o'clock break.

Location

The June meeting is being held in Kanata (see address and map on page 3) as our usual venue will be closed for the summer by June 28th.

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Inventory File            Sales File               Sales_Folk File

Stock #      N(5)  ──────▶ Stock #      N(5)    ──▶ SF #         N(5)
Make         C(10)         Sale Date    D           SF Name      C(20)
Model        C(10)         SF #         N(5) ──┘    SF Commission N(0.2)
Serial #     C(10)         Customer #   N(4) ──┐
Description  M             Price        N(5.2)    │
Cost         N(5.2) ──┐    Invoice #    N(5)      │

                      │                           │
Invoices File         │                           Customers File
                      │
Invoice #    N(5) ◀───┘                       ──▶ Customer #          N(4)
Sale Date    D                                    Customer Name       C(20)
Paid         L                                    Customer Address    C(20)
Paid Date    D                                    Customer City       C(15)
Late         L                                    Customer Province   C(2)
                                                  Customer Postal code C(6)
```

draw for a full working copy of both the DOS and the Windows versions of the product.

Bob Scowcroft of Microsoft will be demonstrating both Ac-

crosoft Office Professional, it is interesting that FoxPro is getting the same treatment. In the other direction, Microsoft has now incorporated into Access

For some of us this will be quite a hike, but the June program promises to be well worth the effort.

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product. Certainly they're banking on it. Their new technical support policy as of June 1, 1994, and as described in the Version 5 manual, provides users with one free call (to 1-800-818-1848). After that you get billed for calls at a rate of $30 per call or you can purchase credits in advance at that price or at $120 for five calls (or multiples thereof). The part of

the policy not explained in the manual and on which Corel is banking that their program is relatively bug-free is that if the problem is caused by a program bug you get to keep your credit for another call. You only use up your credit if the problem was caused by an incompatibility within your system.

Once again Corel is offering us a cornucopia of a product. It will take most of us a while to find out just how exciting the product really is. Some of us are still finding that out about version 4. And to think its just under a year before we get to see Version 6!

Lynda Simons is OPCUG's Corel Representative.

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Protecting your files

by Eric Clyde

For the August 1993 issue, I prepared some notes entitled "DON'T; or how to care for your computer." The title was taken from an excellent but now somewhat dated 1981 book by Rodnay Zaks. The message was that computers are surprisingly robust providing that certain sensible precautions are taken.

Perhaps the single most important recommendation given is to make backup copies of any valuable (or useful) files you have prepared. When you are in a hurry (and who isn't) it is tempting to think that your hard disk has always been reliable, so you won't bother to backup the files this time. However, as someone said, the question is not *if* your hard disk fails what will you do, but *when* your hard disk fails, what will you do?

Catastrophic failures of hard disks are much less common than failures due to the development of bad tracks, or of bad areas on the disk (usually due to wear). Unless that area of the disk has been marked as bad, the computer blithely writes there. Unless you have issued the command, VERIFY ON (which slows data throughput considerably), the computer does not automatically check to ensure that the saved file is readable. Other problems can be caused by power surges, by strong magnetic fields, for example lightning nearby, or by bugs in programs.

So what precautions should you be taking?

File and FAT checking

• CHKDSK

Preferably daily, or at least weekly, use CHKDSK (Checkdisk), available with all versions of DOS. It looks for lost data, invalid subdirectory information, and "crosslinked File Allocation Table (FAT) entries." (The latter can be thought of as having parts of two different files sharing the same data—a NO NO.) If errors such as crosslinked files are reported, take note of the file names, make backup copies of these files (with luck, one of the files may be complete), then run CHKDSK /F. This will clear up the problem, but at least one of the files will be cut short.

• COMP or FC

Use of either of these programs ensures that the backup copy is identical to the original.

• COPY fileNUL

The NUL device is like a black hole: the computer reads the file and copies it to a non-existent device, giving no error messages as long as the file is readable.

Bad tracks or areas of the disk

If you have MS-DOS 6.2, a newly developed program called SCANDISK was included. This program is much more thorough than CHKDSK (and takes much longer to run). It should be used at least

monthly to thoroughly check your disk drive for surface defects and for areas where the magnetism is becoming marginal, which will lead to future problems. This can even be done when the drive is compressed using DOUBLESPACE.

Note that if you are using a disk compression tool other than DOUBLESPACE, you should use the disk checking tooled supplied, e.g. with STACKER use STAC. (Stacker v4.0 recommends the use of CHKDSK on both stacked and uncompressed drives: Ed)

There are a number of other programs available. The best known is the Norton Utilities, which includes the Norton Disk Doctor, a program which can remedy many defects on the hard disk; another is PC Tools, which also includes disk repair tools; and a third is SPINRITE III.

Floppy disks and tape backup units

Using the above tools on your hard disk regularly is important. But don't forget to check out your floppy disks and tape drives as well. There can be another problem here. From my personal experience, I had religiously been backing up important files to floppy disk, not realizing that, on that disk drive the heads were misaligned. The files could be read back on that computer,

Protecting your files *continued from page 7*

but were unreadable on any other computer. Then we had a problem with that computer. The disk drive was realigned, and we found that it could no longer read the backup disks. Fortunately we located another computer whose disk drive was slightly misaligned—just enough to be able to read the files! This also happened with a tape backup unit at work. The moral is not just to depend on backups to floppy disks and to tape— check them on another machine to make sure they are readable.

There is no Beginner's SIG at the next meeting. So if you have any questions on this or on any other topic, phone me at 749-2387.

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Prize winners at May's meeting

The following club members had their ticket CorelDrawn:

- Joseph Chang: CorelDRAW 5
- Michael Hogan: CorelDRAW 4
- Alain Audet: Clip Art Library
- Peter Hartmann: Corel SCSI
- Randy Widdup: Ventura

And countless others who won Corel Professional Photos CD-ROMs, Flying Mouse Pads, CorelDRAW posters, and many many CorelDRAW 4 demo diskettes.