
COUSIN MIKE

© 1995 by *Bob Miller*

Early this morning, the Vice-President of our local bank dropped by the office to ask if I could do him a favor and try to fix his sister-in-law's computer. He has been of enormous help to the counseling Center over the years with fund raising efforts and general assistance. I was happy to help him out.

Background: His sister-in-law has a 486-33 with 4 megs running Windows 3.1; DOS5.0; WordPerfect 5.1 and little else. They were having a few problems and "cousin Mike--the computer expert" had offered to help them. After a couple of hours, most programs didn't run at all so Mike left to "ask his buddies" in the office what he should do. He returned to inform them that he was absolutely certain that he could fix everything. Three hours later, nothing at all worked and Mike slunk away.

I started with my standard procedure. I ran a virus check and the machine came up clean. I then tried "Type config.sys". Interesting! First time I have ever seen these lines:

```
FILES=180
BUFFERS=160
SHELL=C:\DOS\COMMAND.COM C:\DOS\ /E:16384 /p
```

I fixed these and re-booted. Interesting. The computer asked for the date and time even though it is showing the correct values for both. I tried "Type Autoexec.bat" and got an "ACCESS DENIED" message! Access denied on a type command? I did a DIR on the root and find 488 files. Many are clearly WordPerfect documents that were saved to the root directory. But there are also files you don't expect to find in a root directory---files that end in .GRP and .INI. There were three Autoexecs ending in .bak, .bav and .baz--but not .bat! I looked at these three and they are all in written using the Word Perfect format. Got rid of them along with the five copies of the older configs (three of which are in the WordPerfect format) and found the autoexec.bat.

It is a Directory!! In it are most--but not all--of the contents of a normal Windows directory. There is a \System subdirectory with, again, most but not all of what should be in Windows\System. I then I found a *SAVE* directory with 75% of both Windows and System's files. In Windows itself, about half the normal files are there while only six files remain in \System. I tried to start Windows and there is much flashing of the screen as it tries to load the five (!) instances of QBASIC that are in the startup group. It freezes before it can try for the four copies of EDIT that are also there.

I rebooted, deleted the startup group entirely and then re-started Windows. This time it comes up - all forty-two group windows including ,but not limited, to Main, Main1, Main2, Main3, Games, Games1. Few of the groups are identical although WordPerfect is in all forty-two. It is also a bit difficult to use since the titles under each icon are using the symbol font.

I wonder how much *Cousin Mike* could have screwed up the system if he hadn't been an expert?

Lacking a *Deltree* command in DOS 5.0, -remember? I am reduced to copious use of **del*.*** followed by **rd** (remove directory) commands. I then deleted the 872 files -(9.35 MB)- in \Windows\temp and the 533 files (5.7 MB) in C:\TEMP. I installed a fresh copy of Windows into C:\WIN, tidied everything up, put a full set of [RESTRICTIONS] into PROGMAN.INI and left.

And Rosemary thinks that her computer is screwed up!!!

Bob Miller is the director of a non-profit Mental Health agency. He is also the Host of several online conferences including the Ilink ProComm conference. He is a very knowledgeable Windows professional who has regularly helped out his buddy and soon-to-be co-columnist for *WindoWatch* - *Rosemary McGuire* .