

THE SAS USER GROUP NEWSLETTER - START THE PRESSES!

Andrew T. Kuligowski
Nielsen Media Research

As the number of users of the SAS System continues so does the need to share information among peers. The proliferation of local SAS User Groups is a direct outgrowth of this need. One common mechanism to allow members to communicate among themselves is the user group newsletter. We will walk through the steps in creating a newsletter, citing *Gulf Coast Currents*, the newsletter of the Florida Gulf Coast SAS User Group, as an example.

ASK YOURSELF "WHY"

The first question we need to ask, long before we explore desktop publishing packages and postal rates, is "Why does this newsletter need to be produced?" There will probably be more than one reason. Make a list of what you expect the newsletter to accomplish, then prioritize it. This will help you to determine what sort of editorial content you will need, and will assist in determining the proper layout of your newsletter.

Let's look at a few examples:

- Most of the local SAS user groups use their newsletters to announce the date, location, and agenda of their next meeting.
- The newsletter is often the method of choice to disseminate organizational news, such as meeting notes, election notices, etc.
- Many readers like to exchange technical tips on effective or innovative uses of the SAS System via their local newsletter.
- Your readers may want to use the newsletter in order to exchange professional advice.
- Some local groups have found that printing classified ads in their newsletter provides both a service to their members and a source of funds to continue publication.

These examples are listed in the order of importance to *Gulf Coast Currents*. To illustrate this point, please refer to Exhibit 1, which is the predecessor to that newsletter. Exhibit 2 is an early issue of the newsletter, which shows the progress made towards fulfilling these goals.

ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS

Now that you have determined the purposes of your newsletter, the next step is to gather up the appropriate editorial content. Where can this material be found? Your primary source should be your User

Group members. Many newsletters claim to provide an exchange of ideas - the word exchange implies that thoughts must be given as well as received. Your membership will probably divide itself along the following lines: One or two members will be happy to volunteer information on a regular basis. These people will make your life easier, and should never be taken for granted. Two other categories of members will be also be very helpful, but will require a little effort on your part to recruit. A small group of members will provide articles, provided they are specifically and personally asked to do so. A larger group of members will also contribute, but you may need to resort to coercion, sycophancy, or threats in order to obtain their cooperation. Both of these groups will normally need to be reminded of their commitments, and will need to be given a long lead-time to prepare their material. Also, always keep in mind that the largest group of your members will not contribute an article - ever! Fortunately, these people are countered somewhat by the occasional contribution from a SAS user who is not a member of your group.

Your second sources of article contributions are other user group newsletters. Most user groups will be happy to allow you to reprint their articles, provided credit is given to the author and their newsletter. It can be a real ego boost for the author and editor to find out that someone thought enough of what they said to reproduce it for a wider audience. Some newsletter editors will be happy to put you on their mailing list, provided you reciprocate with a copy of your newsletter. Furthermore, the SAS Institute gathers all newsletters that are sent to them and reprints them in a quarterly publication, which can be sent to your SAS Institute representative on request. Do not forget that there are many newsletters out there that are not published by SAS User Groups. These can also provide content for you, usually aimed at a more general, professional audience than the SAS-specific articles normally found in a local SAS user group's newsletter.

Electronic bulletin boards can provide a plethora of information, most of which has been posted with the specific intent of being passed on to others. For example, *Gulf Coast Currents* has recently begun a semi-regular feature containing technical tips obtained from the SAS-L bulletin board.

Finally, consider yourself warned: Be prepared to create your own articles on a regular, often last-minute basis. If you want your newsletter to be of a consistent

length each issue, and you haven't received or found enough appropriate articles, it will be up to you to produce them. In an extreme case, the newsletter could be subtitled, "My thoughts, and my thoughts alone!." (If this occurs on a regular basis, maybe you had better re-address your original reasons for publishing your newsletter.)

DEFINING YOUR LAYOUT

So far, you've reviewed your reasons for publishing a newsletter, and have reviewed your sources for appropriate content. You are finally ready to develop a format that will make your newsletter cry out for attention, to ensure your message is passed on to your audience.

Don't be afraid to admit that you may need help to develop a unique, yet readable style. The majority of us are technical people, and this aspect falls more into the artistic genre. Find out if someone in your group has worked on newsletters in the past, or knows someone who has. Consider recruiting a student from a local university's art/design program - many user groups have contacts at the local college. You may be able to get some free assistance in return for providing the opportunity for an independent study elective. Of course, if money is no object, you can always hire an expert to handle the design for you.

The first task will be to determine which grid, or column layout, you plan on using. With most typewritten newsletters, a straight one-column layout is common. Desktop publishing and manual cut-and-paste open up additional possibilities. The most common layouts for a newsletter printed on 8 1/2" by 11" paper are straight two-column or three-column grids. Be certain that you have allowed yourself sufficient white-space on all sides of the page and between columns. This will provide a visual break for the reader, and will help ensure that your articles are read.

You may also want to consider a six-column grid. This does not mean that you need to run six columns across every page - this would probably prove unreadable. The six-column format will allow you the flexibility of combining columns together, varying from page to page. For example, your front page may have two visual columns, one occupying the first two logical columns and the other taking up the last four. Your next page could also have two visual

columns, with these made up of three logical columns each. This approach allows you the flexibility to provide a little visual variety in your newsletter, while maintaining a consistent look and feel throughout the publication. *Gulf Coast Currents*, for example, is produced using this grid.

The most common approach to column justification is to align both the right and left margins, unless you are producing your copy on a typewriter. This used to be close to a commandment in newsletter preparation, and is still very common in newsletters today. A few publications, however, have found it possible to maintain a professional look while going with non-traditional columns. Some newsletters will insert a graphic onto the page, then tailor the surrounding text to flow around it. One publication uses a normal right/left justification for factual news items, and a ragged right border to indicate editorial or opinion columns.

Your next decision will be to determine the font or fonts you wish to use, assuming your method of production allows you this option. The textbook rule is to select one standard font for the text of your newsletter, another for the headlines, a third for captions and bylines, and a fourth for your banner. Avoid the temptation to use additional ones! Excessive use of different fonts looks like the publisher is either experimenting with a new desktop publishing package, or is auditioning for a moonlighting job writing ransom notes.

Be conservative when selecting your fonts. If your readership calls your attention to your selection of fonts, even in a complementary way, you have probably failed. The words and ideas that make up your newsletter are supposed to be its primary attraction, not the lettering used to print those words.

So which fonts should you use? This decision is best left to the editor and publisher at the time of creation. Allow yourself a little time to experiment with the fonts available to you, and determine which ones work best for your particular audience. *Gulf Coast Currents* is published using Century Schoolbook, a serif (short extensions at the end of the letters) font for its primary text. Authors are credited with the same font, except that it is italicized. Headlines are produced using a Helvetica sans-serif (without serifs) font. The document that you are currently reading was produced using Helvetica Fonts.

BOOKENDS - THE FRONT AND BACK PAGES

You are now ready to move on to the front page. This is the most critical page of your publication. A potential reader who finds your front page unappealing may never give the rest of your newsletter a chance. Start off with your banner, which contains the name of your publication. The banner normally runs across the top of your front page, although a few publications have been successful in placing it along the left or right margin. This is the only area of the newsletter where a non-conservative font is encouraged. A creative name, displayed in a unique, decorative style, may draw in readers.

The dateline is normally placed immediately under the banner. This can contain the volume number, the issue number, the date which the newsletter was published, or a combination of these things. Basically, the dateline is to your newsletter what a key field is to an observation is to a SAS dataset - the unique identifier for a given issue of your newsletter.

The lead story should be chosen with care. You should select the article that will be of most interest to the most readers. Keep in mind that some readers will use this one article to determine whether or not the entire newsletter is worth reading. The headline for this article is also important. The font should be the largest one used in the entire newsletter. The headline must be worded with care, in order to tempt potential readers into the article itself. Consider using a pull-quote to call additional attention to the article. A pull-quote should be copied from the article, separated from the rest of the article by a box, lines, or white space, and printed in a larger font than the article itself.

A photo, drawing, or graph can be placed on the front page to enhance the lead story. It is easy to remember that the graphic selected must relate in context to the lead story. Some editors forget, however, that the quality of the graphic selected must also conform to the front-page rule of "best of the best". A poorly selected or reproduced graphic will probably deflect potential readers, rather than have the intended effect of encouraging them. **DO NOT USE A GRAPHIC UNLESS IT IS OF HIGH QUALITY, AND ENHANCES YOUR ARTICLE!**

Finally, put a Table of Contents on your front page. Potential readers who pick up your publication and are not impressed by your lead story may still see something that interests them in the Table of

Contents and decide to read on.

Let's bypass the body of the newsletter temporarily, and move on to the last page. (This may be all that a short newsletter contains!) This back page is also very important. Most newsletters that are distributed via the U.S. Mail use this area for the address, folding the newsletter in two and securing it with tape or a staple. Therefore, the back page may be the first thing that a prospective reader will see. Your back page does not have to have the visual staying power that is required of the front page, but it must properly represent the content and quality of your newsletter. Let us cite *Gulf Coast Currents* as an example. As stated earlier, the most important reason for *Gulf Coast Currents'* distribution is to announce the next meeting. Therefore, we use the back page to list the date, time, agenda, and location for the next meeting.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

You are finally ready to address the interior of the newsletter. The creator must walk a fine line between visual consistency across pages and visual boredom. As stated earlier, *Gulf Coast Currents* attempts to resolve this issue by varying the visual column format across its eight pages. We retain consistency by placing a common heading at the top on each page. Our header contains the publication name, date, and page number.

The masthead usually appears on page 2. This feature contains the subscription and copyright information, production credits, and the name and address of the publisher. You need to be as accurate as possible in this section for legal protection, to provide readers with a source of further information, and to credit your contributors. Never fool yourself into believing that anyone will actually read it, however, unless you make an error. Then, everyone will call your attention to it.

Never forget that a newsletter is meant to be a continuing effort, not a one-shot wonder. With this in mind, you should attempt to maintain some consistency across issues. *Gulf Coast Currents* does this by maintaining a series of regular features on the same page as the previous issue. This rule is broken on occasion if an article has different space requirements than the previous issue. These exceptions perform the added function of ensuring against the visual boredom which was alluded to earlier in this paper.

Your final decision will be to determine the length of the newsletter. There are a few factors that need to be taken into consideration. The first is the amount of editorial content available. Never confuse quantity with quality. If an article is inappropriate, politely inform the contributor that you will not be able to use it. (Follow this up with either a commitment to include it in a future issue, or with some suggestions of publications that might be able to make use of it.) Your must also consider your finances when determining newsletter length. Each additional page will cause an increase in your costs of reproduction. Furthermore, if you are depending on the U.S. Postal Service to deliver your product, be aware that each additional page adds to the weight of your newsletter. The addition of that next sheet of paper could require the use of an extra stamp.

START THE PRESSES

We now have a design, and we have content. The final step is to perform the final assembly, replication, and distribution of our newsletter.

Your method of production will most likely be limited to your tools at hand. As seen in Exhibit 2, the Florida Gulf Coast Users Group's first newsletters were done on a rudimentary word processor. We have since found a volunteer who is willing to assemble our newsletter using Pagemaker on an IBM PC. This software has proven to be ideal for our use, combining ease of use with consistent quality. However, your budget may prevent you from acquiring any such package. If so, do not be afraid to use a typewriter, scissors, and rubber cement to assemble your newsletter.

Gulf Coast Currents is produced by generating multiple copies on a laser printer. This may not be the most cost-effective method, but it has two benefits. First of all, we have 24 hour access to the printer and can set our own priorities for its use. This is very important if you push your production deadlines to the limit, as we are wont to do. Secondly, the laser printer produces a clearer image than most photocopiers will. A third option which we rejected, primarily due to cost and lead-time, would be to have a print shop mass-produce our newsletter for us.

You have a few options for distribution. The most widely used option for in-house newsletters is the company's inter-office mail. Most user group newsletters, however, are distributed by mail. We have found that we can produce a 4-sheet, 8 page newslet-

ter, including staple and mailing label, and stay within the one-ounce limit on a 29-cent stamp. Each additional group of up to 4 sheets, however, will run an additional 19 cents. (Keep in mind that the post office has bulk rates that can be applied for similar mailings starting as low as 200 units.) A few user groups are experimenting with electronic delivery of their newsletters. Current technology limits their ability to use specialized formats and graphics, but this could become the method of choice in a few years.

ASSORTED ADVICE

There are quite a few things that a newsletter editor learns through experience that can't be easily categorized. The suggestions below have been acquired over time, and run a gamut of topics.

MAINTAIN AN INVENTORY OF ARTICLES

Many contributors will encounter deadline delays - after all, this is usually a volunteer effort, not the source of their daily bread! If this happens, you may need to delay publication or cut back on the size of your newsletter. A better alternative would be to have an article or two in reserve that can be substituted at the last minute. However, do not keep articles in this inventory too long. You will run the risk of making the material described dated, and could anger the author who has waited patiently to have his material published.

USE A DISTINCT FONT WHEN REPRODUCING COMPUTER CODE.

We have found some success with Gulf Coast Currents by using Arial, a Windows-supplied font, when reproducing source code and listings. This font resembles the text that would be produced by a typewriter or teletype.

PHOTOCOPIERS CANNOT HANDLE LARGE DARK AREAS WELL.

Try to avoid large dark areas in drawings and photographs. Even if you do not reproduce your newsletter by photocopying, rest assured that some of your readership will try to copy it after they receive it.

QUALITY CONTENT WILL RESCUE A LESSER FORMAT, BUT A GLOSSY PACKAGE WILL NOT HIDE MEDIOCRE CONTENT.

A poor package may scare away some readers. However, if the articles are well-produced, the remaining readers will gain some benefit from them.

The inverse is not true. Readers may be enticed into starting to read a newsletter prepared by the latest in desktop publishing. If your articles are shabby, this will merely mean that more readers will notice your shortcomings. (Of course, the ideal solution is to package well-written articles within a pretty package.)

DON'T GET DISCOURAGED BY THE ABSENCE OF A DESKTOP PUBLISHING PACKAGE.

This goes along with the earlier suggestion. Remember that if you produce a newsletter on your typewriter, some people won't read it. However, if you don't produce it at all, no one will read it!

REMEMBER THAT THESE ARE SUGGESTIONS, NOT LAWS.

Creating a newsletter is not like taking your driver's test. No legislative body has codified rules to follow, and no enforcement group will punish you if you choose to ignore them. There will be occasions when you believe that breaking a "guideline" will produce a better product. Go ahead and try it - it might work out! Keep in mind, however, that these bursts of artistic freedom should be the exception, not the rule.

CONCLUSION

The most important lesson to learn in creating your newsletter is that books, lectures, and even professional papers will only provide part of what you need to know. If you want to create a newsletter dive in and start doing it. Allow yourself time to create drafts and to revise them. Solicit comments from your readers - it's just as helpful to know what you're doing right as what needs improvement. Good luck.

GLOSSARY

NOTE: Exhibits 3 and 4, which are two pages extracted from recent issues of *Gulf Coast Currents*, contain examples of many of the terms described below.

Banner is the graphical depiction of the title of the newsletter. This is normally located along the top of the first page, and is set apart from the rest of the newsletter by its larger size and unique font. It is also commonly accompanied by a graphic logo, which is often the emblem of the organization publishing the newsletter.

Bylines identify the author of an article. They usually appear at the start of an article, but are occasionally placed at the end of it.

Captions are used to describe photographs, charts, or other graphics that may accompany an article.

Grid describes the number of columns on a page, coupled with the white space separating those columns and the margins surrounding the page.

Dateline is the unique identifier for a specific issue of the newsletter. It can contain a volume number, an issue number, the date which the newsletter was published, or a combination of these things.

Dingbats are small symbols used to indicate the end of an article.

Eyebrow contains a descriptive categorization of articles. These are normally used with regular newsletter features.

Headers and Footers can appear at the top or bottom, respectively of the newsletter's pages. They can contain the page number, dateline contents, or newsletter title. Headers and footers are used to provide identification and consistency throughout a newsletter's pages.

Headline contains a visual cue calling attention to a newsletter article. It is normally set in a larger and bolder typeface than the rest of the article.

Jumplines are used when an article spans pages, and point the reader to where they can find the continuation of the article.

Pull-Quotes are short phrases taken from the body of an article. They are printed in a larger font, and are used to aid the headline in drawing a reader into an article.

Sidebars are used to supplement an article. They are, in fact, mini-articles in their own right, and expand upon selected points from the main article.

Table of Contents is the list of articles in the newsletter, accompanied by their corresponding page number.

Text is the body of the article.

BIBLIOGRAPHY / FURTHER REFERENCE:

Padgett-Thomson (1991). *How to Create Newsletters People Will Read - Course Notes*.
Overland Park, KS: Padgett-Thomson

Parker, Roger C. (1990). *Newsletters from the Desktop: Designing Effective Publications with Your Computer*.
Chapel Hill, NC: Ventana Press.

White, Jan V. (1990). *Great Pages A Common-Sense Approach to Effective Desktop Publishing*.
El Segundo, CA: Serif Publishing

Gulf Coast Currents is published five times a year by the Florida Gulf Coast Users Group.

The SAS Users Group Newsletter Exchange is assembled and published four times a year by the SAS Institute, Inc.

NOTICE:

SAS and SAS Communications are registered trademarks of SAS Institute, Inc., Cary, NC, USA.



TAMPA BAY SAS USERS GROUP

Meeting Announcement

- ➡ **WHAT:** December Meeting
- ➡ **WHEN:** Tuesday December 5, 1989
7:00 pm
- ➡ **WHERE:** US Dept of Commerce Marine Fisheries Svc
945C Koger Blvd
St Petersburg, FL
(813) 693-3506
- ➡ **WHO:** Everyone interested in improving their SAS skills
- ➡ **AGENDA:** Welcome
User News Magazine (SAS Institute Videotape)
Presentation by SAS Institute Representative
SUGI 15 Preview
Question/Answer Session

INFORMATION? QUESTIONS?

CONTACT: Dave Riba
JADE Tech, Inc.

(813) 726-6099

- ➡ **PLEASE POST or DISTRIBUTE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT
TO YOUR SAS USER COMMUNITY**



FLORIDA GULF COAST SAS USERS GROUP

September/October 1990

Volume 1, Issue 2

NEW Development

SUGI 16 will be held in New Orleans, from February 17th through the 20th, 1991, at the New Orleans Hilton Riverside and Towers. SUGI 17 will be held in Honolulu, from April 12th through 15th, 1992, at the Hilton Hawaiian Village. Further information can be obtained from the SUGI Coordinator, at (919) 677-8000. The Final (and only) Call for Papers was issued for SUGI 16. All abstracts are due by September 1. (The early deadline is a result of the conference being pushed up to February.)

At the May meeting, we voted to set the annual dues for our organization at \$15.00. This was amended at our July meeting to include corporate memberships. These are now available at \$50.00 annually, and cover up to 5 individuals from the same company. Checks can be made payable to "Florida Gulf Coast SAS User's Group". Please send your payment to:

Barbara Carmen
Treasurer, FGCSUG
2342 Pembroke Drive
Clearwater, FL 34624

NEXT MEETING

When:
September 11, 1990, 2:00 pm

Where:
Allstate Insurance Building
800 Carillon Parkway
St. Petersburg, FL 33716
(please use side entrance)

For more information,
contact either:
Lloyd Peterson
Allstate Insurance
(813) 573-7390
- or -
Dave Riba
JADE Tech, Inc.
(813) 726-6099

- Agenda:**
- Business Meeting
 - Presentation: "SAS Graph Potpourri"
Edd M. Carter, Florida Power Corporation
 - SAS Quarterly Video

**Florida
Gulf Coast
SAS Users Group**

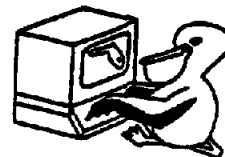
June 1991

THIS ISSUE:

The Hydra in Ancient Greece-- and Present Day Florida	1
Calendar	1
Editorial	2
Data ;	2
Enhancing The Appearance Of Your SAS Reports	3
Inside the SAS Sort Procedure	4
/* Comments */	4
Contest Results	4
Help Wanted!	4
Guest Column	5
Membership Application	5
Next Meeting	6

ROUTE TO:

**Gulf Coast
CURRENTS**



Volume 1, Number 6

The Hydra in Ancient Greece ... and Present-Day Florida
Andrew T. Kuligowski, Nielsen Media Research

One of the mythical labors of Heracles (or Hercules, if you prefer the Roman/Latin spelling) was to slay the dreaded Hydra. The Hydra had nine heads, and every time you cut one off, it would grow two more to replace it. This made the creature seemingly invincible. In order to slay the beast, Heracles had to cut off each head separately, then cauterize the neck wound with a firebrand before the beast could regenerate more heads.

One of the project teams at my shop (as luck would have it, the one I'm working on) has had the misfortune of encountering a 20th Century reincarnation of the Hydra - software clones. The original coders wrote one routine to do a specific task. Let's call the routine 'Hydra'. That programming team then needed to perform the same task under slightly different circumstances. They copied the first program into a second one, and changed a few lines of the new routine - 'Hydra2'. Then, they did it again for another slightly different circumstance - 'Hydra3'. After that, they programmed some more, finished the system, and moved on to other pursuits.

Let's jump ahead a few years, to early 1991 when the system required modifications. The original routine, 'Hydra', was modified. Our first system test of the changes hit a snag - it turned out that 'Hydra2' and 'Hydra3' required the same change. Subsequent problems were uncovered in 'Hydra', which required fixes in three places - the original routine, and its two clones. All was finally resolved, and our system

tests were finally successful - until the last test bombed. After researching the issue, the problem turned out to be due to yet another clone, that had been lying dormant for two years - 'Hydra4' under an assumed name. As of this writing, we've finally found and corrected all of the Hydra's heads ... we think.

The reasons for cloning the code seemed valid at the time - it required less time to code and test the clone than it did to make the original routine flexible. It turned out to be borrowed time; we've paid it back with interest with the time we've taken to track down and correct the clones. Our next task will be to attempt to merge our clones back into one flexible routine. Then, we can catch our breath - but not for long, because there's probably another Hydra routine out there lying in wait.

How many Hydras do you know of in your systems ... and how many more are there that you don't know about? The only way to really bring them under control is to prevent their growth in the first place.

CALENDAR

FGCSUG Meetings

June 11	Data Conversions
September 12	SAS Techniques
November 12	SAS/Windows Guest Speaker: SAS Institute

← BANNER

← DATELINE

← HEADLINE

← BY LINE

TABLE →
OF
CONTENTS

November, 1992

Gulf Coast CURRENTS

5

← HEADER

SAS Tips and Techniques

← EYEBROW

Would you like to be able to justify output using PUT statements? On PUT statements, you can specify -L for left, -R for right, or -C for center justification. For example

```
PUT VAR1 dollar7.2-c
```

Reference page 462 of the SAS Language Manual (Version 6 Reference) for more information.

If you have problems with page numbers not resetting to 1 on each PROC output, specify

```
OPTIONS PAGENO=1
```

Thanks to the Florida Department of Transportation SAS Users Group for these tips.



Check out the output formats WORDSw. and WORDFw. to take numeric fields and convert them to words in your output.

For example, 543.20 becomes

Five hundred forty three and twenty hundredths with the WORDSw. format

or

Five hundred forty three and 20/100 with the WORDFw. format.

Thanks to Ray Pass of Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center as posted on SAS-L for this tip.



DINGBAT →

To print smooth lines in PROC TABULATE when going to any HP printer that can read HPPCL, you need to change the definition of the FORMCHAR.

For example, assign a macro variable for FORMCHAR as follows:

```
%LET FORMCHAR=
B3C4DAC2BFC3C5B4C0C1D9BACD7CC4ZF5C1B1A01x
```

Thanks to Tamara Fischell of Timely Technical Solutions as posted on SAS-L for this tip.

Do you get warning messages when your input data does not meet the criteria for your informat? For example, when you specify a MMDDYYx. informat for dates, but your data contains missing values or all zeros, you get a warning message for every observation with invalid data.

To disable these warning messages generated by the INPUT statement, you can use the ? and ?? informat modifiers.

```
INPUT pnum 1-5 sig $6-13 date1 ?? mmddyy6.;
```

The ? modifier turns off warning messages for the informat, but leaves _ERROR_ set to 1. ?? turns off the warning messages and resets _ERROR_ to 0.

For more information check the SAS manuals, pages 144-145 (Version 5) or page 402 (Version 6 Language Reference).

Thanks to Jack Hamilton of Amdahl as posted on SAS-L for the idea for this tip.

**A VISIT TO THE SUGS
MWSUG AND NESUG
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4**

← JUMPLINE

MWSUG, because of its smaller size and more academic membership, is a more informal conference. NESUG, on the other hand, has been around for a few years and the experience shows. NESUG is a very slick, professionally run conference. But both offer their members the same kinds of opportunities.

Besides concurrent sessions of presented papers, both conferences included a video theater - video tutorials from the SAS Institute. And at both conferences, this attraction was standing room only. Many of the attendees at regional conferences are very interested in the training provided - and the video theater along with the Tutorials section are extremely popular. These features, along with the line-up of papers in the other sections, made the regional conferences a good value in terms of education.

In a nutshell, regional conferences provided attendees an opportunity to mix with other SAS users in an informal setting, to see a wide variety of papers on many SAS topics, and to see what's new and on the horizon for the SAS system. I hope that as you make your plans for 1993, you'll consider making SESUG a part of them. It promises to be an entertaining and educational conference. Hope to see you there.