# Task master

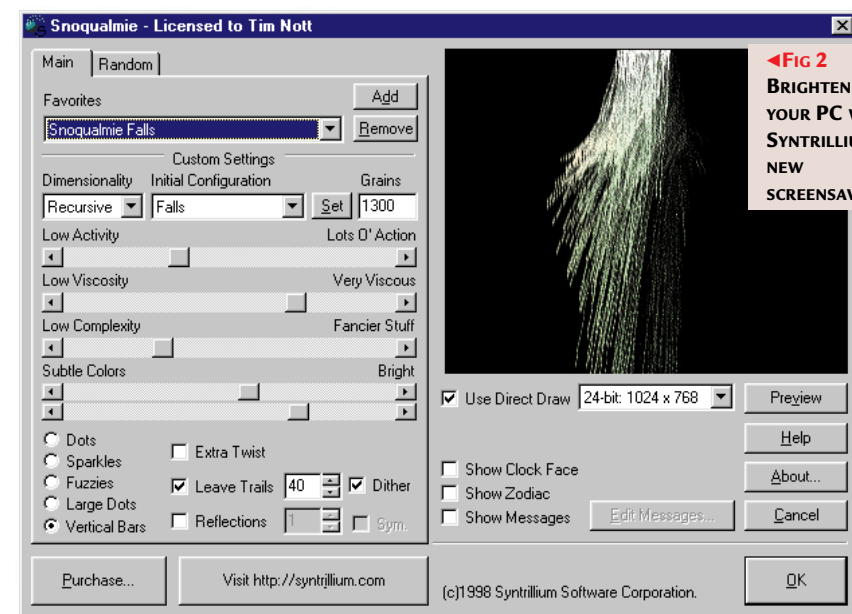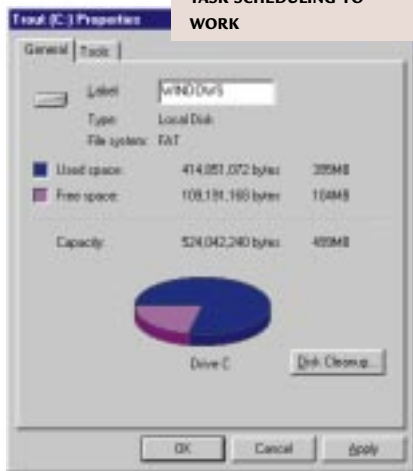**You've loaded up Windows 98 but the Task Scheduler doesn't work — even tech support can't help. Tim Nott has a way to get things moving again. Plus, a 'can't be done' problem is solved.**

**A**ndrew Hawkins celebrated the launch of Windows 98 by buying and installing it. And everything went smoothly except that the Task Scheduler wouldn't work. Having drawn a blank at the MS Knowledgebase, he turned to the newsgroups and made the remarkable discovery that not only is there a newsgroup dedicated to the Task Scheduler, but that other members were having the same problem. No solution had been found. So Andrew bit the bullet, wiped the C: drive and did a clean reinstall, but... same problem. He then dipped into his free 90 days' technical

## *... he made the remarkable discovery that other newsgroup members had the same problem*

support from Microsoft. It gave him lots of helpful tips about altering startup items, none of which helped. So, back to the Task Scheduler newsgroup, and lo, some bright spark had now found

▼**Fig 1 Don't do this — not if you want task scheduling to work**

the answer. Like many people, Andrew had separate disk partitions (drive letters) for Windows, applications and data (you can give a drive or partition a name, or "volume label", which he had done). And here lies the bug: if you label the partition or drive on which Windows resides as "Windows", then guess what? Yup, the Task Scheduler won't work [Fig 1]. But there's a happy ending. When Andrew changed the label, the Task Scheduler sprang to life.

## Dear Santa...

Traditionally, this is the issue where we *Hands On* columnists write our "Dear Santa" wish list. This year, I'm not going to be greedy. Well, actually, I'm going to be greedier than last year, when I forgot to do it at all, but I'm going to confine my list to just one item I'd like to see addressed in the next release of Windows.

First, Microsoft has made great efforts to protect us from the goblins on the internet. We can filter out "unsuitable content" such as pornography, reject "unsigned" content that may damage our PCs, be warned when entering the "internet zone", be

warned when sending information or downloading programs, and so on. In fact, it often becomes impossible to see the screen for the warning messages, and the Internet Explorer Options comprise a wealth of security features, most of which are incomprehensible.

But what of the enemy within? Let's have a better way of protecting family PCs from the ravages of small children than the hideously unfriendly Poledit. Let's have a way of password-protecting drives or folders on family PCs, so that parents can keep their personal and work files out of the reach of children, and elder brothers can keep their collections of "unsuitable content" away from the eyes of younger siblings.

**On an equally topical** but brighter note, two years ago I wished for a screensaver of a waterfall. Syntrillium, which brought us the very wonderful Windchimes and the equally splendid Cooledit, has come up trumps with Snoqualmie [Fig 2], named after the falls in Washington. This does much more than waterfalls: like all Syntrillium products there's a rich source of displacement activity to be had in configuring it, or using the pre-set schemes which include fountains, fireworks and a huge range of kaleidoscopic or random patterns. You can get a trial version from www.syntrillium.com.

◄**Fig 2 Brighten up your PC with Syntrillium's new screensaver**

es & DTP
Word Processing
Networks
Windows
Spreadsheets Databases
Visual Programming
Unix

☞ **Following last month's** venture into the impossible, here's another long-standing "can't be done" which has now been solved. This one comes from Deepu Chandy Thomas, a 19-year-old engineering student in India. It is for either Windows 95 or 98 with IE4. You can give any folder a custom icon and tooltip text. Use Notepad to create a file containing the following, in the desired folder:

```
[.ShellClassInfo]
IconFile=Path to the icon file
InfoTip=Any text you want
```

Save this as DESKTOP.INI, then set the folder's system attribute from a DOS box by navigating to the folder and using the attrib command. For example:

```
CD C:\WINDOWS\DESKTOP
ATTRIB +S MYFOLDER
```

Note that if the path to your folder

**[FIG 5]**

```
[.ShellClassInfo]
IconFile=c:\windows\system\shell32.dll
IconIndex=41
InfoTip = Your text here
```
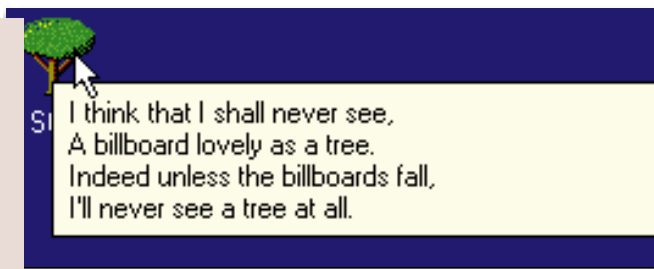
contains a long folder name, or names with spaces, you need to enclose it in double quotes, for example:

```
CD "C:\WINDOWS\DESKTOP\
MY NEW FOLDER"
```

Switch focus to the folder containing the desired folder (or in this case, the desktop) by clicking on it, then hit F5 to refresh it. You should see the icon change, and hovering the pointer over it will produce a tooltip containing the chosen text [Fig 3]. But things get more complicated if you want to pick an icon from a file containing several, as I found out after a glorious time-wasting afternoon.

**First you have to** catch the icon number. You can do this by creating a shortcut (to anything) and then right-clicking it, Properties, Change Icon. Hit the browse button and select the file from which you want to extract the icon: in the example [Fig 4] it's SHELL32.DLL which contains 80 icons. They are numbered, starting at 0 and working down, then across, so that the tree icon is number 41. Then change the desktop.ini file to read as shown in Fig 5. You might find that the icon does not change, even having refreshed the desktop several



▶**Fig 3**
**CUSTOMISE FOLDER ICONS AND TOOLTIPS WITH A DESKTOP.INI FILE...**

*I think that I shall never see,
A billboard lovely as a tree.
Indeed unless the billboards fall,
I'll never see a tree at all.*

times. If this is the case, use the Tweakui "Repair Icons" tool, or go to Display Properties, Appearance and change the icon size by a few pixels. Hit the Apply button, then change the size back and OK out.
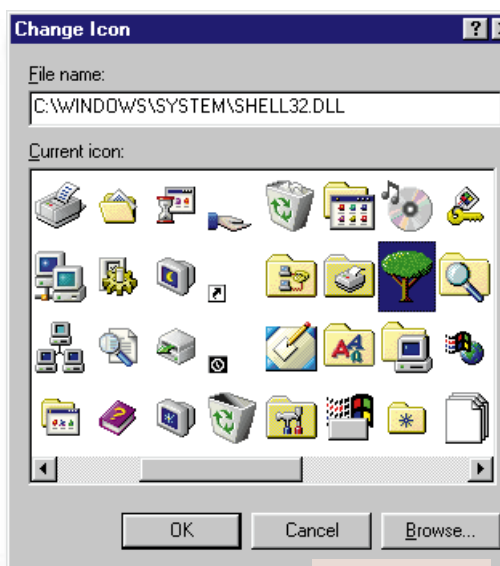
☞ **Here's a quick addition** to the long-running "Shutdown blues" saga, where the PC never gets beyond the "Please wait..." screen. Mark Lomas suffered this problem and cured it by using the Windows 98 System Configuration utility mentioned in the October *Hands On Windows* column. You can get at this from Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Information and then go to the



▲**Fig 4 ...BUT FIRST CATCH YOUR ICON**

*... the pre-set schemes include fountains, fireworks and a huge range of random patterns*

Tools menu, although it is probably quicker to Start, Run... MSCONFIG. On the General tab, click the Advanced button and you will find a checkbox to Disable Fast Shutdown. Mark did so, and his problem disappeared.

☞ **Here's a funny thing.** Robert Trzebiatowski found that some of his Start Menus were too long to fit the screen and showed little scroll arrows at the top and bottom. Well, that's a "feature" of Windows 98; on 95, the menu used to break into multiple panels. I get around it by organising my menus so that no single level is too long for the screen. However, when Robert tried this, the menus shrank but the arrows stayed put, and with only one item on a menu, the arrows obscure it. I can't reproduce this, because the arrows go away politely on my PC. So, has anyone else experienced this, or better still, found a cure?

# QUICKIES

☞ **To select all** but a few files in a folder or Find results, first select the ones you don't want, then Edit, Invert selection.
☞ **When modifying** an item (such as the Active Title bar) in Display Properties, Appearance, clicking on it in the picture is quicker than scrolling down the list.

# Questions & *answers*

**Q** I would like to archive large quantities of data from a server onto CD-R and wish to do this on a time basis (e.g. all files prior to 31st December 1995). Find file on Windows 95 and NT allows the files to be selected but loses the directory structure, which I need to make sense of the data copied to CD. Is there a method or utility available which will allow me to carry out this process?

TONY DAWSON

**a** *You can manage this with DOS XCOPY, Windows Find, some spare disk space and a little ingenuity. Let's take an example. Say I want to copy all the files in my Hands On 95 folder and subfolders modified between 25/09/96 and 24/09/97. First, I create a temporary store for the files at F:\TEMP. Then I open a DOS box and type:*
*xcopy "e:\words\pcw\Hands On 95" f:\temp /D:25/09/1996 /s*
*The quotes are needed because of the long folder name. The date form must match that shown on the screen when you type DATE from DOS, and the /s switch copies subdirectories and their contents. The snag is that the date filter only works one way (i.e. it selects files modified on or since the date given) so my next step is to run a Windows Find on F:\TEMP to get all the files modified between 25/09/1997 and the present, with "Search subfolders" ticked. Now I have to be a little careful, as the copied subfolders, unlike the files therein, will bear the current date and if I delete those I'll*
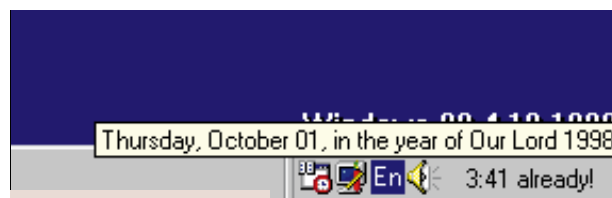
*delete all their contents regardless of date. So, I click on the "Type" heading to group all the folders together and then delete everything but those folders (see "Quickies", p255), leaving just the new folders and any files they contain dated before 25/09/97, ready to be transferred.*
*You can find out more about the XCOPY command by typing HELP XCOPY from the DOS prompt. If you haven't got the DOS help files installed, you'll find them in the OLDMSDOS folder on the CD-ROM (HELP.COM and HELP.HLP). With Windows 98 you may also need to copy the XCOPY.files (XCOPY.EXE, XCOPY32 .EXE and XCOPY.MOD) to the WINDOWS\ COMMAND folder.*

**Q** On my computer and on my dad's laptop, the time is displayed in 24-hour format. On my mate's PC, his clock is 12-hour and has PM after it. I cannot find anything about it in Windows Help, the time settings in Control Panel or even the registry.

GRAHAM
(*SURNAME NOT SUPPLIED*)

**a** *It is in Control Panel, but under Regional Settings rather than Date/Time, where one might expect. You need to go to the Time tab and look in the Time Style box where you'll see something like hh:mm:ss tt. You can choose a different format from the drop list, or have more fun typing in your own [Fig 6], doing excitingly futile things such as putting the minutes before the hour. The salient points are as follows. Upper or lower-case H switches between 24- and*


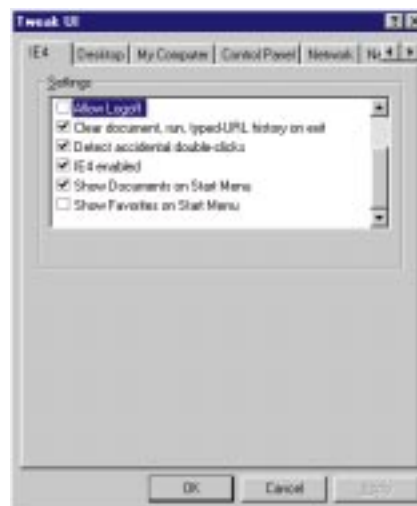▲FIG 6 HOURS OF FUN CUSTOMISING THE TIME AND DATE

*12-hour formats, and a double letter forces a leading zero. The tt suffix appends AM/PM, but you can change these as well in the boxes below. Unfortunately, you only get eight letters, which rather stymied my intention to have "Far too early to get up" and "Time for a siesta" on the system tray clock. Similar tricks apply to the Date tab: d and dd give the day number, with or without a leading zero, while ddd and dddd give the short or full weekday name. One to four Ms work similarly for the month, and two or four Ys give the long or short year. Keeping the best for last, you can add text anywhere in the date or time by enclosing it in single quotes, but beware that more than a few characters kills the system tray clock. These settings affect not just the clock, but the way dates appear in Explorer and in applications.*

**Q** I have recently upgraded to Windows 98 and have succeeded in removing most of the desktop enhancements because I do not like the new look. But two items remain:

on my Start menu, there is a rather nasty "Log Off USER", and also the "Favorites" folder. Can I get rid of these? Especially the Log Off one because I do not have multiple users installed.

TOM GREK

**a** *Yes, you can kill both of these from the IE4 tab of TweakUI [Fig 7] which now comes with Windows 98. If you have not yet installed it, you will find it in the Tools\ Reskit\ Powertoys folder on the Windows 98 CD. Open the readme.txt file in Notepad for details of how to install TweakUI.*


▲FIG 7 GETTING RID OF THOSE UNWANTED START MENU ITEMS

## PCW CONTACTS

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