

# Left Hand or Right Hand?

*Whil Hentzen*

Last December, Bob Grommes promised a number of articles resulting from encounters with people he met and things he heard at the Great Lakes Great Database Workshop in Milwaukee the previous month. I'm happy to announce the start of Steve Black's series on Design Patterns. As you'll expect if you've seen Steve's work before, this topic is sophisticated and requires some concentration. However, there's a hidden benefit in his discussion - while on the surface it may seem he's just talking about Visual FoxPro, each of the concepts he unveils has broader applicability - to your work as a FoxPro 2.x programmer as well as 3.0, to your work as a software developer, and to your role as a business person. I saw several managerial types at the Workshop watching his sessions. They left with a new outlook on their work as managers - and started to think about how to apply the various patterns in their day to day tasks.

Another legacy that Bob left me was coping with the flood of responses to his November editorial, "Honk if You Love 2.x." Actually, I'm not complaining - as he'd mentioned earlier, dealing with the conundrum of balancing 2.x and Visual FoxPro articles is probably my most important, and touchy, issue. Reading through the emails and letters (yes, some people still use the U.S. Mail!) has given me new insight into this problem.

Unfortunately, the answer wasn't also in there somewhere. As you'd expect, some readers were vehemently in favor of all Visual FoxPro: "I know how to do what I want in 2.x - but I'm still learning VFP!" Others felt that VFP was irrelevant, and didn't want to read about it. "Most of my clients are still using DOS, and I'm just getting them to move to Windows. They're not going to upgrade their hardware to the point where they could run VFP for years." I sort of feel like the guy in the movie who has two dates for the same evening, and is trying to run back and forth between the two tables, keeping each date happy.

Fortunately, I can at least admit to both dates that I'm trying to serve two masters at the same time. While it won't be easy, we're going to continue a mix of 2.x and 3.0 articles, but also include more articles that are either relevant to both (such as Menu Builder or Report Writer topics), or that discuss techniques that are independent of platform (for example, articles on the SQL language or algorithms.) Those of you who have yet to move to Visual FoxPro - don't despair - at some point, you likely will, and you'll have a trove of useful information to get up to speed quickly. And for the crowd that is running VFP full-steam, take a quick scan through the 2.x articles - you may find an idea that you can adapt to your current work after all.

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