

GAPP: A Pre-packaged Font Toolbar for Visual FoxPro

By Whil Hentzen

Remember the first couple of times you saw Visual FoxPro? What was the first thing out of your mouth? "Cooooooool!" Same thing for this month's Cool Tool, Griebel's Aggregate Property Pusher, or "GAPP." The first time I saw it, even though I was a hardened VFP Veteran <g>, my jaw just dropped. You have to see this.

One of the most annoying things about VFP, other than it doesn't just write your whole app for you, is that working with the Form Builder can be, as Steve Black has said, "Well, tedious." If you're used to selecting a number of objects on a screen and changing a property for all of them at the same time in FoxPro 2.x, you're undoubtedly unhappy with VFP's inability to do so. This was one of the most requested features during the beta. Sure, you can write a few builders to do this for you, and many of you probably already have. But there is a better way.

What is GAPP?

GAPP is a shareware multi-object font toolbar. A font toolbar allows you to select an object and change the font-related properties, such as the face, size, and formatting characteristics (bold, italic, underline) with the click of a single button. However, you can also select a number of controls in a form (or more than one form!), and alter them all at the same time. The toolbar also allows you to access a number of other properties like Opaque/Transparent that are tedious to get to in the property sheet. Not only is GAPP useful, but it's fun to use. It was created by Andy Griebel, and is a reflection of his personality and style. If you know Andy, you're probably already anxious to load it up.

Running GAPP

Using GAPP is completely painless. First, put GAPP.EXE in your path. (I keep it in DEV30 along with other developer-specific tools that don't go to customers.) Next, issue the command

```
DO GAPP
```

This creates a public object, (a toolbar), called XOGAPP. You'll see the toolbar appear. The screen shot below shows the GAPP toolbar scrunched up. GAPP automatically instantiates in a docked position (all of the buttons are in a single row), but I undocked the toolbar to make it easier to see in a screen shot.

```
## 9509TBAR.BMP "Instantiating GAPP creates a toolbar"
```

Finally, create a form, and play.

Actually, before you start using GAPP, you have to click on the swirly-colored icon above or to the left of the font dropdown - the one that looks like one of those multi-colored Super Balls. This brings forward the "About GAPP" dialog and is worth the price of admission by itself. See if you don't catch yourself wondering "How did he do that?" as you investigate the various features.

Once you're tired with About, go back to that form you just created. Put a couple of command buttons on it, a couple of labels, and perhaps a couple of container controls, like an option button group or a command button group.

Change the font of the labels, and then click on the leftmost toolbar icon, Pick Up Formatting Information. You'll see that the dropdowns change to reflect the font properties of the labels. (If the controls don't all have the same font, it appears that GAPP grabs the information from the first object.)

The next button on the toolbar, Format Painter, is the raison d'être behind GAPP. It allows you to format a number of controls all at the same time, with fonts, bold/underline/italic, and transparent/opaque properties. You can use the large and small "A" buttons to increase or decrease the size of the font of the selected objects. Keep on working with the rest of the buttons - I'll assume you know how to use the next three, and you can read the Tool Tips for hints about the others.

Customizing GAPP

You can pass two optional parameters when calling GAPP so that it operates more to your liking. The first allows you to instantiate GAPP without showing it, whereupon you may alter any of the objects followed by a SHOW() method. For example, to have GAPP always dock at the left side of the screen instead of the top:

```
DO GAPP WITH "NOSHOW"  
xogapp.Move (-1, 0)  
xogapp.show ()
```

To make the Font combo box narrower:

```
DO GAPP WITH "NOSHOW"  
xogapp.cboFonts.Width = xogapp.cboFonts.Width - 15  
xogapp.show ()
```

To get rid of the get picture button:

```
DO GAPP WITH "NOSHOW"  
xogapp.removeobject ('cmdGetPict')
```

To disable AutoSizing as the default

```
DO GAPP WITH "NOSHOW"  
xogapp.FontAutoSizing = .F.  
xogapp.Show ()
```

The help file in About documents the names of all of the objects in GAPP so that you can modify it to your heart's delight.

You can pass a parameter, of type Char, to specify another object name. If you preferred that the GAPP object be named "oHerman", you'd issue the command:

```
DO GAPP WITH 'SHOW', 'oHerman'
```

Where to find GAPP

GAPP.ZIP is on this month's companion diskette, and can also be found on CompuServe's VFOX forum under the name GAPP.ZIP. Remember, it's shareware, not freeware, and when you register (it's \$35, and well worth it), you'll get the source code as well as charter membership in the Plaid Software Fan Club and other goodies.