SouthEast SAS Users Group

Fall, 2007

Volume 8, Issue 2

The SESUG Informant

Inside This Issue...

Special points of interest:

- SESUG looks forward to 2008, and St. Pete Beach!
- Charity events and activities on Hilton Head!
- Hints, tips, tricks, techniques, and more!

SESUG By the Sea Shore!

Are you interested in SAS papers and presentations, networking and fellowship, seafood and spirits, sandy shores and winding paths? Then welcome to Hilton Head Island, and the SouthEast SAS Users Group's 15th annual conference!

The conference is being held at the Hilton Head Marriott Resort & Spa (http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/hhhgr-hilton-head-marriott-resort-and-spa/). This beachfront hotel offers beautiful guest rooms and a spacious conference center, two restaurants, beach access, indoor and outdoor pools, a spa, three golf courses, a fitness center, trails, tennis courts, and bike rental.

Nearby, you will find Savannah with its antebellum charm, Daufuskie Island with its Gullah history, and Beaufort with its wealth of 18th and 19th century forts. The settlement dates back from before the Revolutionary War, with forts built by colonists, French, and Spanish contingents. Bring the family and enjoy this historic area before or after the conference.

The 2007 conference features six weekend workshops, nearly 100 lecture and Poster presentations in 8 sections (never more than four presenting concurrently), 8 consecutive hands-on workshops, 15 poster presentations, a Futures Forum, opening and closing sessions featuring Rick Langston and

Vince DelGobbo, and the ever-popular SAS Demo Room with conference exhibitors. (http://www.sesug.org/SESUG2007/PresentationList.htm) The Sunday workshop presenters include: Peter Eberhardt, Janet Stuelpner, Greg Nelson, Ian Whitlock and Quentin McMullen, and Michelle Buchecker. These workshops cost extra, but we are sure you will find them worth every penny. (http://www.sesug.org/SESUG2007/WorkshopDescriptions.htm)

If you are new to SESUG, you will not want to miss the newcomers' meeting on Sunday afternoon. Andrew Kuligowski will share his insights on how to get the most out of the conference.

The Sunday evening Opening Session will feature Rick Langston on the topic of the upcoming version 9 release. Afterwards, at the mixer, you can renew old friendships and start new ones.

Monday morning, Monday afternoon, and Tuesday morning will feature presentations of the vast array of papers

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(Continued from page 1)
and presentation, either as poster or lecture. Additional presentations will not have accompanying papers; so come prepared to both learn, and enjoy!

We know you will want to visit the SAS Demo Room where you can meet SAS staff and explore their products. The SAS Demo Room is also where you will be able to visit with the conference exhibitors.

Monday evening, SAS will host its traditional Customer Appreciation Reception, in the demo room, from 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM. The SAS staff will be available to answer your questions and listen to your thoughts. Food and beverages will be provided.

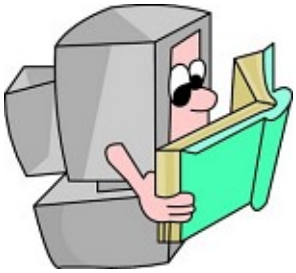
Be sure to stay for the closing session, where Vince DelGobbo will provide a light-hearted overview of SAS® Business Intelligence, from the perspective of a long-time SAS user. Come and enjoy Vince's talk over lunch, as we close the books on SESUG 2007!

If you are with us for the conference, please consider volunteering to help with the registration or the academic sessions. Visit our web site (http://www.sesug.org/SESUG2007/Volunteers.htm)

We invite you to check the web site for more conference details, and we look forward to meeting you on Hilton Head Island in November!

Joy Smith and Ed Heaton
SESUG 2007 Conference Chairs

Andrew T. Kuligowski has been a SAS user for over 20 years, with experience in the petrochemical and media research industries as well as in the public and non-profit sectors. He's chaired two SAS conferences in the past 10 years, and estimates that he has been an Invited speaker at over 40 SAS user group conferences and meetings. Despite being an Emeritus (semi-retired) member of the SESUG EC, his contributions to Site Selection, the annual conferences, and the work of the EC continue to be a significant part of the organization.



Andy's Book Reviews:

Save Time and Money Using SAS

I am currently sharing my office with a couple of consultants from Great Britain. We are all managing to survive quite nicely in a single unit of a typical American cube farm. They never initiate conversation with me, but have expressed a willingness to help me out with my coding challenges whenever possible. And best of all, they don't take up any room to speak of – combined, they're only 7 ½" x 9" x 1 ½" and only weigh a few pounds!

The two consultants – Philip R. Holland and Phil Mason – are physically working and living "across the Pond", as they say. However, in the past 12 months, both have provided the worldwide SAS community with books to assist us with our SAS coding challenges. This column will focus on Saving Time and Money Using SAS, by Philip R. Holland, which has just been published by SAS Press.

Saving Time and Money Using SAS is made up of 6 self-contained chapters, each addressing a different coding issue and some potential resolutions for it. Do you need to have an external application read data that is stored in a SAS dataset? Philip addresses that in his first chapter. Are you trying to obtain data from or pass data to some external database? Chapter 5 covers that issue!

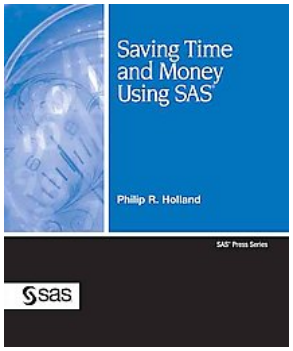
I appreciate Philip's willingness to look at these different issues from multiple vantage points, and I also am a big fan of his approach to use Base SAS whenever possible. (Add-on products can be a godsend, but only if your site and its management are willing to license them!) In addition, I must publicly acknowledge Mr. Holland's references to the Z/OS operating system – I am one of many coders worldwide who still do at least part of their jobs on a mainframe, and it seems as though many people have forgotten that we still exist!

Philip does not aim at the beginning SAS coder – he hits the ground running and trusts that the reader will be able to keep up. On one hand, this feels like one of the book's strengths – there is no attempt to slow down and explain concepts that are not immediately germane to the topic at hand. However, when dealing with the numerous code snippets and screen snapshots that Philip generously provides, it seems that a few well-placed comment boxes might be used to provide some additional details to those who might need them. "Fill out the screen this way – trust me" works if the trust is earned – and in this case, it is – BUT it makes it harder to adapt the explanation to a different problem that the reader might encounter in their own day-to-day responsibilities.

The strengths of this book are many; the weaknesses few. Saving Time and Money Using SAS was a good investment. (And to make it an even better deal, the reader is reminded that SAS Press will be offering a discount for book purchase made in the SAS Demo Room at SESUG '07!)

The next edition of this newsletter should contain a review of Phil Mason's In the Know … SAS Tips and Techniques From Around the Globe, 2nd edition.

Saving Time and Money Using SAS by Philip R. Holland, published in 2007, is 248 pages long and retails for $34.95. It is available through SAS Press.



Ed Heaton has been programming in SAS since 1988 - professionally since 1993. He has presented papers at SUGI (now SAS Global Forum) and in-house, local, and regional SAS Users Groups since 2000. Ed is the academic Co-Chair of the 2007 Southeast SAS Users Group conference.

As a senior systems analyst at Westat, Ed teaches SAS in formal classes, aids other SAS programmers through the SAS Help Desk, writes papers for the Westat intranet, and develops corporate applications.

Many to Many Merges in the DATA Step

Ed Heaton, Westat, Rockville MD

When we want to join two tables on a many-to-many merge, we need a crosswalk table. Let's look at an example.

We have a table of data about SESUG 2007 authors with an indexed author key. We have another table about SESUG 2007 papers with an indexed paper key. Some authors submitted more than one paper for consideration, and some papers were written by more than one author. So, we created a crosswalk that has two columns - the indexed author key and the indexed paper key. (If we have a composite key, then we will need more than two columns.)

Now, we want to join (merge) the three tables on two different keys. Our usual Base SAS® approach is to join the tables with PROC SQL – creating either a data file or an SQL view – using a nested query. The SQL view has advantages in that it is always as up-to-date as the contributing data files.

```
Proc sql ;
    Create view PapersAndTheirAuthors as
        select *
        from Paper natural right join (
            select *
            from PaperAuthor natural left join Author
        )
    ;
Quit ;
```

However, sometimes we want to do things after we put the files together that we can do in the DATA step but not in PROC SQL. This takes three steps by traditional methods and thus cannot be done as a data view.

```
Data PaperWithAuthorKey ;
    Merge Paper PaperAuthor ;
    By PaperKey ;
Run ;
Proc sort data=PaperWithAuthorKey ;
    By AuthorKey ;
Run ;
Data PapersAndTheirAuthors ;
    Merge PaperWithAuthorKey Author ;
    By AuthorKey ;
Run ;
```

Here's a one-step method that uses the DATA step and thus can be written as a data view. It makes use of the HASH object.

```
Data PapersAndTheirAuthors / view=PapersAndTheirAuthors ;
    If ( _N_ eq 1 ) then do ;
        If 0 then set Author ;
        Declare hash a( dataset:'sesug.Author' ) ;
        a.defineKey('AuthorKey') ;
        a.defineData( all:'yes' ) ;
        a.defineDone() ;
```

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```
    End ;
    Merge Paper PaperAuthor ;
    By PaperKey ;
    rc = a.find() ;  Drop rc ;
Run ;
```

With this final DATA step method, we have a data view which automatically updates when it's used and which can process the input data in complex ways that are only available through the DATA step.

Performance to create view (or data file) and run a PROC FREQ.

PROC SQL method:

PROC SQL:	0.06 seconds of clock time for the view
	27 kilobytes of memory
PROC FREQ:	110 seconds of clock time
	65 megabytes of memory

Three-step method:

Both merges:	83 + 144 + 67 = 335 seconds of clock time
	64 megabytes of memory
PROC FREQ:	25 seconds of clock time
	140 kilobytes of memory

One DATA step method:

DATA step:	0.34 seconds of clock time
	140 kilobytes of memory
PROC FREQ:	47 seconds of clock time
	14 megabytes of memory

Note: These are the medians from five runs each. The data files were:

Paper has 1,000,000 rows and 22 columns – 20 of these are 25-byte character variables.

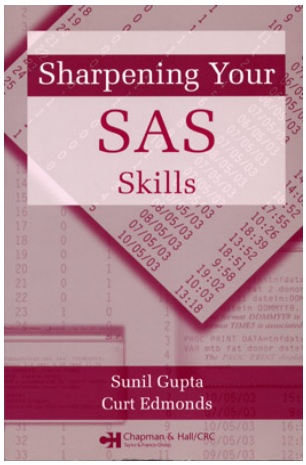
Author has 100,000 rows and 11 columns – all are 8-bytes.

PaperAuthor has 2,002,060 rows and 2 numeric variables.

PapersAndTheirAuthors has 2,040,370 rows.

Book Review:

Sharpening Your SAS Skills



I had the good fortune to meet Sunil Gupta at the SAS Global Forum this year. We talked about various subjects, and during the course of discussing some of the papers we planned to attend, he mentioned his and co-author Curt Edmonds' book, Sharpening Your SAS Skills.

This was a book I decided I needed to look through.

As I skimmed the book, I noticed something. This was not laid out like most of the beginner/intermediate SAS books I had read. For example, most SAS books segregate the statements from the functions, PROCs, and so forth. Gupta and Edmonds take a more functional approach; right after they discuss using the INPUT statement to gather information from raw files, they go right into using the PROC IMPORT for bringing in Excel and Access files. As soon as they cover reading a dataset with the SET statement, they cover how to use PROC SQL to bring in data.

Logically laid out, step by step. Each feature you might use to get data is here, and it gives very concise, yet very complete information on how to get where you need to go.

The book then logically proceeds to demonstrate what to do with the data, showing various ways to build datasets. It shows basic manipulation structures on how to drop data you do not need, and keep and arrange the data that you do need, as well as how to establish permanent datasets and output files. The nuts-and-bolts of what SAS date/time formats are, and how to use them effectively. And as in the first chapter, they move about to give you a variety of options on how to manipulate, store, and even analyze your data.

They take the time to tell you how your data is processed, and how your program is read in and used by SAS, so you can understand when variables are set, where they are stored, and how to make it easier to understand the internal storage of your program – invaluable in diagnosing and debugging a SAS program.

Each new chapter of the book delves a bit deeper into how to build the program you want in SAS. After the authors cover the primary tools in Base SAS, they continue to explore to show you multiple techniques. Even some of the scary stuff, like loops and arrays, are covered here in a clean, straightforward manner. It covers not only the syntax, but the strategy, in setting up your data libraries.

Subsequent chapters cover report writing – absolutely invaluable in today's marketplace. There has been talk about "paperless" reporting for over 25 years, but the need for information exchange, usually meaning formatted reports, never stopped increasing. Gupta and Edmonds lay out a variety of tools and techniques here. Another chapter covers error handling, from debugging to techniques for keeping the program running, while still giving you the information you need to understand how and why the program failed.

The final chapter in this book is of wonderful use to long-time programmers. Since I started with 6.09, Gupta and Edmonds take advantage of their joint experience to think about the enhancements of the past few versions of SAS, pointing out enhancements and fixes which bring you up to date to version 9.1.

I'll admit it – I wondered if they were going to introduce SAS Macro into the mix. For some reason, macro programming really scares some people, even long time SAS programmers. But it isn't in here – and the book doesn't need it. Instead, Gupta and Edmonds take their time, go over each Base SAS feature in detail, and lay it out in a manner which allows you to look for things by what you're trying to do, be it read in formatted or unformatted data, bring in a file from another application, sort or structure your data, or output it in ways from ASCII files to clean, formatted reports.

Now, it's summertime as I write this. Is this the kind of book I'll grab when I head to the hammock, with a glass of iced tea in the other hand? Well, to be honest, probably not. Casual summer reading for relaxation, it really isn't.

On the other hand, this could be a very relaxing book for the office. Why? Because we've all beaten our heads against the desk once or twice, trying to figure out how to do something in SAS. We'll look in one book, or another book, the Procedures manual, then the class workbook, and then sort through some user group Proceedings. Or, we can kick back with Gupta and Edmonds' book – and probably find the answer we need, or at very least a better explanation of what we might be looking to do. In a way, this really is like the Proceedings from a SAS mini-

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conference; it has a couple of Data Input papers, some Program Structure papers, a few Data Management techniques, Reporting, Error Management, and finishes up with What's New With SAS. Lots of information, well organized, and clearly offered.

So, now that I found how to fix my problem, how to build the report the boss needs, and have my data structures set up; it might just be the time for the hammock, and iced tea. Sharpening Your SAS Skills might not be the book I need to relax; but it sure is a good book to have, so I can find the answers I need.

Sharpening Your SAS Skills, by Sunil Gupta and Curt Edmonds. Published by Chapman & Hall/CRC. $63.95, Paperback, 296 pages, ISBN 1-58488-501-7.

- Gary Schlegelmilch

(Editor's Note: Regular readers may find the title of this book to be familiar. That could be because we did another review in an earlier edition of this newsletter. However, since each reviewer will have a differing viewpoint of each book - sometimes minor, sometimes clashing - and since all reviews are the opinion of the writer and not an official statement from SESUG, we hope that the two different reviews will assist the newsletter's subscriber base in fully evaluating the text.—Andy and Gary)

Charity Event at SESUG '07!

It is tradition at SESUG to have a charity event and this year will be no exception; but we need your help to make it really successful. We promise it will be fun!

Silent Auction

The silent auction this year will be held on Monday, November 5 from 2:45 PM – 6:45 PM. While you are taking a coffee break or visiting at the SAS Customer Appreciation Mixer, you can be bidding on the many wonderful items in the auction.

So far, we have two SESUG sweaters, custom jewelry, one SESUG '08 registration and eight items donated by SAS. Everyone is encouraged to make donations to the silent auction. This can include services, books, jewelry, ipods, or whatever. Remember this is for a good cause and is good publicity, too!

All of the proceeds from the event will go to Donors Choose, www.donorschoose.org.

To offer to help or to donate items please contact Imelda Go at IGo@ed.sc.gov

As a SAS Certified Professional and SAS Institute Alliance Member (1996 – 2002), Kirk provides IT consulting services and training to SAS users around the world. He is the author of four SAS books and more than two hundred peer-reviewed papers and articles that have appeared in professional journals and SAS User Group proceedings. He has also been an Invited speaker at more than two hundred SAS International, regional, local, and special-interest user group conferences and meetings throughout North America. His popular SAS Tips column, "Kirk's Korner of Quick and Simple Tips", appears regularly in several SAS User Group newsletters and Web sites, and his fun-filled SASword Puzzles is featured in SAScommunity.org.

Kirk's Korner: Quick and Simple Tips

A Trio of Tips!

Cartesian Product Joins

When two or more tables are specified in the FROM clause of a SELECT query without a corresponding WHERE clause expression, a special type of join is created. The Cartesian product (or Cross join) represents all possible combinations of rows and columns from the joined tables. To be exact, Cartesian product joins represent the sum of the number of columns of the input tables plus the product of the number of rows of the input tables. Essentially the Cartesian product contains *m * n* rows, where m is the number of rows in the first table and n is the number of rows in the second table. Put another way, it represents each row from the first table matched with each possible row from the second table, and so on and so forth. All other types of joins are classified as subsets of Cartesian products essentially being created by deriving the Cartesian product and then excluding rows that fail the specified WHERE clause expression.

Although the Cartesian product serves a very useful purpose in the relational model, it is essentially meaningless for a user to intentionally produce it as a final table. Besides being on the large size – the results contain way too much information making it difficult, if not impossible, for the practitioner to select what is interesting.

To illustrate this point, the example displayed below illustrates a SELECT query in a two-table join without the specification of a WHERE clause. The result of such a complex query is a Cartesian product. The results consist of the PRODNAME, PRODCOST, and MANUNAME columns from the first row in the PRODUCTS table combined with the MANUNUM column from the first row in the MANUFACTURERS table. Next the PRODNAME, PRODCOST, and MANUNAME columns from the second row in the PRODUCTS table are combined with the MANUNUM column from the first row in the MANUFACTURERS table, and so on, until each row in the PRODUCTS table are combined with the first MANUFACTURERS row. Then the results contain each row from the PRODUCTS table matched with the MANUNUM column from the second row in the MANUFACTURERS table, and so on, until all possible combinations of selected columns from all rows in the two tables are joined. It quickly becomes obvious that Cartesian product joins can become huge and are something SAS users should avoid.

<u>SQL Code</u>

```
PROC SQL;
  SELECT prodname, prodcost,
         manufacturers.manunum, manuname
    FROM PRODUCTS, MANUFACTURERS;
QUIT;
```

1. The PRODUCTS table is the first table specified in the FROM clause.

2. The MANUFACTURERS table is the second table specified in the FROM clause.

3. The specification of two tables in a FROM clause without the specification of a WHERE clause is referred to as a two-way Cartesian product join.

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Creating HTML Output with Output Delivery System

The Output Delivery System (ODS) gives SAS users an incredible potential for displaying output anyway that is needed. ODS introduces exciting features for displaying and interacting with SAS output. Gone are the days when the only available formatting choice was a basic output listing consisting of monospace, one-size fits all, fonts printed in black on a white background.

Today, users have a variety of choices for accessing and displaying SAS output. ODS provides users with many built-in format engines allowing users to expand beyond the confines of traditional SAS output. It does this by providing an assortment of output layouts including the HTML destination. This paper highlights all the necessary details for creating HTML output from any SAS procedure or DATA step using ODS.

Examining the HTML Destination

The ODS HTML statement controls how links and references are constructed between one or more HTML destination files. The basic syntax of the HTML destination is illustrated below:

```
ODS HTML ODS-action;

        < or >

ODS HTML HTML-file-specification < options >;
```

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where one of the available ODS-action specifications are: 1) CLOSE, 2) EXCLUDE, 3) SELECT, or 4) SHOW.

When specifying an HTML-file-specification ODS routes one or more pieces of output to the designated file or files, (see your specific operating system documentation for syntax instructions). Four types of files may be specified with the ODS HTML destination: 1) body, 2) contents, 3) page, and 4) frame. Note: Files can be specified in any order. Each file is described below.

The **Body** file contains the results from the procedure or DATA step embedded with ODS-generated HTML code. Note: When specifying the HTML destination this is the only file required.

The **Contents** file consists of a link to each HTML table within the body file. It uses an anchor tag to link to each table. By using your browser software, you can view the contents file independently or as part of the frame file.

The **Page** file consists of a link to each page of ODS created output. By using your browser, you can view the page file independently or as part of the frame file.

The **Frame** file displays the body, contents, and page files as an integrated package. The Frame file integrates the other specified files into a cohesive application.

Creating HTML Output

The Options PS= and LS= have no effect when used with the HTML destination (opposed to most other output-producing steps that generate output to a print destination). If the PS= and/or LS= options are used with the HTML destination, they are simply ignored by ODS. The SAS System creates a type of "streaming" or continuous type of output embedding links between the pertinent parts of the FRAME set: body, contents, and page.

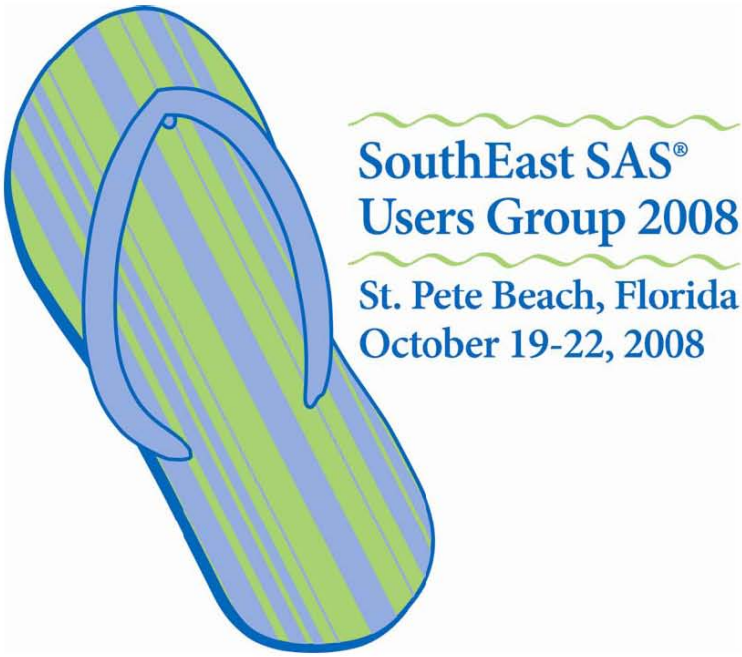
The following example illustrates the creation of a Web-ready PRINT and UNIVARIATE procedure output by specifying the HTML format engine with the body=, contents=, page=, and frame= options. With the streaming capabilities of HTML output, results can be combined so they appear on the same screen (or page). Rather than having output controlled by one or more page breaks, HTML automatically displays output without page boundaries.

SAS Code

```
ODS Listing close;
ODS HTML path='c:\SESUG 2007\'
         body='combined-ods-body.html'
     contents='combined-ods-
contents.html'
         page='combined-ods-page.html'
        frame='combined-ods-
frame.html';

  proc print data=libref.movies  noobs
n;
    title1 'Movie Classics Listing';
    where rating in ('G', 'PG');
  run;

  proc univariate data=libref.movies;
    title1 'Statistical Summary of
Movie Clasics';
    class rating;
  run;

ODS HTML close;
ODS Listing;
```

(Continued on page 12)

TradeWinds
ISLAND RESORTS ON ST. PETE BEACH



Celebrate -

the SESUG "Sweet 16"
Annual Conference
at the Trade Winds Resort
in beautiful
St. Pete Beach, FL!

Renew your relationship with colleagues; learn new techniques, tips and tricks; talk with the SAS experts; and see what's new in SAS.

Before you join in the conference, come see us at www.sesug.org. You will find all the information you need about our "Sweet 16" starting November 2007.

Conference Co-Chairs

Peter Eberhardt
AcademicChair2008@sesug.org

Jennifer Waller
OperationsChair2008@sesug.org

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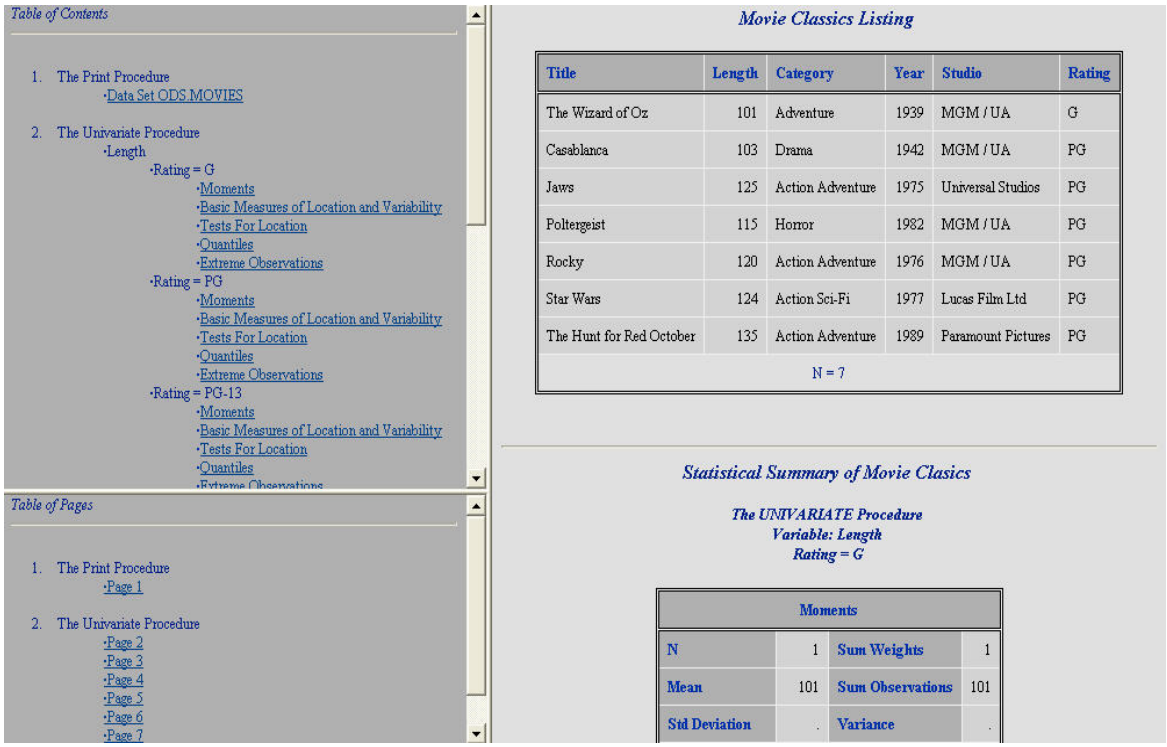
Output from Combining Output



Testing Web Output

Finally, before transferring your Web files to a Web server, users should thoroughly test any HTML code to make sure they are problem-free. Many viewers will not return to Web pages that contain errors or do not work according to design. A word of caution***: Not all Web browser software handles web pages the same way.*** Microsoft Internet Explorer may display web pages differently than Netscape Navigator and others.

***

Displaying Additional SAS Log Messages *with MSGLEVEL=*

SAS users can have the SAS System automatically display additional information directly to the SAS log by specifying the MSGLEVEL= SAS System option in an Options statement. The MSGLEVEL= option supports two options: N (which is the default) and I. By specifying MSGLEVEL=I, SAS displays on the SAS Log helpful information pertinent to merge and sort processing; as well as index usage and suggestions on what can be done to influence SAS to use an index; along with the usual assortment of notes, warnings, and error messages.

To demonstrate the effect of using a MSGLEVEL=I option, the following example code illustrates a program that performs a simple SQL join on two tables, MOVIES and ACTORS. As can be seen in the resulting SAS Log, an informative message was automatically generated explaining that the SAS system chose to use an available index called Rating to optimize WHERE clause processing. This type of information is not only helpful in gaining a better understanding of what the SAS system did to improve processing, but provides the specific name of the index that was selected and used to achieve improved processing.

SAS Code:

```
OPTIONS MSGLEVEL=I;
PROC SQL;
```

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```
        SELECT MOVIES.TITLE, RATING, LENGTH, ACTOR_LEADING
          FROM MOVIES,
               ACTORS
            WHERE MOVIES.TITLE = ACTORS.TITLE AND
                  RATING = 'PG';
      QUIT;
```

SAS Log Results

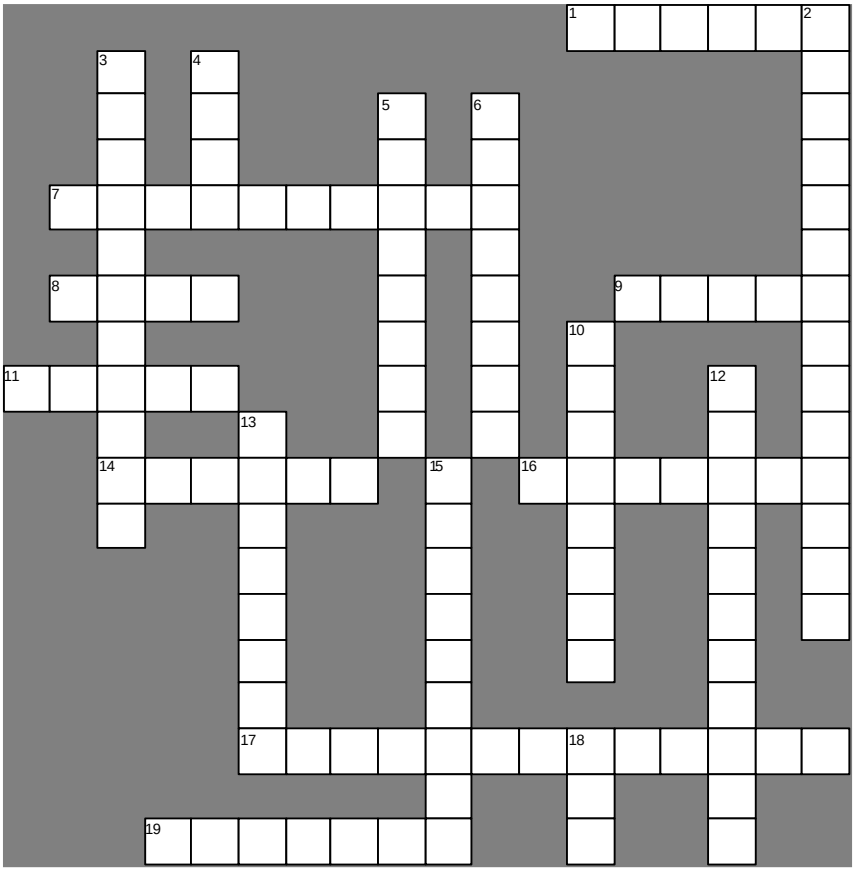
```
      OPTIONS MSGLEVEL=I;
      PROC SQL;
        SELECT MOVIES.TITLE, RATING, LENGTH, ACTOR_LEADING
          FROM MOVIES,
               ACTORS
            WHERE MOVIES.TITLE = ACTORS.TITLE AND
                  RATING = 'PG';
      INFO: Index Rating selected for WHERE clause optimization.
      QUIT;
```

Contact Information

If you would like more information or have any questions about this tip, please contact: Kirk Paul Lafler, Software Intelligence Corporation at KirkLafler@cs.com. Kirk is consultant and founder of Software Intelligence Corporation and has been programming in SAS since 1979. Kirk can be reached at:

Kirk Paul Lafler
Software Intelligence Corporation
World Headquarters
P.O. Box 1390
Spring Valley, California 91979-1390
E-mail: KirkLafler@cs.com

Base SAS© Concepts



www.CrosswordWeaver.com

ACROSS

1 Another name for a variable.
7 What is used to describe the contents of a SAS data set to the SAS System?
8 The name of the step that refers to a comprehensive language consisting of statements, expressions and functions.
9 Another name for a SAS data file.
11 The name of the SAS environment that supports background execution of an external file of statements.
14 The data that is collected or calculated in a SAS data file.
16 The most common SAS data file.
17 The name of the file of system options that determines how the SAS System behaves when executed.
19 The name given to a variable that is non-existent or present.

DOWN

2 The name of the SAS environment where an external file consisting of SAS statements are executed.
3 The name of the SAS environment where statements are entered one-by-one in response to prompts from the SAS System.
4 The name of the step that refers to one or more procedure statements.
5 This type of SAS data structure describes and stores one or more data values.
6 The contents of this entity can represent a numeric or character values.
10 Unlike a SAS data file, this type of SAS data structure creates a logical relationship between one or more data sets.
12 What is the name of a collection of data values describing an object?
13 The name of the file containing SAS statements that are automatically executed each time the SAS System is invoked.
15 The name of the SAS environment consisting of the SAS Display Manager System and online Help facility.
18 Another name for an observation.

SouthEast SAS Users Group

P. O. Box 8345
Clearwater, FL 33758
Email: President@sesug.org

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If you would like to be a part of the next Informant, we always welcome articles, perspectives, and new ideas. Contact the editor, Gary E. Schlegelmilch, via e-mail at editor@sesug.org. Advertising information is also available upon request; contact Imelda Go at igo@ed.sc.gov.

SouthEast SAS® Users Group

www.sesug.org

Editor's Afterwords

"Life is what happens to you when you are busy making other plans."- John Lennon

Looking back over the year so far had me thinking about this quote. Friends, people I care about, lost loved ones this summer. People had to leave good jobs they liked, others left not-so-good jobs and got better ones—or ones they thought were better, anyway. People moved, changed schools, changed their lives… and how many knew all those changes were coming? Or knew when they'd get here? Not many, I'll guess.

We all try to prepare for what's happening next. We have a life insurance policy, a health care plan, maybe a few extra dollars in a savings account or in a safety deposit box somewhere (or perhaps a cigar box under the bed). We'd like to think we're ready for the sun to come up tomorrow, and can handle whatever happens.

It doesn't always work that way.

In my case, a very good friend found himself inexplicably and against-all-medical-odds ill. I thought that I was going to lose him. It could still happen—he's on the mend, but not out of the woods yet.

That, I wasn't ready for. I'm still not. Not sure I can get ready for it, and not even sure I want to.

But it reminded me of something important. I think we all have a book on the shelf we've been meaning to read, an old friend we've been meaning to write or call, or a letter we've been meaning to answer. Perhaps someone you only see at SESUG, but have been meaning to get contact info on so you can go have dinner some time. Well, today is "some time" - go make the time to read the book, call or write the friend; make the time to sit down and spend some time with someone.

After all—who knows where that person—or you—might be tomorrow?

- ges

SouthEast SAS Users Group Executive Council (active membership)

Maribeth H. Johnson (President)
Medical College of Georgia
Augusta, GA
majohnso@mcg.edu

Marje Fecht (Vice-President)
Prowerk Consulting LLC
Cape Coral, FL
marje.fecht@prowerk.com

Jennifer Waller (Secretary, 2008 Conference Co-Chair)
Medical College of Georgia
Martinez, GA
jwaller@mail.mcg.edu

Deborah Skinner (Treasurer)
Apex, NC
Deborah_L_skinner@hotmail.com

Edward Heaton (2007 Conference Co-Chair)
Westat
Rockville, MD
EdHeaton@Westat.com

Joy Smith (2007 Conference Co-Chair)
NC State University
Raleigh, NC
joy_smith@ncsu.edu

Peter Eberhardt (2008 Conference Co-Chair)
Fernwood Consulting Group Inc.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
peter@fernwood.ca

Bob Bolen (2009 Conference Co-Chair)
Southern Company
Atlanta, GA
bebolen2southernco.com

Carol Martell (2009 Conference Co-Chair)
UNC - Highway Safety Research Center
Chapel Hill, NC
carol_martell@unc.edu

Debbie Buck
D. B. & P. Associates
Houston, TX
debbie.buck@comcast.net

Imelda Go
SC Dept of Education
Columbia, SC
igo@ed.sc.gov

F. Joseph Kelley
University of Georgia
Athens, GA
jkelley@uga.edu

David Maddox
Regions Financial Corporation
Birmingham, AL
gmaddox2@bellsouth.net

George Matthews
University of Georgia
Athens, GA
gmatthew@uga.edu

Gary E. Schlegelmilch
US Citizenship & Immigration Services
Woodbridge VA
sesug03@juno.com