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## Who We Are

We, the Vancouver SAS Users Group, are an informal group of SAS users in the Vancouver area who wish to periodically meet and share their knowledge. There are no fees to join – we simply meet twice annually (spring and fall) to have a half day of presentations, networking, and fun! Keep informed of our activities at [www.sas.com/vancouver](http://www.sas.com/vancouver).

## Newsletter Inputs

This newsletter gives information for/by the local Vancouver SAS community. If you would like to provide input to a future newsletter, please email Nathaniel Derby at [nderby@sprodata.com](mailto:nderby@sprodata.com). We would love to hear from you!

## Executive Team

### President:

Colleen McGahan  
(BC Cancer Agency)

### Vice President:

Mei Chong  
(BC Centre for Disease Control)

### Other Members:

Nathaniel Derby (Statis Pro)  
Peter Hruby (HSBC)  
Karim Rajwani (ICBC)  
Cathy Rupp (BC Hydro)

## Executive Update

Colleen McGahan: [cmcgahan@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:cmcgahan@bccancer.bc.ca)

We had another exceptional meeting back in the fall of 2008 where we had record numbers for registrations, attendees and completed evaluation forms. We introduced the first edition of the newsletter and our first networking exercise. Feedback from the evaluation forms showed over a 90% consensus that both these items were useful and should be continued.

In moving forward, we are investigating reaching users within the BI area. There are very few attendees who seem to use the SAS BI tools, but we are sure there are plenty of BI users out there, since it certainly seems to be the ‘hot’ topic these days. In doing this, we will be careful not to dilute the amount of useful information we provide to each of you who are currently attending our meeting. Another area we would like to improve and expand on is encouraging and increasing communication amongst users, not just here in Vancouver, but also across the different groups throughout Canada. There will be multiple benefits to this of which a few will be; pooling of resources for presentations and speakers, sharing ideas and learning about activities in other user groups, and having an extra resource for specialist knowledge.

We would like to say thank you to Saida Zardi for her input into the user group for the short time she was a member of the Executive Team.

Over the last few years, the Vancouver SAS User Group has come a long way. That is in part to the increased involvement of you, the SAS users. As always, we continue to encourage you to get involved by contributing in any small way you can, whether it be giving us your feedback via the evaluation forms, providing a small article for the newsletter, or presenting at a meeting. We need as much help as possible.

We hope you enjoy this second edition of the newsletter.

## TIPS & TRICKS: Changing ‘.’ to Blank for Missing Numeric Values

Cathy Rupp: [cathy.rupp@bchydro.com](mailto:cathy.rupp@bchydro.com)

When you export your data into Excel or output into your report, you will see ‘.’ if the numeric data is missing. Do you feel annoyed because you can’t work in Excel using ‘.’ and the report doesn’t look nice? Here is a very helpful option that you can use to replace the ‘.’ to blank before you export your data:

```
OPTIONS MISSING = '';
```

Psst! Although we will decide on a new name for the Vancouver Users Group today (May 6), we still have no name for the newsletter! Any ideas? Please submit them to Nathaniel Derby at [nderby@sprodata.com](mailto:nderby@sprodata.com).

Also, do you know a SAS tip or trick to share with us? Contributing to the newsletter not only helps us, but also lets you show off your expertise, impress your boss/friends, make yourself known, or just feel good about contributing and sharing something! It can be anything new, small or useful and the editor is always willing to help you with the grammar. Interested? Contact Nathaniel at the above email address for more information.

## Meet the Executive Team

The second of a multi-part series

*Karim Rajwani* is currently the manager of customer analytics in the Strategic Marketing Division at ICBC. He has been a SAS user since 1992, and has his education in statistics, computer science, and economics. In his (extremely limited) spare time, he volunteers with the Aga Khan Foundation Canada and Focus Humanitarian Assistance Canada.

*Cathy Rupp* works as a research analyst for BC Hydro Power Smart. She began learning and using SAS in 1998, when she worked for SAS Institute in China. Cathy loves numbers, and SAS helps feed her number addiction by allowing her to explain real world issues using numbers. She is often found showing her coworkers that SAS can be used to do almost anything. Outside of work Cathy competes in the Vancouver squash league, and enjoys hiking and camping in the beautiful nature around BC.

### TIPS & TRICKS: Deleting All Data Sets from a Directory

Colleen McGahan: [cmcgahan@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:cmcgahan@bccancer.bc.ca)

To delete a data set from a directory, either of these methods will work:

```
PROC DATASETS LIB=foo;          PROC SQL;
  DELETE blah;                  DROP TABLE foo.blah;
QUIT;                           QUIT;
```

That is, we are deleting the data set `blah` from the `foo` directory. `PROC DATASETS` is a SAS procedure, while `PROC SQL` is a SAS procedure which accepts SQL code. To delete *all* data sets from a directory, we can do the following:

```
PROC DATASETS LIB=blah KILL MEMTYPE=data;
QUIT;
```

The option `MEMTYPE=data` restricts the deletion to data files, which is important! Without this option, you would delete *all files of any type* within this directory – such as the formats in your `work` library.

### TIPS & TRICKS: Sound at the End of a Program

Peter Hruby / Nathaniel Derby: [peter\\_hruby@hsbc.ca](mailto:peter_hruby@hsbc.ca) / [nderby@sprodata.com](mailto:nderby@sprodata.com)

When running PC SAS on Windows, call `sound(x,y)` produces a note of frequency `x` for a duration of `y` milliseconds. Thus, we can define the macro `endJob` as the following, which produces some music:

```
%MACRO endJob;

  DATA _NULL_;
    CALL SOUND ( 500, 80 );
    CALL SOUND ( 650, 80 );
    CALL SOUND ( 850, 80 );
    CALL SOUND ( 1000, 200 );
    CALL SOUND ( 850, 50 );
    CALL SOUND ( 1000, 200 );
  RUN;

%MEND endJob;
```

Adding `%endJob` to the end of a program notifies us with this sound when the program is done. This can be useful if you're doing something else (email, solitaire, reading the *insights* eNewsletter, ...) while the program is running.

### TIPS & TRICKS: Sorting Your Data Faster

Cathy Rupp:

[cathy.rupp@bchydro.com](mailto:cathy.rupp@bchydro.com)

When sorting large datasets, `PROC SORT` can take a very long time. One trick you can use is adding the `NOEQUALS` option in the `PROC SORT` statement.

```
PROC SORT DATA=blah NOEQUALS;
  BY id;
RUN;
```

If option is not specified, SAS not only sorts the data set by ID, but also keeps the original sequence for the rest of the variable for the same ID. But if `NOEQUALS` is on, SAS uses the most efficient sorting method ignoring the original sequence of other variables. The speed can be improved by at least 20%.

In SAS 9.2, there is a global option that can do this too and you don't need to specify the option for every `PROC SORT` step:

```
OPTIONS NOSORTEQUALS;
```

Our next meeting will be on **October 7, 2009**. Check out [www.sas.com/vancouver](http://www.sas.com/vancouver) later for more information!

The **2009 Pharmaceutical Industry SAS Users Group** (PharmaSUG) conference will be held on May 31 - June 3 in Portland, Oregon. Information is at [www.pharmasug.org](http://www.pharmasug.org).

The **2009 Pacific Northwest SAS Users Group** (PNWSUG) conference will be held on September 27-29 in Portland, Oregon. **Student scholarships are available**, with applications due on May 25. Information is at [www.pnwsug.org](http://www.pnwsug.org).

SAS is holding its **M2009 Data Mining Conference** on October 26-27 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Information can be found at [www.sas.com/m2009](http://www.sas.com/m2009).