USE OF A DATE MACRO AT THE BEGINNING OF PROGRAMS RATHER THAN FIND AND REPLACE IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS
Joseph Pasquale
Carpenter Technology Corporation
Reading Pennsylvania

One of my tasks at work is to assist new SAS users in getting started. EVERY new user begins by getting familiar with the data step and PROC PRINT. In short order, the user finds that extracting data for a given date range becomes necessary and of course, the date range needs to be printed in the title.

A typical data step looks like this ...

```
   81193 TITLE2 'BASED ON SUPPLEMENT CODES 24888, 26888, 27888';
   89985 TITLE2 'PROGRAM RUN DIARY 39885';
```

Sooner or later the data needs to be printed with a PROC PRINT section ...

```
   89986 TITLE; 
   89987 TITLE2 'SREOO 011 SUPPLEMENT CODES 24888, 26888, 27888'; 
```

As you can see, there are two places in this example (lines 8 and 96) where beginning and ending dates of the range are referenced. All of these referenced dates must be located and typed over when the program is re-run for another date period. The process can be time consuming and opens the user up to more typo opportunities.

Once a user has reached this point, I like to suggest a program change that introduces them to the beginning of MACRO processing, specifically %LET.

Here is what is added to the beginning of the program ...

```
   %LET SDATE=833114; %LET EDATE=100114;
```

%LET will put the SDATE and EDATE values into memory and pull them out where needed elsewhere in the program.

The data step and PROC PRINT sections (lines 11 and 96) also need to be modified to utilize the values stored by %LET. Replacing the original date references with &SDATE and &EDATE is what needs to be done. Here is how the data step will look ....

```
   &SDATE="833114"; &EDATE="100114";
```

and the PROC PRINT section ....

```
   TITLE="PROGRAM RUN DIARY 39885";
```

Note that double quotes are used on lines 11 and 96.

To run the program, the user brings the program into the editor and changes the start date (SDATE) and end date (EDATE) for the range of interest. The program is then submitted in the usual fashion.