Chapter - 11 Utilities

This chapter contains information concerning use of the database utilities and other tools available in Natural Log for Windows.

11.01 Data Backup

Beware:

❑ Due to wide range of computer systems in use, the existence of malevolent computer viruses, and the fact that no hardware is completely fail-safe, the Natural Log developers make **no warranty of any mind that your data won't be corrupted or lost**. **Do regular data backups to multiple locations!**

❑ Your data is valuable! Think of how much time it will take you to manually re-enter all your data!

❑ The only protection you have is to do frequent Data-Backups, daily if possible! <u>**We cannot recover lost data for you so please do not ask**</u>.

❑ We recommend that you save Data-Backups to several different media and locations on a rotating basis in case the backup media goes bad or there is a fire or natural disaster.

> **The NL database is very large and should <u>NOT</u> be backed up to floppy discs. It takes too many discs and is inherently unreliable. We recommend you use USB-Drives, Zip-Discs, re-writeable CD's, or tape backup devices.**

Data Backup

In MultiUser LAN environments, no other user can have the NL database open during this procedure. To begin the EXTERNAL Data-Backup, from the Main screen:

❑ Click **[Data][BackUp]**
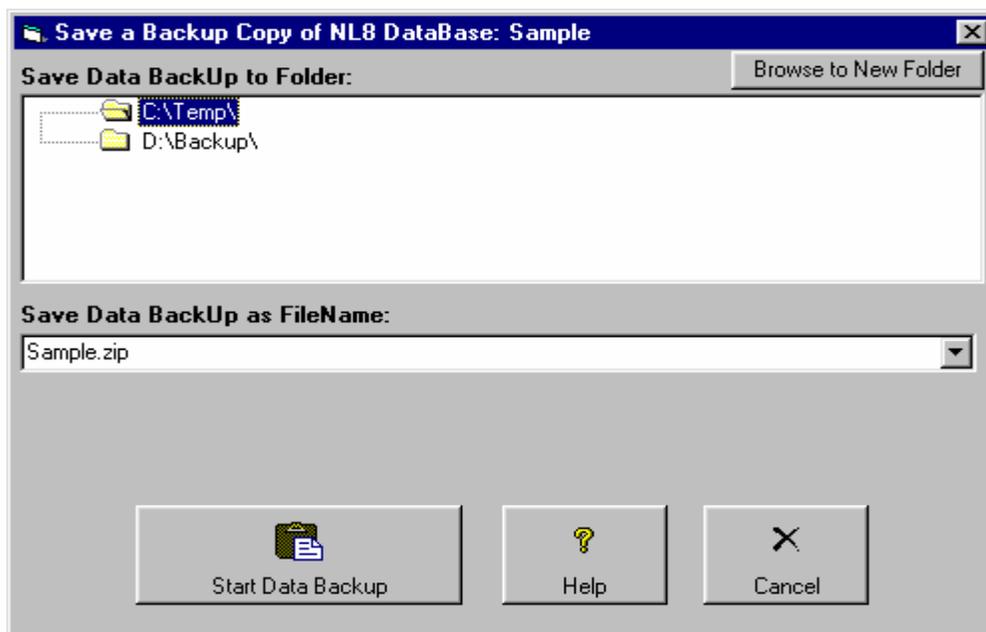
❑ Select the Natural Log Database to be backed up.

❑ Select the folder to which you want to backup the data or click **[Browse to New Folder]** to add a new folder to the list. You may select type of media such as floppy disc, USB-Drive, Zip-Disc™, or send the Data-Backup file to a folder on another computer across a Local Area Network.

❑ Click **[Start Data Backup]** to begin the backup.

Natural Log will report whether it successfully created the Data-Backup file. Natural Log uses standard pkZip™ data compression to reduce storage requirements for the Data-Backup files.

See Special Note for USB-Drive and Zip-Disc backups on next page.

11.01 Data Backup (cont)

Special Note for USB-Drive and Zip-Disc™ Backups

Natural Log sees USB-Drives [if formatted as floppy discs] and all Zip-Discs as "removable media" and will enable the "multi-volume" support needed to backup large files onto multiple discs. This causes all existing files in the root directory of the USB-Drive or Zip-Disc to be deleted each time a new backup is done. If you want to backup several Natural Log database files to one USB-Drive or Zip-Disc, create a folder on the USB-Drive or Zip-Disc and do all backups into that folder instead of the root directory. This prevents deletion of the pre-existing files on the USB-Drive or Zip-Disc during the backup of additional databases.
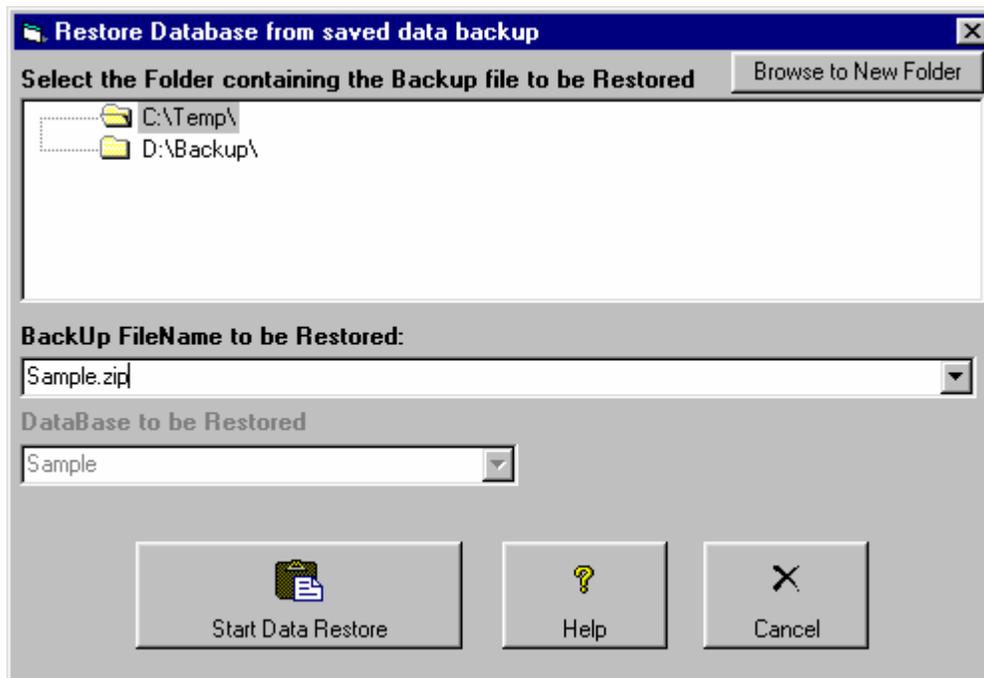
11.02 Data Restore

Beware:

❑   You should ONLY consider a Data-Restore if your database is hopelessly corrupted.

❑   Data-Restore will return your data to its status as of the last Data-Backup date.

❑   It will <u>erase any data</u> from the restored database that was entered since the last Data-Backup of that database.

Data-Restore

In MultiUser LAN environments, no other user can have the NL database open during this procedure. To begin the Data-Restore, from the Main screen:

❑   Click **[Data][Restore]**

❑   Select the file folder containing the backup file to be restored.

❑   Select the filename to be restored.

❑   Verify that the correct database will be restored as listed in the top box on the screen.

❑   Click **[Start Data Restore]** to begin the data restore.

11.03 Database Repair

<div style="border:1px solid black">

Some database corruption problems can <u>not </u>be repaired so it is always vitally important that you do frequent <u>Data Backups</u>!

</div>

Corrupted Database

When you attempt to open or compact a database that has been corrupted, a run-time error usually occurs. In some situations, however, a corrupted database may not be detected, and no error occurs, but the database acts oddly. Database corruption can occur if:

❑ The Natural Log program is closed unexpectedly because of a power outage or computer problem.

❑ Microsoft Windows doesn't have a chance to write data caches to disk because it freezes or is restarted in a hard reboot.

❑ In MultiUser LAN environments, if the network connection is prematurely terminated.

To avoid corrupt databases, always do a normal exit from Natural Log. In some cases, power supplies that can't be interrupted may be necessary to prevent accidental data loss during power fluctuations.
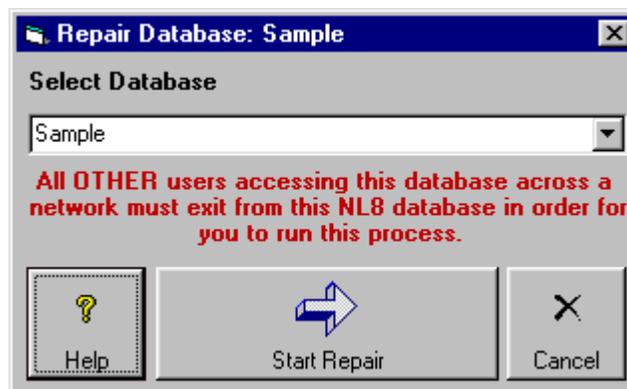
Database Repair

This function attempts to repair a database that was marked as possibly corrupt by an incomplete write operation or other problems with your hardware or operating system.

❑ The Data Repair function attempts to validate all system tables and all indexes.
❑ **Any data that can't be repaired is discarded**.
❑ If the database can't be repaired, a run-time error occurs.
❑ After repairing a database, it's also a good idea to compact the database using the **[Database Utilities][Compact Database]** function method to defragment the file and to recover disk space.

Note: In a multi-user environment, all other users must exit Natural Log database before data repair can be performed. **This process takes a LONG TIME, several minutes even on a fast computer. Do not be fooled in thinking your computer has locked up. Do NOT reboot or otherwise interrupt this process.** This process will create massive traffic on your local area network if run on a workstation so it is recommended you <u>not</u> run this process over a network. Data compaction should be done only on the server [the computer on which the database is stored] in order to minimize network traffic.

To begin Data Repair, click **[Data][Database Utilitites][Repair Database]** from the main Natural Log screen and select the Database to be repaired.

❑ Select the database to be repaired. If you have multiple databases, each must be repaired separately.

❑ Click **[Start Repair]** when ready.

11.04 Compact Database

It is vitally important that you do a <u>Data Backup</u> before doing this Compact Database function in case something goes wrong during this process!

Compact Database

After many data operations such as generating and rejecting logs or entering and deleting transactions, the Natural Log database may become rather large and fragmented. This can also cause database performance to become markedly slower. You may want to occasionally use the **[Data][Database Utilities][Compact Database]** function from the main Natural Log screen to defragment the file to improve performance and reduce its size to recover disk space.

We recommend doing a data compaction once every 3 months or so to keep your NL database(s) as small and fast as possible. Do a [Data][Backup] first!

Note: In a multi-user environment, all other users must exit Natural Log database before data compaction can be performed. This process will create massive traffic on your local area network if run on a workstation so it is recommended you <u>not</u> run this process over a network. Data compaction should be done only on the server [the computer on which the database is stored] in order to minimize network traffic.

❑   Select the database to be compacted. **Note**: If you have multiple NL databases, each must be compacted separately.

❑   Click **[Start Compaction]** when ready.

This process can take a VERY long time, several minutes even on a fast computer! Please do no nothing to interrupt this process even when it appears your computer has 'hung up'. Do NOT reboot, or use [alt][ctrl][del] until you get the notice that the process is complete.

11.05 Adobe Acrobat™ PDF Writer

NL includes a component licensed from Amyuni Technologies that allows NL to create Adobe Acrobat PDF files. **This component only works from within NL and will not work from other applications**. PDF files are a very common means to share printed material via e-mail. The recipient only needs to download a free copy of the Adobe Acrobat reader [version 4 or later] from www.adobe.com. Then your customer can receive any NL printed material from you by e-mail [such as order confirmation, invoices, statements, etc.] and print it in exactly the same format as you originally created it.

> A printer named **Natural Log PDF Writer** is installed into Windows by the Natural Log installer program during Natural Log installation. This printer will appear in your list of printers in Windows control panel. **Do not rename this printer or you will lose the ability to create PDF document files from Natural Log!**

Creating a PDF print file

Using this PDF component is very easy. When you go to print anything from NL, you will see printer selection dialogue box including a printer named **Natural Log PDF Writer**.
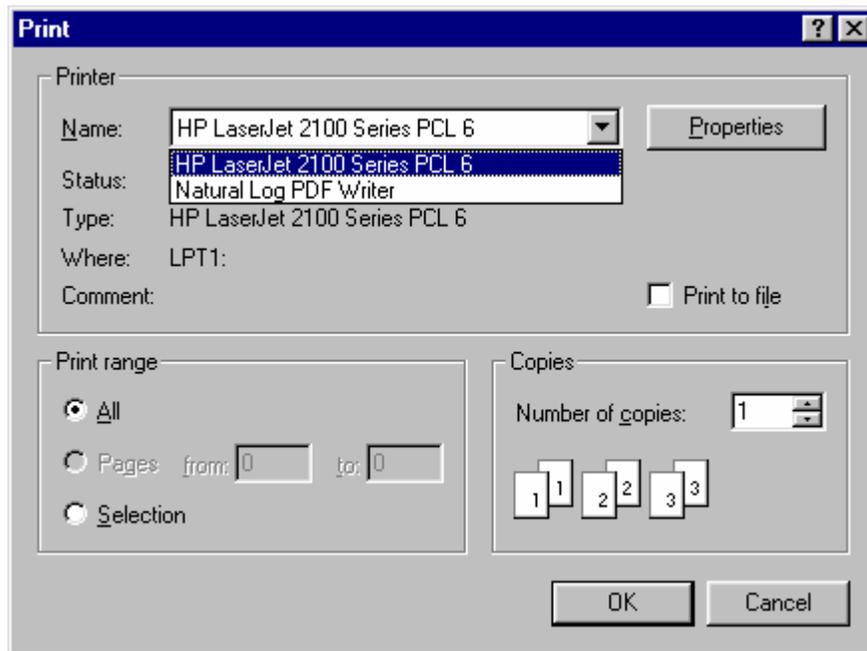
All you have to do is select the **Natural Log PDF Writer** as the output printer OR click **Print to File**. Either way, a PDF file will be created instead of printing a hard copy. This works with any NL printed output but is particularly useful for e-mailing order confirmations, invoices, and statements in a common format that your customers can print and you can be sure all print formatting and graphics will be preserved.

E-mail a PDF file

If you have e-mail capability on the NL computer, you can e-mail PDF files directly from NL order confirmation screen, invoice screen, and statement screen. Just click the **[e-mail]** button on one for those screens and your e-mail program will start up and send a PDF copy of the displayed document. Also see e-mail NL Documents

11.06 Tools - Calendar & Calculator

The tools on the following pages are available from the **[Tools]** menu on many NL screens. Note that some items are not available on all screens if they do not apply to that screen.
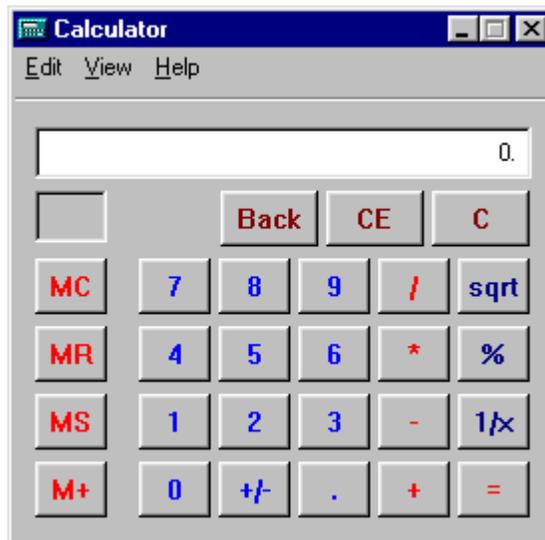
Calendar

This will display a small calendar that you can configure to display any <u>Calendar Month</u> or <u>Standard Broadcast Month</u>. If you need to see the corresponding day-of-year for any day of the month hold the mouse completely still over the date cell [do not click the mouse button].
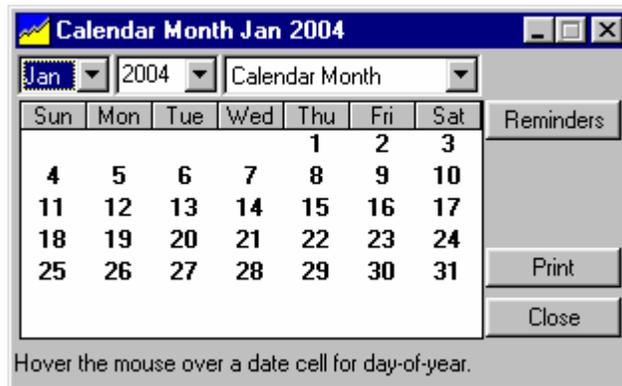
Calculator

This will display the Windows calculator.

11.07 Tools - Reminders

This will display the NL Reminders for a date or range of dates. Reminders are items that are date-sensitive and you can enter them so NL will warn you on the specified date to take some action. This can be used as a simple "Contact-Manager" as well by entering reminders for an Account Rep to contact a customer on a specific date.
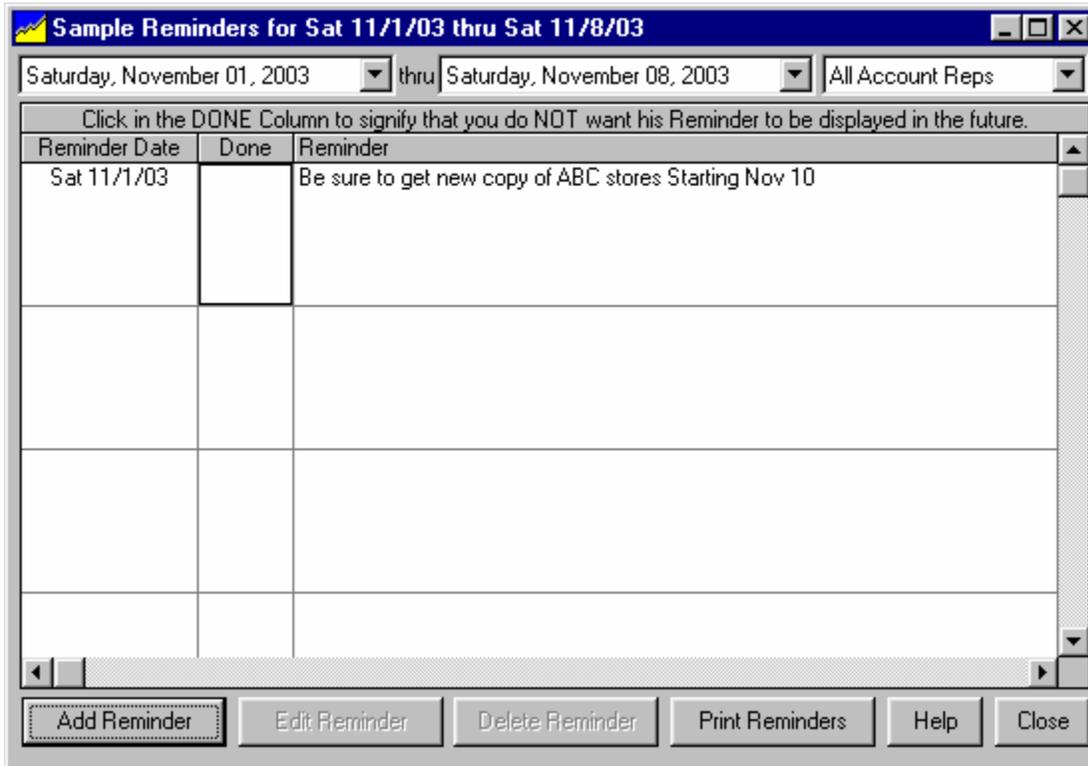
Within a Customer Account

On the Customer Memo tab, click the **[Contact Manager / Account Date Reminders]** button.

Customer Reminder Example Assume your salesman has been told to return on a specific date to discuss placing a broadcast order. You can set up a reminder and on that date when NL starts up, it will warn you (and / or the Account Rep) and display the contacts needing to be done that day.

Within an Broadcast Order

On Order Memo tab, click the **[Contact Manager / Account Date Reminders]** button.

Order Reminder Example Assume you need to pick up new copy for an order on October 13. You can set up a reminder and on that date when NL starts up, it will warn you (and / or the Account Rep) and display the item(s) needing to be done that day.
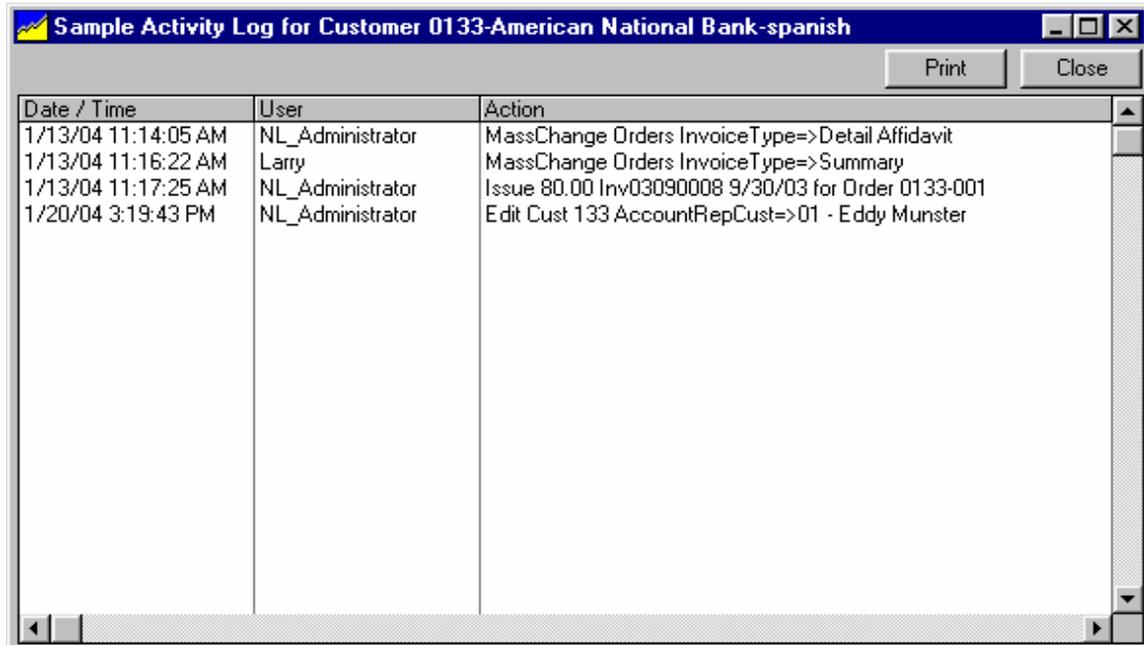
Generic NL system reminders

Reminders that may not belong to a specific customer or order can be entered from the main NL screen under **[Tools][Reminders]**.

Generic NL Reminder Example Assume you need to pick up new copy for an order on October 13. You can set up a reminder and on that date when NL starts up, it will warn you (and / or the Account Rep) and display the item(s) needing to be done that day.

11.08 Tools - Activity Log / User Log

Activity Log

NL maintains an internal log of changes made to customer accounts, orders, logs, and account receivable transactions posted by each user. The **[Activity Log]** under the **[Tools]** menu on the appropriate customer, order, transaction, or log screen allows you to view the change history for the displayed item and the dates / times the changes were performed and (if <u>user Logon is required</u>) the user who performed the action.
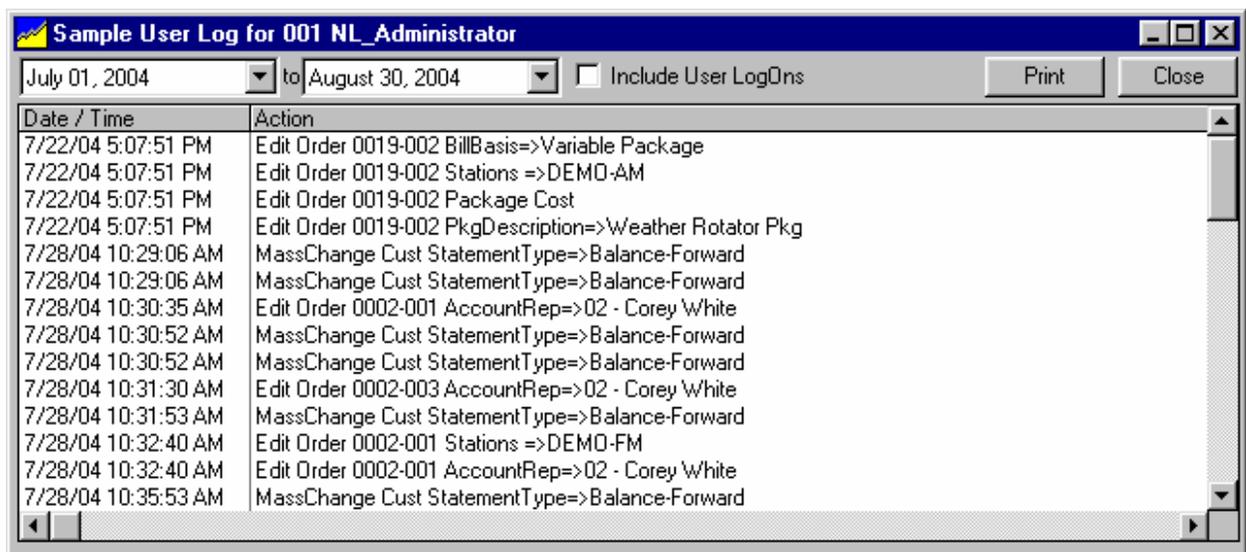

User Log

NL maintains an internal log of changes made to customer accounts, orders, logs, and account receivable transactions posted by each user. To view all activity of a user within a date range, under the **[Setup][Administrator Controls][User Permissions]** menu, select the user and click **[View User Log]**
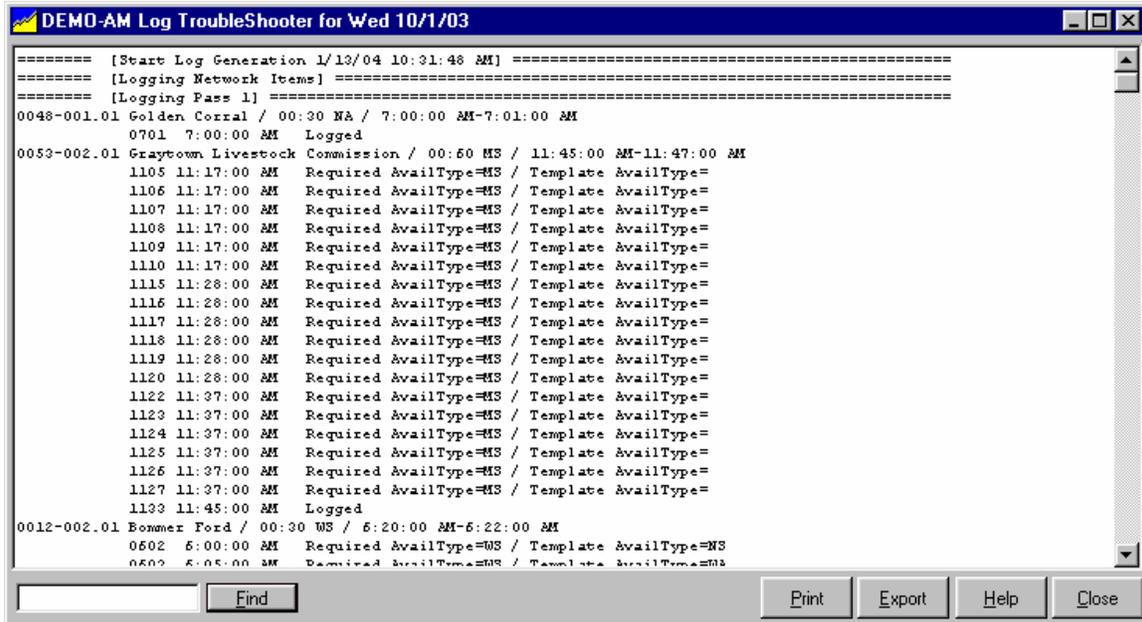
11.09 Tools - Log TroubleShooter

Log Troubleshooter

When generating a new Log, NL keeps a record of its log actions for troubleshooting. This Activity Log is a plain text list of every item it tried to log and [if not logged] why it could not log the item in each avail slot it tried to use. You can view this only on the Log Editor screen using the **[Tools][Log TroubleShooter]** Log Editor menu choice.

```
DEMO-AM Log TroubleShooter for Wed 10/1/03                                      _ □ X
======= [Start Log Generation 1/13/04 10:31:48 AM] ==================================
======= [Logging Network Items] ====================================================
======= [Logging Pass 1] ===========================================================
0048-001.01 Golden Corral / 00:30 NA / 7:00:00 AM-7:01:00 AM
            0701  7:00:00 AM   Logged
0053-002.01 Graytown Livestock Commission / 00:60 MS / 11:45:00 AM-11:47:00 AM
            1105 11:17:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1106 11:17:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1107 11:17:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1108 11:17:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1109 11:17:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1110 11:17:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1115 11:28:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1116 11:28:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1117 11:28:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1118 11:28:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1119 11:28:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1120 11:28:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1122 11:37:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1123 11:37:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1124 11:37:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1125 11:37:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1126 11:37:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1127 11:37:00 AM   Required AvailType=MS / Template AvailType=
            1133 11:45:00 AM   Logged
0012-002.01 Bommer Ford / 00:30 WS / 5:20:00 AM-5:22:00 AM
            0502  5:00:00 AM   Required AvailType=WS / Template AvailType=WS
            0503  5:05:00 AM   Required AvailType=WS / Template AvailType=WS

[_____] [ Find ]                          [ Print ] [ Export ] [ Help ] [ Close ]
```

11.10 Configuring On-Screen Browsers

Natural Log contains several **Browsers** that allow the user to quickly view and access items such as Customer Accounts, Broadcast Orders, Copy Manager, etc. These Browser lists can be easily configured as described below.
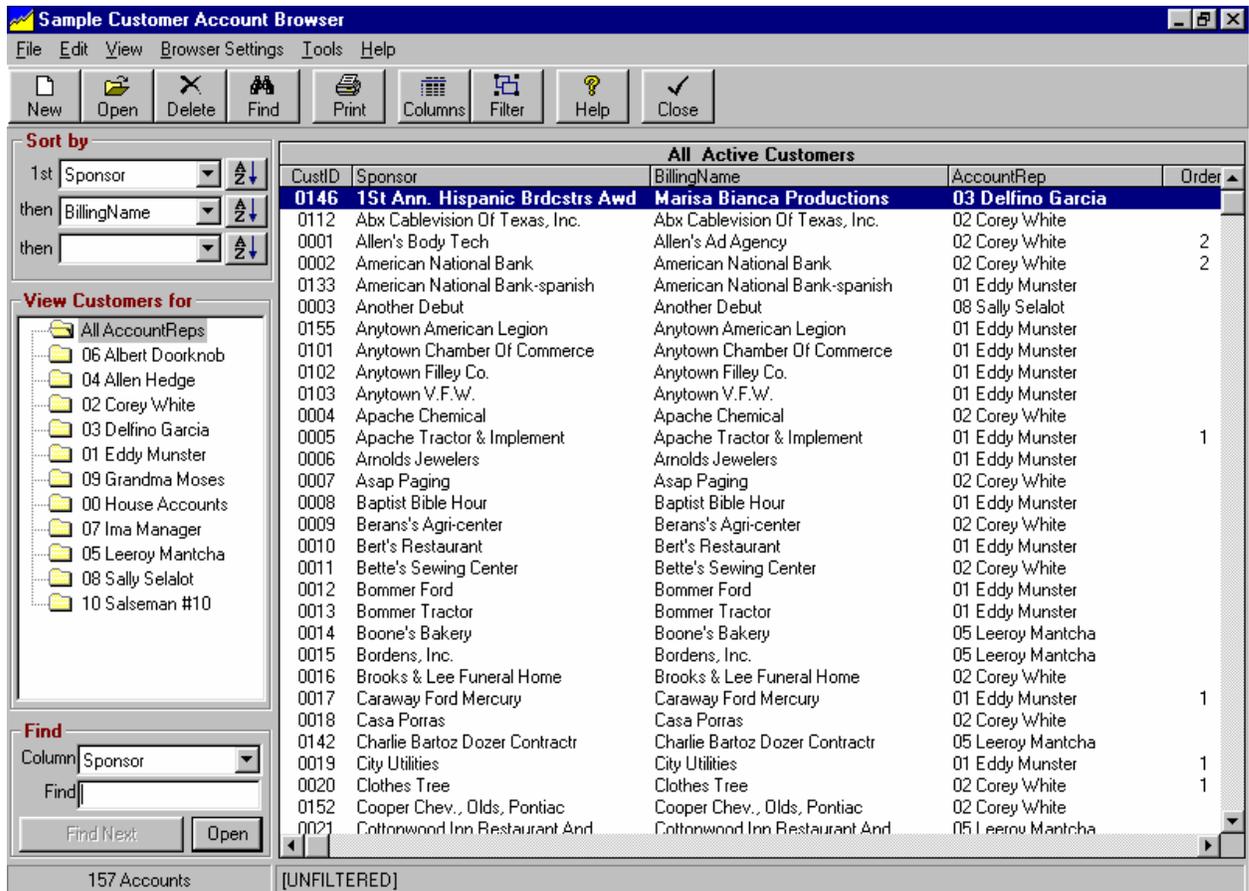
Browser Sorting

In any Browser, you may click on any column heading to sort the list by that column. You may also select the columns from the dropdown boxes on the left side of the screen.

❑ **First Sort** Use the first Sort dropdown box to select the data column to be used as the primary sort column for the list.

❑ **Ascending or Descending** The buttons to right of the Sort boxes allow you to sort in Ascending or Descending order. Up-arrow means ascending, down-arrow means descending.

❑ **Secondary Sort** Any items with matching entries in the primary Sort data column are then sorted by the column selected in the second Sort dropdown box.

❑ **Third Sort** Any items with matching entries in the primary and secondary Sort data columns are then sorted by the column selected in the third Sort dropdown box.

Browser Filtering See section 11.11 of this manual.

Browser Display Columns See section 11.12 of this manual.

11.11 - On-Screen Browser Filtering

On the browser screen, click the **[Filter]** button to change the Browser list filtering. After making any changes click the **[Apply]** button on the Brower design screen to apply the filter to the Browser list.

Filter Field Use the dropdown box to select the data field to be filtered.

Comparison Use this dropdown box to select the field to be filtered:

- Most of the comparison operators are common arithmetic operators like = for equal, > for greater than and < for less than, <> means not equal to

- IN means that the filtered field must be INCLUDED in the list you print in the Filter Value box for the item to be included in the list. **Example**: You set up a filter of AccountRep IN 1,2,5. This would list all items for AccountReps 1,2 and 5 only. Be sure to include commas between the values in the Filter Value box if you use the IN comparison.

- NOT IN means the items would be included only if their filter field is NOT IN the Filter Value box. See Above.

- LIKE means the filtered field must be 'like' the Filter Value. **Example**: If you select Sponsor LIKE Wal* you will get a list including all items for Sponsors starting with Wal followed by any other characters (e.g. WallyMart, Walls R Us, Walts' Place, etc.) . Be sure to put the * at the end of the Filter Value.

- BETWEEN means the data field must be like the between 2 values in the Filter value box. Be sure to put AND between the values in the Filter Value Box. Example: If you select Sponsor BETWEEN A AND C you will get a list including all items with Sponsor names starting with the letters A,B, or C.

Filter Text This text box is where you enter the value for the filtering.

AND or OR Only if you want to add another filter restriction, click the **[AND]** or **[OR]** selection on the next line and repeat the above entries for the second filter line. Continue for as many filter lines as you need.

11.12 On-Screen Browser Columns

To set the columns to be included in a Browser list, click the **[Columns]** button on the Browser screen. After making changes, click the **[Apply]** button to refresh the Browser list
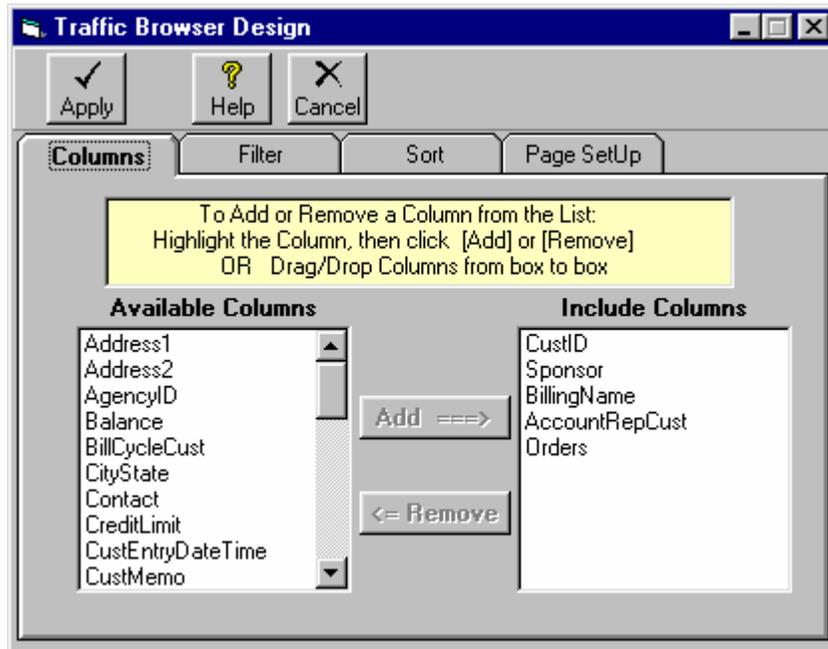
Selecting Columns
You will see 2 boxes on the column selection screen.

- One is **Available Columns** and the other is **Included Columns**.

- You may drag and drop the columns back and forth between these boxes to either include or exclude a column from the report or Browser list.

Setting Column Widths
Directly on a Browser screen, you may drag the column separators left or right to adjust the column widths. Natural Log will remember the most recent column settings.

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