

December 2003



NIBBLES & BITS

Tuesday, December 9, 6:30 p.m. at Sunny Hills Racquet Club, Fullerton — Bring a friend!

DECEMBER PROGRAM

Annual Holiday Fundraising Raffle is here!

by Mike Lyons, ORCOPUG President

The Christmas raffle has always been the club's biggest money maker. It is the only meeting we have where you have to be a member to participate. At the meeting, if you don't see your name at the badge table, it means your dues have lapsed. Everyone needs to wear their name tags to place bids.

Members may download the list of raffle prizes in PDF format from the link on our website. Your password is needed. Print the list, or pick up one at the meeting. (Expired members may contact Charlie Moore, charlie@orcopug.org, for a special link to the raffle list.)

Rules of the Raffle —

All of the raffle items will be out on display as close to 6:30 p.m. as possible. Each item will have a yellow sticky note with a number on it (corresponding to the number on the raffle insert page) and a dish in front of it. Once all of the items are displayed, we will name each vendor and give a brief description of each donated item.

Ticket sales should start around 7:30 p.m. Tickets are one dollar each. There are two pieces to each ticket. Put one side of the ticket in the bowl and keep the stub. Please keep the ticket stubs you hold intact. It makes easier to



The link to download Santa's PDF list of raffle prizes is at www.orcopug.org

check your numbers for winners. Members can put as many tickets as they choose into the bowls in front of each item. All tickets will be deposited into the bowls by 8 p.m.

At 8 p.m., we will check the bowls and add "ORCOPUG" ticket(s) to any bowl with less than five tickets until the count hits five. Our club ticket will be a different color for easy identification. If a club ticket is drawn, the club wins the prize and it is set aside for use in the monthly raffles. (HINT: If you really want something, and yours are the only tickets in the bowl, make sure you put in at least five tickets).

"Review" Prizes—

One or two prizes will require a review. These items will have an "R" on the yellow sticky note in addition to a raffle number. If you do not want to write a review, or make a meeting presentation, then do not put a ticket into the bowl for the prize. We have guidelines to help you write your review on our web site. Reviews are due within ninety days. If you don't turn in a review, you will not be eligible for future monthly drawings until it is turned in.

Anyone with a delinquent review as of the December meeting cannot win a review item—even if their ticket is drawn. If you owe a review, hurry and get it to Terry Schiele.

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Remember last month I told you the Cruzer Mini by San Disk doesn't need software? Well, that is true — except if you are using Windows 98 Second Edition.



This OS doesn't have drivers available for it on the USB port. You'll find the links to download the drivers at: http://www.sandisk.com/tech/s_downloads.asp. Two links refer to the MB size of the storage device: Choose either Cruzer Mini: SDCZ2- 128 or SDCZ2- 256 and follow the instructions for download and installation. It just takes a minute or so, but it's necessary for the older OS.

O'Reilly Books, through its user group coordinator, Marsee Henon, has been a super supporter of our user group and has donated a selection of books this year for our holiday raffle.

I'll personally recommend one of the books, because I have already read it.

PC Annoyances by Steve Bass is a book that makes you chuckle even as you reach for your computer to make the tweaks and fixes he suggests. Bass is a Contributing Editor to *PC World*, founder and president of the Pasadena PC Users Group, and also is a co-founder of APCUG.

He is an honest-to-goodness pc icon while remaining an enthusiastic computer user and a nice man. I hope you're lucky and win his book at the raffle. If not, don't stop to think about it. Get it from O'Reilly and use your 20% discount!

APCUG, by the way, provides several services to its user group members. One of those is handled by our own Judy Taylour, from Southern California and president of Santa Clarita Valley UG. Read about it on page 4.

Linda Gonse,
editor@orcopug.org

Letters

Goodbye to Goodbye Spam

At the November ORCOPUG meeting, Jeff Schwartz gave an interesting presentation for a subscription service to largely reduce the volume of Spam one receives. I questioned him repeatedly about his service working when I was not able to access my e-mail from remote computers. (For more money, the ISP would enable that feature.) Jeff assured me they had good programmers and had solved that problem.

I decided to give it a try and the registration failed because, guess what, GoodbyeSpam was not able to access my mail account. I then sent Jeff an email describing the problem. No response. Then I realized the serious limitation of this program. His mail goes through GoodbyeSpam and I am not a preferred correspondent so my message would have been quarantined and a message sent to me to verify that I am not a spammer. If such a message was sent, I never noticed it. Either my ISP filtered out his message, or whatever message he returned was not obvious to me and I junked it. Were I to use the service, my correspondents would be in the same situation as I was trying to contact Jeff and that is unacceptable to me.

Richard D. Tooley
tooley@alum.mit.edu

Thanks for the nifty review!

Thanks for taking the time to read through my book and write such a nifty review on O'Reilly's site. I read it this morning and it's terrific.

BTW, here's something back for you: Remember Magellan, that terrific DOS search, cum-file manager, cum-viewer program from the 90s? It's back—I saw it at Comdex—and it's faster, better, and slicker. Grab a copy at x1.com.

Steve Bass
Contributing editor, *PC World*
steve_bass@pcworld.com

(See the *PC Annoyances* reviews on pages 7 and 8 of this issue. — LG)

How to choose a DVD writer...

Thank you for the informative and interesting article this month (*Users still need to know more about popular, new DVD technology*). We have printed it in our November's SCUG Report.

We are located directly across the river from Port Huron, MI., and as a matter of fact COMP is our sister

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The opinions expressed herein are the writers. They are not reflective of the Orange County IBM PC Users' Group position, and are not endorsed by inclusion in this newsletter.

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Include your listing here so our members know where to send you email. Send your name and email address to: editor@orcopug.org.

Got a new address or ISP?

Don't miss newsletters or announcements! Send your new information to Charlie Moore, Treasurer/Membership Chairman, charlie@orcopug.org.

Free software for a review

by Charlie Moore

We have received VideoStudio 7 (Movie Making For Everyone) from ULEAD Systems Inc. and it includes a Reviewer's Guide. Visit their web site, www.ulead.com, for details about the program.

If you are interested in this product and agree to write a review for our newsletter, contact Terry Schiele at the next meeting or email terry@orcopug.org.

Members' renewal dates

OCTOBER — Siles Bazerman
NOVEMBER — Jim Curtin, Shelden Peck
DECEMBER — Joe Duffner, Gregory Koch, Loren Tuthill, Carl Westberg
JANUARY — Joe Gionet, Linda Gonse, LeRoy Kaump, Ted Wirtz

FEBRUARY — John Bednarski, Charles Burgwin, Mike Lyons, Charlie Moore

MARCH — Frank Balazs, Jim Brubaker, Art Bullis, Sharon Graham, Milton Gorham

Submitted by Charlie Moore

Holiday Raffle

(Continued from page 1)

Reviews are important. Many vendors require that we do a meeting presentation or publish an article in order to receive additional items. Reviews also benefit our club members. A member's review of an item carries more credibility than a magazine article because we know the member and he/she has no financial gain from the review.

This meeting is always a lot of fun, so bring your smile and your wallet/purse and join us for a great meeting.



Membership Application

New Member Renewal*

* Please fill out all the blanks below to help us keep your information updated in our database.

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone (____) _____ Work Phone (____) _____

E-mail Address _____

Areas of Interest/Comments _____

ORCOPUG meets the second Tuesday of every month starting at 6:30 p.m. Dues are \$25 per year. Please see our website at www.orcopug.org for meeting location and map, program announcements and contact information.

Make check payable to ORCOPUG

Mail to ORCOPUG, P.O. BOX 716, Brea, California 92822-0716

(Please fill out this application and mail it today!)



APCUG Advisor helps user groups TUNE IN ON EACH OTHER'S NEWS

by Linda Gonse

ORCOPUG is a member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international, platform-independent, volunteer-run nonprofit body devoted to helping user groups provide better services to their members.

One of the association's services is helping our group share information and news from the local user group level with other user groups throughout the association.

This service is headed by Judy Taylour, who gathers and emails ("pushes") useful and newsworthy articles and information each month to all APCUG editors.

Besides chairing the "PUSH" Committee, Judy is an APCUG Board of Directors Advisor for Regions 7 and 10. She is also the president of the Santa Clarita Valley PC Group and editor of its newsletter; and co-chairs the annual Southwest Regional User Group Conference with Patricia Hill.

Judy works full-time, and despite a heavy schedule, volunteered for this new task because, "As an editor I wanted the (PUSH) program/benefit to continue," she said. "During our SCRUGS meetings I had heard discussion about editors wanting shorter articles... they didn't want to

devote their newsletter to one article and I was already cruising the 'net looking for articles for my newsletter," she continued. "What I didn't predict was the length of time it takes for people to respond with permission (if at all) when I find an article that I want to include."



Judy Taylour

When her monthly collection is complete, "The articles go out to all the editors." Reaching everyone has proven to be a challenge though. "I recently found that at least 60 groups did not have an editor listed or the editor didn't have an email address. I sent emails out to all of the groups, hoping to hear back with names and addresses. I heard from less than 20, so I need to contact them again."

Greg West, editor of the SCUG Report in Ontario, Canada, receives the monthly mailings. He said, "PUSH articles are an essential tool for use in our newsletters. Not only in providing technical information, but it ties the association's member groups together as a family when we see personalized articles from other groups. We not only associate various clubs as 'fellow' members, but learn about other clubs and members within those organizations through their articles and web sites."

Greg said, "In fact, the 'PUSH articles' are the foundation of our article content, and some of the 'PUSH' authors are now 'household names' within our club."

Charlotte Semple, Los Angeles Computer Society president and editor of User Friendly, praised Judy Taylour's efforts and said, "Our readers' comments are always positive. As I venture into the new year as the new editor, I will be looking for those

PUSH articles...."

Dependable distribution, varied subject choices, good writing, and concise articles make choosing a "PUSH" article easy for me for our 12-page newsletter.

In fact, I use them so I will look better — they erase those "deadline creases" that develop between my eyebrows!

This month check out "Learning about computers: From the very beginning," a "PUSH" article. You can read it on page 9.

November raffle winners

The Secret Guide to Computers, \$10*

LeRoy Kaump, Winner

Avantrix Backup Plus, \$49*

Joe Francis, Winner

Avery Design Pro, \$19*

Linda Gonse, Not Present
Lloyd Boutwell, Winner

NotePager Phone Cable, \$19*

Dave Musser, Winner

DVO Cook'n Taste of Home, \$25*

Terry Schiele, Winner

SAMS Teach Yourself Flash MX, \$30*

Carl Westberg, Winner

Price Grabber T-shirt, \$5*

Steve Sterry, Winner

NTI CD-Maker, \$49*

Donald Bickel, Winner

O'Reilly Dreamweaver MX, \$35*

Sharon Graham, Not Present
Chad Hansen, Not Present
Robert Kambeitz, Expired
Sid Liptz, Winner

Price Grabber T-Shirt, \$5*

Tony Lake, Not Present
Walter Jackson, Winner

NotePager Pro, ver. 2.1, \$69*

Gary Covington III, Winner

Broderbund Movie Shop, \$49*

Joe Gionet, Winner

*Estimated value

Submitted by Charlie Moore

Other services APCUG gives to member groups...

Provides info on forming a user group, annually sponsors one or more national events, distributes quarterly APCUG Reports magazine to officers, sponsors newsletter/web contest, lists user group web newsletter, provides free web space and web board, provides APCUG logo for web and print, publishes "How To" guides on running user group activities, provides international recognition.

User group deals

User groups represent the spirit of the frontier, a community getting together to do things that no individual ought to have to do alone. The pioneers of the American west got together for barn raisings, cattle roundups, and the occasional party. The pioneers of new technology get together for installfests, new user training and support, and just plain fun. Being part of a user group is the best way to get more out of your computer, and lets you make friends while you're at it. — *Tim O'Reilly, President, O'Reilly & Associates*

Magazine discounts just for computer user groups

	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Computer Games	\$10.95		
Computer Gaming World	\$14.95	\$28.95	\$41.95
Computer Shopper	\$16.97	\$32.95	\$47.95
Dr. Dobbs Journal	\$15.95	\$30.95	\$43.95
Mac Addict	\$10.97		
Mac Home Journal	\$15.97	\$29.97	
Mac World	\$12.95	\$24.95	\$35.95
Maximum PC	\$ 9.95	\$18.95	\$27.95
Microsoft System Journal	\$21.95	\$39.95	\$57.95
PC Gamer	\$12.95		
PC Magazine	\$25.97	\$48.95	\$68.95
PC World	\$16.95	\$27.95	\$40.95
Wired	\$ 6.00	\$12.00	

Revised 7/1/2003

These prices are for new subscriptions and renewals. All orders must be accompanied by a check, cash or Money Order. Make payable to Herb Goodman, and mail to: **Herb Goodman, 8295 Sunlake Drive, Boca Raton, FL 33496.** Call or write: 561-488-4465, hgoodman@prodigy.net.

Please allow 10 to 12 weeks for your magazines to start. For renewals you must supply an address label from your present subscription to insure the correct start of your renewal.

I will mail a renewal notice to every subscriber about 3 months prior to their expiration date. Many computer magazine subscribers have used my services for over 300 titles I carry, also at excellent prices. Just email me for other prices.

GIANT Computer Swap Meet

8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

January 25 & March 28

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Free Admission • Free Parking • 100's of Sellers

Submitted by Carl Westberg

What does membership in this user group give you?

by Linda Gonse

Your membership in this user group entitles you to access the Members' Only area on our website and more than three dozen user group offers and discounts worth hundreds of dollars!

Programs or vendors with multiple programs currently being offered, include: File Protector, O'Reilly Books, Drive Image 7, Stuffit 8.0, AlienSkin programs, Keyfinder, Kroll ONtrack programs, Aladdin products, Classic Specialties, Typing Instructor Deluxe, Que Publishing, RoadWired, Earthlink, Blue Squirrel, Click2PDF, Flip Album, Diskeeper Lite, and Hemera Photo-Objects.

Also, available are: Iolo Technologies, Jasc Software, Microsoft Press, Nik Multimedia, Nolo Self-Help Legal Tools, Peachpit Press, PowerQuest, Preclick!, ProShow, Roger's System Specialist, Smart Computing magazine, Ulead, Upperspace.com, Web Hosting and Domains, and White Canyon.

How to use Members' page

Go to <http://www.orcopug.org>. Click on the "members' only" link on the left side of the page. When the password dialog box opens, type your user name (this is your first initial and last name in lower case, no spaces), and your password. The password is the capital letter "R" followed by your member number.

Help keep our vendors' User Group programs alive!

Support vendors who support user groups. Buy their products and tell others about them!



20% OFF!!!

User Group code on Members' Only! page.

PhotoImpact XL

by Dick Tooley

PhotoImpact XL is a comprehensive image editing program with added capabilities to show slide shows and to prepare detailed web sites.

This product from Ulead is one of a series I have been using for some eight years and I recommend it for serious photographers. There are wizards to assist the beginner to do many image correcting processes, but they are buried in the menus and would not be that easy for the beginner to find. I will use it extensively but would not begin to try to teach my wife how to use the program. There is quite a learning curve, but once learned, it is easy to use.

A few words about my background and interests. I consider myself a serious amateur photographer interested in travel and family albums which I am now showing on my computer. When I retired, I set myself the goal of digitizing my extensive collection of slides. My computers have been bought with that goal in mind. Although I use the web, I do not have my own web site and have no interest in having one; therefore, I have not reviewed the web hosting portions of the program which are extensive. I also do not like gimmicks in my photographs so some of those effects have not been reviewed. I have now changed to using a digital camera.

I originally bought Ulead after trying several other products. I read books on Photoshop and it certainly could be used to process imagery, but it did do much I was not interested in and I wondered about mastering any of it. Also, there was no slide show capability and of course, the price was very high. Ulead promised the processing and the slide show and I was not disappointed. There is now a simple slide show program available in Windows XP; however, it will only use the order of the images in one file. All the Ulead products have had album programs that allow images from various files and in an arbitrary order. The album files are pointers to where the files are stored; the image files are not needlessly duplicated filling up the hard drive.

In the past I have had problems registering my Ulead programs. This time the registration program would not accept the serial number I entered which was on

a sticker on the CD envelope. Going to help, the buttons for FAQs worked, but the one for finding the serial number did not. Eventually I was able to get it registered, but it was not easy.

Several features really caught my attention. The High Dynamic Range feature is a greatly improved version of a feature in PhotoImpact 8. Since many scenes have a range of brightness that exceeds what the camera can record, film users have used split attenuating filters to even things out. Ulead provided the capability to take multiple tripod exposures that cover the dynamic range of the scene and then combine them into one proper image. On



PhotoImpact 8 it worked nicely providing one used a steady tripod; if the images were not identical, the result looked out of focus, or worse. PhotoImpact XL added a preregistration and trimming step which should allow even handheld shots to be corrected.

A second feature claimed for PhotoImpact XL is the ability to take a series of pictures and to calibrate the camera. Then, with one improperly exposed image, correct the exposures.

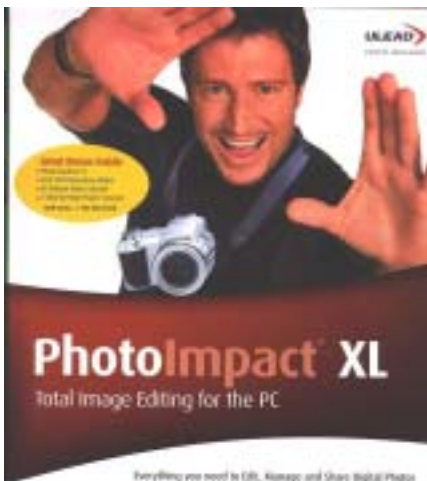
I tested this feature with a series of photos taken from -3 to +3 stops in one stop intervals. I used the calibrated curve to correct the -3 stop exposure and it worked. I then used the image processing features to improve the image as much as I could and compared it to what I could do to the -3 stop image without the calibration. I really could not tell the difference between the two images. With the +3 stop image, nothing would change the image at all.

I conclude that the image registration step is a big improvement; the calibration is of marginal value. When a digital image is overexposed, the data is lost and nothing will coax it back.

PhotoImpact Explorer 8 is included in the package; however, there is no written documentation about this program other than a comment on the product box that one can "Create Photo-Slideshow CD". This is done through Explorer 8 which is a photo browser. It will provide computer monitor slide shows for Windows Operating Systems that do not have this capability; XP does. I was interested in burning CDs that could be played on any TV compatible DVD player. The obvious approach yielded a CD which was in the same image order as the file and displayed on the TV screen for an average of dwell time of 1.5 seconds, not the default 5 seconds.

After a series of interchanges of emails with Public Relations and tech service, (I did get responses), I was shown how to select an order for the

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PhotoImpact XL...

(Continued from page 6)

show and how to use images from several files. I was told to use transitions and I would get an MP3 CD which would respond with the desired timing. After 27 minutes of formatting and burning, I obtained a CD that neither my TV nor my computer could read.

My last response from Ulead said the only way to really insure that a DVD player will play the disc is to use a DVD burner. I want to be able to take the slideshow to friends homes and have a slide show; this I cannot do. The System Requirements area on the box does not list this restriction.

Later in showing the PhotoImpact Album program I had been trying to write onto a CD, the show crashed. It seems Explorer 8 corrupted the links between the source file and the album file. Explorer does not include its own uninstaller; I used the Windows uninstaller to eliminate this poorly

“There is a 294 page manual and a video tutorial included in the package. Ulead gets a big plus for even having a hard copy manual.”

performing program.

A nice effect is adding the moon to an image. I previously had been playing with doing this with my own lunar image and PhotoImpact has a much easier approach. One can put the moon at any phase, any rotation, and any size anywhere in the image as well as change the tone of the picture. Presto—a daytime photo is a moon-light scene.

There is a screen capture program that can be preloaded before going on the web. I was able to get a printout of a procedure that did not allow printing. The image went directly into the image processing program.

There is a 294 page manual and a video tutorial included in the package.

Ulead gets a big plus for even having a hard copy manual.

Some things are named in ways that do not seem to correspond to what one finds in the program. I found the tutorial not to be of much use. The images of the program screen were so small as not to be able to see what the pointer was indicating.

The filter possibilities include several I like. One is to make a blah sky blue; the other is to enhance to lighting to make it look like more sunshine. I took two images of Neuschwanstein last summer (the model for Disney's Magic Castle) so that I could get a pretty sky, the castle, which is white, is surrounded by dark green trees. The registration was not right and so I could not use the Dynamic Range Extender with PhotoImpact 8. I spent hours separating the castle from the sky and manipulating the various objects to enhance the photo.

In minutes on my first try with XL, I combined the images, enhanced the sky, and added sunlight for a much improved image.

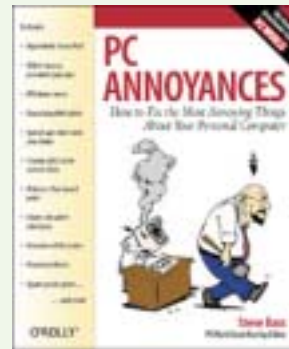
The last nice filter is a color correction feature.

Rather than try

to guess what correction is needed, I am not very good at that, it provides an eyedropper to sample an area known to be neutral; a spot appears on a color wheel and the spot can be dragged to the center. I have found this very useful.

The full program costs \$89.95 and upgrades are \$49.95. It requires Microsoft XP, 98, NT 4.0 SP6 and above, 2000, ME or Server 2003, Pentium II or above, CD-ROM drive, 64 MB RAM, 450 MB available on hard drive, 800X600 or more display resolution. Ulead Systems, Inc., 20000 Mariner Ave, Ste. 200, Torrance, CA 90503. Or contact Sharna Brocket, PR Manager, at 310-896-6388, ext. 162; or email: Sharna@ulead.com.

What are reviewers' saying about...



<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/pcannoy>

Rating: 
November 23, 2003

The problem with trying to tell anyone about this book is that there is so much to tell! But, the short version is, it's one of the best darned all-around pc books I've seen in a long time.

A couple of points potential readers of all levels of expertise might want to know is that there is no “canned” tips and tricks feel to this book. You'll find lots of things that haven't been published and passed around already. Plus, with Steve's easy writing style, you'll feel like you are sitting alongside an experienced friend at the computer and discovering these things.

The humorous cartoons and screenshots in the sidebars allow you to read this book by flipping from here to there, or they can help lead you into related subjects right on the main text pages. It's a little like choosing an appetizer from a tray, or sitting down to a main dish.

One of the outstanding features of the book is that all the little utility, freeware, and helper programs Steve tells you about have been gathered together and can be downloaded from one URL mentioned in the book.

As the editor of a computer user group newsletter, I am recommending Steve's book to our group members —

(Continued on page 8)

What's new...

SPAMNET



A free beta of SpamNet for Outlook Express is now available to download at: <http://www.cloudmark.com/products/spamnet/download/>

SpamNet is the first and largest group of people worldwide — more than half a million — collaborating in real-time to fight spam. Because of its community based peer-to-peer filtering model, SpamNet keeps over 95 percent of spam out of your inbox automatically.

This is how it works: When a spam message is reported by a SpamNet user, the message is sent to a central computer or database that records the spam. When the other SpamNet users download their email, the software checks the new messages to see if it contains reported spam. If the system finds a spam message, SpamNet moves it to the Spam Folder.

This collective reporting power process ensures that your Inbox remains clean of spam messages and that none of your email is lost or blocked.

SpamNet is also available for use in Outlook, \$3.99 a month.

3.5"/5.25" drives & CD/DVD/HD become portable with combo external enclosure with 2.0 USB & Firewire connections

Turn any standard 3.5 in hard disk or 5.25 in drive into an external drive with the hot swappable ease of USB 2.0 and blazing 60MB/sec transfer rate and Firewire IEEE-1394 to blazing 50MB/sec. Connect a CD/DVD burner or a hard disk to any computer. Move the drive from computer to computer with plug and play convenience. Connect a burner to your



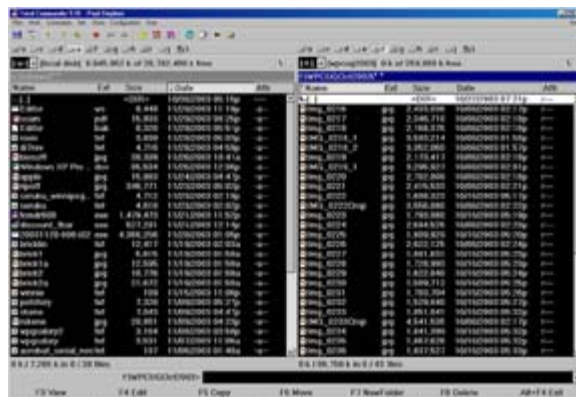
laptop and burn CDs or DVDs at home, and then disconnect it while you are on the go. \$39.95 — <http://ctgdirect.com/>

Take total command of file handling, FTP, and archiving from within one program

Paul Stephen, editor of the Winnipeg PC Users' Group newsletter, told us he uses Total Commander "all the time." Total Commander is a file manager for Windows, a program like Windows Explorer to copy, move or delete files.

However, Total Commander can do much more than Explorer, e.g. pack and unpack files, access ftp servers, compare files by content, etc!

Among file handling features are: Compare files by content, synchronize directories (with subdirs), or a directory with a ZIP file, split/combine big files, search for duplicate files,



restore selection as it was before the last file operation (NUM /), enhanced search function with full text search in any files across multiple drives—even inside archives, multi-rename tool: rename multiple files in one step (Hotkey: Ctrl+T), and copy files directly from one archive to another. Shareware, \$30. <http://www.ghisler.com/>

PC Annoyances...

(Continued from page 7)

for themselves and for Christmas gifts.

Linda Gonse

Rating: 
November 16, 2003

Thank you Steve!

How can I ever repay you? I've had problems with my pc that had bothered me for years. Real headaches I could not get rid of. All amazingly solved in a few fairly simple moves after reading your book! Now that is what I call a must-buy.

P.S. If you ever come to Greece, I want to do my famous belly dance for you as a thank you!

Joanna

Rating: 
October 31, 2003

Finally, the book I've been looking for!!

I'm always looking for information I can really use. Steve Bass knows what's bothering the typical PC user and has the solution. Straight to the point and easy to understand — no techno-babble here. Bass's wit makes this a fun read.

Adrian Fabersheim

Published October 2003, \$19.95 at oreilly.com. User group members get 20% off the regular price by using the special code on our www.orcopug.org Members Only page.

Learning about computers: From the very beginning

by Charlie Paschal

Editor/Publisher, Palmetto Personal Computer Club, Columbia, SC
Columnist, The (Columbia) State newspaper, SC

After watching my 76-year-old sister struggle with her first computer, I decided to start a beginner's series on de-mystifying a computer. We're going to start from the very beginning and if I move to fast or use terms you don't understand, please send me e-mail about it.

I hope this can make your computer more "user friendly" for you.

Even if you're not a beginner, you might know someone who is and point out this series to them. Over a period of several issues, I hope to decipher the language, destroy the myths and, perhaps, entice beginners to overcome their fears of computers and begin to use them more effectively.

First, and foremost, why would you buy a computer in the first place?

Most of us use them for little more than the ability to dial up the Internet, send a few e-mail messages and do some simple searches. Despite these small expectations, it's still a struggle for my sister to learn how to use the computer.

In watching her, here are some things I've noticed that she struggles with:

- Clicking and double clicking.
- The individual parts of a window, such as the scroll bars, thinking other information on a page or document is "hidden" from her or not on the page. (Remember when a small baby played hide and seek? Small children thought you actually "disappeared" until they got older. This is almost the same thing — if you don't know where to look for the remainder of the page.)

- The difference between two separate Web sites.

- Why certain searches don't turn up a Web site ("That's what so and so told me to search for," she says when the search turns up empty, rather than considering that she might have "bad" information.)

A computer doesn't think in the way humans do — it works in ones and zeros and that's the only way it processes data. It uses binary and hexadecimal numbers rather than our decimal system.

You might think that a computer can't reach high numbers using this system, but it can. By using just ones and zeros, a computer can count to incredibly high numbers and just loves to do so. A computer uses these numbers to "hand out" addresses to each part (such as a printer port) or program, so everything knows what street they're on when the operating system (or hardware) needs to reach them.

Ever had a program to "perform an illegal operation" or crash on you? This usually happens because one program tries to use an address already occupied by another program or piece of hardware. It's just like a bill that's delivered to the wrong address.

The operating system is the part of the computer that handles the hard work behind the scenes: Handling communication between an application, such as Microsoft Word, and a printer. When a user clicks on "print" in a Word document, it's the operating system that intercepts and tells the printer (at its address) to print the document. A "device driver," usually from the printer manufacturer, does the chore but it's the operating system that handles the communication between Word and the printer. It uses memory addresses to keep order.

Microsoft Windows is an operating system. It comes in several versions.



Getting to know your computer and putting the information together

Although there are prior versions to Windows 95, most of us only know about Windows 98, Windows 2000 and XP. Windows NT is a heavy-duty operating system and is mostly used as a "Web" server — a server (a beefier computer, with more high end parts than a desktop) that handles duties on the Internet.

Other operating systems include Macintosh (Apple), Unix and Linux, which is a version of Unix that runs on the same type of hardware that Windows uses. Unix runs on different hardware, as do Apple computers. Programs that run on Apple's hardware won't run on Windows computers and vice versa. Some special programs allow some programs that run on Windows to run on Linux.

The "hardware" part of a computer is the computer, monitor, keyboard, mouse, printer and other devices. The "software" consists of the programs and the operating system. Examples of software include Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Word, a virus checker or Outlook Express, an e-mail client.

Questions, comments:
comments@askcharlie.com.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



Windows changing and changing

by Siles Bazerman

The first column I wrote for the PC community appeared in October 1995 in *Winners Notepad*. I took November off and starting in December started *BB&W*. I haven't missed a month since. That first article was a review of Microhelp's Uninstaller. It was run on a 486DX2/66 with a whopping 8 meg of ram and used Windows 95 beta 490. If memory serves correctly, the 8 meg cost what 512 is advertised for this week. By the way, MicroHelp went out of business in 1997 and Uninstaller was taken over by McAfee.

Times they are a changing. With Windows 95, 8 meg was the sweet spot for memory, now it is 512 meg for Windows XP. You could and can run with less or more but the biggest gain in speed comes at those numbers. More will not increase your processing speed noticeably unless you are working with huge graphic files.

Let us look at what is new. Windows XP SP2 has been delayed again. It now is scheduled for release in the first quarter of 2004. (Probably at the end rather than at the beginning.) It will be much more security oriented with both auto update and the built in firewall turned on by default. Windows Messenger will be turned off by default, helping control those annoying pop-ups. Microsoft feels that the only way to ensure critical patches are installed is to force the download. If everyone running Windows XP would have installed them none of the recent worm attacks would have gotten very far. The patches to close the vulnerabilities were issued, but ignored by most, months before the attacks.

Taken from WinInfo Daily by Paul Thoreau: "Questions Linger After Apple Fixes Security Flaw in Newest OS Only"

Imagine Microsoft trying this stunt: Apple's most recent OS software upgrade, Mac OS X 10.3 Panther, includes a fix for security flaws that remain unpatched in earlier versions of the Mac OS, leading some security experts to wonder whether Apple is using security as a lever to get people to upgrade. Apple says it won't fix the flaws in earlier OS X versions, although the resulting bad press might change the company's mind. "Imagine if Microsoft tried to charge for security fixes—people would go crazy," Thor Larholm, senior researcher for software security firm PivX Solutions, said. Yep. They would. And yet, we complain because Microsoft releases too many security fixes. What a world."

I have been busy with a number of things completely unrelated to computers so I haven't done much exploring about Windows XP problems or new programs. Iolo has released version 4 of *System Mechanic* and has included a defragger, popup stopper and a spyware cleanser. I have looked at the trial version but have not really delved into it. At a first glance it looks like a worthwhile upgrade. However, I still prefer *Perfect Disk* from Raxco (not Roxio) for defragging.

Siles Bazerman is ORCOPUG's APCUG Representative and well-known user group columnist. His expert help appears in several other UG newsletters in the US and Canada. Contact him at siles.bazerman@gte.net.

Windows Tips —

Allocate memory on 2nd drive

When your computer uses up its RAM, it turns to a small amount of hard-drive memory called the swap file (also known as virtual memory). You'll run low on virtual memory when you open a lot of large files in labor-intensive programs such as Photoshop.

In Windows XP, allocate more virtual memory to your second hard drive.

1. Right-click My Computer and choose Properties.
2. Click the Performance Settings button on the Advanced tab.
3. Go to the Performance Settings Advanced tab, scroll down to Virtual Memory, and click the Change button.
4. Add more virtual memory from your second hard drive.
5. Select to let the system manage your virtual memory.
6. Click Set.

Trash it, don't talk about it

If you are annoyed by the confirmation window that pops up each time you drag an item to the Recycle Bin. Get rid of it.

1. Right-click the Recycle Bin.
2. Select Properties.
3. Choose the Global tab.
4. Uncheck "Display delete confirmation dialog box."

Tips submitted by Tony Lake

TOP 10 VIRUSES and HOAXES www.orcopug.org



BE SAFE! LOOK IT UP!
And, always check warnings
BEFORE you forward them!

Internet Humor



CUTE KITTY — Go to <http://home.wanadoo.nl/annekebroenink/maukie2.swf> to see something awesome! If you tease with the mouse pointer on kitty's chest, she purrs, and I got her to meow also, by rubbing her forehead with the pointer. If you make a slow circle around her body, not only will her head/eyes follow your pointer, but toward the top, her paw will go up, and when in front of her paws at the bottom, her

foot comes out like she wants to play with your mouse pointer.

— Submitted by Loren Tuthill

The true origin of the Internet

In ancient Israel, it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a young wife by the name of Dot.

And Dot Com was a comely woman, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed, she had been called 'Amazon Dot Com.'

And she said unto Abraham, her husband, "Why doth thou travel far from town to town with thy goods when thou can trade without ever leaving thy tent?"

And Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load, but simply said, "How, dear?"

And Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages saying what you have for sale and they will reply telling you which hath the best price. And the sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)."

Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums. And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had at the top price without ever moving from his tent.

But this success did arouse envy. A man named Maccabia did secrete himself inside Abraham's drum and was accused of insider trading. And the young man did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly take to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Siderites or NERDS for short.

And lo, the land was feverish with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of drums that no one noticed the real riches were going to the drum maker, one Brother William Gates, who bought up every drum company in the land. And indeed did insist on making drums that would only work with Brother Gates' drumheads and drumsticks.

And Dot did say, "Oh Abraham what we have started is being taken over by others."

And as Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or as it came to be known, "ebay" he said, "We need a name that reflects what we are."

And Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators."
"YAHOO," said Abraham.

This is how it all began. It wasn't Al Gore after all!

Submitted by Kay Gutmann

Letters...

(Continued from page 2)

group in the USA: <http://www.bwcomp.org/> of which I attend some of their meetings... We can attend as honorary members.

You don't need to thank me... you have a great club and newsletter. Keep up the great job!

Greg West, Editor
editor@scug.ca

Sarnia Computer Users Group
(Sarnia, Ontario, Canada)
www.scug.ca

DVD article used again

One or more of the articles you have permitted the APCUG (committee) to distribute to member organizations has been posted on the Mountain View Computer Users Group website. Links to your article(s) may be found: <http://www.mvcug.org/magazine/index.html>.

We also invite you to explore our website, and if you have any comments, please let me know either by email or by the feedback form (link) at the bottom of the main page: <http://www.mvcug.org>.

Jim Emmons, VP/Webmaster
vicepresident@mvcug.org
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Sometimes I think I understand everything, then I regain consciousness.

Submitted by Tony Lake

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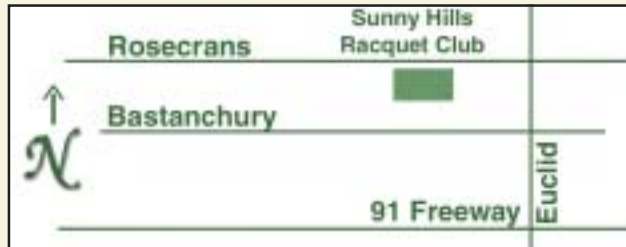
Newsletter deadline
December 20

Send a printed copy of the newsletter to a friend. Use this mailing sheet for the address. Staple newsletter together at top left corner with this last page facing out. Fold in half, so this page is visible. Tape ends together, stamp and mail.

Visitors are welcome! Meetings are FREE!

The Orange County IBM PC Users' Group regular meeting is scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Sunny Hills Racquet Club, 1900 Camino Loma, Fullerton, (714) 992-1300. For more information, call (714) 990-0580, or go to www.orcopug.org.

Directions: From the 91 Freeway, exit at Euclid and go north. Go past Bastanchury and turn west (left) onto Rosecrans. Sunny Hills Racquet Club is located on the south (left) side of the street.



Planning meetings are held the third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. at Downey Savings & Loan, one block east of Harbor at Bastanchury in Fullerton. **All members are invited to attend the planning meetings!**

Special offers for our user group members are on the Members' Only web page at www.orcopug.org. (No access without member number.)

Check out our award-winning web site!

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- Newsletter and web site
- Special offers & discounts
- Monthly meetings
- Affiliation with worldwide group

A user group membership is the best accessory you can buy for your computer. — *Ash Nallawalla, Melbourne PC Users' Group*

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Annual Holiday
Fundraising Raffle
Tuesday, December 9
6:30 p.m.

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