Electrical grounding controversy sparks demo. Page 4

Protect yourself from "Click of Death" and check your ZIP drive with free utility. Page 8

See you Dec. 8 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hunt Library!

Nibbles & Bits

Annual December raffle is here!

by Mike Lyons, President

Once again, it's time for our annual Christmas raffle. This is the only regular meeting during the year where you must be a member to participate, and it is the group's only major fund raising activity of the year. (Make sure your dues are paid up!)

This year we have been given more than 80 prizes from group members, hardware and software vendors, program speakers, and book publishers. Their generosity is what allows our users' group to continue.

All raffle items will be displayed. Once the items are laid out, we will give the name of the vendor and a brief description of each product (either from personal experience or from the product cover). After all items have been acknowledged, we will begin selling the tickets.

Each item will have a number on it. It will be the same number as on the raffle list included as an insert in your newsletter. If it is an item that requires a review, there will be an "R" on the yellow tag. A review guidelines sheet will also be attached. If you don't want to write a review, then don't put a ticket into that item's bowl. (See review policy article on page 6.)

All items will have a bowl in front of them in which members will place their ticket or tickets. Tickets are one dollar apiece. You can put as many or as few tickets into any bowl(s) you choose.

All tickets need to be deposited into their appropriate bowls by 8 p.m. We will then check the bowls.

An "ORCOPUG" ticket will be added to any bowl with less than five tickets to bring the ticket count to five. An "ORCOPUG" ticket is the same as a member's ticket, except that if it is drawn, the prize is set aside for a monthly raffle in the coming year.
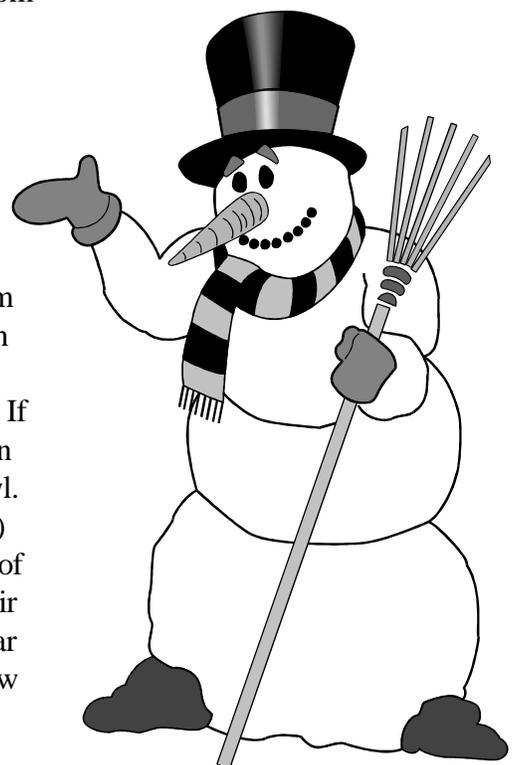
Amnesty is given for past due reviews

by Mike Lyons, President

Mike Lyons

Our review policy says that any member who takes a product for review has 90 days to complete the review and turn it into our Reviews Chairman, Terry Schiele. After 90 days, the review is delinquent and the member is not eligible for any of our raffles until the review is turned in.

The Board of Directors has modified this policy. *In addition to the 90-day time limit and ineligibility for monthly raffles, there will be a "late penalty."* For example, if you turn your review in one month late, you will be ineligible for one month of raffles; three months late, you can't participate for three months, etc., *after* turning in your review .

The one exception will be for our December fund raising raffle. **Members with overdue reviews will receive a one-month's amnesty for the overdue review and may participate in the special December raffle.** *But, the member will not be eligible to win any raffle prize that requires a review.*

Why does our users' group ask for reviews of products? For two reasons: Vendors send copies of their products to our club for review . And, sometimes, we request review products from vendors.

The vendors want a newsletter review to spread the word about their product. The club also benefits, because we learn what one of our members really thinks about the program.

I had seen information about Enfish Tracker Pro, but never paid much attention to it until I read Linda Gonse's review of it last month. Her review carried a lot more weight than all of the ads and flyers I have seen on the product.

The vendor benefitted from her review but, better yet, I learned something about a product I had ignored. I am more informed now because of her review. Reviews are an important way for members to communicate with each other.

Look for raffle items and vendors listed on insert

Raffle items and the vendors who donated them are listed on a separate insert in this Nibbles & Bits issue.

Among the items are: Norton System Works, Microsoft Money 98 and Design CAD Pro2000. In addition, there are suites from Corel including Web Master, Draw 8 and WordPerfect, as well as an assortment of products from Adobe, KissCo, Mijenix and PowerQuest.

Five products require reviews: Modem Wizard 97, Live Art 98, Print Screen Deluxe, Announcements 7.0 and Power Disk Utilities 98.

Alan Jarrett, Vice President and Program Chairman, has compiled the list for the convenience of members. You can bring the list with you to the meeting for reference and to jot notes

about raffle items. (Read information about how the list is setup in the related story on page 1.)

Next month's newsletter will feature the results of the raffle.

Information submitted by Alan Jarrett

View from Vegas: APCUG's Fall Comdex 98

by Alan Jarrett, Vice President/Program Chairman

Charlie Moore and I attended the APCUG Fall Comdex 1998 user group conference in Las Vegas as representatives of ORCOPUG.

Alan Jarrett

APCUG is a not-for-profit international organization dedicated to the promotion of communications and the exchange of information among personal computer user groups. APCUG consists of over 400 user groups representing over 300,00 members.

We attended a series of peer-to-peer sessions to assist user groups in the fullfillment of their educational and charitable missions. Among the topics included were: How to Give Good Meetings; Effective Writing of Product Reviews; Financial Management; Future of User Groups; and Training for Senior Computer Users. We will share this information with you.

You can learn more by visiting APCUG at *www.apcug.org* on the Internet.

Of course, we visited Comdex and will share the latest trends in computer news and tchotchkes we picked up.

Notepad
by Linda Gonse

December is a perfect month for reflecting on what has passed.

In 1998, six of my family members went online. Now, nearly all the family connects electronically. It adds to AT&T's 1997 statement that "U.S. adults with access to commercial online services has surpassed 45%."

It dovetails, too, with an increase in our members' e-mail addresses. (This makes the e-mail directory in each newsletter a handy feature.)

What's more, in 1955 there were only 244 computers in the U.S. By 1995, 37% of U.S. households had computers.

And, by 2000, U.S. businesses online "will swell from 40,000 to 380,000," Forester Research in Cambridge, Massachusetts projects.

Computers and the Internet have become central to many lives since IBM sold its first personal computer in 1981. Back then, most may not have imagined themselves using a computer, much less *owning* one.

With tremendous strides in computer technology since the 1940s, computers have been reduced from tons to ounces; from a calculation set-up by a team of technicians in two days, to a mouse click by a dextrous five-year old; from bits of memory and zero storage to gigabytes and terrabytes; from 5,000 additions per second to 300 million per second, and so on.

Makes you wonder what's in the future for computing, doesn't it? You are sure to have some ideas about it. Please write and tell me your predictions. In January, I hope we can look into the future through your eyes.

Linda

Letters to the editor

■ Wrong URL for Y2K tool

I found your article about the Y2K problem interesting and tried to obtain the program.

Unfortunately, I got the message that something was wrong with the URL *http://www.nstl.com/html/ymark_2000.html*. Do you have a correction?

Dick Tooley

In last month's article, "Is your PC Y2K ready? Use this test," an incorrect URL was inadvertantly given. The correct address is www. nstl.com/html/nstl_ymark2000.html.

■ Free web page printer

PC Computing had a short piece on a web page printer from Hewlett Packard which is free for the downloading. I just did and it at least did a commendable job of printing their instructions. We'll see how it does others.

I'm going to try it on the Forbes site which has the best article on I.R.A. alternatives that I've found.

The printer URL is: *http://www. hp.com/cposupport/printers/software/lj157en.exe*. The file is 3MB.

Carl Westberg

■ Radio article brings praise and comments

Glenn Emigh

That was a nice piece that two of your members did on radio computer programs. I've started to write something like this myself, but the pro-

grams changed faster than I could adapt. And, to do justice, it takes the considerable effort that these guys put in—listening to the programs over several weeks.

I have heard many of these programs, especially the first five listed. And most are quite entertaining and educational. Among them, the one I care the least for is the Jeff Levy show.

Levy's show has followed a

Letters

(Continued from page 3)

common pattern I have seen in other shows of this type (i.e., featuring an expert on some area).

Once the "guru" has established his credibility, the commercialism begins to escalate. The guru, now established, begins to "cash in" on his following. You now find him making "appearances" that promote computer-related products.

His "guests" are always people with something to sell; and he inevitably endorses what they are selling; then he gushes about what product is "next," and how we can hardly wait. The advertising begins to increase in length and frequency, and ties itself ever closer to the guru.

Lastly, Levy's advice, for my money, is the least useful among all of the radio computer advisors. Some is fine, but other times, while I understand what he is saying, I imagine myself in the place of the guy asking the question, and realize that the information is of little value.

Glenn Emigh

■   **Publisher writes**

Just read Nibbles & Bits for Vol. 16, Issue10. The interview piece was great! Thanks for writing it up and including it in your newsletter.

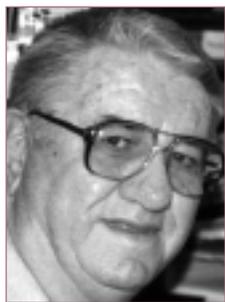**T. J. Lee, publisher**
The Naked PC

Y2K Bug Hits ORCOPUG

by Charlie Moore,
Treasurer/Membership Chairman

I was processing membership renewals last month. Everything seemed to be okay until I did an update. This process scans the database and ad-justs memberships for their expiration date. I noticed that I had one expired membership.

The update process makes a copy of the database before it adjusts membership expirations.

So I compared the current database with the copy. It turned out to be Ted

Charlie Moore

Wirtz. His expiration date was 01/01/99, and after I processed his renewal, his expiration date was 01/01/00.

The database program interpreted this to be 1/1/1900 and deleted him.

Nine winners in November raffle

Kai's	
Photo Soap	**Value $49**
Joseph Duffner	Winner
Rand McNally	
StreetFinder	**Value $49**
Pat McMillan	Winner
Act 4	
Letters & Numbers	**Value $15**
Chuck Moore	Not Present
Sharon Graham	Not Present
Larry Joyce	Not Present
Carl Westberg	Winner
Act 4	
MS Word Tutorial	**Value $15**
Gloria Bearss	Not Present
Art Bullis	Not Present
Terry Schiele	Winner
Rand McNally	
TripMaker	**Value $49**
Donald Bickel	Winner
Act 4	
Quick/Easy Spanish	**Value $15**
Arnold Francis	Not Present
Lloyd Boutwell	Winner

KissCo	
SpeedSurfer	**Value $20**
Pat McMillan	Not Present
James Southall	Winner
Act 4	
Phonics	**Value $15**
Harold Wann	Not Present
Myra Milgrom	Winner
PKWare	
PKZip for Windows	**Value $49**
Art Bullis	Not Present
Sid Liptz	Winner
Act 4	
Phonics2	**Value $15**
Helen Desmond	Winner

Annual membership renewal dates

October 1
Lou Gorman
Paul Wirtz

December 1
Cynthia Gonse
Gary Hollander
Jerry Patterson

January 1, 1999
Carl Apponyi
Joe Gionet
Linda Gonse
Don Hepler
Larry Joyce
LeRoy Kaump
Chuck Moore

February 1
Dom Addonizio
Mike Lyons
Charlie Moore

March 1
Frank Balazs
Art Bullis
Sharon Graham
Pat Kennedy
Gregory Koch
Bill La Mont
Elmer Thomas

Information submitted by Charlie Moore

Computer questionnaire

At long last. A simple assessment form for ALL computer problems. All Tech Support departments will be using this soon.

Computer Problem Report Form

1. Describe your problem: _____

2. Now, describe the problem accurately:_____

3. Speculate wildly about the cause of the problem:
   _____

4. Problem Severity: A. Minor__ B. Minor__ C. Minor__ D. Trivial__

5. Nature of the problem:
   A. Locked Up__ B. Frozen__ C. Hung__ D. Strange Smell__

6. Is your computer plugged in? Yes__ No__

7. Is it turned on? Yes__ No__

8. Have you tried to fix it yourself? Yes__ No__

9. Have you made it worse? Yes__

10. Have you had "a friend" who "knows all about computers" try to fix it for you? Yes__ No__

11. Did they make it even worse? Yes__

12. Have you read the manual? Yes__ No__

13. Are you sure you've read the manual? Maybe__ No__

14. Are you absolutely certain you've read the manual? No__

15. If you read the manual, do you think you understood it? Yes__ No__

16. If 'Yes' then explain why you can't fix the problem yourself.
    _____

17. What were you doing with your computer at the time the problem occurred? _____

l8. If you answered 'nothing' then explain why you were logged in.
    _____

l9. Are you sure you aren't imagining the problem? Yes__ No__

20. Does the clock on your home VCR blink 12:00? Yes__ What's a VCR?__

21. Do you have a copy of 'PCs for Dummies'? Yes__ No__

22. Do you have any independent witnesses to the problem? Yes__ No__

23. Do you have any electronics products that DO work? Yes__ No__

24. Is there anyone else you could blame this problem on? Yes__ No__

25. Have you given the machine a good whack on the top? Yes__ No__

26. Is the machine on fire? Yes__ Not Yet__

27. Can you do something else instead of bothering Tech Support? Yes__

Submitted by Ted Wirtz

Did you check the ground?

Safety is the first priority in the home and club

by Charlie Moore, Treasurer/Membership Chairman

Last month's discussion on grounded outlets and some of the misinformation that was disseminated really alarmed me. I tried to dispel most of it, but I don't think I was very successful. I will readdress this issue with a live demonstration at our January meeting.

If you are replacing a two wire duplex outlet with a grounded duplex outlet, have it done by a licensed electrician. If you do it yourself, make sure you know what you are doing! It could mean a difference between life and death.

When one uses a grounded appliance in a grounded duplex outlet, they are assuming that it is "grounded." Just replacing the outlet does not make it so! If you are doing this to be able to plug in a computer, you are doing yourself a disservice. Most computer equipment is probably insulated sufficiently to not be an electrical hazard. But you will not have the best shielding to meet FCC class B regulations and will be defeating part of any surge suppression equipment you might have.

If you are using an adaptor to convert a grounded plug for a two wire outlet, you must assure that you have a good ground. If the adaptor has a green pigtail or a brass spade lug, these should be connected to the screw holding the cover on the outlet (assuming it is a good ground). If the screw is plastic, replace it with a metal screw. If the electrical box is plastic and has no auxiliary ground in it, connecting to this screw will be futile. In this case look for a good ground nearby and connect securely to it.

Please be safe, we can't afford to lose any members. See you at the meeting!

How do we review new products?

by Terry Schiele
Reviews Chairman

Vendors send new products to us with requests for complete and timely evaluations. Their reasons are based on getting a "fair and balanced" review of their product. They indicate that they hope the evaluator will balance their concerns with appropriate praise for the product. Suggestions are welcome in evaluations, as well as good points which have helped the reviewer as a user.

Vendors also want to make sure we have the most up-to-date release of the product. For those with Internet capability, they request we download the latest release from their web site and install it. This may also be part of your evaluation.

The vendor expects a written report within 90 days. This tells us we have to be responsible in getting started with the evaluation as soon as possible to complete a fair evaluation. Take

Terry Schiele

notes throughout the installation, startup and use of the program. Then, expand from the notes to an outline, to a full written report in first draft, to the final copy. This can be done quickly with a plan set before you.

The vendor also would like to be able to share your evaluation and even publish the information to share with other user groups. If they do publish the evaluation, with your permission, they promise to give you credit for the evaluation.

Videowave and Connectrix programs are available for review

by Terry Schiele, Reviews Chairman

Two boxes of programs were just sent to the club.

The first is "Videowave" from MGI software. This program allows you to publish PC videos for video e-mail, turn home videos into TV shows, make home videos of school plays, concerts, sports events, weddings and other family activities. It includes a step-by-step multimedia tutorial and an easy to use interface. Add music and sound effects and narration and use the built-in special effects console. It also includes a built-in MPEG software encoder for video compression.

It requires an Intel Pentium 90 processor or higher, 16 MB RAM, 20 MB drive space for program and 100 MB workspace, SVGA 2 meg video card, CD-ROM, 16 bit stereo sound card and speakers, 28.8 modem, mouse, Windows 95, TV tuner or video capture board with video for Windows.

The second box has a collection of products from Connectix software: Connectix Desktop Designer CD for Win 95; Connectix Digital Radar CD for Win 95; and, Ram Doubler on disk for Win 3.1. All require a 486 or higher processor except for Ram Doubler.

Digital Radar requires a Quick Time video camera and makes your computer a motion detector and records when someone enters your work area. Desktop Designer will personalize your desktop with dynamic backgrounds, 3-D Icons, animated cursors and sounds.

You can see me at the regular meeting to pick up one of the review programs. Or, write to me at *terry@orcopug.org*.

Humorous Bits
by Don Gonse

The program installed, Ted was now prepared to 'launch'.

@'98 Mar. 22

Cartoons free to User Groups with credit to Don Gonse. Request images from Don at degonse@juno.com.

Y2K bug

(Continued from page 3)

Now I am using a database program that was copyrighted in 1988, namely Foxbase+ 2.10. This program stores dates as eight characters, but it handles the date two ways. If I have "Century set off," it handles the year as two digits. If I have "Century set on," it handles the year as four digits. I dusted off my source code and changed the Century setting to "on." I scanned the source code for date references using two digits for the year. I changed these to four digit date references.

I recompiled the program and I was back on the air again ready for the new millennium. This took about an hour and a half.

But, I happened to think about the raffle program. Was it Y2K aware? It is a basic program written several years ago by Bruce Fellows. I modified it slightly and compiled it.

But, would it work now?

I exported the current membership database to the raffle program. I setup a dummy raffle and the very first winner was Ted Wirtz. When the raffle program was first written, Bruce had to insulate it from database field changes.

The method Bruce used was to look for the required fields and use them as the database presented them (remember it stored the date as eight characters even it was only using two digits for the year). Thanks Bruce.
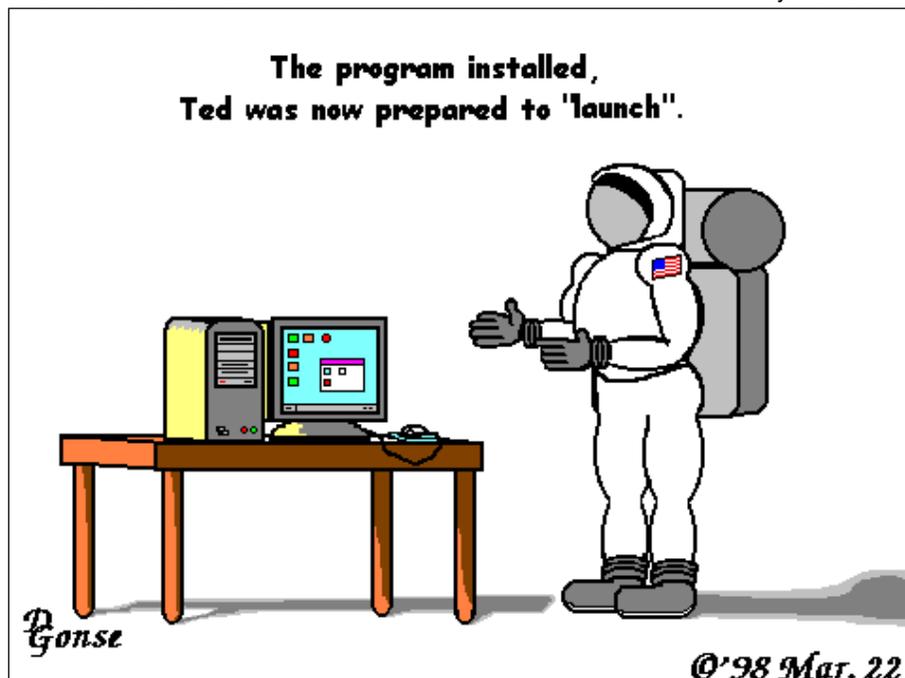
———

What has four legs, is big, green, fuzzy, and if it fell out of a tree would kill you?

A pool table.

Submitted by Tony Lake

What does it mean?

beta testing

Definition: Testing a pre-release (potentially unreliable) version of a piece of software by making it available to selected users. This term derives from early 1960s terminology for product cycle checkpoints, first used at IBM but later standard throughout the industry.

"Alpha test" was the unit, module, or component test phase; "Beta Test" was the initial system test.

These terms came from earlier A- and B-tests for hardware. The A-test was a feasibility and manufacturability evaluation done before any commitment to design and development. The B-test was a demonstration that the engineering model functioned as specified. The C-test (corresponding to today's beta) was the B-test performed on early samples of the production design.

An item "in beta test" is thus mostly working but still under test. In the Real World, systems (hardware or software) often go through two stages of release testing: Alpha (in-house) and Beta (outside). Beta releases are generally made available to a small number of lucky (or unlucky), trusted customers.

Source: http://www.instantweb.com/foldoc/

The alpha, beta and gamma stages of testing are derived from the first three letters of the Greek alphabet.

Why is commercial software buggy?

63%
Vendors are under competitive pressure to get software out quickly.
12%
Software is too complicated.
9%
Beta tests aren't long enough or don't involve enough testers.
6%
Vendors see bugs as a way to get users to upgrade to the next release.
4%
Vendors don't want to spend the money to do a better job.
6%
Other/don't know.

———

Source: Computerworld survey of 202 IT professionals

Are beta tests worth it?

The greater the number of users participating in a beta test, the more bugs that can be removed. The percentage of bugs fixed before a product's final release can exceed 85% when there are more than 1,000 beta testers, Capers Jones, chairman of Software Productivity Research Inc. in Burlington, Massachusetts, said.

People who do beta testing like to be in on new products. Drawbacks to beta testing are the lack of technical support, software-caused computer problems, and lack of time.—*LG*

Trouble in Paradise: Free ZIP drive checker

by Carl Westberg
Membership Committee

"Trouble in Paradise" is an apt term for what some of us may have. We have ZIP drives made by Iomega, the folks that made the highly reliable Bournelli Boxes back when a 20 Megabyte hard disk was big.

I didn't think much about possible problems until Ted Wirtz spoke up in the October meeting about the "Click of Death" on his ZIP drive. At that point, I became less sure of my system for storing picture files.

The ZIP drive seemed ideal, I had years of experience with the Iomega Bournelli Boxes, finding them more reliable than hard drives, and had a ways to go to accomplish storing years of pictures on ZIP disks.

It also seemed the ideal way to back up important data. I remember Charlie Moore's demonstration on how he couldn't restore to Alan Jarrett's computer from a tape drive and diskettes just didn't hold enough.

One evening while browsing on ZDNet, (*http://www.zdnet.com/zdtv/screensavers/projects/story/0,3656,2112061,00.html*), I came across an item on Steve Gibson's "Trouble in Paradise" program. It seemed like a logical solution.

Before, I wondered why nobody had a program that would do what one used to be able to do in CP/M. This was to check a disk and lock out bad clusters, so that you wouldn't write to them and lose the data by being unable read that cluster later.

Well, Steve Gibson's program does that and checks the operation of the drive, as well.

This is "freeware," so download it

Ken's Korner

by Ken Fermoyle

Mouse or trackball acting up? It might be dirty

Some months back, I wrote two articles about the importance of keeping your computer clean to keep it operating properly. They obviously struck a nerve because they have been among the most widely re-printed and requested Ken's Korner columns to date.

I just had an experience that underscored the cleanliness message, one that involved a vital part of any computer system: the mouse or other pointing device. Since the earlier articles didn't cover the care and cleaning of mice, I thought it would be good to share my experience with you.

(Actually, I use a Logitech TrackMan trackball, not a mouse, but the problem and cleaning procedure outlined below are similar for either type of pointing device.)

Over a period of several weeks I noticed the trackball was getting balkier, making it harder and harder to drag the cursor into position. Finally it got so bad I had to struggle to move the cursor at all. "Oh-oh," I said to myself, " I hope it's not time to buy a new trackball." The Logitech device was several years old and had been used a lot, so I thought it might

well need replacement. Then I remembered the mantra that Dennis Orloff of the ComputerBath line of maintenance products (*www. computerbath.com*) chants at every opportunity: "It's not broken, it's dirty!

Since he's right about 70% of the time, I decided to check first to see whether the trackball was just dirty. When I took it apart I was amazed at how much dirt had accumulated inside the poor critter. It wasn't just dust or loose dirt, either. There was a buildup of grime and a sort of lint, especially around the small ball contacts or rollers inside the ball cage. It was obvious that the crud was keeping the trackball marble from making proper contact with the rollers. The result, difficulty in moving the cursor, would be the same for an equally dirty mouse.

I cleaned everything thoroughly, and presto…it was like I had a brand-new trackball! Here was more proof of the need to keep things clean as part of computer maintenance.

The cleaning procedure was simple. It took just about 10 or 15 minutes, and saved me some bucks. So it's worth your while to see if cleaning will fix a balky pointing device before you toss it out and buy a new one. What you really should do, in fact, is clean your mouse or trackball periodically, and not wait for it to get as dirty and hard to use as mine was.

Here's how you do it.

First, if you have a manual for your mouse or trackball, dig it out. (Note: You should always keep manuals and

documents for ALL hardware and software.) Read it. It may show a diagram or cutaway, and possibly instructions, that will make the cleaning job easier for you. The only tool you may need is a small screwdriver, probably a Phillips-head type; you will also need a clean, lint-free cloth, Q-Tips or similar cotton swabs and a mild soap solution. Small tweezers, isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol and a toothpick may be useful, too . I find it convenient for jobs like this to keep screws and other small parts in an old ashtray, which also can serve as a tool rest.

Next, clean the mouse or trackball exterior and cord with a cloth moistened in a mild soap solution; wipe dry. Then turn the device upside down and remove the mouse ball retainer plate or trackball bottom cover. Usually the retainer plate can simply be rotated and lifted out. Some older mice and most trackballs have screws holding the plate or bottom cover in place. Remove the ball

> *The cleaning procedure was simple. It took just about 10 or 15 minutes, and saved me some bucks.*

carefully.

Clean ball with the moistened cloth, wipe with dry cloth and set it aside. (Make sure it is completely dry before reassembling.) I blew loose dirt out of the ball cage with a compressed air duster, held some distance away to lessen the impact. Be careful here so that you don't damage any components. In my case, I had to use a toothpick and tweezers

Ken's Korner

to dislodge some of the matted lint around the contacts in the ball cage. A cotton swab lightly moistened with alcohol may also be helpful for cleaning rollers or contacts and the inside of the ball cage.

When cleaning mice, take a close look at the rollers inside. (Most have three, some just two.) You will probably see dark lines of dirt that have built up over time. Work a cotton swab moistened just slightly with rubbing alcohol along each roller, rubbing side to side until the line of dirt is gone.

Once everything is squeaky clean, place the ball back in the ball cage and replace the retainer plate or bottom cover. That's it; you're done, and your mouse or trackball should be as good as new.

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Fermoyle is a member of TUG-NET and a professional writer. His articles appear in nearly 200 User Group newsletters worldwide. Write kfermoyle@earthlink.net for reprint permission.

Devoted member

For years my wife has told me, "You're a devoted husband," "You're a devoted father," etc.

I finally figured out she meant that I had lost my vote!

Submitted by Stan Leese

———

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

Frostbite.

Submitted by Tony Lake

Review and article guidelines

Facts to always include in reviews

1. What category is your product in? (graphics, utility, game, etc.)
2. Product name and version
3. Product cost (include information about rebates, special offers, etc.)
4. Company/manufacturer's name
5. Company URL, phone, or contact information
6. Special system requirements (such as special graphics card, Pentium II, etc.)
7. Describe in simple terms what you liked about the product.
8. Describe in simple terms what you didn't like about the product.
9. What is your overall recommendation? Should others buy and use the product or not?

How to submit reviews and articles

1. Reviews and articles should not exceed 600 words.
2. Submit reviews or articles as WordPerfect documents, or in ASCII text (such as Notepad) either as an e-mail attachment or on a floppy disk. (Please *do not* send Word documents due to the high risk of macro viruses.)
3. Reviews/articles should be submitted by the monthly meeting date. (If the review is going to be delayed for some reason, please inform the editor and discuss your proposed schedule.)
4. Please do not format the text by adding underlines, boldface, indents, justifying type, or use more than one typeface. Also, please do not double-space after periods or use all caps. In addition, be sure the vendor's name and product name are spelled correctly, as well as the text in the article.
5. Send one copy of your review to Linda Gonse at *editor@orcopug.org*, and to Terry Schiele at *reviews@orcopug.org*, if e-mail is used. If regular mail is used, send to Linda Gonse, 22655 Valley Vista Circle, Wildomar, CA 93595-8334, and to Terry Schiele, 2355 Camino Del Sol, Fullerton, CA 92833. You can also bring your review to a meeting and give it to Linda or Terry. Only one copy of a non-review article is needed. Direct it to Linda Gonse. It's best to provide printed copy and a floppy disk of the document.

Suggestions for interesting reviews and articles

1. Program installations are not interesting, unless they are unique—for instance: it took eight hours to install, you needed a doctorate degree, or a rabbit's foot and special incantations. Write, instead, about what happened after the installation.
2. Write for other users. Ask yourself, "What would my friends be interested in knowing about the product and my experience?"
3. Use personal pronouns, such as you and I, not "one" or "a person."
4. If you have a scanner, send a JPEG or GIF of the product (from the box, manual cover, etc.) with your review or article.
5. After the review or article, please include a couple of sentences about

Win95 dialer prevents system "hangs"

by Ted Wirtz

A new program update that cured the problem of hangs (lockups) when dialing out a second or third time in Windows 95 can be downloaded from Microsoft.

The program file, MSDUN13. exe, is 2.3 MB. DUN stands for "Dial-up Networking."

It also adds additional features for using ISDN adapters, and installs a new WinSock version 2.

The new WinSock optimizes TCP/IP over either a LAN or a dialed-up connection, by negotiating with the host to determine optimum packet size for the connection.

The old WinSock did not negotiate, and used a default setting that was optimized for LANs, and this caused modem connections to suffer. There are conditions where the old WinSock does not remove itself properly at the end of a session, which causes a system hang when you set up a new dial session. It is fixed in this edition. DUN is at *http:// www.microsoft.com/windows/ downloads/contents/ communications/comw95dun13/ dun13sites.asp.*

After loading this page, you will be presented with a list of mirror sites all over the world that you can

Ted Wirtz

Then and Now

ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator Analyzer and Computer), built in 1945, could calculate 5,000 additions per second and was 1,000 times faster than any calculating machine before it.

Created and designed by Linda Gonse

A 150 MHz Pentium calculates 300 million additions per second and is 60,000 times faster than ENIAC.

use to download the file. There are three USA sites, all named "ConXion". Late in the evening (California time), I actually got faster downloads using the East Coast site (Wash. DC). The major reason for slow download rate is because the download server is so busy. At that hour, fewer people are using that site, and it actually goes faster.

Since I applied DUN to a couple of Win95 stations at work, they have not had any more lockups after using the modem.

Windows 98 Update

It's a good idea to visit the Windows Update site regularly in order to keep your Win98 system running tip-top. Click the Windows Update link at the bottom of the Settings menu.

Submitted by Tony Lake

Little things *can* mean a lot to a computer

Large problems sometimes stem from ridiculously small causes. For example, cables, cards and chips can work themselves loose over time or develop bad connections from oxidation on their contacts. CPU cooling fans can die or malfunction, and dust can block air intakes or exhausts, leading to heat problems and erratic performance. To avoid all this, make sure all cables—inside the case and out—are properly inserted. Ensure that all socketed chips are firmly seated, that your fans are working and that your system case has unobstructed airflow. (Windows Magazine Tip of the Day.)

———

Get your own free online subscription; go to http://www.winmag.com/listserv/.

View most recently deleted files

Windows' Recycle Bin lists files alphabetically by default. But, if you want to find an accidentally deleted file fast, it can be more convenient to look at the files most recently deleted.

To do this, double-click the Date Deleted column header. Your latest deletions will appear at the top of the list. —*LG*

Send files to floppy fast

In Explorer, the quickest way to place a file or a folder on a floppy is to right-click on it, select Send To from the dropdown menu and choose "3½" Floppy (A)."—*LG*

Right or left click?

The rule in Windows 95/98 is to left click to select an item, and right-click to see a drop-down menu. —*LG*

A recipe for disaster*

by Frederic Gordon

A not-so-funny thing happened to me on the way to preparing an article on how to install Windows 98 while preserving a Windows 95 installation: I had a catastrophic, unrecoverable loss of data on the primary partition of my hard drive. **Which is to say my brand spanking new Windows 98 installation was totally trashed.**

Stuff happens in the computer world, including data loss. But this is the first time I ever experienced it without hardware failure and without being able to salvage things with recovery utilities. Worse, some of the principal players in the drama claim to have no knowledge of the problems.

The particular combination of ingredients necessary for the problem to occur is: (a) a hard drive larger than 8 GB; (b) using Partition Magic, or other dynamic partitioning utility, to create FAT32 partitions; (c) using a multi-boot utility, such as System Commander, to swap among different operating systems on separate partitions, and (d) running Norton Speed Disk to defragment the FAT32 partitions you created with the partitioning utility.

All that *sounds* obscure, but actually, it's a fairly likely combination if you attempt multi-booting, or even if you just use a partitioning utility to break up a large hard drive into several partitions. Win98 setup will allow you to save a backup of your old Win95 setup, but if you want to have your old Win95 and your new Win98 operating systems working in parallel, you need to multi-partition.

Also, the partitioning tools included with Win98, such as Fdisk, will erase all data while a third-party utility like Partition Magic preserves it.

This experience is the ultimate tech support nightmare: a data-destroying problem caused by the interaction of separate programs made by different companies.

V Communications, which makes System Commander, was on top of the problem, has a fix, and I am indebted to their tech support department for patiently walking me through the bug. The eagle-eyed editor of the Naked PC newsletter, Dan Butler, finally helped pinpoint the key to the problem: unknown to most computer users, Microsoft has devised more than one type of FAT32 formatting: a standard version and "FAT32X," which was invented to get around the technical limitations of current generation PCs when using hard drives larger than 8 GB.

To make a very long story short, **the current version of Partition Magic does not support FAT32X,** and for some reason, Speed Disk will rearrange the contents of a standard FAT32 partition on a large hard drive into FAT32X format.

As noted, V Communications knew of the problem when I called their technical support department, and has a fix. PowerQuest (Partition Magic) knows about FAT32X, but hadn't been aware of the problem with Speed Disk until I called it to their attention. They are developing a version 4.0 of Partition Magic that will support FAT32X.

However, as this is a written, Symantec has yet to acknowledge a problem with Speed Disk. Microsoft, whose format this is, has nothing about FAT32X in their Knowledge Base, nor was the Microsoft technical support person I contacted able to provide any information about it.

At this point, there appear to be only two fixes: first, stop using Speed Disk and instead run Win98's Disk Defragmenter utility, which doesn't cause the problem. Or, alternatively, install the "4.01 Maintenance Release" of V Communications' System Commander Deluxe, which has revised partitioning routines intended to avoid this problem.

(System Commander 3.x, the multi-boot-only utility, does not include this capability.) Upgrading to Partition Magic 4.0 is another option, of course.

Given the potential for catastrophic data loss, the uneven (to be charitable) response from the tech support shops involved is unacceptable and disturbing. V Communications didn't get its information out of thin air, if they knew about the problem, why didn't everyone else?

FAT32 is a new technology that is married in Win98 to some of the old DOS-based technology, which is being outrun by modern hardware. In the issues ahead, we will be looking at some of the problems that may crop up as the old and new technologies collide.

Frederic Gordon is a Boston-area journalist who has been working with Microsoft Word and other Office applications since Version 1. You can reach him at frederic5@aol.com.

Excerpt from The Naked PC's free online newsletter, http://www. TheNakedPC.com/subscribe.html.

* A large hard drive, third-party partitioning software, FAT32, Windows 98, and Norton Speed Disk

Trouble in Paradise

if you have a ZIP drive. It is a small program, easily fitting on a diskette if you don't want to leave it on your hard drive.

Start it up and you first will get an education on what the problems may be and what the program will do. Read the text. Not only is it interesting, but it tells you what is going to happen before the program does it.

Although the program is small, it takes hours to check the whole ZIP disk. I would advise you to run this sometime when you are not otherwise going to be using your computer—like overnight, or while you are at work, or other play. Turn off the sleep switch on your computer so it will continue to operate, inasmuch as there are no interrupts like keyboard or mice to keep the computer awake, because if it lapses into slumber you will have to jar it awake again for the program to continue.

At the end, you will get not only the reassurance that your drive and disk are OK, but a report on the operation.
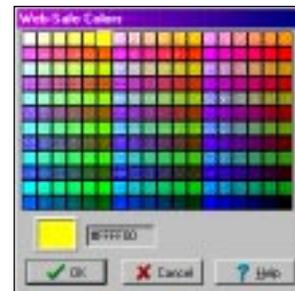
Carl Westberg

The freeware program can also be found at Steve Gibson's site, *http://www.grc.com/clickdeath.htm.*

"Mother of All Windows" books is out

The "Mother of All Windows 98 Books" by Woody Leonhard and Barry Simon, (Addison-Wesley), features tips, shortcuts, and explanations onWin98. Get $7.95 off the price at *http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0201433125/. —LG*

Software review

In AutoPics to HTML, Ver. 1.1, the simple interface has menu items placed in the order they will be used.

Web-safe color palettes for backgrounds and text are integrated into the program.

AutoPics to HTML creates fast picture pages

by Linda Gonse

This easy program is like the Little Engine That Could. It's hard to believe such an little program like AutoPics to HTML can do so much.

But, for anyone who wants to create simple web pages with pictures without fiddling with sizes and placement, this program from PolyVision Software can do it. And, HTML knowledge is absolutely unnecessary.

Or, if you have tons of photos (like I do) on your drives or on CDs and need a quick, easy way of viewing them, this program can do that, too. I use it to sift through numerous picture revisions to choose or delete. (Each file's name is automatically inserted under its image.)

AutoPics to HTML opens with a
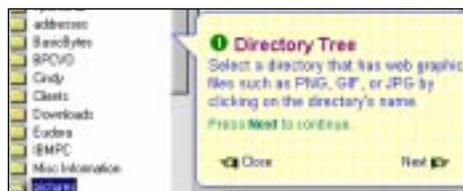
First step in Quick Tour

Quick Tour. Step-by-step graphical instructions show you how to be productive in less than one minute! There's also online help whenever you need it.

Begin by choosing a directory to automatically filter out JPG, PNG, and GIF files. (These image formats are viewable on the Web.)

Next, select from one to 50 images per page. Choose a background texture, or background or text colors from the handy Web-safe color palettes. Type a heading for your page, and select the directory you want to store it in. (Page links are added automatically on multiple pages.)

Click on Create and that's it. The page or pages are finished. Click to View pages in the browser's window.
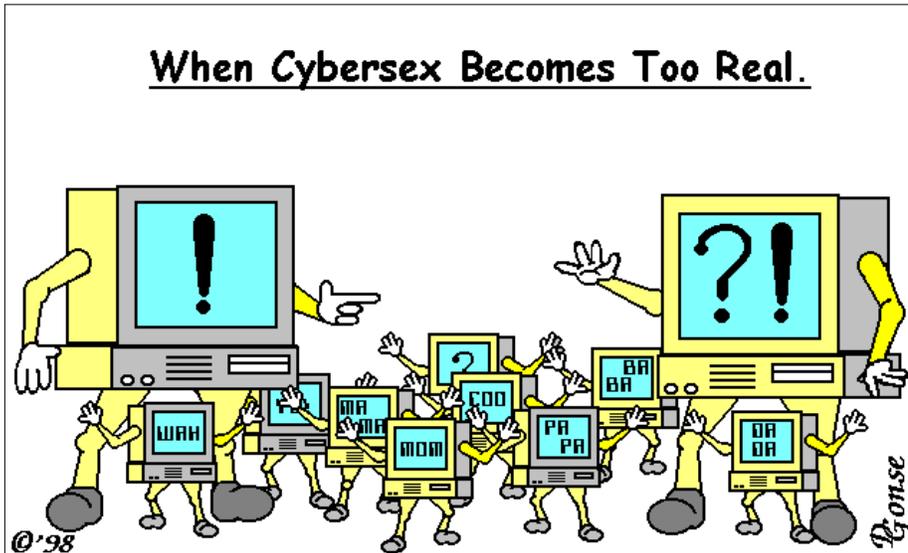
Other things you'll appreciate are the satisfying "click!" sound when buttons are pressed and right-click options in the directory and file views.

32-bit program, runs on Win9X, $12. Download from *http://www.polyvision.net* for a free tryout. Awarded four stars by ZDNet.

Humorous Bits

by Don Gonse

When Cybersex Becomes Too Real.

Cartoons free to User Groups with credit to Don Gonse. Request images from Don at degonse@juno.com.

Get free ISP connection in exchange for ad space

NetZero is a free ISP with no monthly charges, sign up fees, or e-mail fees. In exchange, subscribers agree to have a small, movable window with advertising appear on the screen.

NetZero, a Westlake Village, CA ISP which started up October 19, gives you Internet services, including chat, Internet phone, e-mail, video conferencing and browsing for free. There are local numbers for many areas in California and other states.

The ISP connection works with zCast software, which can be downloaded from *www.netzero.net*. Or, order the software on CD (it has a three week waiting list) at (818) 879-7250. zCast works with any browser or e-mail program.

Computer requirements are: Pentium system, 32 MB RAM, 12 MB free disk space, Windows 95/98 or NT 4, 56K modem, SVGA monitor with 800x600 screen resolution. A Mac version is expected soon.

Information submitted by Stan Leese

Boris and the Bills have dinner with God

Boris Yeltsin, Bill Clinton, and Bill Gates were invited to have dinner with God.

During dinner, God told the three, "I invited you to dinner because I needed three important people to send my message to all the people. Tomorrow, I will destroy the earth."

Yeltsin immediately called together his cabinet and said, "I have two really BAD announcements to make. First, God really does exist, and second, he will destroy the earth tomorrow."

Clinton called an emergency session of Congress and told them, "I have good news and bad news. The *good* news is that GOD DOES exist, and the *bad* news is that he will destroy the earth tomorrow."

Bill Gates went back to Microsoft headquarters and told his people, "I have *two* fantastic announcements! First, I am one of the three most important people on earth. Second, *the Y2K problem has been solved!*"

Vince Cimino

Submitted by Vince Cimino

Santa is only an e-mail message away

by Linda Gonse

Do you know a child who would love to get a letter from Santa? Well, in this computer age, Santa doesn't bother with snail mail, anymore. He replies in e-mail to every e-mail message a boy or girl sends.

Make a child happy this Christmas. Help them write a letter to s*anta@ northpole.usa.net*. He will respond with an immediate, warm, chatty automatic reply.

This great idea is sponsored by *www.netaddress.com.* There are no strings attached.

Newsletter contributors

Alan Jarrett, Carl Westberg, Charlie Moore, Don Gonse, Glenn Emigh, Ken Fermoyle, Linda Gonse, Lynne Cimino, Mervin Frank, Mike Lyons, Richard Tooley, Stan Leese, Steve Polyanchek, Terry Schiele, T.J. Lee, Ted Wirtz, Tony Lake, and Vince Cimino.

December raffle

Next, we will draw and announce winning tickets for each prize.

This has always been a fun evening. In years past, some members have tried to go for tonnage while others have been pleased getting that one program they really wanted. Of course, everyone tries to outdo Lothar Loehr in the "win" category.

Last year, 92 items were raffled, grossing $910 for the club. Thirty members were "official" winners, but everyone who attended took home a software program donated by Parsons Technology.

So, for a jolly good time, bring a friend (and get him or her to sign up so they can join the fun) and enjoy our next meeting.

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Due to the length of the special raffle, there will be no "reclaimed resource" table in December.

Newsletter deadline!

The deadline for Nibbles & Bits' January issue is Sunday, December 20.

New products

The vendors usually will thank us by sending other programs for our raffle and will consider our group for future evaluations.

Vendors generally offer support of the product through their web page, BBS, or sometimes directly with a phone call.

Please refer to the "Review and Article Guidelines" on page 10 for helpful guidelines in preparing a review. Highlight important items before you begin the evaluation and jot down your notes as you evaluate the product.

Planning meeting set third Thursday of month

The ORCOPUG planning meeting is December 17, at 7 p.m. in the meeting room of Downey Savings and Loan, Fullerton. It is located on the corner of Bastanchury and Laguna, one block west of Harbor Boulevard. Meetings are held the third Thursday of every month.

You're invited to come and participate in planning future programs and policies of the club. *—LG*

Review guidelines

yourself: the type of work you do, how long you've been in the club, why you joined a computer group, and anything you think is interesting about yourself.

It could be that you just bought a new computer, or you built your first computer, or you just started using a computer, or you just moved to Orange County, etc. (If you have a photo of yourself, it would be great if you would include it. We can use it alongside your review. Members like to see who is doing the review!)

These guidelines are also posted at the ORCOPUG website at *http://orcopug.org/reviews.html.*

Members' Web Pages

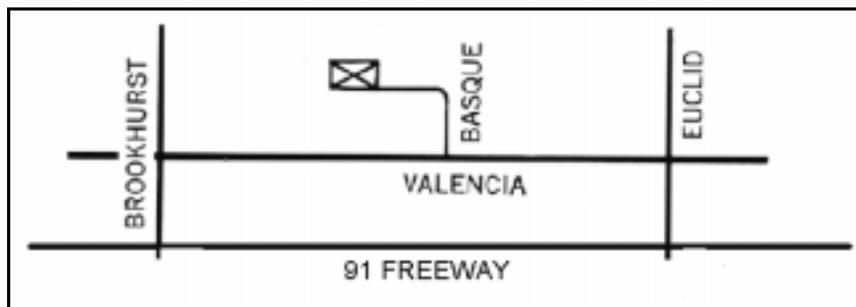|	
Gloria Bearss	*http://www.geocities.com/~glen-glo* **Breed & Show Harlequin Great Danes**
Jim Brubaker	*http://www.1homeseller.com* **Discount Real Estate Services for Buyers and Sellers of Homes**
Vince Cimino	*http://www.pe.net/~capov* **Model Airplanes**
Linda Gonse	*http://basicbytes.com* **PC Instruction, Newsletter Design, Web Page Design and Maintenance**
Sharon Graham	*http://home.earthlink.net/shgraham/* **Family Photos and Information**
Gary Hollander	*http://www.hollanderassociates.com* **System Architecture Consulting, Information Protection Products, and Security Training**

FREE Web listing for ORCOPUG members! Add your Web address!
Send your information to the editor: editor@orcopug.org; or Linda Gonse, 22655 Valley Vista Circle, Wildomar, CA 92595-8334.

Review Policy

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BROOKHURST **BASQUE** **EUCLID**

VALENCIA

91 FREEWAY

The Orange County IBM PC Users' Group regular meeting is scheduled the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Hunt Library, 201 S. Basque Avenue, Fullerton, (714) 738-5364.

Directions: From the 91 Freeway, exit at either Euclid or Brookhurst Streets and go north. Turn onto Valencia Drive. Go to Basque Avenue and turn north. The Hunt Library is located at the end of Basque, which only can be accessed from Valencia.

For more information, call ORCOPUG at (714) 990-0580, or check the club's web page at www.orcopug.org.