



NIBBLES & BITS

Tuesday, February 13, 6:30 p.m. at Sunny Hills Racquet Club, Fullerton — Bring a friend!

FEBRUARY MEETING

WizCom presents new scanning pen!

On the move with the **QuickLink Pen™** – capture printed text with the stroke of a pen!

Travelling for business and lugging your laptop, address book and paperwork with you everywhere you go, just in case you need to look someone up or input an interesting find, is no picnic.

Or imagine sitting in the doctor's office and seeing a great recipe, but it's too much for you to remember, and there's not enough time to copy it down...if you could only find a piece of paper to copy it down on. Or you have a huge amount of data that you need to enter into your computer, and typing it will take a lifetime. WizCom Technologies, the presenting company for the February 13 meeting, has the solution: *The QuickLink Pen™*. No

more scribbling, copying, or typing. This hand-held scanner enables you to capture printed text, store the data, and



A QuickLink Pen™ pen will be raffled off to some lucky person at the February meeting!

upload it to your PC, laptop, PDA or text-enabled cellular phone.

The QuickLink Pen™ itself comes equipped with four applications so you can scan addresses, Internet links, charts, tables and other kinds of printed information with ease. It has a compact, ergonomic design and simple controls to make scanning, storing, managing and transferring data efficient and effortless. The Pen is lightweight and fits neatly in your pocket, so you can capture information *anytime...anywhere.*

Weighing in at only 3 ounces, this handy little Pen can store up to 1,000 pages of text (and more with additional flash memory), or use it to scan

information directly into your application in real-time. Simply hold the QuickLink Pen™ as you would a normal highlighter, place it on top of the desired text and roll. You can scan printed text: **bold**, *italic*, inverted, underlined, 6-22 point size. Your data can be transferred via serial cable, USB, or infrared. The Pen is also designed for both left- and right-hand use and has a friendly icon-based graphical interface that makes the Pen

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*Award Winning
Newsletter*

New February meeting location!

Sunny Hills Racquet Club
1900 Camino Loma
Fullerton
714-992-1300



Notepad

by Linda Gonse
editor@orcopug.org

New place, fundraiser ...

This month we have a new meeting place at the Sunny Hills Racquet Club. The group met at this facility in the past, but due to a change in the restaurant policy, we had to find a new meeting place more than two years ago.

Recently, with our economic situation in mind, we began to search for a new place to meet that might cost less rent than the Hunt Branch Library. Lothar Loehr discovered we could get The Center Court Restaurant once again, since it is under new management. And, best of all, it is free! Thank you, Lothar!

This is going to be great for the people who come to the meeting right after work and don't have time to fix a meal. In fact, we can all show our appreciation to the restaurant and order a snack or dinner before the meeting.

In addition, we have a new fundraiser to try!

An inkjet company located in Southern California gives classes on inkjet refilling, so they use a lot of inkjet cartridges. In fact, they use so many they offered to pay us \$2 for every empty inkjet cartridge we send them! It doesn't matter what condition the cartridges are in, or what brand they are. They also return our postage costs. This will make a sweet, ongoing fundraiser for this group, don't you think? Yet it hardly takes any effort on your part at all. Just bring in your empty inkjet cartridges to the regular meetings and drop them in a special box. Lothar Loehr will mail them in and keep you up-to-date on what we've collected.

Ask your friends to give you their empty cartridges and let's see if we can raise \$500 by the end of this year. That

is only 250 cartridges. Or, approximately five cartridges per member. I think we can do this! Will you give it a try? We have nothing to lose and a lot to gain if you do.

This is the time to bring your friends to meetings. Besides having a wonderful place to meet, this month we are going to have a whiz bang presentation from WizCom! Their flagship product is the QuickLink™ scanning pen, which they will donate for a fundraising raffle.

Then, in March, we will have Ted Meyer, Territorial Manager for Los Angeles, from the Internal Revenue Service. He is in charge of the Taxpayer Education and Communication Program, so don't worry about an on-the-spot audit of your taxes!

Special thanks to all the people in this group who have put a shoulder to the wheel, and also our angels from outside the group, who have donated their effort, time, and money to help us.

WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN BE BETTER THAN EVER!

Letters to the editor

■ Minnesota member checks in

For the last two weeks I have been trying to survive a bout with pneumonia.

I still am not sure who has won.

Dean Kise
deankise@hotmail.com

P.S. I enjoyed the [APCUG Shareware] CD, and will like the next one.

■ PDF feedback

I received the January newsletter in the mail. I was also able to download and print it very nicely with the link you supplied.

Milton Gorham
m4gorham@home.com

■ MTX virus/worm is nasty

From what I read about this virus (it's a nasty one) part of the code lives in the master boot record, and if you don't rebuild the MBR first, all other steps are wasted, because each reboot reactivates the virus. The virus writers are getting increasingly sophisticated, and also are making the virus more damaging. Some viruses are smart enough to be able to detect if you have a virus checker running, and

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Letters

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can neuter it, if it is one of the more popular ones such as Symantec, McAfee, etc.

The one's I'm really concerned about are the XML viruses like the KAK worm.

Just opening an infected e-mail installs the virus. Never mind opening an attachment, it isn't necessary. If people are using a mail package with a preview pane, you're dead the moment your cursor highlights that message. If it happens to be the first message listed in the in-basket, your computer is toast the moment the mail program opens. I keep telling users NOT to use the email preview...

There is a virus (STAGES) that doesn't activate right away. It writes into the registry instead. Then the next time you boot your computer, as the registry is loaded, the computer is instructed to load and activate the virus before any other programs (including the antivirus program) are loaded. When the antivirus program starts, it can only report that you are already infected.

Ted Wirtz
twirtz@pacbell.com

Viruses were sent to me four times this past month: one was W95.MTX and W32.Hybris came in three times! I can't stop thanking Norton AntiVirus for catching them as soon as they downloaded from the mail server.

For those who don't know about

*MTX, a description from Symantec (creators of Norton AV) and a fellow computer user (<http://www.pchell.com/virus/mtx.shtml>) follows. More information and instructions for removing the viruses are at Symantec's site, <http://www.sarc.com>. *MTX and Hybris are rated High Risk and are among the top 10 most circulated.*—LG*

What is the MTX Virus and how did I get it?

W95.MTX is generally contracted by opening an attachment with one of the following names:

I_wanna_see_you.txt.pif
Matrix_screen_saver.scr
Love_letter_for_you.txt.pif
New_playboy_screen_saver.scr
Bill_gates_piece.jpg.pif
Tiazinha.jpg.pif
Feiticeira_nua.jpg.pif
Geocities_free_sites.txt.pif
New_napster_site.txt.pif
Metallica_song.mp3.pif
Anti_cih.exe
Internet_security_forum.doc.pif
Alanis_screen_saver.scr
Reader_digest_letter.txt.pif
Win_\$100_now.doc.pif
Is_linux_good_enough!.txt.pif
Qi_test.exe
Avp_updates.exe
Seicho_no_ie.exe
You_are_fat!.txt.pif
Free_xxx_sites.txt.pif
I_am_sorry.doc.pif
Me_nude.avi.pif
Sorry_about_yesterday.doc.pif
Protect_your_credit.html.pif

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Members win 11 prizes in January raffle

PowerQuest Lost & Found	Value \$49
Ted Wirtz	Winner
Today's Printer Organizer	Value \$40
R.A. Metzger	Winner
Voice Pilot Hear-Look	Value \$49
Chuck Moore	Expired
Ralph Hedges	Winner
Borland Mug	Value \$5
Terry Schiele	Winner
TaxAct 2000 Bundle	Value \$30
Bill La Mont	Winner
TaxAct 2000 Bundle	Value \$30
Leonard Prince	Winner
Adobe Image Library	Value \$29
Linda Gonse	Not Present
Verla Covey	Not Present
Ralph Seymour	Winner
Borland Mug	Value \$5
Joe Gionet	Expired
Robert Chenoweth	Not Present
LeRoy Kaump	Winner
TaxAct 2000 Bundle	Value \$30
Dick McMillan	Not Present
Larry Klees	Winner
Borland JBuilder4	Value \$10
Ray Fitch	Not Present
Walter Jackson	Winner
Borland Mug	Value \$5
Joe Francis	Winner

Submitted by Mike Lyons

Ever hear of the drowning computer nerd who kept shouting, "F1! F1! F1!"

Members Helping Members

**Windows 3.1, '95-'98, Office 97,
Office 2000, PageMaker, Internet**

MS Office, Access, Win 3.1, MS-DOS

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Sharon Graham
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(714) 533-6043 aft. 7a.m., bef. 10 p.m.

**Won't you please volunteer to answer questions for members who need help?
Add your name to this list by writing to: editor@orcopug.org.**

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(If you are online browsing Nibbles & Bits pdf edition, click on any name in the email directory to send an email message.)

Members' Renewal Dates

December 1	Jerry Patterson Dan Sheffield
January 1	Carl Apponyi Joe Gionet Chuck Moore
March 1	Frank Balazs Art Bullis Ray Fitch Sharon Graham Milton Gorham Bill LaMont Marvin Webster
April 1	Bud Barkhurst Monte Holmes Robert Kambeitz Lothar Loehr Pat McMillan Dick McMillan David Musser Denny Turner
April 1	Lloyd Boutwell Chad Hansen Terry Schiele Harold Wann

Submitted by Charlie Moore

WizCom program

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fun and easy to use.

Designed with an open architecture, you can update your QuickLink Pen™ and add new features, translation and barcoding capabilities, as well as third party applications, as they become available. You won't have to upgrade your hardware, just download the options you want via our web site at www.wizcomtech.com.

We even have additional flash memory available as you add applications and expand your Pen. A great tool, whether you're in the field or in the office, travelling on business or researching in the library, the QuickLink Pen™ can lighten your load.

WizCom Technologies Inc. was formed in 1999 as a subsidiary of WizCom Technologies Ltd. (Israel, 1995). WizCom offers easy-to-use, intelligent, hand-held scanners that combine barcoding, text acquisition and image processing technologies with language databases. WizCom's products include the QuickLink Pen™, Quicktionary™, a translation pen, the Quicktionary™ Reading Pen™, an assistive learning device, and Quicktionary™ D-Fine™, a portable dictionary tool.

WizCom Technologies Inc. is located at 257 Great Road, Acton, Massachusetts 01720.

WizCom is donating a scanning pen to ORCOPUG to use as a fundraiser at our February raffle. Buy a ticket for \$1 or six for \$5 for several chances to win this super-duper prize!

MARCH ANNOUNCEMENT!

Just in time to give you tips about taxes—Ted Meyers from the Internal Revenue Service will be the presenter at our March meeting. Bring a friend and lots of questions!

Partition Magic 6.0 does what it claims to do and well

by Lloyd Boutwell

As always PowerQuest has done it again with Partition Magic 6.0. It is certainly a pleasure to review a software program that does what it claims to do and does it well. I now own of Version 2 through 6 of Partition Magic. I wanted Version 6 since I “upgraded” to Windows Me, which is not compatible with earlier versions of



PM because of the DOS thing (some PM features require a DOS-like operation). I believe that most everyone is familiar with Partition Magic by now so I won't go into the obvious features but there are new capabilities that need to be recognized.

PM6 was a no-brainer to install; in fact, it deletes earlier versions of PM so you don't have to bother. I had the opportunity to try PM6 on three different computers. The first is an old 486 running Windows 98SE. The second is a slightly later computer, a Pentium II (266 MHz). The third and latest, at least for me, computer is a Pentium III (600 MHz). The second and third computers are running Windows Me. Everything went without a hitch on the first computer and I even

had the chance to use the undelete partition feature. However, there was a slight glitch with the Pentium II. I found that I had to disconnect my SCSI ZIP and JAZ drives otherwise the computer would lockup when I tried to run PM6. With the SCSI drives disconnected everything went smoothly. It appears that PM6 does not like the hardware combination of Iomega's BUZ interface card and the removable drives. This problem also existed with the earlier versions of Partition Magic, so I was not surprised. The Pentium III computer also has a SCSI JAZ drive but the interface card is Adaptec's 2930 and PM6 had no problems with this combination. I also had an EIDE hard drive connected to my USB using an adapter and PM6 found this drive as well, although it took many minutes before I saw the results. I almost thought the software quit—it took so long.

I was pleasantly surprised that not only did PM6 work with Windows Me but also there are some additional features such as Tree View, Scale Disk Map, and Copy Partition.

Tree View is very similar to the view available with the Windows file Explorer and is very convenient if you have more than one hard drive on your system. I have three hard drives on the Pentium III computer and the Tree View quickly showed me the status of all three drives without having to scroll through a list like the earlier PM versions required.

The Scale Disk Map is somewhat of a goody since it just gives you a relative display of each hard drive's capacity.

One of the biggest surprises was the Copy Partition feature. This allowed me to transfer my software system from one hard drive to another. Although it is not as straight forward as PowerQuest's Drive Copy or Drive Image, I will not have to upgrade my version 2.0 of Drive Image (the current version available is 4.0).



The figure above shows the tree view on the left, scale disk map upper right, and the list in the lower right. Notice that although the tree view shows four disks only three are seen in the scroll view. Also check out the Copy partition feature next to the Merge partitions.

PM6 requires 32 MB of RAM (64 MB with Windows 2000 Professional) and a minimum of 50 MB of disk space. The retail cost of PM6 is \$70 but upgrade and user group prices are \$30. I have seen the program at a computer fair for the same upgrade price. I highly recommend this program even if you, like me, have one or more earlier versions.

Suggested retail price is \$69.95, or \$29.95 for the upgrade. BUT, User group members can get Partition Magic for \$30 at PowerQuest's user group site. Go to <http://www.ugr.com/> order. Give our user group name and the special code, UGFLYR00, to be eligible for the discount price. You can print the form and mail, or order online. Be sure to see The PowerQuest Bundle, too. It costs only \$99 for Partition Magic, Drive Image, Second Chance, and Lost and Found! —LG

Follow-up to Quicken Review

by Glenn Emigh

In my recent review of Quicken 2001 Home and Business, I talked a lot about on-line banking (including on-line bill payment). As I mentioned, this has become commonplace among banks, although a relatively small proportion of financial institutions are set up to allow full use of Quicken as your interface to banking features.

Furthermore, I mentioned that I had had a good experience with Union Bank of California, but had been seeking an alternative bank that matched UBoFC's features, without the monthly \$4.95 service fee for on-line bill payment. BankDirect had proven an unsatisfactory alternative, and I mentioned that I'd decided to try NetBank.

I can now report that NetBank has also fallen short of my expectations. Yes, they have interest-bearing checking account. Yes, they are free. Yes, they have free on-line bill payment. And, yes, "NetBank has implemented full open financial exchange (OFX) ... Quicken users can download their NetBank account information automatically from within Quicken without ever opening a browser or visiting the NetBank site ... [and] true to NetBank form, this service is once again, free."

But, there was still a "gotcha." After opening the account, and setting it up on Quicken, I went to set up on-line bill payment. And up pops a warning message (that I had never seen before) saying that NetBank does *not* support on-line bill payment *through Quicken*. In other words, you can have on-line banking through Quicken, and you can have on-line bill payment, but *not* through Quicken. Huh? Give me a break! Neither the "banking associate" nor Quicken tech support could have told me this because I did not know the right questions to ask. Now I am older

and wiser.

At this point in the setup, Quicken will offer you its *own* on-line bill payment service, which you can establish in conjunction with your on-line bank account. But, you guessed it, there is an additional monthly fee.


I'm stuck with keeping the NetBank account until I've satisfied the requirements to keep the \$50 they give you to open a new account. In the meantime, I'm back on the trail of the holy grail of on-line banking. Mind you, this is all because I want to use Quicken. You can easily have an on-line bank account, whose features (including bill payment) you access entirely through your browser.

My next victim: directbanking.com (Yes, that's the actual name of the bank. And yes, they are located at www.directbanking.com. And, yes, I know that all these bank names sound so similar; its enough to confuse even a computer nerd.)

Here's what *their* website says:

"And now, you can perform all of your HomeBanking transactions through your Quicken software. No extra fees. No extra hassles. No kidding [with] directbanking.com and Quicken2000 you can perform your HomeBanking transactions online, including transferring funds, paying bills, placing stop payments, downloading account information and statements, and organizing and sorting your transaction history."

OK, we'll see.



The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

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Electricity, rolling blackouts, and computers

by T.J. Lee

California is in the grip of record power shortages and Stage Three crisis warnings. Lee Hudspeth and I are both carrying extra Micro-Lights around with us and have insisted our kids and spouses have one handy at all times in case the lights suddenly go out! Usually we talk about electrical problems and computers in the spring here in the Northern Hemisphere since that is when we experience electrical storms around the U.S., but since the rolling blackouts have us all thinking about power let's cover the basics in this issue.

You have to protect your system from three power conditions. The first is too much power coming out of the wall (i.e., power surges). The second is too little power, known as a "sag." We don't often think about low power but a sag can make your computer suddenly reboot itself, making you think there's a ghost in the machine. The lights may not flicker and the radio keeps playing but a sag can cause a spontaneous reboot. Last is line noise. The solution to these three power condition risks is: the right hardware.

For most home users the first line of electrical defense is a "surge protector." This is usually a power strip into which you plug a CPU, monitor, printer, speakers, and maybe a desk lamp. Someone in this scenario typically sets up the system, plugs everything in, and promptly forgets about it until an electrical problem arises.

Two problems right off the bat with this approach. First is the practice of plugging in as many pieces of equipment as there are outlets on the strip. This almost always places too

much load on the wattage rating of the strip, which is drawing all its power from a single outlet, which means a single circuit in your house. The second problem is that surge strips use metal-oxide varistors (MOVs) to connect the hot side of the circuit to the ground side. At normal voltages MOVs don't conduct electricity but when a surge of power hits them they conduct and shunt the load to the ground. This method of protection assumes your outlet is properly grounded. It's not a bad idea to examine the plugs you use for your electronic equipment—computers, stereo, big screen TV, etc.—and make sure they're properly grounded. The problem with MOV technology is that not only are they only good against relatively low power spikes (in the 5-6 kiloamp range), MOVs deteriorate over time due to the minor fluctuations in day to day power coming out of the wall. There's no way to look at a surge suppressor and tell if the MOVs are working. Even if the MOVs are working they won't do anything to protect you from sags or line noise.

Your best bet to deal with surges, sags, and line noise is to hook your equipment up to an uninterruptible power supply (UPS).

Most people think that a UPS is primarily used as a power backup to keep your computer running when the

lights go out. That's a nice feature but really secondary to its power conditioning abilities. The battery will only run your system for a short time, usually measured in minutes, just enough time to save your files and shut down your system.

A UPS takes the power coming out of your wall and uses it to keep an internal battery charged. The battery provides the electricity that actually powers your computer. This ensures a steady, even flow of electricity filtering out line



T.J. Lee

noise and providing protection from surges and sags. UPS devices can protect against surges in the 50-500 kiloamp range (which is what you can get if lightning strikes a power pole near you).

A nice benefit of the higher end models is that they come with software that will monitor your Windows computer and in the event that the power goes out and no one is at the keyboard it tells Windows to Shut Down. Lee reviewed several UPS models in TNPC #2.24: *page 3*.

Like the power strip, it's important to get a UPS with enough umph to power the equipment you'll be plugging into it. If you have our book "T.J. Lee and Lee Hudspeth's Absolute Beginner's Guide to PC Upgrades" check chapter 10, "Adding Power Protection," for a discussion on how to calculate your requirements and the steps for installing a UPS on your system.

If you're concerned about the power going out due to electrical storms, planned rolling blackouts as we're having in California, or other causes, don't just rely on your UPS and go merrily on your way. If there's a good possibility that your power will

Dues Increase \$5

On January 1, membership dues increased \$5. They are now \$25.

Please sponsor a new member this year. You can download membership applications for friends at www.orcopug.org/pdf/application.pdf



WARNING!



What is the MTX virus?

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- Jimi_hendrix.mp3.pif
- Hanson.scr
- F__ing_with_dogs.scr
- Matrix_2_is_out.scr
- Zipped_files.exe
- Blink_182.mp3.pif

W95.MTX has a virus component and a worm component. It infects some Win32 executables in specific folders. The virus also has the capability to block access to certain web sites, including Symantec web sites. This may prevent you from downloading new virus definitions directly to an infected computer.

How to repair

This is a complex and difficult virus to remove. It alters system files, and on some computers these files cannot be repaired. In some cases, after attempting to repair the virus, you cannot start Windows until you restore the essential system files from the original Windows installation CD.

Download the FixTool

Because this virus can not only disable Windows and executable files, but can also block access to certain Web sites, including Symantec Web sites, in some cases you must perform any needed downloads on an uninfected computer.

A tool that will help remove this

virus has been developed by the Symantec AntiVirus Research Center (SARC). Because of the complex nature of this virus, not all files can be repaired. To download the tool, go to: <http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/w95.mtx.fix.html>.

If you cannot get to this site, then the tool is also available at the following sites: <http://www.ghostsoft.com/avcenter/venc/data/w95.mtx.fix.html>, or <http://www.digitalriver.com/symantec/virus>.

W32Hybris.gen.dr

This virus/worm combination, distributed in email, **can update its functionality via the Internet!** The email can arrive with any subject, message text, and attachment name. Read a detailed description at <http://www.sophos.com/virusinfo/analyses/w32hybrids.html>.

Rolling blackouts

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go out be sure to shut down your computer and turn it off. Shut the UPS down as well and as an added precaution unplug the UPS from the wall outlet. If you're working on your computer and the power suddenly goes out an alarm on the UPS will sound and you should close your programs, shut down your computer, shut down the UPS, then unplug the UPS from the outlet.

Unplugging is important because when power is restored the power company boosts the amperage because of the load on the grid caused by all the appliances that were left on when the power stopped. It takes a boost to get them all running again so they spike the power. While your UPS can protect your equipment from a surge, the spike will not do your UPS any good and since you know it's coming you should unplug it. Research any UPS you may purchase carefully. A UPS may have

seven outlets but it's better than even money that some of those outlets will not be conditioned power from the battery but only protected via MOVs. For example, on my main UPS there are 7 outlets but only 4 offer battery power. The other 3 are MOV surge protected only.

Finally, be aware of all the entry points into your computer. You can unplug your computer from the wall only to have your motherboard get fried because of a lightning strike to your telephone line, right into your modem and into your motherboard. You can get surge suppressors for your phone lines as well and it's well worth considering (many UPS models include this as a built-in feature). If you have more than one computer connected by a network be mindful that a surge hitting one unprotected machine can conceivably run through your network and affect other systems. Be wary of any entry point where a conductive cable is plugged into your computer.

T.J. Lee has written several best-selling computer books. You can reach T.J. Lee, at: tj_lee@TheNakedPC.com. *The Naked PC is a free, online newsletter. Subscribe at <http://www.thenakedpc.com>.*

Did you know? The energy usage of a Web host ranges from 10 to 30 megawatts—approximately the same amount of energy used in a steel mill!

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Ken's Korner

by Ken Fermoyale

Wireless headset is first to meet Bluetooth standard

You may or may not have heard the name "Bluetooth" in the past, but you are sure to hear it a lot in the future. Reason? Bluetooth is expected to be the jumping-off point for a giant leap forward in wireless communications.

To understand why, you need only recall the story of the Tower of Babel. Inability to communicate stymied its builders. That's been true of wireless communication devices. Until now. An industry-wide Special Interest Group developed the Bluetooth standard to

first Bluetooth devices is a "milestone" both for GN Netcom and for Bluetooth technology, according to Michelle Boockoff-Bajdek, the director of marketing communications at GN Netcom.

The product underwent the extensive testing required by the Bluetooth Qualification Body to ensure interoperability with the standard, Boockoff-Bajdek said. This is a crucial step, because "the success of Bluetooth as a standard hinges on

The idea of Bluetooth "is to allow [the consumer] to use a single device instead of six or seven."

ensure interoperability between wireless devices such as cellular phones, computers, and PDAs (personal digital assistants).

Nokia, Ericsson, 3Com, IBM, and Lucent Technologies are among the more than 100 companies that make up the Bluetooth Special Interest Group.

Interestingly, a small New Hampshire company beat mobile phone biggies Nokia and L.M. Ericsson out of the Bluetooth starting gate. GN Netcom has announced one of the first officially qualified Bluetooth devices, its GN 9000 Bluetooth wireless headset.

Now a new headset might not seem like a big deal, but releasing one of the

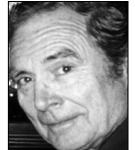
interoperability," she said. The headset will require a Bluetooth host device — either the base station, which GN Netcom sells, or a Bluetooth card for a PC or PDA — to operate. When such a device is present, the GN 9000 Bluetooth headset will offer users a mobile range of up to 30 feet (900 centimeters). The device will retail for \$299, and a package including the base station and headset will cost \$499.

Though this price level puts it out of the reach of small office/home office (SOHO) users, which includes most Ken's Korner readers, I agree with GN Netcom's Boockoff-Bajdek that the headset is a significant milestone. It is the harbinger of things to come, the

"first robin" of a wireless communications spring, as it were.

We must put the cost into context, notes Paul Mahoney, the director of product marketing at GN Netcom. The idea of Bluetooth "is to allow [the consumer] to use a single device instead of six or seven," he said, adding that \$299 for a single product is not expensive compared to buying multiple items for multiple devices.

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Ken Fermoyale has written some 2,500 articles for publications ranging from *Playboy* and *Popular Science* to *MacWeek*, *Microtimes* & *PC Laptop*. Ken's **Korner**, a syndicated monthly column, is available free to User Groups. For information or permission to reprint this article, contact kfermoyale@earthlink.net.



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Submitted by Tony Lake



Should you upgrade Windows?

by Siles Bazerman

I have been getting questions about upgrading to Windows Me lately. I want to make the point that just because a new operating system has come out, you do not have to upgrade. I still see, in the usenet groups I subscribe to, questions and help for upgrading to Windows 95 from Windows 3.1 or 3.11(workgroups). Also from Windows 95 to OSR2, Windows 95 to Windows 98, first or second edition, and from Windows 98 first edition to Windows 98SE. If your computer and software are doing the job for you and running the programs you want or need, why upgrade.

Remember, in just about every case an upgrade of operating system will also mean an upgrade of some or nearly all of your software, or even new programs. It also may also involve getting and installing new hardware including more memory or a larger hard drive. Only upgrade if you need to accomplish a task or use software that requires it.

I upgrade only because computing is one of my hobbies and ways of keeping my mind active. I am retired and have the time to spend learning the ins and outs of each system. I also get bored and run out of things to write about an operating system after a while. A new operating system is a new challenge. I have the choice of not upgrading and not writing, or upgrading and writing. I enjoy writing, although at times I hate deadlines.

Do not upgrade just because I did, or because I write about a new system. Remember, I do not have to produce anything. I also have two computers to use so if one of them is down due to problems, I can use the other. I never update both at the same time.

Having said that, let me tell you about something new I have been

Remember, in just about every case, an upgrade of operating system will also mean an upgrade of some or nearly all of your software, or even new programs.

trying. This is Star Office from Sun Microsystems. I was recently given a free CD of this in version 5.1. This version is being phased out but 5.2 is available for free download (www.sun.com/staroffice) or on a CD for a nominal charge. The suite includes a word processor, spreadsheet, vector and bitmap drawing tools including 3D, presentations, database, and Internet browser, email reader and newsreader. Also included is a task scheduler. This suite not only works in Windows 95, Windows 98 and Windows Me, but in NT and Windows 2000 also. It is truly cross platform as there are versions on the CD for OS/2, OS/2 Warp, Unix, Linux, and Solaris. There doesn't appear to be a Mac version. It seems to be written primarily in Java code and wants an install of Sun Java v1.5, rather than Microsoft Java (surprise, surprise).

This suite works well in all the functions I have tried. Obviously I have not tried it on the other operating

systems though. When you install this be careful of your choices. If given free rein it will install its own browser, email client and newsgroup reader, ignoring what you already have installed. Also, my biggest gripe, it will not save in WordPerfect format. It will save in just about everything else though. Interestingly enough, it will load and convert from a WordPerfect document (.wpd) or WordPerfect metafile (.wpm).

This is an interesting suite and the price is sure right. It has a smaller footprint than either Microsoft Office or Perfect Office. Might be worth

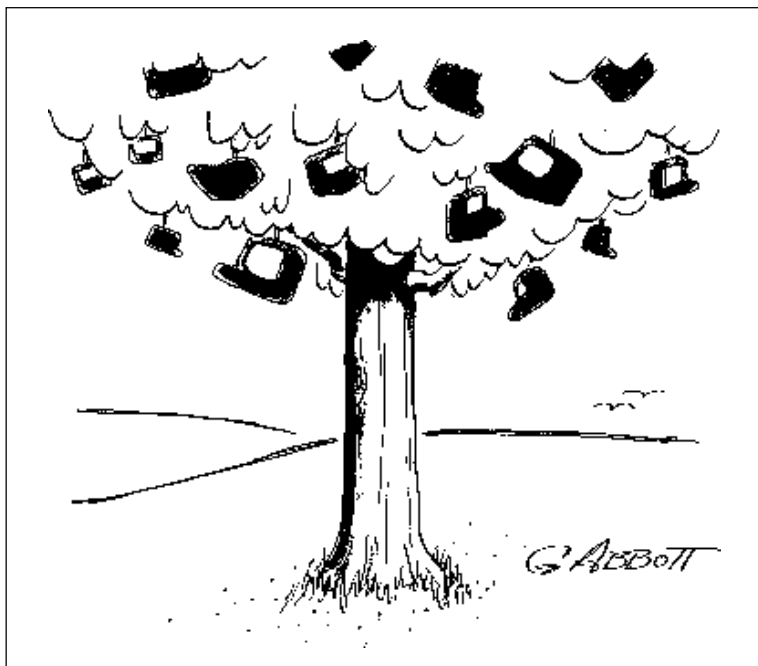
taking a look at if you are in need of a new suite, but don't want to spend much money, or upgrade your system. Requirements include a Pentium processor (P60 or better) and 32 meg of RAM (64 recommended) running Windows 95 or

higher, with at least 100 meg of hard drive space available (300 is best). Also needed is VGA with 256 grayscale or colors, mouse and CD.

Lately I have been asked frequently about defragging a hard drive, and what program should be used. I highly recommend defragging on a regular basis. It helps keep your drive clean, your computer run faster and saves space. I defrag about two to three times a month, and after major changes in my programs. Below are my

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Windows Tips

Clean out startup programs — Some programs startup when you turn on your computer. The programs do this by placing shortcuts to themselves in the Startup folder. If you want to remove a shortcut to a program you don't often use, right click on the Start button and select Open. Double-click on the Programs folder in the left window pane. Then, double-click on the StartUp folder. Right click on the program shortcut you want to delete and left click on Delete. (Do not confuse a shortcut with its program. Shortcuts point to programs and can be deleted. But the program can still be opened and used whenever you need it.) **95/98/Me**

Print directly from unopened files—You can print a file without opening the program that created it. Here's how: Open the folder where you placed your files, such as My Documents. Right click on the file you want to print. Left click on Print, near the top of the menu. (With just two clicks, this option saves you from opening a program, locating your file, selecting print, and closing the program.) **95/98/Me**

Dump the password —You don't need a password every time Windows opens. You can disable this nagging feature so it won't bother you in the future. Click on Start. Then, click on Settings, and Control Panel. Locate the Password icon and double-click to open it. Click on the Password tab, and click on the button Change Password. Type in your old password in the Old Password field. Clear both boxes for New Password and Confirm New Password and click OK. **95/98/Me** —Source: Winter 2000 Bytesize Tips, www.basicbytes.com/tips.html

Siles

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preferences in order of my ranking.

Norton SpeedDisk: Fast, configurable, can optimize or not (your choice), also will let you select where on the HD you want programs placed.

Microsoft Defragger: Comes with Windows, the Windows Me version is much faster than previous versions, somewhat configurable, does optimize.

Diskkeeper 5 or 6: Works well but not very configurable, better for NT or Windows 2000.

On Track(Fix-it Utilities): Fast but not too configurable, not intuitive.

McAfee defragger: Works, but McAfee suite has been known to cause conflicts and problems in both Windows 98 and Windows Me.

Vopt: Fast defrag, but in spite of its name, it does not optimize and places files all over the hard drive—wastes space.

All of the above do work and will do the job, but they each have their own algorithm for where they place files, and how they order them. Regardless of which you use, use ONLY one, not more or you will be totally wasting time and defeating the purpose of defragging and optimizing your hard drive. But, use one.

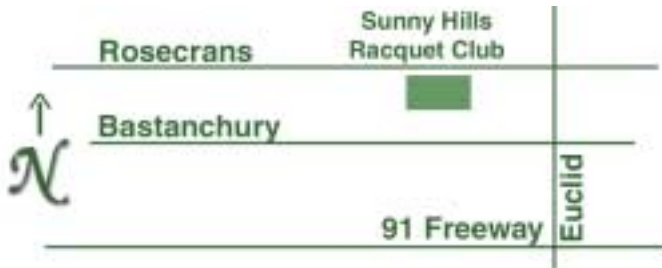
Siles Bazerman is Vice President of WINNERS computer group in Garden Grove, and member of ORCOPIUG. You can write him at siles.bazerman@gte.net; or call, 714-897-2868 (after 9 a.m.).

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“The User Group community plays an important role in educating computer users and reaching out to those who are new to technology.” – Dr. Charles M. Geschke, President, Adobe Systems

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 .



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Everyone is welcome at meetings

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. Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in planning future meetings and events.

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**WizCom to Demo
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Tuesday, February 13
6:30 p.m.
See meeting map
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