



NIBBLES & BITS

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

MARCH MEETING

IRS agent will show you how to e-file your tax return!

On March 13, a representative from the Internal Revenue Service, Ted Meyer, will explain how the IRS is changing. Ted says the IRS now offers several new ways for taxpayers to get help, obtain forms and publications, and file tax returns electronically. As computer users, no longer will you have to search the libraries and banks for the right forms or instructions, nor must you drive to the Post Office at 11:30 on April 15th to file returns.

Ted is the Los Angeles Territory Manager for Taxpayer Education and Communication (TEC) in the Small Business/Self Employed Division. A native Southern Californian, Ted holds a Bachelors degree in Accounting and has been with the IRS in the Los Angeles area for over 22 years. His experience spans that of Tax Auditor, Revenue Agent, Instructor, Revenue Agent Group Manager. He served for 11 years as an Examination Division Branch Chief.

March meeting location

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

The Future of Tax Filing is Here!

Now you have more than one way to file your federal (and most state) tax returns, Ted says. The IRS e-file



**Finally ...
A Paperless Way
To File A Tax Return!**

program offers quick, easy, and accurate alternatives to traditional paper returns. These options include filing through a tax professional, through a personal computer, or over the telephone. IRS e-file is used by millions of satisfied taxpayers each year to provide a more convenient method of filing their taxes.

What is IRS e-file?

IRS e-file is a way to file a tax return electronically to the IRS. It is the fastest, most accurate way to file taxes, and it gets you your refund in half the usual time—even faster with Direct Deposit.

Why File Electronically?

You can get your refund in half the time, even faster with Direct Deposit. Your chance of getting an error notice

from the IRS is significantly reduced because IRS e-file is more accurate (less than 1% error rate) than mailing a paper return. You get proof that the IRS has accepted your return within 48 hours. Your privacy and security are assured. You have many free or low-cost alternatives available.

Can Payments Be Made Electronically?

You can make your payments electronically, if you have a balance due, by using direct debit from your

page 4

March 2001 Volume 19, Number 3

- Notepad 2
- Letters 2
- Member news 3
- More Partition Magic 5
- Its Deductible review 6
- More rolling blackouts and computers 7
- Computers have batteries? 9
- Siles 10
- Peripherals 11

*Award Winning
Newsletter*



Notepad

by Linda Gonse
editor@orcopug.org

Downloads, fundraising, and questions...

Sometimes we overlook talking about details that can be of great help to others. One of the members recently brought a point to my attention and I'll share it with you.

First, if you decide to download Acrobat Reader, you must be connected to the Internet. No downloads can take place without a connection between your computer and your ISP (AOL, Earthlink, Pacbell, etc.).

Next, click on a link to take you to Adobe's home page. Or, you can type in <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html> to download Acrobat Reader. The file you are prompted to save to your hard drive is called AR405ENG.exe. This is an installation file.

Choose which folder you want the file to be saved in and, if you think you might forget, write down the name of the folder.

Turn off your antivirus software and close all open windows before you install the program you downloaded.

Click on Start and go to Settings and click on Control Panel. Double-click the icon Add/Remove Programs. Click on Install and follow the directions. After Acrobat Reader is installed, the file name of its program is AcroRd32.exe.

If something goes wrong and you cannot find the program icon after it is installed, you can go to Start and click on Run. Type in AcroRd32.exe and click OK. The program will open.

Many members brought empty ink jet cartridges to the last meeting as part of our new fundraising effort. There were nearly \$100 worth! Lothar Loehr will mail them for the refund and we

will continue to collect empty cartridges at every meeting. Please bring yours next time!

At the last count, the QuickLink pen raffle brought in \$202.

In addition, we have sold about 89 of our APCUG Shareware CDs. (About 70 remain unsold.)

If we continue to collect funds at the current rate, I'm hoping we may be able to buy our LCD projector by early next year!

Now, I have one more request. Will you please take a minute or two to jot a note and send it to me in answer to the next two questions:

1. Do you prefer receiving the PDF newsletter file as an email attachment (such as I'm sending this month), or would you rather receive the link only and download the file from our web site?

2. What do you do most often: Read the PDF on your computer monitor, or print it out and read the paper copy?

Thank you very much for sending your answers to me at editor@orcopug.org.

Letters to the editor

■ Comment on new newsletter format

The monthly newsletter came through first class. I think the new system is a winner.

Dan Cadish
dbcadish@netscape.net

■ Fundraising support

I have a number of cartridges here and will send them to you.

Dean Kise
deankise@hotmail.com

■ More accolades for new format

This month's newsletter printed out

GREAT! I love getting it this way, you do a great job.

You gave great instructions about downloading the Reader, which I did. I especially like the email message with the link provided so all I had to do was click on the link and when my Reader came up all I had to do was click on Print and voila! There is my bulletin.

Gloria Bearrs
gbearrs@pacbell.net

page 3 ➡

NIBLES & BITS

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Letters

☞ page 2

■ Computer batteries and CMOS

This month, an article about the computer battery appears on page 9. I thank Ted Wirtz for providing us with the following supplemental information. Although some is more technical, users are all levels will find many helpful explanations here. —LG

Useless acronym definition:

CMOS = Complementary Metal Oxide on Silicon.

CMOS technology uses extremely low power as compared to "Bipolar." On the other hand, bipolar can be very fast compared to CMOS. The cache RAM chips used in the secondary cache for the CPU are typically bipolar in order to get faster speeds. Obviously since the board configuration is read only at start-up, speed is not an issue. Low power drain is the issue, and that's why CMOS is used.

Many modern personal computers are able to auto-detect virtually all the information required for boot-up. The number and type of floppies can be auto-detected. Amount of installed RAM can be auto-detected. Type and number of hard drives can be auto-detected since the EDIE specification requires drives to respond to certain low level inquiries about their parameters (heads, tracks, sectors etc.). The remaining data could be stored in rewrite able ROM, and eliminate the need for a battery altogether.

Except nobody has figured out a way to keep a clock circuit (date and time) running without needing a battery. And since a battery is already a requirement, why not stick with the lowest cost solution.

Older motherboards don't have the ability to auto-detect much of anything, and consequently there is a real need to keep the information stored somewhere on the motherboard.

I recently applied a minor upgrade (well it was SUPPOSED to be minor, but that's another story) to my home computer, and while I had the case open I decided to replace the CMOS battery. It wasn't giving me a problem, but it was six years old, and I figured it was about time to do it. My battery was one of those little lithium button cells (coat button?). I read the part number off the back of the battery (CR-2032) and bought a replacement at Radio Shack. I copied all the BIOS settings onto a piece of paper, and then replaced the battery. The circuit was unpowered for only a few seconds, but I had to re-input every single setting when the machine tried to reboot.

The motherboards that have been giving me the most problem are the ones that use a rechargeable nickel-cadmium battery. Those batteries are soldered directly into the motherboard, and when they fail they are a BEAR to replace. If they have failed to an open condition, an external battery can be attached to the motherboard assuming the manufacturer has provided the auxiliary battery connector pins. Some

page 9 ☞

12 win February raffle

Adaptec	
GoBack	Value \$89
Dan Sheffield	Expired
Ralph Seymour	Winner
JBuilder 4	Value \$10
Verla Covey	Not Present
Carl Apponyi	Expired
Glenn Emigh	Not Present
Richard Metzger	Winner
Adobe	
Type on Call	Value \$39
Joe Duffner	Winner
TaxCut 2000	Value \$29
Joe Francis	Winner
JBuilder 4	Value \$10
Lothar Loehr	Winner
PrintMaster Classic	Value \$49
Elroy Schoppa	Not Present
Sid Liptz	Winner
TaxCut 2000	Value \$29
Ike Black	Winner
TechSmith	
Snagit T-shirt	Value \$5
Monte Holmes	Not Present
Terry Schiele	Not Present
Stan Leese	Winner
AlienSkin	
Cap	Value \$5
Sid Liptz	Prev. Winner
George Dedic	Not Present
Carl Apponyi	Expired
Ramon Evans	Winner
Borland	
CBuilder	Value \$5
Glenn Emigh	Not Present
Joe Duffner	Prev. Winner
Tony Lake	Winner
Borland	
CBuilder	Value \$5
Leroy Kaump	Not Present
Walter Jackson	Winner
Borland	
CBuilder	Value \$5
Robert Chenoweth	Winner

Submitted by Mike Lyons

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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linda@orcopug.org
(909) 245-0291 eves. and wkends

Sharon Graham
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**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

January 1 Carl Apponyi
Chuck Moore
March 1 Frank Balazs
Ray Fitch
Sharon Graham
Milton Gorham
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
May 1 Dan Cadish
George Dedic
Richard Metzger

Submitted by Charlie Moore

IRS and e-filing

➔ page 1

checking or savings account or by credit card. When you file electronically you have the option to file now and pay later, up to the day tax returns are due.

Many tax professionals file tax returns electronically for their clients. You can prepare your own return and have a professional electronically transmit it to the IRS or you can have your return prepared and transmitted by a tax professional. Depending on the tax professional and the specific services requested, a fee may be charged.

e-file Through Your PC

You can file your tax return in a fast, convenient way through your personal computer. To obtain a list of software companies who participate in this IRS e-file program, visit the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov, click on "Electronic Services," and then click on "On-Line Filing Companies." This site offers links to over 600 tax forms, IRS publications and instructions, tax laws in plain English, frequently asked questions, and summaries of more than 150 tax topics. Forms are available in both Adobe PDF and PCL format. The site also provides access to state taxing agencies by way of a link with the Federation of Tax Administrators.

Welcome new members

John Bednarski, Placentia, joined in January; and Ray Evans, Yorba Linda, in February. We welcome you both!

Submitted by Charlie Moore

Try this online word game

You can anagrammatize your name, your friends' names, and even your pet's name. Go to: <http://wordsmith.org/anagram/index.html>

Submitted by Mervin Frank

Another member's experience using Partition Magic 6.0

In last month's issue, Lloyd Boutwell reviewed Partition Magic 6.0. Terry Schiele also installed the program and has also shared his experiences with the program.

by Terry Schiele, Reviews Chairman

I recently built a Pentium III 500 MHz computer with an 18.5 GB hard drive which I originally partitioned into three drive letters with Version 5.0 of PartitionMagic. Version 5.0 works well with Windows 98, but when I decided to upgrade to Windows Me, I became concerned about changes that I wanted or needed to make to the partitions using Version 5.0. I understand that about 80% of the program will work with Me but it is that 20% that worries me. (Windows 98 is much more stable than Win 95 and Windows Me is a step above that.)

In order to match the stability and performance of the two programs I purchased PartitionMagic Version 6.0 shortly after the new year. The two programs meld well together. The program came with a \$15 mail in rebate and various software and retail stores sell the program this month for about \$50-\$55. I also own versions 2, 3, 4, and 5 so I have used the versions in previous machines and upgrades.

Installation of 6.0 was the easiest yet. The program comes on one CD-ROM and except for answering some questions as to where you want the program installed, clicking on "Install," entering the serial number and whether you want the older version of PartitionMagic removed, the program is self installing.

You will be prompted to create Rescue Disks at the end of the

installation. You will need two blank 1.44 MB disks to complete this part. This will allow you to run PartitionMagic from DOS, Window 3.x, or other operating systems. Windows Me also allows you to create Rescue disks but the added ability of having a partitioning software available on the Rescue disk could prove useful. An example is if you have PartitionMagic installed and have some hidden partitions. You can use PartitionMagic to unhide the partition.

The program does require at least a 486 and 32 MB of RAM.

After installing version 5.0 a couple of months back I changed all my FAT partitions to FAT32 and found all kinds of room. With PartitionMagic if you don't want to use FAT32, and I don't know of any reason to revert back, you can use the program to change the partitions back to the original. I have used PartitionMagic to resize my "C" drive since most of the programs want to be installed there. Some programs tend to work balky or not at all unless you install them to the default location. (Crimson Skies by Microsoft is one program with which I have had this problem.) I directed PartitionMagic to 'borrow' 2 GB of space from my 'E' drive and confirmed that I wanted to do that and PartitionMagic indicated that it had to drop to DOS to perform this step and asked me if it was OK. I did and the program dropped to DOS and



began work. From the actions shown on the screen I would guess that all the data on the 'E' drive was moved and the available space was allocated to the 'C' drive partition. The DOS process was a bit slow so I didn't watch every step of the way and let the machine run while I did some other tasks. When I next looked at the machine it had rebooted into Windows Me and when I checked everything it had done everything just as I had requested.

My next objective is to install BootMagic and have the ability to use DOS again and some of the many programs I have invested in that only run on DOS. There are some programs that are not available in Windows versions or are so complicated in the Windows version as to make them unuseable.

I have also toyed with the idea of making a Linux partition and installing that as another operating system. PartitionMagic will also create this partition and its special formatting and partition requirements. Linux also comes with a special version of PartitionMagic to do this.

I am quite happy with the partition software and I have only started to explore the well written manual for tips and techniques. The manual is only 148 pages long and has a good index to help finding the sections you are interested in. PartitionMagic is one of the programs I keep in my little bundle of programs with a rubber band around them for immediate use and for identification of needed programs.

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

Can you really save on your income tax with Its Deductible program?

by Lloyd Boutwell

Recently, I came across an article in the business section of the Orange County Register titled "Itemizing Donations Correctly Can Save Tax Dollars." The article mentioned a \$30 software program called "ItsDeductible" from the company Income Dynamics. This program is supposed to save you at least \$100 on your income tax return. You may download a demo and/or purchase the actual program either as a CD or download directly from the web site. I chose the CD option even though it was slightly more expensive.

It is essentially a database program that contains fair market prices for various items you might donate to charities like Goodwill and Salvation Army. It also has areas for mileage donation tracking, cash donation tracking and out-of pocket donation tracking. Needless to say I was intrigued enough to buy the program and see if it would really help.

The CD arrived about a week after I ordered it. No user manual, hard copy or otherwise, is provided. The included help and a demo files are all you need since this is a very easy to use program. You need about 6 MB of hard disk space for the program that also includes 456KB of pdf files. The pdf files are, "Pub 551-Basis of Assets.," "Pub526-Charitable Contributions," "Pub 561- Determining the Value of Donated Property," "Instructions for Form 8283," and "Form 8283-Noncash Charitable Contributions." This is a Windows program so I assume it will run under most versions. I used it with Windows Me.

Unfortunately I find the program has a number of annoyances and faults that deem it, in my opinion, to be unsatisfactory for the following

reasons:

First, after you install the program you have to get an activation number from the company either by phone or their web site. This makes backups a pain in the you-know-what and I would have refused to purchase the software had I known in advance.

Second, the program installs a popup in the start group so that the program is loaded each time you boot your computer. There is no preference capability so that you can turn this worthless popup off except through msconfig. Frankly this is no big deal but the popup is a resource waster.


Third, the program is good for one year only. Presently the year 2000 has

price data and the 2001 version does not (guess which version I got). I have been told that the pricing data will come later.

Fourth, the database is rather limited even though Income Dynamics claims over 900 items. For instance it does not include VCR's. You can input custom data but then you have to figure the fair market price yourself.

Frankly using a spreadsheet like Excel has been my way of figuring the deductions so it looks like it will be the way for me in the future unless Income Dynamics improves their program including a method for backing up the

page 8 ➡



The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

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More on rolling blackouts and computers

by T.J. Lee

I received quite a response to last issue's (TNPC #4.02) article on power spikes, sags, and blackouts and their effect on your computer. A number of TNPCers wrote in with questions and requests for additional information and I heard from several who work for power utilities that shed some light (no pun intended) on what really goes on when power is restored after a blackout.

Last issue I talked about surge protectors and the inherent weaknesses of the MOV technology that provides the surge suppressor its ability to suppress surges. I concluded that the best protection from the three main types of power problems—surges, sags, and line noise—is provided by connecting your computer to an uninterruptible power supply (UPS).

However, there is some confusion about what constitutes a true

...there is some confusion about what constitutes a **true** uninterruptible power supply as opposed to a “standby” power supply...

uninterruptible power supply as opposed to a “standby” power supply and as TNPCer Sol S. pointed out, I added to the confusion by not spelling out the differences. I have been known to use the terms interchangeably when they really are not the same thing. A true UPS provides constant power from the battery to the connected

equipment. There is no switching from incoming AC current coming from the wall outlet (line power) to the battery when the power fails because the battery is always the power source. The AC power is used by the UPS to keep the battery charged. A standby power supply (SPS) feeds line power to your equipment and it may or may not condition the line power against line noise depending on the model. When there's a sag or power failure the SPS “switches” from line power to battery power.

The rule of thumb is that a UPS provides better protection than an SPS. During that split second when the SPS switches from line power to battery power, things could go wrong.

At best if the switch doesn't happen fast enough your equipment could reboot as though you turned the power off, then back on. Worse case would be not switching and letting a power surge hit your equipment. The

good news is that in the past few years SPS devices have gotten a lot better at switching when the line power is interrupted. It's good news because a lot, if not most, of the devices that are advertised as being UPSs are in reality SPSs.

It used to be that you could look at the specs and if you found a “switching time” rating the device was

a SPS. A true UPS doesn't switch between line power and battery so there is no switching time to measure. But manufacturers just stopped quoting the switching time in the specs. If your device has indicators as to when it's providing line power as opposed to battery power it's probably a SPS. Ditto if one of the features is that the battery can be swapped while the device is running and equipment is plugged in. An SPS is not a bad thing if it also provides line conditioning.

Don't panic if your “UPS” labeled device is really an SPS. I use an APC BackUPS Pro 500 and it's really an SPS. The price was right and APC offers a guarantee against equipment failure, although I'll confess I've never had the occasion to try to collect on it.

The main thing is to be sure that your device provides enough power for the equipment you want to protect. Each piece of equipment you are subject to plug into the UPS/SPS draws a finite number of watts. You need a device capable of feeding all the watts necessary. American Power Conversion (APC) has a Web form for calculating what size UPS (most of which are really SPS devices) you need depending on what you plan on hooking up. <http://www.TheNakedPC.com/t/403/tr.cgi?ups1>

Keep in mind that APC has a vested interest in selling you as big a unit as you'll spring for so use their form as a guideline not gospel.

Another common question was how can a computer run off a battery, which provides direct current (DC) when it requires alternating current (AC) to run. Yes, the computer plugs into an AC source for power, but the AC current is then converted to DC before it hits the internal components. Therefore, when battery power is provided by a UPS/SPS the power



T.J. Lee

More about

☞ page 3

device converts the DC power from the battery into AC power to the outlet where the computer is plugged in, which then goes into the computer where it is converted back into DC power for actual usage.

A number of readers wanted to know what “line noise” is all about. Line noise results from static, and electrical interference caused by electromagnetic interference (EMI), radio-frequency interference (RFI), or inductive loads caused by machinery (usually electrical motors) and not just your machinery. The guy with a woodworking shop in his garage next door can cause you to experience line noise. Electrical wire acts just like an antenna and can pick up interference from fluorescent light fixtures, telephone lines, etc. By filtering out line noise you get what is called conditioned power. Be careful though, not all the outlets on a UPS/SPS may provide conditioned power.

Two TNPCers have enlightened me about what really happens when the power company shuts down the power and then switches it back on. TNPCer Mike S. who works at a power company admonished me for thinking that power companies boost the power when trying to restore power. He says, “...often the initial demand exceeds the settings of the protective relays at the power station” and this can require the power utility to try several times to get the power to stay on. The problem is exacerbated by everyone turning on every switch and appliance in their house to see if the power is out throughout the home. They leave these turned on and this increases demand on the returning current. So it would appear that my claim that the utilities upped the amperage when restoring power is incorrect. The most they do in this regards according to Mike is push the voltage “as much as load, voltage

maximum limits, and generator capabilities allow.” Mea culpa.

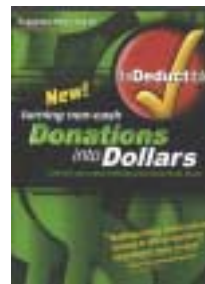
TNPCer Oscar Desmonteix at Macrotel International Corporation put it this way, “The power grid is full of inductive loads (wiring, transformers, electric motors, relays, etc.) and inductive loads have a very nasty reaction when power is applied to them, they do not only resist the current flow but also return a voltage peak to the power line. This returned voltage may easily duplicate the voltage applied to the load and sometimes it goes even above that. This voltage peak is what really damages appliances and equipment connected to the same power circuit if they are not protected.” Oscar has provided a most detailed and technical explanation of the problems involved with protecting an entire building against power problems. You can find this illuminating discourse here: <http://www.TheNakedPC.com/t/403/tr.cgi?ups2>

A final word on MOVs (metal-oxide varistors). TNPCer Lou B. points out that “it takes three MOV’s to properly protect a circuit. One from the Load to Ground, one from the Neutral to Ground and the third between the Load and Neutral. Another consideration is that after one ‘blast’ they should really be replaced.” The trick is to know when you’ve had a “blast” or surge because as Lou correctly points out the second time around chances are that you might not be protected. This is why I don’t like to have critical/expensive equipment reliant on MOVs for power protection.

Read T.J. Lee’s latest book, “T.J. Lee and Lee Hudspeth’s Absolute Beginner’s Guide to PC Upgrades,” at <http://www.TheNakedPC.com/t/403/tr.cgi?sponsor2>. 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>.

Its Deductible

☞ page 6



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Bottom line—save your money.

Ping your server

To see if an Internet server is online, do this: When you are connected to the Internet, click on the Start button, and go to Programs. Click on the MS-DOS Prompt. When the DOS window opens at C:/Windows, press the Spacebar. Then, type: *ping* Press the Spacebar. Type in an Internet address. For instance, www.pe.net — press Enter. Wait. Three to four separate packets automatically will be sent to the server and you will get replies to each one in milliseconds. If no reply is received, then you know the server is down.

The analogy is to sonar. When you ping, you get confirmation that a ping was or was not received by a specific server. —LG

Members’ Web Pages

Gloria Bears—Great Dane Breeders

<http://www.angelfire.com/ca3/glenglo>

<http://www.angelfire.com/ca3/dragonisle>

Jim Brubaker—Discount Real Estate Services for Home Buyers and Sellers

<http://www.Thomeseller.com>

Linda Gorse—PC Instruction, Newsletter and Web Page Design

<http://basicbytes.com>

Sharon Graham—Family Photos

<http://home.earthlink.net/~shgraham/>

FREE Web listing for ORCOPUG members!
Send your information to editor@orcopug.org

Ever wonder about your computer's battery?

Your computer has a battery in it, usually about the size of a thimble, though there are several common shapes. Most recent batteries will normally last 5 or 6 years (though some claim 10). It's inside the computer case, usually located on the motherboard. Its main purpose is to constantly keep alive the "CMOS" (configuration) memory, and to keep the computer's clock running when the computer is turned off.

The CMOS stores all the basic information about the computer's configuration so the computer knows what it has in it. This allows the computer to "lift itself up by its own bootstraps" and start running as soon as it's turned back on—that's where the term "boot up" the computer comes from. Without the CMOS the configuration job would have to be done mechanically, as it used to be done with DIP switches on the motherboard.

You can check the configuration of your computer by running the Setup program at bootup time, usually by hitting the F-1 key or the Alt-Del keys (it tells you on the screen during bootup). Don't be afraid to take a look at it, but be very careful about making any changes which may affect the way your computer runs.

Like a car battery, computer batteries eventually do go dead and can't be recharged anymore. When that happens, the computer doesn't know what it has in it and you're likely to get a message at boot up that there's no C drive, or else the computer won't boot up at all. At that point you could try recharging the battery by leaving the computer running continuously for 4 or 5 days—with the monitor turned off. (Of course, you can still use the computer in the meantime when you want to by just turning the monitor

back on.) If that doesn't work, you'll need to buy a new battery at a computer supply store for about \$10–\$20. In either event, if the computer doesn't do so automatically, you'll have to refer to your Setup hard copy to reset the configuration (CMOS) values, particularly those of your hard drive(s), and you'll have to set the date and time. Just type them in on the Setup page, and hit "Save and Edit."

For more information, call Rayovac at 1-800-430-7030 and ask for their brochure, "Computer Clock Battery Cross-Reference." Or check these web pages for other computer clock battery information, http://www.rayovac.com/busioem/oem/specs/comp_clock.shtml, <http://www.nicapower.com/catalog/>, <http://www.pcsupport.about.com/compute/pcsupport/library/howto/htcmosbattery.htm>.

Letters

☞ page 3

do, some don't. If the battery has failed to a short, then the NI-CAD must be removed from the motherboard before the CMOS power circuit will function again.

Trying to replace a NI-CAD by unsoldering it and soldering in a new one is dicey at best. Problem is finding a battery with precisely the same physical dimensions that will fit exactly in the space occupied by the old one. If the manufacturer was kind, the circuit board traces are on the bottom layer of the motherboard where you can get to them to resolder. If the connections are in one of the middle layers, you hope and pray that you didn't damage the plating in the hole when you removed the battery. If you did, the motherboard will be useless.

Ted Wirtz
twirtz@pacbell.net

Windows ScanDisk tip

If your PC doesn't shut down properly, Windows runs ScanDisk the next time you bootup. If lost fragments are found, it will delete them for you. Before doing that, however, it asks if you want to save them as files. Unfortunately, it doesn't say where it puts them or what the new files are called. Here's how to find them. Open Tools/Find/Files or Folders and search the root directory for file*.CHK.

Typically, the files are named FILE0000.CHK, FILE0001.CHK, FILE0002.CHK and so on. If you're looking to free up disk space, you can delete any old files you find. Or open one in a text editor. If you see anything that looks important, copy and paste into a new document for safekeeping.

—Winmag.com

Giant Computer Swap Meet

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other month.

Submitted by Tony Lake



What are the big questions about Windows?

by *Siles Bazerman*

Linux has grown enough to attract the attention of the malicious hackers whose only joy in life to try to ruin other peoples systems. Since Christmas Linux users have reported both virus and worm attacks. So much for the smugness of Linux users who assumed that their system was immune from these attacks. It was immune only while being such a small base that it was ignored.

The only reason that Windows 9x and Internet Explorer are attacked regularly is that you get the most "bang for your buck." There isn't much point spending time developing a virus that:

- 1: will not be noticed enough to get you the publicity;
- 2: will bother only a few people;
- 3: will not spread widely.

The same effort, used against a more popular OS or program, will meet all three of the above.

The most commonly asked questions on the technical Usenet groups I frequent have to do with memory management. "How big should my swap file be? What size should I set a minimum swap file to? What size maximum should I set? Should I use a third party memory manager?"

Let us answer the last question first. Memory managers such as MemTurbo were marginally useful in Windows 3.1. They helped in many cases but certainly not in all. In fact, a well maintained system with a few edits in win.ini and system.ini would outperform the memory managers. In Windows 95 they did no harm, but also did no good. In Windows 98 and in Windows Me they not only do no good but are actually harmful. They slow

down the system, used up system resources and have been known to cause crashes.

The other three are really variations of the same question along with cache size and management. Assuming a RAM memory size of under 512 meg, the correct answer, not always given, is as big as Windows wants. Many

times you will find the answer to be set a minimum and maximum size of 2, 3, or 3.5 times your physical memory. This has also been repeated in a number of magazine articles and Q and A columns. This is wrong as usage of the computer and programs run have more effect on swap file size and cache memory than does physical memory. Setting a minimum AND maximum swap file size, particularly if they are the same will hamper performance and guarantee an eventual lockup or crash. As soon as you approach the swap file maximum an error message will appear "Out of Memory, close some files or applications." At this point the machine may lock up. Ignore this and keep working and you will have a crash.

The ratio of physical memory to swap file size comes from the Unix world, and it did have some relevance in Windows 3.1. I never saw any real difference between setting the size and

letting Windows manage it although benchmarks (depending on which one you used) did sometimes show slight differences. In later versions of Windows this ratio is very self defeating. It actually says that the more memory you have the bigger swap file size you need. Running system monitor shows the inverse to be true. I have 128 meg of physical RAM and my swap file (Windows manages) shows a swap file size (allocated) of 100 meg and a swap file in use of 20 meg under most usage. The formula says I need close to 500 meg of swap file. In the case of music

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editing I have run swap files of 750 to 800 meg. These would crash Windows if I used the formula, and if I set the maximum high enough to cover all cases I am wasting hard drive space. If I had 32 meg of physical RAM my allocated swap file would be about 225 meg and swap file in use would be about 90 meg.

Another reason given for setting swap file size is to avoid fragmentation of the swap file and theoretically save time in using it. Virtual memory is used in 4k blocks.

page 11





Have dinner or a snack at the March meeting!

We have the Courtside Bar and Grill all to ourselves the second Tuesday of every month—and it's free of charge! In addition, you are invited to order delicious items off the menu before or during the meeting.

Sid Liptz suggested we print a handy menu for your reference in the newsletter. If you have any questions about the menu or comments, feel free to call Allen Rahmani, the restaurant's owner/manager, at 714-992-1576.

Soda	
Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite.....	\$1.00
Fruit Juice	1.50
Light Ideas	
Dinner Salad	\$3.00
Fresh Bowl of Fruit	3.00
Chicken Wings	5.00
Pasta	
Spaghetti (Red Sauce)	\$5.00
Spaghetti (Meat Sauce)	6.00
Pizza	
Small Cheese	\$7.00
Small Pepperoni	7.50
Large Cheese	12.00
Large Pepperoni	13.00
One Slice	1.00

Sandwiches	
Ham or Turkey	\$4.00
Club (Ham & Turkey)	4.50
Hamburger	4.00
Cheeseburger	4.50
1/4 lb. Hot Dog	3.00
French Fries	1.50

Haikus for computer users

Three things are certain:
Death, taxes, and lost data.
Guess which has occurred.

Chaos reigns within.
Stop, reflect, and reboot.
Order shall return.

Submitted by Terry Terrazas

Windows does not care where these blocks are located on the hard drive as it will grab the 4k it needs then go out and find another 4k block and so on. It does not matter if they are continuous or not it will seek out each 4k block individually. With hard drive seek times in the 8 to 9 ns range a 100 seek usage is under 1 second. This is assuming that no seek to place with minimum and maximum size the same, and always took place with Windows managing swap file size. So, at the end of the day we might assume a total savings on the order of 10 seconds (1024 seeks). Swap file fragmentation is a non-issue. If you are really bothered by it than use Norton Speed Disk and place the swap file at the back end of your partition.

If you wish to set a minimum swap file size you can and it will not harm the system. But, use the system monitor and see what size your swap file averages out to, both allocated and in use. Then set a size roughly 10% higher than allocated. Windows will release anything above that size eventually and you will not have an upper limit to cause a crash.

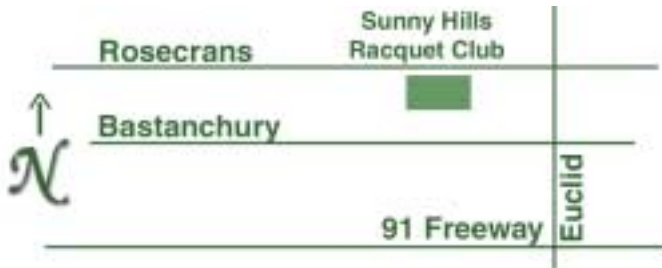
Siles Bazerman is Vice President of WINNERS computer group in Garden Grove, and member of ORCOUG. You can write him at siles.bazerman@gte.net; or call, 714-897-2868 (after 9 a.m.).

Newsletter contributors

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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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www.orcopug.org

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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**IRS Agent Tells How
to e-file Tax Returns**
Tuesday, March 13
6:30 p.m.
See meeting map
on back panel

Computer users helping one another
Orange County
IBM PC Users' Group
Post Office Box 1779 • Brea, California 92822

