



NIBBLES & BITS

Tuesday, March 12, 6:30 p.m. at Sunny Hills Racquet Club, Fullerton — Bring a friend!

MARCH PROGRAM

Software and computer accessory maker to present program

by Charlie Moore

Steve DiGerlando, Director of Corporate Affairs for Stomp, Inc., will be the speaker for our March 12 meeting.

Prior to joining Stomp, Inc., Steve served as District Representative for ten years to United States Congressman, Christopher Cox. Steve has a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a master's degree in History from California State University in Fullerton. He is extremely knowledgeable in the public relations field.

Stomp, Inc., founded in 1996, has become a leader in the CD-R software and computer industry. It was the creation of its flagship labeling product which allowed computer users to quickly create professional looking CD and DVD labels, that launched Stomp, Inc. into the computer technology industry. It has since expanded its market share in the industry with the introduction of high-performance CD recording software and a novelty division geared toward computer accessories. For more details go to <http://www.stompinc.com>.

If you were at the Christmas meeting, you would have noticed a couple of



their products in our drawing. They were very popular. Steve will talk about all their products and answer questions.

Be there! Bring a friend!

Special raffle for March

A special cash raffle will be held at the March meeting for a Belkin UPS system.

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*Award Winning
Newsletter*

Incredible, Powerful, Easy CD Labeling Software

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"This Blows My Neato
Software Away"
- Craig Miller





Notepad

by Linda Gonse
editor@orcopug.org

IT'S NEW! The "Members' Only" page is up and running on our web site. To access it, click on the link on the main page. In the open password box, type your first initial and last name, (lower case, no space between), for User Name. The Password is your member number, beginning with a capital R.

Right now, there is a JASC Paint Shop Pro V7.0 user group offer for you. It is \$75. CompUSA has it for \$81.99.

The first computer I bought was a "multimedia" machine at a computer show at Anaheim Stadium. It cost \$2,700 and was complete with Conner tape drive, 540MB hard drive, 8MB RAM, 66MHZ-DX2, 3-1/2" floppy drive, CD-ROM drive, and Windows 3.1. I upgraded to a 15" ViewSonic monitor from a 14" no name monitor.

But, I had to think long and hard before I laid out the money. I called friends who knew computers where I worked and finally decided it was a good deal I shouldn't pass up. My husband was with me and he encouraged me to buy it as well.

All this leads to something that many of you will relate to.

Two weeks ago, an ad appeared for Fry's Electronics. They were selling e-Machines for \$299! The model was probably 10 times the computer I first bought. Yet, as we looked it over with friends who were buying, we felt it STILL wasn't the BEST deal in the store!

They ended up buying the next highest model. It included a 40G hard drive, 256MB RAM, and a 1.2GHz chip. It cost \$549!

Why can't cars be like this?

Letters to the editor



■ About Herb Goodman...

The only recent picture I have is attached, it is more of the computer than me, which is better. (You will laugh and not put it in the newsletter, which is probably a good decision.)

I belong to the Boca Raton Computer Society (about 600 members) and then in our development we have a group of about 75 members in the Whisper Walk Computer Club.

Herb Goodman
HGOODMAN@prodigy.net

(Herb Goodman gives our user group and others great magazine subscription prices. You can find the latest price list on page 8. The above email was in response to my questions. — LG)

■ Epson impresses members

I've been real busy at work and have missed the last couple of meetings, but I made the last meeting though. It was a good topic with a very knowledgeable speaker (Dave Chu from Epson).

I was so impressed I went out and bought one of the printers he recommended. I had my eye on another Epson printer but he convinced me to cough up the extra \$50 and buy a Photo printer. I haven't installed it yet as I want to rebuild this computer with a P4 and new motherboard. Also have Win XP waiting to be installed but will

install Partition Magic and use a dual boot to install this operating system. Will keep you up to date on how it goes.

Terry Schiele
terry@orcopug.org

Dave Chu was really good. I just got a digital camera, so his presentation was especially interesting to me.

Mike Lyons
mike@orcopug.org



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Optometrist's office sign

"If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place."

Submitted by Anita Leicht

Perfect timing: Never to be repeated

As the clock ticks over from 8:01 p.m. on Wednesday, February 20, 2002, time will (for sixty seconds only) read in perfect symmetry. To be more precise: 20:02, 20/02, 2002.

It is an event which has only ever happened once before, and is something which will never be repeated.

The last occasion that time read in such a symmetrical pattern was long before the days of the digital watch (or the 24 hour clock): 10:01 a.m., on January 10, 1001. And because the clock only goes up to 23:59, it is something that will never happen again.

Submitted by Loren Tuthill and Mervin Frank

Why is it drug addicts and computer aficionados are both called users?

— Clifford Stoll, *UNIX sysop, hacker stalker, and author of Silicon Snake Oil*



Membership Application

New Member Renewal*

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

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

E-mail Address _____

Areas of Interest/Comments _____

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

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

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





Fit Hard Drive Upgrader, Value \$60
Art Bullis, Winner

Que Upgrading and Repairing PCs book, Value \$55
Walter Jackson, Winner

AOL T-Shirt, Value \$5
Bill La Mont, Not Present
Art Bullis, Winner

Klassic Specialties Transfer Film, Value \$20
Joe Gionet, Winner

Lotus SmartSuite T-Shirt, Value \$5
Sid Liptz, Winner

Klassic Specialties Photo Glossy, Value \$20
Jerry Patterson, Not Present
Sid Liptz, Previous Winner
Randy Bremer, Not Present
Jose Ramirez, Not Present
Milton Gorham, Winner

Imprise C++ Coffee Mug, Value \$5
Larry Joyce, Not Present
Charlie Moore, Winner

3M Post-It Notes Caddy, Value \$20
Bud Barkhurst, Not Present
Art Bullis, Previous Winner
Lloyd Boutwell, Not Present
Nolan Cave, Expired
Jerry Patterson, Not Present
LeRoy Kaump, Winner

Abacus NoMouse for Windows, Value \$39
Sharon Graham, Winner

Do you have an e-mail signature yet?

by Linda Gonse, AOL's HomePage Journal (1/8/2001) and www.savetheweb.org

A signature is a short tag line that is added to the bottom of the emails you write.

The idea is that every email you send can conclude with a small bit of information about yourself. It can be your home page address, contact information, a favorite quote, or even a short joke. Here are two examples:

~~~~~  
"I don't suffer from insanity, I enjoy every minute of it."  
~~~~~

+-----+
Fester's Custom Cars
<http://www.pe.net/~fester>
"My truck is not leaking,
it's marking its territory."
+-----+

Two rules for creating your signature are: keep it short and keep it simple. Just provide your URL and maybe a brief quote. It is considered bad Netiquette to have a signature that is longer than four lines.

Some email programs will allow you to create and save your signature file from within the program. Other email programs ask you to point to the plain text file you typed with your signature in it, and which you have saved on your hard drive.

These instructions will help you create your signature for the four top email programs:

PEGASUS: Go to "File," "Network Configuration," "Signatures." Select one of the signature sets and create. Save it on your way out of the task.

EUDORA: Go to "Tools" and

"Signature."

NETSCAPE: Go to "Preferences," "Mail and News Preferences," "Identity," "Signature File Window," Browse."

(In this case, you must create your signature file in a word processing program and save it to disk before Netscape will be able to find it! Most people have Notepad or Simple Text and the signature file can be created there. Suggestion: Name the file *sig.txt*. Then, in Netscape, use the Browse button to find this file and give its location to Netscape.)

INTERNET EXPLORER: Go to "Mail," "Edit," "Preferences," "General-User Info," and enter your signature directly into the allocated signature space.

For more directions with pictures go to: <http://www.icq.com/email/emailsig.html>. Scroll down past the ICQ directions to see instructions for other email programs.

Ready-made signature lines that you might like to browse and choose are at: <http://www.coolsig.com/>.

Recycle

☞ from page 8

to use gnatbox.com to make the PC into a world class firewall. That's what I use here—rock solid!"

Additional information about reusing/recycling PCs and components is on this supplemental page. <http://www.TheNakedPC.com/t/423/tr.cgi?lee8>

Excerpted from **The Naked PC**, a free, monthly online newsletter. It's easy for you to subscribe. Go to www.thenakedpc.com. If you have comments or newsworthy items, email Lee Hudspeth at leehudspeth@TheNakedPC.com.

Software review

Drive Copy 4.0 used to setup second drive

by Carl Westberg

This is a straightforward program for copying data from one drive to another. It is simple to install and run and has verification built in as part of the copying process.

I spent about 40 minutes reviewing the Quick Reference Sheet, a single page, about 16" X 19", which guides one from opening the computer case to removing the old hard drive and the 46 page User Guide. The time spent reviewing the User Guide is well spent because of the insight that the various options and scenarios give one to the possibilities and operation of the program.

For the "usual" use, moving to a larger hard disk, the Quick Reference Sheet is adequate. I followed this sheet, doing the following:

1. Get on the Internet and verify the jumper setting on each kind of drive. Fortunately, both run on the auto setting in the BIOS so that no changes were required.
2. Set the jumper on the new drive, a 40 Gb Seagate, as slave.
3. Check the jumper on the old drive in the computer, a 10Gb Western Digital, to verify that it is master.
4. Physically install the new drive, making certain that cables are properly and firmly installed. I was doing this in a small tower and the crowded space required an extra measure of caution to avoid jarring loose a connection.
5. Boot the computer, watching the data on the screen to make certain that both drives are being properly recognized.
6. Install the software, using the default virtual diskette option.
7. Start the process, making certain that verification is turned on. I know that the drives are not bad, but I like to make certain that the new drive is properly installed and I wanted to see what checks the program would perform.
8. The copying process took about 45 minutes with verification of both drives. User intervention is not required, but it was interesting to see what was going on. For one familiar with the process, it would be a good time to walk the dog.
9. That leaves taking out the old drive, changing the jumpers on the new drive so that it runs as the primary, putting the case back together, and getting back to work.

Moving to a disk four times as large with the program dividing the space proportional to that of the old drive leaves inefficient partitions. Using Partition



What's new in version 4.0?

- *Virtual Floppy technology which removes the need to create boot diskettes thus speeding up the upgrade process*
- *Supports hard drives up to 80 GB*
- *Supports Windows Me*

Magic, the new drive will be further partitioned to get more efficient cluster size.

It might be asked whether it is worth using the Drive Copy program to do the above if further partitioning is desired. The answer is yes for the security of the verification of drive and copy condition that it affords. Multiple other tools would have to be used to do the same job that Drive Copy does so simply. The time spent in reviewing the Used Guide provided not only an insight into what the program was doing, but sparked ideas as to how the same software could be otherwise used. For instance, the single partition copy can be valuable in those instances where a person needs to make modifications without losing the ability to revert to the original configuration. If nothing else, the source disk is a good backup until extensive modifications are made to the destination disk.

Why go to all this trouble? I am finally getting into more digital photo editing and the resultant files are considerably larger than data files. Anyone who is into music would have an even greater need to increase the size of the hard disk in use.

Members' Renewal Dates

JANUARY

Leonard Prince

MARCH

Ramon Evans

Milton Gorham

Sharon Graham

Larry Joyce

Bill La Mont

Marvin Webster

APRIL

Lothar Loehr

David Musser

Denny Turner

MAY

Lloyd Boutwell

Terry Schiele

Harold Wann

JUNE

Dan Cadish

George Dedic

Anita Leicht

R.A. Metzger

Terry Terrazas

Submitted by Charlie Moore

Olympus digital camera offers great new features

by Tom Carnes

Recently I received my first digital camera an Olympus Camedia C-700. This camera has a lot of real neat features, many that I am still learning to use. It came with an 8MB-memory card and a rebate form to mail in for an additional 64MB-memory card.

I purchased an Olympus camera bag kit that came with rechargeable batteries, a charger, a memory card reader and a 16MB-memory card. I also bought a 128MB card that was on sale at Comp-USA. This memory card can hold over 100 pictures taken in the highest resolution mode.

This camera has a 38mm 10x optical zoom lens, which is a true zoom, and a 27x digital zoom. The reason I say the optical is the true zoom is because this is where the lens actually adjusts to the different focal lengths between 38mm and 380mm. So as you zoom in or out on your subject, you are taking a picture of the actual object. After you have taken the photo you use the digital zoom to enlarge the photo or a portion of it. It is the same as enlarging a photo on a copier. This is a good feature to have but as you start enlarging a photo it can start to separate and get grainy, depending on how much you enlarge it.

You do not have the proprietary worry with the batteries because the camera takes AA batteries. And once again I made another purchase—the optional A/C adapter. This is useful if you want to view your photos on your television. The camera came with the wires you need to hook up to your TV set. Also you can make a mini movie with sound.

I have always been a 35mm film man. I have shot professionally using a Nikon camera system ever since I traded in my Minolta SRT 101 over in Viet Nam back in 1970. This digital camera does more than my entire Nikon system, which is over \$6,000 worth of equipment. Also this camera weighs less than one of my Nikon lenses.

The camera takes very clear photos, and I can crop the photo in the camera before I print. I just have to get used to digital photography. I am very critical of my photos and I am adjusting to digital photography.

I have noticed some other features like ISO settings, a built in flash, a macro setting, and etc.

I am slowly learning how to use everything but I have so much to learn about this camera. You can set it on full automatic or you can make manual adjustments.



C-700 Ultra Zoom — The world's smallest 10x optical zoom digital camera and featuring a 27x seamless digital zoom, the C-700 UZ lets you get closer to your subject for greater detail, or lets you capture photos at greater distances, photos you might not be able to capture with a lesser zoom. High-quality Olympus optics provide outstanding image quality and features like USB AutoConnect and QuickTime™ Movie mode.

Software was provided for my computer making downloading the photos and printing very easy. I am enjoying this camera very much.

(Tom Carnes, County of Riverside employee, wrote this article especially for ORCOPUG. If you would like to contact Tom regarding this article and his camera experience, you can email him at: TCZOOM@YAHOO.COM. —LG)

PhotoShop 7 announced

Adobe officially announced Photoshop 7 on February 24. It is a major upgrade to Photoshop that includes some amazing new features.

The new version includes full compatibility with Windows XP, and it's fully Carbonized for Mac OS X. Other features include robust built-in File Browser for managing your digital images; a Healing Brush tool that is probably the single most amazing photo-retouching tool ever; an entirely new Brush engine which greatly expands Photoshop's creative and retouching power; loads of interface improvements and tweaks including customizable workspaces; new Tool Presets with user's favorite settings; and much more. —LG

How to get the most from your Windows system

Find out how to secure, optimize and manage your Windows-based computers.

The Windows Guide Network provides a huge range of tricks, tweaks and tools so you can take complete control of the powerful hidden features of the Windows operating system.

Go visit www.winguides.com/ today! —LG

March User Group Conference announced

by Peter Hess

The Heartland Regional User Group Conference @ Computerfest® will be held in Dayton, Ohio on Friday through Sunday, March 15, 16 & 17, at The Best Western Executive Hotel, 2401 Needmore Road, Dayton, OH 45414.

The Conference will be hosted by The Dayton Microcomputer Association, Inc. (DMA) www.dma.org, in cooperation with the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), www.apcug.org. It includes round table seminars, where user group members are sharing their ideas with other user group members; vendors demonstrating their products; and attendees eating well. The conference is *not* restricted to officers or directors of user groups but participation in the conference requires affiliation with a user group. PC Groups, Mac Groups and all others are invited. Participating user groups are not required to be a member of APCUG.

Conference participation also includes: banquet meals; product demonstrations; round table seminars; and admittance to Computerfest including honored guest status at the March 2002 Computerfest Volunteer Appreciation (all-you-can-eat) Pizza and Sub Party.

After Friday, March 1 registration is \$35. User groups which register early can win a copy of either Microsoft Windows XP or Microsoft Office XP, courtesy of Microsoft. To take advantage of the hotel discount, use the word "Computerfest" when placing a reservation at 1-800-528-1234.

For more information visit www.apcug.org/regional/heartland or email: heartland@computerfest.com. For more information about Computerfest: see www.computerfest.com, or email: computerfest@computerfest.com.

Cumulative patch for IE just issued

In early February, Microsoft issued bundled fixes for vulnerabilities in Internet Explorer versions 5.01, 5.5 and 6.0. Download the patch, which supersedes all previous cumulative IE patches, at: www.microsoft.com/technet/security/bulletin/MS02-005.asp.

Computer book author, Woody Leonard, said, "This patch is worth installing as it addresses many of the recent security flaws found in IE. But there's one caveat: The patch can cause IE to crash if it encounters a site where the code contains a specific VBScript directive." —LG

Get BlackIce patches now

There are now patches available for the BlackIce (a firewall application) ping flood vulnerability. www.computerworld.com/storyba/0,4125,NAV47_STO68189,00.html and at www.iss.net/support/consumer/BI_downloads.php —LG

Word questions and answers

by Linda Gonse

Q. When I try to highlight text to cut or copy it, the window scrolls too fast and I can't highlight the text I want.

A. Instead of clicking and dragging with your mouse to highlight text, click your cursor just before the point where you want to start copying. Then, press the Shift key and hold it down. Now, press the down arrow on your keyboard to move the highlighting down the screen one line at a time.

If you have lots of lines to copy you can do it faster this way: Click your cursor, hold down on the shift key, and press the Page Down button on your keyboard.

Q. How do I add or remove buttons from the toolbar?

A. When you want to add or remove a button from any toolbar that is being displayed in the Word window, you go to the end of the toolbar to the littledown arrow (kind of a triangle). Click on it and hover your mouse over Add or Remove Buttons until another menu drops down. It may say "Standard" for Standard Toolbar at the top, or "Formatting" for the Formatting Toolbar, or the name of another toolbar you have opened. This confirms the title of the toolbar you are going to change.

Hover your mouse over the toolbar title and another long, dropdown menu opens. There are boxes to the left of each button. Put in a checkmark or take one out. This adds and removes the toolbar buttons.

Or, you can go to the bottom of this last menu and click Reset Toolbar to restore it to the factory default.

Recycling PC Components and Paraphenalia — Part 4

by Lee Hudspeth




Now we come to the end of the chain of possibilities for responsibly recycling a whole PC or its components: it's time to safely scrap the item(s) in question, either because it's broken or so obsolete that no charitable organization can extract value from it. This article contains resources for you to use in locating an environmentally safe scrap location.

First let's examine what toxic stuff inhabits the interior of a typical PC. According to a report prepared by Handy and Harman Electronic Materials Corporation there's lead, arsenic, mercury and many other toxic compounds in there, all in varying quantities. Lead typically being the highest concentration in percentage terms (6.3%); there may be as much as 5-8 pounds of it in your CRT monitor. You can study this report online (hosted by the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition): www.TheNakedPC.com/t/423/tr.cgi?lee1

In 1999 the National Safety Council's Environmental Health Center predicted that by 2004 the U.S. would be host to over 315 million obsolete PCs. These numbers are staggering, since that represents about 1.2 billion pounds of lead (that's 600,000 TONS), 2 million pounds of cadmium, 400,000 pounds of mercury, and over 1 billion pounds of various plastics.

- Listing of recycling centers — The Web site of the city of Fort Collins, CO maintains an excellent listing of recycling centers, arranged by category; these include 69 different categories ranging from aerosol cans to video tapes, along with one for "Computers and Printers." Many of these categories list recycling firms outside the state of Colorado. www.TheNakedPC.com/t/423/tr.cgi?lee2

- HP computer hardware recycling service — As previously reported in The Naked PC, HP has a computer hardware recycling service. According to the Web site, "HP's computer hardware recycling service is a simple and environmentally sound take-back program that offers consumers and business customers the ability to return any piece of computer hardware from any manufacturer. HP's state-of-the-art processes ensure that your unwanted hardware is reused or recycled in a way that conserves resources. The cost of the automated, on-line service ranges from \$13 to \$34 per item, depending upon the type and quantity of hardware to be returned. Custom price quotes are also available." www.



In 1999 the National Safety Council's Environmental Health Center predicted that by 2004 the U.S. would be host to over 315 million obsolete PCs.

TheNakedPC.com/t/423/tr.cgi?lee3

- IBM's PC Recycling Service — "...Consumers and small businesses can recycle any manufacturer's PCs, including system units, monitors, printers and optional attachments for \$29.99 which includes shipping. IBM PC Recycling Service will either recycle the equipment or refurbish the system and arrange for its donation to Gifts in Kind International (GIKI)." www.TheNakedPC.com/t/423/tr.cgi?lee4

- Other PC manufacturers' "take back" programs — browse to the Web site home page, find the Search field, enter "recycle" (no quotes) and you can see how green that particular manufacturer is, both domestically and abroad.

- Computer scrap companies in the U.S.: www.TheNakedPC.com/t/423/tr.cgi?lee5

- Global Recycling Network maintains a public, searchable database of almost 5,000 companies that are involved in the recycling industry. Use their search engine to find recyclers in your state, city, or by zip code. www.TheNakedPC.com/t/423/tr.cgi?lee6

If you want to find out what you can do about the impact of PCs on the environment—ranging from viewing sickening pictures of "PC dumps" to contacting manufacturers to advocate the production of cleaner, greener PCs—the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition site is a great place to start: www.TheNakedPC.com/t/423/tr.cgi?lee7

Dan Butler has some intriguing suggestions for an older PC that will keep it in use. "Take it to a local Linux Users group and have them configure it as a mail/web/ftp/news/ server for a local school. They can also serve as firewalls and such. Not much horsepower needed. Another thought is

to page 4 ➡

User group deals

Magazine discounts offered to computer user groups

	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Computer Games	\$12.95		
Computer Gaming World	\$14.95	\$28.95	\$41.95
Computer Shopper	\$16.97	\$32.95	\$47.95
Dr. Dobbs Journal	\$15.95	\$30.95	\$43.95
Mac World	\$12.95	\$24.95	\$35.95
Microsoft System Journal	\$21.95	\$39.95	
Mobile Computing	\$ 9.95	\$18.95	\$26.95
PC Gamer	\$11.95		
PC Magazine	\$25.97	\$48.95	\$68.95
PC World	\$18.95		
Publish	\$17.95	\$33.95	\$48.95
Smart Business	\$11.50	\$21.90	\$31.80
(PC Computing)			
Wired	\$ 6.00	\$12.00	
Yahoo! Internet Life	\$12.95	\$24.95	\$36.95

Prices revised 2/5/2002

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

Please allow 10 to 12 weeks for your magazines to start. For renewals you must supply an address label from your present subscription to insure the correct start of your renewal. As an extra service I will mail a renewal notice to every subscriber about 3 months prior to their expiration date.

COMING SOON!!! LOCAL DISCOUNTS LIST!!!
Please help! We need you to find user group discounts for us.

Giant Computer Swap Meet

8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
March 31, May 26

Free Admission • Free Parking • 100's of Sellers

1310 E. Edinger
Santa Ana, CA
714- 558-8813
www.acpsuperstore.com

Swap meet held the last Sunday of the month, every other month.

Submitted by Tony Lake

How to get your O'Reilly discount

ORCOPUG members are entitled to a **20% discount** on O'Reilly books purchased directly from O'Reilly. The discount code ORCOPUG members should use is **DSUG**. You may place an order online at www.oreilly.com or by calling 800-998-9938.

Members are also entitled to a 20% discount on O'Reilly conferences and tutorials.

Other special discount offers may also be offered to ORCOPUG from time to time.

So take advantage of a great deal and order your books today!

Submitted by Mike Lyons



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Special upgrade price for Partition Magic

by Gene Barlow, User Group Relations, (801)796-7370

PowerQuest Corporation has just released Version 7 of Partition Magic, its most popular product.

If you are a user group member and wish to upgrade, you may order Version 7 for only \$35. Here's how:

1. Access our secure web site at www.ugr.com/order/.
2. Enter your user group name and the special order code of UGPM7.
3. Check the PartitionMagic v7 entry and complete the form and submit it. (There is a \$5 shipping charge, \$10 to Canada.)



Siles tracks down HAL's system problems

by Siles Bazerman

Over the last six or seven weeks I have been encountering spontaneous close down and reboot in Windows XP. All signs indicated a hardware problem. This type of shutdown and restart is almost always a problem with hardware and virtually never a software problem. It could, however, be caused by a virus.

A virus scan showed nothing, so I started troubleshooting the problem. In Windows XP, under Administrative Tools in the control panel, is an Event Viewer. Checking the log for System events only showed an ACPI error. However, a close check of the time factor showed that this was not related to the shutdown, but to another problem. A careful watch on what I was doing at the time of the shutdown and reboot indicated that the problem was related to the video card, an AGP ATI All-In-Wonder Rage 128. Every shutdown occurred when I was in Outlook Express and tried to also start a graphics program or Internet Explorer, logging onto a graphics-rich page. The card functioned perfectly on another computer, Barbie.

A check of the BIOS revealed that I had never reset the settings for AGP from those used in Windows Me. I had set them very aggressively. I was using an AGP of 4x and an aperture of 128. Resetting these to the motherboard defaults of AGP of 2x and aperture of 64 cured this problem. Tracking it down was the time-consuming part.

I also had a related problem involving the video card and some 3D software. In particular HAL would

periodically lock up when a 3D fish Screen Saver would run for an extended period of time. It appears that the seven fish, sound and bubble effects were too much for the video card chipset. New drivers only made the problem worse, so I reverted to the three fish Aquarium screen saver from Plus and have had no more problems. I will investigate this one further and

Windows XP. I have had reports of some systems having problems with Zone Alarm loading automatically on startup, and of it having to be started manually. One firewall I like, and it is free to home users, is Sygate Personal Firewall. It works well, and the GRC site reports my computer is in stealth mode on all ports. It is slightly harder to configure than Zone Alarm, but

A careful watch on what I was doing at the time of the shutdown and reboot indicated that the problem was related to the video card....

have rolled back the drivers to the Windows XP default drivers rather than the latest ones from ATI. I may even cut back the AGP to 1x and aperture to 32 to see what happens.

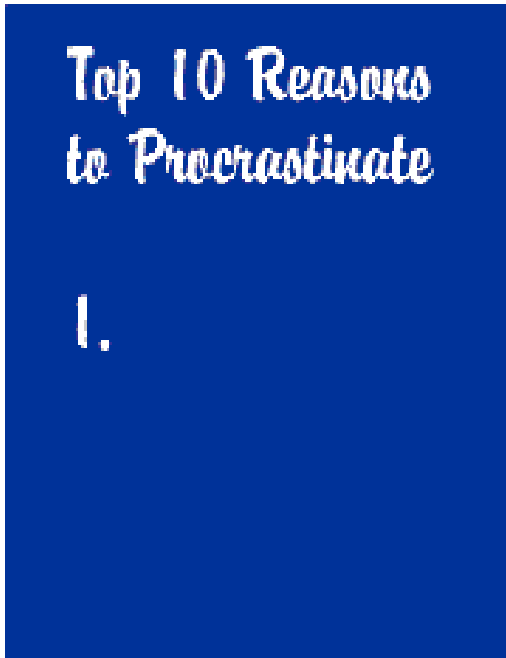
Another thing I am doing is trying out firewalls. Windows XP's built in firewall works fine for incoming protection, but does nothing to stop outgoing calls or transmittals. These can be caused by Trojans and by Spyware. Zone Alarm scans and protects against both incoming and outgoing communications and the latest version works well with

much easier than Norton Personal Firewall (also Norton is commercial). Black Ice Defender seems to have numerous problems with Windows XP as reported on Usenet, and so I did not try it.

This is a short article as most of January was spent preparing for and attending a Model Railroad Show in Bakersfield. This left little time for experimenting on the computer.

Siles Bazerman is ORCOPUG's APCUG Representative. Write him at siles.bazerman@gte.net; or call, 714-897-2868 (after 9 a.m.).

Humor from the Internet



If AOL made cars

- The AOL car would have a TOP speed of 40 MPH yet have a 200 MPH speedometer
- The AOL car would come equipped with a NEW and fantastic 8-Track Tape Player™.
- The car would often refuse to start and owners would just expect this and try again later.
- The windshield would have an extra dark tint to protect the driver from seeing better cars.
- AOL would sell the same model car year after year and claim it's the NEW model.
- Every now and then the brakes on the AOL car would just "lock-up" for no apparent reason.
- The AOL car would have a very plain body style but would have lotsa pretty colors and lights.
- The AOL car would have only one door but it would have 5 extra seats for family members.
- Anyone dissatisfied could return the car but must continue to make payments for 6 months.
- The AOL car would have an AOL cell phone that can only place calls to other AOL car cell phones.
- AOL would pass a new car law forbidding AOL car owners from driving

- near other car dealerships.
- AOL car mechanics would have no experience in car repair.
- Younger AOL car drivers would be able to make other peoples AOL cars stall just for fun.
- It would not be possible to upgrade your AOL car stereo.
- AOL cars would be forced to use AOL gas that cost 20% more and gave worse mileage.
- Anytime an AOL car owner saw another AOL car owner he would wonder, M/F/age?
- It would be common for AOL car owners to divorce just to marry another AOL car owner.
- AOL car owners would always claim to be older or younger than they really are.
- AOL cars would come with a steering wheel and AOL would claim no other cars have them.
- Every time you close the door on the AOL car it would say, "Good-bye."

Submitted by Paul Rosenthal

Meet and eat!

The Courtside Bar and Grill is open the second Tuesday of every month to ORCOPUG members at *no charge*. Please order a snack or dinner from the menu to show your appreciation.

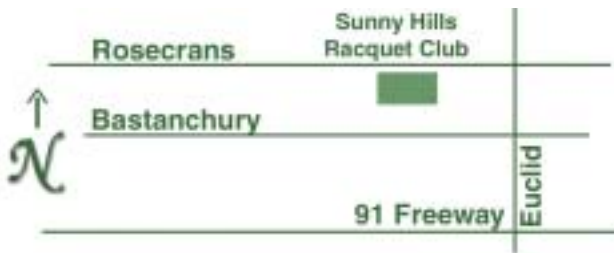
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Newsletter deadline
March 23

Visitors are welcome! Meetings are FREE!

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



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

All members are invited to attend the planning 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.

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David Musser—Consultant

<http://home.att.net/~musserandcompany>

Members, send your URL to editor@orcopug.org

Stamp Products
to be Presented
Tuesday, March 12
6:30 p.m.
See meeting map
on back panel

Computer users helping one another
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