

March 2004



NIBBLES & BITS

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

MARCH PROGRAM

NeuDesk Productivity Suite to be presented

by Linda Gonse



Rich Blumenthal

“The NeuDesk Productivity Suite consists of nine modules that cover most of what we do on the computer,” said Rich Blumenthal of Voice Factor, who will demonstrate the program at our March 9 meeting.



Rich’s talk will cover file management, the Windows search feature, other desktop search methods, and housekeeping tips, but the focus will be on NeuDesk and what it can do in these areas.

The nine modules that are incorporated into NeuDesk Suite are: NeuIP, NeuORGANIZER, NeuVIEWER, NeuPLAYER, NeuHOME, NeuEMAIL, NeuBACKUP, NeuSELF, and NeuASSISTANT. The Internet special price is \$60 but the User Group price is \$45, and upgrades are free for two years.

NeuDesk Productivity Suite makes life easier for everyday computer users by giving them the power to locate and manage files anywhere in Windows-based applications. Designed to reduce the number of keystrokes and mouseclicks a PC user normally needs to retrieve information from his/her system, NeuDesk’s artificial intelligence-based technology understands “Natural Language Commands” to trigger databases, contact information, the Internet and more.

Developed by NeuTRINO Technologies, Inc., Norwalk, California, NeuDesk is available at the company’s site, www.nt4me.com, as a free trial download.

Our members praised Rich’s October presentation of Dragon Naturally Speaking and eagerly look forward to having him back. If you didn’t see his October program, don’t miss him this time! Please come, and bring a friend.

Do your reviews online!

Now you can do your reviews online! Just fill in the blanks and submit your reviews automatically. Here’s how: Go to www.orcopug.org and click Review. Then, click on the Online Form link, type in your answers, and press the Submit button!

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Volume 22 - Number 3

Special raffle prize donated by Radiant Frames

A Radiant Frame product was donated by Shin Ito, to a special raffle held at the February meeting. The winner was Terry Schiele.

Ito, vice president of Radiant Frames, demonstrated the innovative new “low tech” lighted frames at the February meeting. Translucent paper included with each



frame is made especially for inkjet printers and allows picture colors to “pop.” For more information, go to <http://www.radiantframes.com>.

Notepad



Google is examined from every angle in

Wired, March 2004.

Users say things like, "Google has improved my sex life, tightened my abs, and brought me closer to God. (I keed.)..." "Google raises my perceived IQ by at least 20 points. I can pull a reference or quote in seconds..." "I can't imagine life without Google News. Thousands of sources from around the world ensure anyone with an Internet connection can stay informed. The diversity of viewpoints available is staggering." "Within the last seven days, Google has altered and augmented my perceptions of tulips, mind control, Japanese platform shoes...and many more critical topics...clearly, thanks to Google, I am not the man I was seven days ago." "Google means that I no longer have an excuse to be ignorant..."

But, my favorite quote is from Garry Trudeau, *Doonesbury's* creator, which echoes my experience: "Google is my rapid-response research assistant. On the run-up to a deadline, I may use it to check the spelling of a foreign name, to acquire an image of a particular piece of military hardware, to find the exact quote of a public figure, check a stat, translate a phrase, or research the background of a particular corporation. It's the Swiss Army knife of information retrieval."

While preparing this newsletter for our group, I hop on and off the Internet, dipping into Google with a word, or a phrase, and I always return with an answer. Google has become more like an expanded mind. It has stretched the limits of all knowledge for me and other users to freely partake for the price of a word.

There has never been anything like Google in this world. It has changed our world and our lives. It may continue to change them in other ways that we cannot begin to realize.

What about you? How much do you rely on Google? Would you miss it if it were no longer there?

Linda Gonse,
editor@orcopug.org

Letters

Issues with Windows

This site has about 33 pages of issues with Windows. Good reading and well developed. Makes one think.

<http://www.hevanet.com/peace/microsoft.htm>

Terry Schiele
terry@orcopug.org

Radiant Frames VP thanks members

Thank you for the kind words and for allowing us to introduce our Radiant Frames to your members.

Charlie and Mike were very gracious, and your members are all great people and very receptive. All of your members were wonderful and encouraged us to move forward with our products. We appreciate receiving honest feedback from everyone who sees our products. This will help us in making improvements to our current models as well as giving us ideas when we introduce some new models later this year.

I hope that other groups we introduce our products to are as receptive and nice as your group is. Thank you again for allowing us a few minutes with your group... and give my kindest regards to all.

Shin Ito, Vice President
Radiant Frames
shin@radiantframes.com

N&B near top of search results

I just did a Google search on Radiant Frames and the ORCOPUG newsletter came up #3 on the list (1 and 2 were Radiant Frames.com sites). We came in before PC Magazines's review on Radiant Frames.

Mike Lyons
mike@orcopug.org

Overview of UG around the world

Thanks for the (Windows XP Annoyances) review (N&B February 2004).

It is sad that Steve (Bass) is closing his group down. It is hard when you are the only active one in a group. It is easy to burnout.

But I do have tons of new user groups joining our program all the time. (Over 660 groups applied in 2003!) I think the concept of user group is constantly evolving and we need to make sure we change with it.

The groups (who have joined) are located all over the world. We do have another contact at O'Reilly who works with the user groups in most of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. I cover everywhere else.

(Continued on page 6)

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

Submit items to the newsletter editor at:
editor@orcopug.org; or Linda Gonse, 22655 Valley Vista Circle, Wildomar, CA 92595-8334

Directors

President, Mike Lyons
mike@orcopug.org
Vice President, OPEN
Treasurer/Membership/SYSOP, Charlie Moore
charlie@orcopug.org
Editor/Webmaster, Linda Gonse
linda@orcopug.org
Reviews, Terry Schiele
terry@orcopug.org
Programs, Lothar Loehr
lothar@orcopug.org
Membership, Carl Westberg
carl@orcopug.org
APCUG Rep, Siles Bazerman
Siles.Bazerman@gte.net
P.O. Box 716, Brea, CA 92822-0716
(714) 990-0580
info@orcopug.org

More club information and review guidelines at: www.orcopug.org



Members' email

- Balazs, Frank**
fbalazs@netzero.net
- Bazerman, Siles**
siles.bazerman@gte.net
- Boutwell, Lloyd**
LloydB8@aol.com
- Bullis, Art**
bullis@worldnet.att.net
- Brubaker, Jim**
info@1homeseller.com
- Covington III, Gary**
garyiii@hotmail.com
- Emigh, Glenn**
glenne@linkline.com
- Francis, Joe**
joefran1@earthlink.net
- Frank, Mervin**
mfrank3@juno.com
- Gonse, Linda**
editor@orcopug.org
- Gorham, Milton**
m4gorham@home.com
- Graham, Sharon**
shgraham@earthlink.net
- Jackson, Walter**
wvjxn@charter.net
- Kaump, LeRoy**
leroy_kaump@hotmail.com
- Klees, Larry**
lklees@dslextreme.com
- Lake, Tony**
TonyLake@juno.com
- Leese, Stan**
stan_leese@surfside.net
- Loehr, Lothar**
lothar@orcopug.org
- Lyons, Mike**
mike@orcopug.org
- Moore, Charlie**
charlie@orcopug.org
- Musser, Dave**
dmusser@worldnet.att.net
- Schiele, Terry**
terry@orcopug.org
- Tooley, Richard D.**
tooley@alum.mit.edu
- Wann, Harold**
WANN.HSW@worldnet.att.net
- Westberg, Carl**
carl@orcopug.org
- Wirtz, Ted**
twirtz@pacbell.net

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

Got a new address or ISP?

Don't miss newsletters or announcements! Send your new information to Charlie Moore, Treasurer/Membership

February raffle winners

- O'Reilly Windows XP Missing Manual, \$25***
David Musser, Winner
- O'Reilly mug, \$5***
Donald Bickel, Winner
- South Bay Eng. Cooling Fan, \$25***
Carl Westberg, Winner
- O'Reilly Digital Photography Guide, \$15***
Bud Barkhurst, Not Present
Mike Lyons, Winner
- U-Lead Video Stuido, \$99***
Tony Lake, Winner
- U-Lead PhotoImpact XL, \$79***
Loren Tuthill, Not Present
Joe Francis, Winner
- Stardock.com bag, \$5***
Gary Covington III, Winner
- O'Reilly TiVo Hacks, \$25***
Milton Gorham, Winner

U-Lead Photo Explorer 7.0, \$49*

- Sharon Graham, Not Present
Michael Moore, Not Present
Loren Tuthill, Not Present
Charles Burgwin, Winner

**Estimated value*

Submitted by Charlie Moore

Members' renewal dates

DECEMBER — Gregory Koch

FEBRUARY — John Bednarski

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

APRIL — Lothar Loehr, David Musser

MAY — Lloyd Boutwell, Terry Schiele, Harold Wann

JUNE — Richard Metzger, Terry Terrazas

Submitted by Charlie Moore

Don't be the victim of a virus or hoax! Check the TOP 10 hoaxes & viruses at www.orcopug.org



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!)



CD creator program

by Paul Stephen, editor WPCUG newsletter

Have you used Nero Digital yet — a part of Nero 6 Ultra?



It blew my mind — creating an MPEG 4 file of unbelievable quality on a CDRW (that's right, CD NOT DVD) disk. It fit "When Harry Met Sally" on one CD! (You can create VCD/SVCD disks too, but you won't be able to get a movie to fit on one disk using MPEG 2 compression used with those formats.) The time to create the MP4 disk was also MUCH, MUCH less than software that creates DIVX or XVID files!



Full instructions on how you do this can be found at: <http://www.cdfreaks.com/article/131>

First you have to decrypt your movie from a DVD using DVD Decrypter which can be found at: <http://www.dvddecrypter.com/> Then you feed those files into Nero Recode using the CD FREAKS info above.

The only "downside" to the process is that Closed Captioning does not appear using MPEG4 compression, although it might appear if you create a VCD disk (haven't tried that). SUBTITLES **do** appear however. Unfortunately on "When Harry Met Sally" only French and Spanish subtitles are available — not English.

And, of course, until desktop players start incorporating MPEG4 technology, you can only view movies created with this format on your PC using Nero's "Showtime" player or WMP providing the Nero codec is installed.

Turn mouse strokes into commands

I mean symbols you draw on your screen with your mouse. It's a lot like Photoshop's pencil tool. If you draw a symbol StrokeIt recognizes, it'll perform the action you've assigned to that symbol. Do you want to launch your email program? Just draw an "M." Or if you'd prefer an "O" because you use Outlook, just reassign it in your command editor.

StrokeIt gives you a head start on assigning your commands with its huge number of preconfigured symbols for many popular programs (KaZaA, Mozilla, WinZip, and more). You can add whatever you like to the list and tweak the rules for each gesture.

It's not just for launching apps, either. StrokeIt can also execute user-defined commands within an active application. For example, I can draw a straight line down to copy text, draw a straight line up to paste it, and draw a P to print. These application commands are defined by plugin libraries you can create on your own or download from other developers. The possibilities are endless.

So how exactly does it work? Click and hold down the right mouse button and then draw the mouse gesture. The result will appear as a fluorescent mouse trail, so you'll know when the program registers what you're drawing. It's a smart little app, too.

If you need to access a context menu or use your mouse's right button some other way, you can temporarily disable StrokeIt. Just hold down the Control key or right-click the StrokeIt icon in the System Tray. If you want to cancel a mouse gesture while drawing it, simply left click. (Continued to next column.)

Fun and easy to use, and it runs well. <http://www.softpedia.com/public/cat/12/2/12-2-14.shtml>

Submitted by Tony Lake

New SpamCatcher available to UG at 40% off

by Shannon Rose, User Group Coordinator and Marketing Manager, Aladdin Systems, Inc.

Do you hate spam email? If so, you are going to be very excited about Aladdin System's latest release, SpamCatcher. SpamCatcher stops 99% of spam so you get only the email you want.

As always, registered user groups are entitled to a 40% discount on Aladdin Systems products. So, get a great deal on these new products, or

any Aladdin products, by going to the online store (<http://www.aladdinsys.com/store>) and entering the discount code

(The code is on your Members' Only! web page at www.orcopug.org).

A 40% discount will be given when you hit "apply." If you would like to "try before you buy" just go to the product's homepage to download a demo.

Two join ORCOPUG

by Charlie Moore

Two new members joined at our February meeting.

They are: Frank Bollinger who hails from Anaheim. He heard about our group surfing on the Internet; and Bill Pampaniya who hails from Cypress. Bill is interested in computer networking and computer system hardware analysis. He was referred to our group by Bob Welburn, a member of the Sunny Hills Racquet Club.





Word tips

How to handle two common problems

Shrink a document to fit one page

If you've created a document and one or two lines run over to the second page, you can use the "Shrink to Fit" feature to fit everything on one page. Choose File, Print Preview and click on the Shrink to Fit button.

Vertically center text on a page

You can vertically center any page of text, such as a title page of a document. If there is more than one page and only the first page is to be centered vertically, insert a section break at the end of the page by selecting Insert, Break, then Next Page. To center the first page, position the cursor on it, select File, Page Setup, Layout, and select Center from the Vertical Alignment box. Be sure that the Apply to box indicates that the formatting will be applied to This Section.

Excel tips

How to handle functions and formulas

- If you need help choosing a function and entering its arguments, click *fx* (Insert Function) on the Formula bar.
- Instead of clicking the AutoSum button, you can also press ALT+EQUAL SIGN (=).
- To copy the formula in the active cell to all cells in the selected range, press F2, and then press CTRL+ENTER.
- Insert subtotals into a range by clicking any cell in the range, and then clicking Subtotals on the Data menu.

Microsoft releases Hidden Data Removal tool

Microsoft has released Remove Hidden Data Add-In Tool, <http://tinyurl.com/2qaax>, which will remove data such as change tracking and comments from documents. The tool works with Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint files for Office XP/2003. <http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/4/35277.html>

[SANs Editor's Note—Shpantzer: Unfortunately the vast majority of users still haven't switched to the latest versions of Office, so this will continue to be a problem for quite a while. One does not need to be a sophisticated hacker to get the metadata, it is retrievable with a hex editor, or even at the end of the data stream if you open a Word doc with the Notepad application. Go to www.office.microsoft.com and search 'metadata' for tips on how to remove this from your documents.

SANs Editor's Note—Schneier: About bloody time. Hidden data has been a problem with Office files since before Word, Excel, et al. were clumped into Office. Of course, it would have made more sense to build the applications without the hidden data problems in the first place. It'll be interesting to see if there's any fallout from data missed or unintended consequences, of course.]



Excerpt from SANS NewsBites, a free online newsletter available at www.sans.org



WHAT YOU NEED
TO KNOW
About

Prepare photos for Web with easy thumbnails

Sue Chastain, Editor and Guide,
About.com

Most pictures taken with a digital camera are too large for posting on the Web. Before you put them on the Web, it's a good idea to reduce the pixel dimensions and file size.

Fookes Easy Thumbnails, <http://www.fookes.com>, is free Windows software that makes it easy for you to prepare a batch of photos for posting on the Web by resizing, compressing, and rotating them automatically.

These step-by-step instructions will show you how: <http://graphicssoft.about.com/cs/digitalphototips/ht/webeasythumb.htm>.

Altec Lansing 221 Speakers

by Terry Currier, WINners

Altec Lansing, <http://www.alteclansing.com>, has long been known for making great speakers. I always liked the way they looked and sound, and wanted to buy a set. At the last computer swapmeet while going around I brought a set of Microlab quad speakers and subwoofer. Yes, I did want the Altec Lansing but they were more money and these sounded good there. Bringing it home and setting up here was another matter. It wasn't hard; it's just that I did not really get great sound from it. Just enough to not take back for my money.

Altec Lansing is now getting down in price, but not quality. One minute after trying the set of Altec Lansing 221 speakers with my notebook computer, I took the Microlab set down and replaced it with the 221 set.

The only thing missing on it is a bass control, but there is plenty of bass coming from it. It sounds great, and is great looking, too. It is a three-piece system consisting of a subwoofer and two 3" speakers. Music and gaming sounds both come through loud and clear. I know, because my wife came in and asked me to turn them down so she could sleep (spoil sport).

- 20 Watts Total Continuous Power RMS (2x4.36 W/Satellites; 10.5 W/Sub)
- 50 Watts Total Peak Power
- Compact Subwoofer
- Built-In Controls
- Headphone Jack
- Color-Coded Cables
- Shielded Satellites speakers
- MSEP is \$49.95 • Comes with a one year warranty 7-day-a-week support.



Letters...

(Continued from page 2)

The groups are all tech related: PC, programming, gaming, PDA, Bioinformatics, Photoshop, Digital MediaRobotics, System Administrator, Open Source Technology(including Perl, Linux, PHP, MySQL, BSD), Web Designer, Wireless, Java, Mac, .NET, Macromedia, Networking, Security, Tivo, and the list goes on....

I have groups of five people all the way to 15,000. Not all groups are as active as yours, but we do have some diehard O'Reilly fans that I talk to on almost a daily basis.

Many of the groups have no formal president or board, they just have one person that is willing to be my contact

and pass along information/request books to review. Many of our Perl Monger groups are structured like this.

(Check out the new UG wiki URL and go the the "UG list page" to see the actual groups—and look at all the groups who have added themselves so far.) <http://wiki.oreillynet.com/usergroups/view?UGList>

Marsee Henon
O'Reilly UG Coordinator
marsee@oreilly.com

Founder grateful group goes on

In the most recent issue of Nibbles & Bits (February 2004), Linda Gonse suggested that it would be a good idea to thank those members of ORCOPUG who have been instrumental in keeping the club going all these years.

This is my humble, heartfelt thanks to both Charlie Moore and Mike Lyons. It is amazing that the group has stayed together so many years. I am indeed grateful for the 20+ years of contributions that made that possible.

Best of luck and I hope the club survives and continues to serve its members' needs far into the future.

Glenn Emigh
glenne@linkline.com

Article used in Michigan newsletter

SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. (SEMCO) reprinted your article "Users Still Need To Know More About Popular, New DVD Technology" in the January 2004 issue of our newsletter, the DATA BUS.

The electronic version of the DATA BUS is available at our web site at <http://www.semco.org>.

Thank you for making your article available to us.

Bob Clyne, clyne@mich.com
DATA BUS Associate Editor
SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc.

REBATE! REBATE!

Do you remember how much money you've saved using rebates, and which ones are still pending? Rebate! Rebate! is freeware for the rebater that will enable you to track your rebate mailings.

See which rebates are pending, which you've been paid for, and most importantly, which are overdue, how much money you've got coming to you, and how much you really spent after postage, coupons, and rebates! Includes a statistical view of your rebates. Enter the what, where, when, and how much of your rebates, to have a clear record of your rebate activity, and the net costs of your purchases. <http://www.programfiles.com/default.asp?LinkId=4168>

Submitted by Alan Jarrett



Still Annoyed with Your PC? Keep Fighting Back!

by Steve Bass, Contributing Editor, PC World

You know the drill—readers send me the PC behaviors that annoy, irritate and aggravate; I spend countless hours finding fixes.

Here are another four egregious examples of Windows annoyances—and fixes. I'll also provide a few time-wasting, deadline avoiding (and often weird) Web sites I've discovered.

The big collection of annoyances—over 100 of them—are in *PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things About Your Personal Computer*. (Caution: another shameless plug to follow.) If these annoyances are annoying—and you like the fixes—well, maybe you'll buy the book. You can get a copy here at: <http://www.snipurl.com/annoyed>

Boot Boring IE Icons

The Annoyance: Internet Explorer's Favorite's icons are nothing more than Microsoft's dull, blue "e" emblem. I'd much prefer anything other than these tiny logos reminding me how much I've spent on Microsoft products.

The Fix: This one's easy (and if you like it, you really, really need to buy my book—there are dozens of fixes just like this one.) Start by right clicking on any icon, then on Properties. Choose Shortcut, select Change Icon, then Browse, and click on any file ending in EXE. You'll likely see an icon (maybe not; not all EXE's have icons). Find an icon you like and click OK and OK again.

If you have the time and inclination, poke around in other folders in \Windows and \Windows\System for other EXEs that have icons you can use.

Kill Some Time: You'll find these images from the Hubble more than just incredible—they're just stunning. Find them at: <http://snipurl.com/hubble>

Search Animations Begone

The Annoyance: I was annoyed with Office Clippy and your book showed me how to dump it. How about the irritating animation in XP's Search feature?

The Fix: Start a search from the desktop by clicking F3 and then take one last look at the dumb animation. Click Change Preferences at the bottom of the Search pane, press "Without an animated screen character," and say adios to the creature.

Zap Microsoft's Passport

The Annoyance: I just bought a new PC and don't plan to leave the country. So how in the world do I stop that annoying icon from asking me if I want to sign up for a Passport.

The Fix: By now it's probably stopped—Microsoft's perky Passport account.net Messenger appears the first few times you access try to connect to the Web. If it doesn't—or you're impatient—click the Passport message and when the window appears, select Cancel.

Kill Some Time: Almost everyone jokes that the number one way to fix any PC annoyance is to switch to a Mac. Before you do, check out their new iToilet, a little something that may change your mind. It's at http://snipurl.com/i_toilet

Disable the CapsLock Key

The Annoyance: I keep accidentally hitting the darn thing on my notebook, and I'm getting mighty sick of typing things that look like a dumb ransom note. When I'm in Word, of course, AutoCorrect fixes the problem (usually), but in other apps, it's a pain in the butt. Can the CapsLock key be disabled?

The Fix: Whenever I get a chance to circumvent something Microsoft should have built into Windows, I get a warm, content feeling. The fix will cost you ten minutes, including downloading "Disable the Caps Lock key," an aptly named free utility. The utility works in Win 95, 98, SE, and XP (I haven't tested it using NT or Windows 2000, but it's benign and won't do any harm if it doesn't work.) Get the zipped files at <http://snipurl.com/capslockoff>. Unzip it to any folder using Windows Explorer. (My example shows it in C:\Windows. See Figure One.)

(Continued on page 8)

TV photo slide shows: An interesting concept whose time has not arrived

by Dick Tooley



I have been trying to develop a technique to write CDs containing digital photo slide shows that I can then take to a friend's home and show the slide show on his TV. I am now able to write a DVD that will at least play on my TV, who knows if it would play on someone else's system. However I do not feel that this is a viable procedure. My guess is that it will not be until digital TV is a reality.

I was not able to burn slide shows with my CD burner with Photo Explorer 8. However I have just installed a Pioneer DVD burner which came with Ulead DVD Movie Factory 3 Suite and this will burn slide shows. As an aside, it works very nicely to burn data discs. The slide show disc takes a totally unreasonable amount of time initializing after being put into the DVD reader connected to the TV. Then after the show starts, the images are not sufficiently stable on the screen and interference patterns in regions of fine detail are very distracting. I assume that this is either due to the analog TV stability or to the interlacing procedure. When I put the disc in my computer and use a DVD player to read it, I get a rock stable image. I conclude that the disc is well rendered, but is just not really suitable for analog TV.

In my review of Ulead's Photo Impact XL (Nibbles & Bits, December 2003), I stated that the bundled Photo Explorer 8 was not suitable to writing slide show CDs. I still believe that, but it is suitable for writing slide show DVDs. The Movie Factory 3 packaged with my Pioneer is an SE version and the slide show is limited to 99 slides. The limitation apparently is not there on the full version. The 99 slide version still takes an unreasonable amount of time to initialize on the reader. It also short times a few of the images. Using the Explorer, I was able to burn a slide show with 637 images. I was able to read the front section of the LA Times while that initialized.

For now, I will just burn a data CD of my image files and run that on various friends' computers. At least we can see the images without all the problems of the TV.

More Annoyances... (Continued from page 7)

Figure One:

Here's what you'll see when you create a CapsLock shortcut on your desktop.



Now you'll need to create a shortcut on the desktop that points to the utility. Right-mouse-click any empty spot on your desktop, select New, and choose Shortcut. In the "Command Line" (98 and ME) or "location" (2000 and XP) field, type "C:\Windows\CapsLock Off.exe" /off making sure to include the quotes. (Substitute the location of the utility if it's not in "c:\Windows.") Click Next and you'll see a new shortcut with the name "CapsLockOff" on your desktop.

Now it's an easy task to drag the desktop shortcut over to the Start menu and hover until you see All Programs (Programs in Windows 98 and ME); continue hovering until the Startup icon appears and drop the icon onto that folder. "Disable the Caps Lock key" will now automatically run when you boot your system.

If you're an advanced PC user, pick up three REG files (small pseudo-programs that modify the Registry) that change the Capslock key to shift, completely disables it, and changes it back to normal. The files are available at <http://snipurl.com/capslock2>

Kill Some Time

Need something to do that doesn't take creating a shortcut on your desktop? I have just the thing—it's the "Specs of the Century" site. They present you with specs and you try to figure out who they belong to. Try it here: <http://snipurl.com/specs>

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



The manual says to insert disk three, but only two will fit.

— Anonymous

User group deals

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

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GIANT Computer Swap Meet

Submitted by Carl Westberg

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by Linda Gonse

Membership in ORCOPUG entitles you to access the Members' Only area on our website where you are eligible for user group offers and discounts worth hundreds of dollars!

Among other programs currently offered, are: File Protector, O'Reilly Books, Drive Image 7, Stuffit 8.0, AlienSkin pro-grams, Keyfinder, Kroll ONtrack programs, Aladdin products, Classic Specialties, Que Publishing, Road Wired, Earthlink, Blue Squirrel, Click2PDF, Flip Album, Diskeeper Lite, and Hemera PhotoObjects.

How to access Members' page

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

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How to safely troubleshoot your system

by Siles Bazerman

As long term readers of this column are aware, I belong to a number of special interest Yahoo groups. Over the past few months I have been having a problem on several of them opening files. It finally dawned on me that it was with one particular file "server" (for lack of a better word, as I really do not know if it is a real server, a virtual server or a file folder at Yahoo). As Yahoo groups have grown they have been adding areas for storage. They now have f1 to f6. My problem was with f4 files.

Questions submitted to Yahoo Group Help were of no help at all as usual. This area is preprogrammed and will answer questions regardless of whether or not the answer is related to the question you asked. Apparently you are only supposed to have problems that fit in their preconceived program. This was not one of them.

By the way, this is being written not to show how clever I am at problem solving, but to show an example of how to problem solve. The most important utility to use is the one behind your eyes and between your ears. Before you take any action think carefully, back up and think again. Then take one step at a time. If you do several at once and it fixes the problem, which one was the fix? What can be restored to before the fix?

Back to the task at hand. I did try to view the files using both HAL and Barbie. I received the same error on both, page cannot be displayed at this time. This occurred also in safe mode with networking where no drivers are loaded and most programs are not started. Even turning off all startup items was no help. Accessing the files from my son's computer was successful. This indicated the problem was at my end and not a glitch at Yahoo.

Now it was time to think. Even though both HAL and Barbie are both running Windows XP Pro, they have totally different programs loaded. This included the anti virus programs. So, why the similar results? Then I realized they both use the same router to access the DSL line. The next logical step would be to disconnect the router. **Before we do, let us take a look at the rule of unintended consequences. What will happen if we connect to the Internet without the router?**

First, my network would go down. No big deal as that is a temporary condition restored with the router reconnected. But, the router also serves as a hardware firewall. This function would be lost, and in today's atmosphere I would never run on the internet without a firewall, even for a short test. There are just too many flakes out there trying to cause as much damage as possible. So, I made sure my anti virus program had the latest updated. I also updated Ad-aware, and Spybot - Search and Destroy. I also enabled the built in Windows XP software firewall. I then created a new restore point and also backed up my C drive with V2i Protector. If I did somehow become infected with a worm or trojan I had a way out. Since there were no other problems that I could see I removed the router and tried to view the files again. Success!

In order to protect the system while continuing to troubleshoot the problem I reinstalled the router. I also disabled the Windows XP firewall., as I really do not like it. It does have its functions however. The next step was to go to the web site

of the router manufactured D-link and see what information was available. Although there were no FACS covering this problem, there was a firmware update. I downloaded the instructions for performing the update.

I printed out the instructions as the upgrade cannot be accomplished with much else running. This is an online update that requires a reset of the router and a reconfiguration of it. I then reconnected with the web site and updated the firmware. Reset and reconfiguration followed. Now for the moment of truth. I again tried to access the problem files, and could now view them perfectly. The update fixed everything. I still do not really know why only some files were inaccessible before, but I had the cure. I can only assume that there was something in the address of the section that the router did not like.

I hope I have shown you something about how to proceed with troubleshooting and about the hidden traps to look out for.

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

Clean up your Windows program list

Windows has a habit of placing newly installed programs at the bottom or somewhere in the middle of the All Programs list. That tends to make finding programs somewhat of a challenge. Worse, there is no predictable pattern to placement on the list. Windows Me/XP has a fix for that.

Click on Start and then on All Programs. Right-click on any program and then select Sort by Name. All of the programs and folders on the All Programs menu will be alphabetized.

Submitted by Tony Lake

Internet Humor



Submitted by Kay Gutmann

Free Stuff! Free Stuff!
Free Stuff! Free Stuff!

Diagnose your pc crashes online

A free Windows Memory Diagnostic test will check your RAM for errors and includes a comprehensive set of memory tests. They will determine whether failing hardware (such as RAM) or the memory system of your motherboard are to blame for problems you experience while running Windows.

Go to <http://oca.microsoft.com/en/windiag.asp> and download and save Windows Memory Diagnostic program. Launch the .exe file and create a bootable floppy with it or save the ISO to CD.

Restart your computer with the disk in your disk drive. When the Windows Memory Diagnostic interface appears and loads, the first test pass begins using the default standard test suite. The test will continue until complete unless you pause or exit Windows Memory Diagnostic.

Once the first test pass is complete, Memory Diagnostic will begin a second test pass using the same settings as before. Windows Memory Diagnostic will continue to run test passes until you exit. On most configurations, you can download the diagnostic tool, read the documentation, run the test, and complete the first test pass in about 15 minutes.

Submitted by Tony Lake

Sign up for an exciting online course at HP

The top three free online courses offered by Hewlett-Packard at its Small to Medium Business Center, <http://tinyurl.com/3y2as>, are: "How to build your first web site," "Introduction to Microsoft Access 2002," and "Scanning basics."

Many other courses are offered and change each month. They cover topics from business to technology to personal development and are taught by an expert in the field.

The courses are non-accredited, but the learning is real. Instructors talk to students and students talk with each other on the HP Learning Center message boards. All courses include supplemental products ranging from computers to peripherals to books. Check it out. —LG

Filter spam as it comes in

SpamPal, <http://www.spampal.com>, sits between your email program and your mailbox, checking your email as you retrieve it. Any messages that SpamPal considers to be spam will be "tagged" with a special header. Simply configure your email client to filter anything with this header into a separate folder and your spam won't be mixed up with the rest of your email. (Used and recommended by Mike Lyons, ORCOPUG president. —LG)

Windows Updates on CD

Order the **FREE** Microsoft update CD for Win98/SE, WinMe, Win2000 and WinXP with **ALL** security up-dates through 10/03. It's an ideal CD to have on hand if you ever have to format your drive or reinstall Windows." http://snipurl.com/MS_order

Submitted by Mike Lyons

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Things life has taught me

"It's my dog's world. I'm just here to open cans." — *Shawn Swartwood*

Submitted by Paul Rosenthal

Newsletter contributors

Alan Jarrett, Bob Clyne, Carl Westberg, Charlie Moore, Dick Tooley, Donald Gonse, Glenn Emigh, Herb Goodman, Kay Gutmann, Linda Gonse, Lothar Loehr, Marsee Henon, Mike Lyons, Paul Rosenthal, Paul Stephen, Rich Blumenthal, Shin Ito, Siles Bazerman, Steve Bass, Ted Wirtz, Terry Currier, Terry Schiele, Tim O'Reilly, Tony Lake.

**Newsletter deadline
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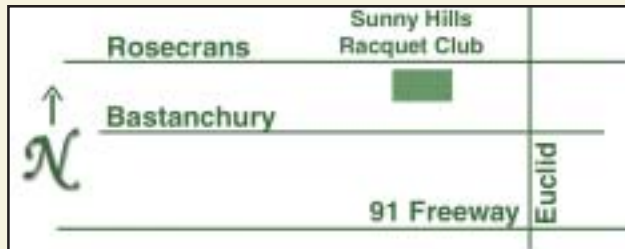
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The Public Is Welcome! Meetings Are FREE!

The Orange County IBM PC Users' Group regular meeting is scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Sunny Hills Racquet Club, 1900 Camino Loma, Fullerton, (714) 992-1300.

For more information, call (714) 990-0580, or go to www.orcopug.org.

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



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

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

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