



NIBBITO & BITS

The Next Meeting is Tuesday, May 9, 6:30 p.m.—See you there! Bring a friend!

Schedule change: Return to the “good old days”

by Mike Lyons, president

At our “non-meeting” in March, due to plumbing problems at the library, one couldn’t help notice how members that stuck around broke into little discussion groups of 4-6 and talked about various computer-related topics.

This got us talking at the April board meeting about the “good old days” of the club and how members used to break into small groups for social and informational discussions during breaks. The board has decided to try any recapture those bygone days by changing our meeting schedule to the following:

6:30–7:15 p.m.

Random Access, club business, announcements, news

7:15–7:30 p.m.

15 minute break and set-up time

7:30–8:30 p.m.

Guest speaker

8:30–8:50 p.m.

20 minute break and raffle setup

8:50–9:10 p.m.

Raffle

9:10–9:30 p.m.

Clean-up and close

We will try to stick to this schedule as close as we can. Give it a try and let us know what you think.

We’re gonna try it again— Windows 2000 at the May meeting!

by Linda Gonse

The March meeting and Windows 2000 presentation was cancelled because of flooding in the library. But, Microsoft’s representative, Jovan Jovanovic, has generously agreed to reschedule the program for the May 9 meeting. His presentation starts at 7:30 p.m.

Based in Irvine, Jovanovic is a Senior Systems Engineer and knows the software well. He’s worked the past four years on Windows 2000 and infrastructure. A computer science graduate from the University of California at San Diego, Jovanovic has also worked for IBM and Novell.

In his 45 minute presentation, he will compare the differences among Windows 98, Windows NT, and Windows 2000. He’ll demonstrate the live program and will tell users how they can migrate from earlier systems to Windows 2000.

Afterward, he will welcome questions from the group about all versions of Windows operating systems. (Please, no questions about individual software drivers, or other questions of non-general interest.)

Adding more excitement to the May program, Jovanovic will donate three raffle prizes from Microsoft.

This is the program you’ve been

waiting for! Please come and see it for yourself. And, bring a friend.

Planning date changed

by Linda Gonse

The planning meeting will not be held the third Thursday of the month in May. Instead, it will be held Tuesday, May 23, at 7 p.m. at Coco’s Restaurant, Harbor and Bastanchury, in Fullerton. You’re invited!

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*Award Winning
Newsletter*



Notepad

by Linda Gonse
editor@orcopug.org

Canning spam

Over the months, you may have noticed how I seem to have concentrated on email here. I conduct most of my business arrangements using email. With a website, I'm also getting email from prospective clients. So, email is on my mind.

But, I've been getting a lot of the wrong kind lately. Unrequested, irrelevant mail—spam. (It looks like real mail on the outside. But inside, like its namesake, the manufactured meat product, it ain't.) Subjects range from getting rich to porn. Other people with email addresses on my web site also received the same spam.

This is how it works. Robots are sent out by bulkmailers (spammers) to glean email addresses from pages everywhere on the 'Net. Then spammers compile the lists for their mailings and to sell to other spammers.

Finally, exasperated by daily spam, I signed up with SpamCop.net. For a small fee, SpamCop intercepts my web mail and holds it for me. If I decide a message is spam, SpamCop traces its route and sends an automatic complaint with the email's header to the systems administrator at the originating domain. Big ISPs have zero tolerance for spammers on their system. They shut spammers down fast. Of course, spammers go into business again somewhere else, but complaints slow them down, and cost them money.

If you want to help clean up spam, forward spam *with the full header* to your ISP. (Find out your ISP's abuse address and keep it for reference.)

Here's an answer I received from a complaint I sent to *Abuse_response@*

abuse.prodigy.net.

"Dear Internet User, Thank you for contacting the Prodigy Postmaster regarding unsolicited email sent from our service. We have investigated this matter and the account responsible for the spam transmission has been terminated.

"For more information on how to combat spam, please visit the following web sites:

"Fight Spam On The Internet,
http://spam.abuse.net/; **SpamCop,**
http://spamcop.net/; **Spamkiller,**
http://www.spamkiller.com/; **CAUCE,**
http://www.cauce.org/about/esources.shtml."

Letters to the editor

■ Metric help

Since we Americans have trouble with the metric system, I thought this might be helpful:

- 1 million microphones = 1 megaphone
- 2000 mockingbirds = two kilomockingbirds
- 10 cards = two decacards
- 1 millionth of a fish = 1 microfische
- 453.6 graham crackers = 1 pound cake
- 10 rations = 1 decoration
- 100 rations = 1 C-ration
- 10 millipedes = 1 centipede
- 3 1/3 tridents = 1 decadent
- 2 monograms = 1 diagram
- 8 nickels = 4 paradigms
- 2 wharves = 1 paradox

Myra Milgrom
WriteOnBiz@earthlink.net

■ March "meeting" held in parking lot

Missed you at the last meeting. Actually I missed everybody since the meeting place was not available because of plumbing problems. We actually spent about 45 minutes in the parking lot talking with each other until we all agreed nothing was going to dramatic-

ally change. Diehard computer enthusiasts talking computer talk (Random Access) in the dark of the parking lot lit with street lights. Actually seemed to be more in order than at the regular meeting. Some people that never would talk at the meeting were seen conversing about computer hardware, shareware, programs and programming, history of computer gurus, and the latest Windows 2000 exploits.

Terry Schiele
terry@orcopug.org

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NIBBLES & BITS

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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—(909) 245-0291.

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, OPEN**

P.O. Box 1779, Brea, CA 92822
(714) 990-0580
info@orcopug.org



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www.orcopug.org

Letters

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■ Free ISPs

I'm trying out some of the FREE ISP providers. Most have a banner ad that stays up on your screen, but one of them, FREEWEB, gives you 80 hours/month (max. 5 hrs/day) with NO banners... you just have to put their site as the homepage to your browser.

And there is another company on the web that is giving FREE ADSL... They give you the hardware and even put that hardware into your computer. URLs: <http://www.freexdsl.com/press.html> and <http://www.freewwwweb.com/>.

I signed up for FREEWEB—and it works fine... I realized you don't have to download any software from that site. If you might be interested in "trying it out" I have written up a set of instructions that simplifies getting registered with them.

I imagine you'll have a local dialup number for them if Winnipeg does!

Paul Stephen
editorpaul@wpcusrgrp.org

New member, 3 visitors at April meeting

A new member, Chad Hansen, Anaheim, came to our April meeting. His interests are computer hardware and the Internet. Three visitors were Ganendra Purkayastha, Lakewood; Donald Keiffer, Bellflower; and George Dedic, Fullerton. Welcome!

Submitted by Charlie Moore

Members' helpline

Windows '95-'98, Office 97

Cynthia Gonse
cgonse@aol.com

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

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

MS Office, Access, Win 3.1, MS-DOS

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

Please offer to help other members. Write: editor@orcopug.org.

One dozen prizes raffled at April's meeting

Computerbath

Cleaning kit	Value \$15
Ray Fitch	Not Present
Art Bullis	Not Present
Helen Desmond	Not Present
Arnold Francis	Not Present
Terry Schiele	Winner

Steve Gibson books	Value \$15
Herman Beverburg	Winner

APC

Notepad	Value \$10
Charlie Moore	Winner

T-shirt

Randy Bremer	Not Present
Dave Tennant	Not Present
Ted Wirtz	Winner

Adobe

PageMaker book	Value \$45
Joe Duffner	Not Present
Arnold Francis	Not Present
Dean Kise	Not Present
Dave Musser	Winner

T-shirt

Robert Kambeitz	Not Present
Lloyd Boutwell	Winner

PowerQuest

Drive Image	Value \$69
Robert Clark	Winner

Intuit

TurboTax Deluxe	Value \$29
Ray Fitch	Not Present
Denny Turner	Winner

Wildfire

GoBack	Value \$60
Terry Schiele	Prev. Winner

Helen Desmond	Not Present
LeRoy Kaump	Winner

Steve Gibson books	Value \$15
Mike Lyons	Winner

Bingomania.net	Value \$29
Sid Liptz	Declined
Pat McMillan	Winner

Comcast@Home Cup

	Value \$5
Marvin Webster	Declined
Robert Chenoweth	Not Present
Win Corey	Expired
Arnold Francis	Not Present
Joe Gionet	Not Present
Randy Bremer	Not Present
Gloria Bearss	Not Present
Elmer Thomas	Expired
Ray Fitch	Not Present
Robert Kambeitz	Not Present
Terry Schiele	Prev. Winner
Don Faisy	Not Present
Ralph Hedges	Winner

Submitted by Mike Lyons

If at first you don't succeed, call it Version 1.0.

—Unknown

2000 Membership Renewal Dates

March 1	Pat Kennedy Elmer Thomas
April 1	Rhett James Lothar Loehr
June 1	Dan Cadish
July 1	Dale Arnold Herman Beverburg Joe Francis Ralph Hedges Walter Jackson Dean Kise Tony Lake Ralph Seymour
August 1	Gloria Bearss Don Faisy Stan Leese Sid Liptz

Submitted by Charlie Moore

Email directory

Bearss, Gloria
..... gbearss@pacbell.net
Black, Ike
..... ikeblack@email.msn.com
Boutwell, Lloyd
..... LloydB8@aol.com
Bullis, Art
..... bullis@juno.com
Brubaker, Jim
..... info@1homeseller.com
Cadish, Dan
..... dbcadish@netscape.com
Chenoweth, Bob
..... Chenoweth1@aol.com
Emigh, Glenn
..... consulting@emigh.net
Frank, Mervin
..... mervinf@surfside.net
Gonse, Cynthia
..... cgonse@aol.com
Gonse, Linda
..... linda@orcopug.org
Graham, Sharon
..... shgraham@earthlink.net
Jarrett, Alan
..... alten101@aol.com
Kaump, LeRoy
..... leroy_kaump@hotmail.com
Kise, Dean
..... deankise@hotmail.com
Klees, Larry
..... LKlees@aol.com
La Mont, Bill
..... WILLARD47@aol.com
Lake, Tony
..... TonyLake@juno.com
Leese, Stan
..... stan_leese@surfside.net
Loehr, Lothar
..... lothar@orcopug.org
Lyons, Mike
..... mike@orcopug.org
Milgrom, Myra
..... WriteOnBiz@earthlink.net
Moore, Charlie
..... charlie@orcopug.org
Moore, Chuck
..... chuckmoore@home.com
Morrill, Trudy
..... morrswiss@aol.com
Musser, Dave
..... dmusser@worldnet.att.net
Schiele, Terry
..... terry@orcopug.org
Thomas, Elmer
..... elmert@aol.com
Tooley, Richard D.
..... tooley@alum.mit.edu
Turner, Denny
..... dturner@juno.com
Wann, Harold
..... WANN.HSW@worldnet.att.net
Westberg, Carl
..... carl@orcopug.org
Wirtz, Ted
..... twirtz@pacbell.net

Add your new or updated e-mail address to the list! Write to the editor@orcopug.org.

Two software reviews are overdue

by Terry Schiele

Reviews are due from Rhett James for Connectix, "Desktop Designer," and Chuck Moore for Intuit's "Quick Books 99."

Bill Lamont returned Caldera System's "Linux 2.3," and it is again available for review. Please contact me, terry@orcopug.org, if you have a review or would like to review software that vendors have sent us.

Virus hoaxes listed at Symantec.com


3b Trojan (alias PKZIP Virus)
AIDS Hoax
AOL4Free Virus Hoax
AOL Flashing 'IM' Hoax
AOL RIOT 2 Virus Hoax
AOL Year 2000 Update Hoax
Baby New Year Virus Hoax
Bad Times Hoax
Be My Valentine Hoax
Blue Mountain Virus Hoax
Blueballs Are Underrated Virus Hoax
BUDDYLST.ZIP
BUDSAVER.EXE
Budweiser Hoax
BUGGLST Hoax
California Virus Hoax
CELLSAVER Virus Hoax
Dear Friends Hoax
Death69
Deeyenda

Despite Virus Hoax
E-Flu
EVIL THE CAT Virus Hoax
FatCat Virus Hoax
FREE M & M's Hoax
Free Money
Free Pizza Virus Hoax
FROGAPULT, ELFBOWL,
Y2KGAME Virus Hoax
GAP Email Tracking Hoax
Get More Money Hoax
Ghost
Gift from Microsoft Hoax
Good Times
Guts to Say Jesus Hoax
Hacky Birthday Virus Hoax
Halloween Virus Hoax
Happy New Year Virus Hoax
Hairy Palms Virus Hoax
Help Poor Dog Hoax
Hitler Hoax
How to Give a Cat a Colonic Hoax
INFILTER Hoax
Information on SARC 'Virus Test'
Hoax
Irina
Jan1st20.exe Virus Hoax
John Kennedy Jr Trojan Hoax
Join the Crew
Let's Watch TV Hoax
Londhouse Virus Hoax
Lump of Coal Virus Hoax
Matrix Virus Hoax
Microsoft Virus Hoax
Millennium Time Bomb
MOBILE PHONE Hoax
NASTYFRIEND99 Hoax
Norman Virus Hoax
Norton antivirus v5 Hoax

Members' Web Pages

Gloria Bearss—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.1homeseller.com>
Linda Gonse—PC Instruction, Newsletter
and Web Page Design
<http://basicbytes.com>
Sharon Graham—Family Photos
<http://home.earthlink.net/~shgraham/>
Dan Sheffield—Educational CD-ROM
Software
<http://www.act-4.com>

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Extensis PhotoTools 3.0: A must-have for PhotoShop users

by Linda Gonse

This may be one of the most difficult reviews I have ever done. It's not because PhotoTools 3.0 by Extensis does not work. It does. And well. But, it's difficult, because there is just so much to tell you about the program's different features and so little space.

I became acquainted with Extensis, a Portland, Oregon company, from another of their plug-ins. PageTools 2.01 for PageMaker cut my work down, and made remembering keyboard shortcuts (a way of life for PageMaker users) unnecessary. In fact, many commands available with PageTools were not even in PageMaker's menu selections. It appears that PhotoTools follows that tradition in PhotoShop.

A second positive experience is Extensis's customer service. Their response time and help has been excellent. My email is *always* answered.

Now that I am using PhotoShop 5.5 for client's projects, I need shortcuts and more features and filters—such as edges, textures, shadows and animation capabilities. PhotoTools offers something in each case: Photo Texture (not in review, but one texture appears in flower picture), Photo Animator, PhotoEffects, and PhotoBars.

PhotoBars go beyond displaying standard toolbar buttons for often-used commands. You can customize its toolbars by deleting buttons you don't use, or adding buttons for commands



you need. Or, you can create a new

toolbar for use with a special project or client. Instead of clicking on a menu item, locating a command on the list, and selecting items in a dialog box, Photo Tools buttons simply open the dialog box! Dock one or more toolbars below the menu items or leave them float and drag them anywhere in an application window. If this were PhotoTools only feature, I'd be a happy person.

But, wait! There are six indispensable plug-ins in Photo Effects: Photo

Groove,
PhotoButton,
PhotoGlow,
PhotoEmboss,
Photo Bevel, and



Sample photo

PhotoCastShadow, come with loads of variables. They allow extensive tweaking and use of layers. And, if you change your mind, they allow you to go back and redo effects easily.

Using one of PhotoShop's sample pictures, I experimented using various effects with PhotoTools. I previewed them without having to permanently "apply" any effect. This saved lots of time and effort. And, without prior experience, my practice effects look professional (see picture above).

For web pages, PhotoButton is handy for creating up to 64 buttons at one time. You can even save a configuration you like of your own design, or of 15 standard shapes, for future buttons. Rotate buttons, change corner radiuses, tweak bevel heights, widths,



Using shadow, double-bevel, and raindrops texture

colors, textures, and surfaces to look like metal, chrome, plastic or rubber!

To me, the most striking PhotoTool of all is PhotoAnimator. This can be a standalone program as well as a PhotoShop plug-in. This program allows you to make animated gifs for the web. But, it is unlike the GIF Construction Set I had been using.

It doesn't just compile frames (separate gif documents) and allow you to set timing for them. Problems arise with frame compilers when one picture needs tweaking, because the whole animated gif has to be redone.

This drawback doesn't apply to PhotoAnimator where I used layers, and set and previewed effects within the program. In addition, I popped out to PhotoShop, changed a picture, and then popped back and previewed the changed animation in PhotoAnimator.

To be honest, this is the first tutorial I've needed to complete before using a program. PhotoAnimator includes so many options, I needed to familiarize

myself with what it could do and how to do it, before I could really use it.

Now, I am amazed it is just one part of the PhotoTools plug-in. It is capable of doing so much by itself. For instance, it has transition effects for layers

which include merge, fade, wipe, and barn door. It has gradient masks so you can build any transition effect you want. File sizes can be automatically optimized. The tutorial animation I completed was 892K. (Imagine downloading THAT from a web page!) It was composed of eight layers and 30 frames. After PhotoAnimation optimized it, it was 24K.

You can also import and export PhotoShop layered documents in and out of PhotoAnimator.

The file size and download calculations that Photo Animator gives you to

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from Ken's Korner...

Tid Bytes

by Ken Fermoyle

DVD rewriteables closer to reality

Recent action by the Optical Storage Technology Association (OSTA) to extend the capabilities of its "MultiRead" optical drive specification will make rewriteable DVD drives more practical. Lack of compatibility between drives from different makers has hampered growth of the technology to date. All CD- and DVD drives that conform to the new MultiRead2 specification will read 2.6GB DVD-RAM ReWriteable media.

Panasonic, a pioneer in DVD-RAM, projects that industry-wide DVD-RAM drive sales will reach 1.5 million units by the end of 2000. "To protect consumers from compatibility issues and eliminate confusion, OSTA has developed a single standard that ensures media interchangeability of recorded media," explained Dr. Paul Liao, chief technology officer of Matsushita Electric Corporation of America. (Panasonic is MECA's principal brand.) "After completing all necessary testing, OSTA issued MultiRead 2, which validates DVD-RAM. This specification paves the way for DVD-RAM to reach the tremendous potential the DVD Forum envisioned for it."

That means lower prices, and not just for rewriteable DVD drives. CD-RW drives probably will drop, too. I wouldn't be surprised to see CD-RW drives going for about \$150, in time for Christmas, if Panasonic's projections prove to be accurate.

DVD-RAM is the industry's first ReWriteable DVD format, and it provides a number of significant advantages over other removable, ReWriteable storage options.

These include:

- A DVD-RAM disc provides a read/write capacity of 5.2GB (about 8 times that of CD-R/RW) on two sides (2.6GB single-side media).
- DVD-RAM media offers extremely inexpensive storage—less than \$.01 per MB.
- Rapid data transfer—1.385MB/second for DVD-RAM, 2.77 MB/second for DVD-ROM and 20X CD-ROM read speed
- High-speed access—120ms or better for DVD-RAM; 85ms or better for DVD-ROM and CD-ROM
- Unprecedented media interchangeability—DVD-RAM drives can read discs currently accepted by CD-ROM, CD Audio, CD-R, CD-RW and video CD drives, as well as DVD-ROM, DVD videos and DVD-R drives
- More than 100,000 write/overwrite cycles
- A technically-proven growth path—next-generation media will provide a single-side capacity of 4.7GB; ultimately, higher capacities will be available

Panasonic began shipping its DVD-RAM drive in April 1998, and was the first company to deliver a DVD-RAM drive fully compliant with the DVD



Forum specification.

In January, Panasonic announced plans to market its first DVD-RAM-based video recorder, which will offer

consumers "exceptional picture quality, multi-disc playback, digital recording and random access when connected to home theater components," the company claims.

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Tid Bytes is written by Ken Fermoyle, an internationally-known author who has written more than 2,500 magazine articles. Fermoyle also writes Ken's Korner, a syndicated monthly column, which is available free to User Groups. To subscribe or for permission to reprint this article, contact kfermoyle@earthlink.net.



• Take a university class

Be sure to check out the long list of classes at ZDNet University. It has been relocated to: http://smartplanet.zdnet.com/module.asp?module=zdu_course_status. For a small monthly fee you can sign up for computer classes of all kinds. Be forewarned, though, there are regular class assignments and the classes require real work to get through them. CEUs are awarded for some classes. Starting times vary. — LG

• Learn about Windows online

You can find Windows help including Communication Tips, Fine Tune and Getting Started with Windows 98, Internet Explorer 4 & 5 Tips, Outlook Express Tips, and Troubleshooting online. Try it out at <http://www.windows-help.net/windows98/all-tips.shtml#tune>.

Submitted by Alan Jarrett

New products & technology

Get free or replacement phone service

by T.J. Lee

I hate my phone bill. Oh, I look it over every month like I know what I was doing but truth be told I have no idea if the "Universal Connectivity Charge" regulatory fee is supposed to be \$5.57 or if the In-State switched outbound charges are correct.

I'm doing good if I remember to mail the check on time. So wherever possible I like to bypass the phone company to the extent I can. Fortunately, there are a number of very neat resources that can help you cut down on your phone bill.

The first is **Freeway.com**. This service, provided by BroadPoint, lets you earn free long distance time by

listening to advertisements delivered over the phone. How it works is, you sign up for the service. You get a toll-free number to call and a personal identification number. You call in, listen to however many messages you want (they're interactive and you have to press buttons on the phone so they know you're listening), and for every 10 to 15 second ad you hear, you earn 2 free minutes of long distance time. When you've heard all you want you press the pound key (#) and make your long distance call.

The down side is that you can't earn more than two hours a month in free phone charges and it takes forever to sign up for the service. In addition, you have to fill out a lengthy and

detailed questionnaire about yourself so they know what type of ads you are most likely to respond to. <http://www.TheNakedPC.com/t/308/tr.cgi?freeld1>

Dialpad may be the hottest tip in telecommunications. You call people using your computer. For this you need a sound card, speakers, and a microphone. Actually, speakers are lousy for this, what you really need is a PC headset (different from telephone headsets I find, the voltage to the microphone is different). A PC headset plugs into the speaker and microphone ports on the back of your sound card. You call using your computer and you place the call through Dialpad's Web site. Sign up for a free account and you can create a phone book for one-click dialing.

Ah, but how many of the people you call are sitting by their computers to receive your call, you ask? Doesn't matter because the recipient receives

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User Group benefit offered: Discounts on popular computer magazines

by Linda Gonse

Deep price cuts are being offered for computer magazines only to user group members. Prices apply to both new subscriptions and renewals.

There is no minimum order, but all orders *must* be accompanied by a check, cash or money order. Make checks payable to **Herb Goodman** and mail to:

Herb Goodman, 8295 Sunlake Drive, Boca Raton, FL 33496. Call 561-488-4465 or email goodman@prodigy.net

Please allow 10 to 12 weeks for your magazines to start. For renewals you must send the address label from your current subscription to ensure the correct start of your renewal. Herb will send a renewal notice to you about about 4 months prior to a magazine's expiration date.

Computer magazine discount price list

	1 year	2 years	3 years
Computer Gaming World	\$14.95	\$28.95	\$41.95
Computer Shopper	\$17.97	\$33.95	\$48.95
Dr. Dobbs Journal	\$15.95	\$30.95	\$43.95
Family PC	\$8.95	\$16.95	\$24.95
Home Office Computing	\$9.50	\$16.50	\$24.50
Mac Home Journal	\$15.97	\$29.97	—
Mac World	\$12.95	\$24.95	\$35.95
Maximum PC	\$7.97	\$14.97	\$21.97
Microsoft System Journal	\$21.95	\$39.95	\$57.95
Mobile Computing	\$9.95	\$17.95	\$25.95
PC Computing	\$11.50	\$21.90	\$31.80
PC Portables	\$16.95	\$31.95	—
PC Magazine	\$25.97	\$48.95	\$68.95
PC World	\$14.95	\$27.95	\$40.95
Publish	\$17.95	\$33.95	\$48.95
Wired	\$13.97	\$25.97	—
Yahoo! Internet Life	\$13.95	\$25.95	\$37.95

Prices effective as of March 28, 2000

Free phone

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the call on their telephone. Is it clear as a pin drop (whatever that means, I've seen that stupid Sprint commercial too many times)? No. It's about like talking on a so-so cell phone connection. It won't work through some firewalls and there are some extra steps you have to take to set it up for ICS. But like I said, it's free and free is tough to beat. <http://www.TheNakedPC.com/t/308/tr.cgi?freeld2>

A similar service (albeit one that I've not tried personally) is **My Free LD**. If anyone is using this service drop me a line and let me know what you think of it. <http://www.TheNakedPC.com/t/308/tr.cgi?freeld3>



T.J. Lee
TNPC publisher

If you don't like talking at all then consider replacing the phone with your keyboard. Services like ICQ let you know when other people using the same service are online and provide a way to instantly message them. I tried ICQ when it first came out but discarded it as too interruptive of my daily work routine. But I've since learned how to remain invisible on the service except for a select few people whom I don't mind ICQ-ing with me. ICQ makes it easy to ask a quick question or to engage in a chat if necessary. <http://www.TheNakedPC.com/t/308/tr.cgi?freeld4>

uReach.com (discussed in TNPC #3.05 "Virtual Office with uReach.com") provides a neat chat facility for their users as well. It will even archive a chat so you can stop a conversation and pick it up later knowing right where you left off. uReach also lets you make outgoing phone calls from any regular phone

using their service. <http://www.TheNakedPC.com/t/308/tr.cgi?freeld5>

Cut back on your phone costs with one of these handy replacement technologies and make yourself more virtual than ever!

The Naked PC is a free, online newsletter published by T.J. Lee and Lee Hudspeth, <http://www.thenakedpc.com>. Write T.J. Lee at tj_lee@TheNakedPC.com.

AOL's Instant Messaging has interesting features

AOL has some interesting features in its 'Instant Messaging' (IM). Anyone can download the software from AOL and use it even if they are not using AOL as their ISP, <http://www.aol.com/aim/>.

You may be familiar with the Buddy List features in which you list your e-mail buddies and if they come on line while you are, their screen name pops up. Both have to have IM in their computers. Then you can communicate online. Both are using local phone numbers so it makes it cheap to smoose with a friend in Vermont or Africa.

Another recently added feature: if you are reading e-mail online, the e-mail address of your correspondent pops up on your Buddy List, if they are online, allowing you to communicate using IM or write an email.

Submitted by Alan Jarrett

Testing 1-2-3...

If it's there and you can see it—it's real.

If it's not there and you can see it—it's virtual.

If it's there and you can't see it—it's transparent.

If it's not there and you can't see it—you erased it!

—Scott Hammer

Virus hoaxes

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Pandemic Hoax
Penpal Greetings
Perrin.exe Virus Hoax
Phantom Menace Virus Hoax
Pluperfect Hoax
Red Alert
Returned or Unable to Deliver
Sandman Hoax
South Park News Letter Hoax
Teletubbies
Time Bomb
Tuxissa Hoax
Very Cool
Virtual Card Virus Hoax
Win a Holiday
Windows will Fail on Jan 1 Hoax
Wobbler Virus Hoax
Wooden Horse Hoax
Work Virus Hoax
World Domination Hoax
Y2K7 Virus Hoax
Yellow Teletubbies
ZZ331 Virus Hoax

*Submitted by Alan Jarrett and
Dave Tennant*

PhotoTools 3.0 review

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see how color palettes affect download times are really helpful.

When I needed help, the User's Guide gave me easy-to-read instructions with pictures. It also has great tutorials which are accompanied by sample files.

You can see my tutorial gif animation in action, and the two flower pictures in color, at http://www.orcopug.org/p_tools.html.

What a program! If you use PhotoShop, you will want PhotoTools. I'm certain of that.

Requirements: Adobe PhotoShop 4.0-5.5, Windows 9x or NT 4.0, Pentium, 64MB RAM. New user \$149; upgrade 1.0-2.0, \$49.95. Get the 30-day demo at www.extensis.com. 800-796-9798.



Internet security is more important the longer you are online

Special to ORCOPUG

by Siles Bazerman

Internet Security is becoming more and more important as more high speed devices are being used to connect. The longer you are online the more vulnerable you become, and DSL and cable connections that are online whenever your computer is on, are the most vulnerable to attack.

Even if you do not have these, I would recommend that you check out Steve Gibson's web site regarding your security. Steve is the author of Spinrite, a disk testing and recovery program that most of you are familiar with. The site is <http://www.grc.com> and the results of its tests will surprise you. Let his computer check yours for wide open holes in your security and also use his program, ShieldsUp, to be sure it is your computer he is checking.

After the test, which checks your ports, you will receive a report telling you which ports are open and subject to attack. He also offers solutions. The first is to turn off printer and file checking if possible. He also suggests unbinding NetBeui from TCP/IP and gives full instructions for doing this. If you do these and retest you will find that your ports will be found, but are closed and thus attack free. To be really safe you need an effective firewall.

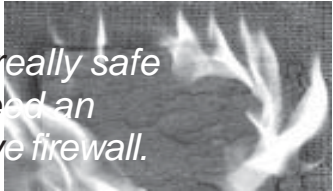
A hardware firewall is the most effective, but also the most expensive. Black Ice Defender (around \$49) is an excellent software firewall, as is Zone Alert, recommended by Steve (free to home users), downloadable from <http://www.zonelabs.com>. This is the one I use and it makes your computer invisible from outside. It is fully configurable for both individual and network

use, and is effective. It does give—regularly but not frequently—false alarms, reporting as attacks Norton AV e-mail protection, POP3 writes, NNTP writes and some other programs even though they are normal and it has been configured to allow these.

By the way, Steve is smarter than most hackers, and probably more knowledgeable than 95% plus. He writes in Assembly, disdaining high level languages, thus his programs are small, fast, and effective. He has a new program out now, again free, called OptOut. This one checks both your registry and hard drive for "SPY" programs such as Auriate.exe that report back to companies that compile where you have been, etc. This program is only 31K and can be run on demand or on startup. The spy programs are usually placed on your machine by visiting a site and clicking "Yes" to download something, without reading the fine print that allows the spy program to be loaded. Therefore, it is legal because you gave your permission. Legal, but not entirely ethical.

I have cut down on the number of news groups I monitor as the volume has grown tremendously in the last few months. I also have grown tired of the same questions asked almost daily. Apparently no one checks to see what is or has been discussed before asking. Urban legends are still being repeated, Windows 98 will only handle 64 megs of memory (or is it 128 or ?). Swap file size is asked at least twice a day and crossposted to as many groups as the writer can think of. This one has the overtones of a religious war. There are three factions, a minimum and

maximum size, usually the same, of 2–3.5 times the memory; a minimum size but no maximum size, and "let Windows 98 handle it." No one will change their mind, but most MVP's agree on "let Windows 98 handle it." Memory management has improved steadily since Windows 3.1 and the latest is almost foolproof. Most, if not all, the reasons that were valid in earlier versions are no longer true and have been supplanted by the Windows 98 built-in management. I use no minimum or maximum, but do have my swap file residing on an older, unused hard drive. With 128 megs of real memory, I almost never, except for music editing and Adobe Photoshop, see a use of my swap file. You cannot disable the swap file as a number of programs will not run without it as they want to reserve some of it for their



*To be really safe
you need an
effective firewall.*

own use, needed or not.

I don't know where I am going from here, next time. It all depends on what Microsoft releases in the next few weeks regarding Windows ME. Under NDA I cannot discuss the Beta, but I can report what Windows Magazine editor Fred Langa wrote, or what Microsoft demonstrated at their eXtreme events. Many of the national publications are releasing information about it now, and seem to have their information with the approval of Microsoft. Certainly they are not bound by any NDA.

Release of this "new" OS looks like fall 2000, and Whistler for mid to late 2001. (Bet on later rather than sooner).

Siles Bazerman is Vice President of WINNERS, a Windows User Group in Garden Grove. You can write to him at siles@ix.netcom.com.



Brian Lewis, PhD

Recovering from hard drive failure

by Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.

One of the most common problems that I run into is a failing or failed hard drive. All

too often the owner has not been conscientious about keeping the data and programs backed up. I have seen situations where the computer is in Florida and the original application disks are somewhere up North. It is very difficult to restore programs if you don't have the original disks or don't have a complete backup. Any backup should include the Registry files, otherwise, you will have to reinstall all of your application software. Just keep that in mind as we go through some of the things you may have to do when your hard drive starts to give you error messages or simply won't boot into Windows or even into Safe Mode.

What types of error messages can you expect when your drive starts to fail? You may simply get a message that a file can't be found or it can't be loaded because it is damaged. Or, you may get a "sector not found" error message. The worst case may be when the computer tells you your hard drive is not bootable. In the first two cases, if you can still run Windows, try running Scandisk and use the "Thorough" setting to check the surface of the hard disk. You may find that one or more sectors are bad and need to be marked so they can no longer be used for data storage. Scandisk will attempt to move the data to a safe location. If you can't run Windows in normal mode, but it will boot into safe mode, then you can

still run Scandisk to check the drive condition. For those who have never used Scandisk, you click the Start button and then select Run. The command to be typed in the run box is "Scandisk", without the quotes.


If you can no longer get Windows to run in either normal mode or Safe mode, then you need to use your Windows start-up disk. You did, of course, make a start-up disk when you installed Windows. If you haven't made one, do it now, before you need it. Go to the Control Panel, click "Add New Software" and in the next window, click on the Startup Disk tab. In Windows 98 this will prepare a disk with diagnostic software, including Scandisk. Now, when you boot with this floppy disk, you can run Scandisk and check the drive surface.

If you are still using Windows 95, then you can make a Startup disk the same way. However, it will not include all the files you need. Microsoft has provided software to help you recover from disk problems. The Emergency Recovery Utility (ERU) is part of the Windows 95 Resource Kit, but it is also provided on the Windows 95 CD-ROM. You can find it in the other\misc\eru folder. I suggest moving this to the backup folder in the windows folder on your hard drive. When you run the ERU, save the files on a floppy disk for the time when you will need it.

With either Win98 or Win95 you want to run Scandisk after you have booted your computer. If Scandisk repairs your drive so that you can again run Windows or your application, you are home free for the moment. However, in some instances you will need to replace damaged files. How you replace them depends

in large part whether they were part of Windows or another software application. Those that belong to another application can probably be restored from your backup. No backup? Then you will need to reinstall the application. Suppose, as can happen, the damaged files were in the Windows subdirectory and you had to wipe out all the files in that particular location. That would include all the system files, the library files (dlls) for many applications, hardware device drivers, etc. In this case, if you don't have a backup, you would have to reinstall Windows and all of your applications. Even if the application files weren't damaged, their reinstallation is necessary to place the necessary files in the Windows and System subdirectories. This will also add the necessary references to the application in the Registry. Believe me, having a complete, current backup can save you hours of work.

This discussion has assumed that the problem on the hard disk is relatively minor. Hard disks can develop small problems and continue functioning for long afterward. In other cases, once the surface starts to fail it rapidly becomes a progressive disease leading to total failure of the drive. If the damaged areas do not involve the boot sectors, you will have a little time to ensure that you have a current

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Peripherals



Hard drive failure

☞ page 9

backup. If it involves the boot sectors, you will get a message telling you that the drive is not bootable or system files were not found - please insert a bootable disk. Now you need that Windows Startup disk.

Once you have booted from the Startup disk, then run Scandisk. To replace the system files you run the SYS program. The SYS program copies the io.sys, msdos.sys and command.com files to the hard drive. The first two have to be written to the system area of the hard drive, usually track zero. If this area is damaged, you will get an error message. The SYS program is automatically included on the Win98 startup. You may have to add it to your Win95 Startup disk.

If the Sys program doesn't successfully replace your boot file (system files), your next step is usually to replace the hard drive. You can try to correct the problem by reformatting the hard drive. However, in my experience, once the boot sectors are

damaged, the drive is usually unusable as a primary drive. It can sometimes be used as a secondary drive providing the remaining surface is not damaged or failing. Scandisk can help you determine that.

In some cases, Scandisk will start reporting sector problems and the number of bad sectors will rapidly increase day by day. When this starts happening, you should be preparing to replace the hard drive. There are some utilities, such as "Lost & Found" that can help you recover files from a failing drive. However, they can't prevent the failure from continuing. So, this is just another reason for maintaining a regular system of backing up your drive.

How you backup your drive depends on how much effort you are willing to put into the recovery process. If you are willing to reinstall all of your application software, then you only need to backup your data files. If you have updated some applications with downloads from the internet, then you may not want to reinstall the original application. In

that case you need the downloaded file saved on some other media so it can be installed.

The only other option is to have a full backup of your entire hard disk, including the registry files. You will still have to make the hard drive bootable which may mean installing Windows again. Most backup software can't be run from DOS or a floppy. They will run only under Windows. After you reinstall Windows and start the restore process, you will receive messages that such and such a file can't be restored because it is in use. This refers to the library files and EXE files that Windows loads so it can run. Don't let that bother you, just continue the restore process. If your backup is recent enough, then your registry will be accurate enough that you won't have to restore your applications. Maintaining a current backup of your hard drive, or several recent backups, should be part of your routine maintenance of your computer system. It is, by far, the best tool to help you recover from a hard drive failure.

Reprinted from the Sarasota PC Users' Group newsletter. Lewis, *bklew@worldnet.att.net*, is a computer consultant offering instruction, hardware/software services and system upgrades.

A wife walked into the house and told her husband, "There's water in the carburetor."

"You don't know the difference between a carburetor and a generator," he huffed. "Where's the car?"

"At the bottom of the lake."

Submitted by Dean Kise

Newsletter contributors

Alan Jarrett, Brian K. Lewis, Charlie Moore, Dave Tennant, Dean Kise, Herb Goodman, Ken Fermoyle, Linda Gonse, Mike Lyons, Myra Milgrom, Paul Stephen, Siles Bazerman, Terry Schiele, T.J. Lee.



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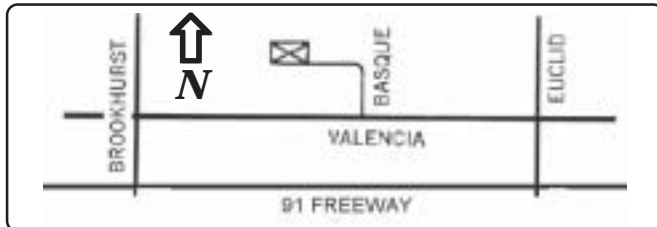
"A user group membership is the best accessory you can buy for your computer."

—Ash Nallawalla
Melbourne PC Users' Group

User group benefits

- Product & "How to" demonstrations
- Free raffles and magazines
- Help from other members
- Newsletter and web site
- Special offers, discounts, events
- Monthly meetings
- Affiliation with other user groups around the world.

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 Hunt Library, 201 S. Basque Avenue, Fullerton, (714) 738-5364. For more information, call (714) 990-0580, or go to www.orcopug.org.



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

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Award Winning Newsletter

Windows 2000!
(Keep your fingers crossed for a dry May meeting)
Tuesday, May 9, 6:30 p.m.
Please come and bring a friend!

Orange County
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