



Orange County IBM PC
Users' Group

nibbles & bits

october 2006

award winning monthly newsletter for orcopug members

vol. 24 no. 10

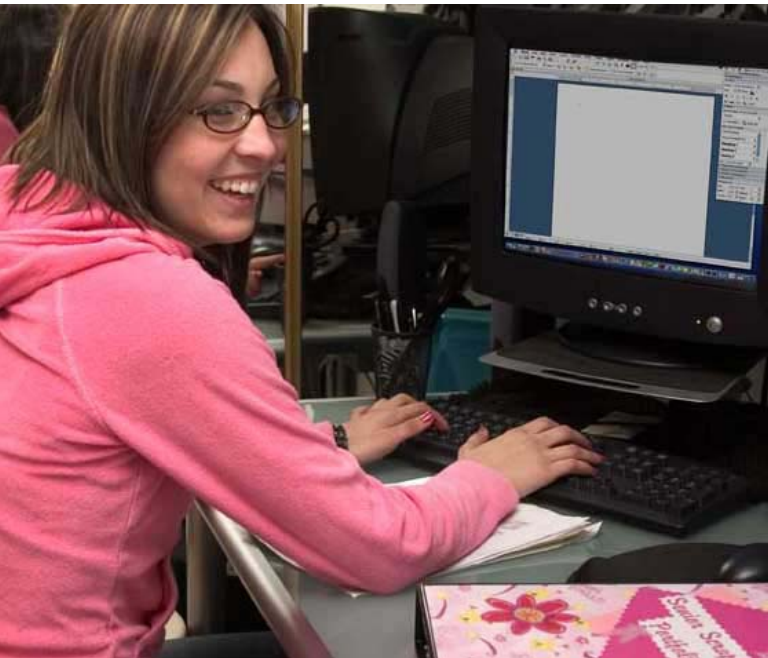
october program

live demo of SmartComputing.com website and helpful tools

- website features 2
- your favorite shot 3
- feedback 4
- earthlink/verizon change 6
- infected images 7
- javascript exploits 7
- free office training 8
- new, best, worst 10
- skytone usb phone 12
- computer events 13
- paintshop pro x 14
- september keyword 16
- members' information 16
- user group deals 17
- ORCOPUG information 18



SmartComputing will show us how to access valuable features through our Smart Computing subscriptions!



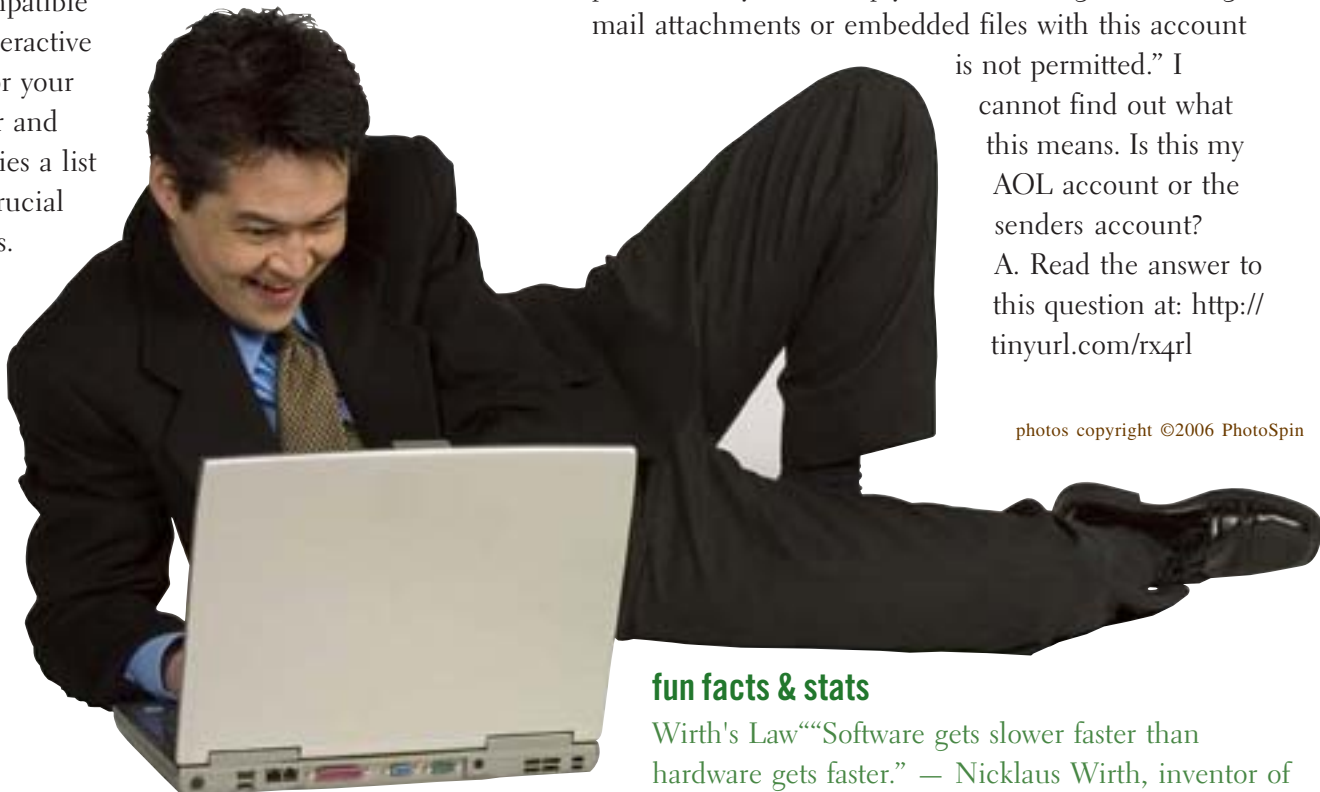
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tip of the day

Finding Compatible Memory: Many memory manufacturers have an online database where you can look for memory that's compatible with your system. Crucial Technology (www.crucial.com) has an excellent database that can provide you with all of the specifications you need to find compatible memory. The interactive guide asks you for your PC manufacturer and model and supplies a list of compatible Crucial memory modules. Although Crucial no doubt hopes you'll buy its memory, you can use the specifications next to each module to locate compatible modules elsewhere.



Free troubleshooting advice on smart-computing.com's internationally known Q&A Board. Ever had a problem you'd gladly pay someone to solve? Plenty of SmartComputing subscribers said they subscribed just to get full access to the online Question and Answer Board. Here's an example of the questions on the board:

Q. When I reply to an e-mail and try to insert a picture in my e-mail reply this is what I get; "Sending mail attachments or embedded files with this account is not permitted." I cannot find out what this means. Is this my AOL account or the senders account?
A. Read the answer to this question at: <http://tinyurl.com/rx4rl>

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fun facts & stats

Wirth's Law "Software gets slower faster than hardware gets faster." — Nicklaus Wirth, inventor of the programming languages Pascal, Modula-2 and Oberon

your favorite shot

the cerritos college falcon

I was driving by the Cerritos College and I saw this statue of a falcon on the college campus. I went back home, got my camera, drove back to the college and got a good picture of the statue.

Photo by Joe Francis
ORCOPUG



yorba linda, california september 20, 2006

This is a Chinese silk embroidered cat on display at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library. One really interesting characteristic is that you can view the image from both sides. I'm afraid the photo doesn't do justice to what you actually see in person.

Photo by Frank Bollinger
ORCOPUG

Everybody has a photo that they believe is their best photo-taking effort. Or they have a shot that isn't technically great, but it is their favorite nevertheless. We'd like to publish a member's special photo (or photos) each month in this space. Won't you please send us your photo for our next "Your Favorite Shot" page?

Submitting your photo is as easy as emailing it. Send a low resolution 3" x 4" or 4" x 3" digital image to editor@orcopug.org. Please provide a short description of the photo, the story behind why you took it, or the photography trick that you used in capturing the image. We can all enjoy the photos on this page and learn something about taking photos at the same time! Photo subjects can be whatever you choose.



feedback

MIKE LYONS
ORCOPUG PRESIDENT

Due to a scheduling conflict, the club's November meeting has been changed to the first Tuesday of the month, November 7, instead of on the second Tuesday, November 14.

TED WIRTZ
ORCOPUG

Scary business. Everybody thought PDF files could not be used for hacking. Now a researcher has shown that it is indeed possible to bury malicious code in a PDF file and gain control of a computer. More info at this link. More and more it looks like ANY program has more holes than a colander. <http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,1895,2016606,00.asp>

FRANK BOLLINGER
ORCOPUG

Whenever I hear stories about DSL or cable modem problems, I realize how good my service has been. I have an Earthlink dialup account that I keep for the email address. My DSL is with AT&T (previously SBC) and the service has been very good for close to

three years now. They recently offered me an upgrade (from 1.5 to 3.0 mbps) for \$1.00 less than my previous fee. From time to time, I do a speed test, <http://www.dslreports.com/stest>, and it consistently shows my true speed at about 80% of the rated speed (for example, the test shows 2.467 download and 0.424 upload). I've had only three performance incidents during this time. Since a T-1 line is approximately 1.4 mbps, a change like the one described in the article (page 6) would be a downgrade for me. With all the recent competition for broadband Internet, speeds have been going up. Fiber also has much more capacity than copper, so I question whether Verizon is really going to limit their customers to speeds slower than their competitors.

Traffic is often hard to predict. I try to check the traffic map at www.sigalert.com before leaving the office each evening, and from home if I'm going somewhere that's not close by. I'm reading a book called "Survive the Drive! How to Beat Freeway Traffic in Southern California" by a fellow named David Rizzo. I heard him interviewed on the radio, where he was referred to as "Dr. Roadmap." Some of the ideas might prove useful.

JIM EMMONS
MVCUG VICE PRESIDENT

I am the Webmaster and editor for the Mountain View Computer Users Group's web site and online magazine.

I recently received the July Push articles from APCUG which contained a copy of an article you wrote. I'm writing to let you know that your article has been posted (finally) in the July Edition of our online magazine, Mountain Views. You may find Mountain Views at <http://www.mvcug.org/magazine/index.html>. Follow the link in the Table of Contents to your article.

As with almost any website, you are welcome to browse our site and learn more about the MVCUG.

DON MILLER
GTBPCUG.ORG WEBMASTER

You have the nicest looking web site I have visited. Hope (I'm) not being too nosy but... I'm Don Miller and a member of <http://gtbpcug.org/> in Brandon Florida. (I) have my own site from there dmiller900.com/.

Some in our group would like to know what program you use for (your) website. We use FrontPage and all have 1&1 for server.

Turn to next page

Do you use MS Publisher and then convert to PDF? It is beautiful and so small in size for all the graphics you have in it. Our editor uses WordPerfect then PDF.

Thanks for any info.

LINDA GONSE
ORCOPUG EDITOR/WEBMASTER

Thanks, Don. I don't mind answering your questions at all. I use DreamWeaver for our web pages in conjunction with PhotoShop. I'm familiar with your web host, because 1&1 hosts the website I created for my daughter at <http://www.iowa-scrubs.com>.

Our newsletter is created in PageMaker and exported, using my customized settings, to a pdf. Since the newsletter is intended just for the screen or the home printer, I reduce the resolution and size of all the graphics before placing them in the layout to help keep the pdf small. They generally are 50K or less. I only embed the fonts I use, but that is because they are not common and are vector fonts that are small anyway.

In addition, version 6 of Acrobat has an option to reduce the size of the pdf. If you don't opt to support earlier Acrobat versions (such as 4) unnecessary data can be cut out to make the pdf smaller.

I hope to completely switch over to InDesign CS2 in another month or so. Adobe has stopped supporting PageMaker, and InDesign does so much more. But, it is always easier to keep plugging away in PageMaker when the deadline gets close instead of putting in the extra time to make the transition.

MARSEE HENON
O'REILLY USER GROUP LIAISON

According to Arthur C. Clarke, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

But just how advanced is sufficiently advanced? Clarke's Third Law provides the inspiration for the next ETech, the O'Reilly Emerging Technology Conference. The 2007 conference is all about magical innovations and will reveal the advanced technology behind them. ETech takes place on March 26-29, 2007 in San Diego, California. <http://conferences.oreilly.com/etech>

In a podcast, O'Reilly Media's Sara Peyton interviews **Barbara Brundage** about her brand new book, "Photoshop Elements 5: The Missing Manual." Barbara's the go-to expert when it comes to using Photoshop Elements. And she's going to talk about the cool new tools for digital photographers and scrapbookers in this new program. <http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/network/2006/09/12/barbara-brundage-interview-ps-elements5.html>

In another podcast, listen as songwriter and Pro Tools guru **Gina**

Fant-Saez transforms a dust-dry vocal into a gorgeous soundscape by chaining four cool effect plugins, and then builds a song from scratch using only virtual instruments. <http://digitalmedia.oreilly.com/2006/09/07/playing-with-audio-plugins.html>

George Jardine, pro shooter and Adobe Lightroom Evangelist, was part of the Lightroom Adventure team that traveled to Iceland during the summer of 2006. He is interviewed by fellow adventurer, Derrick Story. George talks about working with other world class photographers on location and the development of Adobe Lightroom, and how the two forces came together in Iceland. <http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/network/2006/08/17/george-jardine-lightroom-adventure.html>

Having trouble applying Photoshop's Unsharp Mask filter to your creations? Using the Unsharp Mask can be tricky business but, as author Corrie explains, some good technique, a little patience, and an artistic eye is all you need to sharpen your images to a professional standard. <http://www.sitepoint.com/article/sharpening-photoshop-cs2>



Barbara Brundage



George Jardine



Gina Fant-Saez

changes at earthlink and verizon



Their data lines would be the equivalent of "T 1" lines, through the one converter box that would be placed at your house or your office.

by Michael P. Jogoleff, WA6MBZ
Santa Barbara PC Users' Group

In mid July I was doing fine with my Earthlink DSL account and I went over to the house of my friend, Kathi, KF6WB, to work on her computer.

When I got back, I found the "DSL light" on my DSL modem was blinking between orange and green instead of showing up as solid green as was supposed to be the case. I figured right away that the cable/line that runs along the side of my house had been attacked by the sun and so forth because that line is outside and as such exposed to the elements. After trying out another cable, I found that the line was not even a part of the issue. Then I discovered that the third pair of wires which brings my DSL service into the house had been deactivated or disconnected at the office or, at least, someplace off of my property.

I called both Earthlink and Verizon and Earthlink told me to plug my modem into the line that is supposed to have the DSL service attached to it. My DSL modem then started showing up as solid green light, and the service appeared to work but later on I discovered that everytime the phone rang or I picked up the phone, I got knocked off line.

I called Earthlink and Verizon

back. Here is where I learned some interesting facts. My old Speed Stream, 5260 modem, is a little slower than current modems but current modems only last about 2 and one half years on average before failing and my older modem has been going strong since May of 1999. I could not remember if the modem was on lease or what. It turns out, I guess, that I now own it. I also learned that Earthlink has been in the process of changing from Covad to Verizon for certain aspects of their DSL connections, but, they said, that that process had been accomplished by June 15th, 2006. So why did this happen to me on July 17th, 2006???

No one at the Help Center, on the telephone, could tell me about this change. All they could do is tell me that three lines were indeed coming into the house and that the DSL service was supposed to be on the second line.

Another thing I found is that, under Covad, I could simultaneously connect three computers to the internet, but not four or five, and now with Verizon, I can only connect ONE computer at a time, that is, of course, without a router. The speed that I now have is not too bad, for I found a free testing service on the web and my download rate was 2.015

mega bits per second, or 2015 kilo bits. Originally, they had told me that I should get 384 kilo bits upload and 768 kilo bits download. According to Earthlink, my rate is about right for my line quality and modem type.

Somehow the service that I am now getting with Verizon being in the mix is not as good as it was when Covad was involved because I am not getting messages that my messages cannot be sent but then in a few minutes the messages go through without issue. This can vary and it is easy to jump to conclusion about something such as this, and so I will have to keep watching the situation.

I ended up wasting a large part of four days on this issue and it would have been nice if Verizon had sent me a letter or something to the effect that my DSL service was changing because Covad was no longer going to be providing certain aspects of my DSL connection, and that Verizon was going to be taking over that task. Supposedly, there is going to come a time when Verizon will be dropping the copper phone lines altogether, even in Santa Barbara, and go to fiber lines and networks. This is so because California State Law allows its cities and towns to impose a tax phone companies for having their lines within a city's boundaries.

Therefore, when a company such as Verizon goes to put in fiber lines, they pull out the old copper lines rather than rent them to another company. I have even heard stories to the effect that under such a fiber phone system, converters would be necessary for regular phones and that DSL would no longer be available on such fiber lines, converters or not.

Verizon, on their new fiber lines, then would be set offer all kinds of new services, including TV, phones, and other entertainment packages. Moreover, I have heard that their data lines would be the equivalent of "T 1" lines, through the one converter box that would be placed at your house or your office.

They are already doing this in Orange County and in places in Ventura County where new construction is going in, and those places will never see copper wire phone lines. I have a copy of the manual of the fiber optics interface box that does all this stuff. I have not had time to review it in detail but it does look like such boxes have a lot to offer the consumer.

Currently, as Verizon is putting in fiber lines, they are also putting in a device called a Tellabs 1600 ONT 611, where "ONT" stands for Optical Network Terminal. This device is rated for outdoor/weatherproof service at the home where the current phone boxes are located. Big companies tend to go with one device for some period and then when the technology or the demand changes, they starting installing better or cheaper devices. This can lead to the possibility of incompatibility among parts of the overall network.

javascript exploits on the web

Imagine visiting a blog or checking your email on a portal like Yahoo's webmail. While you are reading the web page, JavaScript code is downloaded and executed by your Web browser. It scans your entire home network, detects and determines your Linksys router model number, and then sends commands to the router to turn on wireless networking and turn off all encryption. This scenario is no longer one of fiction. (Source: SPI Labs)

Submitted by Mike Lyons

ie flaw allows images to infect pcs

A new weakness in the Internet Explorer browser allows hacked Web sites to infect PCs merely by displaying specific images.

Microsoft says it may issue a patch on its regular schedule, Tuesday, October 10. But, for now, Windows users can protect themselves against hackers by deregistering vgx.dll. This DLL file is used by IE to render images that are based on Vector Markup Language (VML).

Microsoft recommends that users click Start, Run, paste the following line into the input box, and click OK:

```
regsvr32 -u "%ProgramFiles%\Common Files\Microsoft Shared\VGX\vgx.dll"
```

After Microsoft releases a patch for the problem, you can easily reregister the DLL by repeating the procedure without the -u switch:

```
regsvr32 "%ProgramFiles%\Common Files\Microsoft Shared\VGX\vgx.dll"
```

While the workaround is in effect, Web sites that use VML won't display such images properly. Some sites are already using the flaw to infect PCs, so it's still safer to use the workaround even if some sites temporarily look different.

The fix described above works on Windows XP and Server 2003, but Microsoft says the security hole also affects Windows 2000 SP4.

For more information, see the Suggested Actions section of MS bulletin 925568 at <http://tinyurl.com/pauca>.



microsoft offers free online office training

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by Ira Wilsker

Whatever your personal feelings about Microsoft, it does produce some of the most popular and widely utilized software on the globe. Possibly closely behind its operating systems in popularity and use is its suite of Office products, including such ubiquitous products as Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, Excel, and Access. A quick review of both brick-and-mortar and online booksellers indicates that there are many books and guides available that provide instructions and guidance on using the titles in the Microsoft Office suite. Many colleges, such as Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT), require students to take some form of “Computer Applications” course early in their college career where the students learn the fundamentals of the major Office utilities. Adult

training programs, such as LIT’s Workforce Training program, earn much of their bread and butter by teaching non-credit classes to those who want to learn basic, intermediate, or advanced Office skills with the assistance of a talented instructor. Many other users learn via “OJT” (on the job training) or by simply using the products, teaching themselves about the features that they discover by chance, or with the help of a coworker.

For those who have found that they need help with Office, or would simply like to learn about basic or sophisticated tasks, Microsoft is offering an assortment of free online tutorials, some that are text and graphical based, and others with integrated audio explaining what is being shown on the screen. The domestic start page for these online training sessions is office.microsoft.com/en-us/training.

From the start page the user can select which product he wants to learn about, all of which are components of some version of Microsoft’s Office 2003 suite, or adjunct programs. Included in the selection are Access (database), Excel (spreadsheet), Word (word processor), FrontPage (web page development), InfoPath (organizing utility), OneNote (note taking

utility), Outlook (email and calendar), PowerPoint (presentations), Project (scheduling utility), Publisher (desktop publishing), Visio (graphical layouts), and other Office utilities. Selecting a utility will display the selection of online training courses available for that utility. Most of the interactive online training sessions take from 20 to 50 minutes to complete, and some of the more complex topics are broken into sequential parts in order to improve the learning process.

Microsoft Word is arguably the most widely used word processor, and is likely used in the majority of offices, schools, and homes. Clicking on the Word hyperlink opens a window showing the 30 online courses available. Approximately half the courses listed are audio courses, where a human voice explains each step in that particular course, as corresponding text and graphics are displayed on the computer screen. One of the most popular Word courses, as indicated by the number of users who have rated it, is “Audio course: Get to know Word: Create your first document”. Upon clicking on this selection, the user is greeted with a female voice that says, “You need to create a document in Word, but you’ve never worked with Word. Where do you begin?” and goes on

Turn to next page

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training>

to explain how to start creating a Word document. Once the document is started, this course explains the basics, including how to edit and format text, and manage the margins. All through this course, the friendly voice is explaining what is being shown on the screen. Other Word courses cover such topics as security, mail merge, using graphics and images, creating and managing tables, using Word to create and publish newsletters, and a variety of other useful topics.

While Word may be the most widely used word processor, Excel is possibly the most widely used spreadsheet. A spreadsheet is used to manage and manipulate numbers, and display numbers and statistics in attractive and readable graphs. Selecting the Excel hyperlink opens a choice of 38 free training courses, almost all including audio explaining with a human voice what is being shown on the screen. Excel topics including introductory courses, creating and managing formulas, printing in different formats, creating charts and other graphics, importing and exporting data in a variety of formats, securing data, creating pivot tables, and a variety of other topics. Users of Excel, from novice to expert, will likely find worthwhile training on this site.

Personally, I do a lot of presentations with PowerPoint, Microsoft's popular presentation program. The training page for PowerPoint offers 23 individual topics, appropriately starting off with "Create Your First Presentation". As with the other utilities, virtually all of the courses have an audio component

explaining the selected course. Topics covered include working with masters and templates, colors, graphics, embedding sounds and video, animations and timing, creating organizational charts and flow charts, and other topics. In reviewing some of the online courses I found several tips and tricks that I was unaware of, which I will implement in my future presentations.

Outlook is Microsoft's premier email, calendar, and contact management program. The free online training offered by Microsoft includes 29 separate courses covering such topics as sending and receiving photos and attachments, using the calendar feature, protecting yourself from "spam" and other junk email, creating signature files,

managing your address book, tracking birthdays and anniversaries, and over a dozen other lessons. In my experience, most Outlook users simply use Outlook as an email program, and do not take full advantage of the other powerful functions and features built into Outlook. With these lessons, any user of Outlook can learn to make good use of the features that he paid for.

Free online training is available for all of the other components of the various versions of Office 2003, and its sister programs. With this selection of free online training, there is now no reason why users of an Office suite should not be able to make better use of their software.

You paid for it, now make full use of your Office software.

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Office Online Training website. At the top, there's a search bar with 'Training' and a 'Go' button. The left sidebar has a 'Training' menu highlighted. The main content area is titled 'Training' and features several sections: 'Autumn is almost here' with a small image and text about fall calendar; 'Sit up and listen: Audio courses' with a list of audio topics; 'BUILT BY REQUEST', 'WHAT'S HOT', and 'FEATURED COURSE' sections with small images and titles like 'PowerPoint navigation know-how'; 'BROWSE TRAINING COURSES' with a grid of course links for various Office 2003 applications; and 'TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS' for August. The right sidebar includes 'Download today's clip', 'Extend yourself' with a quiz link, 'Office 2003 Editions' with various download and upgrade links, and 'Quick links' to other resources.



and the worst

backup, schmackup

I can't pick up a computer magazine without being harangued about the urgent need to back up my hard drive(s) before the world is coming to an end. I have never been able to bring myself to follow that well-meant advice, although not without lingering feelings of guilt. On a few occasions I have used the latest hot backup program to store data folders to a compressed file on a backup drive. Then I wondered if I would be able to retrieve my data from that file if the need arose, and conveniently forgot to update the backup.

Last year I bought a 200 GB external hard drive to store backups. It came with a backup program that I used to back up those data folders I wanted to protect. After I was done I had about 199 GB of external disk space left. It dawned on me that it might be easier to just copy the data folders I wanted to back up directly to the external drive. No big deal and no worry about the integrity of my backup data .

After all, what is there that's irreplaceable? I edit our User Group's Web site, about 12 MB by now. After every update I publish the site to my external hard drive and two locations on the Web. Once or twice a year I also copy the whole thing to a CD-ROM that I give to our president for safekeeping. That's safe enough by any measure.

I keep extra copies of photos and genealogy data on several hard drives, and annually copy them to a backup CD. Current financial and tax data I keep on removable storage with backup to CDs, as well as hard copies in a file cabinet. Personal email correspondence gets backed up occasionally, although I can't remember ever going back to letters from years ago. I might



by Pim Borman
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

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have to borrow a computer from the Smithsonian to recover my earliest correspondence, written in the late eighties with a Textra word processor on floppy disks that actually flopped.

During the past two Christmas seasons, while nostalgia was running high, my son Mike and I dug out some old 8-mm family movies, taken in the 60's, 70's, and 80's, for conversion to digital format. The old projector suffered from a broken drive belt, but thanks to Google I managed to find a replacement on the Web. I still had some splice tapes left to repair the brittle film as needed. We used a Vivitar UVC-1 All-In-One Universal Video Converter to funnel the images into Mike's digital camcorder. The converter is a rectangular box with an opaque glass projection window in the long side, and a condenser lens in the short side. The camcorder, on a tripod, is focused through the condenser lens and a

Turn to next page

diagonal internal mirror on the projected image. We needed to adjust the frame rate of the camcorder to obtain a steady picture. Mike then recorded the camcorder copy with a SONY RDR-GX300 DVD Recorder on DVDs for sharing with relatives and archiving. Now THAT is worthwhile backing up! The quality of the old movies is primitive by today's standards, but the contents are invaluable and irreplaceable.

If you run a business I can see the importance of regularly and completely backing up everything, making sure to keep extra copies off-site. But as a private individual, just use common sense and stop worrying. What is there to lose, really? And while you are at it, maybe you should look around the garage, the attic, or the basement for clutter that can safely be thrown away!

tv tuner troubles

We live at the edge of the city of Evansville, with a small, wooded area behind our back fence. That provides great privacy and a wide variety of interesting wildlife, from birds, squirrels, and raccoons to occasional deer. Unfortunately, over the past 50 years or so the trees have encroached on the overhead power line, and we suffer frequent power outages whenever a storm passes through the area. Naturally, that happens just when you are glued to the TV screen to follow the progress of the storm on the radar.

I went looking on the Internet for an external TV tuner that I could plug into the USB port of my laptop when the power went off. As it turns out, there are several models available. I first chose a Hauppauge

WinTV UBSB2 unit, about \$90 online. Unfortunately, it didn't work as advertised. The picture was all right, but I could not get the sound to come on, and the software did not manage to activate the remote control. FAQs on the Hauppauge Web site did not help and the latest drivers were identical to those on the CD. I tried the unit on my desktop computer with the same lack of success. The vendor, J&B Music, readily gave me a Return Authorization number, although I'm still out the shipping charges both ways.

Undaunted, I bought an ATI TV Wonder USB 2.0 tuner at Circuit City, \$80 with a \$20 mail-in rebate. Same features but without remote control. Same problems too, except that this time I received no picture either. Checked their Web site's FAQs, downloaded and installed newly updated drivers. Now I didn't even get the black screen. Called support who referred me to a help file on the FAQ site. No luck. Returned the unit to Circuit City and got all my money back. Oh well... If you know of a reliable external USB2 TV Tuner, please let me know. It better be good this time.

freespire

For those of you with an interest in the Linspire Linux distribution, there is now a free distro called Freespire. It is essentially the same as Linspire 5.1, without some help files, but with developers utilities. To quote freespire.org: "The regular, complete version includes legally-licensed, 3rd party codecs, drivers and software, to offer better hardware, file type, and multimedia support. Freespire includes turn-key, out-of-the-box support for MP3, Windows Media,

QuickTime, Java, Flash, Real, ATI drivers, nVidia drivers, proprietary WiFi drivers, modem drivers, fonts, and so on."

It has all the functionality of Linspire 5.1, including some new features forthcoming in Linspire 6.0. The expectation is that Freespire will function as a core around which volunteer programmers will add new functionality under the Open Source system, similar to other Open Source projects such as Firefox, Thunderbird, and OpenOffice.org. Meanwhile, if you were thinking of giving Linspire a try but were unwilling to pay \$40 for the program, you can now use Freespire for free and have essentially the same functionality.

dell decrapifier

Dell stock has gone down more than 50% during the last several years. Many reasons are given, including the presumed ineptness of its CEO during the last two years, Kevin Rollins. Specifically mentioned are poor customer service and the loss of key personnel (*The Wall Street Journal* 8/22/06). There is no mention of the disgust of many new Dell customers when they find their new computer loaded with unwanted software and spyware that slows everything down and is almost impossible to remove. Jason York to the rescue! He has written a script called the Dell DeCrapifier that automatically detects and removes unwanted software from new Dell computers. If you have a new Dell you can find it at www.yorkspace.com.

Pim Borman is website editor for the SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc. at <http://swipcug.apcug.org>. Email Pim at swipcug@sigecom.net.

SkyTone

by Terry Currier, winnersug@aol.com

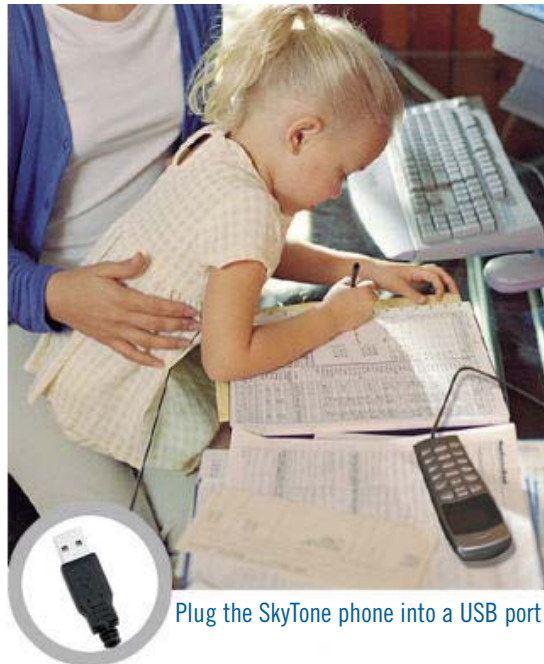
I've known about Skype for a while now, but never really was interested in it since the only person long distance from me is my sister in Florida. I could call her on the cell phone family plan at no cost. Then I tried Skype with the SkyTone phone from Radian – you know what, it's kind of cool.

The SkyTone phone is just like using a regular phone. Very easy to set up. Plug in the SkyTone phone in to a USB port and put in the provided CD. It has the SkyTone phone program and Skype application. Startup Skype, and choose a Skype contact name. Once setup is done you are ready to make calls. There is a box that comes up and ask you to purchase some Skype time, but you do not have to. Skype to Skype calls are always free regardless where in the world you are. Now until the end of 2006 Skype is offering users free calls to any phone in the United States or Canada. Normally it would cost .02 cents a minute. What made Skype cool for me was both of us being able to use a web cam, so we could see each other.

The SkyTone phone will work on USB 1.1 and 2.0. In fact I have it working on a USB hub with no

problems. The phone has sound card ability built in, along with echo cancellation, and noise reduction. I have been using it for a month and had no problems. Calls are very clear.

The USB connection works well since I also installed it onto my notebook, for which the microphone port never worked. I took it to a car



Plug the SkyTone phone into a USB port

dealership and while I waiting for my car I took advantage of their free Wi-Fi to call my sister.

I told a friend whose son was going over to Italy for a month about Skype. She installed it on her computer and the son's notebook that he took with him. On a previous trip, she was calling him with a phone card at 37 cents a minute. With Skype he would go down to a café Wi-Fi hot spot, and call his mom from there. She loves it because it saved her a lot of money



(she talks a lot.) Even if she called him on a regular phone line Skype would only charge 3 cents a minute. The only thing she did not like was his 2 a.m. call. The SkyTone Phone come with a one year warranty. Model number: RST101

Recommended system requirements:

- PC running Windows 2000 or XP
- 1 GHz processor
- 256 MB RAM
- 30 MB free space on your hard drive

• Cable, DSL or equivalent broadband connection to Internet

\$39.99 at CompUSA

\$28.99 at Buy.com

\$29.99 at Amazon.com and

Target.com

<http://www.eradian.com/>

Terry Currier has been involved in computer user groups since 1984. He is the founding president and current president of WINNERS (WINDows usERS) user group in Fountain Valley. He is a past president of the North Orange County Computer Club and past vice-president of the Orange Coast IBM PC User Group.

mini-fair computer genealogy society of san diego

Saturday, October 21, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Robinson Auditorium complex at UCSD, La Jolla the Computer Genealogy Society of San Diego will offer attendees a choice of two classes to be held in two back-to-back 1-1/2 hour sessions.

9:15 a.m. Session I:

A. "Desktop Publishing" — Dona Ritchie

B. "Cutting Cables: Going Online Wirelessly" — Gary Hoffman. Learn how to connect your computer to the Internet using available high speed wireless networks.

10:15 a.m. Break, refreshments

10:45 a.m. Session II:

A. "PowerPoint" — Jerry Oen. A quick tutorial will be given on how to create an effective and efficient presentation that will provide the right impact without overwhelming your message. Tips will be given to enhance your presentation while eliminating some of the common mistakes seen today in many presentations.

B. "The Integrated Genealogist" — Judy Jiru. Learn how to connect all the gadgets and equipment you have. Judy will demonstrate connecting a camera phone, laptop with wifi, a PDA and a digital camera so that your information can be taken wherever you go. For more information, contact: John Kracha, JKK358@aol.com



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three-day video making workshops scheduled

Videomaker Workshops presents The Basics of Video Production from Oct 27-29, 2006 or Dec 8-10, 2006 in Chico, California. Lectures will cover the fundamental techniques of shooting, miking, editing and lighting. Attendees will form production teams to put these techniques into practice. You will plan a project together, shoot it in Videomaker's studio and on location, edit it, and screen the results at the end of the workshop. Check for more at <http://tinyurl.com/zzmys>

free computer workshops

Adults who hold a current valid Santa Ana Public Library Card may register for a free workshop by calling the Computer Lab at (714) 647-5086 or sign up in person with a tutor in the Lab.

Workshops in English and Spanish are:

- Introduction to Computers (Parts I & II)
- Introduction to the Internet (Parts I & II)
- Using Email
- Using Graphic Art in Word
- Creating Presentations in Powerpoint



Paint Shop Pro X is not Adobe Photoshop. Paint Shop Pro X is also not nearly as expensive as Adobe Photoshop CS2, but it offers excellent value for the money.

by Neil Longmuir

End users of photo editing software always ask the same question. Is there an alternative to Adobe Photoshop CS2? The answer to that question is yes. Paint Shop Pro X from Corel is a very good alternative.

The simple answer is Paint Shop Pro X is not Adobe Photoshop. Paint Shop Pro X is also not nearly as expensive as Adobe Photoshop CS2,

but it offers excellent value for the money.

In general, most of the features found in Adobe Photoshop are found in Paint Shop Pro X in one way or another. However, do not expect every feature to work exactly the same as they do in Adobe Photoshop. These are two distinctively different programs. The features are not found in exactly the same places, but they are there.

The new and exciting features

So what exciting features does Paint Shop Pro X give the end user? Corel did the right thing by including **Corel Photo Album 6** free with Paint Shop Pro X. Corel Photo Album 6 gives the end user a quick and easy way to download digital images; do some minor image editing; be creative and share your photos with friends and relatives with e-mail. Corel Photo Album 6 is an

Turn to next page

Paint Shop Pro X

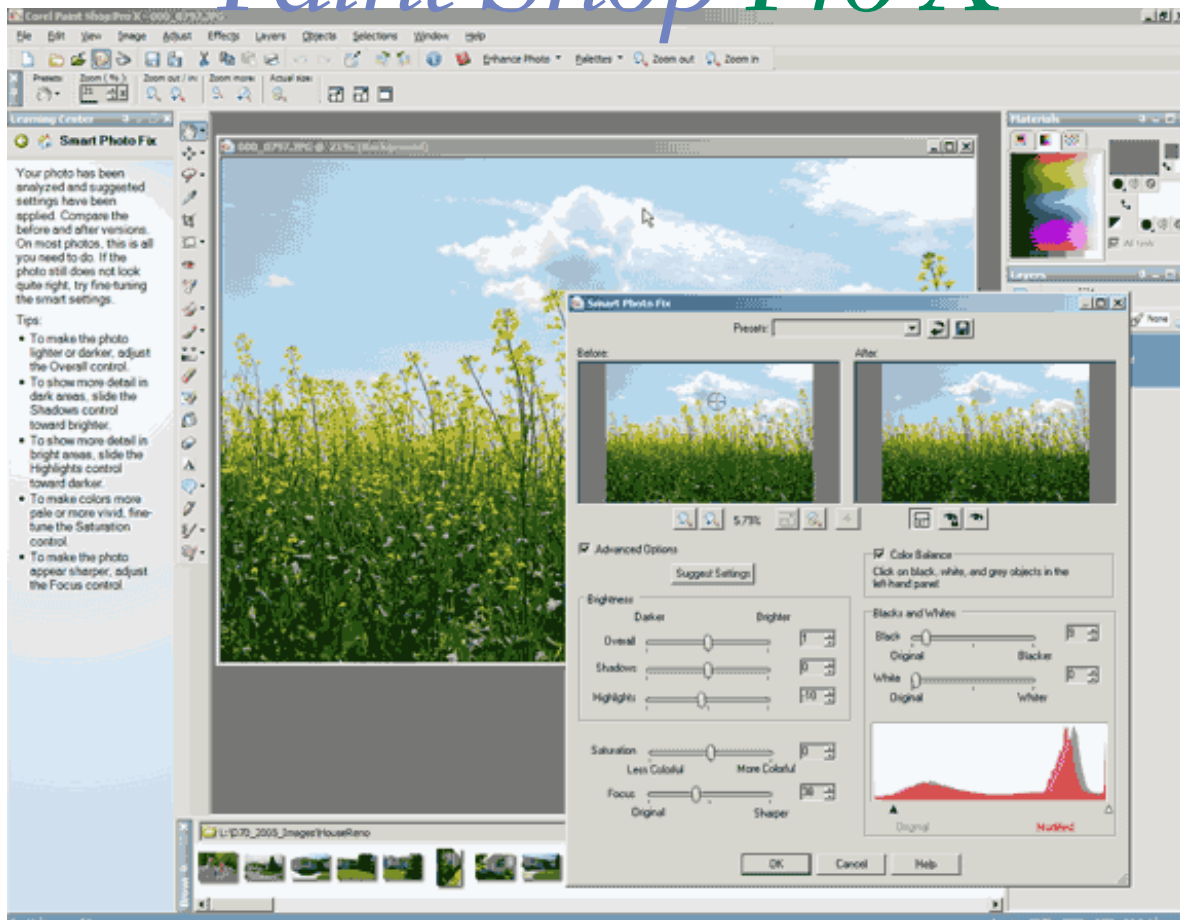


Figure 1

excellent program that could stand on it's own alone. The programs interface is wonderful and easy to master even for the beginner digital photographer.

New to Paint Shop Pro X is the **learning centre**. The learning centre will actually teach you how to use the various features in Paint Shop Pro X to edit photos. For example, do you want to remove an object from a photo? "The Object Remover makes it easy to remove unwanted or difficult to clone portions of images and fills in the removed detail with portions of the remaining photo."

In my opinion, the learning centre is where it all begins and is the real heart of Paint Shop Pro X. Now you can learn step by step how to edit photos easily. Just follow the instructions. Let's examine one of those new features, the Smart Photo Fix feature. Figure 1 illustrates the Smart Photo Fix option found under the Adjust menu.

Insert PPXFigure 1 here

The left hand side of the screen displays the instructions and tips for adjusting the image. In this case, the exposure is not quite right. Why? When I took this photo, it was a bright day and I did not have a graduated neutral density filter with me. The end result, is that the sky and cloud areas of the photo are "overexposed, not by much but a little." This image is a perfect example of **not** getting the exposure correct. One quick and dirty solution would have been to make two more additional images. The first extra image exposure would be made for the shadow areas of the photo. The second extra image would be made for the highlight areas of the photo, i.e. the sky and clouds. Then using adjustment layer masks, merge the

three images (shadow area, mid tone area and highlight area) together to make a more pleasing image. The end result of an incorrect exposure is, some time will be required editing the image on the computer.

Let's analyze the Smart Photo Fix Dialog box. The left pane shows the original photo with a couple of circles with a cross in the circle. These are the problem areas of the photo. Looking at this image on a computer screen will show the sky and clouds are pale (i.e. overexposed) while the rest of the photo is well exposed. Paint Shop Pro X has made some suggested settings. The image displayed in the right pane of the dialog box shows what the image will look like after using the suggested settings.

If the image does not look quite right, then we have some options which will enable us to correct the image to our liking. Brightness can be adjusted either darker or lighter. The shadow areas can be altered. In this case, no adjustments to the shadows areas were recommended. The highlight areas or the brightest portions of the image are overexposed. Paint Shop Pro X suggests toning down just the sky area and clouds by -10. Making this change will make the sky darker and the clouds more defined.

Depending on the type of image, saturation (i.e. the intensity of the color) can be changed. The final change that can be made in the left hand pane is focus going from the original to sharper. In other words, you can apply some sharpening to the image.

The right hand side of the dialog box below the images sets the black point (i.e. the darkest part of the image) and the white point (the brightest part of the image). The final display is a histogram showing the exposure before and after adjustments. At this point, if the image looks fine to you, click ok and the changes are done.

Quoting from the Corel web site: "Paint Shop Pro analyzes your photo and lets you adjust the corrections to suit your tastes. **Smart Photo Fix** is the best way to correct color, exposure, and lighting problems. For the first time ever, all these powerful photo correction tools are together in one place. With a mouse click Paint Shop Pro analyzes your photo and makes suggested corrections. Then, you can change the corrections to suit your tastes."

Paint Shop Pro X Tools

Adobe Photoshop and Elements have the **healing brush** to remove

Turn to next page

Neil Longmuir is a member of the Winnipeg PC Users Group. He generously contributes reviews from time to time to Nibbles & Bits.



blemishes and other defects. Paint Shop Pro X has the **makeover tool**. However, Corel has taken this tool one step further and given it additional features. The makeover tool can remove blemishes, whiten teeth, brush on a suntan and remove wrinkles. Having all these features in one spot makes retouching of photos simple and easy.

The list of basic features and tools available to the end user is impressive. Some of these features include: add or remove digital noise (i.e grain in film); scratch removal from scanned images; removal of JPEG artifacts; adjust back lighting; provide fill flash to images where the flash was not used; remove red eye; correct barrel distortion in a lens; correct pincushion distortion in a lens or correct fisheye lens distortion. These features are not standard in other image editing programs.

Paint Shop Pro X supports adjustment layers for brightness and contrast, channel mixer, color balance, curves, hue saturation and lightness, invert, posterize and threshold. Paint Shop Pro X also supports adjustment layer masks. An adjustment layer mask lets the end user remove parts of the layer by painting over them with the paint brush tool. When used correctly, adjustment layers and adjustment layer masks can make some very impressive images and composites. A composite image is the combining of one or more images to make a single image. The use of layers, adjustment layers and adjustment layer masks make Paint Shop Pro X one very powerful image editing program.

Can Paint Shop Pro X handle RAW files? Yes! "For those who take pictures in raw format, you get Pixmantec RawShooter Essentials, a fully functional RAW converter that

allows any level of user to get excellent results with the minimum of effort and knowledge."

Conclusion: Corel has made a lot of changes in a very short time to what was a very good program. Paint Shop Pro X has taken this to a new level. The new version is faster, better and makes doing every day tasks easier to do. Also by including Corel Photo Album 6 free, there is now a quick way to download, organize and manage your digital images. Corel Photo Album 6 gives you lots of new ways to share and be creative with your digital images. Also included with Paint Shop Pro X is two hours of video tutorial training from Lydia.com.

Paint Shop Pro X is one terrific package. There are far too many features to write about. For further information on the new features go to <http://www.corel.ca>. While you're there, download a 30 day trial version of Paint Shop Pro X. Install it and try it out. Then make a trip to your favorite retailer and pick up a copy.

Neil's Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Neil Longmuir's background includes being a programmer, researcher and teacher in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management at the University of Manitoba for 35 years.

But, photography has always been his hobby and as a high school student he provided photos of the high school scene to two local newspapers. Later, in addition to his job at the University, he had a business specializing in wedding photography.

He estimates taking 90,000 shots with a Nikon F90X, before deciding to go digital in 2001. Now, he relies on two digital cameras, a Nikon D200 and a Nikon D70, "with a vast array of Nikon lenses."

september keyword
explained

JavaScript

JavaScript was originally developed by Brendan Eich of Netscape Communications Corporation under the name Mocha, then LiveScript, and finally renamed to JavaScript. The change of name from LiveScript to JavaScript roughly coincided with Netscape adding support for Java technology in its Netscape Navigator web browser. JavaScript was first introduced and deployed in the Netscape browser version 2.0B3 in December of 1995. When web developers talk about using JavaScript in Internet Explorer, they are actually using JScript. The choice of name proved to be a source of much confusion.

As of 2006, the latest version of the language is JavaScript 1.7.

One major use of web-based JavaScript is to write functions that are embedded in or included from HTML pages and interact with the Document Object Model (DOM) of the page to perform tasks not possible in HTML alone.

Some common examples of this usage are.

1. Opening or popping up a new window with programmatic control over the size, position and 'look' of the new window (i.e. whether or not the menus, toolbars etc are visible; usually JavaScript is used to ensure that they are not)

2. Checking or validating web form input values to make sure that they will be accepted before they are submitted to the server

3. Changing images as the mouse cursor moves over them.

Source: Wikipedia.com

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time for your membership renewal?



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SEPT. 1– Leonard Prince (2nd month)

OCTOBER 1– Siles Bazerman, Gary Covington III, Larry Klees, Ed O'Donnell, David Sander

DECEMBER 1– Don Bickel, Joe Duffner, Dan Gonse, Dick Tooley, Carl Westberg
submitted by Charlie Moore

NOTE: You must be a member in good standing to access our Members' Only page or to win raffle prizes. Web page passwords are deactivated the first day a membership expires.

september raffle winners

NTI Ripper, \$35
Leroy Kaump, Winner
NTI Shadow, \$35
Leroy Kaump, Previous Winner
Milton Gorham, Winner

Comdex Yo-Yo, \$5
David Sander, Not Present
Frank Bollinger, Winner
ViaGrafix letter opener, \$5
Dick Tooley, Declined
Glenn Emigh, Not Present
Michael Moore, Winner
PowerQuest Datakeeper, \$29
Sid Liptz, Declined
Richard Metzger, Not Present
Linda Gonse, Not Present
Ann Carnahan, Not Present
Pete Romeo, Not Present
Leonard Prince, Winner
Computer Bath, \$5
Charles Burgwin, Winner
Computer Bath, \$5
Lloyd Boutwell, Winner

submitted by Mike Lyons

Please bring your empty HP, Sharp, Xerox, Dell, Canon and Lexmark printer ink cartridges to the next meeting for our ongoing fund-raiser! No Brother or Epson cartridges, please.

New Member

membership application

Renewal*

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

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Nickname _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Areas of Interest/Comments _____

Meetings are the second Tuesday of every month. See www.orcopug.org for more details.

Don't lose your membership benefits... renew now!

Expired members are not eligible to win raffle prizes or to access the Members Only web page.

Make check for \$25 payable to **ORCOPUG** — mail to:
ORCOPUG, P.O. BOX 716, Brea, California 92822-0716

secret keyword

September's secret keyword wasn't named. You can now win five prizes if you find the keyword in the newsletter or website: O'Reilly "PC's The Missing Manual" (June), Indoor/Outdoor Wireless Temperature Station (July), NTI Shadow backup software, (August), Universal black ink refill kit (September) and Mini Optical Mouse (October) prizes!

See page 16 for the September keyword and explanation.

thank you newsletter contributors!

Charlie Moore, Don Miller, Frank Bollinger, Jim Emmons, Joe Francis, Herb Goodman, Ira Wilsker, Linda Gonse, Marsee Henon, Michael Jogoleff, Mike Lyons, Neil Longmuir, Pim Borman, Ted Wirtz, Terry Currier, Tim O'Reilly

Deadline for Nov. issue is Oct. 21

members' only! page benefit of membership

ORCOPUG membership entitles you to access the Members' Only page at www.orcopug.org for special discounts. User name is first initial+last name (lower case). Password is member letter+number.

computer swap meet scheduled for November 26

The ACP Computer Store swap meet is held every other month, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 1310 E. Edinger, Santa Ana. Admission is free. www.acpswapmeetbyhyperactive.com

demand net neutrality now! keep the internet free!

You have to pay extra for your email to be delivered sooner rather than later. And, certain companies won't allow you to access some websites. Don't like that? These are only two reasons why net neutrality should matter so much to you. Write your senator to support S.2917 that guarantees net neutrality (<http://tinyurl.com/jqko4>). Tell the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, where this bill is right now, how important it is to you. (<http://tinyurl.com/om3zq>)

are you helping to stamp out spyware?

Have you written letters to the media and your legislators? **We all have the power and the responsibility to stamp out spyware.** Find California lawmakers' contact information at <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html>; get information for other states and Federal officials contact info at <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home/>



thanks to our generous vendors

We sincerely thank the following companies for donating prizes to our 2005 fundraising raffle: AirLink 101, Aviar Inc., Blue Squirrel, Brother, Cerious Software, Corel, Ink Dot Lady, iolo Technologies, Microsoft, Microsoft Press, Microvision Development, O'Reilly, Prentice Hall, Que & Sams, RoadWired, Roxio, Smart Computing, SmartDraw.com, Solid Documents, Stardock Systems, Sunbelt Software, and User Group Relations (Gene Barlow).

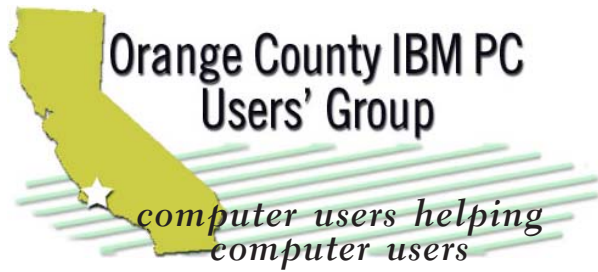
magazine discounts for user group members

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.

	1 Y	2 E	3 A
Computer Games	\$10.95	\$20.95	\$29.95
Computer Gaming World	\$14.95	\$28.95	\$41.95
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Mac World	\$12.95	—	—
Maximum PC	\$ 9.95	\$18.95	\$27.95
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PC Magazine	\$25.97	\$48.95	\$68.95
PC World	\$16.95	—	—
Videomaker	\$11.95	\$21.95	—
Wired	\$ 6.00	\$12.00	\$17.00

Revised August 2006

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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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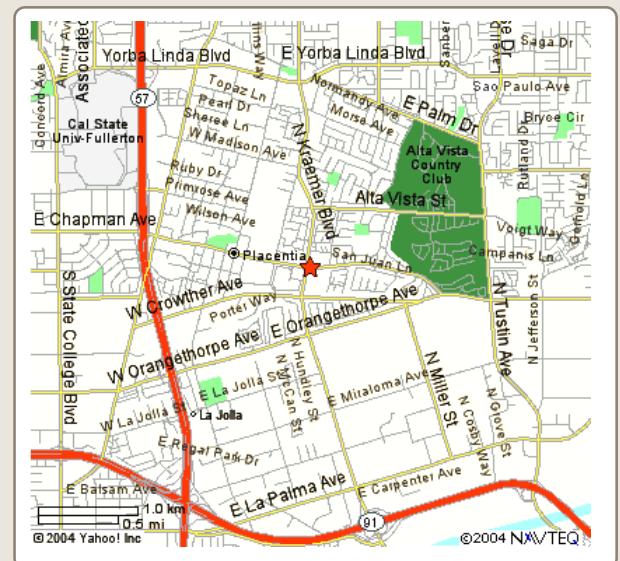
www.orcopug.org



where are the meetings and when are they held?

Regular meeting are the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the **Placentia Library**, 411 East Chapman Avenue. Placentia, California 92870, (714) 528-1906. Call (714) 990-0580, for information, or go to www.orcopug.org. Meetings are free and the public is welcome!

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 welcome to attend planning meetings!



next meeting: tuesday, october 10, 6:30 p.m. placentia library, placentia