



SAN FRANCISCO PERSONAL COMPUTER
USERS GROUP

eBLUE
NOTES

Third Quarter, 1999

Volume 18 7-9



The San Francisco PC Users Group, founded in 1982, serves as a regional volunteer forum for the exchange of ideas, industry insights and solutions to problems, etc. related to members using personal computers having the Intel x86 or compatible processor.

***Blue Notes* was first published in December 1982 by The San Francisco PC Users Group.**

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Who We Are, What We Do and How You Can Join the Fun!

Annual membership in The San Francisco PC Users Group includes, among other things, monthly meetings, a one year subscription to *Blue Notes* and Internet access. Cost: \$40 for individuals, \$50 for families and \$75 for businesses. E-mail our Membership Registrar, membership@mail.sfpcug.org, or attend a monthly meeting (see details inside and calendar). An application form is in the last page. Once completed, mail it with your payment to the SFPCUG Membership Director, Box 284, 3145 Geary Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94118-3300

Internet Services for All Members

Internet access is a major incentive for SFPCUG membership. Visit our web site: <http://www.sfpcug.org> where you will find, among other things, information about *Blue Notes*, the club's dial-up Internet services, activities of our various Special Interest Groups, etc. SLIP or PPP accounts are available by request @ e-mail: help@mail.sfpcug.org or contact our WebMaster at webmaster@mail.sfpcug.org. or 415-564-7730.

The Internet SIG offers access to a shared account for experimenting with Web

technology, including CGI scripting. Contact the WebMaster for details.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Users gather in SIGs to explore and solve specific problems related to software and/or hardware. The Calendar will list dates and venues. If a SIG addressing your interest(s) does not exist, call 415-665-3599 to organize one.

Write a Review on New Software and it's Yours, Free!!

Vendors frequently offer new software or books to the SFPCUG so that an interested member can give it a test run and keep the product in exchange for a published review in *Blue Notes*. Our Product Review Coordinator can arrange to obtain software you might want to review. Guidelines for reviews appear regularly in *Blue Notes* or ask the Product Review Coordinator for a copy.

Steering Committee Meetings

The SFPCUG Steering Committee are held on the first Tuesday of each month at the upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza on Geary Boulevard and 16th Avenue.

The SFPCUG Steering Committee discusses issues of immediate importance to the Group and makes plans for future activities. Steering Committee meetings are open to all SFPCUG members. Any Group member having attended two of four preceding Steering Committee meetings is eligible to vote.

General meetings

General meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. (SIGs meet at 6:15p)

Location: Meetings now take place in the auditorium of the Community College District Office, 33 Gough Street, (a half-block south of Market Street) San Francisco, CA There is ample free parking in front of the building.

The latest information on programs and location for upcoming general and steering committee meetings is available on our web site <http://www.sfpcug.org>; Always check for late breaking news.

Publication in Blue Notes

Follow the structure of a previous article in *Blue Notes*.

- ! **Name/version of the subject program/book.** What does the program do and on what operating platform (s)? Does it satisfactorily fill a genuine need, e.g. task, entertainment, utility, etc?
- ! **Reviewer:** name and telephone number, latter optional.
Name and reputation of the company distributing the product. Available mail address and phone number(s).
- ! **At A Glance:** A 1-to 4 rating.
- ! **Price:** MSRP, retail or street?"
- ! **System Requirements:** (self-explanatory.)
- ! **Pros:** Ease of use, learning, etc? Documentation: comprehensive, intelligible? Support? Does it deliver as advertised? If a book, is the author's style smooth or challenging? Is the Index useful?
- ! **Cons:** Shortfalls, if any
- ! The body of your review.

When addressing technical, complex issues, endeavor to be as comprehensive and street-level clear as possible.

- ! Use one space between sentences, two carriage returns at the end of each paragraph.
- ! Re-read your work carefully, objectively, checking word, sentence and logic flow to ensure you say precisely what you mean to say, clearly.
- ! Do not use indents or tabs.
- ! Spell check your work.

Procedure for submitting articles for publication.

Save your article as a pure ASCII file with line breaks, and a **.TXT** extension. Consult with the Editor concerning graphic inserts. We recommend that the article be included in email or as an attachment to an e-mail message. If the article is very long you may want to use PKZIP or WINZIP, zip your text file and email it as an attached file to bluenotes@sfpcug.org. Should special formatting be necessary, forward a hard copy to the Editor. Contact *Blue Notes* staff, email, bluenotes@sfpcug.org

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President's Message

from Ron Feiertag

This column will be about Computer Users Groups, their future, and our future. Computer Users Groups are non-profit volunteer organizations that exist to help their members find out about, and make better use of, computer related products that can enrich our lives. How significant are these products? The August 1999 issue of PhotoElectronic Imaging magazine quoted a recent Business Software Alliance report prepared by Nathan Associates. Two of its conclusions were that since 1994 "the software industry has been growing at a rate of 15.4 percent annually, three times the rate of the economy" and "by the year 2000, the software industry will contribute more to the U.S. economy than any other manufacturing sector." My conclusion is that software is very significant, there will be a lot more of it, and Computer Users Groups are one of the best ways to keep up to date about the best and newest software. We saw the cost of computer hardware go down sharply over the past year, and this increases the number of people who will own their first computers, especially as they realize how useful computers can be in their lives. Computer Users Groups are here to help them overcome the complexity of computers at the same time that we help keep our long-time members informed of new developments and opportunities. In the New York Times, its columnist Tom Friedman wrote "The year 1999 will go down as the year when the Internet really began to penetrate the consciousness of Americans; the way they communicate, invest, work and learn is being fundamentally

transformed by the web. But it has come on so fast that people are feeling overwhelmed by it." Computer Users Groups help people integrate the Internet into their lives so that they are not overwhelmed.

Those national trends are true locally too. We understand the increasing importance of the Internet, and of making our members knowledgeable of and comfortable with the latest developments in computer hardware and software. The San Francisco Personal Computer Users Group is proud to have authors of some of the best books about computer software in print as its members. One example is Lenny Bailes, who wrote a fine book about Microsoft Windows 95 and who later wrote an even better book about Microsoft Windows 98. His knowledge of software in general and of operating systems in particular is a real resource for us. We had Caldera give us a presentation about Linux before that operating system was not nearly as widely known as it is today, and we were fortunate to have Microsoft visit us in the past, as it will in the future. On the hardware side, we had a very early demo of the Palm Pilot soon after it became a recognized breakthrough product, Advanced Micro Devices gave a presentation making us more knowledgeable about computer chips, and IBM demoed for us their latest Aptiva computers. We had a presentation about the MediaDome website and recently the Webmaster for BayInsider gave us insights into what it takes to keep a commercial web site doing the job that KTVU-TV Fox Channel 2 created it to do.

We also understand the importance of breaking down walls. Not breaking down physical walls, but removing barriers between each of our members and that person's ability to use technology better for fun or profit. I also want us to break down the barriers between each of us and our fellow members so

that we will do more networking, more mentoring, and more helping each other to meet our individual goals with the help of technology. None of us knows everything that there is to know about every aspect of technology, and each of us has enough knowledge about some things to be able to provide useful advice to another member of our Group. How well we do depends on you. Your coming to our meetings helps us, and your exchanging knowledge with each other (at a meeting, as a mentor, or in an article that you write for Blue Notes) helps us more. Your paying membership dues of \$40 per year helps us (and we need to have more paying members, so tell a friend), and your stepping forward to perform some of the volunteer activities that keeps us functioning month after month (as Secretary or Publicity Director or Volunteer Coordinator) helps us more. I cannot name everyone who helps us here, but I will name some notable current contributors to our continued success. We are strengthened by Butler Crittenden serving as Windows 95/98 SIG Leader and as Product Review Coordinator, and by Joseph Puig serving as Webmaster and as Membership Director. We rely on David Caldwell as Assistant Treasurer and as Meeting Site Coordinator. We recently received the assistance of Vic Saravia as Vice President and as Microsoft Word SIG Leader (and thank you for bringing in a computer for that SIG, Vic), and I was pleased to have Harold Charns step forward and indicate his willingness to serve as our Treasurer. His help is needed, as is yours. Despite mistakes that we made in the past, I believe that the future of the San Francisco Personal Computer Users Group is bright, but how much we accomplish and how well we succeed in enriching each other's lives depends on everyone who reads these words. Not everyone has to help, but if more people do help, we will all notice the results with great satisfaction.

Editor's Notes

by Tom McLoughlin

Welcome to the Premiere issue of *eBlue Notes*. In an attempt to further economize on the club budget, we have gone over to an electronic rather than a print edition of Blue Notes. This is not the greatest reason for "doing BN" electronically; however, economy is the precipitating factor.

An electronic version brings wider and more varied forms of media to Blue Notes: color and hypertext are immediately available. New vista of opportunity include sound, video clips, and interactive data creation on the website come to mind first. Currently eBlue Notes is available in .pdf format. This version and future versions will be available in .html, also. We will especially print a few color copies for those who fit special cases. There may be additional formatting as technologies become available and workable.

Several of the other computer clubs have electronic newsletters. These are definitely a resource for ideas for us. One organization across town, the Bechtel Group - an organization slightly larger than the SFpcUG - has a newsletter called "Bechtel Briefs", which is available on their website, www.bechtel.com. Their newsletter has been an inspiration: all of the color, the articles, -the whole product. I have gleaned many ideas from this issue. *Blue Notes* will excel in this area. We are not beholden to any vendor for our existence. We have been treated very well by vendors over the years. With the birth of an electronic issue, we are in a position to honor the vendors who have been our consistent supporters over the years. We will be recognizing our vendor supporters with graphical pointers to their websites: Intuit, Corel, Microsoft, Adobe, and the many others all of whom will be credited.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions -

particularly if you wish to volunteer some graphics or graphics talent: tommcl@pacbell.net or bluenotes@mail.sfpcug.org .

From the Dealsguy,

**by Bob Click,
Greater Orlando
Computer User Group**

Chipset Limitations

By the time this column appears some motherboards being sold will have Intel's 810 chipset. (A chipset being the surrounding chips that support the CPU). One caveat though, there is a problem in that Intel's 810 chipset will not support the Pentium III. It supports the Slot 1 design, and the Pentium II, but fails to support the Pentium III.

If you plan a new motherboard or computer purchase, it wouldn't hurt to see if your motherboard has the updated "810e" chipset (expected late in the fourth quarter or early first quarter of next year). If you don't plan a later upgrade to the Pentium III, or to use the Pentium III in the first place, it won't matter. The fix will also be incorporated into the 820 and 840 chipsets and all three will then support the Pentium III.

The thinking was that there would be little worry about this problem since

those chipsets are targeted for entry level motherboards using the Celeron or Pentium II. Still, many resellers are concerned that if an owner wanted to upgrade, they would have to be told to upgrade only to the Pentium II, sort of a limited option. Just thought I'd mention that so you would check into it if you were buying a new motherboard or computer. Actually, many consultants feel the Pentium III isn't that much of an improvement anyway.

What A Great Show

InfoCom was a great show, especially visiting the "shoot-out" room. Of all the shows I have attended, I think that in terms of dollar value for equipment displayed, InfoCom has to be about the richest of any trade show, even over the famed "Comdex" or "Consumer Electronics Show." I have no handle on a dollar value for the entire show, but the shoot-out room alone contained about \$38 million in equipment.

What an impressive array of projection systems ... all side by side, displaying the very same thing on each screen. The rotation of displays ran from still shots, some with the right picture chosen to check gray scales, to movies, to crosshatch and other things to make good comparisons in picture quality. A voice on the PA system instructed you what was showing and what to look for.

There were 79 lower-end projection systems, from the \$4000 CTX and Sony to a BARCO for \$25,500, resolutions varied. A projector from "Plus" Corp. was ultra thin at 2.28 inches. Then there were 12 mid-level projection systems from the \$15,000 Sanyo/Fisher to the \$170,000 Electrohome, with resolutions ranging from 1024 x 768 to 1280 x 1024. Most impressive were the nine theater-type projection systems ranging from the \$10,000 Toshiba to the \$150,000 Electrohome (I mean only \$149,995). Resolutions were 1280 x 1024.

Also in the shoot-out room were some very large monitors. Some were "hang-on-the-wall" type. I think Panasonic had the thinnest one, which was a 42" (\$10,000), but only 3 1/2" thick. Large monitors ranged from about \$4,000 to a mere \$34,995 with a resolution of 1365 x 768. HDTV (High Definition TV) has a 16 x 9 aspect ratio, (16 units wide by 9 units high). All could be either a monitor or HDTV.

As an aside, we're used to the 4 x 3 aspect ratio, but you will see 16 x 9 more and more with the advancement of HDTV. By FCC mandate, all commercial TV stations must transmit DTV (Digital TV) service by May 1, 2002. Many will do it by the end of this year. DTV is not compatible with analog TV, so both systems will be transmitted for a while, but either a new HDTV or a converter will be needed eventually for proper reception.

Back to the Shoot-out - "Extron" provided the complete distribution system, valued at about a million dollars, to provide signals for the entire shoot-out room. "Stewart" furnished the screens, except for a few by "DaLite." Each item had an illuminated sign with the manufacturer name, model, resolution and price. "Crestron" provided touch screen displays to see specs for the various manufacturers' equipment. Nineteen other companies contributed support for the shoot-out.

In the shoot-out room, adjustments and repairs could only be made during an hour before the show opened, and the projectors should work right the rest of the day. It was certainly easy to form an opinion about what would be your favorite brand while browsing the shoot-out room. I thought a couple of brands were consistently good in the different categories. However, I did wish I could adjust some a bit. There was a distinct difference in the displays.

I visited several booths in the show containing a couple million dollars in equipment, not including the booth cost. One small exhibitor paid \$8,000 for a 15' booth and \$18,000 for the display, not to mention the equipment shown,

shipping, setup and dismantling costs. Many booths were elaborate with all types of unique projections.

One day Sony featured an all-electronic robot dog, and what a neat dog! It walks, it talks, it chases a ball and even cocks its leg to ... well ...you know, but no water, fire hydrant or not. It was only shown one day and they sold 3,000 units in about 15 minutes at \$2,200 a pop. Another buyer has an order pending for 3,000. I'm told it's on the Sony web site www.sony.com but haven't found it yet.

Video walls abounded. One with about 15 cubes was priced at \$300,000 including the digital processing equipment. I was surprised to find that, like many projectors, it used Texas Instrument's DLP (digital light processing) technology. Video walls with one or two rows of cubes were also offered as electronic signs by a couple of booths. Prices started at about \$10,000.

The new 16 x 9 monitors were abundant in the show, as I have noticed in most shows with computers these days. As you can imagine, thin flat monitors abounded, and expect to see more of the plasma displays as this new technology gathers momentum. The show floor was filled with attendees from all over the world.

Enough trivia for this month.

Here is what I have in special offers, (not much): The Data Depot items will still be good this month. Visit their web site at <http://www.datadepo.com> , or call Data Depot at 1-800-767-3424 (# also good in Canada) or 1-813-445-3402.

Another Way To Buy a Projector

Many user groups long for a better projector, as do some businesses, and prices are coming down. I just saw an In Focus LP 400 featuring 700 ANSI lumens and not a bad resolution in the CDW catalog for \$2994.88.

(1-800-599-4239)

On the other hand, if you want to check the web, I read that you can do better. In fact, a manufacturer's rep at InfoCom also told me about that. www.Projectorcentral.com is a place to check out specs for different models and manufacturers. Here are web sites from the article to check further:

www.ccsprez.com

www.onsale.com

offers "at cost" and "at auction" sections for new and used equipment

www.buy.com

www.presentingsolutions.com

www.123present.com

www.projector.com

www.shopper.com

The article I read in "Presenting Communications" warns to be careful of extra handling charges, etc. They noted that some site's ethics leave something to be desired. They sell at cost, but make money via extra charges. In other words, "buyer beware." Making a deal with a local salesperson, even if paying a bit more, may be better. But a good deal on a web site might be leverage to get that better deal.

That's it for the August column. Sorry to take up so much room with my dribble, but deals were in short supply this month, with many calls not returned from vendors in spite of preliminary discussions. Meet me here again next month to discuss "deals." This column is written to make user group members

aware of special pricing, and my comments should not be construed to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products.

**Bob (The Cheapskate) Click. dealsguy@mindspring.com .
AUGUST 1999**

New York! New York!

I managed to make the PC Expo/APCUG event and enjoyed it. A lot of hard work by many people made this event possible. I noticed attendance was mainly people in the area. PC Expo starts on Tuesday, making it necessary for distant attendees to stay longer, but I thought that extra day (Monday) was well filled with interesting activities.

Many attendees commuted from home. The hotel @ \$129 + taxes per day gets expensive. While PC Expo is fun, it's a corporate show, not that useful for myself. NY was expensive for our sponsoring vendors and their support is already waning.

Why weren't more of you there? I'm sure your APCUG officers wonder why and you should express your thoughts, whatever they are. Is it the wrong show; if so, what show do you prefer? Is it too expensive? Are two events a year to many --- although one seems attended mostly by people from the east, and the other by people from the west. Is the duration too long? What can APCUG do to get your attendance?

Most shows are held in expensive cities, with few exceptions, and many shows go from city to city each year. You might be interested in something smaller, such as the Dayton Computerfest or the Trenton Computer Festival, which could simply be a long weekend (if either group were interested in working with APCUG). Or is it even necessary to hold APCUG events in conjunction with a show? The FACUG event offers only it's own conferences, roundtables

and the supporting vendors, and is limited to 150 attendees. FACUG is mostly attended by Florida area UG officers and was not intended to attract from all over.

Now for my pet peeve -- I have always thought these events should be opened up to all UG members rather than just officers. Would you attend such an event if there were NO FREE MEALS during the presentations? That could mean more vendors might be sponsors giving presentations. APCUG thinks few would attend such an event without freebees.

I'd like comments from all my readers, especially user group officers. Up until now, these events were intended for officers only (considered the movers and shakers). You can send APCUG your comments via board@apcug.org.

They would love to know your thoughts. If you'd rather, e-mail me at dealsguy@mindspring.com, I'll read and forward them. Now for some deals.

Manage Your Computer's Memory Better

I don't often feature shareware, but when I saw "MemTurbo" demonstrated by Mike Ungerman & Hewie Poplock at a Central Florida Computer Society meeting recently, I liked it and the vendor granted a special offer for this column. MemTurbo does a better job of managing your computer's memory. I watched as they demonstrated by opening up many programs and draining available memory, but a touch of the button brought things back in control. MemTurbo can display a graph showing your resources, and it changes, remarkably, right before your eyes. The following are their claims: (from their Web site):

- *Increases available RAM for applications and the operating system,
- *Defragments system memory,
- *Recovers RAM from applications and the operating system,

Recovers RAM from poorly behaved applications,

- *Performance-tunes your file caching,
- *No performance-robbing compression,
- *No system files modified or replaced,
- *No drivers or VxDs are installed on your system,
- *Complete uninstall facility

MemTurbo stays in your tray until you need it. When its time for more RAM, press the hot key and watch the on screen progress display. And get this: it doesn't modify any DLLs, and installs nothing outside its own directory.

Visit the Web site www.memturbo.com for more explanation and a free download for trial. I haven't tried it myself, but I liked the demonstration that was done by friends I respect for their abilities, although Hewie doesn't normally use any such utilities. The address is silicon Prairie Software, 23316 NE Redmond Fall City Road, Suite 553, Redmond, WA 98053-8376. I noticed on the ever-popular Tucows.com shareware site that MemTurbo was rated only three cows, but you can download the free version to see for yourself.

Visit the URL <http://www.memturbo.com/bsco.html> for the special offer on MemTurbo. This URL was created just for my deals column and will be good during September and October. It's normally \$19.95, but you get the full version during that limited time for just \$14.95 by downloading it from that URL. You save shipping and get the lowest price. If you prefer, call them at 713-524-6394 Ext.15789 to order at \$19.95 + S&H. (Because phone orders require a staff, the \$19.95 price stays the same.) S&H will be \$3.00USA and \$5.00 Canada.

How About Some FREE Software?

The following is an announcement I received recently:

"The problem with the Windows clipboard is that you can only copy once

before pasting. Not anymore; now you can copy several times from one application before pasting into the next. You can also save thousands of clips permanently. We publish the leading clipboard utility **Classic Clipboard.**" As a brand awareness promotion, we are releasing the Windows 95/98 version totally FREE of charge. We invite you to offer 'Classic Clipboard' as a FREE utility to your members. There is no catch; the product is FREE and we ask nothing in return. You can either link to our download site, place the installation file on your own site for download, or distribute it in any manner you wish. The download page for 'Classic Clipboard' is: <http://www.easysoftwareuk.com/classic.htm>
John Turnbull, Easy SoftwareLtd.

Not many companies give us FREE software, John, so we thank you. I wonder how "Classic Clipboard" compares with the clipboard utility included on your windows CD (but not installed) that nobody seems to know about. This will give you a chance to find out at no cost.

Finally, Something Just For The NT Folks

What do you do about fragmenting on your hard disk if you're using NT? In fact, what in the world is fragmenting? Most NT users already know this, but for newcomers, fragmentation occurs naturally as a user creates, appends, deletes, or truncates files during normal system use. On an empty hard disk, when the first files are saved to a disk, it is laid down on the tracks in contiguous clusters. In other words, the read/write head can move directly from one cluster to the next in one smooth operation. The head stays in one place over a single track and reads or writes the file as the disk moves beneath it. As more files are added, they too are written in contiguous clusters. But, as files are erased, they leave empty clusters to which new files can be written.

Unfortunately, some of these clusters are not big enough to hold the new files. As a result, a fragment of the file is written to one cluster with the rest of the

file linked to the next available cluster, or clusters if necessary, on the disk. File fragments can end up being any distance from each other on the disk, causing the head to move/jump all over, thus causing the drive to write and read information slower. This is where a good defragger should come to the rescue! PerfectDisk NT is the smart, safe, powerful way to improve Windows NT performance by rapidly defragmenting a disk (putting your files back in some contiguous order) using Raxco's patented SMARTPlacement. SMARTPlacement reorganizes files based on usage patterns. Seldom-used files move toward the back of the disk and every-day files move closer to the master file table, thus minimizing head seek time. After initial setup, PerfectDisk NT will automatically defragment and optimize ONLY the files that have been fragmented since the previous pass.

Raxco is the only company offering single-node licensing, so, for the same price you can have the same functionality for servers and workstations. Until October 31st 1999, Raxco Software, Inc. is offering its NT defragger for only \$19.00 to Dealsguy column readers. But, you say, I don't have an NT system. In the late September or October time frame, Raxco will be launching its PerfectDisk 2000. PerfectDisk 2000 supports Windows 95/98/NT 4.0 and Windows 2000. It defragments all system files including the NTFS Master File Table. Pick and choose; you can either buy PerfectDisk NT retail, register the copy, and get a free upgrade to PerfectDisk 2000, or simply visit the Raxco site at <http://www.raxco.com> for product info, then take advantage of their special \$19.00 offer by visiting the URL <http://www.raxco.com/cug> for the download. No modem? Call 800-546-9728 and tell the inside sales representative that you are calling about the special code "BCDEAL" priced at \$19.00 + \$10.00 S&H(US/Canada). (Downloading saves S&H!) One caveat, the URL created just for my readers to order will not be in service until September 1, 1999, and ends October 31, 1999. Snail mail address is Raxco Software, Inc., 6 Montgomery Village Ave., Suite 500, Gaithersburg, MD 20879. (Fax) 301-519-7711.

That's it for my September column. Meet me here again next month to discuss deals. I'm working on a couple of very interesting ones. This column is written to make user group members aware of special pricing and my comments should not be construed to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products. Bob

Ken's Korner

Ken's Korner Cupboard Offers Some Tips You May Find Useful

by Ken Fermoye

This column includes an assortment of tips, comments and answers to questions from readers that have been cluttering up Ken's Korner for some time...

Phone Combo Relieves Pain in the Neck

How many times have you tried to juggle a phone receiver and follow instructions from a support technician using your keyboard and mouse? Tough, isn't it? I don't do it anymore; instead, I use a headset plugged into a cordless phone. When I went shopping for a new cordless last fall I found a remanufactured Uniden 900MHz model on sale for half the price of a new

one. Seeing that it had a headset jack, I snapped it up.

(Note: I don't hesitate to buy remanufactured hardware IF the refurbishing was done by the original manufacturer or its authorized supplier and IF it includes a reasonable warranty. I've had good luck with several pieces of remanufactured equipment over the years.)

I also got a Panasonic headset (about \$25). The combination was one of the best buys I've made in years. I use it a lot for taking notes during phone interviews, conference calls and just plain chatting. Where it really shines, however, is when calling tech support numbers. It eliminates pinning the phone receiver against your shoulder and neck during long "on hold" periods and leaves both hands free for typing and mouse use as you follow a technician's instructions. Using the headset relieves me of a chronic pain in the neck (mine was damaged by a falling tree limb).

Any phone with a headset jack will work, but the cordless/headset combo lets me walk around and talk with the phone tucked in a shirt pocket.

Love that KVM Switch!

Another favorite is my KVM (keyboard, video, mouse) switch. I wrote about this in an earlier article (if you haven't seen it, ask your editor to print it), but I grow fonder of it every day. The ability to control two or more computers (my workstation and our network server, in this case) from a single keyboard, monitor and mouse is terrific: convenient, saves space, is utterly reliable. I'm trying out several other types of switches that many of you may find helpful. Watch for an article soon.

Brass Thumbscrews

The least expensive, but probably the most convenient, items I use in

maintaining our office computers are brass thumbscrews that replace the normal screws used to attach case covers. They make quick work of removing and replacing the "lids" on our four computers. The thumbscrews have the same diameter and pitch as the hex-head screws they replace, of course, but you don't need a nut driver or Philips-head screwdriver to remove and replace them.

One of our Tugnet stalwarts, Bruce Doshier, found the thumbscrews at a computer show (aka "swap meet") and bought several hundred. They were packaged in sets of six and sold to members for \$2 per package (a slight profit that went into the group's coffers). Bruce reports that you could probably get similar thumbscrews at local stores or websites that specialize in electronic components, if they don't show up a computer shows in your area.

Browser Tip

Have you tried using two browsers, one for fast Internet searching and the other for general web surfing?

I have an older version of Netscape with graphics disabled that I use when I use search engines and to do research. This allows me to do quick checks of sites to see if they offer information I want. If I do want to view a graphic on any given page, all I need do is click on its icon.

(Check your browser's manual or "Help" menu for instructions on how to disable graphics.)

I use Internet Explorer 4.x for more normal, leisurely web browsing and when I want to explore a site thoroughly.

The only drawback is the extra hard drive space that having two browsers installed consumes, but with hard drives so cheap now this isn't the limiting

factor that it once was.

Put Some Light on the Subject

This one is really off the wall and makes you look like a weirdo, but it makes computer maintenance a lot easier for me. Like many of us who have reached "senior citizen" status, my eyes aren't what they used to be, especially since macular degeneration destroyed central focussing ability in my left eye 12 years ago. I need a lot of light on the subject when I work on a project, otherwise I have difficulty seeing the slots in screws, inserting interface cards, etc.

I've tried various types of flashlights and work lamps, but they all require three hands or have other failings.

My latest solution to the problem combines a small clip-on flashlight and a baseball cap. I clip the flashlight to the bill of the cap, so I can shine it directly on an area where I'm working. Even better is a clip-on flashlight I found recently that has a flexible extension. You can bend it to point precisely when you need the light, and the extension puts it closer to your work area.

Like I said, it looks weird, but it works. (What really shook up my wife recently was seeing me wearing both the cap-and-light combination and the phone headset! Her reaction: "It's the creature from outer space!")

Copyright 1999 by Ken Fermoye, Fermoye Publications. Ken has written some 2,500 articles for publications ranging from Playboy and Popular Science to MacWeek, Microtimes & PC Laptop. Ken's Korner, a syndicated monthly column, is available free to User Groups. For information or permission to reprint this article, contact kfermoye@earthlink.net.

News Bytes From Ken's Korner

**Compiled & edited
by Ken Fermoye**

Intel Plans New Chip Debuts

Intel promises a busy late summer and early fall. At this writing, the chip maker plans to officially announce the launch date and pricing details for its eight-way Xeon processor for servers on Aug. 23; mobile Celeron processors on Sept. 15; and a new chipset for Pentium III, which will support 133-MHz frontside bus speeds and higher speed memory on Sept. 27. Intel previously announced (On Aug. 2) 600-MHz version of the Pentium III and a 500-MHz version of its desktop Celeron chip.

This will be of more interest to corporate power users than most grassroots users, due to high initial prices. Typically, however, debut of new Intel chips means price reductions on "older" CPUs. Maybe now I'll upgrade our 200- and 300-MHz computers to 400MHz, complete with new motherboard and chipsets.

Corel Offers Some Toll-Free Support

Corel recently introduced a toll-free number for its Fax on Demand and IVAN (Interactive Voice Answering Network) services. Previously, customers all North America customers had to call Ottawa to access these services, and

each service had its own telephone number. This meant high toll bills, causing many users to be unhappy campers.

Now, both services can be reached toll-free at 1-877-42-COREL. Fax on Demand allows customers to call the toll-free line and request a document to assist in answering their technical questions. Customers can review an index of available documents and choose, by number, the document they wish to receive by fax. IVAN allows customers to select the product they want and hear information on topics such as Common Issues and Tips & Tricks.

"We wanted to make this type of information as accessible to our customers as possible," said Jeffery Bennett, director of technical services at Corel. "Customers can also access free support from the Support section of the Corel Website." Customer can go to www.corel.com/support/index.htm, for online access to technical documents and post free messages in one of the Corel Newsgroups, to get technical responses, when possible, from Corel's C_Tech volunteers. C_Tech volunteers are knowledgeable Corel software users who volunteer their time to provide free on-line technical support to other Corel users.

Okay, it's not like being able to talk, toll-free, with a real live techie, but it's a step in the right direction. And I can testify personally that the Website support can be tremendously helpful. Some of these C-Tech volunteers are as knowledgeable as many salaried techies.

Patterns Changing in Removable Media Drives

The removable-media disk drive picture is changing. This category includes CD-ROM and DVD-ROM drives, CD/DVD writable drives, other read/write optical disk drive formats, rigid disk cartridge drives, card format rigid disk drives, high capacity floppy drives and low capacity standard floppy drives.

New types and technologies that enable users to remove data from systems for safe storage or sharing with others are supplanting older ones. A Disk/Trends, Inc. Report covering 61 manufacturers notes that 1999 worldwide sales revenues of such drives will top \$10 billion

The sales outlook for the nine disk drive product groups included in the report is a mixed bag. DVD-ROM drives are projected to pass up CD-ROM drives in shipments within two years, excellent growth is forecast for writable CD/DVD drive formats, miniaturized hard disk drive cards will develop entirely new markets, shipments of standard 1.44 megabyte floppy drives will peak within two years, and high capacity floppy drives will continue a strong growth pattern.

Rapidly declining prices and performance improvements for DVD-ROM drives will make drive customers the big winners in this product transition, as DVD-ROM drives go through the same rapid product cycles of speed improvements and price declines that have characterized the CD-ROM market in recent years.

Falling prices and improved availability of CD-RW drives have made this format the leading growth product among all types of writable optical disk drives, at least for a few years. However, by 2002 significant growth in drive shipments is also expected for DVD rewritable formats and for new high capacity rewritable drives using new technologies.

Don't count out the lowly 1.44-megabyte floppy drive just yet. It is adequate for typical word processing applications and price is now low. Shipments

should peak in 2001, then start a slow decline.

DSL Growing as Broadband Alternative. Covad Communications, a leading broadband access provider, recently reported its 20,000th DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) installation, and Earthlink began a pilot DSL project that it reportedly will expand nationwide.

Covad now claims to have the more installed lines than any other national provider. The 20,000th milestone represents a growth rate of 133 percent over the end of March 1999 and 413 percent growth from the end of 1998

DSL offers high-speed, always-connected, simultaneous multi-user access to the Internet over existing copper telephone lines, which proponents say will make it a major player in the broadband arena. Myself, I can hardly wait for a DSL installation in Ken's Korner, coming soon as part of the Earthlink pilot project. The cost: Only \$6 to \$9 more per month more than our current ISP/phone bill because we can get rid of our second phone line, which has been a dedicated dial-up modem line. Stay tuned for updates.

Science, Space Fans Get Online Community

If you are a science and space enthusiast, you now have an online community to call your own. Cosmiverse, <http://www.cosmiverse.com> the Internet portal devoted to science, space, is a one-stop location on the Web where visitors can find a variety of services. Membership is free and entitles users to the following free services: e-mail address; search engine; auction house; daily planner/calendar; address book; stock quotes; news and local weather; web hosting space; file and data storage; chat rooms, and message boards. It also includes a game room with chess, backgammon, and science fiction games where players can play against other people on the web.

Ken's Korner

'Free' Computers May Not Really Be Free in Long Run

By Ken Fermoyale

A link from the Cosmiverse site connects members to one of the most interesting and innovative space projects on the web. At Cosmic Voyage 2000, (www.cosmicvoyage2000.com), visitors can read about and even participate in the first-ever private space-exploration mission. The Near Earth Asteroid Project (NEAP), a mission organized by SpaceDev Inc., of San Diego, is intended to be the first in a long series of profitable commercial deep space missions to be conducted by SpaceDev Inc. NEAP is currently scheduled to launch at the turn of the new millennium.

Does all this light your jets? If so, prepare for liftoff!

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Which adage do you believe? "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth" or "There is no such thing as a free lunch." When it comes to taking advantage of many of those "free" computer offers being hyped recently, you'd best consider the latter one.

First came the giveaway offers from Free-PC and clones. They promise a free computer to people who are willing to watch continuous ads. The deals include all sort of restrictions on your Internet activity and require that you agree to answer questionnaires and otherwise give up aspects of your personal privacy.

So, in a sense, you do pay a price for the "free" computer. You lose a great deal of privacy and have restricted Internet access. Anyone with the slightest trace of paranoia won't be comfortable with these deals.

Then came free computers from Internet Service Providers (ISPs) like Gobi and InterSquid. They give you a "free" computer in return for a long-term (30 to 36 months) contract for Internet access service at higher-than-normal rates of \$26 to \$30 per month. These rates will really seem excessive in a few years for reasons explained below.

Next we got a spate of partnerships between companies like eMachines, Compaq, large electronic retailers and various ISPs or online services such as CompuServe and Prodigy (which are not true ISPs).

Most of the latter offers don't give you a free computer after all. Many are like the one Circuit City and Fry's chains have been promoting in partnership with CompuServe. Staples has a similar tie-in with MSN, Microsoft Network. Mac fans also are being wooed with offers of "free" iMacs; more on that later. They offer rebates, usually \$400.

The Fry's deal is typical. It includes a \$400 rebate on a \$499 "eMachines/Compaq" computer with 366 Cyrix MII MMX-enhanced

processor, 64MB of SD RAM, 4.3GB Ultra DMA hard drive, 56Kbps modem, but no monitor. It's decent, low-end, entry-level home computer. You pay \$499 up front and wait for the \$400 rebate "within 45 days of credit approval...from eMachines/Compaq/CompuServe Internet Service."

Ah, but the cost doesn't stop there. Part of the deal is that you must sign a "contract commitment to a 3-year/36-month subscription for CompuServe 2000 Internet Service at a monthly rate of \$21.95." And therein lies the rub. (You didn't really think that Steve Case, honcho of AOL, which owns CompuServe, would really play Santa Claus, did you? Not blooming likely!)

That monthly cost is 10-20% over the going rates (currently running from \$17.95 to \$19.95) The kicker is that \$21.95 may be double, even quadruple, what industry analysts and other experts project Internet access to cost in the not-too-distant future! Some predict monthly access fees may go as low as \$5 within a few years, as reported in the Los Angeles Times during July. Why? There are several reasons.

1. Telephone and Internet gurus report that competitive effects of the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996 are finally beginning to appear. We have already seen long-distance rates drop substantially, to as low as 8 cents per minute in some cases. This ultimately means lower costs for Internet Service Providers.

2. Broadband technologies that offer fast Internet access are beginning to show significant growth. More users will turn to DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) and cable access, as they become available. DSL and cable not only offer fast access, the "always-connected" benefit and simultaneous multi-user capability, but they can be very competitive in cost compared with current dial-up access rates. This is especially true for users who have a second phone line, dedicated to modem use, because that line can be dropped if you get DSL or cable.

So if you sign a 3-year contract for Internet access at \$20 or \$22 per month and access rates drop to \$10 or \$12 in 12 or 14 months, your "free"

computer won't be so free after all. And don't think you can terminate your service contract early to take advantage of lower rates. Read the fine print. The CompuServe contract "requires repayment of \$400 rebate plus a \$50 cancellation fee" for early termination.

As Bank of America Securities analyst Kurtis King commented in a L.A. Times Business There's nothing free about the offers."

How about the FreeMac deal? All details weren't clear at this writing, but it appears that the offers requires a 3-year commitment to Internet access with Earthlink at \$19.95/month and submission of a demographic profile. The latter would be used to target advertisements to specific users.

FreeMac plans to distribute 10,000 free machines in October. I have no information yet on what penalty would be invoked if you try to terminate the contract with Earthlink before 36 month have elapsed.

(Author's Note: Just as I was finishing this article I received an offer of Internet access through MSN, the Microsoft Network, at \$11.99 per month. The deal is available through Costco, a large membership retailer, and requires a 3-month prepayment (\$35.97) but no long-term contract. Take this as an omen of things to come!)

SOFTWARE REVIEWS

L&H Voice Xpress Professional Version 4.0

Reviewed by: Sylvia Rippel

L & H Voice Xpress Professional, Version 4.0

52 Third Avenue

Burlington, MA 01803

800 380 1234 (phone)

781-203-0986 (fax)

<http://www.lhsl.com>

At a glance rating: **1/2

Price: \$149.99

System requirements: Windows 95/98 or Windows NT 4, Creative Lab Sound Blaster 16 compatible or sound board supporting 16-bit 22KHz recording (no sound board needed if used with USB headset), CD-ROM drive for installation, speakers (for listening to Talking Text and Quick Tour), Noise-canceling headset microphone (included), processor performance equivalent to Intel Pentium II, 48 MB RAM for Windows, 95, Windows 98

(96 MB recommended), 64 MB Ram for Windows NT 4.0 (with service pack 3 installed, 128 MB recommended), 160 MB free disk space +50 MB for each speaker profile.

Pros: Relatively short, straightforward installation. Intuitive user interface. Mode free dictation, command, and the spelling functions. Automatic integration with various desktop, internet, Office 2000/97 applications.

Cons: To perform adequately, should have significantly more than the stated system requirements. Substantial drain of system resources. Not always accurate. At times very sloooow .

Speech recognition software represents a long-standing dream of many computer users. The dream is that you simply speak your thoughts, as quickly as you care to, with little regard for the mechanics of spelling or the particular requirements of the word processor you happen to be using, and, magically, your thoughts appear on the screen, flawlessly typed without your having to move a finger (literally). The dream continues: not only are your words recognized, but also your commands, will be understood in the variety of ways you may express them (thanks to NLT, the natural language interface), and carried out without a moments hesitation. Presto, your perfectly formatted document exits the printer, programs open and close at your whisper, web surfing is a breeze, productivity soars. However, your dream, regrettably, is just that-a dream. All too soon what the unwary weary user soon discovers is a nightmare instead.

In the nightmare, your speech recognition product presents a series of mismatches resulting in a hopeless jumble of words-startlingly off: "Korean"

for "period," for example. To your dismay, the wild guesses made by the program not infrequently create a random flow of words so disjointed as to break any chain of thought in your composition process. Not only are your words and phrases misinterpreted, but also navigation commands you've never spoken are executed, and program menus pop up uncalled for, often several at a time, with input screens for file save specifications or print permissions. All too soon your document is lost, programs fail, the web is unreachable, productivity is non-existent, the system halts. The nightmare is complete.

Well, neither the dream nor the nightmare represents the reality of today's speech recognition products in general and L & H Voice Xpress 4.0 in particular. Voice Xpress installs easily, only requires minutes to get started (XpressStart) combined with progressive adaptation through use of the product (XpressTrain Technology).

An impressive feature of the program is its use of global NLT (natural language technology) commands for virtually any Windows application. To navigate, or move around you document, you can say "down three lines" or "go to the end of the previous line," or "end of document;" to format: "bold that;" to edit: "cut this word;" "copy the next two words." Continuous speech technology allows dictation to be in conversational manner rather than a word-pause-word mode. The program includes a Command Browser and Recognition Advisor, customizable vocabulary to help with the dictation process. To customize the program, personal commands (keystroke macros) can be created for your particular needs. Plug-in subject vocabularies on business, finance, and technology are included with Voice Xpress Pro, as is a word processing program similar to WordPad.

In addition, the program comes with its own suite of desktop accessories, called Talking Tools, designed for use by voice: Voice Web Finder, VoiceScheduler, VoiceCalculator and VoiceClock. Voice WebFinder gives users a NLT interface for finding information on the web. You can ask a natural language question ("What are some good restaurants in San Francisco?") and the proprietary meta-search tool will find the answer. VoiceClock can be asked the time anywhere in the world. Also included is Xpress Recorder, which lets you record, listen to, and edit wav files in any Windows environment, and improved mobile dictation support, so that you can dictate into devices such as Sony, Olympus or Norcom handheld recorders and transcribe your recorded speech into text. The TalkingText feature lets you hear your documents or email read out loud to you.

All in all, the current version of Voice Xpress achieves a significant gain over previous speech recognition software I've tried. True, all the programs I have seen, including this one, understate the time required for enrollment or training the program for a particular speaker, underestimate the system resources required for optimal functioning, and overstate the ease of verbal interaction with your applications. In addition, there are subjective factors such as your personal ability to handle the idiosyncrasies of the program. Frequently, the time spent on correcting the supposedly only 2% misrecognitions (more a dream than a reality) can make good typists flex their fingers. Still, if you're looking for a speech input program and, importantly, if you have the appropriate resources (machine and otherwise), you may want to consider this program. It may not be the absolute fulfillment of the long-standing dream, but it's getting closer.

QUICKEYS for Windows 1.0

Reviewed by Carol Lee

CE Software, Inc.
P.O. Box 65580
West Des Moines, IA 50265
(800) 523-7638
www.quickeys.com or www.cesoft.com

At A Glance Rating: **

Price: \$45

System Requirements: IBM PC or compatible with 486DX or higher processor (Pentium 90 or greater strongly recommended), Windows 95/98 or Windows NT 4.0 or greater, 16 MB minimum RAM (32 MB RAM recommended), CD-ROM drive, 8 MB of hard disk space, VGA (SVGA recommended), certain features are enhanced by an Internet connection.

Pros: Useful utility in quickly accessing programs.

Cons: Macro recording function is frustrating to use.

QuicKeys for Windows is software that creates custom keyboard actions or macros, menu commands, and toolbars so that routine computer tasks can be performed with a single mouse click, keystroke, or keystroke combination.

Installation of the product required that I removed everything from memory before it would install. This is not explained in the installation instructions, but

what I learned through trial-and-error. The QuickStart Wizard, which is displayed by default the first time QuicKeys launches, assisted me in setting up "My Actions" by prompting me to select from a list of executable files. The QuickStart Wizard automatically creates a dockable toolbar that appears by default at the top of the screen. With this toolbar, I can click on its buttons or use the default hot keys to access the "Actions" I created. Using the QuicKeys Editor, I could also create new hot keys and edit existing hot keys. QuicKeys toolbars are customizable using the QuicKeys Editor. I could specify what each toolbar button does, which icon is used, and when and where the toolbars are displayed. The only problem I discovered was that I could accidentally add the same "Actions" over and over again because the same list of executable files are offered every time I selected to add "Actions" to the toolbar. In addition, any new programs that are installed after QuicKeys would not be recognized and offered as selectable "Actions". Manual searching for the executable file would be required to recognize new "Actions". Also, shortcuts and .pif files would not work on the toolbar. Only executable files would be recognized and work on the toolbar.

QuicKeys has a macro recording function for automating lengthy or complex tasks. Unfortunately, this macro recording function was so frustrating that it was essentially useless. It should be noted that the macro recording function recommends the use of keystrokes to perform tasks rather than using the mouse. I tried to record the steps to downloading financial information from the Internet into my Quicken for Windows program. The steps including dialing up my internet account, opening my Quicken program, entering the password into my Quicken account, answering yes and entering another password to downloading internet data, exiting the Quicken program, and logging off from my internet account. It was definitely a challenge to perform all these task just using a keyboard. In any event, when I attempted to

playback the macro, it did not succeed in duplicating the tasks I performed. It recorded waits that stopped the sequence of steps from proceeding. Using the Sequence Editor, I tried to edit the sequences so that the macro would work. Finally, after about 2 hours of struggle, I gave up and ended up manually entering the sequence of steps over again. However, this manual entering of sequences did not immediately succeed. It took another hour of trial-and-error editing to finally get it to work just once. However, even the "perfected" macro does not work consistently. I have not been able to get it to work to completion successfully after that first time. At the QuicKey's web site, I discovered that QuicKeys cannot record or playback macros in Windows 98 or on any machine with Internet Explorer 4.0 with the Shell Update installed. Because I operate with Windows 98, I suspect that may be part of this inconsistent behavior. So far, there is no solution to this compatibility issue. Consequently, I am dissatisfied with the macro recording function. Using this feature, I have learned to appreciate the ease of Microsoft Word's macro recording function. Novice users of macros and users of Windows 98 will have difficulty with this feature.

In addition, to user-defined actions, QuicKeys also provide pre-programmed actions on its toolbar(s) such as Open, Change Folder, File Handler, and Recent Files. In addition, there are tools available for addition, such as printer selection, monitor and volume adjustments, CD/DVD player controls, network drives, and Internet access. This program is a useful utility for quickly accessing programs and other routine tasks, as long as you are willing to spend the time to customize it and do not intend to use macros feature.

Lost & Found V1.0

Reviewed by Minee Yu

Lost & Found V1.0
PowerQuest Corporation
P.O. Box 1911
Orem, Utah 84059-1911
(801) 437-8900
(801) 226-8941 Fax
<http://www.powerquest.com>

Minee Yu-Stern (650-572-1100) is currently working in San Mateo. She does administrative duties for a bank, but would rather work on her sculpture. Minee has held the position of Membership Registrar of the SFpcUG.

Reputation of Company:

PowerQuest products include ServerMagic, DriveCopy, Drive Image, EasyRestore and PartitionMagic.

At a Glance: ***

Price: List Price: \$69.95

System Requirements:

Intel x86 compatible processor, IDE, EIDE or SCSI controllers, 8MB RAM, FAT16 or FAT32 File System, 3.5-inch diskette drive. Drive Access: LBA (Logical Block Address) and/or CHS (Cylinder-Head-Sector). DOS 5.0 or later recommended.

Pros: Easy to use features. Does not need to be installed prior to data loss.

Cons: Will only run on one system. If you need to recover a disk from another system, you must purchase another copy of the program (consider purchasing PowerQuest's Search & Rescue).

Body of Review:

PowerQuest Corporation acquired the assets of Texas-based highpoint Technologies on November 2, 1998. Highpoint developed the first in a new generation of utilities and tools for the PC.

Unlike traditional recovery programs, Lost & Found does not need to be installed prior to the loss of data. Lost & Found can be run from a floppy disk, and the data can be recovered.

Some of the key features are as follows:

Locate any file, anywhere as long as it has not been overwritten. Perform diagnostic checks on the health of the disk media to prevent future disk failure and data loss. Preserves long filenames when restoring directories or files. Works on all IDE, EIDE and SCSI disk devices, as well as fixed, removable and floppy drives. Recover data from FAT16 and FAT32 partitions.

To begin using Lost & Found: Boot your computer in DOS mode. Insert Disk 1 into Drive A. Make sure the Los & Found disk is "write-enabled." At the A:\ prompt, type LF and press Enter. All the drives attached to the system will be displayed, and you will indicate which drive the lost data is contained on. You will then select the destination where the recovered files will be placed. The process of data recovery can now begin.

From the Main Activity menu, select **Executing Disk Analysis**. You will then select a **Directory List Form** from the menu provided and press **Enter**. You will now select the directory and files you want to recover. The **Spacebar** will select single files, or the **F2** and **F3** keys will select/deselect all directories/files. Click **ESC** to return to the Main Activity menu and select **Start Recovery**. The progress and status are displayed to keep you informed. When recovery is finished, you will be returned to the Main Activity menu. You can choose to exit or **Quit** the system.

I don't need to remind everyone how important it is to backup your data, but you may find yourself in a situation where Lost & Found may be the only hope in restoring damaged or corrupted data. Let me say it one more time backup, backup, backup.

GoldMine 4.0 Standard Edition

Reviewed by Jerry M. Stern
(415) 243-8400 ext. 225 Days
(650) 572-1100 Eves.

Jerry M. Stern (650-572-1100) was (until 12/96) a Controller/Treasurer/Network Administrator for a General Contractor in San Carlos, CA. He is currently employed by a structural engineering firm in downtown San Francisco. Jerry has been a member of the SFpcUG since August, 1986 and has held positions of Treasurer, Vice-President and President of the SFpcUG. He currently resides in San Mateo, California.

GoldMine 4.0 Standard Edition
GoldMine Software Corporation
17383 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 301
Pacific Palisades, California 90272
(310) 454-6800
(310) 454-4848 Fax
<http://www.goldminesw.com>

Reputation of Company:

Awarded PC Magazine's "Editors' Choice" (Aug. 1993, Aug. 1995, Apr. 1996 and Aug. 1997)

At a Glance: *** ½

Price:

List Price \$295.00

Street Price \$199.00

System Requirements:

Requires 486SX or higher IBM PC compatible computer with 25MB of free hard drive space, 16MB RAM and Windows 95 or NT 4.0. On a network, GoldMine requires a DOS 3.1 File and Record-Locking Compatible Network including Novell, LANtastic and Banyan. Designed for use on both standalone and networked Windows 95/NT operating systems. Allows you to re-host data to a broad range of databases, such as Microsoft SQL, Oracle and Sybase SQL.

Pros: Easy installation. Does what a contact manager is supposed to do. Plenty of features, including telemarketing scripts, and various kinds of sales analysis (leads, quotas, forecasts).

Cons: Calendar not as fluid as schedule-oriented products. Doesn't display project-oriented tasks that take place over one day. Not backward compatible with any prior version of GoldMine or GoldSync.

Body of Review:

GoldMine Software Corporation was founded in 1989. They developed a unique niche through workgroup contact management for the enterprise. GoldMine has the basic contact management tools such as day/time planning, mail/FAX merge, document management, and reporting. It also offers opportunity management, sales forecasting and analysis, telemarketing scripts, workflow automation and Internet capabilities including Web lead capture and e-mail messaging. GoldMine was developed for the functional areas of sales, marketing and customer service. It is a powerful application for real estate agents, stockbrokers, insurance agencies, technical support staff and more. Users in sales can use this program to better understand and profile their accounts. One can effectively track multiple projects and contacts associated with any given opportunity.

GoldMine offers Internet POP3 Messaging, as well as native support of Microsoft Exchange 5.0. The E-mail Center handles multiple e-mail accounts. Users enjoy a combined view of all their e-mail in the Inbox, Outbox, and "filed" and "saved" folders organized by month. Messages can be drag-and-dropped between unlimited user-defined folders and sub-folders for quick and easy e-mail retrieval, storage and organization.

Remote synchronization tracks and manages all additions, changes and deletions for every data file, including lookups, field definitions and user lists. Each remote user is defined as a Site, and a "profile" of all the options specific to that site is kept track of by the Synchronization Manager. Numerous methods of connecting users include Modem, Internet, WAN/RAS, Internet E-mail and Shared Directory Connection.

In the box, GoldMine also provides a Zip Code Database. The data is divided into 57 zones (Entire USA, Eastern Zone, Central Zone, Mountain Zone, and Pacific Zone). For those individuals wanting enhancements, a booklet is provided listing Authorized Trainers, Platinum Solutions Partners, and Third party Add-Ons, all of which is fairly extensive.

GoldMine 4.0 offers over 50 standard sales and marketing letters. Forms for a number of MS Word and Excel templates are also provided to get new users quickly up and running.

Your purchase of GoldMine includes a number of complementary incidents to get you up and running. Single-user systems offer three free technical calls for support, five-user systems receive five calls, and 10-user and greater systems receive seven free calls. Technical support is available Monday through Thursday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, and on Friday from 8:00 am to 4:15 pm (Pacific Time). They can be reached at (310) 459-1222. Technical Support is also available by facsimile at (310) 459-8222.

I should mention that I had to install the program twice. The problem I ran into was my forgetting to write down my User Name and Password. The only way I could access the software was to literally start over. Overall, the program is easy to install and use, right out of the box.

BOOK REVIEWS

MICROSOFT OFFICE 2000 FOR WINDOWS VISUAL QUICKSTART GUIDE

Reviewed by: Carol Lee

Peachpit Press
1249 Eighth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
(800) 283-9444
www.peachpit.com

Carol Lee (415-749-4689) is a staff engineer for a local regulatory agency in San Francisco. Her hobbies include tennis, investing, and playing with her computer. She looks forward to other reviewing opportunities (in exchange for free software and hardware).

At A Glance Rating: **

Price: \$19.99

System Requirements: None - This is a book.

Pros: Easy-to-read entry-level guide to Office 2000.

Cons: Too rudimentary for experienced or advanced Office 2000 users.

The Visual Quickstart Guide to Microsoft Office 2000 is intended for beginning and intermediate users of the software. It is intended to be used as a quick reference book. All explanations in the book are short and concise and provide a bare minimum of information on each of the programs within Office 2000. At the beginners level, this book succeeds in being an easy and quick reference guide. However, on an intermediate and advanced level, this book would fail miserably. For example, in Word 2000, the book only touches the surface on topics such as entering and editing text, formatting text and pages, creating tables, special word techniques, and the web. There are no detailed explanations for more advanced features, such as creating macros or templates. Similarly for the other programs of Office 2000, the book provides short explanations of the various features but does not go any further than those short explanations.

The usefulness of the book is questionable. It does provide a quick study of Office 2000 for novice users. However, once these novice users become more experienced users, they may find the book lacking and want a more advanced book for assistance in performing more complex tasks within Office 2000. As long as the user only wants an easy-to-read entry-level guide to Office 2000, then this book will indeed deliver. However, if they want something more, then I suggest they look elsewhere.

Maximizing Windows 98 by Lenny Bailes

Reviewed by Yves Barbero

Osborne McGraw-Hill, 1999, 898 pages, \$34.99.

At A Glance Rating: *****

Yves Barbero is a computer consultant specializing in the training of staff and the setting up of computers and networks for small businesses, non-profits and individuals.

415-285-4358

<http://www.yvesbarbero.com>

ybarbero@yvesbarbero.com

I'm happy to say that I knew about half of what is in "Maximizing Windows 98" before I even cracked it open. It says a lot about what I picked up both formally and informally over the years. At the risk of patting myself on the back, I think I know a great deal. This is due to my setting up a half a dozen computers a month for clients and tuning them up as their non-Microsoft applications somehow freeze Windows (incompetence on the part of the publishers) or Windows detects a non-Microsoft product and sabotages it (for those who believe in conspiracies on the part of the software giant).

But Lenny Bailes's book, it should come as no surprise, has again humbled me into admitting I don't know the half of it. It is thorough and complete, well written and to the point. Like his earlier work, "Optimizing Windows 95" (Lenny Bailes et al, Osborne, 1996, 636 pages, \$29.95), it is an education. I

confess that I learned a substantial portion about the original Windows 95, of which Windows 98 should be properly called "Windows 95, revision four," by reading this earlier work. It is well-thumbed. And I'm grateful to Bailes.

This is a book for those who don't want to be frustrated every time a new problem arises. Microsoft would have the average user believe that Windows 98 is problem-free. For most people, especially home users, it largely is. But for small business users, it can be problematical, especially if they need to use complex non-Microsoft applications. A large business may have a management information specialist (MIS) in-house, but the small business user has to often struggle to keep up with the changes. Having this book on the shelf can be a big help.

Other users who can make good use of this book are game players. Games, although they have improved greatly in their design, have a way of not working from time to time. Most use heavy graphics and huge chunks of memory. They often require cutting-edge video cards which require some knowledge of the Windows 98 interface to install properly. Bailes covers hardware installation problems, especially plug-and-play devices, in detail.

And, of course, there are the everyday frustrations that plague everyone. One of those is the shutdown problem I began seeing with Windows 98 more often than it should happen. Often, you wait forever for the damn thing to close properly. Using the information found on pages 812 to 813, I was able to resolve it for a client who had been troubled with it for months. Another problem is running some old DOS applications needed by some of my accounting clients who have to keep IRS-type programs for seven years. I had, since I know DOS thoroughly, already solved most of them, but I might have saved a lot of time had the information on page 813 been available to me earlier.

I also used the book to install Windows 98 systems files on my large hard disk

so I don't have to load the CD every time some program calls for it (pp. 813-814). The troubleshooting section is worth the price of the book all by itself. The book often sits in the trunk of my car if I perceive that I'll be facing a particularly troubling problem at a client's office.

With the price of networking now easily affordable, many people are networking their household computers (you can do two computers for less than a hundred dollars worth of hardware). The book will guide you through the Byzantine concepts needed. Yes, you might have to read it twice, but the information is there (pp. 699-736), and written in a clean, crisp style. You will also see how not to get in trouble using Internet protocols which often get mixed up with the local networking (this is a common problem since both use the same language -- both are networks).

Networking a couple of your home computers will make you smarter about modern operating systems. This book gives you a clear guide.

If you presently have an older version of Windows, make a point of reading Chapter Two before upgrading. It will save you a lot of grief. Many people advise reformatting the hard disk and doing a clean installation, but I disagree. First of all, an "upgrade" version of Windows 98 is cheaper. Secondly, it is a lot less time-consuming to "upgrade," even given the hour you'll spend reading the relevant pages. Proper preparation will prevent you from carrying problem baggage from your old operating system, and make it all go much smoother.

The Internet is useful (if somewhat over-hyped). E-mail has become essential. This is all covered in this book. Bailes doesn't find much difference between Internet Explorer and Netscape as web browsers. I agree although I favor Netscape for a variety of reasons including the fact that I try to avoid Microsoft products whenever possible. That may be emotional, but it is also true that Netscape is somewhat more configurable. I have both on my machine (which Bailes recommends for everyone) because I write web pages and need

to know how they look in both browsers. He also points out that to get Windows 98 "upgrades," you need IE. This is true, and is just one of the ways Microsoft tries to dominate the market. But with hard disks being as cheap as they are, a \$130-150 eight gigabyte hard disk can hold both easily.

Do you need to read the entire book? It depends on your experience. Someone like me tends to bounce back and forth, first looking to see if it has solutions to outstanding problems (it did for many, but not all), then to bolster knowledge in areas that I felt weak in (such as telecommunications). For the newbie, start at the beginning by all means. If you bought your computer with Windows 98 already installed, you should still read the installation chapter just for background. If you're self-taught as I am, you'll discover that you missed a lot because you didn't run into certain problems. Nothing you learn can hurt.

Page 379-380 contains a list of "What's new in Windows 98." This is well worth a look if you've been using Windows 95. Make a point of Installing Tweak UI (page 380). This will give some nice control of the Windows 98. Another useful section starts on page 608. It explains the Active Desktop and its uses. I don't like the Active Desktop so I removed it, but the section does explain what its uses are, and you may want it. Page 610 tells you how to get rid of it (or turn it on).

The "Channel Bar" can be removed. It is Bill Gates's billboard to push products he's paid to push. Since you pay around \$90 for the program, it has no business on your desktop. Page 611 tells you how to get rid of it.

If you own a car, even if you never work on it, it is a good idea to understand the general principles of its operation. You should know that you don't need to remove the transmission to change the oil or you'll be a sucker for some unscrupulous mechanic. Similarly, it's a good idea to understand the basic principles of your operating system so you can do your own basic configuration to avoid being the victim of Microsoft's marketing hype, and to

trim the sails so it becomes your tool for productivity and not someone's notion of what they are. Even someone of my experience cannot possibly read your every desire. Only you can do that. Reading this book will save you tons of money and time. For the newbie or the old-pro, this book is a very good investment.

OFFICE 97 ANNOYANCES

**by Woody Leonhard, Lee Hudspeth,
and T.J. Lee**

Reviewed by: Carol Lee

O'Reilly & Associates, Inc.
101 Morris Street
Sebastopol, CA 95472
www.oreilly.com

At A Glance Rating: ***

Price: \$24.95

System Requirements: None - This is a book.

Pros: Good instructional reading for customizing Office 97 for more efficient use.

Cons: Not a comprehensive Office 97 instruction manual.

Unlike the Visual Quickstart Guide to Microsoft Office 2000, Office 97 Annoyances offers detailed instructions for improving the use of Office 97 for the intermediate and advanced user of Office 97. The book assumes that you have a basic knowledge of Office 97, and provides a detailed look at "annoyances" of Office 97 and how to overcome them so that Office 97 can be used more efficiently. This book describes lesser-known customization features (such as programming using the Visual Basic for Applications macro language) and provides detail instruction of how to use those features to improve Office 97 functionality. It is not intended to be a comprehensive book on Office 97 but more an advanced book to touch upon those features that may be ignored in other beginners or even intermediate level books, such as the Visual Quickstart Guides. This book is recommended for experienced Office 97 users who want to tweak Office 97 features for efficient use.

INTERESTING WEB SITES by Jack Ledger

<http://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/index.html?year=&country=27>

Calendar set for Canada - can be set for any country.

<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/>

World clock - see the current time in cities all over the world.

<http://www.m-w.com/>

Webster dictionary

<http://www.matisse.net/files/glossary.html>

Glossary of internet terms

<http://internet.epicurean.com/latest/exchange/calculator.index>

Food related

<http://www.xe.net/ucc/>

Currency converter

<http://www.usps.gov/nsc/>

US zip codes

http://www.canadapost.ca/CPC2/menu_01.html

Canada postal codes

<http://www.travlang.com/languages/>

Learn phrases in other languages

<http://www.uilondon.org/conv.htm>

Unit conversion calculators

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

CIA world fact book 1998

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Visit my webpages at:

<http://home.golden.net/~jledger>

<http://home.golden.net/~jledger/ireland.htm>

<http://home.golden.net/~jledger/year2000.htm>

SAN FRANCISCO PC USERS GROUP

STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 1999

As revised

The meeting was called to order by President Pierre Hahn at Round Table Pizza, Geary and 16th Avenue, San Francisco, CA at 1915 hours. Members present were David Caldwell, Butler Crittenden, Pierre Hahn, Dave Hart, Ron Feiertag, Yono Mork, Nancy Struck, and Dorothy Walker.

The May, 1999 minutes were reviewed and amended. A motion was made and passed to accept the minutes as amended.

The May, 1999 treasurer's report was submitted but due to scheduling conflicts was not reviewed.

The president reported he was resigning effective after the July, 1999 Steering Committee meeting.

Vice president, Ron Feiertag, reported the following:

Club participation in three local, San Francisco meetings which provided good publicity for the club. He incurred a \$31 expense in the meeting with the San Francisco Youth Empowerment Conference. On a different topic, Ron said the club could provide useful information on the Y2K problem if it provided links with the Y2K web page of the American Red Cross. Also, he said ViaGfix had approached him to conduct a research program with club members. He will follow up & provide additional information at the next

meeting.

Butler Crittenden on product review reported it is more difficult to get products for review.

Blue Notes committee reported a slight delay in getting *Blue Notes* out.

David Caldwell reports the club is now scheduled through November for the 33 Gough Street general meeting site; however, we need to find a different site for December because that 3rd Tuesday is not available.

On new business, Pierre Hahn reported Blue Notes now can be published electronically.

A motion was made and passed unanimously to publish Blue Notes both electronically and hard copy in the second quarter and in the third quarter to basically publish Blue Notes electronically.

Volunteer Sandra Solomon helped by providing the Bob O'Donnell Radio Show with the time and location for the club's general meeting. Ron Feiertag will coordinate.

Ron said he has a list of popular and useful URLs which he has been distributing.

A motion was made and passed to have Dave Hart represent the club if he attends the SW Group meeting at San Diego.

The meeting was adjourned at 2020 hours.

Yono Mork, Secretary

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTE
TUESDAY, July 6, 1999
as revised

The meeting was called to order by President Pierre Hahn at Round Table Pizza, Geary and 16th Avenue, San Francisco, CA at 1910 hours.

Members present were: David Caldwell, Butler Crittenden, Pierre Hahn, Dave Hart, Ron Feiertag, Tom McLoughlin, Joseph Puig, Dorothy Walker and Eymard DeCastro.

[David C. was asked to be the Secretary pro tem.]

Minutes of June Meeting reviewed and approved with revisions.

Treasurer transmitted the Treasurers Report via T. McLoughlin. It was approved.

Ron F. arranged with the Red Cross to let us establish a link to their Y2K web page. The ViaGrafix proposal did not pan out. Ron was in contact with Bob O'Donnell and persuaded him to list our Users Group on his web site. He announced our addition to his web site on his June 19th radio show.

David C. reported that the 3rd Wednesday of December was available at 33 Gough Street for the Holiday Party and Meeting. It was agreed to have the Dec. meeting at this time and place.

Membership: Joseph Puig submitted a report on the membership. 17

memberships were just received. Dorothy Walker volunteered to handle the membership desk at the July Meeting.

Joseph Puig also reported on the Club's Internet Service. He was officially named the Club's WebMaster.

In view of the need for additional hard disk storage, it was agreed (8-0) that the Webmaster should be authorized to spend up to \$350.00 for a new hard disk and SCSI interface. Butler C. agreed to provide technical support in this regard. New DSL hookup is still being implemented.

Butler C. reported that there were more Product Reviews in the hands of members.

Tom McLoughlin reported on the publishing of Blue Notes electronically. The need for additional data storage is because an issue of Blue Notes takes a substantial amount of file space. David Hyman and Silvia Ripple are providing support.

Program Chair Darrell Struck has advised that Pacific Bell wishes to have a special meeting for the Group in September re their new DSL InterNet Services. This will be at their offices.

Pierre Hahn reported and submitted his resignation as President. He was given an ovation for over 2 years of dedicated service as President. Vice President Ron Feiertag then accepted the office of President.

The meeting was adjourned at 2015 hours.

David Caldwell, Secretary pro tem

SAN FRANCISCO PC USERS GROUP

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTE
Tuesday, August 4, 1999

The meeting was called to order by President Ron Feiertag at Round Table Pizza, Geary and 16th Avenue, San Francisco, CA at 1910 hours.

Members present were: David Caldwell, Ron Feiertag, Joseph Puig, Vic Saravia, Nancy Struck, Darrell Struck, Dorothy Walker and Stefan Klenze.

Minutes of July Meeting reviewed and approved with revisions.

Treasurer Nancy Struck submitted her Monthly Report which was approved. She emphasized the importance of the Holiday Party to the financial health of the Group. With the demands of her other work increasing, Nancy advised that at the end of October she would have to curtail her involvement with the Group. David Caldwell volunteered to be the Assistant Treasurer.

Vic Saravia was introduced and outlined his objectives for the Group. The President nominated him to fill the vacated office of Vice President, which was approved (7-0).

Bank Signature Card. The President and Treasurer were authorized to update the Group Bank Account at the Bank of America with the addition of the following officers authorized to sign checks:

Ron Feiertag	President
Vic Saravia	Vice President
Nancy Struck	Treasurer
David Caldwell	Assistant Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP: Written membership report submitted. Dorothy Walker is assisting at the Membership Desk at the General Meetings. Membership data

base need to be up-dated. Ron is working on this.

WEBMASTER: Joseph Puig reported progress on building the new computer with the large hard disk. The move of the network computers to the new location is on schedule.

BLUE NOTES: Discussion re staffing. Ron F. would like a Team to assist with production. Ron volunteered to proofread *Blue Notes* to assist with quality control.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE: Chair Darrell Struck discussed the Presenters for the next few meetings. Also, how to respond when the presenters make a request that the Group provide LCD panels, etc. It was agreed to rent an LCD panel for the August meeting should Symantec request it.

HOLIDAY PARTY: Ron has last years database; he will up-date it to Excel.

BUSINESS CARDS: the President was authorized to order Business Cards.

The meeting was adjourned at 2015 hours.

David Caldwell, Secretary pro tem

Tue., Sep. 7, 1999, 7PM

Steering Committee meeting

Upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza,
Geary Boulevard and 16th Avenue

Tue., Sep. 21, 1999

Bob O'Donnel on Personal Computer Secrets

Community College District Office Auditorium,
33 Gough Street, (a half-block south of Market Street)

Tue., Sep. 28, 1999, 7PM

Pacific Bell DSL

Special date and location. Pacific Bell DSL presentation at a new time and a new location for this meeting only: we begin promptly at 7:00 PM and the meeting will end at 9:00 PM. The location is 370 3rd Street (between Folsom and Harrison Streets), 1st Floor, in San Francisco, near the Montgomery Street BART Station.

SEPTEMBER 1999						
Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Tue., Oct. 5, 1999, 7PM

Steering Committee meeting

Upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza,
Geary Boulevard and 16th Avenue

Tue., Oct. 19, 1999

See End Page for details

Change of venue and time - Hyatt Regency,
5 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco
5PM

Microsoft presents Windows 2000 Technical Tips & Tricks

OCTOBER 1999						
Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Tue., Nov. 2, 1999, 7PM

Steering Committee meeting

Upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza,
Geary Boulevard and 16th Avenue

Tue., Nov. 16, 1999

Learn iT!

Will include many training courses as door prizes

Community College District Office Auditorium,
33 Gough Street, (a half-block south of Market Street)

NOVEMBER 1999						
Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Tue., Dec. 7, 1999, 7PM

Steering Committee meeting

Upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza,
Geary Boulevard and 16th Avenue

Wed., Dec. 15, 1999 Annual Holiday Party and Auction

Community College District Office Auditorium,
33 Gough Street, (a half-block south of Market Street)

DECEMBER 1999						
Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

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Tom Karnes 415-431-024

**San Francisco PC Users Group
Application/Renewal/Address Change**

Name: _____
(Please type or print legibly.)

Date: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: (____) _____

Work phone: (____) _____

City, State, Zip: _____

FAX phone: (____) _____

e-Mail Address: _____

Please check: Renewal member # _____ New Member

Check type of membership:

please send your check to:

- G** Individual \$40
- G** Family \$50
- G** Business \$75
- G** Outside US \$50

SF PC Users Group
Attn: Membership Director
3145 Geary Blvd, Box 284
San Francisco, CA 94118-3300

Please be patient it may take up to 5 weeks to enable the account

Amount enclosed: \$ _____ (Please do not mail cash.)

Windows 2000 Customer Satisfaction Tour

"Windows 2000 Technical Tips & Tricks"

WHO: Microsoft visits the San Francisco Personal Computer Users Group

WHEN: Tuesday October 19, 1999

WHERE: Hyatt Regency, 5 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco.
See the board in the hotel lobby to find out which Ballroom will be used for this event.

WHY: For an early look at this exciting new technology, for the insights, for the answers, and for the door prizes.

COST: Free.

Agenda:

5:00 PM Doors open.

5:15 PM User Group business

6:00 PM Microsoft presentation: "Windows 2000 Technical Tips & Tricks"

7:00 PM Questions & Answers, and Giveaways

Come find out the latest tips and tricks about Windows 2000 through product demonstrations, Q&A and informal discussion with the Windows 2000 Development Team. We'll show you how you can get the most out of Windows 2000 Professional and Server.

Everyone at this meeting is eligible for the raffle. Everyone who turns in a complete and legible evaluation form will receive a t-shirt and one or more other prizes.

We invite you to let your colleagues know about this event, and bring a friend.