

SAN FRANCISCO PERSONAL COMPUTER
USERS GROUP

eBLUE

NOTES

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

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.

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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 can be found on the last page of this issue. Once completed, mail it with your payment to the SFPCUG Membership Director, 3145 Geary Blvd, Box 284, 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's Meeting are held on the first Tuesday of each month at the upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza on Geary Blvd and 16th Ave.

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. Doors open at 6:15 PM for SIGs and the general meeting begins at 7:30PM

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

by Ron Feiertag

On Wednesday, December 15th, we are going to party like it's 1999, because it still will be 1999. But we will have much to celebrate at our 8th annual holiday celebration and fund raiser. To put us in a more festive mood, I encourage you to treat this as a pot luck and bring some food for you and for several other people. The more people who do this, the more food there will be for each of us. I also encourage you to bring cash or checks for the auction. You will be able to bid for computer software, and for books about computing and the Internet, which can be had at bargain prices. At the same time you will be helping this organization raise the funds that it will need to continue to provide you with worthwhile services, as it has done for San Franciscans ever since 1982. If we raise more money, we will have more and better services; if we raise less money, we will have to cut back. Another way to help us keep afloat financially is by becoming a member of this Computer Users Group and by encouraging someone you know to become a member. At forty dollars per person per year (or fifty dollars per couple), this is certainly affordable. It enables us to continue to learn about topics as

diverse as Personal Computer Secrets from Bob O'Donnell, DSL Internet access from Pacific Bell, Windows 2000 from Microsoft, and the latest program from Learn iT! on affordable computer training featuring an introduction to the best of Macromedia products, including Dreamweaver.

This column is being written on Veterans Day, an ideal day for me to be looking back and looking forward. I look back over my many years as a member, you could say as a veteran, of the San Francisco Personal Computer Users Group, including the day in 1994 when I first heard about the Internet. A little later that year Netscape was founded. Before Netscape and its founders, someone had to use UNIX commands to move about the Internet. UNIX commands are something like DOS commands, but its typed in commands are even more obscure than DOS, at least to this observer. Netscape popularized the Internet by making it easy to use. Instead of having to know UNIX and typing whenever you wanted something done, the graphical user interface of the Netscape Navigator let you point and click your way across the Internet. Microsoft soon followed with a competing product of its own, the Internet Explorer. Today, according to the Reuters news service, more than one hundred million adults in the United States use the Internet. We use it for communication, commerce, learning, and fun. We use it for e-mail, and most of us use it to surf from web site to web site. More than one out of every five of us who access the Internet also have our own web sites, as does the San Francisco Personal Computer Users Group. Visit us at www.sfpcug.org and while you are there, subscribe for free to our Announce mailing list if you have not already done so. We want you to be informed about what we are doing, and that list is one of our main

ways of accomplishing that.

Looking forward to the upcoming year, we will have more general meetings showing new, useful and interesting technology that can enrich our lives. We will also have new SIGs, special interest groups where our members can have more in-depth learning about a particular topic of interest to them. Our existing SIGs include the Windows SIG, the New Users SIG, the Word SIG, and the Linux SIG. Our newest SIG is the Web Design SIG. We also plan to have an Internet SIG, an Investment SIG, and a Digital Photography SIG if there is enough interest. We will also have elections for new officers in April. If you are interested in being an officer of this Group, it is not too early to start thinking about that. If you can help us some other way, either as a volunteer or as a member of our steering committee, please do so. Any member of the San Francisco Personal Computer Users Group who attends at least two of the previous four steering committee meetings is considered a member of the steering committee, and that is the place to be if you want to help shape the future direction of this organization. I am now about to mail this column to the editors of *Blue Notes* and prepare to travel tomorrow to Las Vegas for the COMDEX Computer Show that I wrote about in other issues of *Blue Notes*. It is held there each November and this could be a good time for you to think about whether you would like to attend it next year. Before you make your final decision, I am sure that a future issue of *Blue Notes* will include a review of this year's COMDEX. Best wishes to you all for a very successful new year!

Well. “Ring out the
old, Ring in the
New!!!”.

Editor's Notes

by Tom McLoughlin

Hopefully, the new year,



the Year 2000, will bring back good memories of the past year, decade, century, or millennium, depending on how far back your memory goes. And, in like manner, hopefully you will begin the new year with solid plans and goals for the year, decade, century or millennium, depending how far into future time you plan.

This year has been rather eventful for *Blue Notes*. We have gone over to an electronic version of the newsletter for purposes of economy. Since most people have access to the Internet, an e*Blue Notes* works, most of the time. The publication of *eBlue Notes* has presented very few problems that were not endemic of every issue. In fact, *eBlue Notes* has started a few new economies to *Blue Notes*: one does not have to trot over to the mail center and the printer for every edition and our Treasurer does not have to write check for around \$1,000 every time the issue is published. The greater benefit arises in the production tools that are emerging every day. The application of color in page layout, photos, and graphics is the first highlight that appears. Unlimited length of issue in pages is another attraction. Also, Pierre Hahn has obtained a digital camera, so be warned.

Your picture may be gracing one of our future editions. Color photos in *Blue Notes* was prohibitively expensive in the past.

The tool of an eBlue Notes gives ever new opportunities for future augmentations. My personal wish list includes: an email service to our members on specified, timely topics under the heading of *eBlue Notes Daily*, sharper linkage to our website, an eBlue Notes sponsored members only section on the SFPCUG Web Page that offers timely news and other valuable information, real audio on the Web Page: eBlue Notes Broadcasting, and streaming video. Also, I would like to give proper credit to the vendors who have been so courteous to the SFPCUG over the years, on our Web Page, as a permanent reminder that we do not forget. It is all possible.

Enough of dreams. In this issue we have several offerings from the APCUG community including cybercrime and club development. We have offerings from the Bob Click, the DealsGuy, and from Ken Fermoye. As is always our favorite, we have offerings from our own members: Carol Lee - several reviews and Vic Saravia - a review of Office 2000. And a special thank you to Pierre Hahn for his time and collaboration.

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

Not surprisingly, your response for comments about a spring APCUG /show event has been slim. Without your comments, ideas and opinions, planning such an event is next to impossible. I'm not involved in that project, but

they need your input. It's not too late to send opinions. Dan Hanson has e-mailed all clubs asking for opinions. I liked some of his suggestions, especially the Caribbean Cruise one. Please sound off to him.

I read that a couple of motherboard producers are working to incorporate a USB hub on the motherboard. A price increase is undesirable, but that would be cheaper and more convenient than buying an external hub. I don't know the introductory date, but look for it soon. If you're in the market for a new computer or motherboard, check that out if you're into USB peripherals. It maybe only two USB plugs at first, but that will do for a start.

I read about a study concerning the high cost of projection bulbs. I'm sure those who have replaced a "metal halide" bulb will concur after paying BIG bucks for a replacement. They concluded that in the future, higher production should bring the costs down. Duh, no kidding, we never would have guessed And I can hardly wait. How much did that study



cost?

They said improvements in performance, and the costs of small arc lamp technologies, coupled with the commercialization of electrode less radio frequency lamps, should support the extension of light-valve projection technology into low-priced market segments. Good, I'll take brighter, cheaper, projection any day.

I saw a deceptive ad for a 400-MB Iomega Zip drive the other day. Being unaware of any such model, I looked closer. Very small print described it to be a 100-MB Zip drive with four 100-MB disks. They could have included more disks and made it a one gig zip drive, couldn't they! In fact, it could have been unlimited capacity (for more money). Read the small print in those ads and know what you're getting. Above all, do your homework, or ask about these things at your UG meeting. There are no stupid questions.

Let's Get Started - Print Anything On Your Screen!

"Print Screen Works" <http://www.printscreenworks.com> or <http://www.silverlaketechnology.com> allows users to capture and print, e-mail or fax, anything on their computer screen simply by pushing the print screen button. In the existing Windows 95/98/NT, to print what you see on your screen is a very tedious process: push the print screen key, open a word processor, and finally, paste an image in the word processor. In addition, capturing and resizing just a portion of an image requires a variety of tools from other sources.

"Print Screen Works" makes it possible to both 'print what you see' and 'see what you print.' It enables a user to capture full, or a portion of, any image on the computer screen. PSW is generally not visible during

operation (reside in the system tray). It converts the print screen button into a hot key that triggers the capture process. Once captured, the image may be printed or saved as a bit map (.bmp) or jpeg (.jpg). Easily capture, re-size, and re-shape images before saving or sending. PSW is loaded with features. It can capture images that fill the whole screen, an active window, or just a portion of it. There's more information about working with the images on the Web site, so take a look.

I've used the original "Print Screen" and it did what it promised with no problems. A free trial version of Print Screen Works is available on their Website. On the other hand, if this sounds like its for you, the regular price is \$29.95, but the Dealsguy column price is just \$19.95 + S&H.

To get this special price, call 1-973-259-9300 and ask for "Dante." S&H is FREE in both US and Canada. Print Screen Works is for Windows 95/98/NT, 32-bit only.

When I Say Delete, I Mean "Disappear -- Really Disappear"

Normal deletion is not secure. When you delete a file, the operating system doesn't destroy the contents from the disk. It only deletes references to the file from system tables. As a result, sensitive information (available corporate trade secrets, business plans, personal files, or even confidential letters to a lover) may be lying unprotected on your disk and can easily fall into the wrong hands (the secretary you dated the other night). "Eraser" introduces a new meaning for the verb "To Erase." Erasing a file means wiping its contents beyond recovery, scrambling its name and dates, and finally, removing it from disk. Eraser is fully integrated with the Windows shell so you can drag files and folders from Explorer and drop them into eraser. Erase them directly from "Explorer" or "My Computer" with a single mouse click.

The extensive erasing capabilities of Eraser make sure that not even a

trace remains after erasing data. You can even define your own "wipe" methods. There's more so visit their Web site <http://www.east-tec.com/eraser/> for more information, such as how Eraser even checks the Recycle Bin to make sure deleted files are destroyed.

There are three editions of East-Tec Eraser: a Basic Edition (\$19.95), a Standard Edition (\$29.95) and a Professional Edition (\$39.95). For Dealsguy readers, Basic Edition is \$14.95, Standard Edition \$24.95 and Professional edition will be \$32.00. Prices are in US funds and S&H is the same all over the world. Software is for Windows 95/98/NT only. These prices are by download. If you desire a CD, it is \$10.00 extra.

S&H worldwide 1st class is free. Second day priority (US) \$4.00. Next day USA is \$10.00. To order East-Tec Eraser, please visit the URL <http://www.east-tec.com/order/special/eraser/index.htm>, a secure ordering site. Voice Orders: 8:00am - 7:00pm EST - 1-800-414-4268 (USA & Canada only) or 1-910-791-7052. Please inform the operator you want to use the East-Tec Eraser Special Purchase Offer and specify the edition you want to purchase (Basic, Standard or Professional). Very important-- these numbers can be used FOR ORDERS ONLY.

Adobe And Peachpit Press Specials For User Group Members.

Did you know you could buy Adobe Press Books at a discount through Peachpit Press? Neither did I until I read the update in the latest Adobe mailing. AdobePress is the publisher of the "Training-in-a-box" series of hands-on training workbooks, and other titles. Peachpit Press, publisher of graphics, Web designing introductory computer texts for the novice and professionals, distributes them.

The user group discount is 20% off any Adobe Press or Peachpit Press buccal 1-800-283-9444 to order, or for info. A group order of 11 or more books shipped to one address will be entitled to 40% discount. Visit

www.adobe.com/adobepress or www.peachpit.com.

I wasn't aware of the GoLive update special until recently but Louise Miller(Adobe user group coordinator) sent this information when I asked: "AdobeGoLive 4.0 for Macintosh and Windows is expected to sell at an estimated street price of \$299 (U.S.). Version 4.0 for Macintosh will be available in March; the Windows version will be available in the second quarter of 1999."

"In the U.S. and Canada, all registered users of Cyber Studio Professional 3.x and below can upgrade to Adobe GoLive 4.0 for \$99.00 (U.S.). Customers in the U.S. and Canada, who purchased GoLive Cyber Studio Professional 3.x after January 1, 1999, are eligible to receive a free upgrade to Adobe GoLive 4.0with proof of purchase. For information, customers can call Adobe at 1-800-685-3612. For a limited time, registered users of Adobe PageMill and CyberStudio Personal Edition could upgrade to Version 4.0 for a promotional price of \$99.00. After Sept. 1, 1999, that upgrade price will be \$199.00(U.S.).

My request to extend the Sept. 1 deadline was turned down. Personally, I think they should have extended it to entice more people. So far, the reviews I've read for GoLive start glowingly, but end up mediocre. I bought it, but found you needed Windows 98 and a 200 MHz machine to run it. Tech support said I would probably have trouble using it under Windows 95 so my copy is now shelfware

Get It For Just the S&H

I seldom print Web items because they are so numerous, and sometimes questionable, but Quirt Alrich of Central Florida Computer Society sent me this URL and I actually ordered two popular items (limited supply)

just for the shipping. Not the latest versions, and there are no manuals, but for that price, who cares? He gets a message from time to time, but I didn't subscribe as they suggested because I worry about being spammed. Visit <http://www.arcamax.com/freebies/an0899psd> (perhaps try leaving off the last part) once in a while and see what they have. They sent the CD via snail mail, so at the \$9.95 S&H I'm sure they made a profit, and I was satisfied.

That's it for my October column. Meet me here again next month to discuss deals. No luck with return calls or email from six deals I'm working on. Maybe they're on vacation. One small vendor with music conversion to MIDI is still thinking it over. 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) Clickdealsguy@mindspring.com.

From the Dealsguy, Greater Orlando Computer User Group (November Column)

Last month I made mention about some motherboards having USB plugs incorporated into them. If I was a hardware-knowledgeable man, I would have known that those have existed for a while in higher-end motherboards. Actually, it turns out I was referring to low-end motherboards. I hope you took my comments as advice to check out that concept while shopping.

What I would like to see becoming more popular is the FireWire (IEEE1394), which up until now has not caught on well. It is much faster than USB and peripherals connected with FireWire can talk to each other without using the CPU. This is yet another vicious circle in the hardware development world. However, FireWire accommodates less peripherals

than USB, but I doubt I could afford to plug in more than 63 devices. Some digital cameras offer IEEE1394 as a connection.

As for the speed of USB, the original development team of the USB concept (five companies), along with three new companies, is working on USB 2.0 to replace 1.1, which will increase the throughput nearly 20 times. Expect that version in a year or so. Next month will be more comments about the 810-chipset problems because of a lack of space this month. I found it an uninteresting situation. Also the latest surprise on USB development.

Stuffit, will ya!

Since I have not tried Aladdin's products, the following are their words: "Aladdin Systems just announced DropStuff 5.0 for Windows, the only cross-platform Windows compression tool that provides up to 20% better compression than other Zip utilities. DropStuff 5.0 is a FREE upgrade to registered users of DropStuff 1.0, and is also a 30-day free trial for others available for download at <http://www.aladdinsys.com/dropstuff>.

"If you own Aladdin's StuffIt Deluxe 5.0.x for Macintosh, Aladdin recently released a free update, StuffIt Deluxe 5.1. This update includes enhancements and fixes, and eliminates the need for StuffIt Deluxe 5.0.x users to download DropStuff 5.1.2 and Expander 5.1.2 separately. The 5.1 update provides faster file compression and decompression than previous StuffIt Deluxe 5.0.x versions, and other improvements.

"StuffIt Deluxe 5.0.x is available as a download directly from Aladdin's Web site at: <http://www.aladdinsys.com/updates/index.html>. For more information on StuffIt Deluxe and its recent update, visit: <http://www.aladdinsys.com/deluxe/>". There are new features, but to keep this item short as possible, I suggest you get more information from

their web site. Prices for Aladdin products are as follows:

Stuffit Deluxe (Mac) - \$49.95, reg. \$79.95. The complete compression solution for Macs.*Aladdin DropStuff (Win) \$20.00 - shareware regular price. Only cross-platform compression tool for Windows. *Spring Cleaning (Mac) \$29.95 - reg. \$49.95. The number one uninstalled forma. *DragsStrip (Win/Mac) \$20.00. NEW - the ultimate desktop organizer. *MacTicker (Mac) \$20.00 - NEW - The Stock Market on your desktop. *Aladdin FlashBack (Win/Mac) \$29.95 (regularly \$49.95). Provides unlimited undos to all your favorite software. *ShrinkWrap (Mac) \$30.00 - Shareware, regular price. The easiest and most complete way to create disk images. *Sundial, California & Hawaii Collections (Win/Mac) \$19.95 each, or \$30 for both (regularly \$29.95 each). Desktop pictures that change with the time of day. Private File (Win) \$19.95 (regularly \$49.95). The easiest, cross-platform data protection.

In order to receive the above special pricing, user group members MUST use Code # UGDEAL 999. These prices are good through November 30th (maybe longer). Call 1-800-732-8881 to order (1-831-761-6200 in Canada) or e-mail them at sales@aladdinsys.com S&H is \$7.50 for the first unit, \$2.50 each additional unit in both US & Canada. Somehow, my money must have been caught up in this software because I was sure I had more money than I can find now. Does compressed money buy the same amount?

How About Surfing the Web For Absolutely FREE (Well, Almost Free)

I'm talking about Web4Life - the largest distributor of WebCOMBO's National Internet Access (their words). They are a unique ISP in that they offer dial-up Internet access for a ONE-TIME FEE ... no monthly charges.

They are 5 years old, in all 50 states, Canada & Puerto Rico, and say they are backed by corporations who have their sponsorship information only on the homepage (no banners following you around). (Dealsguy likes that!)

Their explanation goes on, "we provide an e-mail address (total of 5 coming soon), personal Web space and toll-free tech support. If you want more information about our service to 'check us out,' please stop by our website at www.web-4life.net."

This special offer came together just before deadline so I have not had the chance to do anything but take a quick look at their home page and browse a bit. It was interesting to note that in the city where my mother lives, the only national ISP I knew about is AOL (line always busy there), but I noticed Web4Life has an access number there. That said a lot for me, but be sure to check for your area if you are interested in Web4Life since they are not responsible for long distance charges.

During November & December '99, Web4Life wants to offer Computer User Group members a special package for WebCombo 2000. The retail price is \$179.95 -but user group members can order it for \$149.95, which includes the "Getting Started on the Internet" training video free. With the holiday season around the corner, members can ask for multiple discounts if they want to order Internet access as a gift.

Here's what's included with the Internet access: Unlimited dial up Internet access, all 50 States, Canada & Puerto Rico - 56Kflex-V.90 & X2 - Toll-Free tech support - personal Web space (5 mb) - 5 free E-Mail accounts - 7 Day money-back guarantee - Net 2 Phone software included - use any browser & e-mail (IE5 is included) - save \$\$ with AOL or Web TV - FREE Net Nanny software. <http://www.web-4life.net>.

You can order by phone with credit card by calling 1-888-267-1122, or send a check to the address listed. Shipping is \$5.95 for the whole package. Right now the order form on the Internet is defaulted to the full price so you'll have to call Joy Porter to get the special. Be sure to specify which user group you are with.

Are You Over-Hyped About Y2K? Read This

One of my regular readers e-mailed to inquire about her book being one of my deals. It was described as on the "light-hearted" side, but that could go anywhere so I wanted to take a look. When I received it, I meant to take quick look at a few pages to see the content. I have to say that I didn't put it down until I finished it an hour later. The book is called "Got Beans, Get Ready For the Year 2000 Computer Crisis" written by "Ingrid Harding."

It is a 5" x 5" book with 93 pages, and with easy-to-read type. I found it contained many suggestions we've heard before, but mixed in were many others that brought a smile. I don't laugh easily, but this made me smile alot. I doubt that many would be offended by any of the light-hearted stuff. Such as suggestions concerning the shortage of supplies. She suggests you stock up on condoms in advance, which might raise the eyebrows of a snide clerk when you buy five boxes each time you stop in. I would rather think that clerk's attitude was admiration, especially if the clerk was aged. I'll bet that suggestion will also boost the sale of Viagra for a while. Few suggestions were on the risqué side.

I liked the suggestion about milk, and comments about a timepiece were practical, but whimsical. I can't tell you too much, so buy the book to learn (and chuckle) for yourself. The regular price per book is \$7.95 but my readers can get it at 50% off. Check her website www.ing2000.com. Ingrid also has a free Y2K weekly e-mail newsletter you can sign up for

at her web site.

Scott Newland's Y2K Favor to User Groups

I called Scott at Symantec about a special on his Y2K software, this is his response.*****SPECIAL***** Symantec Corporation, the maker of Norton Anti-Virus, Norton Utilities and other great products, has 39 shrink-wrapped copies of their award winning Y2K solution software that was specially packaged for User Groups this past year. It is the full product, The only difference is you don't get the box, just the manual, CD and registration form. Please fax your order in "AFTER" October 11th to 408-446-8122. The first 39 people to do so will be called back and your credit card number taken over the phone. Thanks Scott, you have always been a great UG supporter!

Looks like I'm out of space so meet me here again next month to discuss deals. The music conversion software will be next month because of getting the ordering logistics set up. I'll also talk about long-distance phone service for 3.9 cents-per-minute after friends have a chance to see if there are any catches. 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.

Ken's Korner

by Ken Fermoyle
The User Group Network

'Korner' Turns Two: Looking back...and ahead

It doesn't seem possible that two years have flown by since I clicked on "Send" to launch the first Ken's Korner column into cyberspace. Yet, when I stop to think, it's equally incredible that so much has happened in just 24 months.

In September, 1997, that first article (Prehistoric DTP, or Publishing in the Stone Age) went out to just 11 editors, all of whom had signed up at the Southwest Regional User Group Conference in San Diego a month earlier. Now 225 editors and webmasters subscribe. In addition, the list of computer pros who have asked to receive the column has swollen to more than 50 since I started adding individuals some 10 months ago.

Several Ezines (electronic magazines) feature Ken's Korner regularly, as do such differing Websites as the North Carolina Dept. of Education, Australia Seniors Online and the Mac-oriented User Group Network. (I think I'm UGN's token PC person.)

Practically all of the early subscribers were from California and Arizona. Now almost every state is represented, including Alaska and Hawaii, plus

Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Great Britain, Greece, Japan, New Zealand and Panama.

What makes this growth surprising is how it happened. Most subscribers have come aboard as a result of word of mouth, or seeing the column in other group newsletters of Websites. APCUG Reports, official publication of the Association of PC User Groups, has run several articles about Ken's Korner and its availability. Fred Showker at UGN has been another booster. I have written to acquaint some groups with the column after learning about their publications while surfing the Net. Of course, the fact that articles are free doesn't hurt! But still, a 25-fold increase in 24 months is impressive.

The growth also indicates that my two main premises in starting the column were on the mark. First, having been "volunteer" editor of many newsletters over the years, I knew that many editors have to scratch for good material. Second, I felt the mainstream computer press was so focused on corporate computing and "enterprise solutions" that it often failed to provide information for grassroots computers, the area on which I concentrate.

New projects are born

Ken's Korner gave birth to a major new offshoot early this year: the User Group Media Workshop project. It resulted from reading hundreds of group newsletters and journals over the past two years. Most editors comply with my request that they send me a copy of any publication in which one of my articles appears.

From two to six newsletters arrive every day, either via snail mail or e-mail (usually in PDF format). I don't claim to read every word of every one but I do go through them all, and I do read many of the articles. A lot of editors can testify to that because they've received e-mail from me commenting on their newsletters and/or specific articles.

(Many a cyberspace friendship has developed as a result. I started with one "UG Column" mailbox, added one for "First Contacts" as requests for the column began coming in. Then I opened folder in the UG Column mailbox for individual editors and groups after I had corresponded with each one several times. Now I have about 110 folders in the UG Column mailbox!)

I also visit group Websites regularly, checking out their design and just generally trying to keep up with what's happening in various groups.

I do this to keep in touch with grassroots computing, to get ideas for future columns and quite simply to learn from many of the great articles I find.

Quality of the newsletters and Websites is surprisingly good, given that most editors and webmasters are volunteers (or draftees!) with little or no publishing background. My correspondence revealed that these volunteers, particularly the least experienced ones, are eager to improve and welcome any help they can get.

This, and some discussions with Rick Altman, founder and host of CorelWorld, led to planning of what was to have been the first User Group Media Workshop, during October in Orlando, FL. Another conversation soon after that with Judy Taylour, one of the Southwest Regional organizers, resulted in the first Media Workshop being presented in August. (You can find more details on Workshop history at my new Website: www.zyworld.com/wordsmithken.)

The Website is the latest project from Ken's Korner. Started in late August, it is still very much a "work-in-progress." I do invite you to visit it, and will appreciate your feedback. Be forewarned: don't expect music, animated GIFs, abundant graphics or other gimmicks. And you definitely won't find blue type on a black background! My goals are to provide easy

readability and navigation, plus reasonably fast downloading.

Plans for the future

I hope to do more Workshops and to keep updating and improving the Website. Beyond that, I am researching several subjects for future columns, and could use your help in that respect.

I'll list the subjects I have in the works below. If you have any experiences, suggestions or comments you care to contribute, I'd love to hear them. Reader letters and input have often been a big help in the past, and I hope that continues in the future.

AOL censorship - The Irish language, American Civil Liberties Union and various other groups have been the target of Steve Case and company in recent months. In addition, serious security breaches allegedly have occurred on AOL. I will welcome any experiences, pro or con, you have had with the service.

Net conferencing - We've been working on this for some time, but new developments keep appearing. If you use this technology, I want to hear from you.

Digital web cameras - We have two units installed now in Ken's Korner: Kodak's DVC323 and Vista Imaging's VICAM. Each has excellent features, which we will be reviewing soon.

Broadband Internet Access - This is a complex, fast-evolving subject. I've started an article on it at least four times in recent months, only to have new developments change the picture. I think I have a handle on it now, but would like to hear any experiences you have had with cable, DSL, wireless or ISDN.

Opening Cable Access - This deserves its own separate treatment. Cable

companies have valid arguments against opening access through their expensive new cable infrastructure. Proponents of opening cable access to other providers have their own arguments (often hypocritical ones, I might add). I've studied the situation carefully and will give you my in-depth take on it ASAP.

Copyright 1999 by Ken Fermoyale, Fermoyale Publications. Ken Fermoyale 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 kfermoyle@earthlink.net.

Your Roving Photographer

by Pierre Hahn

FLASH, late breaking news, The SFPCUG Millennium party and Auction was great fun, The people, the food and all the products were in abundance. I used my new digital camera, and am including some of the results. I found that using a digital camera is quite different from an "old fashioned" analog camera, but I am getting the hang of it. If you missed the event, wait till next year, and maybe we will have another Millennium Party, What the heck, one at the end and one at the beginning and why not! There are photos spread out through the issue

Web Pages Lost? Check History In Your PC or Mac Browser:

by Ken Fermoyale

Your Web browser's history keeps a record of Web pages you've visited recently. If you forgot to bookmark a page you liked, your history can often help you find it again.

To open your history in Microsoft Internet Explorer, click the History button in the toolbar (Windows) or click the Go menu and choose Open History (Mac). In Netscape Communicator, type Ctrl-H (Windows) or Command-H (Mac).

Once the history window appears, double-click a page to view it in your browser. For more Web browser tips, go to:

www.earthlink.net/internet/web/browsers - A Ken's Korner TidByte

Seattle FilmWorks Adds Sound To Photos Devliered via Email

Seattle FilmWorks, a long-time discount photofinisher now largely Internet-based, has joined forces with VStream, a leader in Web-based communications, to bring audio commentary to email-delivered photos. The new service allows FilmWorks customers to add a personal narrative to their photos, using of VStream's Internet-based messaging service, Beep.

"This is a marriage of two convenient services with high customer appeal," said Paul Berberian, VStream president. "We're blending Internet-enhanced communications with multimedia and the result is a visual and audio service that is fun and personal."

Using VStream's voice-to-email technology, Seattle FilmWorks customers can add narration to a photo with a simple phone call to VStream's automated messaging center. The audio file, produced through VStream, accompanies the photo whenever a customer emails photo links to friends, family, and business associates.

"We know our nearly two million customers enjoy sharing their visual memories with family and friends over the Internet, and now using VStream's technology, they can enhance those memories with audio descriptions," said Gary Christophersen, president and CEO, Seattle FilmWorks.

A Seattle FilmWorks customer, while viewing an online image of a photos, can now add a personal message at the click of a button.. After selecting "Send a voice message" option, you receive an identification code and phone number. You then dial the number, enter the ID code and record your private messages and captions for specified photos. The audio file accompanies the photo, so anyone who views the photo via email has the option of also hearing the audio caption.

For more information, visit Seattle FilmWorks <http://.filmworks.com> or VStream <http://www.vstream.com> - TidByte from Ken's Korner

Net2Phone Announces Agreement with Compaq

Net2Phone will offer its award-winning Internet telephony services to new Compaq Presario customers in Canada, Latin America, Japan and Asia-Pacific.

Under the agreement, a button located on the Presario keyboard will connect online users to a co-branded telephony services web site. Called the Community Center button, it initially connects Presario customers to a Compaq and Net2Phone joint Website which features free downloadable

PC-to-phone software, download nstructions, and details about Net2Phone's low calling rates.

After downloading the software and setting up an account, the user can launch the application and connect via the Web to a phone anywhere in the world. - TidByte from Ken's Korner

Apple Files Suit Over iMac Look-Alike

Apple Computer has filed a lawsuit against eMachines, charging that the \$799 eOne PC copies the iMac. This is Apple's latest attempt to prevent rivals from cashing in on its innovative iMac design. Apple filed similar lawsuits on July 1 against Daewoo Telecom of Korea and Future Power, Daewoo's joint venture that sells PCs in the United States.

The complaint accuses eMachines of "illegally copying" the iMac's industrial design. It asks the court to prevent eMachines from shipping its look-alike computer, and seeks unspecified actual and punitive damages. - TidByte from Ken's Korner

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Lend a Hand

**By Coco Johnston -
F1 Computer Users' Club, Shell Knob, MO.**

Computers are no longer the exclusive domain of office workers. They have moved into our homes, our cars and our pockets, and it looks as if they are here to stay. The list of tasks they are capable of handling grows daily, and it's difficult for even the seasoned expert to keep up with the ever-expanding technology. The crowd of learners, eager to know more about these amazing machines, just keeps growing.

It's no wonder that thousands of PC and Mac user groups have sprung up all over the country. People everywhere are realizing the value of sharing computer know-how. By pooling our knowledge, we can speed up the learning process in our pursuit to master the realm of electronic information and entertainment. The bigger the pool of knowledge we have available, the easier it is to find what we're looking for.

Computer user groups provide a valuable and economical resource for learning and sharing information about computers. At the very least, they provide an opportunity to get together with other computer users and ask questions and exchange tips and ideas. Some groups publish newsletters that help disseminate information of general interest and keep members informed of events and activities; others maintain Web sites listing local information and reference points for members and visitors from the Internet community. There are groups that invite guest speakers to give presentations at the meetings; some groups offer classes to their members; some form smaller special interest groups that meet and have in-depth discussions on one aspect of computing.

In addition to the many services a user group offers its members, records need to be compiled and kept updated (a membership list, e-mail addresses, dues, how much money is brought in, what bills need to be paid). Some groups have hardware that needs maintaining and servicing. Special events and parties are sometimes organized. Generally, the bigger the group is, the more activities it offers and the more work it takes to run it.

All of these wonderful services offered by user groups depend on volunteers. It takes people to plan, organize and "emcee" the meetings; keep records of membership and finances; suggest and write articles for the newsletters; take the newsletter to the printer; label, stamp and mail the newsletters; create and update the Web site; organize, advertise and teach classes; send articles to the local newspapers to notify people of events; create and hand out fliers about meetings and events; organize special interest groups and meetings; organize parties and picnics; and think up new ways to maintain growth and interest.

You are fortunate to have a computer user group in your community; you are also fortunate to have the opportunity to contribute to its success. By donating a couple of hours of your time each month, you will help build and maintain a user group that benefits not only you but also your entire community. And many of the jobs that hold a user group together and make it hum don't even require computer skills.

The secretary and treasurer can be trained with some basic instructions in MS Works and Quicken, which make record keeping and bookkeeping simpler. However, computer skills are not necessary to set up chairs, take roll or make name tags at the meetings.

Those who know the least about computers are in the best position to suggest ideas for meeting topics or newsletter articles. It doesn't take a computer genius to plan meetings and find speakers. Organizing classes, advertising them and finding someone to teach them can be done by

people who know nothing about computers. Computer experience isn't necessary to stand up in front of a meeting and make announcements or present the guest speaker (just a good loud voice, a few notes and a little enthusiasm will get anyone through it).

Putting together a newsletter is probably the most time-consuming job in a user group, but the toughest part of that job is coming up with ideas and articles. As the editor for *The F1 Key*, the newsletter of the F1 Computer Users' Club, in Shell Knob, MO, I am thrilled when members e-mail me tips, shortcuts, useful Web sites, ideas and questions. I don't always have the answers to the questions, but I can usually track down someone who does. And I enjoy taking other's tips and ideas and creating articles out of them. I'm willing to bet that every user group has a wannabe writer in its midst; I happen to be ours.

Once the newsletter is completed, it has to be taken to the printer and then picked up later. Volunteers who help sort, staple, fold, label, and stamp newsletters are always appreciated.

It takes a lot of work and time to run a user group, and the more people who help with the many jobs involved, the better the club can serve the membership as a whole. The better the service to members, the more the membership grows and, eventually, the greater the pool of knowledge from which to learn.

You have everything to gain from giving some of your time to your user group. Run for an office, sign up for a committee, offer to help organize events, classes or meetings, send your ideas and questions to the newsletter editor (or better yet, write a paragraph or two). Help out where you can. Get involved. You *and* everyone in your user group will benefit from what you do.

This article is furnished as a benefit of our membership in the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international

organization to which this user group belongs. The author, Coco Johnston is currently the editor of *The F1 Key* and has served as secretary/treasurer, vice president and president of the F1 Computer Users' Club in Shell Knob, MO. She is also Webmaster for the F1 Club's Web site: www.mo-net.com/~f1club.

Publicity! Publicity! Publicity!

By Steve Morgan

What are the big 4 positions that should be in every user group? President, Editor, Program Chair and Publicity. Which position is the most important to growing your group? For many groups, Publicity should win hands down!

Too many user groups out there are just too small! Computer sales are booming, there are 80 million people on the Internet, several countries have fully half of the population with access to a computer. With the exception of the Apple owners, who can pretend that owning and operating a computer is easy? I daily learn something new about computers, and I have 25 years experience in using them!

With the kind of numbers above, every computer user group should have people pounding down the doors trying to learn how to use their computers. Unfortunately, most user groups have less than 75 members. What are we doing wrong?

A major reason for the lack of growth stems from a lack of information. The general public does not realize that user groups are a great place to get help with their computer problems! Ever wonder why \$150.00 Computer training classes are booming, Libraries are packing in members to use their computers and Vocational schools are now offering adult

computer classes? They are successful because they concentrate on letting people know how the classes will help them!

So what to do about it? Make Publicity the most important person in the user group! Find someone who likes to talk and get everyone else in the club behind them! Here are some ideas that various user groups are using to jumpstart the publicity bandwagon.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WITH CLUB INFORMATION ATTACHED.

Here is one of the easiest ways in the world to get some publicity. Go to the local newspaper and ask if you can submit a weekly or biweekly article about computers. Most newspapers are starved for good articles about computers; their readers are demanding good information to help them use all the computers they are buying! An excellent resource are the monthly articles that the APCUG Editorial Committee sends out, but even better are good articles written by your members! Promote your group; at the end of every article by writing a brief commercial like this, "The xxy computer club will be meeting Thursday, the 19th of January from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Vocational school in Scottsdale. Everyone is welcome to attend this month's program on connecting to the Internet. Call 456-0000 for details!"

Not every newspaper will agree to do this, but it doesn't ever hurt to try! If you are in a large metro area, do not forget the many smaller newspapers that serve a suburb or ethnic group, these can be great ways to reach people that you do not often see.

MORNING, AFTERNOON AND WEEKEND RADIO SHOWS.

a. Ask to be on the local morning show of popular radio stations that reach your target audience. Call up the station and tell them about your club, and ask to be interviewed by the "personalities" of the show. Don't just stop at one show either! Try to hit the different

music formats such as rock, country, easy listening etc. Try to be on the show the day before, or the day of your club meeting. My favorite airtime is from 7 am to 10 am, this is great for getting the ears of many drivers and also people at work. And hey, it doesn't ever hurt to bring goodies to the interview! Donuts, juice, bagels, even some software disks are great ice breakers and will help you become a "regular" on the show

- b. Many talk radio stations now have regular computer information shows. These shows have hosts, guests and take calls from users having problems. If there is one near you, beat down the doors in order to get on the show, send goodies to the host along with information on the club activities. If there is not a show near you, think about starting one up. Often radio stations just charge a small fee for the engineer that keeps the show going. User groups can even make money if they sell the advertisements that are used during the program.
- c. Community service announcements! Most radio stations make these announcements at regular times during the day, find out who is in charge and get a copy of the meeting information out to them 2-3 days before the meeting.

Any member who is willing to help us by becoming Publicity Chair is invited to contact Ron Feiertag at president@mail.sfpcug.org.

POSTERS, POSTERS, GROUPS REALLY NEED THOSE STINKEN POSTERS!

There are few jobs more intimidating than asking merchants and building supervisors if you can hang up a poster. The good news is that if the poster looks good, many of them will be glad to let you do it! Wall-Marts, Supermarkets, Computer retailers, Libraries, Copy centers, University's, High schools, Shopping Malls, they have all let us put up posters. Here are 5 commandments for putting up posters!

- a. Make it look appealing! Bright colors, large print and nice graphics will attract attention
- b. Try to give information for several months meetings, this will show people that you are well organized and will also appeal to a wider range of people!
- c. Keep checking the signs and replace those that are looking bad
- d. If you have the capability, make it tabloid size (11 by 17), put it on heavy stock paper and waterproof it!
- e. Do not forget to include a map! Have good directions to the meeting, and put the dates and times in big letters!

INCREASE THE CIRCULATION OF YOUR NEWSLETTER!

If your group has more than 200 members, think about changing your club newsletter to tabloid size and use newspaper stock for the pages. Believe it or not, the cost of 3000 tabloid newsletters is not that much more than 400 regular newsletters that you take to a copy center to have put together. And the mailing cost is often dramatically lower! When you have 2600 extra newsletters, nicely folded in half, clubs also have a gigantic marketing opportunity. Many of the computer hardware, software and consumables retail outlets in your area might be willing to spend some money on advertisements in your newsletter! In fact several user groups make more money from advertisements than they spend on printing costs! Buy some wire holders, and start leaving 100 newsletters

at every place that you are able to have a poster. Take 5-10 of the extra newsletters and drop them off to the businesses in your area. Yes, some will just get thrown away, but many of them will be read! If you have any questions about this, please check out an excellent article by Don Singleton, Tulsa Computer Society, at this web address <http://www.apcug.org/events/comdex/tabloid.htm>.

There are many ways that your user group can grow, and now is the very best time to do it! Implementing any of these suggestions will help; all they need is a dedicated person willing to put 10-15 hours a month into helping out the user group. Find that person, and treat him or her well!

This article is furnished as a benefit of our membership in the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization to which this user group belongs. The author, Steve Morgan, is a member of the APCUG Board of Advisors. He represents Region 5, which covers AK, ID, MT, OR, WY, ND, SD and WA. Steve is also a member of the APCUG Editorial Committee. He's one busy guy!

Computer Fraud

By Lee Schwab

*Published in the August 1999 issue of the dVINE Blues
Napa Valley PC User's Group*

I took advantage of the opportunity to attend the Southwest Regional User Group meeting in San Diego on July 9-11, 1999. One of the best presentations I attended was by Terry Rankhorn, Special Agent, Cybercrimes Unit, FBI San Diego. His presentation was fascinating and scary. Below is some of the information he presented.

The FBI has developed a hacker profile based on their experience. The following description of a hacker lists the most common attributes first. The hacker is usually a student who uses the Internet every day, especially IRC. If the hacker has a job, it usually involves computers. He is usually quite knowledgeable of Unix. As a matter of fact, you will usually find several books on Unix in a hacker's room. The typical hacker is an adolescent, white male.

Many things motivate the hacker. His curiosity pushes him to learn how to get around the Internet, firewalls, and whatever else he happens to encounter. Hackers gain prestige and bragging rights when they are able to break through a firewall or other obstacle. There is even a web site where they can post their accomplishments and gain a following. Some hackers are motivated by revenge for some perceived injustice, which they feel they have experienced. They may get the IP of the person causing the injustice and knock them off the Internet every time they get on. Because of their age, hackers are usually not motivated by

politics or profit.

One of the most common targets of hackers is Internet Service Providers (ISP) because they are easy to hack and have numerous user accounts. A hacker will break into an ISP and get one or more accounts and passwords. He may sell or trade the account information to other hackers. Unless the subscriber of the account reports a problem with the account, the hacker usually does not get caught. Most ISPs assign a different IP addresses every time you sign on which allows anonymity for the hacker. Therefore, it is unlikely the Internet will ever be truly secure.

Other popular targets for hackers are Universities because many have powerful number crunching computers like the Cray. This number crunching capability helps the hacker more quickly find the key that they are looking for. The university setting provides a perfect opportunity for the hacker. Many times (especially in smaller schools) the security is lax and there are numerous user accounts.

Government and military sites are also popular targets among hackers because of the challenge, prestige, and publicity. If a hacker breaks into one of these sites, he gets big bragging rights and will probably post his accomplishment at attrition.org. Recently, it was reported that a hacker broke into the pentagon. Terry said that what actually happened is that security was alerted that someone was trying to break through the firewall. When the hacker tried a different approach, security decided to take the system down. No breach of security was made.

If a person is denied service or experiences a perceived injustice, he may want to hack for revenge. This may require a low skill level and use of pre-made downloaded tools. This type of hack could be called "Internet Road Rage". With wiretapping (sniffer) type hacks, a hacker uses a password sniffer to collect passwords and personal information.

There are internal intrusions where the biggest threat is from within. Whereas, in classic external intrusions a remote intruder breaks into the computer.

All of the frauds that work through the mail work just as well, or perhaps even better, when using a computer. This is partly because of the feeling of anonymity on the part of the person committing the fraud and partly because people are sometimes embarrassed to admit that they were ripped off (especially at x-rated sites). Terry told a story about a man who advertised a projector for sale at one of the Internet auctions. Several people bid on the projector and the auction site gave the seller the contact information for the top bidders. The seller then contacted each of the prospective buyers and told them that the person above them had dropped out of the bidding and that they had won the bid. The seller received checks from several people but none of the buyers received a projector. Was there ever a projector for sale? Who knows? The good news is that the seller was caught.

Pyramid schemes are a popular type of fraud on the Internet. You put your name at the bottom of a list and send each person on the list above you \$5. There is almost no chance that you will recover your money. Plus, you may have provided your email information to a hacker. The same threat holds true for advance fee schemes. For example, you send \$19.95 to have your credit history repaired. You do not need to pay a fee to repair your credit and you may have given a hacker access to your email.

Hackers can be prosecuted for mail fraud (Title 18, Section 1341) or wire fraud (Title 18, Section 1343). Wherever hackers or anyone else goes on the Internet, they leave a trail that can be followed by a savvy investigator. However, the investigator has to be alerted that there is a crime before he/she can investigate.

If you use a cable modem or are connected to the Internet all the time, be aware of who is accessing your computer. Terry gave an example of a friend who has networked two computer in his home and uses a file server. Terry was easily able to look at the files on his friend's computer and could have caused major damage. Instead, he sent a message that appeared on his friends monitor. What a scary wake up call.

This only scratches the surface of what Terry covered during his presentation. The bottom line is – use good common sense when using the Internet. If you feel you are at risk, you can download a shareware firewall from nukenabber.com. Happy surfing!

This message is brought to you courtesy of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an organization to which this user group belongs. Lee Schwab has been an active member of the Napa Valley PC User's Group for many years and was an officer for ten years. She served as Editor of the dVINE Blues newsletter (7.5 years), President, Vice President, Publicity, Public Relations, Evaluations Coordinator, and Program Chair. PC's play an integral part of Lee's busy life outside the NVPCUG. She is the President and Chairwoman of the Board for the CyberMill, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization where people (especially at-risk youth) learn to use technology. She uses her PC to evaluate and track her extended family's investments and make stock trades. Lee feels very fortunate to work in areas that she likes (computing, investing, and volunteering) and will always be challenged and in learning mode.



IN THE
BEGINNING
THERE WAS
FOOD



1999 4th quarter

eBLUE NOTES

SOFTWARE REVIEWS

Office 2000 Standard

Reviewed by Vic Saravia



Rating: ***** Yeah, I Like It !

Vic Saravia makes music with people, guitars, and synthesizers and enjoys helping people create music. He teaches guitar and music theory, and helps people use computers. He is Vice President of the San Francisco PC User Group and Leader of Special Interest Groups for Word and for New Users.

You can visit his website:

home.earthlink.net/~xplorations.htm

!

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Pros: HTML export format [and to clipboard], Font styles visible while selecting, Outlook PIM, Excel conditional formatting, backwards file compatability, 'Roundtrip' Save to HTML and back to Office 2000 retaining formatting characteristics in Office that may not be available in HTML.

Cons: Installation should use hyperlinks as Readme files were not where it said they were. Outlook still doesn't automatically send Mail when you press Send after composing message.

Title: Office 2000 Standard includes
Microsoft Word« 2000 (9.0.2720),
Microsoft Excel « 2000 (9.0.2720),
PowerPoint « 2000 (9.0.2716), « 2000 (9.0.2720),
Microsoft Outlook « 2000 (9.0.2711)

Vendor: Microsoft,
One Microsoft Way,
Redmond, Washington.
www.microsoft.com/office/

Recommendation: More than worth your time to check it out. There's lots to like. And Christmas is here ! Cheers !

Installation of the program went well. The program claimed "After installation, Readme files for Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Access, and FrontPage are also stored on your hard disk in the path C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office\1033\. The file names are: WdRead9.txt (Microsoft Word 2000)". Looking for WdRead9.txt (Microsoft Word 2000) didn't work out so well. I got the message

"Cannot find the file or item 'C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office\1033\WdRead9.txt'. Make sure the path and file name are correct. Type 'go <SearchText>' to use AutoSearch."

Well, I didn't find that file there. In Explorer, I tried pasting the file path from the ReadMe file that told me where to look for it, that didn't work. Using Windows Explorer, Tools I found the file actually located in C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office. Couldn't they make a hyperlink to the file ? It would make it easier, one click and you wouldn't have to know/guess/search to find the file. I KNOW to use Explorer/Tools/Find File. How many users do? How many beginning users do?

Word 2000

File/Open [or clicking on the file folder icon] brings you to a new experience. You see an Outlook/Explorer-type window. On the left are icons for History, My Documents, Desktop, Favorites, and Web Folders. Clicking on History will take you to the most recently opened files, folders, and drives. This is good.

Templates

Click on File New: you're offered a plethora of options: General [blank documents], Web Page or E-mail message, Legal Pleadings, Letters & Faxes (different kinds), Memos, Résumés [although they don't seem to know that résumé is spelled differently than resume], Other Documents, Publications, Manuals, Theses and Reports, and Web Pages. In short, lots of help on formatting various types of documents. That paper clip help assistant that Bob told me he can't stand: it's been replaced by an animation with eyes, looking, the paper clip scratches his head. And there IS a way to get rid of it.

Size Matters

146 MB for Microsoft Word 2000. This figure indicates a default installation; your hard disk usage will vary depending on your configuration and the options you choose to install. Choices made during a custom installation may require more or less hard disk space. To save a file in Word 97 format required loading from CD-ROM. After 20 seconds the CD-ROM stopped whirring; there was no onscreen indication that it was done. Not too long to wait: just nervous, waiting, without a signal indicating it was done.

Header and Footer gives icons: if you hold your mouse on them, they inform you what they do: insert page #s, # of pages, format page #, insert date, time, page setup and show/hide document [e.g., if you're working on a watermark underlying your text]. You can navigate forward and backward from header to header or footer to footer for different sections, and you can switch between header and footer by clicking on an icon.

What's new is that to the left of the icons for Header and Footer is an Insert AutoText with multiple options: -Page-, Author, Page #, Date; Confidential, Page #, Date; Created by; Created on; Filename; or Filename and path; Last printed; Last saved by; Page x of y. These are useful to check [sometimes an icon is not obvious]. So yes, I admit to having a textual relationship with my computer/software.

Puttin' on the Style

When you click on Style [Ctrl+Shift+S] a drop down list shows Styles; what's slick is that you see the styles. If Heading 1 is Arial & 16 pts and bold that's what you see on the drop down menu easier to choose what you want. As before, to change the style, simply choose a style, make changes, e.g., change Arial to Times New Roman, click the style again,

choose the original name, Heading 1 in this example, and it will prompt you with the name of the style.

Style: Heading 1

Do you want to:

Update the style to reflect recent changes?

Reapply the formatting of the style to the section?

Automatically update the style from now

Automatically updating the style will avoid the popup box in the future, and save you time, if you know what you're doing, i.e., you don't want to change just one occurrence of a style, but when you change formatting of a style you want it to stay changed, every time you use that style in the future.

What I find nice: Format/Style/Modify/Format takes you to the above, you can change a style, e.g., change Normal from 12 pt to 14 pt [more readable if you are trying to make it easier for people to read important with an aging population and you can Add to template, so that now any time you open a document or select Normal style, it will be 14 points]. Ctrl+Shift+S will take you to the style box, pressing arrow up or down takes you through various styles.

Word-Nice Things

As you type a hyphen and move on, the hyphen changes to a small dash - nice touch. But, you have to have a space either side of the hyphen. My wish for the future, automatically change hyphens [even without spaces], with an override, of course, if you REALLY want a tiny hyphen. If you have two spaces between words, the words and excess spaces between are underlined green: helping you more quickly get rid of errant spaces. Misspelled words are underlined in red as are words run together: also helpful. Browse by moving from item

to item headings, graphics, tables, fields, endnotes, footnotes, comments, sections, and pages. Select item, click on a circle on vertical scroll bars, then move to next or previous by clicking on blue double arrows. Going through headings in a document allows for following coherence [you could also do this by inserting a TOC and perusing the logic, or lack of same] View/Document Map displays list of headings in your document in a separate pane you can navigate from one section to another. You can display all headings or only top-level headings, expand or collapse level of detail under a single headings.

Customizing Toolbars

Word View/Toolbars/Customize/Command
Scroll down, select command you want on your toolbar, and just drag it to where you want it on your toolbar. I use superscript for music chord symbols, e.g., Dsus4 A13#5b9: it's handy to have this icon on my toolbar. You can create a bookmark in one part of a document and insert a hyperlink in another part. Clicking on hyperlink goes to bookmark. Insert text anywhere on page: double-click and start typing. Insert objects: pictures, hyperlinks, bookmarks, and outside objects such as Excel worksheets. Automatic formatting: Type a number followed by a period, space and text: Word creates a numbered list. AutoComplete. Type first few letters of word or phrase in the list, AutoComplete tip appears, showing full content. Press Enter: Word inserts the item. Auto Text inserts word and phrases you use repeatedly. You can add your own. Typing this in December, I type the word December and a space [Word shows a little post-it colored note December 9, 1999: if you press Enter, the rest of the date will be typed for you. This can save time. Or you continue typing something else. Legal Ease: Pleading Wizard automates common pleading elements, create new template for each type of pleading format, Table of Authorities is automatically created, based on citations you mark. Supported graphic formats include: AutoCAD .dxf, .cgm, Corel Draw

.cdr, .eps, emf, .gif, .jpg, Kodak Photo CD, Mac PICT, Micrografx .drw, PC Paintbrush .pcs, TIF Targa, .bmp, .rle, .dib, .wmf and WordPerfect Graphics. You must have a graphics filter installed to import some formats. When I went to use a .pcx file, I was prompted for the Office 2000 disk: it quickly installed the translator. Right clicking on a picture will offer options, including show Picture Toolbar, which adjusts brightness, contrast, crops, text wrapping, and can make colors appear transparent. Insert tables from external Excel worksheets or Access datasheet, paste data as a Word table.

Sharing

Send docs by E-Mail or post to Web site. Others can edit document or add comments and send to you. Comments are stored apart from document, labeled with name of user who made the comment. You can list trusted macro sources and digitally sign macros you create. Browser compatibility lets you design your Web page to a specific version of a specific browser. Likewise you can make sure document displays correctly in a previous version of Word.

E-Mail

Send E-Mail from Word, Document Routing lets you E-Mail document serially to several users, one after another: each recipient sees revisions and comments made by previous recipient.

E-Mail Signatures

Found under Tools/Options/General/E-Mail Options/E-Mail Signature tab. Type title of your e-mail signature or choose from list box. Insert text and/or pictures. This is not the most intuitive place to find it. I would rather it appeared under the Edit or Insert menu, but then I could change its location if I wanted by customizing my menus. After

using it once, it appeared under Insert/AutoText/E-Mail Signature. Insert/AutoText/Signature allows you to store multiple often used signatures.

Web Pages

Creating web pages, Web Page Wizard offers background themes, I'm undecided: the themes didn't appeal to me, but one can get started quickly.

Web Page Hyperlinks

Link to another web page, web site, E-Mail address, or Office document. Word keeps track of all links you insert, as well as recently used files, web pages, email addresses to easily insert links.

Insert/Hyperlink/ [Alt+I,I] brings up an Insert hyperlink box from which you can select an Existing File or Web Page, Place in this document, Recent files, browsed pages, inserted links, E-mail address, Screen tip text. Useful.

Save As Web page.

HTML as a Clipboard format. Nested tables let you put one table inside another, put a whole table inside cell of another table. Picture bullets insert tiny pictures before each item in a list allowing you to use WordArt or your own art instead of standard bullets. Personalized Stationery to customize mail docs when using Word as E-Mail editor. Tag preservation ensures when you import an HTML file, all unknown tags are stored, even if Word 2000 cannot display them. This maintains integrity of HTML files, and allows Word 2000 to support future file formats.

Help

Clicking on Help gives you the usual version number information plus two tabs for System Info & Tech Support, under which there is IRQ, DMA, reserved memory locations, and much other system information, e.g., processor and system resources free. Tech Support tab suggests ways to answer questions, including accessing resources on the web. System gives IRQ information, useful when things are not working the way you expect. IRQs for Modem, Audio devices, IDE controllers are all listed, available space on your hard drive, and how your file system is partitioned. The Applications section stated Excel "Has not been started or is not installed." although it **was** installed, but not being used at the moment. It offers suggestions to start the Excel program and press F5: this worked; it then accurately saw that Excel had been started [and was installed]. To keep it interesting, I got the following message: File in Use Office 2000 Review.doc is locked for editing by 'Victor J. Saravia.' Click 'Notify' to open a read-only copy of the document and receive notification when the document is no longer in use. To escape this difficulty I clicked Read-Only, Selected All [Edit/Select All] then attempted to save to a new file. I was informed: The file is read-only. What happened ? I don't know. I had Excel open, was browsing Outlook after I imported my E-Mail addresses and messages. Trying to save to a new file using the name of the old file, Office 2000 Review.doc, I got the above message. I noticed later it DID save it as a temporary file WRL3179.tmp Renaming the cut & pasted version with a different name allowed me to save my work. Of course, I closed and reopened it, just to make sure. Checking properties on the original locked for editing version, I noted it was Archived, changing that switch did not allow for editing. Unfortunately the file is not only locked for editing it will not let me delete it. Hmmm? So this file stays on my hard drive forever? Hmmm Trying to drag it to the Recycle bin gave the same response: it will NOT let me delete it. Hmmm

For some reason, Office thought the document was being protected by someone else [who happened to share my name!] editing it. When I finally thought to shut down the machine, and turn it back on, logic came to the fore: you've turned off your machine, someone CAN'T be editing the file. The earlier file was then available to me and I could delete it; it won't stay forever on my hard drive. Interesting, I like logic puzzles.

Word Web Page Wizard

Frames page editor for creating multiple frame layouts for Web pages. Table of Contents in one frame, Web pages in another, ensuring TOC always visible. Frames toolbar to design frame pages, Word does coding. Left frame can list pages, clicking on page listing in frame would display corresponding page in right frame. Pixel and percentage are now supported units of measurement, allowing specific size and position of web page objects.

Outlook

I like Outlook, particularly the present incarnation. It is a rich application, from viewing your day, to navigating file folders or web pages, you can flag items for Outlook to send you reminders, it automatically saves unsent messages every three minutes while you compose: you won't accidentally lose that massive E-Mail you were composing. You can place Voting buttons in E-Mail messages, request and tally responses. I know some folks who are UNIX command line interface types who do NOT want to get HTML: Outlook will notice how they send messages, and default to sending in the format they sent. In address book I can designate E-Mail messages sent to specific addresses to use plain text only. It keeps them happy, and avoids me making a social blunder irritating them with excess code they don't

want. Signature Picker allows for multiple signatures using your various identities.

Outlook Shortcuts

Outlook Today, Inbox, Calendar, Contacts, Tasks, Notes, and Deleted Items are all shortcuts. Outlook Today gives you the date in a banner, so you know where you are in time (often useful), Tasks, and Messages [E-Mail Inbox and Drafts]. As is usual in Microsoft products, you can easily customize the view, to go directly to Outlook today on startup if you like, show which folders you want to be shown in Outlook [default is Inbox, Drafts, Outbox], Number of days in Calendar you want shown [1x7], your task list can show All Tasks, or just today's tasks, you can sort your tasks by Due Date, Creation Time, or Start Date, in two sort orders, and ascending or descending, and more. There are two monthly calendars, this month and next, which is nice, today's date has a box around it, so you can enter reminders, e.g., I need to be clear: Nov. 12 I will be going to Comdex that evening, I simply click on Nov. 12, add a quick note, so that's at the top of my list that day. Contacts is nice: it lists all your E-Mail addresses, click on them to open up their properties: Names, Physical Address, Phone Numbers, etc. You can assign up to 3 different E-Mail addresses for a contact, using a label for each different address. This is good. You can customize Outlook, to start with Taskpad & Calendar open, for example, which I like: Taskpad can help keep you on track as to what you want to do, Calendar reminds you of what/where you need to be, has alarms, allows you to set recurring events for a set number of times, e.g., Monday nights, 6:30pm for the next 10 Mondays. Day, Work Week, Month Views. It's worth looking at Outlook shortcut keys: it took a while to find them in Outlook help, but they allowed me to navigate more quickly. Alt-1 views 1 day, Alt-9 gives you 9 days in view, Alt-0=10 days. Alt-Hyphen switches you to weeks, Alt-=

[Equals] is months. Ctrl-Tab or F6 moves you between Calendar, TaskPad, and Folder List [just like it always has taken you between document windows in Word].

Conditional Formatting

As in Excel: create rules to highlight e-mail messages, e.g., different colors for different types of messages. Multiple POP3, IMAP4 E-mail and LDAP directory accounts: have one net account at work, another with an ISP for personal use: E-Mail from both accounts delivered to your Inbox. You can edit your E-Mail using Word formatting features.

Excel

So, what do I like? Excel 2000 character format bar gives you not only the name of the font, but also an example as to how it looks [as does Word]. This is slick. You can get results to look the way you want much sooner. You can save your Excel work as a web page: this is something I am enthused about. Corporate internets go down. It is valuable to have another route to the Internet, assuming you are careful with what information you are communicating. In times when you NEED to send information, person at the other end does not NEED to have the version of software that you have, they only need a browser. This can be very useful. You can insert hyperlinks into your Excel documents to point to another document or web address. AutoFill extends cell formatting, one can increment numbers, dates, days of week, you can choose the increment value. Dragging AutoFill handle with right mouse button provides a menu of AutoFill options. Custom AutoFill: you create custom list containing entries for series; Conditional Formatting specifies formatting criteria for a cell or cell range based on up to three conditions or formulas. You can use a formula to set up more complex criteria. You could, for example, set

up your spreadsheet cell to change color when a customer owed more than 30, 60, or 90 days, and multiply it by the factor you charge for aging accounts. Excel includes an add-in to display data in geographical maps, using a map wizard.

Validation Lists

Allow you to type a range of values in a column elsewhere on the worksheet and set up validation rules. When someone begins to enter data, a dropdown arrow appears, clicking on arrow allows picking from a list of valid choices. Validation messages create popup messages when a cell is clicked: give instructions, display error messages: you may force retyping of correct value or just warn but let them type any value.

Excel/New/Expense Statement, Invoice, and Purchase Order templates contain macros. You get a warning re: enabling macros and the option to do so or not. Expense Statement includes autosequential numbering macros, if you like, and gives you a start on making the system you need. Invoice and Purchase Order templates have a small floating toolbar with options including assigning a (sequential) number (or you can type in your own), and capture data in a database.

I appreciate that Excel lets you save your work as 2.1, 3.0, or 4 Worksheet, Excel 95 or 97, dBASE II, III or IV, Excel 97-2000 & 5.0/95 Workbook, as well as a web page, or template. For people who share work, or need backwards compatibility, it is there as Excel "Round Trip" file format

Create worksheet or chart in Excel 2000, save as HTML, bring back to Excel without losing any data. Office Shortcut Bar gives you one click access to: New Office Document, Open Office Document, New

Message, New Appointment, New Task, New Contact, New Journal Entry, New Note. Office Shortcut can float onscreen, or be minimized to go to the taskbar at the bottom of the screen. 12 separate items can be saved on Clipboard. You can have web discussions: typed conversation with several people at once about documents you have published to Web using Office program. Web subscriptions sends you e-mail when document of Web page has been updated. Subscribe to indicate if you want to be notified by E-Mail or on Web page when document changes. A single worldwide executable means one core program version, simplifying deployment and usage for global businesses. Int'l Web pages saved with international text encoding so users in any language system can view correct characters.

Office Web Components

View and manipulate worksheet or database info in Web browser and share over Web. People do NOT have to have Excel to view spreadsheets, charts, and PivotTables and utilize some functionality. Spreadsheet component lets visitors to web site enter text and numbers into worksheet, create formulas, sort, filter, and format. Office saves and reads HTML: share docs even with users who do not have Office 2000. Web docs saved as Office docs and vice-versa. Web document features are preserved when saved to Office format.



INHERENT EVIL, THE HAUNTED HOTEL

Reviewed by Carol Lee

HeadGames Publishing
7646 Golden Triangle Dr
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
(612) 942-5202
<http://www.headgames.net>

At A Glance Rating: *
Price: \$19.99

System Requirements: IBM PC or compatible with Pentium 100 MHz or higher processor (166 Mhz recommended), Windows 95/98-compatible computer system, 16 MB minimum RAM (32 MB recommended), 4X minimum CD-ROM drive (8X recommended), DirectX compatible video card running in 16-bit color, SoundBlaster compatible sound card, 150 MB of hard disk space, 100% Microsoft compatible mouse and driver,

Pros: Good 16-bit, 3D graphics.

Cons: Primitive 3D movement. Inability to change sounds or save games within the game.

Inherent Evil (IE) is a role-playing adventure game in which the player takes on the role of Kyle Reed. The opening scene of the game starts with a call to Kyle from his brother Frank. Against Kyle's wishes, Frank was attempting to re-open the Reed Hotel, which was formerly owned and operated by their parents. Twenty years earlier, their parents and all the hotel guests had disappeared in that hotel. Kyle rushes to the hotel and Frank is nowhere to be seen; the opening scene video ends and the game begins. The player takes it from there to investigate what happened to Kyle's brother, while trying to keep himself (as Kyle) alive while solving puzzles and advancing through eight levels of game play.

I didn't get through the first level, nor did I really want to. Compared to the other adventure games out in the market, IE is primitive. Although the 16-bit 3D graphics are well drawn, the movements are arcane. Instead of the player moving through the hotel, the hotel scenes move for the player. Green arrows point out the directions where the player can move, when the player advances to those indicated directions, the scene shifts to show new background. The feeling that results is that the player is stationary while the background moves. Consequently, the player cannot move step-by-step through the background environment, because the background environment is fixed and only certain backgrounds are available for investigation.

The options are also limited. Most current 3D games allow the player to adjust sound and music through the options menu of the game. However, to lower the music, which often drowns out the other game sounds, the player must go adjust the sound using the sound card's control panel before starting the game. In addition, there seems to be no way of saving the game once you start. Hence, if the player leaves the game before they complete the level, the player would have to restart the level all over

again. This inability to save the game, required me to restart several times, because I was stuck trying to advance to the next level. After awhile, I just gave up on the game.

Although the price of IE is relatively cheap, it is extremely frustrating to play due to its lack of options. I cannot recommend this game to anyone.

QUICKEN SUITE 2000

Reviewed by Carol Lee



Intuit Inc.
2535 Garcia Avenue
Mountain View, CA 94043
(800) 446-8848
www.intuit.com

At A Glance Rating: ***
Price: \$69.95 (includes \$20 rebate)

System Requirements: IBM PC or compatible with 486/66 or higher processor (Pentium recommended), Windows 95/98 or Windows NT 4.0, 16 MB minimum RAM, 2X-Speed or faster CD-ROM drive (4X-Speed recommended to view multimedia), 145 MB of uncompressed hard disk space (includes Quicken Deluxe, TurboTax Deluxe, TurboTax State, and Quicken Family Lawyer; another 33 MB may be needed, if Internet Explorer 4.0 greater is not installed), mouse or other pointing device, VGA (SVGA recommended), 14,400 or higher-baud modem and internet access required to access online features, and sound card and

speakers recommended to listen to audio.

Pros: It's all there in one package.

Cons: It's all there in one package without hard-copy documentation.

Quicken Suite 2000 for Windows includes Quicken Deluxe 2000, Quicken Family Lawyer 2000, TurboTax Deluxe 1999, and TurboTax State 1999. Consumers purchasing Quicken Suite 2000 prior to the shipping dates for the 1999 TurboTax products will receive in-box coupons for both TurboTax Deluxe and TurboTax State for redemption when each product is available. Intuit intends this suite of software to provide the user with a comprehensive financial managing and planning package.

Installation of the suite (not including TurboTax Deluxe or State 1999, which are not yet ready) was relatively painless. The installation program will not allow Quicken Deluxe 2000 to exist on the same computer with another version of Quicken. Quicken Deluxe 2000's installation program detects previous versions and prompts the user to uninstall any detected version. Only after the previous version is uninstalled will Quicken Deluxe 2000 install. After the installation was completed, I found something that is becoming more common on my desktop after a program installs -- two advertiser's icons (one for MySchwab.com and one for Wingspan.com) with the Quicken icons. After I deleted the two advertiser's icons, I continued with the installation of Family Lawyer 2000. Unlike Quicken Deluxe 2000, the installation program for Family Lawyer 2000 does not uninstall or overwrite

Family Lawyer 1999. As a result, I had two versions of Family Lawyer (1999 and 2000) on my computer.

The web page look of Quicken Deluxe 1999 has been changed slightly in Quicken Deluxe 2000. Rather than having folder tabs on top to move between the various sections (Banking, Investing, Household, Taxes, Planning, Reports & Graphics), tabs on the right side of the web page (called "QuickTabs") now exist. The interface has been improved to assist in navigating within the program. Now a QuickTab exists for Online Setup to specify a financial institution for a Quicken account. Quicken uses its online capabilities with Quicken.com to get financial data into Quicken. An improvement in this version is that instead of manually having to request asset class information, Quicken now automatically downloads asset class information, along with improved security news and quotes, and brokerage statements from more participating brokers. However, as in Quicken 1999, the requirement to enter a password before such data can be downloaded still exists, without any option of turning off the password. I still see no reason for a download password, when a data password already exists.

Four new investment alerts have been added to the Investment section, such as alerts for insider trading, new moving averages, when new research is available, and when earnings announcements dates become available. The new Asset Allocation Guide shows a snapshot of the user's current allocation. It provides a benchmark by showing model portfolios, and portfolios that achieve a given rate of return with the least amount of risk. The user can select a model portfolio as a target and get updated feedback on your current allocation vs. your target. A stock or mutual fund can be compared to up to 8 other

stocks and mutual funds, as well as any of the 18 market indices, all on the same chart. These comparisons offer a more comprehensive look at portfolio performance by allowing comparisons with other portfolios.

The integration of Quicken with Quicken.com has been improved to offer a more integrated way of evaluating a stock or mutual fund. Stock Evaluator shows users relevant information and summarizes it in a way that is easy to understand. This feature on Quicken.com can be accessed directly from within Quicken on the Investment Research page (under Activities in the Investing section). Quicken.com also has a new Mutual Fund Evaluator tool that allow the same evaluation and comparison with Mutual Funds also accessed with Quicken on the Investment Research page.

A new feature of the Taxes section is the ability of Quicken Deluxe 2000 to import data from TurboTax for use with tax planning for the coming year. With this import of the user's tax data, Quicken stores this information in a Quicken Tax Profile. With this Tax Profile, the Tax Withholding Estimator provides the projected year-end tax situation and helps to track whether federal taxes are being under or over-withheld. The Tax Alerts have been also been expanded to keep the user apprised of changes in their tax situation. Allowing the import of the previous year's information helps to make the tax estimation more precise.

Quicken has improved the Household Section (formerly known as Home & Car) to keep track of the value of a home by downloading such information from an online database, which provides the price range for similar homes that sold in the user's area. The new House Account Overview provides an at-a-glance picture of net home equity. In addition, the value of the user's car is also

available for downloading. These two new downloading features are indeed good ideas. However, these downloading features can still be improved somewhat. I own a condominium and a 1987 Honda Prelude Si. Although the home value download did provide the latest prices of homes that recently sold in my area, it did not indicate whether these homes were condominiums or not. I assume they were not since they did not indicate a unit number. Hence, the downloaded prices are actually an overestimate of my home's value. It is nice to see such high values (\$400-\$600k), but probably not realistic for my 2 bedroom, 1.5 bath condo, I suspect. My car was also not covered by the Edmunds databank, which Quicken uses to estimate blue book value. The oldest Honda Prelude in the data bank was for 1989. As a result, I chose that year to give me an idea of the best-case value of my car. Again, it is nice to see such a high value (\$3.5-5.5k), but not realistic for my 13 year old car.

The Planning Center, which includes all of the functionality of Quicken Financial Planner, has been reorganized with a better layout for preparing for major life events by offering a set of improved Life Event Planners. New Life Event Planners uses existing data to estimate the monetary requirements needed to fund selected goals. These planners include a Retirement Planner, College Planner, Home Purchase Planner, Special Purchase Planner, Save More Planner and an improved Debt Reduction Planner. It gives the user an overview of the goals that they can setup and provides feedback on the progress of those goals.

Although not earth-shatteringly better, Quicken Deluxe 2000 is a nice update of Quicken Deluxe 1999. The product has evolved to a point that any improvement Intuit makes only seems to add small extra bells and whistles to the product rather than changing it in any significant way. Therefore, it is the choice of the

consumer whether they want the extra bells and whistles, because the product is at its core the same as the previous version. Because I usually like the new bells and whistles offered by the newest versions of Quicken Deluxe, I would buy this product (if I did not get it free for this review). In addition, the cost of this suite of programs is cheap compared to the purchase of its separate parts. If you use Quicken and intend to purchase TurboTax Deluxe and State 1999 anyway, I recommend that you consider Quicken Suite 2000; you can consider Quicken Family Lawyer 2000 as an added bonus.

PERSONAL COMPUTER SECRETS
by Bob O'Donnell

Reviewed by Carol Lee

IDG Books Worldwide, Inc.
919 E. Hillsdale Blvd., Suite 400
Foster City, CA 94404
www.idgbooks.com

At A Glance Rating: *****

Price: \$49.99 retail

System Requirements: None – This is a book.

Pros: Good comprehensive guide to everything related to computers.

Cons: None.

I have been a listener to Bob O'Donnell's radio program, Everything Computers, on KGO 810 AM radio (Saturday's from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. PST), since he started on the program. Although he is not an expert on everything, he knows a lot of technical details and information that he can convey in an easy-to-understand manner in answering the many and various questions he gets every week from his callers. In addition, what he doesn't know he often finds out about with a little research or a little help from his listeners. I am indeed a fan, and so when his book was made available for me for review, I grabbed it.

Like many computer books, *Personal Computer Secrets* is thick (about 2 inches), but like his radio show, it is easy to understand. The book is

divided into five parts: 1) Buying a PC, 2) Enhancing Your PC, 3) Connecting Your PC, 4) Using Your PC, and 5) Fixing Your PC. Each part provides extensive detail and information for each subject area. Although he does not recommend any specific make and model for hardware, he discusses the features or attributes that are important in considering when making hardware selections. He allows the reader to make the final decision by giving them the information that they need to know in making that selection. Although his explanations are detailed, they are not too technical to go over the head of the casual computer user. His troubleshooting guidance is also detailed and provides good instructions for any computer diagnosis. His book is essentially all his radio-show knowledge put together in a very organized paperback with more detail and information on each topic than he could provide on the air without the commercial interruptions.

The software that comes on the CD-ROM with the book is related to the topics that are discussed in the book. Copies of retail demos, freeware, and shareware are provided for six categories of software: 1) Audio/Music, 2) Graphics/Video, 3) Internet, 4) Networking, 5) Utility, and 6) Web Site. However, the most valuable software that is provided is the Adobe Acrobat version of Personal Computer Secrets. The PDF file of Personal Computer Secrets has been electronically indexed to allow for quick searches of key words or phrases from the entire book within the Acrobat Reader application. I have the book at home as a reference guide and the electronic version at work so that I'm ready to answer any questions from my coworkers, who consider me a computer guru.

This book would be a good reference guide to have in any home or workplace with a PC, because it covers all the topics related to the PC.

THEN YOU GOT YOUR BIDDING PADDLE AT THE FRONT DESK



BOOK REVIEWS

WINDOWS 98 ANNOYANCES

by David A. Karp

Reviewed by Carol Lee

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).



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 comprehensive guide to tweaking Windows 98.

Cons: Does Not Cover Windows 98 SE.

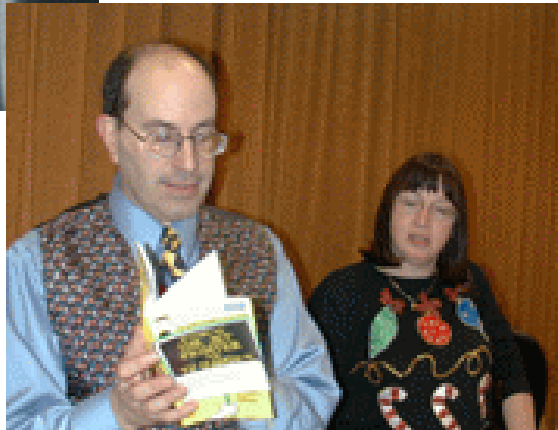
As its name indicates, the book details Windows 98 annoyances. In addition, it offers suggested fixes or work-arounds to most of these annoyances so that Windows 98 works better or at least less annoyingly. The book is also useful in detailing the new features in Windows 98 that did not previously exist in Windows 95 (such as improvements to the Start Menu, File Explorer, and the backup utility; and addition of the Registry Checker (ScanReg) and the System Information utility (Msinfo32)). It provides guidance on managing the registry files, fixing software bottlenecks, and improving system performance overall. It also provides techniques for general troubleshooting of hardware and software problems with Windows 98 and instruction for network setup using Windows 98. The book was extremely informative and relatively easy to understand. Although it is not a book intended to describe every little bit of Windows 98 in the greatest detail, it does describe all the bits of Windows 98 that matter for improving performance of the operating system or at least to make some of its annoying features less annoying. The book is recommended for intermediate and advanced users of Windows 98 who want to know how best to tweak Windows 98 for best performance. All of the software utilities, patches, and add-ons mentioned in the book are available at the following web site: www.annoyances.org. The web site generously provides many the topics included in the book.

Included with the book is a CD-ROM, which contains copies of all the programming code examples from the book. In addition, a 30-day evaluation copy of O'Reilly Utilities - Quick Solutions for Windows 98 Annoyances is included. The software provides an automated way of implementing many of the suggested fixes mentioned in the book and also includes other add-ons to customizing Windows 98 even further.

After the 30-day evaluation period, any changes made to Windows 98 using the software will be returned back to the original settings prior to installing the software. If a licensed version of the software is installed over the trial version, then those prior settings created with the software will be restored.

Although this book is recommended as a good Windows 98 resource, it should be noted that this book was published prior to Windows 98 Second Edition (SE), and as a result, does not cover any of SE new features.

SILENT BIDDING AND LAST CALL



O'REILLY UTILITIES: QUICK SOLUTIONS FOR WINDOWS 98 ANNOYANCES

Reviewed by Carol Lee

O'Reilly Software
101 Morris Street
Sebastopol, CA 95472
(800) 998-9938
www.oreilly.com

At A Glance Rating: ***

Price: \$50

System Requirements: IBM PC or compatible with Pentium or higher processor, Windows 98, 16 MB minimum RAM, CD-ROM drive, 6 MB of hard disk space, VGA monitor.

Pros: Easy-To-Use.

Cons: Only works with Windows 98 (including SE).

After reading O'Reilly's Windows 98 Annoyances, I was eager to adopt some of the recommendations offered in the book by using their software, Quick Solutions for Windows 98 Annoyances. The software comes essentially by itself in a cardboard CD-ROM case. There is no accompanying software manual. But none is really needed. It installs with no difficulty and all screens are well explained. In addition, there is on-line help to provide further details, if needed. The software is divided into four sections:

- 1) Files & Folders,
- 2) Startup Menu & Desktop,
- 3) Internet, and
- 4) Maximizing Performance.

The Files & Folders section offers options to handling files and their folders, such as changing the multiple file names quickly and easily using Power Rename. Using File Version, information regarding the file can be provided. Through the use of check boxes, the user can choose to allow file and folder names to be copied to the Clipboard and the addition of menu items to File Explorer, such as Copy To, Move To, Open With, Open DOS prompt, Print File Listing, and Use Quick View.

The Startup Menu and Desktop section offers enhancements to hiding certain items of Windows 98. I don't know when I'll find a need to change my name (and/or company name) on my computer but it is nice to know that I have software that will allow me to do it anytime I want. Other features allow the hiding of unwanted icons from the control panel and desktop or hiding the taskbar tray. In addition, it provides check boxes for turning off CD auto runs for audio and data and the "Click Here to Begin" arrow.

The Internet section offers the option of disabling certain aspects Internet Explorer desktop integration, such as Active Desktop, Channel Bar, and Favorites in the Start menu. In addition, the Web Browser Delegate allows the selection of which programs are to be used as the default web

browser, e-mail, and other Internet programs. LinkShare converts Netscape bookmarks to Internet Explorer bookmarks and visa-versa. URL shortcuts can be copied more easily using Internet Shortcut checkbox, which adds the option of copying any URL address by right-clicking on it and choosing "Copy URL" from the menu that pops up.

Of the four sections, I used the Maximizing section most. This section provides the option to optimize the virtual memory (swap file) to increase overall system performance. It can also change settings optimally to increase usability of the Windows 98 (such as showing hidden files and/or extensions, improving screen resolutions and fonts, and setting keyboard speed). It provides check boxes for turning off the animated features of Windows 98 to increase responsiveness. After I chose to implement all the options of this section and rebooted the computer, Windows 98 did feel more responsive.

I found this software very useful and recommend it for anyone who wants an easy way of customizing Windows 98 to make it less annoying and/or to increase its performance easily. Because everything in the software is reversible, there is no concern of losing anything or doing anything wrong.

THE LIVE AUCTION DECEMBER 15 1999



PALMPILOT - THE ULTIMATE GUIDE by David Pogue

Reviewed by Carol Lee

O'Reilly & Associates, Inc.

101 Morris Street

Sebastopol, CA 95472

www.oreilly.com

At A Glance Rating: ****

Price: \$29.95

System Requirements: None - This is a book.

Pros: Good comprehensive guide to the 3Com Palm.

Cons: None.

I have been a PalmPilot user for more than 3 years now. I started with the PalmPilot Professional, which I later upgraded to the Palm III simply by replacing its controller board. I love its simplicity and its sophistication. I thought I knew everything there was to know about using the device, until I read PalmPilot - The Ultimate Guide by David

Pogue. This book is a must-have for any Palm Pilot user. It not only details known features of the Palm Pilot; it also includes useful information of the lesser-known features of the Palm Pilot. It provides tips for increasing its usability and performance. I learned how to use the programs that come with the device to better advantage; and I learned new things about the device, such as how to add pictures to my Palm Pilot. I also got a kick out of the "Easter Eggs" hidden within my Palm Pilot.

The second edition of the book covers all Palm devices up to and including the Palm VII. It comes with a CD-ROM filled with freeware and shareware Palm programs that are very useful and described to some extent in the book. The book is intended for both beginners and advanced users of the Palm devices. The book starts out describing the device itself and its built-in programs and features. It then moves on to describing how the Palm syncs with a Windows or Macintosh computer and the features and uses of its Palm Desktop and Hot sync programs. The third and fourth parts of the book goes on to illustrate the "Undiscovered Palm Pilot" features such as using electronic books and multimedia and database files with the Palm Pilot and how to use the Palm Pilot (with the Palm modem) online. The last section of the book provides useful troubleshooting and upgrading tips and techniques. Everything is well written and easy to understand. Anyone with a Palm device should learn at least a thing or two more by reading this book.

Tue., Jan 4, 7PM

Steering Committee meeting

Upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza, Geary Blvd and 16th Ave

Tue Jan 18, 2000

Aladdin Systems

**Private File, DropStuff for Windows,
and FlashBack, & DragStrip**

JANUARY 2000						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sat
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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., Feb 1, 2000

Steering Committee meeting

Upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza, Geary Blvd and 16th Ave

Tue Feb 15, 2000

Adobe

Photoshop 5.5, GoLive 4.0

Tuesday Feb 15 to Thursday 17, 2000

Windows 2000 Conference & Expo, Moscone Center windows2000expo.com

Note: This is a leap year, the definition for leap years is the year must be divisible without a remainder, by four (4) and if a century divisible by four hundred (400). Another Y2K problem for some BIOS.

FEBRUARY 2000						
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27	28	29				

SAN FRANCISCO PC USERS GROUP

STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday, September 7, 1999

The meeting was called to order by President Ron Feiertag at Round Table Pizza, 16th Avenue and Geary Boulevard, San Francisco at 7:11 p.m.

Members present were David Caldwell, Harold Charns, Butler Crittenden, Ron Feiertag, Pierre Hahn, Joseph Puig and Vic Saravia.

The minutes of the August meeting were reviewed and approved with minor corrections.

The Treasurer's report was accepted.

President Ron Feiertag passed around his new SFPCUG President business card. Discussion followed concerning the appropriateness of his personal email versus President@Mail.SFPCUG.Org.

Ron Feiertag notified the group that he registered the SFPCUG website for competition in the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) contest. He also stated that similar registration on the UserGroupNetwork contest will not be done due to the required \$35 fee.

Ron Feiertag stated that an e-postage company is offering the group \$25 and any users \$10 in postage to beta test their new system. They are only interested in small business or home office users. Ron was told that he can follow up on this offer.

A question was asked pertaining to reinstating the mentor's program. Some discussion followed.

Vice President Vic Saravia, by way of the Vice President's report, indicated a need for information dissemination about the group to strengthen purpose and increase membership.

A discussion of *Blue Notes* began. The plan is to produce the newsletter as a Portable Document File (PDF) for download by the members. Need for additional HTML documents was noted for those members who cannot/will not have or use the Adobe PDF reader.

Ron Feiertag stated that Program Chairman Darrell Struck has resigned from that position, and that Ron will be performing the Program Chairman duties until another volunteer is identified. Upcoming programs include:

September 21: Photodex

September 28: Special DSL program at Pac Bell

October 19: Microsoft on Windows 2000

November 16: LearnIT! on their Computer Learning programs

Joseph Puig gave the Webmaster's Report, stating that he is still working on the new web pages and the web server computer. He also gave the membership report, stating that

the membership is "flat".

Pierre Hahn gave the *Blue Notes* Editor's report, stating that the latest copy is in the final stages of production, with all authors' materials received and only assemblage needed. Discussion followed concerning advertising. It was brought up that we cannot participate in the APCUG advertising consortium since monthly publication is required. Regarding advertising, it was mentioned that there is no current rate sheet for advertisers.

Butler Crittenden had no Product Review report.

Old business included only one item, the December auction. Topics discussed were the need to market the event, the recommendation to continue the inclusion of food and the need to contact firms and members soon for donations.

New business involved discussion of the Steering Committee meeting night. The conflict with the same Tuesday meeting night for one other group, and the possibility that some persons might want to attend both meetings, prompted a suggestion to move the meeting to Wednesday or Thursday. Many members stated that either one or both of these nights would produce additional conflicts. It was decided to postpone the discussion under after the new year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Tuesday, October 5, 1999

The meeting was called to order by President Ron Feiertag at Round Table Pizza, 16th Avenue and Geary Boulevard, San Francisco at 7:08 p.m.

Members present were David Caldwell, Harold Charns, Butler Crittenden, Ron Feiertag, Pierre Hahn, Tom McLoughlin, Nick Pasquariello, Joseph Puig, Vic Saravia and Dorothy Walker.

The minutes of the September meeting were reviewed and approved with minor corrections.

The Treasurer's report was accepted.

Introductions of those attending the meeting were made.

Butler Crittenden gave the Product Review report. Some items have been received and others have been distributed to members for review.

Tom McLoughlin stated that *Blue Notes* is now available online in PDF format.

President Ron Feiertag gave the program report. Photodex

bowed out the Friday before the Tuesday meeting. Fortunately, Bob O'Donnell agreed at the last minute to provide the program. A second meeting on Digital Subscriber Lines (DSL) was held at Pacific Bell on September 28th. An email was sent to each of the presenters thanking them.

Microsoft will present the October program on Windows 2000. The time and place have been changed to accommodate the expected large audience. It will be at 5:00 p.m. at the Embarcadero Hyatt Regency. The November meeting will be LearnIt!, presenting their low cost software training.

Joseph Puig gave the Webmaster's report. As mentioned, *Blue Notes* is available on the web site in PDF format. He also stated that a new DSL has been ordered for the SFPCUG web site. There was discussion on web space on the server vs. using the Pac Bell space provided with the DSL. Other discussion involved audio and video files on the web site, and creating a member's only area for discussions and news.

Joseph Puig also gave the membership report. New and renewals are trickling in. A suggestion was made to have a special raffle for new/renewal members. Another suggestion was to have a membership information table for the Microsoft meeting.

Tom McLoughlin gave the *Blue Notes* editor's report. The

Blue Notes PDF file is 170K for 38 pages in color. The original Word Perfect file was 900K. He presented a question about how many to print and how to have them printed. He also asked whether the December issue, for the auction, should be printed. The answer was "Yes".

The December auction was mentioned. An auctioneer is needed, Richard Katz was suggested.

Old business brought up the issue of President business cards. A motion was made, seconded and passed to get new President business cards with the SFPCUG email address. The vote was 5 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain.

New business involved web design assistance. An email was distributed asking for interested persons. There have been no meetings on this subject to date.

Pierre Hahn presented the results of his research on user group newsletter ad rates. The most expensive newsletter charged \$225 for a full page ad, \$65 for a business card ad. The cheaper newsletters were \$30-\$50 for a full page ad, \$12 for a business card ad.

David Caldwell volunteered to coordinate food at the December meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Tuesday, November 3, 1999

The meeting was called to order by President Ron Feiertag at Round Table Pizza, 16th Avenue and Geary Boulevard, San Francisco at 7:05 p.m.

Members present were David Caldwell, Harold Charns, Ron Feiertag, Pierre Hahn, Tom McLoughlin, Joseph Puig, Vic Saravia and Dorothy Walker.

The minutes of the October meeting were reviewed and approved with minor corrections.

There was no Treasurer's report. There was discussion about bills that need to be paid, including the Mailboxes, etc. mailbox and the phone bill for the Internet server. Joseph Puig states that he has several member checks to be deposited. All information will be forwarded to Treasurer Nancy Struck.

Harold Charns was nominated to replace Nancy Struck as Treasurer beginning next month when she resigns. The motion was seconded as passed.

A check for \$300 was received from Microsoft for their *Blue Notes* ad by Ron Feiertag, who will receive the customary 15% fee from the Treasurer. He invited other members to sell ads in *Blue Notes* and receive 15% fees that are given as an incentive to bring this revenue into our organization. A question concerning the 15% commission was asked, and it was decided that this has been the standard for some time.

Ron Feiertag gave the Presidents report. He has sent emails to several vendors requesting donations of products for the December auction. Some positive results have already been received. Publicity has also been sent out.

Tina Saravia (wife of Vice President Vic Saravia) has volunteered to be Volunteer Coordinator.

Vic Saravia skipped the Vice Presidents report since there was nothing to report.

President Ron Feiertag gave the program report. About 200 people attended the Microsoft Windows 2000 program. Discussion concerned the perception by many that the presentation was oriented toward Windows NT administrators and not for regular PC users and was therefore too technical for many of the SFPCUG attendees. Ron agreed to keep this guidance in mind when he schedules future programs.

The November meeting will be LearnIt!, presenting their low cost software training. They will present an introductory training session on Macromedia's products.

Joseph Puig gave the Webmaster's report. The server is down, but the virtual server on Richard Couture's machine is operational. Email, FTP and Internet services are all working. The dial-up lines are down momentarily due to phone line installation switch over.

Joseph Puig also gave the membership report. New and renewals are arriving. The membership is remaining fairly constant. He mentioned that he received some membership information separated; he stated that the membership envelopes must be kept intact for him to reliably keep track of all member information.

The December auction was discussed. This will be the 8th annual. Product labeling was mentioned, last year it was a group effort at Butler's house the weekend before the auction. Last year there were about 200 items, with 25 or so sold in the live auction. Several requirements for this year were delineated. An email should be sent to all

members reminding them of the auction and the pot-luck dinner. Someone must go to Costco for chips, etc. David Caldwell volunteered to coordinate food. Other needs include red dots for marking sold items and cash for change. Regarding an auctioneer, Richard Katz is currently on vacation and will be asked on his return.

Tom McLoughlin gave the *Blue Notes* report. The December issue will be two publications, the standard quarterly downloadable issue and a 4-page auction issue. He stated that he needs the product list by December 1 for publication.

The issue of Steering Committee meeting night was reintroduced. It was noted that Butler Crittenden was not in attendance due to another meeting at the same time. It was decided that this needs to be discussed but not until more information is known about schedule conflicts. The topic was tabled until early next year.

The need to reserve meeting space for next year was brought up. David Caldwell volunteered to handle the matter.

New business included the national Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG) election. Since no one had any comments about any of the candidates, the topic was concluded.

Tom McLoughlin states plans to produce *Blue Notes* every other month next year, and monthly the year after.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

PRESIDENT Ron Feiertag	president@mail.sfpcug.org 415-391-4905	VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR Tina Saravia	Orchidanica@goplay.com 415-242-0429
VICE-PRESIDENT Vic Saravia	vice-president@mail.sfpcug.org 415-242-0429	<i>Blue Notes</i> - Editors	bluenotes@mail.sfpcug.org
SECRETARY Open	secretary@mail.sfpcug.org	Pierre M. Hahn Tom McLoughlin	415-474-1587 510-654-4027
TREASURER Harold Charns	treasurer@mail.sfpcug.org 415-861-6043	<i>Blue Notes</i> FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED Tom Karnes	415-431-024
Assistant TREASURER David Caldwell	treasurer@mail.sfpcug.org 415-777-1935	MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Joseph Puig	jbpuig@mail.sfpcug.org 415-564-7730
WEBMASTER Joseph Puig	WebMaster@mail.sfpcug.org 415-564-7730	PROGRAM DIRECTOR Ron Feiertag	programs@mail.sfpcug.org 415-391-4905
PRODUCT REVIEW COORDINATOR Butler Crittenden	butlerc@hooked.net 415-346-9321	SIG COORDINATOR Tom McLoughlin	tommcl@mail.sfpcuq.org 510-654-4027

**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.)