

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 benefits, 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, information about **Blue Notes**, the club's dial-up Internet services, activities of our various Special Interest Groups. etc. SLIP accounts are available - 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 or call 415-346-2644.

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 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 Meetings 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 7PM and end by 9PM

First time guests are admitted free, after they are asked for a donation of \$4.

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. Civic Center BART and MUNI is ½ a block away.

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 BlueNotes

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
 - * Graphics welcome and requested if possible
- 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. You may alternately save your files in Rich Text Format (**.rtf** extension) then send them to bluenotes@mail.sfpcug.org. Should special formatting be necessary, forward a hard copy to the Editor. Contact *Blue Notes* staff, e-mail, bluenotes@sfpcug.org.

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President's Message

by Butler Crittenden



Mayday! Mayday!
Certainly this is one meaning of Mayday--well-known from movies and novels, when a ship or plane is in trouble and a signal is sent crying for help. Another: all across the world, except for the United States, May Day is celebrated in support of labor. Perhaps one reason the day is not celebrated in the U.S. is that for many years, including some 45 years after World War II, May Day was observed in the U.S.S.R. as a day of national pride, with a focus on its revolution and military capabilities, and presumably the U.S. did not wish to lend any symbolic support to its Cold War adversary.

For SFpcUG, Mayday! in the first sense of the term seems appropriate. Coincidentally our gradual trimming down in size began about the time the Berlin Wall came down. Our club's slow decline from 1000 members, or was it 1200?, to our present 150 or so, is not connected with the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. or which day labor is honored. But it is fact that once "big mo" is lost, once atrophy begins, the results can be tough on nations and computer clubs alike.

In the club's glory-days there were precious few PCs, and the few that there were did very little by today's standards. No doubt exaggerating somewhat, the small community of PC users felt a great need to huddle together and garner knowledge from each other. Indeed, the early computer-industry model was "cooperation" (as opposed to competition and secrecy), which spilled over to the user groups, where everyone was eager to share his or her knowledge with others. Our club, the first in the Bay Area and one of the first in the nation, quickly became the proverbial large frog in a small pond.

Today the computer penetrates broad and deep in the Western world, and is vastly more complex -- in terms of both software and hardware. The Internet represents a vast set of applications and uses for the computer, not to mention thousands of programs that might be of use to small-business and home users. The need for cooperation among users in learning about computers, software, and the Internet is perhaps greater than ever. Yet classic user groups find their membership down, and a few have closed down. What is going on?

Several new Bay Area computer groups seem to be big successes. Their focus is the .com world. Their programs include no-host bars, "networking" (mingling, swapping cards), announcements of jobs offered and job-seekers announcing their talents and availability, and guests or guest-panels discussing some aspect of the Internet. Their members tend to be young, with lots of women involved. (Fortunately the association of Internet Professionals, A.I.P., meets 2nd Tuesdays, so attending their meetings does not preclude attending SFpcUG's. Otherwise I might be reluctant to admit they exist and have a reasonable balance of young men and women.)

Having attended several of these meetings, there is a notable difference. Their focus is not nuts-and-bolts, not even software reviews and demonstrations. Networking is a good idea for job-seekers and getting to know others in the Internet industry, not to mention other possibilities, and SFpcUG can increase this component of meetings if members wish. We are fortunate to meet at a location that permits snacks, coffee, and soft beverages, so perhaps this should be reinstated. A.I.P. offers SIGs (Special Interest Groups) -- the success and content of which are not known to me. We've benefitted considerably from SIGs in the past, and no doubt rejuvenation of several of them could boost our club. The question is: which SIGs do our members want most.

Steering Committee meetings are one place that changes are planned. New members are both needed and welcomed. While attendance at three meetings is required to become an official, voting member, the views of new attendees are valued from the beginning. There will be a lot of smaller meetings and e-mail discussions, to which you all are invited as well.

Today is May Day. Let's celebrate it as a time to renew our labor on behalf of the club and not as an SOS signal. Just a small boost from each member and momentum will reverse. While SFpcUG's future is not a life-or-death matter, we can all benefit from a stronger club, better presentations, more members, and greater outreach. The objective is to have every member feel that s/he is learning, having fun, and has spent a short evening in beneficial way. Please e-mail your suggestions and preferences.

Editor's Notes

by Tom McLoughlin



Welcome to the second edition of *Blue Notes* for the year 2000.

What can I say but, that, is DVD or CD/RW hot, or what? We have in this issue three articles on CD's, varying in topic from the notion of CD/RW overtaking tape drives all together to DVD-RAM. These articles come from three completely different sources. So you have a great deal of flavor to choose from.

If we had started we could have produced an issue that reflected March and April in the past tense. We are a little late, so we are presenting the offerings of March and April along with a few from May and looking forward with this issue being a May-June issue. Compute that!!

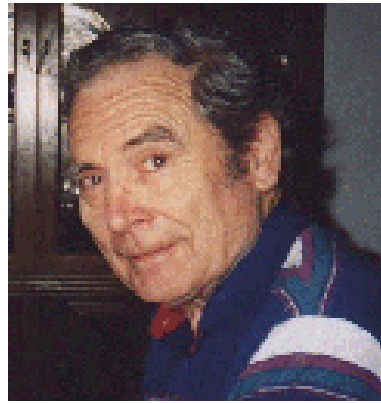
I would like to applaud the newly elected officers of the SfpcUG: Butler Crittenden, President, Donald Oclassen, Vice-President, Harold Charns, Treasurer, Judy Gaer, Secretary. Good luck to all of these people and thank you for stepping forward.

In addition to the articles mentioned we have some reviews from Carol Lee who has graciously agreed to be Product Review Coordinator, taking Butler's place as he becomes President. Additionally we have inserts from Dealsguy and Ken Fermoye. APCUG has a group of people who are offering articles among whom, Don Singleton, sends along an article about posting graphics in AOL e-mails.

I hope you enjoy this issue. If you need to contact me, e-mail me at the following: bluenotes@sfpcug.org.

Ken's Korner

by Ken Fermoyle



After meeting notices and other club news, product reviews make up a major share of the content in most user group publications.

Therefore, it's important—even critical—that they be done properly. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case.

In the 2½ years since I started my Ken's Korner column I've read at least 2,000 newsletters, sent to me by groups that use the articles. I don't pretend to read every single one cover to cover, but I do scan them all and I do read most of the interesting material, including reviews. Most are okay, some are very good, and some are terrible! The majority of them would be improved if reviewers followed a few simple rules.

- Honesty is the only policy – Yes, you want to keep vendors happy so they will continue to support your group and the UG community as a whole, but your first obligation is to your fellow members. This means telling it like it is. If you find a flaw in the product, tell your readers about it.
- Be fair to readers & product – Don't blame the product for your shortcomings or those of your computer, however. If a software

program runs slower than you'd like, maybe it's because your machine doesn't have enough RAM. Or perhaps you haven't configured things properly. You need to put things into context so readers can judge whether a flaw you report is inherent in the product or may be pilot error.

- Accuracy is vital - I've read many reviews in which the reviewers criticized a product with which I was familiar. It was obvious to me that the reviewer didn't understand it, had not read the manual or help page carefully, and had not sought help from a more experienced fellow member or the product's Tech Support before writing the review.
- Explain user benefits – Up front, preferably in the first paragraph, tell readers what the product is designed to do for them and how it can make their computing life easier. Be specific enough so they can determine whether or not the product would be useful for the type of computing they do most often.
- Specify system requirements – We all know that requirements listed a box aren't usually realistic. Sure, a graphics program may run with just 32MB or RAM, but it will make a snail's pace look speedy. Spell out exactly how your system is configured so readers can compare it to their own setups. This is part of being fair, Item 2 above.
- Balance subjectivity, objectivity – You're allowed to editorialize, but make it clear when you're giving a subjective opinion. ("This program was somewhat difficult for me to use because the interface is different from the XYZ software that I normally use" is a clearly-labeled subjective statement." "It took exactly 5.4 seconds to save to save a 5.6MB file to this disk" is clearly objective.)

- Check out tech support – Is there an 800 number? How long were you on hold before a real live techie was available? Is a manual furnished in the package? Is the manual helpful? (Hint: Lots of illustrations, including screen shots, and a very complete Index, with abundant cross-indexing are characteristics of a really good manual.) Remember the fairness factor, however, and check to see what experiences others have had with this vendor's tech support.

- Include relevant details – Give readers the suggested price, and user group discount, if one is offered. Add complete vendor contact information: address, phone & fax numbers (both sales & tech support), website URL, e-mail address.

Your group may have its own set of product review guidelines. If not, it would be a good project for an editorial committee to undertake. Such guidelines should spell out minimum and maximum lengths, how a review should be delivered to the editor (usually on diskette or via e-mail), what file format should be used (plain ASCII text, Word, Rich Text Format, etc.) and other editorial requirements.

Correct grammar and spelling are certainly important, but don't let lack of writing experience stop you from doing reviews. Honesty, accuracy and fairness are more important than an occasional split infinitive or misspelling. Do a spell check, and you might want to have a third party check your opus for obvious goofs (An ex- or current English teacher would be great).

Those are the basics. Follow them and you will be a real asset to your group when it comes to doing product reviews that are effective, readable and useful for readers.

One Size Fits All' Not True When Choosing DTP Tools

By Ken Fermoyale

As a writer specializing in specific areas—cars and RVs during the '50s, '60s and '70s, to computers since 1984—I've been asked the same thing time and again: "What is the best _____? Fill in the blank with *car*, *van*, *camper*, *computer* or whatever.

Since I began writing a desktop publishing (DTP) column for *Computer Currents* back in the mid-1980s, the most common query has been: "What is the best DTP program?"

My stock answer in all cases: "There is no one *best* of anything; one size does not fit all. A single person might be happy with a sporty roadster but a family of five needs a roomy sedan or minivan. By the same token, a publishing professional needs very different tools than the average computer owner."

In fact, in some cases, a full-featured word processing program might serve all of a user's DTP needs. Let's look at typical uses for publishing software, then try to match them with the tools available.

(One note: Things are complicated today by the growth of online publishing, which involves such things as hypertext markup language (HTML) coding and Acrobat portable document format (PDF) files. I will cover this area in a future column. For now, I'll concentrate hardcopy print output.)

First comes what I call "personal publishing." This includes creating greeting cards, holiday season letters, simple 2- or 4-page newsletters, and 1-page bulletins or flyers. Microsoft Home Publishing, any of the Print Shop-type programs or Microsoft Word let you combine formatted text and clipart or digital images, including photos, and flow text from column to column to produce this kind of work.

Mac versions of Word and Print Shop are available. If you want to explore Linux platform possibilities, check out Corel's offerings.

Next step up is production of more complex documents: 8- to 32-page newsletters or journals; long reports that require footnoting or indexing; trifold brochures; and anything that includes imbedded tables. I've long recommended Microsoft Publisher for such midlevel DTP work. It does everything that entry-level programs can, and it offers a lot of the features that high-end programs do.

I began experimenting with Publisher when it first came out. At the time, I was editing and producing newsletters for five clients, ranging from a Maritime Museum and large mobile home park to a retail store, bicycle organization and high-tech firm specializing in printer and fax testing software suites. I was a devoted Ventura Publisher fan in those days, having used it since serving as a beta tester before Version 1.0 was released.

Switching the retail store and bicycle publications to Publisher was easy. I continued to use Ventura for the other newsletters because they demanded special pagination or other features that the first version of Publisher didn't offer. From the mid- to late-1990s, I found myself using Publisher for more and more newsletters as Microsoft added to its capabilities.

I recommend Publisher regularly in my presentations to DTP SIGs and Media Workshops. It is well-suited for User Group (UG) newsletters, and it is widely used for that purpose. The majority of the 100-plus UG publications I receive each month from groups that use my Ken's Korner column are produced by editors using MS Publisher.

In fact, if pressed, I would have to admit that Publisher comes closest to the "one size fits all" concept for the usual DTP chores of most SOHO users. And the price is right, about \$100 for Publisher 2000 and \$129 for Publisher Deluxe 2000, with rebates of \$20 in the retail boxed programs for users of earlier Publisher versions.

If your goal is to produce long documents, Microsoft Word may well do the trick. Recent versions include many of the features that made Ventura Publisher the program of choice for books, theses and lengthy reports during the '80s.

Microsoft Publisher is not the tool for professional publishing chores, and it is neither meant nor advertised to be the right choice for such work. When you move up to this level, suitable applications cost much more and are more difficult to master. Prices start at about \$500 and escalate from there. Add plug-ins that facilitate specialized tasks, and cost of a complete publishing package can run \$2,000 and more. Companion software, such as high-end graphics applications (and *their* plug-ins), can more than double that figure.

Programs in this category include Adobe's PageMaker 6.5 Plus, FrameMaker and InDesign; Quark XPress; and Corel's Ventura 8. The Adobe products and Quark XPress come in both Windows and Macintosh versions but Ventura is available for Windows only.

MultiRead Spec Brings DVD Rewriteables Closer to Reality

By Ken Fermoye

Recent action by the Optical Storage Technology Association (OSTA) to extend the capabilities of its "MultiRead" optical drive specification will make rewriteable DVD drives more practical. Lack of compatibility between drives from different makers has hampered growth of the technology to date.

All CD- and DVD drives that conform to the new MultiRead2 specification will read 2.6GB DVD-RAM ReWriteable media. Panasonic, a pioneer in DVD-RAM, projects that industry-wide DVD-RAM drive sales will reach 1.5 million units by the end of 2000.

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

That means lower prices, and not just for revwriteable DVD drives. CD-RW drives probably will drop, too.



I wouldn't be surprised to see CD-RW drives going for about \$150 in time for Christmas, if Panasonic's projections prove to be accurate. DVD-RAM is the industry's first ReWriteable DVD format, and it provides a number of significant advantages over other removable, ReWriteable storage options. These include:

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

Panasonic began shipping its DVD-RAM drive in April 1998, and was the first company to deliver a DVD-RAM drive fully compliant with the DVD Forum specification. In January, Panasonic announced plans to market its first DVD-RAM-based video recorder, which will offer consumers "exceptional picture quality, multi-disc playback, digital recording and random access when connected to home theater components" the company claims. — *A TidByte from Ken's Korner*

Ken's Korner TidByte

Firm Offers Free Tool To Fight 'Love You' Virus

By Ken Fermoye

A temporary free solution for the "I Love You" virus and its various mutations, latest in the epidemic of malicious viruses, is available from Binary Research International (BRI). Other sources also offer information about and help stopping the virus.

The virus, called the "worst in history," began to appear as "Joke" files and possibly other mutations within 24 hours or so of its birth. It acts as a worm and those who use Microsoft's Outlook Express seem to be most vulnerable.

Those interested in BRI's solution can download the e-mail content filtering program MailMarshal directly from BRI's web site www.binaryresearch.net/. Alternatively, Binary Research will ship the software to those who prefer to receive it on CD. While the normal evaluation period for MailMarshal is 21 days, Binary is offering to extend that an additional three weeks to ensure the "'I Love You'" threat has subsided.

The widespread and devastating impact of the virus caught individuals, governments and corporations of all size off guard. Estimates of lost productivity and commerce as a direct result of this one virus attack are in the billions of dollars—and still climbing.

I have not yet tested MailMarshal V.3, a third-generation e-mail management software tool from Designer Technology Ltd., an Auckland (NZ) software developer. I plan to do so ASAP but wanted to get this word out quickly as possible because of the urgency of the virus problem. Also, BRI's track record is excellent.

BRI is the former wholly-owned subsidiary of Binary Research Ltd. of New Zealand, best known as the original developers of Ghost (now Norton Ghost), the hard-disk cloning utility that was acquired by Symantec Corp. in 1998. BRI is also the master distributor for RemotelyAnywhere, SkunkLabs' Media Studio, Win², News Clipper and WebMarshal.

Reportedly, MailMarschall offers immediate, simple, effective e-Mail protection, without requiring users to download the latest virus definition enhancement. By relying solely on an anti-virus solution, organizations need to wait several hours or even days for a potential fix.

"With its ability to scan incoming messages, MailMarshal denies or quarantines messages based on a variety of criteria. It can control the movement of commercially sensitive data and proprietary information, give legal liability protection, block junk mail and eliminate inappropriate use," a company spokesperson reports. By monitoring and controlling key words (lexical scanning), users or system administrators can effectively remove the threat of malicious viruses, including the current "I Love You".

One last word of caution, the equivalent of "Don't quit your day job!" Don't ignore your other virus protection software. True, it sometimes takes time for the virus-killers to work out and post their solutions, but

they remain valuable tools to help keep your system from being vandalized.

Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM PC Users Group and PC World columnist offers the following advice.

"You may have already received one [copy of the virus e-mail]. If not, be patient. Because the "I Love You" worm is heading your way. (I got four already.)

"Two rules to follow:

Update your virus file right now.

Scan ****every**** e-mail attachment before opening.

If you're interested in the details, read PC World's New article at www.pcworld.com/pcwtoday/article/0,1510,16582,00.htm. Or look behind the scenes with Steve Gibson www.grc.com compilation below.

The PC World article reads in part:

"Like the Love Letter virus, the variant spreads when the 10307-byte attachment is opened. In the original version, the message text reads, 'kindly check the attached LOVELETTER coming from me.' In both versions, the .vbs extension indicates a Visual Basic Script. If you open the attachment, the script inserts a number of files into Windows system directories. The virus then sends a copy of itself to all the addresses in a Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express directory."

Ken's Korner Tip

Add Professional Look To Your Greeting Cards

By Ken Fermoye

Many computer owners use various software programs and inkjet printers to create their own greeting cards. It's fun, and people who receive them seem to appreciate the effort made to produce customized cards made especially for them.

My wife Liz and I have been designing our own greeting cards for years and look constantly for new ways to make them even more attractive and professional-looking. We've tried various paper stocks, generally favoring card stocks in the 55- to 65-lb. range. Recently we found one from Wausau that is a real winner!

It is called Exact Bristol and it is a medium card stock (67-lb) with semi-smooth finish. It costs under \$10 for 250 sheets and comes in several colors, including blue, ivory, yellow, gray and more. Every store might not stock all colors but you're likely to find ivory, which makes very attractive cards. The semi-smooth stock works best with clipart. For cards that feature photos you should use Bristol smooth stock or a glossy photo paper.

Take Rest Breaks, Exercise To Prevent Computer Ailments

By Ken Fermoye

Between us, my wife and I offer a catalog of physical ills caused by long hours of working on computers: repetitive stress injury (RSI), neck pain, backaches and vision problems. Liz underwent surgery twice for carpal tunnel syndrome and still has frequent wrist and hand pain.

I have suffered from aggravated neck and back injuries. My vision has deteriorated from 20 years of staring at a monitor, although admittedly age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and cataracts have been more damaging.

The sad truth is that if we knew 15 years ago what we know now, these problems need not have occurred. Or if they had, they would have been less severe. Even sadder is that prevention of many computer-related ailments is neither difficult nor especially time-consuming.

Frequent rest breaks are vital, says my chiropractor, Kurt W. Rice, who is also my son-in-law, God bless him. (He has helped me more times in recent years with neck and back problems than I care to remember!)

The breaks needn't be lengthy. Dr. Kurt recommends that we get up from our chairs every half-hour or so, stretch our backs and walk for a

minute or two. Other experts offer different opinions about frequency and duration of breaks but all agree that they are vital.

Sitting and working at a computer creates more tension and stress on muscles, nerves, tendons and joints than most of us realize. Our bodies fight gravity every minute that we're seated. Breaks alleviate this tension and stress.

To prevent the dread carpal tunnel syndrome, during your break let your hands go limp at the wrist and wiggle them vigorously in what some call "the clerk & typist exercise."

Some people use voice recognition programs to cut down on their need to use a keyboard and mouse. I find that difficult; after more than 50 years of banging away at typewriter and computer keys, dictation comes hard to me. Now that voice recognition is improving and more reliable, however, I've resolved to use it more often. A major benefit is that you can use a microphone or headset while standing or even lying down. I plan to try dictating drafts, then to rewrite and edit as necessary from the keyboard.

Vision experts warn that we should take "eye breaks" even more frequently. Every 10 or 12 minutes, look away from the monitor at objects 10 to 12 feet away. When I'm working with a word processor or any other program that allows me to increase type size easily and temporarily, I do it. Working with 14- instead of 10-point type prevents squinting and straining to see my work. It also allows me to sit up straight, not bent over the keyboard, and you can always reduce point size before printing or sending e-mail.

I mentioned my neck and back injuries earlier. The neck problems began about 17 years ago. I was riding my bicycle when a large tree limb broke off and fell on me. (Fortunately I was wearing a good

helmet or the freak accident might have killed me.) That caused some damage, which increased with age and was aggravated by working on computers and long-distance cycling. The pain got so bad I could not turn my head to either side more than 12 or 15 degrees. Dr. Kurt came to the rescue, with manipulation, ultra-sound and heat packs. He recommended several simple exercises, which I try to do regularly.

My back injuries were computer-related. The first came when I installed a second drive in one of our machines. I crawled under a desk to get at the computer case. After removing all the cables, I tried to lift the box and slide it out to where I could work on it, not waiting to shift to a position that would give me more leverage.

Bad move. I heard a pop and was in instant agony. It took several weeks of Dr. Kurt's ministrations to recover from that one. I injured it again in October 1999 after conducting my monthly desktop publishing/word processing SIG. I took a computer and 17-inch monitor out of a car trunk with a high lip that made it impossible to lift them properly. I had to bend and lift with my back—and *pop*, there it went again! This time, recovery took more than even longer.

I mention these details to make a point. The first instance was pure accident. No way could I foresee that a brittle, rotted pepper tree branch would break off and fall just as I pedaled under it. The second injury occurred because I didn't take time to position myself properly. The third case was avoidable too; I should never have tried to lift heavy objects out of that particular car truck. Trouble is, I forget my hard-used back is more vulnerable now than it was even 20 ago, and I think many of us who have reached senior citizen status do the same.

I just caught myself in a no-no a few minutes ago. I wanted a book from a built-in shelf high and to the right of my home office

workstation. I started to reach up, twisting my back at an awkward angle. Various muscles prepared to scream in protest, so I did what I should have done in the first place. I moved my chair out of the way, got a step stool I keep folded behind the door, set it firmly in place and climbed up to find the desired book. It took a few extra minutes, but it kept me from aggravating my previously-injured back.

The book, by the way was *Zap! How your computer can hurt you*—and what you can do about it. Written by Don Sellers (edited by Stephen E. Roth), it was published by Peachpit Press in 1994. It's now out of print but Peachpit has a condensed version, *25 Steps to Safe Computing*, also by Sellers, that is still available for \$5.95. (Remember that Peachpit offers discounts to user group members.) Either would be a good addition to your library.

You can also check out my Website at www.zyworld.com/wordsmithken. I'll be adding links to several computing safety sites there.

Meanwhile give yourself, and your body, a break...at least once every half-hour!

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(Note from the Author: Questions can be sent by e-mail to djs@ionet.net. I request, but do not absolutely insist, that I be sent a copy of any issue in which the article appears. Please mail to 3311 South 127 East Place, Tulsa, OK 74146.)



From The Dealsguy

Bob Click
Greater Orlando Computer UG

The comments about my disgusting experience with Best Buy brought a tremendous response. I was deluged with people's experiences, almost all bad. I have an attorney, but no response yet from Best Buy. More next month.

***Here's a caveat** when buying rebated products from catalogs. I learned that "Net Objects" had a \$200 rebate on their "Fusion 4.0" Web site software (too late to include it in the column). To order on their Web site was \$299.00 before the rebate. Then I received a new catalog from "PC Mall" offering it for \$269.00 (\$69.00 after rebate), \$30.00 cheaper. I seldom order rebated items, but relented and ordered it from PC Mall for that kind of rebate since I'm told Net Objects is a reliable company.

In the package from PC Mall, I found the product, no receipt, and just a very plain shipping slip. I called PC Mall and was faxed a receipt, but it also was plain with no logo on it. A phone call revealed that was not acceptable to Net Objects for the rebate, so I called PC Mall asking for a software receipt with their logo to be mailed. After a week and no receipt, I called again and was promised the proper receipt by mail a

second time. After the third call and no response from PC Mall, I did the best I could to send for my rebate (before its deadline) with what materials I had to qualify, including a copy of the catalog pages offering the product.

Had it not been for the good graces of Net Objects customer service, I would have been out the \$200 rebate (pleading on my knees may have helped). When I asked Net Objects about their upcoming version 5.0 upgrade, seems I had bought it too early for a free one, but they'd send it anyway because it was close. What a nice staff to work with at Net Objects. I came out OK, but no thanks to PC Mall. Interesting that version 4.0 had no free tech support, but version 5.0 does. Imagine my relief when I received the \$200 rebate check.

***Regarding people with cable or DSL** being susceptible to prying eyes, Paul Witheridge from the Sarnia, Ontario group suggests that just because you are using ordinary dial-up access to the Internet doesn't mean you are not susceptible to prying hackers. He stresses that everyone has the same problem without a firewall, but the increase in vulnerability for 24/7 connections (cable and DSL connections on full time) is owed to the fact that they normally keep the same IP address. The dial-up modem has a different address whenever you sign on and you are normally not on long enough to catch anybody's attention, or at least to be of use as a remotely controlled hacking site. I'm sure you will read articles about this according to what I see in various newsletters.

According to the Gibson site, Zone Alarm, is the better firewall <http://www.zonelabs.com/downloads/zonalnm20.exe>. Paul Witheridge states that some people can pass Steve's tests with flying colors, even though they may have taken NO special precautions, so they have no

problem. Take the test at [<http://grc.com>] and be your own judge. He explains further, but I have limited space.

***Sorry I didn't do my** homework for the Pram battery software. I've had e-mails saying it's for Macs only. I didn't check or I would have mentioned that. However, check your favorite shareware Web site to find similar software for a PC. Your CMOS battery condition is important.

***AOL disks have become so commonplace** that most people have enough to tile their bathroom walls. Next time you stop at a Kmart store, notice their free BlueLight.com disks hanging on a post at the checkout counter for free. I've heard few complaints about their Bluelight.com free Internet service. They are certainly making it easy to try. They have telephone tech support also. Perhaps one bathroom wall could be tiled with Kmart disks.

As far as I know, the deals from Caere are still good. Visit [<http://www.caere.com/survey/usergroups.asp>] to have the order forms mailed to you. The special offer from World Skyline should also be good yet. The Adobe photo site is good indefinitely (corrected URL is <http://www.activeshare.com>).

***A Reminder From Adobe**

I printed this one before, but at the FACUG conference in Kissimmee, FL, Louise Miller from Adobe asked me to make sure you knew about this discount. Adobe is, without a doubt, one of the user group's best supporters. Peachpit Press/Adobe Press offers up to 40% off the list prices. Order 1 - 10 books and receives a 20% discount. Eleven or more books get a whopping 40% discount, so ordering in bulk pays.

Have your group's special offers coordinator contact Louise Miller or Rye

Livingston for the form.

***From Our Friends at JASC Software**

Belated Happy New Year from your friends at JASC Software! As you may have heard, we recently created a free digital imaging community called StudioAvenue.com(tm) for all Paint Shop Pro users. When you join StudioAvenue.com, you'll be able to:

Securely store and share your photos over the Web with friends and family,

Create unique photo-personalized greeting cards and gifts,

Order high-quality reprints of your favorite photos,

Search and browse through hundreds of photo communities,

Use advanced viewing technology to easily zoom, pan, and explore your photos,

Get 50 MB of free photo storage,

Enter fun contests - and win cool stuff!

"If you've already joined us at StudioAvenue.com, thank you. If you haven't, then please take a moment and read about all the great benefits StudioAvenue.com has to offer."

***Latest From Our Friends At Power Quest**

As you would expect, Gene and Linda Barlow were at the FACUG conference and Linda gave me this form with the latest specials. Boy do they take good care of us user group people. Look at these great specials, so get 'em while they're hot:

Partition Magic V5 -- List \$69.95 -- UG special \$30.00

Drive Image V2 -- List \$69.95 -- UG special \$30.00

DataKeeper V3 -- List \$49.95 -- UG special \$25.00

SecondChance V2 -- List \$69.95 -- UG special \$30.00

Lost \$ Found - List \$69.95 - UG special \$30.00

OpenLinux V2.3 -- List \$49.95 -- UG special \$25.00

Submit three for \$75.00, four for \$95.00, five for \$115.00, or six for just \$135.00.

OpenLinux eServer - List \$199.95 - UG special \$120.00

\$5.00 S&H for mail and Web orders only. Use the order form, which should have been mailed to all user groups, or use their secure Web site to order at www.ugr.com/order/. Have the code UGMAR00 when ordering. What a friend we have in Power Quest and the Barlows. They are two of the hardest working people I know and it is always great to see them.

***A Scanner In Your Pocket** --- What Have You Been Smoking???

That's right! At the FACUG conference, a company called Wizcom was showing the neatest little scanner that looked somewhat like a large pen you could put in your shirt pocket. It is battery operated and will scan full lines of printed text (regular, bold and italic, 6-22 point size). It stores up 1000 pages of data, which can be edited and retained in separate files. It will transfer data to your PC, laptop, Palm Pilot or text-enabled cellular phone. It transfers data directly into Microsoft Windows applications as well as other standard applications. Uses a friendly icon-based graphical interface that makes the "QuickLink Pen" fun and intuitive. An "Opticard" is included to read larger text from billboards or headlines or to input text manually.

The weight is three ounces (I'm tellin' ya, its small) and it takes two

AAA batteries (included). Communications are Infrared (IrDA) and a serial cable is included. Contains 2MB ROM memory, 2MB integrated flash memory and 4MB flash memory (optional upgrades). Desktop applications included are: address book, table and charts, Internet links, notes and data, with the same familiar icons as the QuickLink Pen so users can store, edit and transfer text for easy data management.

To order this little jewel of a scanner for just \$125.00 (UG price), call sales at 1-888-777-0552 or 1-978-635-5357. E-mail them at sales@wizcomtech.com] or visit their Web site at [<http://www.wizcomtech.com>]. Tell them you read it in this column, and what user group you are with. S&H is \$10.00.

I gave them my green business card to scan and it didn't do well. I wasn't surprised, but it worked well otherwise because another guy gave them a card with a white background and it did very well. I don't know how long this special is good.

Looks like I'm out of space. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [dealsguy@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns.

I receive infected e-mail attachments more often than you might think from unknowing people. Recently, I received one called PrettyPark.exe from a friend. What might have fooled me is that I know the sender has McAfee on her machine, and I have Norton Antivirus. No virus alert was issued by mine. I checked with that person later, and as I suspected, she didn't even know she had sent it,

but by that time she found she had a virus. The problem --- neither of us had updated our virus protection that month, but my precaution of not opening a .exe file attachment saved me anyway.

A friend swears by F-Prot as his antivirus protection and it is free for home users. Since I hadn't deleted the suspected virus I downloaded F-Prot. After installing F-Prot, it found PrettyPark immediately and gave me the option to delete it. F-Prot can be found on various download sites. His favorite site is <ftp://ftp.telusplanet.net/pub/simtelnet/msdos/virus/>. Find the current F-Prot file starting with fp and ending with .zip. For updates, go to <http://www.complex.is/f-prot/Download.html>.

I was hesitant to change, so I ran Norton's live-update, but my subscription had expired. Next morning Customer Service immediately updated me at a cost of only \$4.95 for the year and gave me a confirmation number. I signed on right away using that number to update my Norton Antivirus. I think that's cheap protection for a whole year, but granted, a free one is also very good.

Many people sending a virus don't know it happened because some viruses run in the background using the address book. Virus protection is so cheap, even free. Do your friends a favor and acquire the protection --- PLEASE. People don't realize that a virus does not always inform you that it's there. Some even initialize your modem unbeknownst to you and send to every address in your address book (one version of PrettyPark does so every half hour. Happy99 sends an extra e-mail containing its virus, without your knowledge each time you e-mail someone. Be very cautious of ANY .exe attachments to incoming e-mail.

In last month's specials, I thanked PowerQuest for the deals that also

listed "Open Linux." I'll bet some folks cringed a bit on that one. I was reminded that it's by Caldera. It didn't say Caldera on the price list. Sorry guys. By the way, the PowerQuest items and the Wizcom pen scanner in last month's column should both still be good.

***I'm Featuring Some Reader's Feedback This Month.**

I e-mailed Dave Teschner of Hilton Head Island Computing Club after reading his virus article in their newsletter. He acquired a tough version of PrettyPark.exe. He answered my questions and sent me a government site on viruses that you might find interesting -- [<http://www.nipc.gov/nipc/nipcaaw.htm>]. It has information on 40,000 different viruses. His version of PrettyPark (there are three) didn't yield to the normal virus cleaners and required special cleaning instruction acquired off the aforesaid site. Dave is experienced, but used a Microsoft certified technician this time.

Other Interesting Feedback

Bob Wexler of Western NY Computer Society tells me that PC Connection and Mac Connection (mail order catalogs) have a policy of offering free ground UPS shipping to all legitimate members of a user group if you mention that when you order. I checked and it's true. Phone 1-800-800-5555 for a catalog.

Murry Davis of the Akron/Canton Users Group sent me the following: "www.bargaindog.com] is featured in an article in the Circuits section of the NY Times on page D4 (4-20-00) as a source of hundreds of deals on many, many items."

I checked it out and there are all kinds of interesting items, not just computer stuff, and I assume things change all the time. It will even do

comparison shopping for you.

Feedback In The ISP Dept.

Melvin Turetzky of the Boca PC Users Group e-mailed me a Web site that he says gives unbiased evaluations of ISPs -- www.dogwolf.seagull.com]. Mel agreed with my good opinion of Mindspring until lately. Since the merger with Earthlink, his confidence faltered because of problems accessing his Web site, but their tech support came through again. Now I'm having similar problems they have yet to solve.

John Chmura of HAPCUG in Daytona Beach gave me this URL -- <http://nzlist.org/user/freesip/index.htm>] -- and tells me he has found no less than 48 free ISPs available in the Daytona Beach area with local access numbers. He tried the free Juno service, but says he gets disconnected a lot, which I've heard before.

And this detective work from John Hedinger of Manatee PC User Group: Concerning K-Mart's "BlueLight.com;" by following and snooping behind the links, it appears that this service is part of [www.spinway.com] free ISP service. Besides [www.bluelight.com], Spinway seems to be providing the software, or engine (and perhaps the advertising) behind a number of free ISP's, including [www.collegeclub.com], [www.nettaxi.com], and [www.webland.org]. Try www.alladvantage.com]; they actually pay you to be on the Net. And the beat goes on."

Mike Ungerman of Central Florida Computer Society in Orlando sent me this. "FINALLY, there is a FREE Internet access service with e-mail accounts without any banners, pop-up windows, floating bars -- you name it. It works nationwide (in US) with a great amount of local access numbers. How do they do that? Tell you the truth, I do not know. But yes; no banners, no ads, no floating bars -- unlimited and

stable connection. So, go grab it!!

<http://freewarehome.com/services/internet.html#913840507>]. And while you're at it, the link to the Freeware site which also has some great free downloads. Note I said 'free' and not 'shareware.' There are no registration fees required using the programs located at <http://freewarehome.com/>."

Mike also sent this URL for checking out virus alerts and hoaxes -- <http://www.911virusalert.com/home1/home1.html>.

***Want To Plan The Perfect Trip?**

This is a subscription service by PlanetWare, but there is some free stuff here too. For the traveler, it can be a great help in planning your trip, especially overseas. The PlanetWare Travel Encyclopedia, the largest, searchable source of travel attraction data on the Web, is on-line at <http://www.PlanetWare.com>]. The PlanetWare site helps travelers search for travel gems related to their special interests, provides visit decision details and serves as a one-stop source for making judgments about the relative merits of tourist attractions

The PlanetWare Travel Encyclopedia is probably the largest site of its kind on the Internet with over 110,000 pages of attraction data. While the bulk of data is available by monthly subscription at a cost comparable to that of a single paper tour guide book, about 10,000 pages are free. The free data includes all photos, complete details of a featured city of the month (currently 550 attractions of London, England with maps), lists of the top-rated sites, suggested walking and driving tour sequences, plus lists of the 8,000 towns currently featured on the PlanetWare site.

All PlanetWare maps are interactive. Cursoring over a map shows attraction names. Similarly, rolling over a list of attraction names

pinpoints each site on the map. Clicking either the name or the pinpoint on the map brings up attraction details.

There's more, but my readers can get a two-month subscription for the price of one month (\$20.00 US). The minimum is two months, maximum is twelve months. If this catches your attention, e-mail info@planetware.com] and provide:

- C The secret word 'dealsguy' in the subject line to qualify,
- C An e-mail address where they can send the password,
- C The name on the credit card you are using,
- C Visa, MC or AmEx,
- C Card number,
- C Expiration date.

They'll then send you your secret password. If you take a two-month subscription to plan any trip, it should more than pay for itself. I think \$20.00 for two months is cheap for what they offer.

***Does Your Computer IQ Fit This Category?**

Below is a note from Marcia Laughry, author of the book "Active Directory for Dummies."

"Intimidated by Windows 2000's Active Directory?"

"With all the media hype surrounding the release of Windows 2000 Server, you may already be a bit intimidated by the prospect of working with Active Directory. You've seen the presentations and articles discussing trees, forests, sites, and namespaces. Not only must you assimilate a new technology, but you must also pick up an entire new language just to understand what everyone's talking about. But Active Directory doesn't need to be difficult! In this book (Active Directory for Dummies), you find out in clear and simple language

what Active Directory is, what it does and what benefits it brings to your organization - and to your job.

"To Order, simply type WIN2000NEWS in the referral field on the Shopping Basket Checkout page.
[<http://www.fatbrain.com/shop/info/0764506595?from=XUU975>].
This is good for 10% off the online price of \$19.95."

That's it for this month. Thanks for all your wonderful feedback. Looks like I've exceeded my word count again. Sorry Editors! Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Clickdealsguy@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns.

May 16th General Meeting



At the last meeting (May 16, 2000) the planned speaker did not show but the food and the prizes were appreciated by all especially the chow hounds.

AOL Pictures

Tulsa Computer Society From the April 2000 issue of the I/O Port Newsletter

by Don Singleton

I have received frequent questions from members regarding problems sending and receiving pictures via AOL. At one time I had an AOL account, just to be able to answer questions like this, but it got too expensive so I dropped it, and had so much trouble getting them to stop charging my credit card (it took over 6 months) that I was not about to sign up for another account and hope that I could cancel it before they started charging me.

Dolly Allison had some difficulties with Juno Web charging her, so she went ahead and signed up for an AOL account, and was willing to set up a screen name where I could explore this problem using her account, and what I found out amazed even me.

In their new Version 5 software, it appears that AOL has two ways of sending pictures: one uses an icon that looks like a camera, and one uses the attach button. (*See graphics next pages*).

The camera icon works fine if you are sending pictures to someone else on AOL -- they see the picture immediately when they receive their e-mail message, and they can send multiple pictures in one message, and all will work, However, if an AOL user tries to send an

e-mail using that icon to anyone not on AOL (any other Internet



Service Provider), they won't get the image at all, and instead will just get the message [Unable to display image] (which sometimes shows up as pic.eml).

If an AOL user uses the attach button to send a single picture to a non AOL user, they will see the picture, just as easily as if it had been sent by a non-AOL user, HOWEVER if the AOL user sends two (or more) pictures, AOL will compress them into a Zip file, and the user at the other end will have to unzip it to see the pictures.

Let us look at things from the reverse side, a non-AOL person sending

e-mail to an AOL person. If the e-mail has one picture, the AOL user will see it with no problem, However, if the e-mail has two pictures, AOL will group them together into what is called a MIME file, and the AOL user will have to save it to disk, then use a special program to process the MIME file.

The AOL user can find out how to handle MIME files by going to keyword MIME, and then clicking Handling Mime Files.

For PC Users...

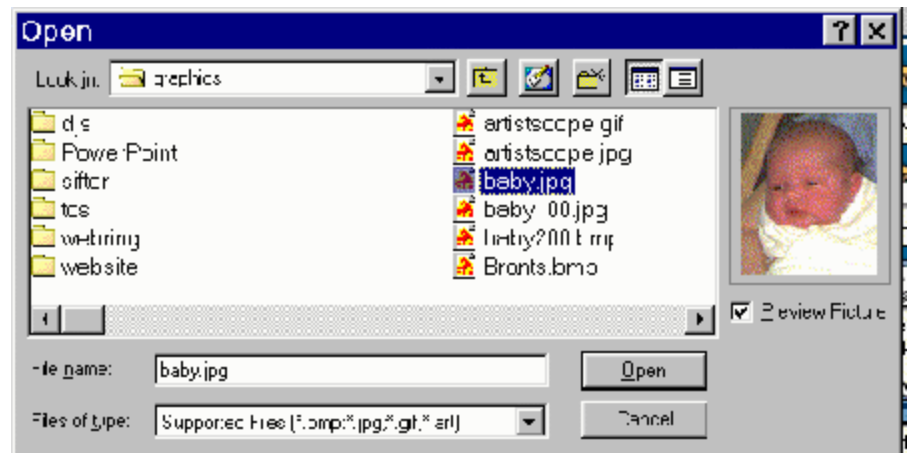
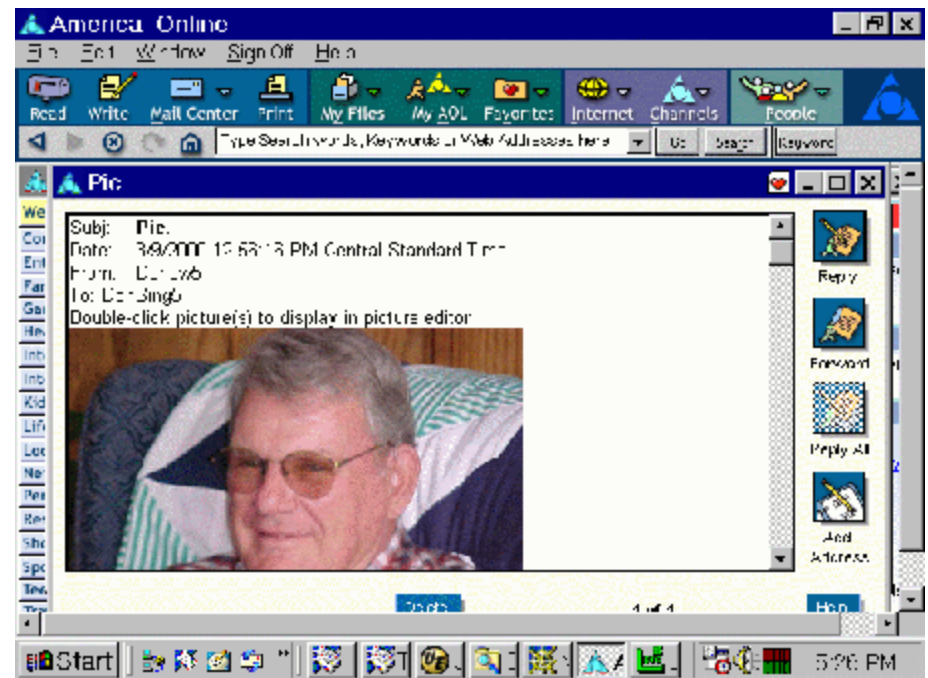
If AOL was unable to decode the MIME file, the attachment will be in MIME format, with a filename extension of .MIM. One of the following programs will allow you to decode the MIM file so that you can use it on your computer.

Recommended MIME programs...

- * MIMDECODE: V6.0 MIM E-mail Decoder (Win95, 98, 2000, & NT) Decodes MIME (.MME) with drag 'n drop.
- * WINZIP: V 7.0 SR-1 WinZip (Win95, 98 & NT) Decodes MIME (.MME) as well as compressed ZIP (.zip) files.
- * WINZIP: V6.3 SR-1 For Win31 (Win 3.1, 3.11) Decodes MIME (.MME) as well as compressed ZIP (.zip) files.
- * MIME: V4.3 Decode Shell Extension (Win95, 98 & NT) Adds a "decode" option to your mouse right-click context menu.
- * WINCODE: V2.7.3c Encoder/Coder (Win 3.1, 3.11, Win95)

After you've downloaded and installed any of these programs, please be sure to read the READ ME guide or "Online Manual" for information on how to use the MIME program you downloaded.

After you've decoded your MIME (.MIM) you may need to "un-zip" it.



If you don't understand the procedure, check out Zipping and Unzipping Files.

For Macintosh Users...

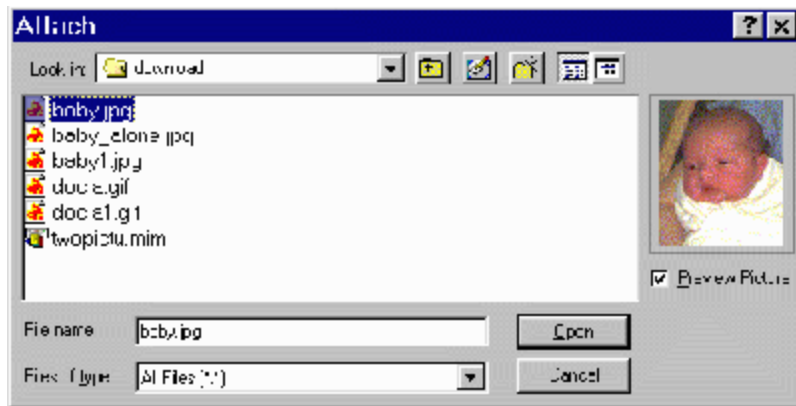
If AOL was unable to decode the MIME file, the attachment will be in MIME format. The following programs will allow you to decode the MIME file so that you can use it on your computer.

Recommended MIME programs...

- * STUFFIT: V5.5 Aladdin Expander (All Macs running System 7.1.1 or later) Uses drag 'n drop to decode your MIME as well as .SIT, .ZIP and many other formats.
- * DECODER: V2.0.7 Decoder FAT (68K and Power Macs) Uses drag 'n drop to decode your MIME.
- * DECODER: V2.0.7 Decoder PPC (Power Macs) Uses drag 'n drop to decode your MIME.
- * DECODER: V2.0.7 Decoder 68K (68K Macs) Uses drag 'n drop to decode your MIME.

In Summary	One Picture	Multiple Pictures
AOL to AOL using Camera icon	No problem	No problem
AOL to NonAOL using Camera icon	Does not work at all	Does not work at all
AOL to AOL using attach	No problem	Files are Zipped
AOL to NonAOL using attach	No problem	Files are Zipped
NonAOL to AOL	No problem	Files are left in MIME form
NonAOL to NonAOL	No problem	No problem

AOL may be the largest single ISP, but they are very very, very far from being anywhere near to serving half of the Internet Users, even in this country, much less around the world, so what it amounts to is AOL's non-standard approach is foolish, because it will be very confusing to their beginner users to remember that they can send and receive single pictures with no problem, regardless of who the other party uses, but that any transmission of more than one picture per e-mail between AOL and Non AOL users will cause some additional work on the part of the recipient, AND AOL users must be sure never to use the Camera Icon unless the recipient is an AOL user.



Now isn't that as clear as mud?

When I first discovered all of these ramifications to the problem I called Dolly and told her that AOL's handling of pictures was similar to what comes out of the south end of a north bound horse. I feel I must retract that. The stuff that comes out of the horse can be used for fertilizer, and hence can promote growth. I don't see how the convoluted way AOL deals with pictures can promote anything but confusion.

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization to which this user group belongs. Don is the President, Editor, and Internet SIG Leader for the Tulsa Computer Society, and a Director and the Web Master for APCUG

Will CD-R and CD-RW Become the "Floppy of the Future"?

By Surya Singh

Ten years ago the common method of sharing files was via a square piece of plastic, five and a quarter inches in diameter. This "floppy" disk held either 360 kilobytes or 1.2 megabytes depending on which type was being used. With today's ever increasing need for removable storage however, CD-R and CD-RW, may become as popular as the floppy disk was in its heyday.

CD-R and CD-RW are acronyms that stand for Compact Disc-Recordable and Compact Disc ReWriteable respectively. Both CD-R and CD-RW drives are extensions to the standard CD-ROM (Compact Disc Read Only Memory) drive format found in most every computer. These two systems are related to each other and present the consumer with a wide number of upgrade choices in this brave new world.

The key feature of CD-R and CD-RW drives over their now commonplace relative the CD-ROM drive is their ability to write data to a disc. CD-R media can be written once only to any particular area on the disc. CD-RW drives build on the CD-R standard and allow the user to write and rewrite to any particular area on a CD-RW disc many

times. Most CD recordable drives available today have rewriteable features and can process both CD-R and CD-RW media. However, a CD recordable must have rewriteable features to rewrite CD-RW discs. In other words, a CD-RW drive can only rewrite CD-RW media (not a CD-R disc) and a CD-R only drive can not process CD-RW media.

One of the caveats with CD-R media is that once it has been written or marked it can never be erased. Thus, working with CD-R media is quite similar to writing everything with a permanent ink pen: Nothing can ever be erased. Moreover, if a mistake is made, the whole process must be restarted and the erroneous disc is simply trashed. It was because of this vexing problem that CD-RW technology, using phase-change media was developed.

CD-R and CD-RW drives, unlike most drives, can record in a variety of formats, each of which effects the final utility of the finished disc. The most common CD-R and CD-RW formats are discussed as follows:

1. The Packet Writing Format - This means of using the disc allows for the disc to easily act as a removable media drive. If CD-RW media is used, the drive responds and acts as a diskette or Zip drive would. However, the disc first needs to be formatted to the UDF format style which reduces the storage capacity to approximately 550 MB. CD-R packet written discs can be read by any CD-ROM drive as long as they are at least "temporarily closed." If the UDF drivers are installed on a PC, a CD-RW packet written disc can be read by most modern

CD-ROM drives as long as they support packet reading.

2. Standard Data Track Format - This means creates a CD data disc similar to most CD-ROM disc distributed with software. This format allows the user to store the full 640 MB that the disc can hold; however, the disc data must be processed using a CD recording application (e.g., Adaptec's CD Creator) and can not be written to directly.

3. The Audio Track/Multisession Format - This is the standard means that digitalized forms of audio are added to CD discs. However, each time a series of songs are recorded, a new session is created. For a "multisession" to be read, the CD player must support the multisession format

Why is CD recording such a complex system? Basically, it stems from the history of CD technology. CD technology was invented by Phillip's Electronics and others almost two decades ago. The original CDs started out as an optical incarnation of long-playing vinyl records (LPs). For this reason CDs, unlike diskette and hard drives, read/write along a continuous, spiraling track instead of sectors. This causes the drives to vary their speed as data is read at various points on the disc because on the outside, more "media" goes by for a given angular velocity. However, data storage is best done using a sector or packet based approach and not the spiral-track approach of CDs. To accommodate data, CDs often place all their data in the first "track" along with a Table of Contents that stores information about all the

files and where they are located. Even the speed ratings of most drives are a product of CD history as drive multipliers (e.g., 8x) are in proportion to the speed of the first drives that operated at a rate of 150 kilobytes per second.

Another reason for the great popularity of CD recorders is their economies of scale, which makes them extremely cost competitive for the storage of a large amount of data. CD-R discs or media cost about one dollar per disc and CD-RW discs are approximately \$5 dollars a disc. This results in exceptionally low unit costs, or cost per megabyte (measured in ¢/MB). CD-R discs have a unit cost of less than 1/6 ¢/MB and CD-RW disc have a unit cost near 1 ¢/MB. In comparison, hard drives have a unit cost ranging between 3 and 6 ¢/MB and Iomega Zip disks have a unit cost almost 100 times greater than CD-R (i.e, 12 ¢/MB). In addition to cost, CD-R and CD-RW are gaining popularity because of their backward compatibility with the CD-ROM standard. This allows distribution of data on CD-R discs to a wide number of users without having to worry if the user has the right drive to read the media.

CD-R and CD-RW systems however,are not perfect. One key disadvantage is that CD-R and CD-RW drives can be somewhat expensive. For example, CD-RW drives range from \$200 to \$400 depending on the drive's speed and interface. A second disadvantage with CD-R and CD-RW drives is that they are relatively slow. Most of these drives operate only two or four times the speed of the original CD-ROM specification. Thus, even the fastest CD recorders are 10-15 times slower (while writing) than a hard drive and 2-3 times slower

than CD-ROM readers.

In terms of marketability and support, CD-R and CD-RW have not seen a major advertising campaign (excluding a small campaign by Philips electronics) nor have they been endorsed by any major computer vendor. Nonetheless, CD-R and CD-RW drives have generated a great deal of end user support and are increasing tremendously in popularity. Since CD-R and CD-RW are not proprietary standards, there is a great deal of competition between a number of CD-R and CD-RW manufactures. This competition should not only lower the prices on the drives, but may help CD-R and CD-RW become more widely accepted in the computing industry.

In summary, the complexity of today's software and the data files associated with it, has grown exponentially. One of the most promising and cost effective solutions could be the CD-R and CD-RW system. However, for this technology to "replace the floppy" the price of the drives must come down and performance must be increased.

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs. Surya Singh is a member and SIG leader of the East Tennessee Computer Society in Knoxville Tennessee.

ENTRY LEVEL QUESTIONS ANSWERED

by Lowell Shatraw

What is the "Task Bar" and the "Tool Bar"?

The TASK BAR is the area at the bottom of your WIN9x screen that shows the applications that are currently running. The active application will look different, while the others will just show the names of the applications. Clicking a non-active application will cause that application to be displayed on the screen; on top of whatever else you may have displayed.

The TASK BAR on all WINDOWS systems can be relocated to the side or to the top of your screen if desired. To move it, just click and drag on a blank area on the TASK BAR and let go when your mouse is located within one inch of either side, or at least halfway up the screen from the bottom.

The TOOL BAR is a row or column of icons that appear, typically, at the top of the application screen. The functions will vary according to the application being used. For example, the tool bar for my Internet Explorer shows the BACK and FORWARD icons, as well as the STOP, REFRESH, HOME and others. Netscape COMPOSER shows the NEW, OPEN, SAVE, PUBLISH, PREVIEW, and others

Generally, the TOOL BAR is displayed below the MENU BAR, the topmost area, under the title and which contains the names like FILE, EDIT, INSERT and others.

If I delete an icon off my desktop, how do I start the program if I need it later?

Many users place shortcuts on the desktop to expedite the opening of a much used application. Some of the icons are placed there when the Operating System (OS) is installed, or when an application is installed. The MY COMPUTER, NETWORK NEIGHBORHOOD, and the TRASHCAN icons are typical of those placed there when the OS was installed. The Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator icons are typically placed on the desktop for easy access when those applications are installed.

For the most part, deleted icons can easily be copied from another location and placed back onto the desktop, using the COPY OF or SHORTCUT TO method. To install a shortcut--the preferred option--here is what you can do. This will allow replacement of any application icon, or the addition of one you never had there before.

Find a blank space on the TASK BAR and RIGHT CLICK it. When the selection window appears, select PROPERTIES (Or click START, then SETTINGS, then select TASKBAR & START MENU. This displays the TASKBAR PROPERTIES. Now click the START MENU PROGRAMS tab, and then click the ADVANCED button in the window that appears.

The window EXPLORING-START MENU will display and you need to select the PLUS (+) sign next to PROGRAMS to expand the selection list. Of course, if your desired application is in a different folder in the initial display, select the folder and click the PLUS sign to the left of it instead. If no PLUS sign appears at the left of the desired folder, just LEFT CLICK that folder icon and the files in the folder will appear on the right side. (WIN98 users may have the VIEW AS A

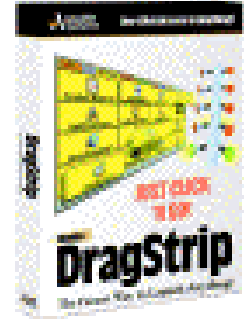
WEBPAGE turned ON and see the listing differently. If desired, for this configuration, select VIEWS and turn OFF, or uncheck the VIEW AS WEBPAGE selection in the drop down list.)

Now find the program you want to create a shortcut for and click the folder name. Look for the application name, like Acrobat Reader 4.0. RIGHT CLICK and DRAG the icon to an open space on your desktop. Obviously, in doing all this you definitely do NOT want all the window displays to be FULL SCREEN so that you can see the desktop. Once you have an open space positioned with the mouse, release the mouse and a drop down dialog window appears showing some selections. Select CREATE SHORTCUT(s) HERE and you now have your shortcut on the desktop. Repeat for other programs as desired.

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs. Lowell Shatraw is Secretary to the Computer User Group of Greeley, in Greeley Colorado. Lowell has worked in computer support call centers supporting Macintosh and PC environments; has developed and taught computer troubleshooting and repair; and is currently a UNIX system Administrator who also works with WINDOWS 9x, NT and WINDOWS 2000.

DRAGSTRIP

Reviewed by Carol Lee



Aladdin Systems, Inc.
165 Westridge Dr.
Watsonville, CA 95076
(831) 761-6200
www.aladdinsys.com

At A Glance Rating: **

Price: \$14.95

System Requirements: IBM PC or compatible with Pentium 200 MHz or higher processor Windows 95/98/NT-compatible computer system, 32 MB minimum RAM, CD-ROM drive, video card running in 256-bit color at 800 x 600 minimum resolution, 2 MB of hard disk space, 100% Microsoft compatible mouse.

Pros: Cheap and easy-to-use program.

Cons: Cannot display DragStrip on edges of screen; no macro capability.

DragStrip is a desktop utility that provides one-click access to frequently used items from desktop folders, which the program calls “strips”. Each strip contains empty buttons, a status bar, page tabs, and title bar, which can be configured, via drag-and-drop or cut-and-paste to display shortcuts to user-selected documents, folders, applications, disks, web pages, graphics, and any file the user chooses. The strips can be modified to support multiple pages of buttons so that items can be arranged into categories.

Installing DragStrip requires that the user double-click on the DragStrip installer. When DragStrip launches for the first time, it creates a new untitled strip, onto which the user can immediately begin adding shortcuts, folders, disks, URLs, and etc. Users can configure a “hot key” keyboard combination that can be used to open a shortcut on their strip. This is a very useful feature. In addition, command line parameters to an application and the directory where an application begins looking for files can be set for each customized button. Multiple strips and pages can be created. Strips can be customized for different projects or personalized for more than one user on a single computer. For users sharing computers, the multiple strips can be created to allow each user their own customized menu.

DragStrip pages can be customized in two ways. The first is to set it up as a standard button page, which the user can drag files, folders, URLs, etc. onto the buttons of the page. Clicking on these buttons opens the associated item. Another way of is to set the page as a task windows page which automatically fills itself with a button for each top level window that is open at the time the page is set as a task windows page. As applications and documents are opened or closed, the buttons on that page will be automatically updated to show the current open windows. To turn a task items page back into a standard

page, the user just needs to turn that option off. I did not find this task windows option very useful.

DragStrip offers about two options of how to display the strip. Users can choose to set the strips to float above other windows so that its items are always instantly accessible or set to auto-hide when not in use so that it is out of the way. Unfortunately, DragStrip does not offer the option to allow the strip to be set at the edge of the screen like that of the Windows’ startup bar. I would have like to be able to attach my strip to the top of the screen or to the side and auto-hide it. However, that option does not yet exist. In addition, because it does not attach to any side of the screen, its title bar is never hidden (how else to you expect to find it) even when the auto-hide option is selected. Hence, having multiple strips on the screen will result in having multiple title bars appearing over the screen, which could be annoying for those who prefer a clean desktop (like me).

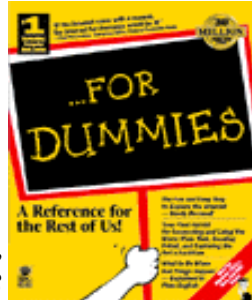
DragStrip allows the user to add special buttons (called “DragStrip Additions”) to the strip that allows user to access several useful Windows functions (such as Run, Find File/Folder, Find Computer, Task Manager, Minimize All, Logoff, Suspend, Shutdown Windows, and Clock). However, some of the functions are only available with certain version of Windows; for example, Task Manager is only available on Windows NT.

A feature I would have like to have seen in the program was a macro option. In addition to the hot keys, macros of commonly opened programs and the task performed would have been a definite time saver and a very useful feature. However, what exists in DragStrip now is still useful. I like the hot key option the best. DragStrip does

provide a useful, relatively cheap utility that does improve on the way programs, URLs, and documents are accessed.

MP3 for Dummies

Reviewed by Carol Lee



Although I am familiar with the MP3 format, I learned a few things from reading *MP3 for Dummies*. The book starts with an explanation of the system requirements that are need for playing and creating MP3 files and provides instruction on how to upgrade the computer if it doesn't meet the necessary minimum requirements. It then goes on to explain how to locate the free MP3 songs floating around the Internet by setting up your Internet browser and other utilities to find them. The last section of the book describes in good detail how to “rip” songs from music CD's and vinyl records and encode them in MP3 format. It also proves a good introduction to the MP3 hardware players' that are currently available on the market. The book comes with a CD-ROM of freeware and shareware programs that are mentioned in the book (i.e., such as MP3 players) and samples of MP3 songs. This book does what it is intended to do -- it provides a good overview of how to play and create MP3 tunes.

SANDISK IMAGEMATE COMPACTFLASH EXTERNAL DRIVE

Reviewed by Carol Lee



SanDisk

140 Caspian Court
Sunnyvale, CA 94089
(408) 542-0500
www.sandisk.com

At A Glance Rating: ****

Price: \$49.99

System Requirements: IBM PC or compatible Pentium system with USB Support, Windows 95 with USB Support or higher.

Reviewer: M.K. Carol Lee

Pros: Easy-installation and fast photo transfer rate.

Cons: None.

I recently bought a Kodak DC240 digital camera. The camera comes with a serial and USB interface for transferring and saving .jpeg photos onto a computer. However, even with the faster USB interface, transferring of photos is still time consuming. To transfer 8 MB of high-resolution photos (17 – 1280 x 960 pixel .jpeg files), it take approximately 6 minutes (using Kodak's transfer program). The transfer speed is directly relational to the size of the transfer. Hence, with my other 32 MB compact flash card, the camera's USB interface takes approximately 24 minutes to transfer photos onto my computer, which also consumes the camera battery life.

SanDisk provides a handy solution to this slow transfer annoyance. SanDisk offers an external memory card reader for either CompactFlash or Smart Media memory. Kodak uses Compact Flash memory in their digital cameras, and so SanDisk sent me their Compact Flash reader for review. Installation of the unit was a breeze. I just stuck the SanDisk reader's USB plug into an empty USB port and ran the setup program that is provided on the CD-ROM that comes with the reader, and that was it. The SanDisk reader is given the next available drive letter and essentially treated by my Windows 98 operating system as another external, removable drive. The best part of the reader was the transfer speed. It took less than 10 seconds to transfer the same 8 MB worth of pictures into my computer. SanDisk conservatively advertises on their web site that the reader is at least 20 times faster than a serial interface. From my system, the reader was about 36 times faster than my camera's USB interface. I promptly disconnected my camera's USB interface. The SanDisk reader is a great solution for fast photo connectivity.

INVESTING ONLINE FOR DUMMIES

by Kathleen Sindell (2nd Edition)

Reviewed by Carol Lee

IDG Books Worldwide, Inc.

919 E. Hillsdale Blvd., Suite 400

Foster City, CA 94404

(800) 762-2974

www.idgbooks.com, www.dummies.com



At A Glance Rating: ***

Price: \$24.99

System Requirements: For Bonus CD which is included with book, 486 or faster PC running Windows 95, NT 4.0, or later; 16 MB RAM; double-speed (2X) or faster CD-ROM drive; Internet connection.

Pro: Numerous Internet site references.

Con: Beginners guide to online investing.

Investing Online for Dummies is a good reference book for any investor to have by their computer. It discusses some investment fundamentals and provides some common sense tips. In addition, it

provides numerous Internet site references for obtaining information on investment choices and performance tracking. The difference between the first edition and the second edition of the book is the addition of more Internet site references. The value of this book is all the Internet site references that it organizes and describes so that the user knows which site to use for what information needed. Although the book offers some basic information, the Internet sites that it references often provides information that is more comprehensive. The software that is provided on the included CD-ROM includes some freeware, shareware, and demonstration versions of software for analyzing investment performance. The book is not intended to make the reader a professional financial analyst, but it does refer them to the Internet sites that will teach and guide them in their investment decisions.

FILESITTER 2.0

Reviewed by Carol Lee

Bytecode Technologies, Inc.
P.O. Box 698
Epping, NH 03042-0698
603-679-2088
www.filesitter.com



At A Glance Rating: ***
Price: \$39.99

System Requirements: Pentium equivalent 100 MHz processor or later, Windows 95/98/NT or later, 10 MB available RAM, 10 MB free disk space, 100 MB or higher removable disk cartridge drive or network server, and HTML browser.

Pro: Works in the background to backup files.

Con: Uses system resources and may slow system performance during backup sweeps.

FileSitter is a Java-based utility that provides continuous backup protection to fixed, removable cartridge, networked, and CD-RW drives. The installation software recommended that

FileSitter begin upon startup of Windows to continuously operate in the background. During backup “sweeps”, *FileSitter* looks in the user-specified coverage area for files to backup. The coverage area can be just the data from certain programs or it can be the entire hard disk. It was somewhat cumbersome to set up the backup coverage area. The default setting for the coverage area is the entire main hard drive. To just select certain directories and files (such as data) of the hard drive required that I unselect directories and files I did not want. There seemed to be no direct approach for just choosing the directories or files I wanted to backup. In addition, I used the default file extension filters to exclude from backup non-data related files (such as .exe, .com, .dll).

The initial backup sweep took approximately one hour to complete (the time will vary based on the size of the selected coverage area). *FileSitter* used 1% of the system resources, while running in the background. It monitors the specified files and automatically backs those that are new or have changed during each follow-up sweep. The default setting for each follow-up “sweep” is two hours. The follow-up sweeps are relatively quick. However, the more frequent the sweeps are set, the more the computer’s performance will bog down during backup. After the initial backup sweep, I hardly noticed *FileSitter* running in the background, until I saw my hard drive indicator light flashing. At that point, I realized that it was performing a follow-up sweep and I noticed my system’s response slow. After the hard drive indicator light stopped flashing, the system’s performance returned to normal. My follow-up sweeps usually lasted less than 5 minutes each for about one gigabyte of archived data.

The *FileSitter* swept files are available in its proprietary archive format, which compresses the data to save space. Multiple previous versions of files may be contained in *FileSitter*’s archives (depending on the backup settings), providing the ability to revert back to any previously archived version. *FileSitter* has comprehensive multi-volume archive and restoration capabilities for large backup needs. The use of CD-RW drives and disc as archive destinations is newly supported in this version of the program; however, the use of CD-R discs is not yet supported. Restoration options range from complete file restoration as of a certain date to restoring individual iterations of a file and even searching through archives if the file’s location is unknown. I have one minor grip about the search feature – there is no dialog to tell when the search is complete. There is dialog to indicate when a searched file is found. However, when a file is not found, there is no dialog to indicate that or that the search is complete. However, *FileSitter*’s sweep icon does stop moving when the search is complete which can be taken as an indicator that the search is done (or that Windows has locked up). In addition, the restore feature offers no dialog warning that an existing file will be overwritten with the restored version. Hence, once the restore button is pressed, there is no turning back. Consequently, I selected to restore into different directories so as not overwrite a file until I was completely sure that

was what I wanted to do. *FileSitter* is a useful backup utility. Although it does take about 1% of the system's resources and slows system performance when it runs the backup sweep, the resource hit is relatively minor and the slow-down period is relatively short. The program enables consistent and continuous backup.

Handwriting On The Virtual Wall?

by Jeffrey R. Harrow

Many of us tend to have a bit of tunnel vision when it comes to entering textual information into the world of our word processing documents, our Web pages, and other digital information containers -- we usually use a keyboard. It's true that some people use a stylus on a PDA, although usually only for small amounts of text. And voice recognition does keep getting better, although it still has lots of room for improvement. But now RCFoC reader Ulf Trulsson points out a new alternative coming from Anoto

http://www.anoto.com/index_main.asp.

This looks like a sleek, high-tech pen, but you haven't seen anything yet. A peek at the tip gives us a hint -- an odd transparent window sits



the pen also tracks its angle, its velocity, and the pressure applied at any instant, all of which can be very useful for signature capture and validation. But this gets even more interesting -- the invisible grid is not just a standard grid, but one whose pattern allows the pen to recognize where in a half-continent-wide virtual sheet of paper it's currently writing.

just above it. But it takes a block diagram to see just how different this pen is: (see image).

This pen is chock full of electronics, and uses an unusual method of capturing handwriting. If you write on paper that is preprinted with a very special information-carrying grid (it looks to us humans like a slightly off-white tint of about 3% gray), the camera behind that transparent window uses the grid to track exactly where the ink is going. In fact,

Huh? Well, the concept is actually rather neat -- any printed bit of the grid identifies where it lives in this huge grid-space. Some of the "address space" is reserved for special commands (so there might be a "save" button pre-printed on the paper in a margin whose grid is in a special portion of the grid-space reserved for "commands;" tap that area and the pen tells the application to Save). Other sections of the grid-space can be given out to application developers for their own purposes. For example, state police "ticket books" might have their fields in an assigned grid-space; that way, whenever an officer handwrites-in a license plate number (not mine, please), the pen would automatically recognize that the number was a license plate number. Note that the pen was never told the "application" it was supposed to do -- the officer just used it to write in her ticket book, and the pen (or its server software) recognized the application from that bit of the grid's address space. Similarly, she could next write in her notepad, and the pen would recognize that these were personal notes that should go into her electronic diary. It's this application-independence, based on the invisible grid on the paper form, which is so intriguing. But how does the information get out of the pen and into the computing world? It would be cumbersome to "dock" the pen. That's where Bluetooth, the forthcoming Personal Area Network (<http://www.bluetooth.com/>), comes in. This pen, like many devices to come, will have a Bluetooth transceiver built-in, so it can send its information to any other Bluetooth device in the area. The police officer might find that the pen uploads the information through her walkie-talkie; you might find the pen using your pocket cell phone to send the information to your office PC via the Internet. This is a good example of how Bluetooth may turn our world into one giant ad-hoc network.

So, this is an unusual concept with some interesting potentials. All that being said, though, I haven't actually seen an Anoto pen myself (they're apparently not due out until sometime next year), and of course the execution may be far from the potential. Also, people might balk at having to write on special paper to give this pen its voice.

But even if this product doesn't catch on, it is another good example of the extraordinary computing power that can, literally, now sit in your pocket. And it's also a good reminder of the truly innovative ideas that drive our rapidly changing face of computing. It will be fascinating to see what comes next!

About the "Rapidly Changing Face of Computing..."

The RCFoC is written by Jeffrey R. Harrow, a Senior Consulting Engineer with the Technology & Corporate Development organization of Compaq Computer Corporation. The RCFoC is published as a service of, but not necessarily reflecting the opinions of, Compaq Computer Corporation. Copyright © 1996-2000, Compaq Computer Corporation. All rights reserved.

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Tue., June 6, 2000 @ 7PM

Steering Committee meeting

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

Tue., June 13, 2000 (call to confirm 415-346-9321 or 415-346-2644)

2040 Ellis, 3 houses west of Divisadero, 7-9PM

"general questions about Windows and hardware, and minor hardware installations."

Tue June 20, 2000

TBA (to be announced)

Check at www.sfpcug.org for latest info

JUNE 2000						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Wed., July 5th 2000 @ 7PM

Steering Committee meeting

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

THIS IS A CHANGE

Tue., July 11, 2000 (call to confirm 415-346-9321 or 415-346-2644)

2040 Ellis, 3 houses west of Divisadero, 7-9PM

"general questions about Windows and hardware, and minor hardware installations."

Tue July 18, 2000

TBA (to be announced)

Check at www.sfpcug.org for latest info

JULY 2000						
Sun	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SAN FRANCISCO PC USERS GROUP STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of March 17, 2000, was held upstairs at RoundTable Pizza, 18th and Geary.

Present were Pierre Hahn, Butler Crittenden, Harold Charns, David Caldwell, Dorothy Walker, Lee Most, and Ron Feiertag.

The meeting began shortly after 7PM, chaired by club-president Ron Feiertag. The minutes of the February 2000 meeting were distributed. A motion was made and seconded that they be approved. After amendments and corrections, the February minutes were approved.

The Treasurer's report followed, which was approved after a motion to do so was made and seconded.

There was no Vice President's report, and the President reserved time to make his report later in the meeting.

Although the webmaster was not present, the club's web site was discussed. It was noted that the site was still "down" and that it had been 10 days since action had been taken. Butler and Pierre agreed to try to contact Joseph Puig. There was no membership report, except to observe that a few checks and forms had arrived.

Pierre Hahn, the Co-Editor of *Blue Notes*, reported that a new edition would be coming out shortly.

The Product Review report was primarily that Carol Lee had been doing a fantastic job on obtaining and reviewing products. There was consensus that she deserved special praise for her work.

Under Old Business there was discussion of the upcoming elections, with David Caldwell and Butler Crittenden reporting that no candidates had been found for the three positions of Secretary, V.P., and President. It was noted that nominations would be accepted up through election night, including from the floor.

Under New Business the SC went into executive session, after which the motion was made and seconded affirming that the editor of *Blue Notes* has sole authority as to what is published in *Blue Notes*. The motion passed six "aye," one "nay," one abstain. Also, a motion was made that membership be extended for two months for all, based on the club's web site and e-mail services being down. Discussion focused on the economic implications of such a decision, as well as upon how long the members had been inconvenienced due to e-mail being inaccessible. With unanimous consent, the motion was tabled.

The Program Chair's report was given by president Ron Feiertag, who noted that we did not have a presenter for the April meeting but that L & H was scheduled for May.

The meeting adjourned about 8:15PM.

Minutes taken and prepared by Butler Crittenden

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of April 4, 2000, was held upstairs at RoundTable Pizza, 18th and Geary

The meeting was called to order by President Ron Feiertag at Round Table Pizza, Geary and 16th Avenue, San Francisco, CA at 1905 hours.

Members present were: David Caldwell, Butler Crittenden, Pierre Hahn, Ron Feiertag, Lee Most and Harold Charns.

Treasurer's written report approved. Bank of America Checking account is being closed out. Eight membership checks were received and will be deposited.

Programs: Jeff Marchi to speak at April Meeting; Topic "Hardware for Experts and Dummies too." Pierre Hahn will handle Programs for next month or so. Ron F. to advise of the presenters he has asked.

Webmaster Joseph Puig not present. It was reported that the Web Site was up and running. Congratulations to Joseph and Diana!!! The new hardware has not yet been installed.

Blue Notes: Editor Pierre Hahn reported that they were starting on a new issue. Discussion re Acrobat 4.0 and how to download same.

Product Review: Butler Crittenden wants to re-vitalize the Committee of Reviewers.

Nominations Committee: A short list of possible Presidential nominees are being considered. A slate will be presented at the April Meeting.

Motion to "extend the memberships of all members in good standing as of Jan 1, 2000 for one month because of the problems with the website". After discussion, the motion passed by a vote of 6 to 0.

President Ron Feiertag adjourned the meeting at 1955 hours.

David Caldwell, Secretary pro tem

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Butler Crittenden

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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.)