

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](mailto: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. PPP accounts are available - e-mail: [help@mail.sfpcug.org](mailto:help@mail.sfpcug.org) or contact our WebMaster at [webmaster@mail.sfpcug.org](mailto: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, repeat guests 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 Blue Notes*

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

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

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## Beating Up The Computer

By Butler Crittenden,  
President

**Or, If It Ain't Broke Bad, Don't Fix It;**

**And If It Is Broke Bad, Well, F It,**

**Where F Means Fdisk Then Format.**



Let's face a fact about modern computing: it's not easy, and it's not getting easier. I've been using a personal computer 20.5 years--an Apple from January 1980 through 1983 and PCs since then--and a reasonable guess would be that for me computer use has become second nature and computer hardware is a snap. Not quite: each new program, hardware feature, and glitch becomes yet another challenge, *which I assume can be handled given enough time and patience*. But such a view is a luxury, and not realistic for the masses.

### **The Internet: An Operational Definition of Infinity**

Often consumers of high-tech products get them in fairly simple doses.

The medical-industrial complex offers numerous examples, where patients receive pills or treatments that are relatively simple to take but involve fantastic prior technology to develop. Another example is an air flight, where the consumer simply boards a plane that is the result of elaborate division of labor and specialization over a period of 100 years. But neither of these examples compares to the user-experience of the computer world, where many thousands of hardware components are combined into thousands of "computers," which then "run" many thousands of software programs, which are increasingly feature-rich and which include millions of lines of "code" that are written according to the rules of various computer languages, operating systems, and hardware protocols. Add to this the seemingly infinite amount of information on the Internet--itself another technological marvel--and the result is that computing is expanding exponentially while the users are lucky if they can cling to a linear trajectory without slipping off into a plethora of options, technical snags, product patches and upgrades, and incompetent advice. While those of us who live and breathe computers 7/16/365 are a little more at ease than the newbe's and average office workers, we're usually merely more patient, determined, and confident that there is an answer, if only we can find it.

Two of the best clone-builders in the Bay Area have decided "never again." Custom - schmushdom, forget about it, who needs the headaches! Yes, there's [www.TomsHardware.com](http://www.TomsHardware.com) and a host of hardware review sites, and by now millions of email posts to various forums and the USENET regarding problems and solutions, but there's no way to assure that all the

hardware selected for a new custom system will work with all the software. Indeed, the major clone-makers and **IBM** itself don't have it figured out either, but at least they are equipped to deal with the repercussions. Well, 'er, sort of. At least their hype, and some of their reality, is that they're prepared for their customers' problems.

One of the two ex-clone-builders decided to refer customers to a local clone-shop, as occasionally there would be a "problem" that might be hardware and might be software misuse. In either case the sole practitioner clone-builder is out time and perhaps cash. Today that clone-shop is about to close, also--too many "problems", too small margins, too much overhead, with the rent going up as the dot Commies close in.

The other told me that he's made a contact at **Micron**, who "cuts to the chase" without complaint and coughs up the best price available for their professional models, which tend to run about \$1,4xx and include **Intel** motherboards and full *Pentium* processors plus three-year on-site warranty. He bills for consulting to discern the customer's needs and the time to shop for the product. Prior to **Micron** he was enthusiastic about **Dell's** computers, but recently two had to be sent back due to lock-up and shut-down problems--and these problems despite two months of long phone calls to tech support and even a rare technician on-site. This experience led to the switch to **Micron** and the all-**Intel** core components, but according to reviews and hardware sites many gamers and others will want other components. Thus the solution for the business-user isn't the solution for all of us. And my experience with **Dell** boxes has been fine; two bad apples aren't enough to spoil the Dell barrel.

Of course a realistic question is just how good is the three-year on-site

warranty? Call tech support with the complaint that the CD has failed in the installation of two or more different programs, and without much ado they'll send someone out to replace it, or perhaps send one via **UPS** or **FedEx**. No doubt there are other examples of fast response and relatively short calls to tech support. Horror stories abound, however, the common thread being "hours on the phone with tech support" while every trick is tried and in the end the customer is required to bring the computer back to "factory specs" by first backing up all his/her important data (that in itself a daunting task beyond the capability of many users--where is the email hidden?) and then using a "recovery" CD, which blows away the contents of the drive, quickly throws a ghost of the original factory set-up onto the C: drive, and leaves the user with the task of reinstalling everything else and plugging the data back into their proper folders, plus dumping the stuff s/he didn't want in the first place--touted as "free" software but actually either more like advertisements (trial software) or **Microsoft Works** (the cheap substitute for *Office*). Hours on the phone--hours off the phone cleaning up and restoring. And the problem may not be solved. If it's not, then perhaps the technician comes at the promised time, or perhaps up to months later, as a couple of cases that have come to my attention. And I'm talking about the "majors." There's a catalog and on-line el-cheapo source with an animal name that sells systems that are almost sure to have problems, and try getting relief from them!

There is a lesson here for all of us, however. The Big Boys have long since learned that F'ing the computer is the only sure-fire way straighten out software and hardware problems. Their "recovery CD" is the equivalent of popping in a boot disk with *fdisk.exe* and *format.com* on it and then running the two Fs. The Big Boys definitely are not into Beating Up The

Computer, which is how many of us spend our time. They certainly aren't going to take the time (which is money, if you'll recall) to find out if the computer is "broke bad" or not.

### Beating Up The Computer

Computers of any age can experience hard drive failure. Drives that are three years old or older are beginning to turn up on my workbench with some regularity. **Ontrack's Data Advisor** (<http://www.ontrack.com/dataadvisor/>) is a free download and a handy tool for checking a HD upon boot-up. It writes to the floppy you've created, so remember to always keep a copy of the original on another floppy. In several instances **Ontrack Data Advisor** has convinced me that the HD really is dead, or so close that the only good idea is to try to get as much data off as possible and then toss the drive. It's not a bad idea to run *Data Advisor* on a newer computer, either, just to assure that it's healthy.

An inexpensive solution to data back-up and off-loading from a defective drive is a ZIP drive. The 100MB internal version sells for as little as \$43 at the **Robert Austin** show, with disks as little as \$7. The drive is only 3 ½ inches, so a mounting kit for a 5 ¼ inch bay may be necessary. Assuming five disks as a reasonable supply, for \$80 or so the equipment can be installed, or just kept at the ready for technicians. It can be "cabled in" by plugging it into the primary or secondary IDE cable, making sure to check the master/slave options, and connecting a power plug. (Carry a spare Y-power-cable for safety sake.) Then using the included DOS software it's possible to retrieve data from the failing HD. If the ZIP is installed as just another HD in the drive chain and *Windows* system, there is no need to install any software. I recommend that data and folders be

dragged to the ZIP, using *Windows Explorer*, rather than the back-up software that is provided. (Remember that right-click and drag gives you the option of Copying or Moving files or folders.) There's no substitute for being able to see your files on the ZIP disk. Don't forget to safely store the important data (disks) off-site. Fire, theft, earthquakes, etc. can part you from your backed-up data if they are all stored in the same place.

Recently the opportunity arose to try **PowerQuest's DriveCopy**. I had two new HDs, one a 9gig SCSI and the other a 27gig IDE. As good luck would have it I first went to work on the SCSI project, which involved copying a 1gig C: partition/drive (out of 4 partitions total on a 4gig SCSI drive) to the new 9gig. With the new drive assigned SCSI ID 0 and the old drive reassigned to SCSI ID 1, it worked just as advertised. The software gave me the choice of copying the whole 4gig drive to the new 9gig drive, proportionately into four partitions, or to copy just the old 1gig C: drive to the new 9gig drive, which is what I chose. I then booted from the new C: drive (the 9gig) and copied the contents of the old D:, E:, and F: drives to separate folders on the new C: drive, after which I doubled F'd the old drive, first fdisking to become an extended-partition drive, then formatting. This gave me a D: drive, onto which I transferred some data and folders that I knew needed to be on D: to open properly.

Feeling lower than a Texas rattlesnake I preceded with the *DriveCopy* CD to the second task--copying two 4gig partitions (C: and D:) from an 8gig IDE physical drive to a new 27gig. That damnable message popped up warning me that I could only use *DriveCopy* on one hard drive, but I resolved to cheat a little and try it out on the large IDE HD. Alas, it bombed out at the 85%-complete level. Thanks to DSL a quick visit to the

**PowerQuest** site revealed that there is an issue with drives over 15gigs. No problem, I chose an option to divide the 27gigs in half, and *DriveCopy* the old C: to the new 13.5gig C:, which still didn't work--due to a limitation by *DriveCopy* to use only 64MB RAM, no matter how much is installed (196MB in my case). *DriveCopy* reached the 97%-complete mark, then failed. I was thus prevented from being a master criminal, unless perhaps trying to use the product counts. In defense of **PowerQuest** and *DriveCopy*, the first positive experience greatly outweighed the failure on the large IDE drive. Alas, now that I've thrown the **PowerQuest** CD in the trash so that I won't be tempted to use it on another computer, I won't know how well it works in other situations.

John Scott suggested I try **Symantec's Norton Ghost**, as he'd used it with success copying to a large HD. **SOYO** motherboards come with a "3-in-1 Bonus Pack" that includes *Norton AntiVirus*, *Norton Ghost*, and *Norton Virtual Drive*, and this CD is often available at the **Robert Austin** computer show at just about giveaway prices, making it a bargain for *NAV*, with the other two thrown in as freebies.

The Readme in the Ghost51c folder states:

GHOST not only provides the quickest method for installing Windows 95, Windows NT and OS/2, it can also perform complete backup of the entire disk or duplicate the "in use" system files ignored by other cloning utilities.

GHOST is designed to duplicate or clone IBM compatible hard disks. It copies all partitions on the source disk to the destination

disk. The source disk and the destination disk can be in the same computer, or in two different computers that are connected through the network. GHOST is especially effective for cloning Windows 95. There is no need to run FDISK or FORMAT on the destination disk. These actions will be performed automatically. The size of the source disk can be different from the destination disk. GHOST will automatically adjust the partition location and size on the destination disk.

GHOST can also save the content of an entire hard disk as a single disk file. This file can be saved in the network server, CDROM, JAZ or ZIP as backup, or cloned as the backup of the source disk.

A hard disk is composed of a Master Boot Record (MBR) and one to four partitions. The main partition is the actual partition in the hard disk, and is usually defined using the FDISK utility. The main partition can be partitioned further into several logical drives, also using the FDISK utility. However, understanding the details on how to further partition a hard disk is not important. GHOST will clone all the partitions from the source disk (hard disk or image file) to the destination disk.

Using *GHOST* can be done from a boot disk with *ghost.exe* copied to it, or by copying *ghost.exe* to the hard drive and double-clicking it, after which the computer shuts down to the DOS mode and a GUI pops up offering various choices. Selecting "Disk to Disk (Cloning)," I identified the old drive/Disk as the Source and the new drive/Disk as the Destination. *GHOST* divided the new disk into two drives automatically. After an hour or so the job was done. I then

disconnected the old physical drive and jumpered the new one as master, and a quick test proved successful. After jumpering the old drive a slave, I fdisked it as an extended-partition drive, then formatted, and cabled it back into the drive chain. On balance I was very impressed with *GHOST 5* and plan to use it for "Disk To Image (Disk Backup)," perhaps burning a CD of the resulting file, perhaps putting it on a ZIP disk if small enough. Also, I appreciated not be called a criminal when using *GHOST*.

Another useful tool is **Symantec's Norton SystemWorks 2000**. Worthy of a separate review, a brief comment is that this version has at least partly turned me around as to the value of *Norton Utilities*. Generally I don't like a lot of extra stuff loading into the system to "guard" me against one or another menace, new installation, or problem, as each requires system resources and adds complexity. *Norton Utilities* can be run directly from the CD, however, although without all the features of a regular installation. From the CD *Disk Doctor* can check your hard drive/s, and *WinDoctor* can discern lots of problems, especially .DLLs and other files that have lost their way. Also, I don't recall seeing a message about being a master criminal if you use the CD *Disk Doctor* and *WinDoctor* on more than one computer, though no doubt installation of *SystemWorks 2000* itself on more than one computer would be illegal. By the way, *SystemWorks 2000* can be configured to not load at start-up or perform tasks automatically, overcoming my primary objection and making some of its many other features worth investigating.

As usual I've rambled on far too much. Just about every day some new problem and solution come to my attention--many of which are too subtle

and tricky for the average user, and almost all of which do not require the draconian F treatment. As you're beating up your own computer/s and run into these tidbits please forward them to me. In the computer world, as in the moral and intellectual world, the objective is to associate with a group of people whom you can count upon to have at least one member awake and listening, who in turn will awaken others as the need arises and before s/he inevitable drifts off to sleep. The task is far gr eater than any single one of us can manage.



**Editor's Notes**  
**by Tom McLoughlin**

Welcome to the September/October issue of Blue Notes. So much activity is taking place in the PC world that it is difficult to report it in the span of articles of our publication. Some of the news is current to the moment, some news is of recently past occurrences, and some is the foretelling of future events.

On the current level, we can point to the articles in this issue of Blue Notes. We have a review from Carol Lee on the Clickbooks product. Yves Barbero has written a book review for us. It has been some time since we have heard from Yves. It is good to have you back. Yves' protegee, Tim Chiara has written a review of Photoshop 5.0. Thank you to Yves and Tim.

Your contributions are most welcome.

We also have articles from Robert Click, the Dealsguy and Ken Fermoye, two gentlemen who syndicate their work to the PC User Group community.

And finally, our club President, Butler Crittenden has written his President's Message along the lines of keeping the PC going. When is it necessary to buy new one? When is it necessary to erase the hard disk? Where do I go to buy a new one? These are the texture of Butler's article.

There are numerous things that have happened on the club in the recent past. One area is well worth mentioning: the quality of the presenters of recent general meetings: July - SNAP by Quantum, August - the author of the O'Reilly book MP3, and September - Microsoft Windows ME.

It is pretty well expected that when Microsoft shows up, they come well prepared. And they did. The presenter, within the limitations of time, presented Windows ME with good coverage of new techniques in video and audio production on the PC. Multimedia has been on the taste buds of the PC User since the late 80's. Now it seems closer than ever to be within the grasp of the every day user.

What is surprising and exciting was the previous two meetings which were not as well attended - the presenters did not have the Microsoft name to draw a crowd. The Snap meeting evolved from a chance encounter with Snap Regional Manager and Pierre Hahn. It turned out to be a wonderful general meeting topic opportunity. Pierre arranged for the rep to present at the July meeting when we needed a presenter. The presentation itself was filled with information about data storage. Data storage is just about the

hottest thing going. Snap has a leading edge technology in moveable storage units. The presenter was well informed. The group not only learned about data storage of the Snap flavor, there was discussion about EMC, IBM, and the other players in the data storage market place.

MP3, as it turns out, is even a hotter topic. The August general meeting featured a presentation on MP3 by the author of a book entitled MP3, published by O'Reilly. The presenter led the group through a 45 minute presentation which was intricate, thorough, and exciting. If there is anything that is stretching the limits of bandwidth on the Internet frontier, it is MP3. The presenter was well informed on the topic, and, yet, he was able to deliver the info on a person-to-person level which I believe everyone in the room enjoyed.

I suppose the bottom line is this: the general meeting is a sounding board timely hot information.

Finally, club affairs of the future.

It isn't too early to plan to set aside Tuesday December 19<sup>th</sup> for the Annual Auction and Holiday Party. Plans are already way. Hope to see you there.

On another note, I was approached by a friend of mine in Oakland with the notion of helping a Franciscan mission in Guatemala with obtaining a PC to help in email and record keeping. The Steering committee has generously stepped to the plate and will be furnishing a used albeit fully functional PC for aid these people in their efforts.

Stay tuned. There is lots yet to come.

## **From the DealsGuy**

### **Greater Orlando Computer Users Group**

**M**y thanks to James Anderson (Editor) for sending the data for IBM Humboldt Users' Group in Eureka, CA to add to my distribution page. They've been regularly using the column. Also, French Prescott, Editor for Big Bear Computer Club in Big Bear Lake, CA, asked to start using the column. French is also the contact for Enfish Software in this month's column. I look forward to more information from groups already publishing the DealsGuy.

Talking about "paid referral URLs," I'll try to leave out the ones that are obvious, but I think some are actually just a shorter way to take you to an information page. I'm going to leave it up to your own discretion whether you will use a numbered URL or not, now that you know the possibilities.

Some feedback on freedsl.com says that if you don't keep the service for one year, there is a stiff termination fee. I noticed that you are forwarded to a different URL, but the information is the same. Thanks for the feedback.

### **Offer Still Good -- Including Two New Games**

The Hang2000 game is still good and Ken Winograd e-mailed me that he has released two new games that are very educational. They are "States3000" and "Presidents3000" and are based on an improved Hang2000 engine. You can check for more info at his Web site [<http://www.winograd.com>]. The "private" URL for Macintosh users group members only is [<http://www.winograd.com/macug2.html>], and [<http://www.winograd.com/pcug2.html>] is only for PC users group members.

### **I'm Keepin' Mine**

I think you can still take advantage of the Sizzlin' Summer offer for the Friendly Robotics lawn mower. I have kept a diary on my Web site (Announcements page) for you to read. I've had some minor problems, but so far I love it. They have offered to send me a new mower to correct a bad charging message which I'll take advantage of. That doesn't keep the mower from doing its job and I certainly have the neighbors intrigued. How embarrassing that I didn't include the ordering number (1-888-244-5178) last month. A few people e-mailed me about it.

### **This One's For You Cheapskate Investors**

I know many of you are trading stocks for as low as \$8.00 per trade, but how about trading securities for FREE. Freetradez.com is the latest entry in the online brokerage field. They said they went into operation on June 19, 2000 with the intention of doing options trading towards fall. They are offering trades with NO commission charge, even for limit orders, plus, they offer Nasdaq Level II quotes.

You guessed it, advertising pays for it. If you type in a ticker symbol, up

pops an ad from that very company. Or, get this, if that company wasn't interested, the ad at the top of your screen will be for their competitor or a related company. How's that for strategy! And, another company will sponsor confirmations. Your monthly statement has an ad from that same company.

Most trades should be executed in one second, but if it is not executed in 45 seconds, your account is credited with \$5.00. A day trader can set a price at the bid, or below the bid. Just so you know, anytime you type in a stock symbol, an advertiser pays them. And yes, they accept trades any time of the day or night. Check them out at [<http://www.freetradez.com>].

### **Convert Those Old Videos (After Brushing Off The Dust)**

Here is an announcement I received some time ago from Bill Loesch, vice-president of Consumer Products for Pinnacle Systems. I've not tried their products which appear to be just for PCs.

"Do your members want to edit those baby videos collecting dust in their attics, or maybe preserve the memories of their best vacations? With Pinnacle Systems' Emmy-award-winning technology, video editing is simple. All you need is a Pentium-based computer, a video camera and/or a VCR. Sign up your Users Group at the Users Group Support Program Web site at [<http://usergroup.pinnaclesys.com/>] and review our products for your newsletter on a 60-day loan. [DealsGuy note - "a loan" just doesn't work for me. If the reviewer can't keep it for all their work, forget it.] User group members receive a 15% discount off suggested retail price (SRP) on all our Studio line of video editing products; arrange for a customized demo from a Pinnacle Systems representative in your area.

Sincerely, Bill Loesch."

### **Check Out E-mail Hoaxes.**

I hate to take up column space with this kind of stuff, but I have been deluged with so-called warnings lately and many people read this column. If you are a person that "insists" on sending out all those "warnings" to your friends, do them a favor and check further before you send them any more "spam." Here are some informational sites gleaned from newsletters I receive. Out of all those URLs I read and tried, several either didn't work, or else I couldn't find the correlation, but here are the ones that worked for me:

[<http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/index.html>]

[<http://www.avp.ch/avpve>]

[<http://www.datafellows.com/virus-info>]

[<http://www.datafellows.com/news/hoax>]

[<http://www.icsa.net/services/consortia/anti-virus/aler-hoax.html>] (I had problems with this one but I'm including it anyway).

[<http://www.kumite.com/myths>]

[<http://www.snopes.com>] (This one also has music so it loads slowly.)

[<http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/>]

### **Can Your Web Browser Get A Ticket?**

Not likely, but I assume everybody is interested in accelerating his or her browser power. Murray Davis of Akron/Canton PC UG passed this one on

to me. Your browser's cache is meant to help if visiting a Web site again by already having the data to load it. However, you have little control over that cache. There is PC software to speed the whole process called "NetSonic." It works with any browser and they can share NetSonic's cache, thus saving space on your hard drive as well.

It also retains Domain Name Server information. There's more, so I suggest you visit their Web site and take a look at this FREE program. They are hoping you will like it enough that you will eventually purchase their more full-featured "NetSonic Pro" that sells for \$39.95. (\$29.95 if you use a special URL given to me by their marketing people) [[http://www.netsonic.com/redirect/buy\\_redirect.asp?DIRECT\\_FLAG=25of&netsonic=~ ,~c~,~](http://www.netsonic.com/redirect/buy_redirect.asp?DIRECT_FLAG=25of&netsonic=~ ,~c~,~)]. Find out more about the software at [<http://www.netsonic.com>] where you can also see a description for the Pro version. Unfortunately, I had to wrap up this column a bit early and the special ordering URL doesn't find the \$29.95 price. If it is a problem this month, I'll feature the special offer next month for the Pro version. That will give you time to see if you like the free version enough to buy it.

## **A Way To Combine Both Your PC And The Web For Some Projects**

Beth Fordyce from Southeastern Michigan Computer Organization referred this to me some time ago and I'm just now following up. I e-mailed French Prescott of Enfish Software and the following is what he told me:

"Enfish's current release product is 'Onespace.' This product has superceded the Tracker Pro, their original flagship product. It incorporates

the same tracking and search function of Tracker Pro, but it now extends the product to bring Web content and the user's own content into one unified workspace.

"For example, if you're working on a project, say the annual Christmas party, you can earmark the relevant Web pages (maybe caterers or decoration suppliers) and see it all in context with all the e-mail you send and receive about the project. You'll see any documents (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.) related to the planning, and any other files that you specifically indicate are involved. Onespace does the tracking on your own system automatically and you can use search tools (much like Internet search engines) to expand the tracking. The user can set up and configure the working area to fit individual needs."

This product is a FREE working download from the Enfish site: [<http://www.enfish.com>]. The latest release version was made available July 19. French gave me many more details, so check the above Web site for more information. Looks like it is for PC only. I've seen good reviews on it.

## **More Invasion Testing For Hacker-Worried Computer Owners**

You've all read in many places about Steve Gibson's "Shields Up" for testing your machine for hacker invasion, a great service at no cost. In case you want an additional test to check further, I read that you can visit Webtrend's site at [<http://www.webtrends.net/tools/security/scan.asp>]. Or try Hacker-Wacker at [<http://www.hackerwacker.com>] and click on "Free Security Scan."

That's it for this month. 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) Click [[dealsguy@mindspring.com](mailto:dealsguy@mindspring.com)]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns. Also check out the [distribution page](#).

## Ken's Korner

### Postal Service Plans E-Projects, Including Permanent E-mail Addresses

by Ken Fermoye

**A**nticipating that electronic bytes will take bigger and bigger bites out of first-class mail in future, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is readying new and varied electronic mail services for Americans. A major one would assign e-mail addresses to most people.

One of the new services could notify customers by e-mail about an incoming bill or package, which they could then reroute to another address. Another proposal, set to begin a three-year consumer test in

September, would allow customers to send e-mails to a post office to be printed and delivered as first-class mail. A third program, already available, lets customers pay bills online through the Postal Service's Web site. Postal Service spokeswoman Sue Brennan called the e-projects "a way for customers to choose how they want to get their correspondence."

The new services will be added to Internet-oriented offerings the Postal Service already has in place. It began testing a kind of certified e-mail service in 1998. Called PostECS, it sends electronic receipts for contracts and other important documents transmitted over the Internet.

### Online Stamps Popular

Last year, USPS rolled out its heralded system that makes postage available online. The Postal Service says 280,000 customers have printed \$22.6 million worth of "online stamps" since July 1999, but the service has yet to deliver a profit.

Both of these existing services do show promise for future growth, however, which may be critical to the USPS in coming years.

Considering that e-mail will soon take huge bites out of USPS first-class business, these moves, and more, are needed to move postal service into the 21st century. The post office itself predicts that in 2003, first-class mail service, now a \$35 billion business and its top revenue producer, will begin an unprecedented decline at the hands of booming e-mail and online billing services.

Benjamin Franklin, our first postmaster and a great innovator himself, would surely applaud these new efforts, but probably would be critical of

the Postal Service's slowness in facing up to challenges of new technologies. Banks, credit unions and many other private services already offer bill-paying services, and have for some time. Is it too late for the USPS to capture a piece of this pie? Judge for yourself.

Under its own online billing system, the Postal Service charges customers \$6 per month to send 20 electronic transactions, or \$2 per month and 40 cents apiece for unlimited transactions. How does that compare with bill-paying services already available to you?

The e-mail-to-paper system would cost about 41 cents per message - eight cents more than current 33-cent postage. Is it worth it? My personal opinion is that it might be in some instances, but it would depend on how much faster the Postal Service can get time-critical correspondence to recipients than would be the case with normal first-class mail.

(Mail2000, a Bethesda, Md., company (mail2kinc.com) already offers a service that translates e-mail messages into first-class mail, plus a variety of other mail-related services. Aimed more at businesses and other volume mailers than individuals, it claims it can save time and money, compared to the USPS.

### **Your Own 'Mailbox'**

The e-mailbox proposal, whereby virtually every American would be assigned a free e-mail address corresponding to his or her street address shows more promise.

Under this system, customers could simply link the service to any present e-mail address they have, or opt for a special online postal box. Customers

could then get an e-mail address using their initials, followed by their nine-digit ZIP code and the last two numbers of their street address - with "usps.com" tacked at the end.

For instance, John Doe, 1234 Main St., Los Angeles, CA 91365-4004 would get the e-mail address: jd91365400445usps.com. I know, it's cumbersome and tough to rattle off from the top of your head! But it also is unique enough to minimize duplication problems. This would eliminate the need to change addresses when you change Internet Service Providers, but using e-mail services such as Bigfoot, Hotmail or Altavista mail provide a similar benefit.

It's no news that Americans are avid e-mailers. A new study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that more than 90 million people have Internet access. Of those, about 84 million use e-mail regularly, while 16 million have used some sort of online banking service.

E-commerce gurus have mixed feelings postal e-mail proposal. "They're in catch-up mode," was a typical reaction. Several experts I talked to pointed out that most people apt to use the service already have e-mail - and that many of the rest probably wouldn't log on for the tracking service.

"As schemes go, this one isn't bad," said one representative of a Santa Monica, Calif.-based technology research firm. "It absolutely makes sense - the Postal Service's business, and expertise, is mail delivery, and e-mail is just another form of mail. If the USPS ignored this new mailing technology it would insure that it would become obsolete eventually. Any steps it can take to work within the new framework should help it survive."

## Ken's Korner

### Acrobat: Is It Changing Publishing as We Know It?

By Ken Fermoye

**A**dobe Acrobat is more than just another software program. It didn't arrive with the instant impact of its ancestor, Adobe's PostScript, but it bids fair to make equally important changes in publishing as we know it.

For user groups and other non-profit or educational organization, Adobe Acrobat(tm) is a tool that has special implications, not to mention benefits.

How can I claim that Acrobat may be more important than PostScript, you ask? Didn't PostScript help create a revolution in publishing back in the mid-1980s? Certainly! PostScript, combined with PageMaker from Aldous and the Apple LaserWriter printer created what John Warner of Aldous named "desktop publishing." Then Ventura Publisher came along and extended the new technology to PCs.

We're in a new era, however, with the Internet and World Wide Web, plus hardware and software more capable than anything we dreamt of 15 years ago. And Adobe Acrobat, especially the current 4.0X versions, fits right into this new era. It's a unique publishing tool, more versatile than anything

we've known in the past. Consider these points:

1. You can use Acrobat to publish a document from virtually any application in a Portable Document Format (PDF) file.
2. Acrobat is a true cross-platform application; its PDF files can be created and read on both PC and Mac computers.
3. PDF files preserve the fonts, formatting, colors and graphics of the original source document, regardless of the application and platform used to create it.
4. Conversion of document files to PDF can be a simple drag-and-drop operation, but there are sever other ways Acrobat can create PDF files, especially from within Window Office applications such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint. The default installation in Windows includes macros that allow quick, easy creation of PDF files.
5. You don't have to be a publishing genius or understand how the program works to use it effectively for such chores as converting a PageMaker newsletter or Word document to PDF for distribution via e-mail. You do have to spend more time to learn the more sophisticated features that Acrobat also offers.
6. Acrobat captures Web pages or entire sites and converts them to PDF files for convenient offline viewing and printing.

And that's just for starters. For more detailed information than I could possibly include here, including FAQs, User Forums and tutorials, go to [www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/main.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/main.html).

What I'd like to stress here is the important role Adobe Acrobat can play in the distribution of information by user groups and other educational or not-for-profit organization that publish newsletters and journals.

For at least four years I've been arguing that distributing hardcopy newsletters via the U.S. Postal Service may not be the best choice for user groups. It's expensive, vying with meeting place rental as the major item in most groups' budgets. It's slow, especially if newsletters go out as third class mail. It also places major restrictions on editors.

I know, I know! Members resist receiving their newsletters via e-mail.

"I want to get the news printed on paper so I can sit and enjoy it with a cup of coffee. I don't want to read it on a computer monitor!" Those are the comments I hear all too frequently.

But think about it for a minute. The newsletter you get via snail mail is printed in plain black and white, right? And it usually contains eight or 12 pages; more must be added in multiples of at least two pages, usually four.

Downloading a typical PDF newsletter takes only a few minutes, printing it just a few minutes more. And how many user group members don't have a color printer these days? Not many, so editors can add color to their pages, something too expensive even to consider for printed newsletters.

Acrobat eliminates page constraints, too. Editors don't have to worry about filling an extra page when they have only seven pages of material, or to trim a page when they can easily fill nine pages. There is no need to do the laborious task of collating, folding and/or stapling and sticking on stamps.

Deadlines become more elastic and more up-to-date news included. Once

the newsletter has been thoroughly proofread, corrected and converted to a PDF file, it's ready to go out via e-mail without delay.

Many groups, recognizing the economic and other benefits of PDF, now use Acrobat to publish at least a portion of their newsletter each month. When I first started the Ken's Korner column three years ago, receiving a PDF newsletter was a rarity. Now I get two or three dozen each month.

What I recommend in my Media Workshops is that groups set up pilot programs and start using Acrobat to create PDF newsletters for a portion of their subscription list (e.g. vendors, advertisers, exchange copies for other groups and members who volunteer to forego printed copies) as a pilot program. The list can be expanded as more people, particularly new members, agree to receive their newsletters in electronic form.

I realize this isn't your typical software application review -- and it isn't meant to be! It's meant to be a thought-started for groups (and individuals) who are willing to consider a new, effective and efficient means of publishing documents in the new millennium.

At \$249 for the full version of 4.0 (\$99 for update version), Adobe Acrobat may be pricey for the casual, occasional user but it makes sense for anyone who produces a lot of documents and needs to distribute them widely via e-mail or on CDs. It also makes a great dollars and cents value for any group.

I welcome comments about their experiences from groups and individuals that use Acrobat -- and from those who find fault with my reasoning and suggestions. If response warrants, I will print replies in a future column.

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## The Napster Conundrum

### It's Free, It's Easy, It's Wrong

By Steve Bass, PIBMUG

I'm writing while listening to Dave Brubeck. Not unusual but this is one of Brubeck's long out of production cuts, a song I've been searching for on CD for a couple of years. You guessed it: I found it on Napster. It was free.

Another? "High Wire," a just released cut from a Rob Brown and Sunny Wilkinson CD that wasn't available at cdrom.com or Barnes and Noble, my usual haunts. Right. It was already on Napster.

Napster works by connecting you to other people wanting to download MP3 music. Once connected, you search on, say, "Brubeck" and Napster's servers find everyone logged on with music that has "Brubeck" in the listing. You can limit the search to a reasonable number of hits—100 is the

default—or ask for 900 (and sometime you get your wish, filling the screen with songs). Once the search is complete, a click on the title starts a download; click on the sender's name and he or she is added to your Hot List, providing a way of finding them in subsequent sessions.

So yes, I'm using Napster, feeling conflict and guilt, and collecting songs. I logged on last month and it wasn't for research or a future article. I just had to see it for myself. Free music, all you can download, all perfectly anonymous. And entirely illegal.

### Gimmie Some More

The problem is just that: the music *is* free, as much of it as I want, and stunningly easy to get. With a high-speed connection, I can pop a 5MB song onto my PC in less than 30 seconds. Hell, it takes me that long to turn on the amp and CD-ROM player on my home audio system. In about seven minutes I can download and start listening to the equivalent of an entire long playing record, about 55MBs. And it's ever so tempting to dip in and grab another few songs.

### Scour Your i-drive for Gnutella

Want more? While less valuable than Napster, there's Scour.com, an Internet app that supplies music, videos, and images. Scour works with i-drive.com, a site that supplies users unlimited—and free--online storage space.

The story is that things get even more outrageous with Gnutella, a free program that provides anything you want. Search on Word and you'll get the program. Music? Easy. Porno? No sweat. But that's nonsense so let's

dispense with Gnutella right away. First, Gnutella is more difficult to use than Napster or Scour.

Once you master Gnutella and start searching for items, you'll find more junk and x-rated sites than you can possibly imagine. For example, a search on Wordstar (stop laughing) brought up wordstar.html, a file with an x-rated URL embedded inside. Same thing happened with a search for most popular programs. In a way it's a lot like unmoderated newsgroups with unfiltered files and messages.

Worse, Gnutella is probably the easiest way to pick up a virus or have your system examined by an experienced hacker. You can safely get a taste of what Gnutella's capable of by searching at CapnBry's site. <http://capnbry.dyndns.org/gnutella/gs.php> If you want Gnutella, get it at <http://gnutella.wego.com>

## **The Napster Connection**

On the other hand, Napster's files are 100 percent MP3s with no worries about viruses. The program's commercial enough with a relatively easy interface so you'll get the knack in a few minutes. If you use a personal firewall—I'm using ZoneLabs free Zone Alert ([zonelabs.com](http://zonelabs.com)) and feeling comfortable with it—you'll be safe against intruders.

Of course, there are a few downsides to Napster. Not all the music is complete, and not all of it is good quality. Some Napster users are conscientious and make it clear in the song's title that the song was cut short. Often a cut doesn't get ripped—transferred from the CD to the hard drive—properly and the music is distorted. When you log on to Napster, you fill in your connection speed. Unfortunately, not everyone tells the

truth. So you might find yourself downloading from someone using a 56k modem, making your high-speed access valueless. Or if you've decided to share one of your folders filled with music, slow connectors may start grabbing songs and you might feel guilty disconnecting them before they get anything downloaded.

## **Knock Knock, it's the Net Cops**

In mid-June, the Recording Industry Association of America, a trade association, and a handful of record labels sued Napster, alleging it's contributing to massive copyright infringement because of its members trading songs through the service.

Nobody's going to catch you, so don't worry.

The biggest bugaboo you'll face is ethical. My concern is for the songwriter and performer, the two groups who are generally stuck holding the unsavory end of the stick. So not only do they get screwed by the record producers, now the customer gets a chance to chisel them out of their royalties.

## **The Process of Denial**

Some people I've talked with justify using Napster thinking it will force the record industry to pay attention and change their greedy ways. Maybe it will. I know I'd gladly pay a buck or two for each cut I want, provided I'm not stuck with the entire CD.

What I want is the ability, as with Napster, to check out and listen to the entire song, not a 15 second sample. For instance, I heard about four

#### HERE'S HOW: NAPSTER

**Limiting uploads:** Maintain control of who's able to take files from your shared music directory. One way is to limit the number of downloads to one song per person.

**Check your sharing folder:** It's critical you pay attention to the folder you're sharing with other Napster users. It's easy to inadvertently check the box to share the entire drive.

**Security Tip:** When you first begin using Napster, don't share any songs. In Napster's configuration, set the number of files to share to zero.

**Don't Share at All:** The safest way to use Napster is don't allow anyone to get at your files. That way you're completely safe from intruders.

**Limit your Downloads:** Don't try to download too many songs at once. You'll run out of bandwidth and may get knocked offline. Think about it: Your one connection will divide the bandwidth among all the songs you're downloading because each song is coming from a different user. It's better to grab a few songs; they'll download more quickly and if you are disconnected, you'll lose only a few songs.

**Dump partial songs:** Get rid of incomplete partial files. Check out the file before you allow it to be copied to the next person. Better, set Napster to delete incomplete files.

**Be Polite:** Check if others are downloading files from your drive before you log off. Use Napster's Chat feature to warn people just starting a download if you're planning on logging off.

**Hotlist Tip:** As you search, watch for people on the list with multiple selections of your favorite author. Put them on your Hotlist and ignore users with just one selection.

**Protect Yourself:** Use Zone Lab's free firewall, Zone Alert. It will stop outsiders from doing any harm. ([www.zonelabs.com](http://www.zonelabs.com)).

minutes of "The Time of the Barracudas," a Gil Evans and Miles Davis cut on the radio. I liked what I heard. After I downloaded the entire song on Napster, I realized it wasn't something I wanted to listen to again. I deleted it, just as I would with shareware I couldn't use. Had I purchased the \$16 CD, I would've been stuck with it.

And what's the business plan for the 19 year old behind Napster? The program's free and there's no advertising on Napster—no banner ads, no cookies, and no intrusions on our privacy. My guess? The kid's going to sell it to one of the big record companies. So the question we're faced with

is whether Napster is a rogue, a way to let everyone pirate music from the Internet. Or is Napster a change agent, pushing the industry towards reform. Me? I've gotta go. There are a couple of Herbie Hancock cuts I'm trying to find!

*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. Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World Magazine, frequently writes for Forbes ASAP, Working Woman, and Family Circle, and is the president of the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He can be reached at [stevebass@earthlink.net](mailto:stevebass@earthlink.net)*

## **Three Little Words That make a big difference**

**By Bill Roush, SWIPCC Editor**

**D**id you ever stop and think about how much little things change your life? The US Government is putting out tons of paper work telling us common people how to do things. There is always someone that we sent to Washington standing beside a stack of paper reaching half way to the ceiling, telling us that they are going to make things "simple" for us.

How much has your life changed because of the "simplified way" from Washington and how much has it changed because of little three and four word phrases from someone close to you? Almost all are "good news."

As a kid you heard: "Don't do that," "I'll show you" and "We love you."

As we grew older, we heard: "Don't be late," "Drive careful," "Do we

know his/her parents?"

Later on the phrases became: "Let's go out," "I like you," "Here is my ring," "I love you."

And then the big one; "Let's get married." Followed by "It's a boy" or "It's a girl"

Sports also has its own phrases, often in headlines: "Yankees Win Series," "Unser Wins Indy," "Jarrett Wins Daytona."

As powerful and important as these phrases may be, there is nothing that will cause a bigger change in your life as: "You have cancer."

My story started four years ago when as part of a routine physical, the PSA (Prostrate specific antigen) test came back with an elevated (6) reading. (Any thing above four is considered high.) This led to a referral with a urologist who examined me with his finger. He did not find anything out of the ordinary but, because of the elevated PSA, prescribed a biopsy. The biopsy was negative and I was advised to have another PSA in one year. I will tell you that the biopsy got my attention.

Eighteen months later I had another PSA test. This time it was five. The doctor mentioned it when reviewing the lab tests. I told him that the earlier PSA was higher and I was not concerned.

Another eighteen months later, three years from the first abnormally, I had another routine physical, this time the doctor informed me that I was being referred to a urologist for evaluation. The urologist gave me the results of the PSA test, 12. I was scheduled for an immediate (few days) biopsy and other lab work. My wife went with me to the biopsy.

My wife also accompanied me to the follow-up appointment, I was called into the doctor's office and he went over the results of the blood tests. At that moment my wife appeared at the door and the doctor invited her to have a chair. He then looked up the results of the biopsy. He turned to me and my wife and said "The biopsy was positive, You Have Cancer."

He explained some options, I think. All I really remember of that day was: Walking out of his office with a piece of paper referring me to a Radiation Oncologist. I do remember him saying that he was a surgeon and it would be in my best interests to hear from a radiation expert.

That night I jumped on the Internet and tried to learn all I could about Prostrate Cancer. I quickly learned why many doctors do not like the Internet. One search engine gave me 214 hits. I found many "Instant Cures." I found articles condemning all forms of cancer treatment, except theirs (some from doctors and many from patients). I found an article on "How to Remove a Prostrate Gland (with color photographs)." I found few articles by authors with credentials. I found many conflicting articles. It tended to confuse me. I went to bed without the knowledge I was seeking.

I have a daughter who is a Registered Nurse and is Internet savvy. I asked her for a list of sites that might help. I have another daughter who is studying nursing and uses the Internet as part of her studies, I also asked her for help.

Both daughters responded with a short list of possible sites. No one web site gave me all the answers but by combining information from just a few

sites and printing the selected web pages, I was better able to get a handle on what was happening to me. The pre screening of the web sites was a big help. One of the better web sites was the American Cancer Society at <http://www.cancer.org>.

The Internet research had prepared me for the visit to the Radiation Oncologist and for the battery of tests to follow. I was injected with radioactive dye, drank a "gallon" of contrast fluid, had all sorts of x-rays, scans, and had enough blood drawn to get two punches on my "donor card."

I also learned that no two prostrate cancer cases are the same, just as no two people are the same. An excellent treatment plan for one man may be a bad plan for the next person. It is important to keep this in mind when talking to survivors. Most men think their treatment was the best, it was for them, but they are not you. Their enthusiasm tends to increase with the distance traveled for the treatment

The results of my tests showed that the cancer had "broken through" the prostrate and was outside the gland. This excluded surgery and made radiation and hormone therapy my treatment of choice. I had forty treatments receiving massive amounts of radiation focused on the prostrate. I did not suffer the side affects of radiation therapy that many report. I did have a "light sunburn" and a couple of bouts with an upset stomach (two Maalox tablets). (No two men the same)

The radiation therapy sapped my strength, slowly. Only after the radiation was completed and the recovery started, did I realize how weak I was. I noticed the rapid improvements, on a daily basis almost as soon as the

radiation was completed.

I'm still on the hormone treatment and will be for some time to come. Prostrate cancer feeds on testosterone and the hormone treatments decrease testosterone levels.

I'll be getting several checkups per year for the next three years and then back to the once a year PSA blood test. My last PSA was less than 0.5.

What changes have I noticed in the past year?

I pay more attention to the sermon/homily in church. I have more patience with my family and close friends and less patience with others. And I put on some extra weight, as if I needed that.

My wife has stood beside me in every step of the ordeal and I do not know if I'd be the same today if it were not for her support.

Cancer is a family disease.

Mistakes I made:

- 1 I did not start yearly PSA testing at age 50, I was in my sixty's when I had the first PSA test.
2. I did not follow-up on the one year test interval.

Did it make any difference? Who knows? I don't, but I didn't help my own cause. The short history also made it harder for the doctors.

If you are diagnosed with Prostrate Cancer, find out your treatment options and talk with the doctors in each field. A good doctor should recommend someone in another discipline of cancer treatment.

Use the Internet to help you in talking with your doctor, not to challenge. Patients have been known to print every web page they could find, hand reams of paper to the doctor and say "According to this, I should be getting the 'XYZ' treatment." And then sit down and wait for the doctor to answer.

Check your doctor's credentials. Board certified, years of practice, claims, word of mouth at a prostrate cancer support group meeting. Who was your doctor and what do you think? People will tell you.

Prostrate Cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in men. Early detection is the key to survival.

#### **Recommendations:**

- ! For all men over fifty, get a yearly PSA blood test and an exam by a doctor who will feel the prostrate for any lumps and abnormal tissue.
- ! If you are of African decent start testing at age forty.
- ! If there is any history of Prostrate Cancer in your family, start testing at age forty.
- ! Learn what Prostrate Cancer is before you get it, most men will.

## SOFTWARE REVIEWS SOFTWARE REVIEWS SOFTWARE REVIEWS



### CLICKBOOK 2000

Reviewed by M.K. Carol Lee

Blue Squirrel

170 W. Election Drive, Suite #125

Draper, UT 84020

[www.bluesquirrel.com](http://www.bluesquirrel.com) At A Glance Rating: \*\*\*

Price: \$49.95

System Requirements: Pentium 100 or faster processor, Microsoft Windows 95/98/NT, 16-MB RAM, 5.5 MB of free disk space, Laser or DeskJet printer.

Pro: Useful and easy-to-use printing utility.

Con: Limited editing options.

ClickBook is a printing utility, which organizes printed output into customized layouts such as day planner pages, wallet booklets, brochures, greeting cards, and catalogs. Content such as digital photos, on-line content, spreadsheets, and text files can be assembled into 40 different types of established layouts or into one created by the user. From the ClickBook Community ([www.clickbook.com](http://www.clickbook.com)), additional layouts developed by other ClickBook users can be downloaded.

After the software is installed on the computer, ClickBook launched the Printer Setup dialog box to set up the printer to print double-sided pages. Opening a document in its application program and printing it to a ClickBook printer or dragging documents onto the ClickBook printer icon typically begins the process, which causes ClickBook to pop-up. Once in ClickBook, a layout is selected and customized further, if desired. ClickBook 2000 allows for the addition of page numbers and borders to print jobs. The page numbers appear in the bottom/center position of each page. The borders can be shadowed, frame, box, or dashes of varying selected thickness. A Table of Contents for the printout can also be made, which lists all the print jobs (up to 31) and their page numbers that each print job starts on. Portrait and Landscape Documents can be combined into one print job. To save on paper, ClickBook automatically rotates, reduces, and realigns the content to print as double-sided publications. In preparing the document for ClickBook printing, ClickBook's User's Guide does recommend that the user manually enlarge the font of documents that are to be printed in a wallet-sized layout to ensure readability. ClickBook does not have the ability to change fonts or font sizes, and so it relies on the application program of the data file to make such changes. ClickBook provides instructions at each step of the printing process, including

printing out an instruction sheet with an arrow showing the correct direction for re-inserting the paper into the printer to print on the other side.

I was quite impressed at the ease of printing out an impressive looking brochure. This product is relatively inexpensive and should be useful for the development of newsletters, booklets, pamphlets, and greeting cards. There is coordination required if using a networked printer to ensure that other printer jobs do not interfere with the ClickBook printing process. However, with a non-shared printer, this utility works without much difficulty.

## **Adobe Photoshop 5.0**

**Reviewed by Tim Chiara**

Adobe Systems Incorporated <http://www.adobe.com>

(downloadable free product tryout- Photoshop 5.5)

At a Glance Rating: \*\*\*\*

Price: \$609

Minimum System Requirements : Pentium or faster, Windows 95, NT4 or later, 32 MB of RAM (64 recommended), 80 MB hard disk space, 8-bit color display(24-bit recommended),

CD-ROM drive, Sound card for tutorials

Review machine : 233 Pentium II, Windows 98 + downloads from MS, 128 MB RAM, 32-bit color display

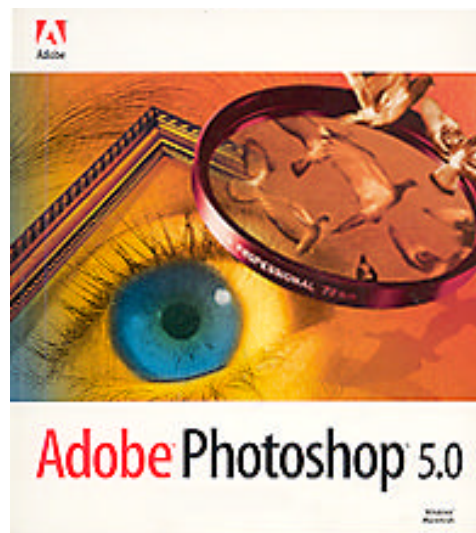
As with all programs, especially major ones, and Photoshop 5.0 is approaching that status, more is better and the most is best. Pour on the RAM !!

Reviewer: Tim Chiara, (415) 285-4358, [timchiara@yvesbarbero.com](mailto:timchiara@yvesbarbero.com)

Pro: The best, most elegant photo editor around. Ease of operation is a byword with Photoshop and this version is no exception. A multiplicity of tools for use in any area of graphics production, whether it be photo editing, print design or web design.

Con : The price you pay for excellence, Adobe style. \$609 for Photoshop 5.5 from their website.

**P**hotoshop 5.0 continues Adobe's tradition of excellence. From version 3.0 to the current version 5.0, Photoshop has been an excellent program to use for photo editing. With version 4.0 came multi layer compositing. Version 5.0 is a continuing refinement of the Photoshop mystique.



Photoshop 5.0 has the usual complete set of tools for print applications, from four color preview and out-of-gamut color preview to spot color adjustment layers to printing color separations. I am no expert in matters of print but the tools seem very complete.

The set of photo editing tools is likewise extensive. One I appreciate is the auto levels which allows Photoshop to choose the most appropriate adjustments to the image. Not always the best solution but usually a good place to start and maybe finish.

There are also controls to adjust hue, saturation level, color balance, brightness and contrast, and handy ones like variations which give you a look at various possibilities of color change and brightness to give you an idea of what does what.

In addition, there is also a large number of filters available to add effects to the image or a partial area of the image. Some are cool and extreme, some are okay and subtle, some even have the ability to obliterate the original image completely. But everything is undoable. And there is a large assortment of after market products that work with Photoshop. But like Photoshop, some of them are pretty pricey.

Most adjustments and filters have a dialog box to tweak them to get the effect you want and usually allow a preview of the effect before applying. Something else that is a fascinating tool in Photoshop is the use of layers to control different elements of an image. Final artwork can be built up layer upon layer and adjustments can be made to individual layers without

affecting any other layers. Also, the transparency of different layers can be controlled to give you that cool depth of image look that is so popular with the arty crowd. Creating a layer couldn't be simpler. Go to the layers palette, click on the right side arrow, click on create new layer, give it a name (or not, Photoshop will provide a name) and voila a new layer is created.

If you add text, it automatically becomes a new layer. You can also add layers by cutting and pasting, or dragging and dropping from another open document in Photoshop. Hold the control key down, which allows you to move the selected layer and just move it to the new image. Great stuff!

An important part of Photoshop usage is the necessity to select different areas to edit, or transform with the various editing tools and filters that are available. So Photoshop provides a large array of selection tools to make the task easier. You can choose to select by area, by color or you can draw or paint a selection.

One interesting new tool in version 5.0 is the magnetic lasso. It allows you to draw around an object in an image and it will automatically snap to the edge of the object thereby lessening the problem of drawing around the wiggly bits. It does this by differentiating between contrast levels.

So what's different from version 4.0?

I must say that the most obvious change is that version 5.0 takes longer to load than version 4.0. Although when loaded, I didn't notice that the program ran much slower. Just more housekeeping to do I suppose.

The most interesting change, to me, is the addition of the history palette. This allows the user to undo to any state of the original image. Version 4.0

only allowed the undoing of the last operation. There are two methods of using the history palette. The default is that changes will be undone sequentially. If you have made 10 changes and you want to undo change five you will undo changes five thru 10. This makes sense, of course. The other method is to "Allow Non-linear History." This allows for the deletion of individual states without affecting those that come after. As you move through the history list when you click on the change that you want to undo, the image on the screen reverts to that state, so you can see before you undo what the image will look like. Very handy!

The history brush allows you to revert areas of the image to any former state by painting. An unusual idea that takes a bit of getting used to. There are a couple of things to remember about states and snapshots. A state is the location on the history palette where the various changes are recorded. Each editing action is listed in the history palette. By checking next to that action you can paint your way to that state in any area of the image. A snapshot is a temporary copy of the image created by choosing a state in the history palette and using that state you can switch between the various snapshots.

Text control has been improved considerably. Text now remains fully editable, as long as you don't merge the text with other layers. And all the transformations available for layer use are now applicable to text, as text, as well.

Layer effects have been added by which you can add beveling, embossing, and drop shadows to any layer. The effects can be turned on and off, and are automatically updated as further editing takes place.

Layers can also be aligned by edges, centers, or selection edges. Also by various set amounts such as top, vertical center, bottom, left, horizontal center and right. This aligns linked layers by various increments according to Photoshop's settings.

There is a new reselect command which allows you to retrieve the last selection you used.

Paths and selection borders can be transformed by reshaping control points in the path, by rotating and by resizing. Paths are used to draw precise selection borders. They are vector based . They can be converted to selections, filled, stroked to add color or exported to a vector based program like Adobe Illustrator.

Photoshop 5.0 supports ICC device profiles to provide more accurate color reproduction. There is also support for 16-bit channels for both CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, black) and RGB (red, green, blue).

Photoshop will also separate images to one or more spot color plates.

Color samplers can be created to monitor color changes. Four colors can be sampled and their values will go into the info palette. As changes are made the color numbers will be displayed as before and after values in the info palette.

The Hue/Saturation command has been changed to allow control over all color components, both Red, Green, Blue and Cyan, Magenta, Yellow.

Channels can be mixed to allow for "creative color adjustments," the creation of high quality grayscale or sepia-tone images, conversion from alternate color spaces or the duplication or swapping of channels.

## **Here are some new tools**

The measure tool lets you measure the length, angle and location of areas in the image. This allows you to correct for images that are not exactly vertical in appearance.

The magnetic lasso and magnetic pen, discussed earlier, let you create selections in a more automatic fashion by differentiating between levels of contrast.

The freeform pen lets you create paths simply by drawing them. Control points are automatically created or can be added manually by clicking as you go.

Also, there is a new filter, the 3-D transformation filter, which allows you to map part of the image to a cube, sphere or cylinder. The map can then be rotated.

The actions palette has the ability to record more tools and palettes. And wizards have been added to simplify multiple step operations.

The color settings, duotone and indexed color dialogs are now previewable.

PDF files can now be imported. It does a pretty good job of it to. Of course they cease to be PDF's as Photoshop rasterizes them.

There have been some improvements in the interface such as an updated Curves dialog box and changes to the Path tools to improve consistency with Adobe Illustrator. Save As options now make it easier to exclude unwanted options, thereby decreasing file size. Scratch space support has changed to allow up to four scratch volumes with a total size of 200 GB.

Photoshop 5.0 also supports printing to Postscript Level 3 printers. And DCS 2.0 format support has been added to the Encapsulated Postscript(EPS) export module. DCS 2.0 is an enhancement to the EPS format developed by Quark. Encapsulated Postscript is the industry standard format for communicating between Postscript language applications and devices, and can contain both vector and bitmap graphics.

There have been some changes to keyboard shortcuts, tools and commands, most notable of which is that the transformation commands are now under the edit menu instead of the layer menu as version 4.0.

The included hard copy User Guide is quite useful. It provides good information about the functions of the program. And also gives background information about color concepts, file formats and printing requirements.

In conclusion, is Photoshop 5.0 for you? To my mind it is the best photo editor around. It's painting abilities are good, but not necessarily the best. In terms of ease of operation it is at the top of the heap. There are very few instances of frustration caused by the inability to complete operations. It is an intuitive program to use. There are many graphics programs out there, all having their weak and strong points. Photoshop 5.0 is the professional solution to graphic editing in the print world and it is very capable in the web world. It doesn't do everything on it's own, but it does a lot. The biggest problem in my mind is the price. Professional capability at a professional price. If you do not require the extensive print capabilities there are other better priced programs. But if you want the best, this is it.

## **“DSL for Dummies” by David Angell**

**Reviewed by Yves Barbero**

DSL For Dummies by David Angell

0-7645-0475-4

312 pages, IDG Press, \$24.99.

[www.idg.com](http://www.idg.com)

**W**hy they say, “The Fun and Easy Way to get up to speed on a Digital Subscriber Line [DSL]” is beyond me. There is nothing fun about waiting for the telephone company all day only to find out that they came and went without bothering to tell you, having hung the wrong type of line so that you have to do it again a couple of weeks later. After that the DSL provider, in my case, Northpoint, will come along and do the inside wiring. Two weeks drags to two months by the time all is said and done.

This is not to distract from this excellent and informative book. It's certainly not the author's fault that a crippling strike against the regional phone company on the East Coast has had its ripple effect all the way to San Francisco, or that Pacific Bell is overselling its services and is way behind in its orders. Don't misunderstand! I'm all for the employees of Verizon getting their share of the pie in these boom times, and anyone who thinks PacBell is going to get it right the first time should have his head examined. No matter who your provider is, it is the local phone company

that will hang the wire. Northpoint is the CLEC (Competitive Local Exchange Carrier), while PacBell is the ILEC (Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier), thanks to Telecommunications Act of 1996 and one of the myriad of details you will learn from the book.

I'm doing contract work for an Internet provider and it is their nickel that is paying for this so they chose the system. But if it had been up to me, I would certainly have read this book first just to understand exactly what is going on. DSL, even at its bargain rate of \$40 from the local phone company, is still a commitment of at least a year if you don't want to purchase the DSL modem (\$200-250).

What's a hub? What's a firewall? Do you know the difference between a twisted pair and a coaxial cable. What's a protocol? Do you really think the phone company has your best interest in mind when it removes the cover from computer, puts a strange network card in, adds software and pounds strange commands in your system settings? Are you paranoid yet?

Flashcom brought a line into my client's house (he's a day trader), hooked it up to the DSL modem and said, "Where's your network card, buddy?" The client had waited a month for his connection and he was stuck high and dry. The technician had the decency to write down what kind of card he should get. He got it. The client then had me install it and set the protocol (with Flashcom being on the other end of the POT (Plain Old Telephone) with the numbers for the IP address). The client then wrote me an unplanned check. It's best not to get caught in that situation.

In addition, if you have an existing network, you certainly don't want to have protocol conflicts or open your system to the outside world. On a couple of occasions, I've gone in after a DSL installation to clean up protocol conflicts. The phone company techie is good at what he does, but is probably not very knowledgeable about other computer setups.

This book is written in a good clean journalistic style. It tells you what to look for; how to plan; what the technobabble means; and most important, what your choices really are. It may be that a simple ADSL (Asymmetric DSL) connection from your local ILEC is all you need. But for small businesses or sophisticated users, especially if they already have a network, this is unlikely to be the case. The book has more details than most people need, and frankly, I skimmed about half of it, figuring that it's on my shelf with a good index if I need to find out something further. It is thorough.

A word to the wise. Buy this book if you're considering DSL. Consider DSL seriously! Most programs will be sold on the Internet and they tend to be in the 100 megabyte range these days, but they are cheaper that way. Manuals will be in Adobe Reader format (PDF), and those tend to be large. Not too long from now, you'll be downloading rental movies through DSL or cable. Forget downloading music without DSL. Even a single song can take an hour. If you like long symphonies, you'll be crying in your beer without DSL. It is likely to be the standard for a few years anyway.

David Angell brings it home without requiring a degree in engineering, just some of your attention.

[Yves Barbero (415-285-4358 – <http://www.yvesbarbero.com> – [ybarbero@yvesbarbero.com](mailto:ybarbero@yvesbarbero.com)) is a computer consultant specializing in the writing of web pages, the training of staff and the setting up of computers and networks for small businesses, non-profits and individuals.]

## **USB to Dominate PC and Peripheral Markets**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., September 11, 2000 - Already ubiquitous on new PCs, the Universal Serial Bus (USB) will soon be the dominant interface between PCs and peripherals, according to Cahners In-Stat Group (<http://www.instat.com/>). The high-tech market research firm finds that USB is already present in 99% of PCs shipping today, and by 2004, about 750 million USB-equipped desktop and notebook PCs will be in use. Shipments of USB-enabled peripherals will grow to an estimated 141% in 2000 and an average of 55% per year through 2004.

Video cameras and scanners represent the majority of peripherals that are equipped with USB today. In 1999, 54% of video cameras and 38% of scanners shipped with USB ports. The USB standard will also be incorporated into printers, monitors, keyboards, mice, analog and digital modems, stand-alone hubs, external storage drives and other peripherals. In-Stat predicts that by 2004, 88% of scanners shipped will feature USB technology, as will the majority of peripherals. According to Robyn Bergeron, Industry Analyst for In-Stat's Computing and Internet Research Service, "USB 1.1 is substantially faster than legacy PC interfaces such as parallel, serial and PS/2 types. The next USB standard, USB 2.0, will operate as much as 40 times faster than USB 1.1, and will be capable of supporting multiple isochronous devices such as digital video cameras and digital speakers. USB 1.1 technology will hence be rendered insufficient. USB 2.0 performance will compare favorably with the throughput of the IEEE 1394 bus, a competing technology that will have a bigger impact in the

consumer electronics industry than in the PC industry."

In-Stat has also found that:

\* USB 2.0 products will become available in the third or fourth quarter of 2000 and will ramp up quickly over the next few years. Intel, however, is not expected to integrate 2.0 into core logic chip sets until the third quarter of 2001. Other core logic chip set suppliers are expected to deliver USB 2.0 two to three quarters later than Intel.

\* While waiting for 2.0 integration, most PC OEMs will offer at least a few models over the next couple of years with USB 2.0 based on a motherboard with a discrete host, or an add-in PCI board. This will present a large opportunity for component manufacturers such as Lucent, NEC and Philips to sell millions of USB 2.0 host controllers.

\* PC OEMs currently include both USB and legacy interfaces in most designs, but plan to phase out legacy interfaces to reduce costs. Most will have at least one legacy-free model by the end of 2000.

# Steering Committee Minutes

## The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of July 5, 2000

was held at Round Table Pizza, 16th and Geary.

**Present** were Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, Pierre Hahn, Donald Oclassen, Diana Gregory, Joseph B. Puig, III, and Harold Charns

The meeting was called to order at 19:12, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the June 2000 meeting were distributed. After a correction, a motion was made and seconded that they be approved as corrected. They were approved as corrected.

**The Treasurer's report** followed. It was suggested that instead of listing names on the report as to phone bills paid it should list phone numbers. The bottom line on the treasurer's report was that we have sufficient funds.

**The Vice President's report** was that he is hoping to have enough people to man a table at an upcoming Cow Palace computer show.

**The President 's report** was that he wanted to discuss ways to use our benefactor vendor incentives. It was decided that we could put a notice of incentives available on the club's web site without mentioning the vendor. It was also decided

that it was for new members or renewing members who are not currently a member. For a 2-year membership they would get the deluxe program. The more expensive version of the program would be awarded for a 3-year membership. These will be taken to the Cow Palace computer show in an attempt to gain new members.

**The WebMaster's report** – Butler reminded Joseph and Diana that they still need to send passwords and instructions to Butler and Pierre so that if they are struck by lightning someone can still manage the website. Joseph said he would try to contact Mike Higashi to arrange the DNS name change for InterNIC.

**The Membership Committee** stated that there was no change in membership.

**The Blue Notes Editors' report** was that the next issue would be out early in July.

**The Product Review report** was that we are now eligible to review Microsoft Products.

**The Program Chair report** was that there is currently no program scheduled for July. Butler is still working on the possibility of a company called InternetShare.com to present its "All Aboard!". Pierre will contact Quantum Snap. In August we have Scot Hacker, the author of an O'Reilly book on MP3, and in September Microsoft Millennium will be presented by Eric Johnson.

**Old Business** – Lernit and Hauspie has not yet paid for the projector they requested for the presentation that they didn't show up for. Pierre will contact them regarding this. Butler suggested that maybe they would like to try to present again for October or November.

**New Business** – Pierre suggested it was time to start getting ready for the auction. Butler will get the database from Ron Fiertag. A discussion ensued whether it would be better to contact companies by email vs. snailmail. No decision was reached.

President Butler Crittenden adjourned the meeting at 19:57 hours after a motion was made, seconded and passed that he do so.

Respectfully submitted,

**Judy Gaer, Secretary**

**The San Francisco PC Users Group  
Steering Committee meeting  
of August 1, 2000**

was held at Round Table Pizza, 16th and Geary.

**Present** were Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, Pierre Hahn, Harold Charns, Dorothy Walker, Lee Most, Michael Litant, David Caldwell, and Tom McLoughlin. Young guests were Ricky and Devon Berwick, and Raven Most.

The meeting was called to order at 19:07, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the July 2000 meeting were distributed. A motion was made and seconded that they be approved. After brief discussion the minutes were approved.

**The Treasurer's report** followed. The bottom line on the treasurer's report was that we have sufficient funds. The Treasurer's report was approved.

**The Vice President's report** was not given, as the Don Oclassen had called Butler and said he would be away and unable to attend.

**The President's report** was that he wanted to discuss the preferences of the group re whether we should sometimes have two presenters at one meeting. It was decided to leave this up to the discretion of the president or program chairman on a case-by-case basis. He also suggested we have a phone bank night on a 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month -- to call former members to find out why they were no longer members and invite them to rejoin with

our new benefactor vendor incentives. He also stated he would be calling people to see if they can help at the Cow Palace on a 3-hour shift (either 10-1 or 1-4) on one of the following dates: August 12, September 9, and September 23.

**The WebMaster's report** – the WebMaster were not present but Butler mentioned he was still working on getting InterNIC to change the names on our domain listing. Michael Litant stated that he was unable to get the domain name server to work although he could enter IP addresses and connect through the club's site. He suggested that an update of the status be put on the site splash screen, when people sign in, since the club email is not currently working.

**The Membership Committee** stated that there were 2 new renewals.

**The Blue Notes Editors' report** was that Pierre would be leaving to Europe for three weeks and that Tom would be handling the next issue. They were hoping to go to press the first or second week of Sept. We now have an advertisement. The editors were given the authority to negotiate the price of ads with each advertiser.

**The Product Review report** was to encourage people to do reviews and that Yves Barbero has rejoined the club and begun turning out excellent reviews again.

**The Program Chair report** was that in August we have Scot Hacker, the author of an O'Reilly book on MP3, and in September Eric Johnson will present Microsoft Millennium. We have several

possibilities for October and November but none scheduled yet.

**Old Business** – We are waiting for Ron to give Butler the auction list. Butler will start with his and Pierre's database while he is waiting. He will try emailing people at the companies first, with snail mail used when necessary. Butler and Susan Klum will be going to COMDEX. Butler thinks we can send three people and asked if anyone else wants to go.

**New Business** – Pierre will experiment with mailing list services to the steering committee to see how well they work before using them for topical lists for the club.

After a motion was made, seconded and passed that he do so, Butler adjourned the meeting at 20:03 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

**Judy Gaer, Secretary**

## OCTOBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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				

## NOVEMBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			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		

## DECEMBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

**First Tuesday: Steering Committee meeting**

**Upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza, Geary Blvd and 16th Ave 7PM**

**Second Tuesday: General questions about Windows and hardware, and minor hardware installations.**

**2040 Ellis, 3 houses west of Divisadero, 7-9PM (confirm 415-346-9321 or 415-346-2644)**

**Third Tuesday: General Meeting, The auditorium of the Community College District Office,**

**33 Gough Street, (a half-block south of Market Street) San Francisco, CA**

**OCTOBER TBA - Check our web site for latest schedule [www.sfpcug.org](http://www.sfpcug.org)**

**NOVEMBER TBA - Check our web site for latest schedule [www.sfpcug.org](http://www.sfpcug.org)**

**DECEMBER AUCTION**

**PRESIDENT** [president@mail.sfpug.org](mailto:president@mail.sfpug.org)  
**Butler Crittenden** 415-346-9321

**VICE-PRESIDENT** [vice-president@mail.sfpug.org](mailto:vice-president@mail.sfpug.org)  
**Donald Oclassen**

**SECRETARY** [secretary@mail.sfpug.org](mailto:secretary@mail.sfpug.org)  
**Judy Gaer**

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**Joseph Puig** 415-564-7730

**PRODUCT REVIEW COORDINATOR** [productreview@mail.sfpug.org](mailto:productreview@mail.sfpug.org)  
**Carol Lee**

**24 hour recording for meeting information** 415-346-2644

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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.)