



SAN FRANCISCO PERSONAL COMPUTER *eBLUE*  
USERS GROUP *NOTES*

**Volume 21 Nos. 5-6**  
**May - June 2002**

May - June 2002



## 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 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: \$25 for individuals, \$30 for families and \$50 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 415-665-3599.

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 or 415-346-2644 to organize one.

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

Vendors frequently offer new software or books to the SFPCUG so that an interested member can give it a test run and keep the product in exchange for a published review in *Blue Notes*. Our Product Review Coordinator can arrange to obtain software you 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 email address.  
**Name and reputation of the company distributing the product.** Available mail address and phone number(s)
- \* **At A Glance:** A 1-to 4 rating (worst to best)
- \* **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 by e-mail, [bluenotes@mail.sfpcug.org](mailto:bluenotes@mail.sfpcug.org).

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## Editor's Corner

**W**e are b..a..a..a..ck. We missed a couple of issues (January to April) as a result of too many excuses, too numerous to list. Let us say that we are sorry that it happened. In this issue we have included various articles from other Users Group as well as reviews by Carol Lee. We hope that this issue meets your expectation and please write to us with your views, comments or criticism. We also will welcome articles for inclusion in the next issue

**Blue Notes Editors**  
**bluenotes@SFPCUG.org**

May - June 2002

**The DealsGuy**

**May 2002**

**by Bob Click**

**Greater Orlando Computer Users Group**

**S**o far, nobody has answered my call to take over the Deals Column. I don't blame them because it's a demanding task. I can't say that it's a thankless job though because I receive many thanks everywhere I go. This may sound egotistical, but I would surely miss that. Some editors didn't print that part of my April column so perhaps that's part of the reason for no response. I'll keep it going for a short time, but I'm not sure how long. Maybe I'll have more time after all my company has gone next month. Actually, I've received several messages asking me **NOT** to stop because they just enjoy reading it. It's very gratifying to have people enjoying my work.

There are some discouraging things such as a couple of editors who were content to just print the name of the product, the price and where to buy it, until I asked them "please do not do it that way." They were compressing my two-page column to one paragraph. I think those

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editors are misinterpreting what makes the Deals Column work. Many readers tell me that they rarely buy anything, but they just enjoy reading it. Maybe that's because I keep the readers broke. Anyway, we'll see how my time and the vendor responses go.

### **\*Great Conference**

My wife and I had a GREAT time at the FACUG (Florida Association of Computer User Groups) Conference. Attendance was up considerably this year. There were 197 attendees from 24 user groups. Vendor participation was down this year with only thirteen, but that didn't hurt it a bit. The camaraderie was great. Door prizes were also less abundant this year, but I doubt anybody was surprised at that with the economy the way it is and vendors cutting back. If you missed the conference, you were the loser.

There was an impressive presentation for the new iMac by the Apple folks, and they even gave one away. They have become great supporters of FACUG. During the roundtables one RT during each session was by a vendor. I liked that. As usual, it was a tough decision choosing which RT to attend for each session. There were also many attending the conference for the first time and they were thrilled with it all. FACUG is alive and VERY well thanks to the hard work of its officers.

I think one of the things that makes it work well is that the meals can be catered in at cheaper prices, and the facility is more intimate for attendees. Hotels in the area are reasonably priced. Since it is not held at a convention type hotel, attendees don't have to stay in an expensive hotel room. FACUG is one of my favorite events during the year. As usual, there are still some changes I would like to see.

### **\*Still Good**

The items through Gene & Linda Barlow are always good. To order, go to [<http://www.ugr.com/order/>]. Use the code UGDEALS02.

The Alpha 5 software deal is still good. To order, call 1-800-451-1018 and mention "code 77." Tell them you belong to a user group. Visit [<http://www.alphasoftware.com>] for a better description of the product.

When I commented on how I used to like the Prodigy message boards, Richard Rabin (CEO of Alpha Software) told me that they now have a message board on the Web site that is very active, and where their customers are incredibly helpful to each other. In fact, he said there are about 50,000 posts on the board, which has a super fast search built-in.

Richard asked if I would like an updated version and I jumped at the chance since I still have the DOS version and can't get it to run on my latest computer. I installed my new Alpha 5 and it easily opened my old DOS .dbf files so I could work with them. Then when I closed the

files, they were converted to the new format. I don't know why they didn't keep the .dbf format.

### **\*Gobe Is Back**

I received a message from Dave Johnson of gobeProductive the other day letting me know of another offer for this very interesting product. gobeProductive is currently at version 3.03, but they have some 3.0 CDs left over. He said this seems like a good time to make a special offer to sell these 3.0 versions to my readers, exclusively, for \$49.95 plus S&H. (Retail is \$124.95, but they're still offering a \$74.95 introductory price for the 3.03.) They will again use a special Web page for this DealsGuy offer and they will come in a CD mailer packaging instead of a full box. Users can still upgrade the 3.0 version for free to version 3.03 by downloading the upgrade installer. What a deal!

To purchase the gobeProductive 3.0 DealsGuy special, go to [\[http://www.gobe.com/dealsguy.html\]](http://www.gobe.com/dealsguy.html) and place your order.

### **\*A Quick Message From Herb Goodman**

Herb offers magazine discounts to user group people only. He wants to make sure that even the small user groups know about the changes in the magazine line-up and the new prices. Editors can contact Herb at [HGOODMAN@prodigy.net] for the latest list to publish in their newsletter.

### **\*Get Your Files The Easy Way**

Bonnie Mitchell from Casady & Greene was kind enough to send me this one just before I closed the column. The following is their description of InstaFiles!:

**"View and Organize Documents, Applications, and Projects with One Click!** InstaFiles! is the first visual Document and Project browser for your computer. Everyone who runs more than one program at a time on their PC will find that InstaFiles! will make their life easier. With InstaFiles! you will never lose track of an open window again.

#### **"Browse for documents and projects**

InstaFiles! is a graphical browser for all currently open documents, applications and Web pages. InstaFiles! allows you to easily navigate between documents, etc.

#### **"Simplify Windows using patent-pending technology**

Patent-pending technology lets you see every open window as real-time oversized thumbnails, which allows for instant access to many different open documents, projects, applications or files—with one click!

#### **"Improve your productivity and performance**

Save time by grouping related documents, files, and applications, to launch together later just by opening an InstaFiles! saved project!

#### **"Instantly find your active files**

Never again wonder "where did that file go?" InstaFiles! lays out all open windows, side-by-side, using graphical thumbnails."

Check this URL to order InstaFiles! or any of the Casady & Greene user group specials. [<http://ug.casadyg.com/?page=shop/win>]. The user group price for InstaFiles! is \$19.95, regular price, \$39.95. C & G offers both Mac and PC products.

### **\*Keep Track Of Your Hard Drive's Health**

Bob Esche of the Dayton Microcomputer Association forwarded this DiskAlert offer by Executive Software to me. He liked their Diskeeper® defragger product and feels this is a good company. Their DiskAlert™ software gives you an inexpensive, automated **early warning** system, monitoring for imminent hard drive failures and dangerously low free space on all your servers, with or without RAID. And, DiskAlert protects stand-alone desktops and laptops running Windows NT®/2K/XP. There's more so check their Web site at [[http://www.diskalert.com/purchase/online-store\\_da.asp?ad=dae1](http://www.diskalert.com/purchase/online-store_da.asp?ad=dae1)]. For a limited time, you can download a DiskAlert 1-disk license for just \$29.95, regular \$49.95, or a DiskAlert 2-disk license for \$49.95 instead of \$99.95. One license is only good for a single hard drive. For more questions, call 1-800-829-6468, extension 6012. I'm not sure I understand it all that good so do your homework on this one and check out their Web site information, but it sounds good to me.

**By Bob (The Cheapskate) Click**  
**[[Bobclick@dealsguy.com](mailto:Bobclick@dealsguy.com)].**

[<http://www.dealsguy.com>]

**The DealsGuy  
June 2002  
by Bob Click  
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group**

**\*I Do My Best, But Not The Very Best**

Be aware that the deals I write about may not be the very best. I often get e-mail saying they found a better deal at a certain URL, and some Web surfers say they can beat all my deals, sort of like a challenge. A few chastise me for not using more Web URLs for the best prices. I always explain that I must write this column two months in advance (three months for some editor deadlines), I try to avoid using much on the Web since experience has shown that, two months later, either that deal no longer exists, or it has changed. Often the Web site changes too.

I never argue with the vendors, I mostly take what I can get, unless it is obviously not a deal at all. Also, some of the “deal” URLs I find in user group newsletters do not work when I try them. Some I can track down the correction, others I cannot. You would have to be on my end to see all the e-mails about problems with my column’s published

ordering URLs on the Web, and my proofreaders check them all before it is released.

**\*A New Deals Author – Not Yet –**

Among all the complimentary messages I received about giving up my column was a message from an interested party, a friend, with the possibility of a new author for the Deals column. I believe this person would be good for the job, but I think I scared him off during our conversation. I talked about the never-ending deadlines etc. along with the other work I have been doing on the Web site. I may have turned this job into a monster. That’s been my only possibility, but who knows, eventually something may happen. My heartfelt thanks for all your kind comments concerning not quitting.

**\*And Now For “The June Column”**

There’s nothing fantastic this month, but I’d hate to miss a month. Even though all my winter company has left by now, my time has been limited, not to mention the days I fell asleep in my favorite chair when I could have been making phone calls. Sorry about that, but I’ll give you what I found in my backup items and announcements, and hope somebody finds it useful. A couple of vendors have deals pending. I’ve also been busy remodeling our newly acquired beach condo, at times. Relaxation will be nice whenever the work is finally finished. The problem is, I think we do more “veranda sitting” than we do “work.” My wife also slipped and fell while cleaning the old vinyl

glue off the kitchen floor in preparation for the new tile and is hoping to be healed by next week when we can return to work some more. "Recreation" sure has its price.

### **\*Still Good**

Gene & Linda Barlow's specials are still good. To order, go to [<http://www.ugr.com/order/>]. Gene says they have announced a new version of Drive Image. Also, the Alpha 5 deal may still work. They are supporting user groups very well and doing a few presentations for groups near them. To order, call 1-800-451-1018 and mention "code 77." Tell them you belong to a user group.

I'd be surprised if there are any of the gobe 3.0 specials left, but you can try if you forgot to order before. To purchase the gobeProductive 3.0 DealsGuy special, go to [<http://www.gobe.com/dealsguy.html>] and place your order.

And don't forget about the Casady & Greene user group specials at [<http://ug.casadyg.com/?page=shop/win>]. InstaFile was the feature last month.

### **\*Hey Dude, Don't Forget To Backup (This Just In)**

LaCie Launches the SilverKeeper Web Site with a FREE backup tool for All Mac users. A simple backup software for everyone. Easy-to-use, scheduling at specific days/times or at system shutdown, and protection for valuable documents, video, music, and graphics files. This is Mac OS 9.x and 10.x compatible. LaCie announced a new web

site where users of Apple® Macintosh® computers can download SilverKeeper™ backup software free of charge. Posted on [[www.silverkeeper.com](http://www.silverkeeper.com)], LaCie SilverKeeper takes the complexity out of backing up documents, video, photos, music and graphics files. The software can be used with any storage device that will mount on a Macintosh desktop. Like LaCie's Silverlining drive management and formatting software, SilverKeeper will be included with all of LaCie's storage products.

An easy-to-use backup solution, SilverKeeper eliminates the time-consuming task of manual backups. SilverKeeper can also compare folders, or synchronize folders so they contain the same files. \*Note: CD-R/RW and DVD-R/RW requires Apple Disc Burning compatible drives.

I thought my readers ought to know about this deal when I received their announcement. Especially since I don't often have Mac information.

### **\*Free Office Suite, Anyone?**

You all know about Star Office, which is a free one, and with good reviews. I read that the new soon-to-be-released version of Star Office may not be free though. However, here is another office suite by a Czech software company. I found this in an article about office suites in Old Pueblo PC News, newsletter of the Tucson IBM PC Club. Software 602, Inc. offers it. Its called 602 Pro PC Suite, and at no cost. There is a plus pack module containing a couple of add-ons for

\$29.95. I have not tried 602Text PC Suite2001, but you can check it out at [<http://www.software602.com/products/pcs/tour.html>]

“Fast – Compatible – Free. These three words define today's user requirements for an office suite. 602Pro PC Suite 2001, the new version of the free alternative to Microsoft® Office, has much to offer and is composed of four full-featured applications: a word processor, spreadsheet, graphics editor and digital photo organizer.”

Some of the above came from their Web site and there is a very active tour you can take. Plenty of information is available there and it is interesting that their word processor uses the .doc format. I wonder why, but it's a good idea.

### **\*The Newbie Club**

If you're relatively new to computers, how would you like to have a helping hand at your fingertips. Well, this one is not in person, but available on the Web at [<http://www.newbieclub.com>] where you can find all kinds of help. I understand they may start charging a fee of about \$19 a year, but so far I didn't see that on their Web site. There are tutorials, and if you post a question, it will be answered the next day. I'm one who really needs something like that, but I was afraid it wouldn't understand what I was asking since even I can't.

### **\*Now, Let's Get Rid Of The Spam**

Spam Buster is popular software that will help keep you from pulling your hair out when you receive so much unwanted e-mail. You can set

up filters for it to search your incoming e-mail and get rid of the junk. Don't be deluded though, you'll have to learn how to create these filters since using wording to find spam can be deceiving, and sometimes disastrous. However, if you'd like to give it a try, check [<http://www.contactplus.com/products/spam/spam.htm>]. Registration is only \$19.95, but if it does what they say, it's worth its weight in gold. The free version has popup ads, so it's your choice. However, when it saw the amount of spam in MY email, I thought I heard cussing --- oh, that was me.

**By Bob (The Cheapskate) Click**  
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[<http://www.dealsguy.com>]

## **The Hard Facts...of Hard Drives by Bruce Pechman**

**It's really not that hard.** If you have been following my articles lately, you know that every couple of months I like to center on a particular PC component and explain it in simple English. There are two components inside your PC I consider most vulnerable to failure from a mechanical origin. Those two components are your hard drive

(HD) and your power supply. Translation: Your computer will probably die as a result of a hard drive malfunction, or a nondescript power supply breakdown. I liken this to the human brain and heart. You can absorb other minor injuries, but any concerning these two and both you and your computer will result in a blackout. Before I explain the fundamentals of HDs, you should be aware that most computer manufacturers use inexpensive models of both these critical parts. When it comes time to upgrade your HD or select your new computer, make sure you consider these facts. In this article I will explain how to interpret the most common HD specifications.

**Just the facts, please.** Because this article is intended for home consumers, I will forgo any dialogue relating to SCSI and RAID technologies, and focus on the ubiquitous internal 3.5-inch ATA EIDE hard drives (a hard drive is also known as a hard disk). The two acronyms you will hear most are ATA (Advanced Technology Attachment) and EIDE (Enhanced Integrated Drive Electronics). Don't be confused if you also see Ultra ATA or Ultra DMA (Direct Memory Access) because they all essentially refer to the same thing: ATA EIDE interface. And guess what? All that mumbo jumbo refers to is the rate of the hard drive interface and connection speed. Today, the most prevalent EIDE drives are the ATA/66 and ATA/100. The numbers mean that an ATA/66 drive's maximum rated speed is 66MBps. Don't get hung up on these numbers considering the real world performance difference between ATA/66 and ATA/100 is very negligible. By the way, the next generation in the ATA interface (we

may see this by next year) is what's called Serial ATA. Serial ATA uses only two wires, to and from the hard drive at 1.5 Gbps. This will be a vast step forward, as 1.5 Gbps is significantly faster than ATA/100! One last thing to note about ATA EIDE hard drives is that if your Mother Board/Controller is not rated at the same speed as the hard drive (ATA/100 for example), it will not take of advantage of the hard drive's peak rate anyway.

**Performance does matter when it comes to the platter.** The platter is a rigid disk inside the hard drive that is covered with magnetic material that stores your data. Depending on the capacity, there may be several platters in your HD. A key specification that tells you about the drive's performance quality is what's known as "rotational speed". Rotational speed (also called spindle speed) is measured in rpm's (revolutions per minute), thus the 5,400 or 7,200rpm specification you read about. Normally, the higher the rpm's the better the performance. It's generally accepted that a 7,200rpm drive outperforms a 5,400rpm drive by 33% because of its ability to read and transfer data more quickly. The next specification to determine a drive's performance is the "Cache Buffer". Cache Buffer, more commonly just called cache, can be thought of as the HD's temporary RAM storage. The cache of a HD plays a very important role; hence the larger the cache's buffer the better. A 2MB cache buffer would be considered very adequate for a home PC. The final indicator of a HD's performance is called "Seek Time". In short, the seek time is how long it takes the hard drive to find a particular track on the disk. Seek time is measured in ms

(milliseconds) and on average is 7 to 13ms with the lower numbers being preferred. One last tidbit if you read anything about a drive's "shock tolerance" it will be measured in G's. This may sound crude, but this measurement relates to how hard a wallop it will take before the drive suffers damage. The average is about 200 to 300G's. Installing a replacement Seagate drive about a year ago, my German Shepherd couldn't resist the anti-static bag the drive was in, proudly running around while chomping down on the drive. After installing the drive and re-booting, nothing happened, but I digress. The last two points to consider are related to the HD's reliability the manufacturer's warranty and MTBF (Mean Time Between Failure). The MTBF is usually listed in hours and indicates the manufacturer's expected life span of the HD. A nicely performing HD by today's standards would be an ATA/100, 7200rpm, 2MB cache, 40Gig, 8.5ms seek time, and offer a 3-year warranty. I personally prefer the IBM Deskstar GXP and Seagate Barracuda models. Happy Driving...um, make that Hard Driving!

**by Bruce Pechman**

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May - June 2002

## **Cable vs. DSL – What You Need To Know by Bruce Pechman**

### **Decisions, Decisions**

What a conundrum; she loves me she loves me not, caffeinated or decaffeinated, paper or plastic, and now Cable or DSL. For many of you, the choice of DSL may be determined by the proximity of your residence to your ISP's telephone junction switch. The rule of thumb is if you live more than five miles from your telephone company's junction switch, DSL probably won't be available to you. Based upon your address, ISP providers of your area will determine the availability of Cable, DSL, or maybe both. To get a brief idea of what broadband services are available in your specific area, I have provided some links at the end of this article under the Resources section. I would still recommend checking the major players in the Atlanta metro area by consulting the "Personal Technology" section in the AJC.

### **The Many Flavors of DSL**

Let's get into DSL first. Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) is a high-speed Internet connection through the telephone line. What many of you

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might not know is that there are eight subtly different types of DSL permutations. I created the table below for easy explanations:

Depending on the age of the telephony equipment in your home, it may need to be updated. Remember when you contact various ISPs to inquire about the specific type of DSL for which you are being quoted. Just a little advice--avoid IDSL like the plague. It will cost as much as ADSL per month, but will be a poor performer. ADSL is what you want in the DSL game and represents the best value on average (for the record, the "A" in ADSL stands for asynchronous).

### The ABCs of DSL

| DSL TYPE | SPEED RANKINGS                       | RECOMMENDED USES  |
|----------|--------------------------------------|---|
| ADSL     | 8 Mbps download<br>1.5 Mbps upload   | Home and small business; this is the type I recommend for most                                    |
| G.lite   | 1.5 Mbps download<br>384 Kbps upload | Same as ADSL except for speed; bad for voice and multimedia applications                          |
| RADSL    | 7 Mbps download<br>1.5 Mbps upload   | Same as ADSL but can adjust bandwidth during transmission based on line quality                   |
| HDSL     | 1.5 Mbps both ways                   | Requires two wire pairs; used by businesses as an alternative to T1                               |
| HDSL II  | 1.5 Mbps both ways                   | Same as HDSL, but over a single phone line  |
| SDSL     | 1.5 Mbps both ways                   | Forerunner to HDSL II; same performance but available only within 10,000 feet of a central office |
| IDSL     | 144 Kbps both ways                   | A hybrid of DSL and ISDN technologies with no call setup delay                                    |
| VDSL     | 52 Mbps download<br>2.3 Mbps upload  | The fastest DSL service; available only within 4,500 feet of a central office                     |

DSL utilizes digital technology to send heaps of compressed data over traditional phone lines. How do they do that? This little trick involves using special modems at both ends to encode the data, and then transmit it over an unused frequency on the line. On your end you will need an Ethernet network card in your PC that in turn is connected to your DSL modem. Don't worry if you're unsure about this, your provider will take care of the whole ball of wax.

### The Fable of Cable

Despite that I spent more time explaining and sorting out DSL technology, don't overlook the power of Cable. The fact is Cable modem and DSL services are not only very close competitors, but also share similar elements. You will need a similar Ethernet network card, Cable modem (instead of DSL

modem), and a professional to do the initial installation. Cable modems do have one distinct advantage over DSL in that Cable service is very accessible. If you have Cable TV, chances are high you can subscribe to the Cable modem service or it will be available in your area shortly. In terms of speed and cost both DSL and Cable are similar. I use Cable and can tell you first-hand that the speed of downloads is awesome. I download 10MB files in one minute (that equates to downloading a 100MB file in about 10 min)! My average download speed is about 100KB to 177KB. By the way, AT&T Broadband took over MediaOne and they are the dominant Cable provider here in the Atlanta area.

### Wrapping up and Pros and Cons

First let me state this: whatever services you choose make sure you get a money-back guarantee from the provider. Most will give you a 30-day MBG. This way you not only protect yourself, but if you are fortunate enough to have both DSL and Cable service available, you can sample each then decide for yourself. Some providers also have minimal standards of speed they will guarantee; ask about this up-front or get it in writing. Yes, both are considered “always-on” connections so security is always an issue. Do these two things if you are a concerned home user. Obtain a good grade personal software firewall such as ZoneAlarm (Free at [www.zonealarm.com](http://www.zonealarm.com)). Second, disable “File & Print Sharing” from your Network control applet. Note that Cable is a shared bandwidth, so in theory you will receive

diminished performance over time as more users are added to your node. I find this to be greatly over-exaggerated. In my subdivision, for example, we have over 500 homes. I did a survey talking with neighbors over the year on the prospect of getting Cable. The bottom line is 10 out of 100 would want to shell out the extra \$40 to \$50 per month to receive a broadband connection. Remember, unless your company will pay for it, or you are a true enthusiast, you will probably pass until the prices get much lower.

### Resources

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <a href="http://www.speedus.com/UpdateISP3.asp">http://www.speedus.com/UpdateISP3.asp</a>   | Broadband availability guide |
| <a href="http://www.zdnet.com/special/isp/simplesearch/">http://www.zdnet.com/special/isp/simplesearch/</a>                         | Broadband availability guide |
| <a href="http://www.2wire.com/dsllookup/finddsl.asp">http://www.2wire.com/dsllookup/finddsl.asp</a>                                 | DSL availability guide       |
| <a href="http://www.catv.org/index.html">http://www.catv.org/index.html</a>   | Cable Modem Resources        |
| <a href="http://www.speedguide.net/Cable_modems/cable_patches.shtml">http://www.speedguide.net/Cable_modems/cable_patches.shtml</a> | Cable/DSL tweaks & patches   |

## **ENTANGLED PHOTONS COULD PROMISE LIGHTNING-SPEED COMPUTERS**

**Press Release September 25, 2000**

Defying traditional laws of physics, researchers may have found a way to blast through imminent roadblocks on the highway to faster and smaller computers.

Using modern quantum physics, a research team from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), Pasadena, Calif., and the University of Wales in the United Kingdom has discovered that entangled pairs of light particles, called photons, can act as a single unit, but perform with twice the efficiency.

Using a process called "entanglement," the research team proposes that existing sources of laser light could be used to produce smaller and faster computer chips than current technology allows. Their paper appears in today's issue of the journal *Physical Review Letters*.

"Our economy constantly depends on faster and faster computers," said JPL researcher Dr. Jonathan Dowling, a co-author of the paper. "This research potentially could enable us to continue upgrading computers even after traditional manufacturing procedures have been exhausted."

Currently, in a process known as optical lithography, manufacturers use a stream of light particles to sculpt computer chips. A chip is basically a grid of interconnected on-off switches, called transistors, through which electric current flows and enables computers to calculate. As companies crowd millions of transistors into tinier chips, electric current travels shorter distances, resulting in speedier processes.

Chipmakers shine a laser light onto photosensitive material to create a stencil-like mask, which is used to carve silicon into the components of transistors. However, the producers can only provide transistors with dimensions as small as those of the masks.

Today's state-of-the-art chips have transistors measuring between 180 and 220 nanometers, approximately 400 times narrower than the width of a human hair. While traditional computers have the ability to perform with transistors as small as 25 nanometers, or 3,000 times narrower than a human hair, this presents manufacturing obstacles.

The light manufacturers use to produce today's transistors has a wavelength of 248 nanometers. It becomes increasingly difficult to use light with shorter wavelengths to produce transistors with smaller dimensions. In fact, according to a central principle of optics called the "Rayleigh criterion," 248-nanometer light can't create features smaller than 124 nanometers.

However, this new research, still in its theoretical stage, could provide a bypass of the Rayleigh criterion. The research team proposes that

entanglement would allow the use of existing sources of laser light of 248 nanometers to produce computer chips with dimensions of a fourth of the wavelength (62 nanometers) or smaller compared to today's limits (124 nanometers).

Entanglement would allow researchers to use the intermingled properties of two or more photons to obtain subwavelength spatial resolutions. Albert Einstein called this intermingling of photons process "spooky action at a distance" because the particles can immediately influence each other over huge distances, even halfway across the galaxy.

Here on Earth, entangled photons can be produced by passing a light beam through a special crystal. In this quantum lithography proposal, a pair of entangled photons enters a setup with two paths. While the two particles travel together and act as a single unit, it is impossible to determine which of the two paths the pair has taken. In a strange effect of quantum mechanics, however, each photon actually travels down both paths.

On each path, the photons act like a rippling wave with peaks and valleys. After traveling on their own path for a while, the two photons converge on a surface. Because the light particles making up each wave were originally entangled, the result of adding the photon waves together is to create patterns on the surface equivalent to those made by a single photon with half the wavelength.

This process, in essence, enables the entangled photon pair to produce patterns twice as small on each side of a chip's surface as can be created by the single photons in the conventional optical lithography procedures. Entangling more than two photons would improve results even further.

While a number of technical challenges remain, researchers are already working on developing materials that would be required for quantum lithography.

This research is part of the Revolutionary Computing Technology project in the NASA/JPL Center for Integrated Space Microsystems. The project is supported by the Deep Space Systems Program in NASA's Office of Space Science. JPL is managed for NASA by the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.

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## CLICK'N DESIGN 3D

By Carol Lee

Stomp, Inc.  
1000 Brioso Drive  
Costa Mesa, CA 92627  
(866) 713-7700  
<http://www.stompinc.com>

At A Glance Rating: \*\*\*

Price: \$19.95

System Requirements: IBM PC or compatible with Pentium 166 Mhz or higher processor, Windows 95 with IE4 or Windows NT with Service Pack 4 or above, 32 MB minimum RAM (64 MB RAM recommended), CD-ROM drive, 16 bit color, 800 x 600 or better, mouse or other pointing device.

**Pros:** Easy to use CD label creator.

**Cons:** Does not allow the use of plain paper to make CD case labels.

I have always labeled my CD-R's the old fashioned way, using a CD marker. They weren't pretty to look at, but the marker worked to



identify my numerous CD-R's. With Click'N Design 3D, my CD-R can look pretty.

I was somewhat disconcerted when I first tried to install the software, because upon inserting the installation CD in my CD drive, an error box popped up indicating an error with "setup.exe" not being able to find a "framedyn.dll" file. However, I was still able to continue with the installation, and the program installed and worked without any other noticeable error.

In addition to 5,000 photos and clipart, Click'N Design 3D includes image tools for the creation of barcodes, circular text, and 3D text. Photos can be edited using the photo effects feature within the program. In addition to selecting digital photo files that are included with the program or from another location, photos can be acquired using a scanner or digital camera. The "Quick Designer" provides different layout, background, and font and color schemes for creating customized labels.

Click'N Design 3D requires the use of commercial labels. Understandably, this is a necessity for the CD labels because of their shape and the requirement that the label be symmetrical so as to not interfere with a labeled CD spinning within a CD drive. However, plain paper could be used for the CD case label. Unfortunately, Click'N Design 3D does not allow the option of plain paper. Other CD label programs from Roxio and Nero allow the use of plain paper and

May - June 2002

***BLUE NOTES***

print out cutting guides along with the label so that the label can be cut to fit the CD case.

Click'N Design is useful and easy to use. I was able to create and print out a CD label within 5 minutes using the "Quick Designer" feature. A CD case label was similarly easy to create. After I purchase more labels, I intend to pretty up my CD-R's.

## InkSaver

By Carol Lee

Strydent Software  
4664 Lougheed Hwy, Suite 188  
Burnaby, BC V5C 5T5 CANADA  
(800) 663-6222  
<http://www.inksaver.com>

At A Glance Rating: \*\*\*\*  
Price: \$34.99



System Requirements: Any PC running Windows 98, Me, 2000, XP Home or XP Professional and at least 20 MB available of hard drive space.

**Pro:** Works to reduce ink usage in inkjet printers.

**Con:** Does not work with laser printers.

**I**nkSaver is a software product, which controls the amount of ink used in an inkjet printer. Users can configure their desired ink savings to save ink on every print job or for all print jobs. According to Strydent Software, InkSaver is compatible with most HP, Epson, and Canon color inkjet printers. In addition, it works with any brand of ink cartridge and refill ink kit. Unlike printing in draft mode, InkSaver saves ink even when printing at the printer's highest resolution.

I could only conduct a subjective test in verifying the claim, because it was not possible to pinpoint a particular percentage where the change in quality is first noticeable and when it becomes poor. However, I found when printing a black text document using my HP printer and with InkSaver enabled, there was no noticeable change to print quality up to about 25% ink reduction in ink. When printing a graphic (i.e., photo) and text document (such as a web page) and InkSaver enabled, there was no noticeable change to print quality up to about 20% ink reduction in ink. Without a noticeable change, InkSaver can extend the life of the ink cartridge by more than 20%. If printing quality is allowed to degrade such that the ink reduction is noticeable, then InkSaver can extend the life of the ink cartridge by at least 50%.

I was quite impressed with this product. It performed as promised in reducing ink usage without much noticeable difference. The company offers a free trial of the software at their web site. Give it a try and save yourself some ink.

## The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting minutes January to May 2002

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of **January 8, 2002** was held at the beautiful home of Butler Crittenden, Prez.

Present were Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, Harold Charns, Pierre Hahn, David Ross, Joseph Puig III, David Caldwell, Edgar Gomez, James Sotomayor, Steve Shank, and David Hart.

The meeting was called to order at 19:14, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the October 2001 meeting were distributed. The name of the auctioneer was corrected from Ron to Pierre. Then a motion was made and seconded that they be approved as corrected.

The Treasurer's report – The Treasurer reported that we have a healthy balance. (See treasurers report)

The Vice-President's report was out of town.

The President's report – was that the auction went well and we were very close to perfectly balancing what was supposed to come in and what did. A rousing applause was given to Butler, who did the majority of the preliminary auction work.

The Webmaster's report – The 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday meeting will be happening this month.

The Membership Committee – We received two renewal memberships and one new one this month.

The Blue Notes Editors' report – Next issue will be the Jan/Feb issue, which hopefully will be out the end of the week.

The Product Review report was that we have 10 new products for review. Butler will send out an email to the members re this.

The Program Chair report is that January will be about club members experience with Windows XP, February is techbargains.com,

hard drives and more, plus shopping wisely with Norman Fong. March 19<sup>th</sup> is Mike Cellura at Movieworks.com; April 16 will be Zone Alarm.

Old Business – The server relocation committee has not met yet.

New Business – None

After a motion that the meeting be adjourned was made, seconded, and passed, with no abstentions, Butler adjourned the meeting at 19:14 hours.

**Respectfully submitted**

**Judy Gaer, Secretary**

=====

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of **February 12, 2002**, was held at the home of Butler Crittenden, President.

Present were Butler Crittenden III, Judy Gaer, Harold Charns, David Ross, David Caldwell, Ross Davidson, Don Oclassen, Salvatore Tufo, and Alex Larys.

The meeting was called to order at 19:05, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the January 2002 meeting were distributed. A date correction was made, after which a motion was made and seconded that they be approved as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.

The Treasurer's report – The Treasurer reported that we have a healthy balance. (See treasurers report.) A motion was made, seconded, and passed that the treasurer's report be accepted.

The Vice-President's report was that he was back from Knee surgery and that the computer

show needs more vendors to make it more viable.

The President's report – Web access at our meetings works fine, but the City College person-in-charge needs to be reminded each time.

The Webmaster's report – The 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday meeting may be happening this month; it did not happen last month.

The Membership Committee – We received one renewal membership and one new one this month.

The Blue Notes Editors' report – Due to Pierre being out at sea (literally), the issue is not yet out.

The Product Review report was that Butler is working on a list of available products.

The Program Chair report is that February is techbargains.com -- hard drives and more, plus shopping wisely, with Norman Fong. March

19<sup>th</sup> is Mike Cellura at Movieworks.com; April 16 will be Zone Alarm.

Old Business – Elections are coming up. It would be great to get “new blood” especially to replace the secretary, president, and vice-president. The treasurer is doing a great job and willing to serve another term.

New Business – None

After a motion that the meeting be adjourned was made, seconded, and passed, with no abstentions, Butler adjourned the meeting at 19:30 hours.

**Respectfully submitted**

**Judy Gaer, Secretary**

=====

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of **March 5, 2002** was held at Round Table Pizza.

Present were Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, C. David Ross, David Caldwell, and Don Oclassen.

The meeting was called to order at 19:08, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the February 2002 meeting were distributed; a motion was made, seconded, and adopted that they be approved as written.

The Treasurer's report – The treasurer was absent due to a communication error.

The Vice-President's report was that r building a compute can be fun and trying.

The President's report – The president can use any and all help he can get.

The Webmaster's report – The webmaster was not present. The 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday meeting may be happening this month; it did not happen last month.

The Membership Committee – See treasurers report next month.

The Blue Notes Editors' report – The end-of-year issue is at the web site. The next issue may be out in 7-10 days.

The Product Review report was that Butler is working on a list of available products.

The Program Chair report is that March 19<sup>th</sup> is Mike Cellura at Movieworks.com; April 16 will be Zone Alarm. For May we have 2 presenters possible but no confirmations. The suggestion was made to have hardware

April confirmed: Zone Labs – ZoneAlarm Pro 3.0

May confirmed: Real.com / RealNetworks / RealOne

June tentative: gobeProductive - gobe.com (had to switch from May.

July

August

September

October

November

December – annual party and auction

vendors as well as software vendors.

Old Business – Elections are coming up. It would be great to get “new blood,” especially to replace the beleaguered secretary. Some suggestions were made of people that the president should contact re possibly becoming officers. Butler will discuss this with the indicated people.

New Business – None

By suggestion of the secretary a motion was made that the business part of the meeting be adjourned. Said motion was made, seconded, and passed with no abstentions. Butler adjourned the meeting at 19:41 hours.

**Respectfully submitted**

**Judy Gaer, Secretary**

=====

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of **April 2, 2002** was held at Round Table Pizza.

Present were Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, David Ross, Don Oclassen, Pierre Hahn and Harold Charns.

The meeting was called to order at 19:00 chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the March 2002 meeting were distributed. A correction of a typo was noted. Then a motion was made, seconded and passed that the minutes be approved as corrected.

The Treasurer's report – The treasurer gave reports for March and April. We continue to have an adequate balance in the treasury.

The Vice-President's report was that he has been having Pacific Bell woes.

The President's report – discussed the responses he received to his letter stating that without a better turnout at meetings it would be hard to continue to get vendors to come. Some of the suggestions from the president and steering committee were: buy some extra really

good door prizes with our adequate treasury, put a teaser in the meeting announcement that mentions some of the more interesting parts of the presentation, and having “virtual meetings” so presenters don’t have to travel to present to us.

The Webmaster's report – The webmaster was not present. The 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday meeting is not happening this month, like last month.

The Membership Committee – See Treasurer’s report.

The Blue Notes Editors' report – will be out in a few days. Butler will send the president’s column.

The Product Review report was that Butler is working on a list of available products.

The Program Chair report is that April 16 will be Zone Alarm. For May we have Real.com/RealNetworks/Realone. July is tentative:gobeProductive.com.

Old Business – Elections are coming up. There is no new blood available so the old blood needs to keep circulating. Moving the location

of the server was discussed again. It was suggested that having a computer student spiff up our website might be a good idea.

New Business – None

A motion was made that the business part of the meeting be adjourned. After seconding, the motion passed with no abstentions. Butler adjourned the meeting at 19:49 hours.

**Respectfully submitted**  
**Judy Gaer, Secretary**

=====

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of **May 7, 2002** was held at Round Table Pizza.

Present were Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, David Ross, David Caldwell, and Ron Feiertag.

The meeting was called to order at 18:33 chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the March 2002 meeting were distributed. A motion was made, seconded and passed that the minutes be approved as written.

The Treasurer's report – The treasurer was not present but Butler distributed his report. Our healthy balance has increased. The report was approved as written.

The Vice-President's was out of town.

The President's report – He reported that the website was down but is up and ok now. Carla Turpin has our new web look ready. Now we need to approve it and decide how to post it. Butler will talk to Joseph and Carla, and will look into having it commercially hosted if need be. Ron mentioned a contest from APCUG re web sites and Butler stated that maybe that would be a good reason to get moving on our web site now. Ron will email the secretary with an article about the contest to file with the minutes.

Nick Maffei reports we've been written up in "Guardman," April 30, 2002.

Butler also mentioned that at least one presenter in particular was taken aback by the behavior of some members at a meeting at which he presented and a lively discussion ensued re the solution to this.

The Webmaster's report – The webmaster was not present.

The Membership Committee – We had 4 new and 3 renewal memberships this month.

The Blue Notes Editors' report – Butler stated that he was sorry that Blue Notes was delayed due to his column being late. Ron stated his concern that the current issue is dated several months ago. He said that writers might be unwilling to write if by the time their writings are published the journal is already post-dated three months. After a lively discussion, it was suggested that Blue Notes be published on schedule, and if columns are missing to be published without them. Also, the actual date when published will be put on the cover.

The Product Review report was that Butler is working on a list of available products.

The Program Chair report is that for May we have Real Audio; June meeting is Kaitlin Duck Sherwood; author of Overcome Email

Overload; July is Dave Johnson, gobeProductive; August meeting, Lenny Bailes playing guitar and recording using the computer; September meeting is Eric Johnston of Microsoft, Digital Photography.

Old Business – The officers were all reelected (to the chagrin of the secretary). Butler noted that a club computer is still living in his living room. Discussion of relocation of the server was again postponed.

New Business – Ron mentioned the best website and best newsletter contest of APCUG (see President's Report).

A motion was made that the meeting be adjourned. After seconding, the motion passed with no abstentions. Butler adjourned the meeting at 19:02 hours.

**Respectfully submitted**

**Judy Gaer, Secretary**

**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:

- Individual      \$25
- Family          \$30
- Business        \$50
- Outside US      \$25

please send your check to:

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 3 weeks to enable the account

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