



SAN FRANCISCO PERSONAL COMPUTER *eBLUE*
USERS GROUP *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 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, 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 or contact our WebMaster at 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. Should special formatting be necessary, forward a hard copy to the Editor. Contact *Blue Notes* staff by e-mail, bluenotes@mail.sfpcug.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	4
Meeting Notice	8
MS Publisher 2002	8
Search Engines	10
From The DealsGuy for	
August 2003	13
September 2003	16
Past President's Message	18
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes	
March, 2003	19
No Meeting in April, 2003	19
May, 2003	20
June, 2003	20
July, 2003	21
August, 2003	22
SFpcUG - Who's Who	23
Application/Renewal/Address Change	24

**King of Right-Click,
Windows XP, Dell, and USB2**

**Butler Crittenden
President**

For a decade or two the mouse that came with the Mac computer only had one button. While not verified personally, I'm told that the new Macs come with a multi-button mouse – like PC users have had for over a dozen years. Based on watching and training hundreds of computer users over the past 10+ years, the reason for Mac having only one mouse button is fairly clear: most PC users never touch the right button, and a good many find the center wheel awkward as well. I've even known surgeons who can't or won't hold the mouse properly and use three of their five fingers to control the mouse buttons. They can work with a team of fellow doctors and nurses and open up your heart or re-do your face, but a simple mouse is too much to master. Just click away with the index finger on that

left button (if you're a "rightie"), or push the slider up and down with it, and computing is accomplished with some ease, although not utilizing the full capabilities of the mouse and computer. The folks at Mac simply studied the way we work and figured, "why fight Mother Nature?"

No one would use just one chop stick. Computing without right-clicking is not quite as bad as eating with a single chop stick, but a lot is lost by not using the menus that come up when right-clicking. Right-click on the "Desktop" and up pops a menu with several options, including Properties, which in turn opens a host of choices including the screen resolution. Right-click on a short-cut icon and Properties indicates where the program is located and what makes it execute. Right click on a file in Windows Explorer and Properties will often indicate the manufacturer of the program, along with other useful information about the file. If an antivirus program is installed, and these days to be on the Internet and not be protected is a sure path to big trouble, right-click a file and then left-click "scan with antivirus." In XP (or even 9x) right-click My Computer, then click Properties, and a half-dozen key details are visible. In XP,

right-click an item in Start / All Programs and “Pin to Start Menu” is an useful choice. Or right-click a menu item already pinned to the Start Menu and “Remove From This List” is a choice.

Perhaps most important, in Windows Explorer, when dragging and dropping folders and files, remember to use right-click when the target drive is the same as the origination drive – for example, when Copying or Moving from C: to C:. Right-click gives the choice of Copy or Move. Often Copy is what is intended, but simply using the left button will Move the file or folder, often causing a lot of heart burn. Dragging and dropping from one drive to another, or one computer to another on a LAN, will always Copy the item. However, getting into the habit of right-clicking when going from one drive or computer to another has the advantage of making fewer mistakes in the long run, as the Copy or Move choice is always offered, and the user has to think just enough to avoid most mistakes.

Assuming most SFpcUG club members are familiar with other options offered by right-clicking, I will forego additional examples. Suffice to say that I think right-clicking is important enough that I urge newbies and others unfamiliar with right-clicking to go to extreme lengths to get

in the habit. One suggestion: when you walk down the street and your right foot hits the sidewalk, silently chant “right click.” I advise against saying this aloud, however, lest the guys with butterfly nets come to your rescue.

The joke turned out to be on me, of course, despite all my raving about right-clicking. Old habits die hard. With Windows 9x (95/98/98SE/ME) I was accustomed to testing the speed of a video card by playing Solitaire until I won and then timing the speed at which the cards flew by. Fast video cards would zoom away all the cards from the four neat piles at the top in about one second. Old Windows 95 computers might take 10 seconds or more. Naturally I tried this experiment with XP and was disappointed that the cards bounce off the top of the board very slowly, no matter how fast the computer. I mentioned this to Pierre Hahn, our Blue Notes editor, and he laughed and said, “Yes, but have you tried right-clicking when playing Solitaire?” I confessed that I hadn’t, and to my amazement when I tried right-clicking a card playable to the top of the board, the card would just fly into place. And if there were more cards that would play to the top, they’d also fly to the correct pile. Sometimes a half-dozen or more would jump to the top, and at the end a single right-click will often complete the game and start the cards

cascading. I always suggested to newbies that they play Sol as a way to improve their mouse skills, which with XP is a better idea than ever.

No doubt there are several ways to hold a mouse and use it efficiently. I prefer to hold it with my thumb on the left and my pinky on the right, leaving the three middle fingers for click, roll, and right-click. I often pick up my mouse to position it better on the mouse pad, which includes an ergonomic wrist rest. Holding the mouse with my two outside fingers makes this easy. Others use track balls and other exotic pointing devices, which are unfamiliar to me.

Windows XP, Dell, and USB 2

Someone told me recently, “I love XP. Microsoft finally did something right.” He’s a gamer, and gamers are a major driving force behind hardware innovations and the insatiable demand for ever greater computing power. I couldn’t resist pointing out to him that Microsoft knew by the mid-1980s that DOS was not a robust operating system, and that DOS was especially bad about handling memory and multi-threading, or having more than one major application open at a time. NT (New Technology) was Microsoft’s answer, and it came out in three major versions before XP was

released. Why the transition to NT/XP has taken so long is a good question for economic, business, and science Ph.D. dissertations. My guess is that Microsoft didn’t want to lose their grip on the market with an abrupt switch to NT, so they kept nursing 9X along until they felt the market (and hardware) was ready for the conversion. My advice: if you haven’t tried XP yet, do so. After the initial shock of it being a little different you’ll love it like the rest of us do.

All who know me know that I’m not a supporter of large corporations. Would that it were possible for multiple Operating Systems (OSs) to live as harmoniously together as the diverse cultures on the planet (in theory, at least). To date, however, I’ve seen no evidence that this is happening. Microsoft just happened to stumble into the invention of the equivalent of, say, water, and hence their dominance in the marketplace. Dell, on the other hand, has plenty of competition, yet somehow gets the vote of many of us as the top builder of computers. I hasten to add that in recent months I’ve seen great Compaq/HP and Gateway computers, as well as numerous attractive notebooks manufactured by the above vendors as well as Hitachi, Sony, and others. Certainly the home or small-business clone-builder is no longer competitive. I don’t know what kind of a deal

Microsoft and Dell have, for example, but I recently purchased ten Dell 2400s for \$429 before \$50 rebate, or \$379 after rebate, and they included both XP Home and Microsoft Office for Small Business, along with a CD player, keyboard, mouse, and six months free AOL or Earthlink. The memory was a puny 128MB DDR, but \$46 bought an additional 256MB at the Computer Show, which brought the actual base cost up to \$425 plus tax. Shipping was included in the Dell deal, and Dell must have been in a big hurry to book the bucks, as the computers arrived in less than a week. XP Home costs about \$100 including tax, and Business XP Office is closer to \$200, so this makes the cost of the computers about \$125. Someone told me that Frye's was offering an even better deal on HP Pavilions at about the same time toward the end of July. Amazing!

The Dell 2400s, and I'm sure all their other desktops, are a dream to work on. Simply slide a button a half-inch or so and the cover comes off. Click in the memory. Or gently lift three tabs and the front pops off, exposing the CD and an open bay for another 5.25" device. Several of the ten needed a burner, which are getting ridiculously cheap, especially promotional offers hither and yon. I heard of one for \$9.99 after rebate. Dell has an easy-install feature on the CDs and

burners, which is a set of small screws that take the place of the old rails and hold the drive in the exact right position when it is slipped back into the body of the frame. Dell realized this was a new wrinkle, and added two spare screws below the empty bay, in case the new owner wants to install a second CD, DVD, or burner. The only minor issue is to remember to make the old CD a "slave" and the new device a "master," although perhaps "cable select" on both would work.

Finally, USB 2 is definitely a lot faster than USB 1, and more reliable. PCI USB 2 cards are now available for as little as \$10 at the Robert Austin Computer Show, down from about twice that a month or two ago. So if you have any new cameras or other external devices that are USB 2, consider adding the card if your computer is older.

MEETINGS

SFpcUG has two great meetings coming up.

On 16 September we'll meet at LearnIt!'s headquarters and get a free lesson in the new Adobe Acrobat.
(250 Montgomery, 15th Floor)

On 21 October we'll host Microsoft's roll-out of the new Office.



Microsoft Publisher 2002

reviewed by John Wester
Member, SFpcUG

Microsoft Publisher 2002 (27.8 MB) is an impressive desktop publishing program. It offers a great deal more options, templates and enhancements than its predecessor yet remains intuitive and easy to use.

The installation (in a choice of 33 languages!) was a cinch. You just insert the Publisher 2002 installer and Office XP disks and the wizard does the rest.

There are 26 different types of documents to choose from, each with multiple layouts, including 120 samples of flyers, 49 4-page brochures, 49 4-page newsletters, 67 label layouts, with Avery numbers, 32 business card formats, 47 calendars with automatic correct dates for each month, etc., even origami and paper airplanes to play with. The many new capabilities of this program include commercial prepress preparation (color separation, spot color & process color mix printing), foreign language templates, speech and handwriting recognition (with Office XP).

I use Publisher to create the newsletter for our association, to lay out album pages on photo paper for trips we have taken, to make my own calendars, and simply to arrange photos for printing (better than my printer's software). Good Print Preview too.

The help section offers links to many resources via the Microsoft Office website, such as help with disabilities, how-to's, website designs, press, and support services. For the heavy user, it lists handy keyboard shortcuts. It also gives a complete overview of what's new for 2002, including better integration with Microsoft Office XP programs, especially Word (Word documents import readily, just as formatted)

Some of us will appreciate the automatic global spell checker and thesaurus (unlisted words get the usual wavy underline). The mail merge facility is easy to use, yet very functional. Your publication can very easily be e-mailed directly from within the program (File/Send to).

For a professional look, you can use the pre-designed schemes (coordinated font sets, styles, and color sets all easily accessible from "task panes") which will help you make sure all parts work well together. A style inspector describes style properties to help in making better use of them. You can also save and open documents in HTML file format. The manual has a substantial section on Web site

design.

You can now do inserts inline with the text flowing around. I have also used WordArt (30 choices of pre-designed fonts shapes, styles and colors) to jazz up my newsletter with very good results. You can download clipart from Microsoft Office's web site, choosing from 100,000 (!) clips.

At first I wasn't too crazy about the fat outline on the selected text boxes. It is however, useful in preventing unwanted superimposition of new inserts. The text box auto-formatting takes a while to get used to but you can work around it. With the previous version I had problems with overly large files. That doesn't seem to matter with 2002.

At first I thought the manual was only a design guide, but find that it is quite informative. If you don't find the information you need in the manual, you might try *Introductory Concepts and Techniques for Publisher 2002* by Shelly Cashman Starks.

Recommendation: Well worth upgrading to the new version, especially if you make good use of the built-in design schemes. With this powerhouse of a program, even the least artistic person can produce polished, professional looking publications, and have fun in the process.

SEARCH ENGINES: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

**by Burt Leavenworth
Member BRCS**

Information is power. This aphorism, in the information age, is more true than ever on the Internet. If you are using your computer mostly to send and receive e-mails, you are wasting a powerful resource. Most Boca Raton Computer Society (BRCS) members with computers should be aware of, if not regularly using, search engines on the web such as Google (google.com), Hotbot (hotbot.com) and Fast (www.alltheweb.com). Your web browser is very useful when you can direct it to a specific web site, easily obtainable these days from addresses given in newspaper articles and magazines. But the latent power of the browser can be more fully exploited when you are looking for information on general and specific topics but do not have a specific address to use. In this case, search engines can be used to "surf" the web. They are really easy to use once you have mastered some basic principles. This article will discuss these principles as they apply to search engines, both public and private (terms employed by the author to

differentiate two different types of search engines which are defined below).

What is the difference between public and private search engines? A public search engine uses keywords to index pages on the web which contain articles or documents on a particular topic useful to the public at large. The sum total of these pages is in effect a huge public database of all the information that can be accessed by the search engine. These indexes are created and maintained by personnel supporting the search engines. On the other hand, a private search engine uses keywords to index documents or notes contained in an individual's private database. These indexes are correspondingly created and maintained by the individual for his or her private use.

Suppose we want to find out about Boca Raton. So we fire up one of our favorite search engines, Google, and type in the two keywords: Boca Raton, and then click on Google Search. By default, Google displays the first ten documents containing all the keywords of the query. In this case, some of the results obtained are the city Boca Raton, the Chamber of Commerce, the Boca Raton Resort and Club, the Boca Pointe Community Hospital, and the Boca Raton Museum of Art. The criterion 'all the keywords' is an example of a search mode called 'All of the Words'. A second search mode called 'Any of the Words' would allow you to search for documents that contain as few as one of the provided

keywords. But this mode will generally return many more results than the previous mode. If we use this mode in Google (actually we had to click 'Advanced Search' to get this option whereas Hotbot provides both these modes plus several more on its home web page), one of the results returned is Raton, New Mexico (you can find it in your atlas).

Let us now turn our discussion to private search engines which will elaborate the above ideas and introduce some new ones. Consider a small private database containing the names of restaurants in the local area; this is not a real example but is designed to motivate and illustrate the search principles discussed in the article. The types of search queries will be the same as those used by most public search engines.

Carafiello's Restaurant
"Deerfield Beach" Italian
The Lobster House Restaurant
"Boca Raton" seafood
La Trattoria Restaurant
"Boca Raton" Italian
Busch's Seafood Restaurant
"Delray Beach"
La Luna Restaurant
"Boca Raton" Italian

Note that the type of restaurant (Italian, seafood) and the location (Boca Raton, Deerfield Beach) have been entered as attributes, but this is not necessary in the case of Busch's because Seafood is part of the name of the restaurant. Instead of entering, for example, Boca and Raton as separate words in the database, we combine them in the one word "Boca Raton". This is an example of an exact phrase. Of course, we could have used the abbreviation: Boca.

Suppose we want to find all the seafood restaurants Using 'All of the Words' as the search mode and the keywords: seafood restaurant, the search engine would return:

The Lobster House
Busch's

To be more specific, suppose we want only the seafood restaurants in Boca. Still using 'All of the Words', and the three keywords: seafood restaurant "Boca Raton", the result returned is only:

The Lobster House

There is just one more idea that needs to be introduced, that of a Boolean phrase, named for the English logician George Boole (you can look him up by using one of the public search engines mentioned above). The Boolean phrase equivalent of the first example would be: seafood AND restaurant.

Now suppose we want to find a restaurant in Boca that is not Italian. Using Boolean phrase as the search mode, we enter the search query: restaurant AND "Boca Raton" NOT Italian, and the result is: The Lobster House. The advantage of using Boolean phrases is that they enable us to put together more complicated queries.

Each of the constructions we have mentioned: all of the words, any of the words, exact phrase, and Boolean phrase are provided in one form or another by most public search engines and, of course, by our private search engine. But what are private search engines good for? They enable the individual user to store away any kind of information that is useful to him or her in unstructured form. This might consist of names, addresses, phone numbers, driving directions, records of phone conversations, medical records, ideas, etc. My wife has names of handymen under "H" in the rolodex but it is much easier to use associations in a private database because you can use multiple associations for an object; you can forget the name of the object but are more likely to find it using one of its associations or attributes. Much of this information otherwise is normally entered on scraps of paper which are easily lost.

There is a commercial product called Info Select www.miclog.com which is a private search engine with lots of bells and whistles, a steep learning curve and a steep

price, but there is also a homegrown product by the author called InfoSearch which is free to members of BRCS. If you want to start keeping track of things and would like to play around with the software, you can drop a note to the author at: edlsoft@adelphia.net for more information.

So start using the public search engines to look up all kinds of information and a private search engine in order to store and retrieve your personal information.

From The DealsGuy for August, 2003

**by Bob Click
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group**

***Alas, Its Another Goodbye From a Great User Group Supporter**

I was about to release the August column to my editors when I received Bonnie Mitchell's e-mail with the sad news that Casady & Greene is closing their doors after 19 years in business. Bonnie, their users group coordinator, sent out her sad goodbye to all of us who are users group contacts. While we were only connected with C & G for eight years, many of you have met Bonnie at APCUG or regional events across the country. She was always ready to help with review products and prizes for drawings. C & G supported us when the expense of it might have been questionable, but they were there when we needed them. This recession is certainly taking its toll in the business community, and in the process, the user group community is losing some great friends along the way. Thanks for everything Bonnie, and good luck in any new endeavors.

March - September 2003

***Eliminating The Competition**

I read that Palm has declared its intention to purchase Handspring and they will do business under a new name, but with two different units; one for handhelds, and the other for "so called" smart phones. Since Palm is not an APCUG sponsor, it looks like Handspring will be gone too. According to Value Line, Handspring's liquidity was deteriorating and revenues were significantly below last year's levels. Sales for both have been declining so perhaps it's time.

***Ink Jet Deal Is Jetting Back Again**

I don't often repeat a deal, but this one was very popular. Susie McLean of Inksell.com agreed to repeat the original deal offered last year and extend it until the end of this year (2003). The differences are; the expiration date, the coupon code, and free shipping on orders over \$49.00 (an improvement). I am repeating it below with the changes.

"InkSell.com is a discount printing Supply Company that specializes in cartridges for all makes of ink jet and laser printers, solid ink printers, copiers, and fax machines. We sell brand names, new compatible cartridges (for most brands), and remanufactured cartridges and refill kits. Our compatible cartridge quality is certified to match that of the manufacturer and our prices are up to 70 and 80% less. We

eBLUE NOTES

would be happy to offer DealsGuy readers a 10% discount on purchases at our online store.

"A discount coupon code will be valid through December 31, 2003. To redeem the 10% discount, (not valid with any other discount or offer), simply visit our site, [<http://www.inksell.com>], place your order and continue to 'check out' where there will be a blank to enter the discount coupon code (DealsGuy2003). The discount will be automatically calculated. Should anyone have questions or need assistance, phone customer service at 1-800-255-0483, or send e-mail to [help@inksell.com]. Don't forget the free shipping on orders over \$49.00."

***Its Not Free This Time, But Its Still A Bargain**

Colleen Toumayan from Executive Software e-mailed me to let my readers know that they have a good price on Undelete and Diskeeper bundled together. The bundle is \$39.95 and would normally be \$59.90 if bought separately. About Diskeeper: "they say built-in defragmenters are slow, labor intensive and use too much system resources to keep up with the performance demands of today's computing needs. Ultimately, they don't get used. Running Diskeeper is like hiring an expert to constantly monitor and maintain your system's maximum performance."

About Undelete: "you store a lot of data on your computer, and you need to protect it 24/7. Re-creating accidentally deleted files takes a lot of time, and using backups to restore deleted files is not always reliable—especially if you've created and deleted something between backups. New Undelete replaces your recycle bin with a Recovery Bin, which catches all the files you delete so file recovery is quick and easy."

these products in the bundle are for home use and you can check them further at:

[<http://consumer.execsoft.com/home.asp>]

to order them if you wish.

***What's Going On Your Web Site?**

If you have a Web site, it often helps if you know all the statistics about the visitors. One problem though, if you're using the free space given to you by your ISP, you probably have no access to the log for it (and can't use this product). On the other hand, if you have a paid Web space, usually you have access to the server log for your site. You should find out if your server log is accessible. You could analyze things the hard way and download the log file, then sift through it manually to see what you can determine. Sure it will work, but it's time consuming. I know in my case, I'd

like to know which files were hit, and for how long.

I talked to Sane Solutions about offering a discount on their products and they agreed to do it. I have to say, their NetTracker Professional software is already much cheaper than another well known software for the same purpose, but Sane Solutions feels theirs does it better. They did not give me a product to review so you will have to do your own evaluation, but you can download a fully functional two-week trial version to evaluate. Check their Web site at

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

and look at the product descriptions.

NetTracker Professional sells for \$495.00 and NetTracker Enterprise is \$995.00. Darryl Cunningham, sales manager of Sane Solutions, said that if you call him with your request, he'd personally handle the order giving you a 20% discount on their products and support. Wow! That's \$99 discount just on NetTracker, making it very competitive! The 20% discount is good on all orders through August 31, 2003. You can contact Darryl at 1-800-407-3570 ext. 122 to order. Don't forget to tell him you heard this from the DealsGuy.

***Talk About Tweaking!**

Many of you have used TweakUI and loved it. It performs many very useful tasks for Windows. Lee Reynolds of Boca Raton Computer Society Inc. wrote some time ago in his

monthly "Nibbling At The Net" column about another even more useful utility that he feels is much better than TweakUI. It is Xteq X-Setup and can be found at

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

It's absolutely free for home users. However, they do take donations if you enjoy using it.

This product has an incredible number of features that you can hardly imagine. It is also updated constantly. To add to its value, it also offers to help other software such as Office 97 and 2000; not to mention hardware installed on your computer. Sounds like a great product. Thanks for letting us know Lee.

From The DealsGuy for September 2003

by Bob Click
Greater Orlando Computer User Group

***Has This Kind of Stuff Made You Mad?**

When is the last time you looked at your phone bill itself and read the many charges on it? It's disgusting since it seems to be well over 100% taxation. I only have basic service, which is \$10.80, but the final bill with no LD charges is \$23.86. I wish somebody would start a movement to stop this blatant money rip-off. TV's Dateline pointed out that some of those larger charges are not a tax, but simply more money for the Phone Company. Not only that, but my DSL bill just went up \$3.21 per month with new taxes and charges, one just for the DSL. I'll miss it, but goodbye DSL since I thought it was already overpriced at \$59.95.

***Let There Be Justice**

A friend sent me a news item that Hormel is suing a company called Spam Arrest for using the term SPAM in its' product name. I wondered how long it would be before something like that might happen. It's not the use of Spam as a general term, but for using it in an official name.

Interesting.

***Still Good**

I'm reminding you that the Sane Solution's "NetTracker" for analyzing your Web log is good until August 31, 03 with the great discount. Contact Darryl at 1-800-407-3570, ext. 122, to order. The Inkjet deal will be good until the end of the year. Go to <http://www.inksell.com> to order. For assistance call 1-800-255-0483, or send e-mail to help@inksell.com. The Executive Software Undelete and Diskeeper bundle is still good.

<http://consumer.execsoft.com/home.asp>.

***This Author Is Unusual**

I read a review by Larry Grannis in the Central Kentucky Computer Society's newsletter about a great computer book that has been given many accolades by well-known sources. Russ Walter wrote this book called "The Secret Guide To Computers." He even gives you his phone number and says to give him a call anytime. He wisely publishes the book himself, no publishing company involved. In fact, you can even read some of it right on the Web at:

<http://www.secretfun.com>

This book is good for beginner or advanced users. Russ Walter's phone number is 603-666-6644. E-mail is Russ@secretfun.com.

I talked to Russ about a deal and he said that user groups could use the discount on a bulk order as a fundraiser for their group. He has been publishing a help book since 1972 so he certainly goes further back than many of us. In fact, there are very cheap prices if you can use an older book. Standard shipping is free in the US. \$2.00 per book outside the US. Air is \$3.00 per book in the US. Check his Web site for information on quantity discounts and other shipping choices. For example, his latest edition sells for \$17.50 per copy, but buy two and they are just \$14 each.

When I received mine, the first thing I wanted to do is fix my network. Unfortunately, I was unable to find such a chapter so that project is on hold. However, looking through the book certainly shows that just about everything else is covered. While reading through it, I did indeed find a couple of chuckles in the explanations. It looks great, and after seeing it, if your question is not covered, I would be astounded. However, if it isn't, you can always call him for the answer. I have not seen another book of this type with that offer. It is an 8 ½" x 11" book with 639 pages.

***Let The Gaming Begin!**

I picked up a copy of Utah Computer Society's "Monthly Report" at the Comdex/APCUG activities and found a glowing review for "A Computerized One Armed Bandit," a game by Masque Publishing. <http://www.masque.com> There is much information on their Web site, including

games for PDAs. Right now only "Slots From Bally Gaming" (ordering URL below) is on special. They have new releases for PC/Macintosh. The special would have ended in August, but since this is the Sept. column, they agreed to extend it until the end of October.

Slots From Bally Gaming with over 40 slot machines can be purchased for \$19.95, regularly \$24.95, by going to <http://www.masque.com/SfBGsp.htm> to order. Shipping is \$5.00 in the US or \$10.00 to Canada. Best part is making bets (5 cents, 25 cents, \$1.00 to \$5.00), but not in real money. Think of it this way; look at the money you'll save by not having to go to Las Vegas to play those slots. You're already ahead of the game.

I just received my evaluation copy and I am enjoying it. The installation was faultless and it runs with no problem on my 900 MHz Athlon running Windows 98/SE. Had I known you need the CD to run it, I might have tried installing it differently. While I'm not ahead so far, the sound effects are very real and one slot has all of my favorite cartoon characters; Popeye, Blondie, Dagwood, Wimpy, etc. A couple of times when I won it became very entertaining, and led to more fun. I can't give that away, but I think you'll like it. It takes a few minutes to learn the games. Right now my wife is learning so I'm not sure when I'll be able to tell you more.

From The DealsGuy

These columns are 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 any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click
[Bobclick@mindspring.com].

March - September 2003

...Past President's Message

Tom McLoughlin

The nicest thing has happened. Two of my nephews Mike Carini and Rob Mitchell from Tennessee were my recent house guests. Mike is a graduate of the University of San Francisco. I arranged for a small supper for a few of Mike's college friends and extended college family. One of the supper guests was Carlos Baena.

Perhaps you remember Carlos, perhaps not. When I was SFpcUG Club President back in the early 90's, Carlos was attending USF with a heavy emphasis on graphics art and animation. The SFpcUG offered Carlos a small stipend or gratuity to redesign a few *Blue Notes* covers. This was during a time when *Blue Notes* was a print publications rather than an electronic publication. For a few issues the BN cover was centered around a ant-like character. It ran its course and was a nice addition to BN.

Since then Carlos has graduated and has worked for a time with Lucasfilms and is now with Pixar. In my estimation he has had stellar success with animation contributions to top films from both groups: "Finding Nemo" and "StarWars: Episode II. You can view his animation work at his website:

<http://www.carlosbaena.com/animation.html>

Congratulations to Carlos. I thought you might like to know.

BLUE NOTES

MINUTES

MARCH MINUTES

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of March 4, 2003, was held at Round Table Pizza.

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

The meeting was called to order at 19:02, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the February 2003 meeting were distributed. A motion was made, seconded, and passed that the minutes be approved as submitted. The vote was unanimous except for one abstention.

The Treasurer's report – The treasurer's report again showed a healthy balance. It was accepted as presented.

The Vice-President's report – Don Oclassen said that he was hoping the nominating committee would find a replacement to run for his position. All the officers expressed the same hopes for their positions.

The President's report – the president will not be able to make a meeting the first Tuesday in April. The secretary is also unable to attend that day. A motion was made, seconded and passed that the April meeting be canceled. It was proposed that we have an informal meeting of all who can attend the fourth Tuesday of April at the president's home to discuss possible officers for next year.

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

The Membership Committee – We had a 2-year renewal and a new membership.

The Blue Notes Editors' report – This issue is running late. The Jan-Feb issue will be out soon. It will focus on Linux.

The Product Review report is that Butler will have a list eventually.

The Program Chair report is that we have a motherboard company in March, possibly a Linux training company in April, May will be a past Presidents panel. Some possible future topics are a gaming demo of new hardware and possibly DVD ripping.

Old Business – Only one person answered our esteemed president's email re available old parts. Butler has one candidate for a donation of a computer.

New Business – It was suggested that we have a presentation on wireless networking in the future. Butler suggested that the club provide tokens for people who take the bus to the meeting as an experiment. A motion was made and seconded that the treasurer get some rolls of tokens. The motion passed.

A motion was made that the meeting be adjourned. After seconding, the motion passed with no abstentions. Butler adjourned the meeting at 19:54 hours.

**Respectfully submitted, Judy Gaer,
Secretary**

No meeting in APRIL

No APRIL minutes

MAY MINUTES

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of May 6, 2003, was held at Round Table Pizza, 16th and Geary.

Present: Butler Crittenden, Don Oclassen, Pierre Hahn, Harold Charns and David Caldwell.

The meeting was called to order at 1905 hours, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the April meeting were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report - Financial report was distributed and approved. Harold is reviewing our bank relationships, toward the goal of avoiding monthly charges after Cal Fed's merger with Citibank. Our balance remains healthy.

The President's Report: Nothing new to report, other than the club's need for new officers and more volunteers.

The Vice-President's Report: Nothing new to report.

The Webmaster's Report: Not present. Others observed that the new equipment is not yet in place but that progress is being made.

The Membership Committee: Three renewals and one new member. Discussion about issuing membership cards to those who request them. Harold says this should be possible.

The Blue Notes Editors' Report: Publication due soon as an abridged edition for the 2nd quarter. Pierre is working on an issue focused on Linux.

The Product Review: Butler still needs to post a list and update the product review database

The Program Chair report: David Whittle will present at the May meeting, representing several software products.

Old Business: NONE

New Business: We are planning a 4th Tuesday meetings to assess future goals of the Group. Discussion of increasing budgets for publicity and promotion.

A motion was made and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. All agreed and the meeting concluded at 1940 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

D. B. Caldwell, Secretary pro tem

JUNE MINUTES

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of June 3, 2003, was held at Round Table Pizza.

Present: Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, Don Oclassen, Pierre Halm, Harold Charns, Ed Fok, David Ross and David Caldwell.

The meeting was called to order at 1910 hours, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The Minutes of the May meeting were reviewed and approved.

Treasurers Report: Financial report was distributed and approved. Our balance remains healthy.

President's Report: Butler noted that we have a presentation for June 17th and he's working on one for July.

Vice-President's Report: Don was present and offered general comments during the meeting.

Webmaster's Report: The Steering Committee requested that Joseph prepare a report showing the names of the users of the web-site and how often each person has logged on. This would include persons using the club as their

ISP and those using our service as a mail box.

Membership Committee: Two new members and eight renewals.

Blue Notes Editor's Report: Second Quarter is due out soon. Butler is working on an article. Linux is a new topic.

Product Review: Butler is behind in preparing a list of products available.

Program Chair report: Trend software will be presented at the June meeting – both firewall and virus protection program (PC-cillin).

Old Business: None

New Business: None

A motion was made and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. All agreed and the meeting was adjourned at 2006 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

D. B. Caldwell, Secretary pro tem

JULY MINUTES

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of July 1,

2003, was held at Round Table Pizza.

Present: Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, Don Oclassen, Pierre Halm, Harold Charns, Joeseeph Puig, David Ross and David Caldwell.

The meeting was called to order at 18:58 hours, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The Minutes of the June meeting were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report: Financial report was distributed and approved with corrections to the name of one membership renewal. Our balance remains healthy.

President's Report: A motion that we use approximately \$60 to buy door prizes per meeting until further notice was suggested. This was seconded and approved by the voting members.

Vice-President's Report: Don was present and praised the great Roundtable pizza.

Webmaster's Report: The webmaster brought the requested list of people with email accounts. There were 71 names on the list (68 mailboxes). Butler crossed off 2/3 as people he knew had other email addresses. Butler requested

a list of people who actually use the club as an ISP and email sent to him and Harold. Pierre offered to go over the file from Joeseeph.

Membership Committee: There were three renewals.

Blue Notes Editor's Report: Issue is in process. It is waiting on an article by Baadd Butler.

Product Review: Butler is behind in preparing a list of products available. Tsk, Tsk.

Program Chair report: We received 27 purchases of Pccillin at the last meeting. Whether members would come for a linux presentation was brought up. It was decided to poll members at the meeting.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

A motion was made and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. All agreed and the meeting was adjourned at 19:48 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Gaer, the "still here" secretary

AUGUST MINUTES

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of August 5, 2003, was held at Round Table Pizza.

Present: Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, Ed Fok, Harold Charns, David Ross and David Caldwell.

The meeting was called to order at 19:02 hours, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The Minutes of the July meeting were reviewed and approved as amended.

Treasurers Report: Harold Charns distributed the financial report, which was approved after discussion. Our balance remains healthy. The treasurer suggested that we change our bank account to US Bank, as they have a no-fee account. He also suggested that since the bank only requires one signature that we change our account to only require one signature. A motion that included both of these suggestions was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

President's Report: See program report.

Vice-President's Report: Don was absent with leave.

Webmaster's Report: The webmaster was not present. There was a suggestion that we stop being an ISP and stop providing email to the club members. The suggestion was that we retrieve the new server from the current webmaster. A motion was made to look for alternative hosting for our web site and notify everyone (especially the people that use the club as an ISP or email provider) that we would be discontinuing the service and that we would finalize these plans by 10/1/03. This motion was seconded and passed. A second motion was that we terminate two of the three phone lines as soon as possible (but keep the DSL line until we make the change). This also was seconded and passed. A third motion was that we ask Joseph to transfer the club Domain name as soon as we know where we want it transferred to. This motion also was seconded and passed.

Membership Committee: There were 5 renewals and 2 new members.

Blue Notes Editor's Report: He was not present.

Product Review: No change.

Program Chair report: August will be a random access program with someone that is knowledgeable answering questions. September, LearnIt! will host a program at their downtown headquarters. Microsoft will present in October. November is still open.

Old Business: None

New Business: Ed suggested that we might consider having members get free stuff from the office supply stores with rebates and donate them to the club for raffle items.

A motion was made and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. All agreed and the meeting was adjourned at 19:55 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Gaer,

**“still here, after all these years”
and greatly-appreciated secretary**

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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:

- 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.)