

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

END OF THE YEAR ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

December 2008

\$5.00

What's a good computer to buy?
page 32

When to turn off PCs
page 38

Mac vs. PC
page 41

Let me count the ways I like Linux
page 45



SAVE ON INK

without the squid farm.



Discount Printer Ink

Ink Cartridges ♦ Laser Toner ♦ All Printing Supplies

Huebner Oaks

next to BBQ Galore

San Pedro

next to Hermes Music

The Forum

behind Hobby Lobby

Bulverde Road

inside Loop 1604



210-2-BUY-INK

(210-228-9465)

www.inksell.com

Printer
InkSell.com **INK**



**New
Life
Toner inc.**

930-9300

5800 Rittiman Plaza
www.toner.net

Reduce Office Cost!

Save Up to 70%

on Supplies

Printer, Fax, & Copiers

Toner, Ink, Ribbons

Free Delivery

Volume Discounts

Money Back Guarantee

Huge Selection

New and compatible Toner & Ink Crtgs

We buy empty toner and ink cartridges.
Ask about the great deals on refurb. printers

**Authorized
Printer Service**

Hewlett-Packard

Xerox

Okidata

Brother

10%

Discount
On Parts and Labor

We also service

Lexmark

Canon

Sony

Computer Service

Coupon 1103



Alamo PC Organization

Alamo PC Organization is a non-profit organization whose mission is to increase its members knowledge and effective use of personal computers through presentations, instructional programs, other membership services and access to the expertise of other members.



To register for a Class, Study Group or Sr. Comp classes call:

Registration number **210-736-0080**

If you **didn't receive your issue** of *PC Alamode* or have questions about your **membership** e-mail:

membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

Learning Center number **210-736-0700**

If you have comments about classes call

Linda Bianchi **210-561-2278**

If you have questions about advertising call

Joseph de Leon
send e-mail to editor@alamopc.org

Please send change of address and other correspondence to:

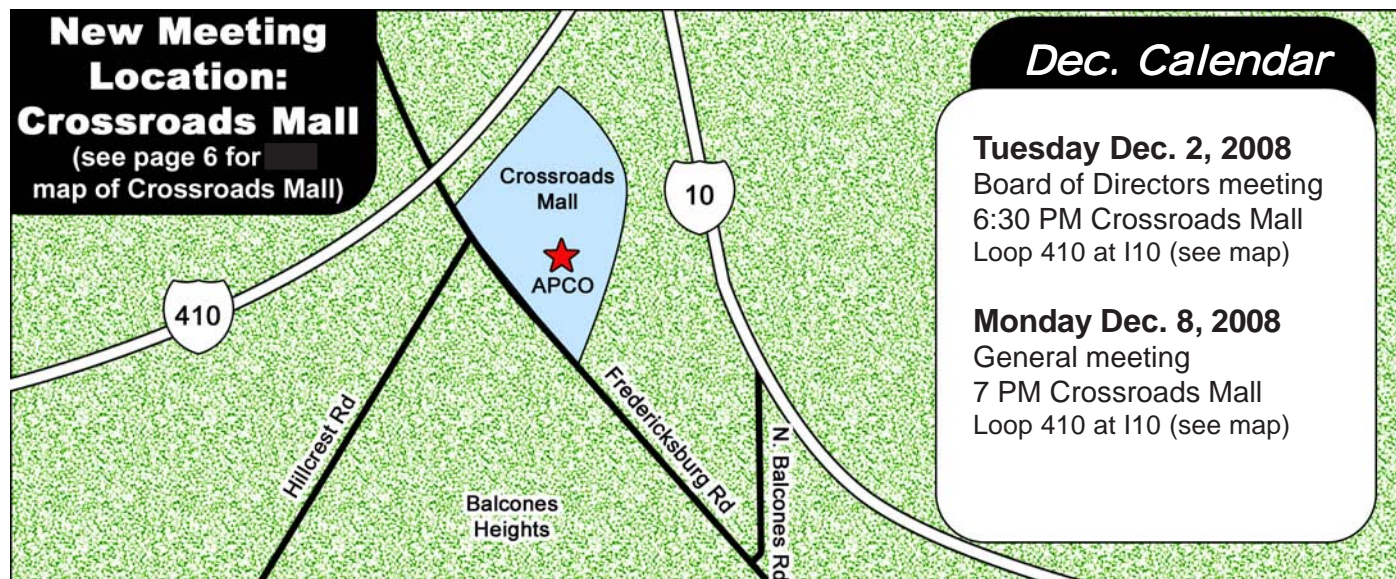
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

Meetings

Monthly program meetings are normally held the second Monday of the month. Meetings are held at the Crossroads Convention Center (across from the Learning Center) located in the lower level of Crossroads Mall, Loop 410 at the intersection with I-10 starting at 7:00PM. Open to all members and the public.

The Board of Directors meets normally on the Tuesday prior to the monthly General Meeting. The BoD meets at the Alamo PC Learning Center located in the lower level of Crossroads Mall, Loop 410 at the intersection with I-10 starting at 6:30PM. Any changes will be announced via the Voice Mail/Hot Line (736-0700) and on the Calendar of Events. Open to all members.

New Meeting Location:
Crossroads Mall
(see page 6 for map of Crossroads Mall)



Dec. Calendar

Tuesday Dec. 2, 2008
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday Dec. 8, 2008
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

End of the Year

New computer, OS, tech

departments

PC Alamode Links List	7
Enter <i>Joseph de Leon</i>	7
President's Message <i>Bill Klutz</i>	8
December Program News <i>Bill Klutz</i>	9
Volunteer of the Month	10
Funny Bytes	12

columns

PowerTalk <i>Shane Hicks</i>	13
Windows Tips & Tricks <i>Bill Beverley</i>	15
Lazy Webmaster <i>Susan Ives</i>	17

guest contributors

The Deals Guy <i>Bob Click</i>	19
PC 101 <i>Ron Ingraham</i>	22
Computer Hysteria <i>Barry Phillips</i>	24
This and That <i>Elizabeth B. Wright</i>	25
Business Solutions <i>James D. Duncan</i>	26
Ergonomic Tips <i>John R. Chait D.C.</i>	28
Practicing the Blakc Art <i>Vinny La Bash</i>	30

Alamo PC Phone Directory	6
Map to Meeting Places	6
Alamo PC Calendar of Events	58
Study Groups and Classes	59-63
Help Numbers	64
Index of Advertisers	65
Classified Ads	65
Membership Application	66

PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

Featured this month

What's a good computer to buy?
 Read before opening!
 How to answer the question
 When to turn off personal computers
 Simple file management enhancements
 Mac vs. PC
 Traveling then and now
 Password Protection
 Let me count the ways I like Linux
 Moving on to Vista - part 10
 Photosynth Panoramic Image Creator
 Chicago Computer Society makes Skype history

32
35
36
38
39
41
42
44
45
46
48
51

PC Alamode (ISSN 1065-3708) is published monthly by the Alamo PC Organization, Inc., PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180, an independent association of personal computer users, founded in January 1983, and incorporated in January 1984 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. COPYRIGHT © 2008 by Alamo PC or the author. All rights reserved. No part of PC Alamode may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means — mechanical, electrical, or otherwise — including, but not limited to, photocopying, recording, or information storage/retrieval, without express written permission from Alamo PC. However, unless otherwise indicated, articles may be reprinted by other user and education groups provided the articles are reprinted unaltered and the publication acknowledges the author thereof and PC Alamode. Articles, programs, reviews, and advertisements are compiled without verification of accuracy or applicability to a specific task, computer, or other equipment. Comments or claims are made solely by the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views of Alamo PC or of any other Alamo PC member. Trademarks have been used at random within the publication and are hereby recognized as such.

Periodical postage paid at San Antonio, TX and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PC Alamode, PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180.

EDITOR
 Joseph de Leon

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD
 Joe Barth
 Susan Ives

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
 Bill Beverley
 Bruce Cramer
 Shane Hicks
 Tim Hoke
 Bill Hudson
 Susan Ives
 Russell James
 Larry Lentz
 K. Joyce McDonald
 Paul Vaughn

INTERIM PRODUCT REVIEW COORDINATOR
 David Steward

ADVERTISING
 Joseph de Leon

PUBLICATION SUBMISSIONS: Please check with the editor regarding submitting ads. **Deadline for submissions is the first of the month preceding publication,** e-mail to:

editor@alamopc.org

Joseph de Leon, Editor, PC Alamode
 editor@alamopc.org

Ad rates effective January 2005

Rate frequency.	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
	Per insertion			
Full pg. (7 ¹ / ₄ " w x 9 ¹ / ₂ " h)	\$274	\$260	\$246	\$238
Half pg. (7 ¹ / ₄ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	144	138	130	121
Half pg. (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 9 ¹ / ₂ " h)	144	138	130	121
Quarter pg.(3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	74	72	64	62
Bus. card (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37
*Consecutive months		**To be paid in advance		

product reviews

Computer Crimes
 Software Review: Pinnacle Studio 12
 Software Review: SnagIt
 Software Review: QuickMonth Calendar

53
54
56
57

Board of Directors

President	Bill Klutz	532-9122 (Home)	president@alamopc.org
Secretary	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	secretary@alamopc.org
Treasurer	Billy Samples	646-0047 (Home)	treasurer@alamopc.org
Education	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	education@alamopc.org
Operations	Cary Hall	736-0700 (Learning Center)	learncenter@alamopc.org
Marketing	TBD (Steve Tech)	675-2880 (Home)	marketing@alamopc.org
Communications	TBD		communications@alamopc.org

Executive Service Officers and other important numbers

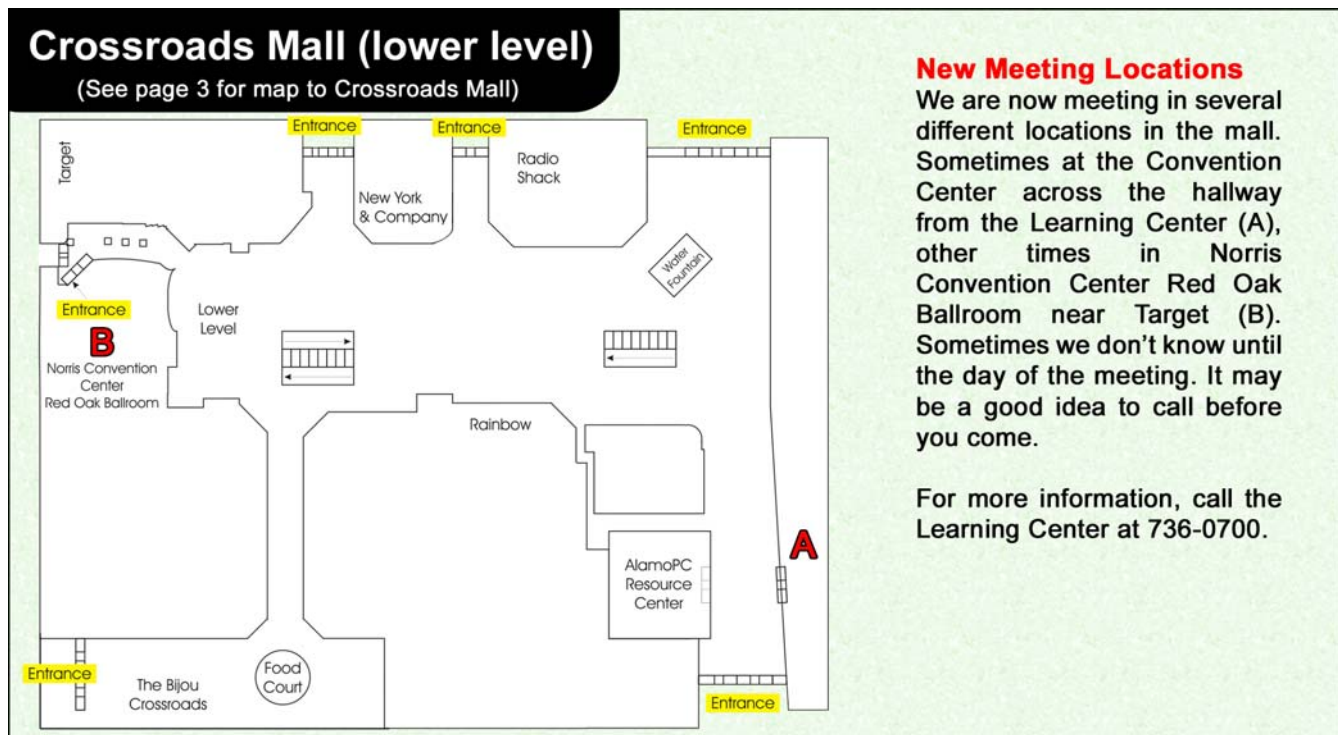
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

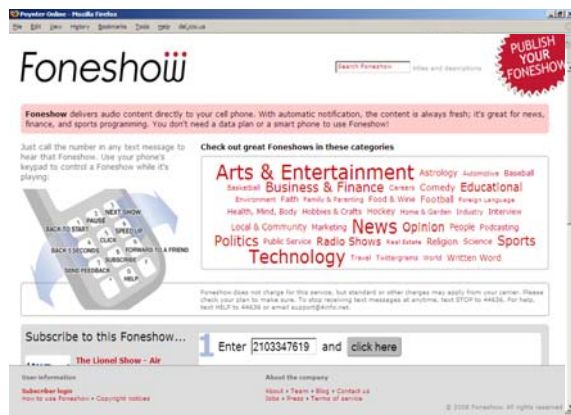
FAX 736-0032

Learning Center Manager	Cary & Jean Hall	736-0700 (Learning Center)	learncenter@alamopc.org
Past President/Programs	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	dsteward@texas.net
Member Records	Steve Tech	675-2880 (Home)	membership@alamopc.org
Public Relations	Susan Ives	694-4582 (Home)	suives@texas.net
Product Review Coordinator	TBD (David Steward)	662-8606 (Home)	reviews@alamopc.org
Study Groups Coordinator	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	education@alamopc.org
Special Projects	Joe Brazell	370-2207 (Office)	projects@alamopc.org
Registrar	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	Registrar@alamopc.org
Webmaster	Mike Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	Webmaster@alamopc.org
Lab/Network Administrator	Gary Grieve	492-5066 (Home)	netadmin@alamopc.org
Trade Shows	Steve Tech	675-2880 (Home)	stephentechnr@yahoo.com
APCUG Representative	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	dsteward@texas.net
Editor, PC Alamode Magazine	Joseph de Leon	unlisted	editor@alamopc.org

For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0080 or 736-0700



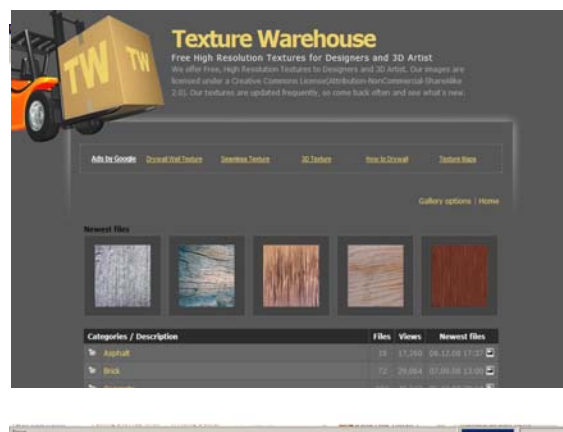
PC Alamode Links List



Foneshow

<<http://foneshow.com/>>

Foneshow delivers audio content directly to your cell phone. With automatic notification, the content is always fresh; it's great for news, finance, and sports programming. You don't need a data plan or a smart phone to use Foneshow!



Texture Warehouse

<<http://www.texturewarehouse.com>>

Free, high-resolution textures for designers and digital artist. These images are licensed under a creative commons license. The site is updated frequently, so check often to see what's new.

I have some news for you that is important! Please read the entire message.

Alamo PC Organization will be closing the Crossroads Mall Computer Learning Center by the end of December. This is NOT the entire organization, JUST the Learning Center. The reasons for closing are numerous including; falling membership, lack of students, volunteers, new members, and the high cost of maintaining this facility. (Rent, telephones, internet, insurance, and utilities just to name a few) An announcement regarding sales of equipment, furniture, etc. will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

All Classes and Study Groups held at the Learning Center will cease to meet after November 15th, unless the individual Class or Group leaders make arrangements to continue elsewhere. Alamo PC is continuing to look at options to maintain a Learning Center on a smaller scale elsewhere, If you can help please contact membership@alamopc.org

The High Growth Stock Investing Study Group will continue to meet and private tutoring will still be available. The Dr Is In Computer Diagnostic Clinic will hold it's last session on Friday November 14th. Questions, comments or helpful suggestions regarding the closure may be referred to membership@alamopc.org You ask the desk staff to pass comments along.

It has been a real honor and pleasure to work with all of you and I hope Alamo PC will find some means to continue classes and to let you know soon if that is a possibility.

Thanks,

Linda Bianchi
Director of Education, Alamo PC Organization

Recently, APCO sent out a message indicating December would probably the timeframe for closing the Learning Center.

The PC Alamode will continue in its electronic format as usual. It's unfortunate the club can no longer maintain the Learning Center, but I'm glad the Alamo PC Organization will continue to support the magazine.

If you have any suggestions or comments, please let us know!

Joseph de Leon, Editor
<editor@alamopc.org>

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"December" - Human Rights, Hanukkah, Holidays, LC Closing


This month marks several things of interest to many: 5th - Pearl Harbor Day: Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941. Lest we forget, vigilance must be maintained for those who would do this country harm (both foreign and domestic); 10th - International Human Rights Day: This day commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. "The declaration and its core values, inherent human dignity, non-discrimination, equality, fairness and universality, apply to everyone, everywhere and always. The Declaration is universal, enduring and vibrant, and it concerns us all" (United Nations Statement). A day celebrated annually across the world to help people become aware of the rights they have, and help create an awareness that there are many people in the world who do not have the same basic rights granted to them [e.g. the right to equality, democracy, etc.]; 17th - Wright Brother's Day: First flight at Kitty Hawk in 1903. Look how far aviation has progressed and how vital it has been to our travel and military operations; 21st - Hanukkah: Start of the eight-day Jewish festival of lights, commemorating the rededication of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem; 21st - First day of Winter: the arbitrary time established by man to initiate a change of season; 24th & 25th - The eve of and day of festivities and celebration focusing on Christ (usually accompanied by family gatherings and gift giving); 31st - New Years Eve - The end of the current year (2008) and at midnight, the beginning of the new or next year (2009); 31st - Alamo PC Learning Center in Crossroads Mall Closes: It has been great, and many have been helped, but high rent declining membership, waning interest in the organization and shrinking finances have forced the business decision by board members. At present (late November) we have not secured a location to house our offices.

The November BOD meetings had five members present. (One was still plagued by health issues.) A presenter for the monthly General Meeting was addressed, but the primary focus of the discussions was on Alamo PC and the Learning Center in Crossroads Mall: the financial status of the organization, the ever declining membership, declining class participation, major expenses, etc., and the future of the Alamo PC Organization. At the conclusion of the discussions, it was once again painfully reaffirmed that the Learning Center, and its associated expenses, was the largest drain on the organization's finances. With that in mind, board members again agreed: that the Learning Center location and "Dr. Is In" operation should continue to operate until classes were concluded (approximately mid November), and then work to terminate operations in the current location by December 31st. (Until then, a location with donated, or very low rent, should be sought to house the office area, and the associated requirements and equipment. If sufficient donated space can be obtained, a down scaled Learning Center may be something to anticipate); Currently, monthly General Meetings are planned to continue, but depending on how things develop in the coming months, a requirement for bi-monthly or quarterly meetings should be anticipated; The magazine (PC Alamo) will continue in its present form through the December 2008 issue as options are discussed with the current editor. After that, depending on what can be worked out with the current editor (or a volunteer who may desire to take over that role), it is currently planned that the PC Alamo magazine will continue in very possibly a scaled down mode, and perhaps different format. Membership fees are continuing to be addressed as well, and how best to be fair to current members who have extending past the end of this year. (If there is a clamoring for refunds from current members, then the organization may no longer be able to financially function and would suffer its demise very quickly.) These are only some of the more pressing issues the board is attempting to address, along with numerous other smaller things that must also be considered and perhaps added to the growing "To Do" list for the current BOD.

The approximate 30 who were present at the October General meeting seemed to enjoy the presentation, but it again affirmed that overall interest in the organization has waned. As I have in previous messages, this fact is confirmed by the ever declining membership and the fact we have not had a full compliment of board members (one or more vacancies) for the past three years.

To try and inform members, the following was conveyed to desk staff volunteers, class teachers, those attending the October General Meeting, and remains posted on the Alamo PC web site: "Alamo PC Organization will be closing the Crossroads Mall Computer Learning Center by the end of December 2008. This is not the entire organization, just the Learning Center. The reasons for closing are numerous including; falling membership, lack of students, volunteers, new members, and the high cost of maintaining this facility.

An announcement regarding sales of equipment, furniture, etc. will be forthcoming in the next few weeks. All Classes and Study Groups held at the Learning Center will cease to meet



100% gray cotton golf shirts with pocket and embroidered full-color

Alamo PC logo

Available at the Learning Center in a wide variety of sizes.

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Continued on page 9

after November 15th, unless the individual Class or Group leaders make arrangements to continue elsewhere. The Dr Is In Computer Diagnostic Clinic will hold it's last session on Friday November 14th.

Questions regarding the closure may be referred to membership@alamopc.org

The six individuals currently serving on the board have committed to continue through December. After that, there are no guarantees. It may be a continuation on a month-by-month basis, but with only six individuals currently willing to serve, and one vacant position for the past few years, the future of OUR organization appears to be in serious jeopardy.

It is now very late in November, and I am hoping that we will have a presenter for the December General Meeting (have not been so informed). Since things can change, even at the last minute, check the website for the latest information about the General Meeting. On the day of the meeting, call the Learning Center for the most current information on location and presenter. I can only hope that David Seward will have made the latest information available for the staff to pass along to those who may call.

Since almost all of our new members have been obtained from walk-in traffic at the Learning Center, that will be severely degraded after the end of this year. Unless we have members helping to obtain new members, at some point in time funds will no longer be available to allow the Alamo PC Organization to continue.

During the past few months, we have also suffered the loss of volunteers who have been diligent in giving a few hours each week to be a part of the Learning Center "Desk Staff." With a move to another location, we will still need volunteers to help with phone calls and questions that may arise.

We are still trying to improve member retention, but it has not been successful - the member number total continues to slowly decline. If you do not choose to renew, send a comment briefly explaining as to "Why?" to membership@alamopc.org, with a copy to me (president@alamopc.org, or privately to me - wlklutzjr@juno.com). I appreciate all communications, especially those on how we can improve the Alamo PC Organization and increase member interest!

As, I have said before, "the future of OUR organization will always rest in the hands of its members. Whether WE continue (or not) depends on OUR interest and involvement. But, it primarily depends on membership renewals and/or financial support. Without those, we will not be able to meet our financial obligations and additional 'business decisions' will have to be made that will affect everyone." With our past trend of fewer members each month, it may be sooner than later! I hope it does not come to that, as it will be like the loss of a friend or family member, and will impact those in the community desiring to learn about computers or improve their computer skills.

December Program

Bill Klutz

It is late November, and I have not been informed whether or not there will be a corporate level presenter for our December General Meeting. The meeting location (Norris Conference center, across from our Learning Center, or in our Learning Center) will be determined at the December board meeting (depending on the presenter identified). Since things can change at the last minute, check the Alamo PC web site (www.alamopc.org) for information on the presenter and meeting location. BUT, on the meeting day please talk with one of the Learning Center desk personnel (210-736-0700/0080). Make plans now to come and bring some friends, as we hope to have an interesting presentation, and possibly "gifts."

Volunteer of the Month

Marge Fraley



Student Practice Lab

Polish those new skills - A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis.

Call (210) 736-0080, or (210) 736-0700

Visit the Alamo PC Learning Center

Media Center

Learn all about computers with hundreds of books and dozens of video tapes. Enjoy our large selection of techno-fiction.

A comfortable seating area is available.

Call (210) 736-0700.

The Doctor is In



Each Friday from 9:00am until 12:00 noon

Diagnose your software and hardware problems

Trouble shoot major applications

Run tests

Solve Operating System mysteries

For information call 736-0700



Owner must stay with computer during repairs

Alamo PC Organization now offers members private or semi-private tutorials

- ⌨ Keyboarding/Typing
- ⌨ Basic Computer Skills
- ⌨ Microsoft Word

Rates for one student

\$35 per hour
\$300 for 10 hours

Rates for two or three students

\$20 per student per hour
\$150 per student for 10 hours

Enjoy private instruction on days and at hours that fit **your** schedule at our modern facility in Crossroads Mall.

**Call or visit the Learning Center to register
(210) 736-0080**

ComputerFest is a collection of local and statewide dealers under one roof offering rock-bottom prices on all your computer needs. All of our dealers are independent wholesalers, so each conducts business separately. Most of the dealers will accept credit cards, but with cash you can usually get the best deals. And new products are almost always backed up with a warrantee, so you and your wallet can always feel comfortable with your purchases.

What you can find at the show:

New Complete Systems
New Hardware
Newest Software Titles
Printers, Monitors, Scanners
Ink-Jet Recharge Kits
Imaging Devices
Internet Services
Used Hardware
Multimedia Upgrades
Shareware
Diagnostic Equipment
Cables & Connectors
Bare Bone Systems
Computer Related Books
Refurbished Systems, Monitors

Location:

Live Oak Convention Center
8101 Pat Booker Road
San Antonio, TX.

Show Dates:

December 13, 2008

more info at <http://www.pcshows.com/>



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen



Copyright 2003 by Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com



**"I regret upgrading to the super-premium cellular service.
I can smell your breath over the phone."**



Snippets

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

Shane runs Windows Server 2008 on his iMac... so take that!
You can e-mail him at shane@vpwn.com.

VistaBootPRO

If you're trying to dual-boot Vista with any other Microsoft operating system, you're probably familiar with Microsoft's command line tool: BCDEdit. The boot.ini file is no more, replaced by this cryptic utility. Don't worry. Just download VistaBootPRO from <http://www.vistabootpro.org>. It offers a series of helpful options. Not only can you rename the OS entries, you can change their boot order, the time delay, and a slew of other options. Enjoy!

Belarc Advisor

If you need a detailed audit of your hardware, Belarc Advisor is highly recommended. It gives you all the basics: CPU, RAM, hard disks, etc. It also shows the motherboard maker, chassis serial number, PC service tag, bus type, and a list of other details too numerous to mention. You can get this software at http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html.

Filezilla

I've found the need to FTP files a lot over the last few months. However, the built-in Windows tools for FTP are really non-existent, and I haven't seen a good commercial product in years. Besides, who really wants to pay for FTP software? A program called Filezilla received high ratings from Maximum PC recently. If you want to give it a try, go to <http://filezilla-project.org>.

VirtualBox

Everyone is talking about virtualization, or the ability to run another operating system (OS) on top of your current OS without having to reboot. If you're not interested in supporting the big names like VMware and Microsoft, then look to Sun's recent acquisition of the open-source virtual machine project, VirtualBox. It has support for Windows, Linux, and several other OS. Plus, it supports the hardware virtual machine acceleration built-in to most current processors. To grab this software, go to <http://www.virtualbox.org>.

Handbrake & DVD43

If you've been looking for a way to rip unencrypted DVDs, a program called Handbrake may be just what you're looking for. It allows you to rip directly into H.264 files. If you also use DVD43 along with it, you can convert your video into virtually any format you require. For this software, go to <http://www.handbrake.fr> and <http://www.dvd43.com>.

WinDirStat

We were having a discussion a month or so ago in one of the user groups I belong to about how you can determine what files are using up all of your hard drive space. The program that was universally recommended in our group was WinDirStat. This program gives you a map of your drive's contents so that you can see where all of your free space has gone. I suggest you check your MP3 collection, and the folder where you've been uploading all the pictures of your last vacation from your digital camera! Go to <http://www.windirstat.info> to get this program and start mapping your drives.

Continued on page 14


Alliance Managed Computer Services

Serving the IH-35 corridor

- Service in your Home or Office
- PC and Mac Computer Service
- Small Business Server Specialist
- Custom Websites with Email
- SQL Database Management
- Wired/Wireless Networks

Austin - San Antonio (512) 589-4028

Visit us at <http://www.amcs-usa.com> for a complete list of services, special offers and free advice.
support@amcs-usa.com



\$25.00 Off
Hourly Rate
Computer Service
For your Home or Small Business.
(Labor only. Does not include Parts.)

Sick Computer?

APC2008JUL

QuickSites
Get a website for your business only \$100* per year

Modern customers use the internet to search for goods and services. Increase your company's visibility. This single page website is easily accessed by computer, cell phone and PDA's. Contact us for details.

Need a larger customized website? Mention this coupon and save 10% APC2008JUL





7-Zip

I've gotten really tired of having to install numerous programs to unpack compressed files of various formats on my computer. And, I'm even more tired of having to purchase and register such programs. Welcome 7-Zip! This program can unpack just about any format I've ever come across on the Internet, and it's totally free. Give it a try by downloading it from <http://www.7-zip.org>.

USB 3.0 Specifications

Just before the Intel Developer Forum this year, the latest USB specifications were announced. The new throughput is expected to be 5Gb/s!

Do you like to play pinball?

If you're a Pinball Wizard, you may be saddened by the fact that all the major pinball machine manufacturers are dead and gone. Rejoice! Thanks to the power of the Internet, and emulation, you can bring back your glory days. You need two programs: Virtual Pinball and PinMAME. Virtual Pinball is the game engine; PinMAME is the actual emulator. Once you have these programs installed, you simply need the ROM files for the pinball table you wish to play. You'll need to do a bit of Internet searching to find everything you need to start flipping, but a good place to start is <http://www.vpforums.com>, which has numerous links and downloads to get you going.

Tired of the old KVM switch?

If you have two computers, and you wish to share a single keyboard and mouse, your only option in the past was to use a KVM switch. Now, you can accomplish the same task using a piece of software called Sinergy. This software lets you share your keyboard and mouse, as well as a clipboard. To use the software, simply install the Server component on the machine that has the keyboard and mouse, and install the Client component on the machines you wish to control. You can find this program at <http://synergy2.sourceforge.net>.

Well, that should keep you busy for this month!

CORONA VISIONS, INC.

Do You Know Where Your Equipment Is Going?



A lot of electronics end up overseas in developing countries where it is harmful to the environment and people as well.

CORONA VISIONS is the only recycler in San Antonio that has signed the Basel Action Network Pledge of True Stewardship for electronic recyclers promising to recycle the right way.

Call us at (210) 521-7612 so you can be sure your end-of-life electronics and your personal information contained therein are disposed of properly.

CORONA VISIONS, INC. 411 N. MEDINA, SAN ANTONIO, TX 78207 (210) 521-7612

WWW.CORONAVISIONS.COM



Troubleshooting Windows – Part IV

Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

Bill is retired military and an intermediate computer enthusiast who has been an APCO member for seven years. He has contributed for the past six years.

If your computer uses McAfee's VirusScan 11 and is running slowly, the cause may be Emproxy.exe which could be using 85 to 97% of your processor's resources. The company has responded with a fix. First, open the McAfee SecurityCenter and then go to View Details in the bottom-right corner of the window. This feature will show your software version. If your software is earlier than 11.0.213, you need the update. Click the McAfee icon, which looks like a large red M, and select Updates and allow the updates to install on your computer. Now restart the machine.

Keyboard Problem

If you have problems with your keyboard and it doesn't type what you type into it, you may be having an input language issue. Not all keyboards follow the standard QWERTY layout. In fact, there are many keyboard layouts. Countries and languages use different styles. The best guess is that you're using one for the United Kingdom. It is similar to the standard U.S. layout, but a few keys differ. Your default layout may have been set wrong. You can change your layout back to the U.S. standard. The process is a little different among WinXP and Vista. WinXP: Click Start, Control Panel, Regional and Language Options. Select the Languages tab and click Details under "Text services and input languages." Under "Default input language" you'll find a pull-down menu. It should read: English (United States) – US. If it doesn't, open the pull-down menu and select it. This step will return your layout to the U.S. standard. Next you may want to remove the other language options. You'll find a table under "Installed services." You'll see options categorized by language, country and keyboard layout. Select any layout that isn't English (United States) – US. Then hit Remove. There is a chance you won't find English (United States) – US in the first pull-down menu. In that case, click Add under "Installed services." Under "Input language" select English (United States). Under "Keyboard layout/IME" select US. Click OK to add it to the table. Finally, select English (United States) – US under the first pull-down menu. Click Apply to save your settings. Windows Vista: Click Start, Control Panel. Click on Classic View in the left side of the window. Select Regional and Language Options. Then click on the Keyboards and Languages tab. Now click on Change Keyboards. In the new window, click on the General tab. Under "Default input language" select English (United States) – US. Next remove the other language options. Go to the table under "Installed services." Select any layout that isn't English (United States) – US. Then click Remove. Again, you may not find English (United States) – US under "Default input language." If it's not there, click Add under "Installed services." You'll see a list of languages. Click the + next to English (United States). Then click the + next to Keyboard. Now check the box next to US and click OK. Finally, select English (United States) – US under the first pull-down menu. Click Apply to save your settings.

Performance Enhancements

There are many ways to enhance the performance of your computer. 1. You can increase the RAM memory. RAM is measured in gigabytes (GB). More memory is generally better, but the law of diminishing returns for most home users really kicks in above the 2GB mark for both WinXP and Vista systems. Because most consumer versions of Windows are 32-bit operating systems, they can address a maximum of 4GB of RAM, but 2GB of RAM is ideal from a price and performance standpoint. Before buying more RAM, it is important to check the documentation that came with the computer to find the maximum amount of RAM the motherboard supports because sometimes that figure is lower than what Windows can address. The first step when buying new RAM is to check the type and amount of RAM already installed on your computer to determine if an upgrade is even necessary. In WinXP, right-click My Computer, click Properties, and look in the Computer section of the General Tab. In Vista, click the Start button, right-click Computer, click Properties, and look at the figure next to the Memory (RAM) entry. 2. You may need to clean the Windows Registry. Windows updates the Registry's configuration entries whenever you install or uninstall new hardware or software or make changes to Windows setting. Over time, the Registry accumulates corrupt or obsolete information. These bad Registry entries weigh down your computer's performance by slowing the machine or even crashing it. To correct those problems, CleanMyPC Registry Cleaner has a good reputation for fixing those problems and improving your computer's performance. After backing up your Registry, the CleanMyPC Cleaner scans the Registry and lists problems by category. 3. You should also clean up the Startup. You can speed up the startup process by configuring Windows to ignore some of the unwanted programs. In WinXP, click Start, Run, and then type msconfig in the Open field. Press the ENTER key. Once you've opened the System Configuration Utility, click the Startup tab. This tab lists the programs that automatically start when Windows starts. Browse the list and deselect the checkboxes next to any programs that you want to prevent from running at startup. Then click the OK button. You'll need to restart your computer for the changes to take effect. In Vista, click Start, Control Panel, and then click Security. Click Windows Defender and then Tools at the top of the windows that appears on your screen. Next, click Software Explorer. The left column in this window lists the applications that can load when Windows starts up. 4. Both WinXP and Vista have a Performance Options menu that helps you shake your computer free of its sluggish behavior. You can boost your computer's

Continued on page 16

performance by disabling some of the appearance settings. To access the menu in WinXP, click Start, open the Control Panel, and then double-click System. When the System Properties windows appears on your screen, click the Advanced tab and then click the Settings button in the Performance section. Click the Visual Effects tab when the Performance Options window appears. In Vista, open the Control Panel and then click both System And Maintenance, and Performance Information And Tools. By default, Windows selects the Let Windows Choose What's Best For My Computer radio button. You can boost your computer's overall performance by clicking the Adjust For Best Performance radio button, but this is an extreme step because it turns off many of the user interface features that you may regularly use, such as the Common Tasks pane. If you want the best of both appearance and performance worlds, click the Custom ratio button and then use the checkboxes to select your desired settings. Click the Apply button to see your changes.

Remote Assistance

Remote Assistance was introduced in WinXP. It will let you log on to a computer expert's machine if you are in need of help to solve a computer problem. It is much more cumbersome to set up than GoToMyPC, which is an alternative way of seeking outside assistance. To set it up, click Start, Control Panel and double-click System and open the Remote tab. Next select "Allow Remote Assistance invitations to be sent from this computer" and click Advanced and select "Allow this computer to be controlled remotely." You can also set a time limit after which an invitation will expire. Click OK, OK. To send a Remote Assistance invitation, click Start, Help and Support and then click "Remote Assistance: Invite a friend to connect to your computer" and click "Invite someone to help you." Both parties can use Windows Messenger or Outlook/Outlook Express to communicate. On the next dialog box, you can send an invitation to a contact in Outlook/Outlook Express or you can use Windows Messenger. Once it is received, the remote work can begin! Things are different in Vista. To get started, click Start, Control Panel and double-click System and click Remote Settings. Now select "Allow Remote Assistance connections to this computer" and click Advanced and select "Allow this computer to be controlled remotely." You can specify an expiration for the invitation if you choose this option. Also, you can select "Create invitations that can only be used from computers running Windows Vista or later." Vista's settings are very different from XP's! Click OK, OK. To send a request for help, click Start, Help and Support and click "Use Windows Remote Assistance to get help from a friend or offer help." Next select "Invite someone you trust to help you" and click "Use e-mail to send an invitation." Enter a password and then confirm it. Click Next. An e-mail will be generated with an attached file. Enter the recipient's e-mail address.

Software/Operating System (OS) Problems

If you have a new computer perhaps with Vista on it and are having troubles installing old or perhaps even some new software on the machine, take these steps. First, make sure you have upgraded your operating system if that's necessary to have sufficient memory for the software to work on it. Memory demanding programs will run sluggishly if they have to fight Windows for limited system resources. Second, the program you are attempting to install may conflict with another one already on your computer. Visit the Web site of the manufacturer of the older program that isn't working for you. Third, sometime just uninstalling and reinstalling a program will solve the problem. Fourth, Vista, for example, has a Compatibility Mode which is a tool that changes the operating environment of it to mimic a previous version of Windows. If you aren't using Vista and have received a document from someone using MS Word 2007, which isn't the version on your computer, then you will have to download a Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack that will let your older version of Office open and read Office 2007 Open XML documents. A fifth possible solution to your problem may be old drivers. You might just need to download updated drivers for older programs and even peripherals. Again, the manufacturer's Web site of the program should list updated drivers available to you. Finally, you just may have to purchase an updated version of your software program to be compatible for your new computer and its OS.

Web Sites

Here are several web sites which might be of help to you in solving computer problems. [afreeDLL <afreedll.com>](http://afreedll.com) can assist you in hunting for a missing DLL (Dynamic Link Library). This site makes finding, downloading, and restoring DLLs a breeze and all of the downloads are free. You can browse the site's most popular files or search alphabetically and the site includes explanations and helpful tutorials to walk one through the download and installation process. [MajorGeeks.com <www.inviteshare.com>](http://www.inviteshare.com) has a collection of free and paid apps and utilities for your computer that have been tested to recover, repair, protect, and backup your machine. It sorts files by name, date, license, operating system, and popularity. [Infected or Not <www.infectedornot.com>](http://www.infectedornot.com) is a service that offers excellent and free NanoScan tool to quickly ascertain whether there's malware on your computer. It also tracks computer infections around the world. You can obtain the data on both active and latent threats and learn what percentage of scanned computers have this stuff on them.



Getting found

The Lazy Webmaster

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Susan Ives is a former president of Alamo PC. She archives these columns on her Web site, www.susanives.com/. If you visit, you can cut-and-paste the code instead of retyping it from the magazine – the ultimate in lazy Webmastering!

The best thing you can do is to structure your Web site so that it is more likely to be picked up by search engines and categorized correctly.

Meta Tags

First, look at the meta data. Meta means “higher level.” In Web design, it denotes information that does not show up on the screen but tells the Internet how to handle the document.

Two of them are sometimes used by search engines to find, categorize and prioritize sites and you should use them as a matter of routine. Place meta tags within the <HEAD> tag, right after the <TITLE> tag. The two you need to use are “keywords” and “description” Here is the format:

```
<meta name="description" content="San Antonio Vocal Arts Ensemble (SAVAE): Baroque music from Mesoamerica and Middle Eastern music in Aramaic, Hebrew and Arabic from the time of Christ.">
```

For the description, aim for about 25 words. Avoid marketing hype and include key words that people may be searching for.

```
<meta name="keywords" content="SAVAE, San Antonio Vocal Arts Ensemble, El Milagro De Guadalupe, Virgen De Los Indios, . . . Aramaic, Hebrew, Arabic, Second Temple, . . . plainchant, colonial, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, renaissance, missionary, Mesoamerican, Virgin Mary, Dead Sea Scrolls, . . . Iago, Early Music, Classical Music, Christopher Moroney, . . . huehuetli, teponaztli, huilacapitzli, . . . ayacaxtli, omichahuaztli">
```

Keywords should relate to you site – in fact, it helps a lot if they are actually mentioned in the text of the page. The upper limit is 1,000 characters. Put the most important ones first.

There is no guarantee that search engines will use your tags – some do, some don’t – but including them can’t hurt.

Title Tag

I am surprised at the number of Web pages that fail to take advantage of the <TITLE> tag. If you bookmark a site, the <TITLE> tag is listed as the name of the bookmark or favorite place. If visitors bookmark several pages from your site, the title helps tell them apart. Search engines list the title and may use the words in it as the most important key words.

Hint: Some search engines alphabetize their results by title, so pick something near the top of the alphabet. Don’t “spam” search engines, though, by calling your site “AAAAAA something.” They are onto this and may drop your listing.

The <TITLE> tag should be no more than 80 characters, including spaces. It may get lopped off in some listings, so put the most important information first. Look upon the title as a mini-advertisement for your site: it may be all a visitor coming from a search engine has to go by. Each page in your site should have a different title to distinguish it from the others. You cannot use HTML code in your title – only text.

Search Engine Submission:

Search engines typically have robots or spiders that sweep the Web looking for sites and pages to include. Catalogs have a human behind them, selecting sites. In either case, most will have a link that allows you to “suggest a site” to include. Take advantage of this, even though the best positioning in search engines and catalogs usually goes to organizations that pay for higher placement. To learn more about search engines and how to get a good listing, visit Search Engine Watch.

Paid inclusion

You can pay money to have your search engine request processed faster, have greater prominence or (in some cases) get listed at all. You can bid on being listed first for selected key words.

It can get expensive. Yahoo commercial listings, for example, are \$300/year. Non-commercial sites can get listed for free, but Yahoo decides which ones get included. Some paid listings are invoiced on the basis of click-throughs – every time someone clicks on a link, you get billed.

This is a call you have to make.

Reciprocal Links, Banner Exchanges and Web Rings:

Some people set great store by exchanging links with other Web sites. I am ambivalent about this. I am always eager to get my sites listed on directories that specifically pertain to my site's area of concentration. A genealogy site, for example, would want to be included on "Cyndi's List" of 182,500 genealogy links. Everyone goes there for that kind of information. However, my belief is that asking hundreds of sites to link your site in exchange for you listing theirs is a waste of time. If I like a site, I list it. If I don't, I don't. No obligation on either side.

In banner exchanges, you submit an advertising banner to a service. So do others. The free service provides a script that automatically rotates all the banners through your site. You don't get to choose the content or the design of the banners, and often there is a requirement to display them prominently on your front page. Look at an example at neobanners.com/.

Web Rings are formalized link exchanges that centralize the administration of managing hundreds of links on related topics. They are best suited to nonprofit and hobby sites, although small businesses not in competition with each other may find them useful. The biggest free service is at webring.com - go there to get the details.

Word of mouth

Don't forget to advertise your site by more traditional methods. Put it on your business cards and letterhead. Include it in your signature block on e-mail. Tell your friends.

Computer Briefs With Pim Borman

ColdFusio is HOT

Many DACS members reading this probably have some experience programming with PHP. Maybe this is a time to remind developers and those making application choices about ColdFusion.

When Allaire first released Cold Fusion (two words then) in 1995, it made some headlines purely because of its name. It was a number of years later when I met a person at my wife's college reunion who was a ColdFusion developer, and she raved about how easy it was to create database-enabled Web pages.

As fate would have it, I too, have become a ColdFusion (CF) developer and have to say CF makes Dynamic HTML (DHTML) and database-enabled sites really easy. Much richer than old-school CGI (Perl or otherwise) and even still more feature rich than PHP.

The neat thing about CF's version of HTML, called CFML, is that if you can write HTML, then it's just a couple of tags and commands more to be writing dynamic websites with CFML. Some hosting providers provide a version called ColdFusion 4.5 Express. The current "standard" appears to be based on 6.1 MX. The current version is 8 (no MX) and is published by Adobe, and includes support for AJAX.

© 2007 WILLEM F.H. BORMAN. THIS ARTICLE MAY BE REPRODUCED IN ITS ENTIRETY ONLY, INCLUDING THIS STATEMENT, BY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN THEIR MEMBER PUBLICATIONS, WITH MENTION OF THE AUTHOR'S NAME AND THE SOUTHWESTERN INDIANA PC USERS GROUP, INC.



From the Deals Guy

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies 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>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>> for past columns and some interesting articles.

A lot is written about cloud computing lately and I wonder how many of you are as confused about what that really is as I am. It would seem that cloud computing has to do with keeping your data stored on some distant server or storage service where you hope it is safe. To me, that's a new name for an old concept, uploading it to some distant storage service on the Internet. On the other hand, in any offsite concept of storage, things must go right no matter what the concept is. In reality, it's still possible that things could go terribly wrong. Read this short article from Information Week magazine about Nirvanix whose service turned sour because of a third-party vendor assisting in providing their service. A bad experience like that can shatter your confidence in Software as a Service, or Cloud Computing. The article is "Beyond Online Storage" and the crisis description is near the end of the article. <<http://www.informationweek.com/news/software/hosted/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=210602537&pno=4>>

Perhaps you could do your own "Cloud Computing." For example, put some servers in grandma's house. She might have a spare bedroom now that the family no longer lives there. <G> Perhaps there are ways to do cloud computing yourself, which would make it as secure as you like, and if something goes wrong, you should still have the data, physically. That might also be an advantage since DNS hijacking is becoming more prevalent these days. (I couldn't resist a tongue-in-cheek comment!)

*Don't Trust Anybody!

I'm on my soapbox again this month. We purchased a new microwave oven (above the stove type) from Best Buy after considerable shopping because they were the cheapest at the time. Some of you might remember my lawsuit against Best Buy several years ago. We had written them off for shopping, but decided to try them again since this was a different store. We bought the unit and when they loaded it into my pickup, I checked the box closely before accepting it, and it was not damaged. That led me to believe that the microwave oven was in good condition. Later on, I had a professional installer over to help me with the installation because of the difficult mounting space over the range. When we opened the box, the microwave's metal case was badly bent and the door alignment was bad. The installer said the unit had obviously been dropped. Needless to say the unit would not work.

When I tried to take it back to Best Buy, they said that once I took possession of the unit, it was my responsibility and they would not replace it since I had probably damaged it myself. However, they sent it to their repair facility for evaluation. Obviously, Best Buy's service facility would not repair the damaged unit under the warranty and said it could not even be repaired. As a last resort, I tried calling Best Buy's corporate headquarters, but to no avail. That conversation lasted about one minute before I got the same response as the store gave me and a quick goodbye, so there went \$300. No more dealings with Best Buy by us, although perhaps other stores would have also taken that attitude. I guess it could be said that you should check the contents of the box and not take anything for granted when picking something up yourself.

It was suggested by a friend to also call Samsung, which I did; but they didn't seem to care either. For what it's worth, the metal in the Samsung microwave's case was very thin and flimsy. The installer suggested not replacing it with another Samsung.

Continued on page 20

David's Essential Domains



Website Hosting Starting at \$3.95/month!

Economy	Deluxe	Business
\$3.95/mo.	\$9.95/mo.	\$29.95/mo.
50MB storage	1GB storage	2GB storage
1 GB transfer	15 GB transfer	30 GB transfer
50 e-mails	unlimited e-mails	unlimited e-mails

Domain Names

.COMs starting at \$7.85!

FREE with every domain:

- FREE! Change of Registration
- FREE! Parked Page w/ Domain
- FREE! Domain Name Locking
- FREE! Status Alerts

Website Tonight

Click 'n build your site online, in minutes!

- Hosting is built in
- 5 Page Site - \$4.95/mo
- 10 Page Site - \$8.95/mo
- 20 Page Site - \$12.95/mo
- 100+ professional templates



SECURE SSL Certificates

Build trust, build confidence, and build your online business—with a Secure SSL Certificate!



TRAFFICBLAZER™

Prepare your site so the search engines find it!

<http://www.davidsessentialdomains.com>

*A Repair Suite For Your Computer

Want to clean up your computer? I published this product last winter and some liked it. It's been updated so I asked them for a discount on the new release and they agreed. Their description is below:

YL Computing, Inc. announced the new version 6.2 of their WinUtilities software product. Actually, WinUtilities is not a software program, but is a kind of shell that comprises 20 tools allowing users to tune up the operating system and generally speed up the performance of their computers. This bundle of tools allows you to perform a number of optimization and cleanup operations from disk and registry cleanup to protecting your executable files with a password. It works with any Windows version starting from Windows 98, and including Windows XP SP3 and Windows Vista (for both 32-bit and 64-bit systems).

The tools are grouped into six categories. System Cleaners allow you to clean up your disks, the registry and all kinds of history files. You can view all found files before you go to the last step (that is, removing files, moving them to the Recycle Bin, or to a separate folder), but even if you delete some files you may need, the tool can create a Restore Point for you to get back to the state before erasing files. The same precautions are used when you clean the registry. The operating system stores a lot of history files and logs about your activities both on the computer and on the Net. Deleting these entries and history files not only frees space on your drives, but also takes care of your privacy. A one-click maintenance tool is now available that can be used to clean up everything with one click, without opening each separate tool.

System Optimizers deal with "dead" shortcuts and duplicate files. You can remove the former and analyze the latter. You can optimize your memory usage (the program can do it automatically) and your network connection (if you are not sure about these settings, there are recommended options available).

The tools in the System Control category allow you to actually control your system from editing your system configuration files to allowing you to shut down your computer automatically at a certain time. You can also use this category to remove the browser helper objects and startup items that you don't need.

System Tools provide you with access to tools available in the system. Registry tools allow you to back up either the entire Windows registry or only certain keys (and later restore them). You can simply search the registry for certain keys and values. Simple Search sounds simple, but it actually provides you with more search options than the standard Windows Registry Editor.

The File Tools: Here you will be able to view deleted files, and if necessary, restore them on NTFS and FAT volumes. Or, you can completely wipe files off with the Shredder tool so that even experts will not be able to restore them. Also, you can split large files into smaller ones (for example, to move them to another computer) and glue them back together. Last, but not least you can protect any executable file with a password or disable this protection, and you can schedule almost any operation available in this suite of tools using the built-in scheduler.

Visit the Alamo PC Learning Center

Can you help teach?

We're looking for someone to teach one or more of the following classes:

Digital Camera; Photo Editing; Movie Maker; Microsoft Digital Image 2006

Please call (210) 736-0700

Volunteers Wanted

Call the Learning Center to volunteer to assist ongoing classes. For more info, call 736-0700.

STUDY GROUPS

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-63.

You can download WinUtilities 6.2 for free from the developer's site at <www.ylcomputing.com> and try it for 30 days before making a decision about purchasing it. DealsGuy readers can get a 30% discount using the following URLs. DealsGuy note: These URLs for ordering are mishandled by MS Word when converted to hypertext so you should copy and paste them into your browser's address bar. The entire URL must be on one line in the address bar. I also tried TinyURLs, but they wouldn't work from my document.

WinUtilities Personal License w/30% discount: <[https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_xclick&business=paypal%40ylcomputing%2ecom&item_name=WinUtilities\(Personal License\) Special Offer&item_number=7019-8-1&amount=28&no_shipping=2&no_note=1¤cy_code=USD&lc=US&bn=PP-BuyNowBF&charset=UTF-8](https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_xclick&business=paypal%40ylcomputing%2ecom&item_name=WinUtilities(Personal%20License)%20Special%20Offer&item_number=7019-8-1&amount=28&no_shipping=2&no_note=1¤cy_code=USD&lc=US&bn=PP-BuyNowBF&charset=UTF-8)>

WinUtilities Family License w/30% discount: <[https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_xclick&business=paypal%40ylcomputing%2ecom&item_name=WinUtilities\(Family License\) Special Offer&item_number=7019-8-2&amount=49&no_shipping=2&no_note=1¤cy_code=USD&lc=US&bn=PP-BuyNowBF&charset=UTF-8](https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_xclick&business=paypal%40ylcomputing%2ecom&item_name=WinUtilities(Family%20License)%20Special%20Offer&item_number=7019-8-2&amount=49&no_shipping=2&no_note=1¤cy_code=USD&lc=US&bn=PP-BuyNowBF&charset=UTF-8)>

WinUtilities Corporate License w/30% discount: <[https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_xclick&business=paypal%40ylcomputing%2ecom&item_name=WinUtilities\(Corporate License\) Special Offer&item_number=7019-8-3&amount=350&no_shipping=2&no_note=1¤cy_code=USD&lc=US&bn=PP-BuyNowBF&charset=UTF-8](https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_xclick&business=paypal%40ylcomputing%2ecom&item_name=WinUtilities(Corporate%20License)%20Special%20Offer&item_number=7019-8-3&amount=350&no_shipping=2&no_note=1¤cy_code=USD&lc=US&bn=PP-BuyNowBF&charset=UTF-8)>

Product page link: <<http://www.ylcomputing.com/content/view/9/27/>>

Direct download link: <<http://www.ylcomputing.com/download/wuinstall.exe>>

***Do You Have Memory Problems With Your Passwords?**

Why not give KeePass a try. Many people try the wrong methods for managing passwords, such as using the same one for everything so it's easy to remember. All the thief has to do is obtain that one password and he can have you hurting. KeePass will help you be better organized and perhaps you will develop better and safer password methods. KeePass is FREE and also open source. Check it out at <<http://keepass.info/>>

Alamo PC Organization
now offers members
private or semi-private tutorials

☎ **Keyboarding/Typing**
☎ **Basic Computer Skills**
☎ **Microsoft Word**

☎

Rates for one student
\$35 per hour
\$300 for 10 hours


Rates for two or three students
\$20 per student per hour
\$150 per student for 10 hours

☎


Enjoy private instruction on days and at hours
that fit **your** schedule at our modern facility in
Crossroads Mall.

Call or visit the Learning Center to register
(210) 736-0080

The Doctor is In




Each Friday from 9:00am until 12:00 noon
Diagnose your software and hardware problems
Trouble shoot major applications
Run tests
Solve Operating System mysteries
For information call 736-0700



Owner must
stay with
computer dur-
ing repairs



Microsoft Works - Task Launcher

Ron Ingraham, Space Coast PC User Group

Ron is a member of Space Coast PC Users Group. Instructions in this column were created on a Windows 98 system. E-mail Ron at <ringram728@earthlink.net>



Addresses
Certificates
Coach a Sports Team
Event flyers
Gift and card lists
Manage Club and Group Activities
Menus
Organize a Fantasy Sports ...
Plan a Family Reunion
Plan a Party
Plan a Vacation
Prepare for the Holidays
Start a Fundraiser
Wedding and party planner

event flyers in an earlier article. The same is true of **Gift and Card Lists**.

I'll extract the list of items from the To Do list evoked by **Manage Club and Group Activities**.

Keep club members database

Track club finances

Schedule club meeting events

Design club newsletter

Record club meeting agenda

Design club event flyer

Track contacts

Start club fundraiser

List prices for club merchandise

Share photos with club members online

Last month we pretty well wrapped up the discussion on Cards and Crafts. Next in line is Events & Planning. The function here is to use a variety of templates, tools and web sites to make event planning easy.

Works accesses a copy of your address book from Outlook Express. You have full capability to edit any of the entries directly from Works.

Certificates offers the same wizard as seen last month under **Cards and Crafts**.

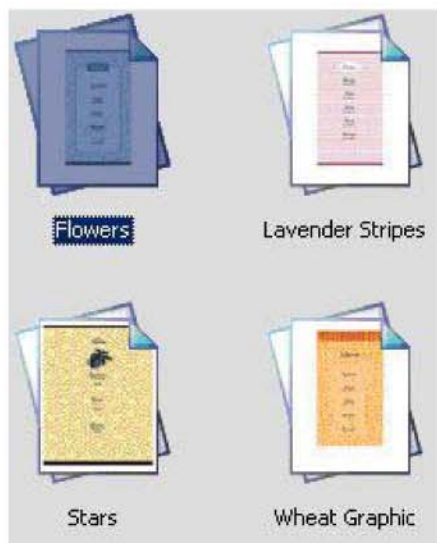
Coach a Sports Team brings up a **My Works Project** screen with a comprehensive **To Do** list. Each of these items brings up a spreadsheet appropriate to the task. There are twelve, with an option to add more if needed. These include - Create team sign-up sheet - Create team roster- Record emergency contact information - and so on. If this area is of interest to you, click on the task and browse the various items.

I get the feeling of Deja vu all over again as I go over these tasks. Just as we had discussed **Addresses** under **Household Management**, so too did we cover

Each of these items brings up a template suited to that task, spreadsheet, database, or word processor. **Start club fundraiser** opens a complete new project with its list of **To Do** items. **Share Photos with club members online** takes us back to MSN.com and the photo functions we discussed last month.

If you need to create and print a **Menu** for your event, here you'll find a wizard that offers the templates seen at the top of the next column.

Continued on page 23



Clicking on any of these brings up a template which you may edit as needed.



I'm not sure I understand the purpose of **Organizing a Fantasy Sports Team**. The task lists are very similar to those seen under **Coaching a Sports Team**.

Plan a Family Reunion is another full project with the **To Do** list seen below,

Create save-the-date cards

Search for family history online

Build family tree

Record family member names and cor

Design family newsletter

Schedule reunion events

List food needed for reunion meal on

Track reunion budget

Find online directions to the reunion

Create invitations

Share photos with family online

The remainder of the events all bring up full projects complete with their appropriate **To Do** lists. I think you've seen enough of the various events to be able to browse the lists on your own.

Try out the various templates to be confident in your ability to use them. Fill them out and perhaps print some samples to see just what is offered.

Works is really the only program you need to manage most of the activities you may plan. Keep working with it on your own. The wizards and help files are quite complete and should guide you through most of the projects you select.



SN decoded!

Computer Hysteria

Berry Phillips, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Barry is a member of the CCOKC and a regular writer for the CCOKC website and the eMonitor

What is SN? Do you suppose it is some evil secret society like SPECTRE which James Bond, 007, has battled for years? I wonder if it might be another evil secret society like THRUSH fought by the Man from Uncle? I recently heard that SN was celebrating a twentieth anniversary. I also heard that there were hundreds if not thousands of card carrying SN members in the United States and now even in other countries who have regular meetings where a variety of issues are explored and networking takes place. You don't suppose SN is some kind of global terrorist network like the Illuminati? I sense your mounting impatience with this humble writer so will attempt to decode SN now!

SeniorNet is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization of age 50 and older computer-using adults. SN's mission is to provide older adults education in computer and communication technologies to enhance their lives and enable them to share their knowledge and wisdom. The organization has benefited millions of seniors since its founding in 1985, supports over 240 learning centers throughout the United States and in other countries, publishes newsletters, holds regional conferences, and collaborates in research on older adults and technology.

SN publishes computer curriculum's used in the Learning Centers to get seniors up to speed as quickly as possible on their computers. The learning approach that works the most efficiently with seniors is a hands-on learning experience with SN instructors via a computer lab. Unlike alternative training, SN curriculum is focused on what you need to know to become productive eliminating lots of theory and technical jargon that is time consuming and often confusing to seniors often with little if any previous technical experience.

SeniorNet members learn and teach others to use computers and communications technologies to accomplish a variety of tasks including: how to touch up photos and send and receive them in email, to desktop publish documents, write their autobiographies, manage personal and financial records, and communicate with others across the country and the world and serve their communities. Many SN members had never used computers previously and all understand well after advancing to computer literacy going from the attitude of "Where would I ever use a computer?" to "I wonder how I got by without a computer!" The evolution from computer illiteracy to computer literacy and the new virtual world that opens to SeniorNet members stimulates interest, and improves mental health greatly improving quality of life. Today without a basic knowledge of computers, one soon feels abandoned on the sidelines of life as the world of technology rapidly evolves. SeniorNet networking provides many close friends since all of us are working together and helping each other to get higher on the learning curve to achieve computer literacy. All you need to do is bring the desire to learn about computing, and we will supply you with the rest of the tools you need including how to purchase intelligently a computer if you do not own one. You will be

amazed at how computer users help each other because we all started as beginners and help others advance as others have helped us to advance on the computer learning curve.

In 1965, Senior Net User Group, formerly meeting at Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma joined the Oklahoma City PC Users Group renamed the Computer Club of Oklahoma City. Charlene Francis is the Senior Net coordinator, a former government systems analyst, who has been active in developing a very strong senior net learning center with the considerable technical expertise of David Robbins who maintains the computer lab at the learning center.

Get out of that rocking chair and develop your mind or lose it! "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." Call us at 405-843-4300 and get started on the road to making new friends while obtaining computer literacy in one of the very best SNUG groups. We have been visited by SN to see how we have developed such a strong group. You can teach old dogs new tricks; I am a perfect example! SN decoded is SN, the ultimate mind recycler!



Paying too much for healthcare?

discounted fees on:

- ♦ doctors
- ♦ dentists
- ♦ prescription drugs
- ♦ vision care
- ♦ chiropractors
- ♦ alternative health care
- ♦ and more

visit online:

<http://ushealthadvisors.net/davebobst>





Lost and gone forever

Elizabeth B. Wright , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Elizabeth is a member of the CCOKC and a regular writer for the eMonitor

Well, it finally happened. A picture which had taken far too much of my time was finally ready for printing. I sent it online to my favorite photo store. Expecting to see a picture good enough to share with family, it was a great disappointment when I picked up the print to see that parts of it were not up to that standard. A renewed frenzy of “fiddling” with it resulted in losing track of the names used for the changes. When I thought I had everything in order, I chose to eliminate the extra files. And did I do a good job. Not only did I choose the unwanted files, but also included the one version which was half way good. No recycle bin, no delete, but the ultimate “destroy.” In other words, probably only the CIA would be able to recover the file from my hard disk.

Starting from scratch with the original image, I tried to retrace my steps to reach the same quality as the lost file. I had the hard copy print, so I knew what I wanted it to look like. But for some reason nothing worked and my renewed efforts to enhance the picture did not give me the results I had previously attained. But there was real improvement in one area that was so lacking in the lost image.

The newest image was then uploaded to the photo store and while doing so I noticed that the original picture was still online. And as in all things ethernet, the image could be reloaded to my computer via a download. It was a little difficult, but the end result was I got my picture back. Then the problem areas of the picture were corrected and the end result was a very acceptable print. So while a lot of time was spent on a rather insignificant picture, the knowledge obtained as a result made it well worth the effort.

After a recent study group meeting my friend Dorothy asked me if I learned anything. My answer was the same as always. I never attend any kind of meeting that I DON'T learn something. Now maybe it isn't something that will change my life forever, but more often than not it is something that enriches my life, if even in a small way. In addition to that, whenever someone asks me for help, usually we both learn something. The most recent request for help reminded me, once again, when helping someone over the phone with a computer problem, it is important to have them start at the very top of their computer screen and describe exactly what they see all the way down. With that information it is often possible to pinpoint a possible area of trouble and generate ideas for solutions. Many times the description of the problem, while usually understandable, does not contain that one little piece of information that will lead to the answer. So by following the procedure of top to bottom on the screen, we solved the problem and I took away at least as much from the experience as did the recipient of my help.

As humans age time seems to fly ever more swiftly by. But I don't think that is what has been happening in real time when it comes to technology. It looks to me like many things are moving so rapidly that we almost miss them.

Not all that long ago it was hard to imagine a small 8 Gig USB drive that could fit on your keychain. So portable, so useful. Of course they came on the market and were being sold at prices often over the \$100 mark. Now they are practically throwaways, good for birthday presents, stocking stuffers for Christmas, Hanukkah and other celebrations as well as any other gift giving occasion. Should this be troubling? Perhaps it signals the end of one technology era and the beginning of another. My crystal ball is a bit cloudy on this one, so I will leave it to the more savvy writers to tell you the answer. All I know is that for now those handy little USB drives are so useful that it's hard to imagine how we did without them. At the present time we are seeing 16 Gig USB drives with prices over \$100. How long before they will be things of the past?

Who uses USB drives? There probably isn't anyone out there who travels with a computer who doesn't keep some information on them. They are somewhat safer than storing everything on the hard drive of a laptop. Thieves target laptops in airports, hotel rooms and any other place people might be careless enough to leave one unattended. If all the information a person needs to do his/her job is on the machine, and if it gets stolen or damaged then the consequences could be disastrous. Even a one or two Gig USB drive will hold a lot of information and can be so much more easily protected. In an emergency situation, a new laptop with enough software already installed on it to do business can be purchased, sometimes even in large airports, and keeping essential files on the USB drive will get a person back up and working almost without missing a stride.

Of course there are other uses for them. My favorite use for the little devices is to transport image files whenever it is necessary. Those occasions usually are to share pictures with family or to use digital images in study groups or classes and also occasionally to get prints from a kiosk in the stores which offer that service. Mostly I do that when I just have a few prints that I need. For large orders I still upload my image files online.



Access: Performing a find function

James D. Duncan , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

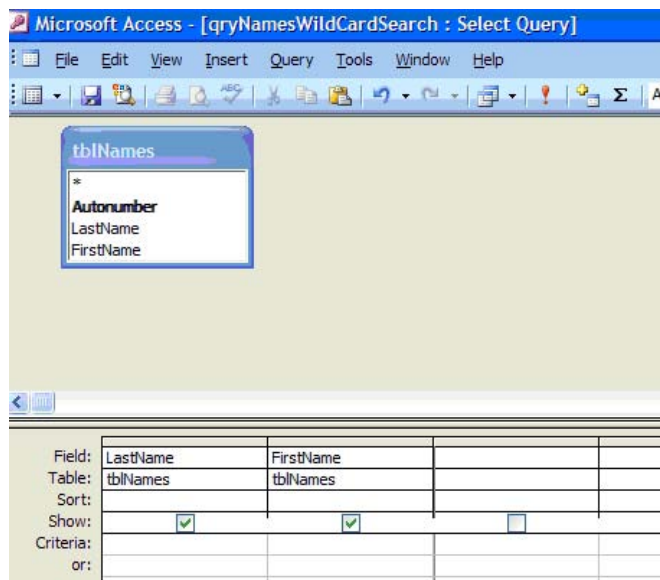
James is a member of the CCOKC and an expert in Access and Excel.

Queries in Access are usually looking for specific values or ranges. I have currently been working on searching for items that contain so set or subset of values. By using wild cards we can find a set of characters contained within a string.

For example, let's put some names in a table.

tblNames	
LastName	FirstName
Smith	Ralph
Best	Katy
Best	Jessie
Woodward	Larry
Ford	Robert
Dallas	Robin

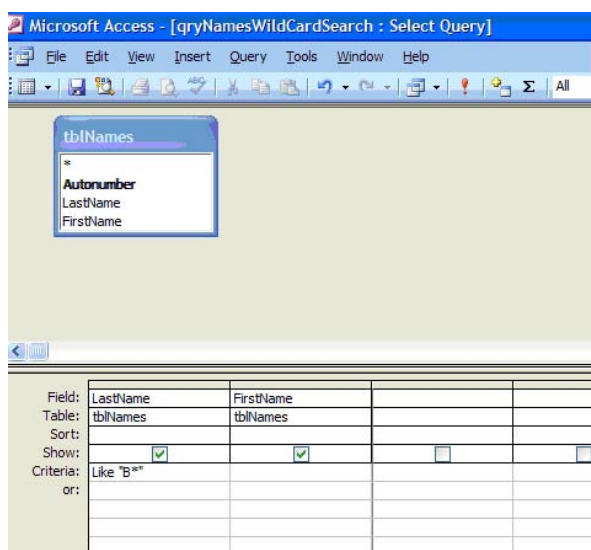
Now, Create a quick query using this table.



All we have done here is drag the Lastname and FirstName field to the grid. If we run this we will get a list of the last names and first names.

qryNamesWildCardSearch	
LastName	FirstName
Smith	Ralph
Best	Katy
Best	Jessie
Woodward	Larry
Ford	Robert
Dallas	Robin

But what if we wanted all the LastNames that began with “B”. That is easy too. In the criteria of the LastName column enter like b and press enter. Access will format the criteria to read “Like “b*””. The asterisk after the b is called a wildcard. This statement tell the field to display all the items that begin with b and ignore any other characters after that.



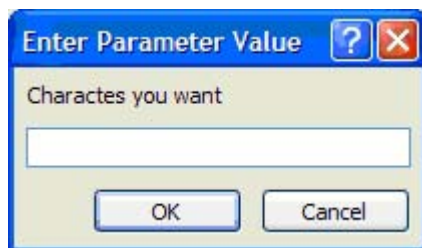
Run the data sheet view and we get a list of the Last names that begin with b.

Now if we wanted to search the LastName field for the characters “es” we just modify our search criteria to have the wild card “*” in the front and one in the back. The criteria would be “like *es*”.

qryNamesWildCardSearch	
LastName	FirstName
Best	Katy
Best	Jessie

In this case we get the same result. You will get a different set with real data. This example is fine for a couple of runs. Now if you want to get prompted for the characters you are looking at let’s change the criteria just a little.

Enter Like "*" & [Characters you want] & "*" into the criteria of LastName. Now you get a prompt and do not have to change the criteria for what you want. The prompt looks like this.



Enter the letter s and you get every LastName with an s in it.

Look in help for wild card and you will get a list of all the possibilities for searching using this method. Then just go WILD and create away. This then is incorporated into a form and used to populate a report and you have some real power and nice reports.

Get out there and put this to practice. Generate some errors, search the help for that little clue that corrects your code and makes your program run as you expected it too. This is United Way Fund drive time. I volunteer my time to a United Way Fund agency. They are doing exceptional work for the community. I feel humble to do a very minute part to give back to the community. When you help another you can hold your head up a little higher. You can affect how the community gets shaped.

qryNamesWildCardSearch	
LastName	FirstName
Smith	Ralph
Best	Katy
Best	Jessie
Dallas	Robin



Reducing exposure to stress

John R. Chait D.C. , Sarasota PC User Group

Dr. Chait is a practicing chiropractor in Sarasota and is the SPCUG ergonomic consultant. As an avid computer enthusiast, Dr. Chait knows first hand how important proper interaction between the user and their PC can be. He stresses this in his ergonomic tips column and his lectures. <drchait@hotmail.com> For more ergonomic tips, visit <<http://chaitchiropractic.com/links/Ergonomics/>>

One of the primary methods employed to reduce exposure to a hazardous work environment involves improving the work place. The science of matching workers with their work environment is known as ergonomics. Properly defined, ergonomics is the scientific study of human work. A more practical definition states that ergonomics is "the science of matching the job to the worker and the product to the user," to everyday work situations. For instance, if workers encounter problems with their wrists because the counter they work on is too hard, a reasonable solution is to provide a padded wrist support. Or if a worker develops a tendonitis in the elbow because the forces required to tighten a machine part are too great, the solution involves providing mechanical assistance to reduce the forces.

The two primary objectives of ergonomic intervention are to enhance performance and control fatigue. Three primary areas, physical, psychological and psychosocial, can affect both performance and fatigue. Within each of these primary areas are a number of factors including:

Workers' physical fitness - How fit are the individuals for the job they're performing?

Force - Does the job require the use of force? What type of force (static vs. dynamic)? How often is the force applied (seldom, frequently or constantly)? Is the force sustained for periods of time?

Position - Are any joints and muscles place in non-neutral postures for prolonged periods of time?

Repetition - How frequently is a task performed?

Duty cycle - How long does it take to perform a single task? How long the recovery time before the task is repeated?

Vibration - Is the worker exposed to vibration? Are anti-vibration devices used?

Friction - Is the worker exposed to slippery surfaces?

Work practices - Is training adequate? What are the policies regarding injury reports? Light duty? Return to work?

Environment - Is the work environment adequate (temperature, lighting, ventilation)?

Job satisfaction - What is the relationship between labor and management?

Operator control - How difficult is the task to perform?

The interaction of these factors has a cumulative effect. The process of improving workplace safety involves identifying the risk factors, investigating the actual causes of injuries or the triggering events, designing intervention, strategies, implementing necessary procedures, and tracking outcomes.

Chiropractors have helped large numbers of workers by improving the worker's ability to function and interact, hopefully in a less stressful environment. Enhancing performance and controlling fatigue should be one of the most important goals of employers to help employees deal with the stresses of the daily working atmosphere.

Volunteers Wanted

Call the Learning Center to volunteer to assist ongoing classes. For more info, call 736-0700.

STUDY GROUPS

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-63.

It all begins with the chair

John R. Chait D.C. , Sarasota PC User Group

Dr. Chait is a practicing chiropractor in Sarasota and is the SPCUG ergonomic consultant. As an avid computer enthusiast, Dr. Chait knows first hand how important proper interaction between the user and their PC can be. He stresses this in his ergonomic tips column and his lectures. <drchait@hotmail.com> For more ergonomic tips, visit <<http://chaitchiropractic.com/links/Ergonomics/>>

In the past the chair has been used to provide both sitting and working comfort for people who work at preset desk heights. This height, twenty-nine inches for PC desk height and twenty-six inches for typewriters, was determined years ago to go well with the physical requirements of the 'average' person.

Unfortunately, the result has been the necessity for shorter than average people to raise their chair height as they try to reach a comfortable position at a work surface which is too high for them.

Sitting back in the chair would then result in the person's legs hanging with their feet off the floor. The person may then experience pressure under the front of the thigh where it presses against the chair at an angle. The user is forced to sit forward in the chair to avoid discomfort because this is a sensitive part of the leg through which pass many nerve endings and veins.

In fact in any large office with fixed height desks, you will see a large number of shorter individuals, who are forced to sit forward on the chair, away from the support of the chair back. They might as well be sitting on stools.

Employees who are taller than the average person are also affected by the fixed height work surfaces. Though they would more comfortably sit in a higher chair, the work surface would then be too low, causing them to slump forward. So instead they lower their chairs, only to cause other another dilemma. When the person sits back in their lowered chair, their knees will be higher than their behind when their feet are placed flat on the floor, causing all the weight to be on the back of the chair.

Every time this person sits back in his chair, the chair will tilt back. Then every time he wishes to work at his desk, he must move forward in the chair away from the support for his back.

As with the shorter than average individual, this will have an effect on their posture and can cause stress and strain. This can transfer into back pain, fatigue or aggravated tension. In fact; backache is the third most widespread illness in our population. The back pain that develops from the misalignment of the normal posture can be treated very successfully with chiropractic care. Talk to your Chiropractor to find out if there is anything that can be done to correct the ergonomic problem.

The proper means of adjusting a chair for sitting and working comfort is to stand facing the chair and adjust it to a height just below the kneecaps.

Then when you sit back in the chair your thighs will be parallel to the floor and your weight will be evenly distributed across the chair. While there are a regrettable number of chairs still being made with high and prominent arms that prevent the user from sitting properly positioned at their desk, the trend is towards chairs with recessed or sloping arms that do not cause this problem. These chairs are highly recommended.

Once people adjust their chairs to the comfort requirements of their heights, they then will be seated at differing heights relative to their work surfaces, typewriters or keyboards.

If these keys or surfaces are too high, then the users are forced to raise their arms. Many shorter individuals raise their arms from the shoulders, almost like having a constant "shrug". This uses muscles across the top of the shoulders and at the base of the neck, and it often takes very little time before discomfort is felt.

At a properly positioned work surface, keyboard or typewriter, the height of the surface or keys will be at elbow height, when the individual drops his arms to his side while sitting. At this height the person may work in an upright, yet comfortable sitting posture, with the forearms at right angles and parallel to the floor in a relaxed working position.

As you can see, chair positioning is the most important aspect when you consider proper PC use. The problem is your desk is not adjustable and is the limiting factor for your chair adjustment. Hopefully someone will design a desk with an adjustable height so the chair will do what it is supposed to do-support your posture.



When Two (Or More) Is Better Than One

Vinny La Bash , Sarasota PC User Group

Vinny (SPCUG President in 1996-97-98) is a retired IBM'er and teaches computer part time at the Sarasota Vocational Technical Institute. <labash@spcug.org>

Bear with me while I quote John Dvorak from his August 2008 PC Magazine column, then I will tell you what my point is. Regarding Vista, he said: “Vista isn’t completely unusable; It’s simply hard to use. Menus have been reorganized for no apparent reason, features of XP appear to be missing or need to be turned on from some remote directory, and basic functions are now obfuscated.

“In a nutshell, Vista manages to be more complicated than XP, performs more poorly than XP, and is more expensive than XP.”

Now, substitute Word 2007 for Vista and Word 2003 for XP and my point is made. Compared with Word 2003, Word 2007 is an involuntary learning experience for anyone

already proficient in Word and productive with one or more of the features. To name a couple I use often, are: Mail Merge, tables, labels, and fields. But, first users have to discover where basics like Help, Save As, Print and Close are.

To say Word 2007 has a steep learning curve may not scare everyone. But, to say it has a steep learning curve for experienced Word users should scare everyone, as well as be a cause for serious concern.

Unfortunately, I didn’t fully understand how an Office 2007 upgrade for Office 2003 functioned. If you haven’t taken the step, yet, let me caution you. The upgrade wipes out Office 2003 and you cannot downgrade. I believe this step was automatically taken by the installation. Perhaps with a full version, you would be given a choice to install the newer version into another directory, leaving the older version intact.

The first thing you notice when you open Word 2007 is the highly touted “ribbon.” Nine tabs take the place of menu items across the top of the window. The tabs do not have the same names as the old menu items. In fact, a couple of the tab categories—Home, References and Add-Ins—are enigmatic. And as they say on “Dancing With The Stars,” the tabs “are in no particular order.”

Clicking on a tab opens a segmented toolbar of options across the top of the window that relate to that tab’s category. Although you may want to add to or rearrange the commands on the Ribbon or change or remove a command or group on the Ribbon — as you might have done with the menu and toolbar of earlier Word versions — you cannot.

And, you can forget about being able to revert to Word’s old style toolbars and menus. But, Microsoft helpfully advises that if you are fluent in XML programming code, you can add tabs to the Ribbon.

In Photoshop, the ribbon concept is intuitive and natural, and actually speeds up productivity. In Word, it can be chaotic and time-wasting.

Now, that you have this background in mind, you will better understand the images and steps that follow which is a short tutorial for simplifying Word 2007. My suggestion for anyone using the new Word version is to first set it up to make the features you need easy to locate.

With that in mind, I’ll show you how to create a custom toolbar for the tasks that you need to perform most often. It will help to take the aggravation and time-wasting practice of hunting around and calling on Help to figure out where things are and how to use them.

Incidentally, speaking of Help, here’s a tip. When you need to turn to Help, don’t look for a tab or menu item. Just as in the old days of DOS, you must press the F1 key to make it appear!

In the upper left corner of the Word window is a round Windows logo, called the Microsoft Office Button. It will remind you of the Start button in Windows. Click on this button, it is a kind of command center temporarily until you get Word customized the way you want it. Or, it’s possible, you may prefer to use it, rather than the Quick Access Toolbar. (Nah.)

The Quick Access Toolbar is just to the right of the Microsoft Office Button. It can be likened to the Quick Launch Toolbar in Windows. (Do you see a pattern here?)

When you first open Word, the Quick Access Toolbar is empty. Click on the down arrow a slight distance away from the Microsoft Office Button. A dropdown list appears, similar to the ones you saw at the end of toolbars in Word 2003. It contains many of the general commands that you might use frequently.

Click on the commands that you want to be on the Quick Launch, er... Quick Access. Toolbar. The icons will be added to the bar and available to you with one click. It's almost too easy isn't it? Well, keep in mind that with this Word version, whatever effort you save in one area, you are going to earn by working harder somewhere else.

You may want to fill in the basic commands on the Quick Access Toolbar with different commands not on the dropdown list. In that case, right click on the down arrow for the dropdown menu and go to More Commands... at the bottom. There are five categories, so click through them to see what they offer. You'll be surprised. In each category, there are dozens of commands for just about any task and circumstance.

When you find a command you want to use, click to select it in the left window (see screenshot below) and click on the Add button with the arrows to move it to the right window. Alternatively, you can click on the Microsoft Office Button. At the bottom of the dialog box click on Word Options. Then, in the list that appears on the left, click on Customize.

A familiar box with a double window will open. It is the same box that you can open from the down arrow next to the Quick Access Toolbar. My Quick Access Toolbar has several preset command buttons and one macro that I recorded (to add the pathname to the bottom of documents). Without intentionally doing so, I nearly recreated the Standard Toolbar offered in earlier versions of Word.

The commands that I found useful to add were Open, Blank Page, Save, Undo, Redo, Page Setup, Print Preview, Print, Show/Hide, PathName (the macro), and Close.

Although a couple of the commands are available by clicking on the Microsoft Office Button, it is still faster and less distracting to have them at the top of the window and only one click away, rather two or more.

GLOBAL TRAVEL TRENDS

We're Going Places!

Global Travel Trends has designed a fun, work from home, Associate Travel Agent Program, to provide an opportunity for people all over the world, a way for them to change their lives for the better.

Take advantage of tremendous savings when planning a family vacation or a romantic trip for two by visiting our website at www.greatratetravel.gttrends.net and click on the "Travel Center" button.

Rudy & Debra Flores

Associate Travel Agents

(832) 259-9910

(832) 372-4527

greatratetravel@sbcglobal.net

*** Cruise for \$40 a day**

*** All-Inclusive Resorts for \$30-\$50 a day**

*** Upgrades on Flights, Car Rentals and Hotels**

STOP PAYING RETAIL! BECOME A TRAVEL AGENT! SAVE & EARN!

TO LEARN MORE, WATCH THIS MOVIE:

www.gttmovie.com/greatratetravel

End of the Year

New computer, OS, tech

What's a Good Computer to Buy?

by **Doug Fairchild**, Director, Exton PC Council, PA,
www.extonpccouncil.org, dbfair@verizon.net

This is an age old question in terms of computer technology time. Almost any professional that provides unbiased advise will tell you that it is not an easy answer. The first question that comes to mind is, what do you intend to do with it?

Many persons, who are not involved with what's current, do not really know just what's encompassed with their regular routines. A typical answer is, "I don't do that much and don't need an elaborate machine".

Continued on page 33

It seems to me that as technology advances, more and more uses will become commonplace requiring more oomph from the computer being bought today. Therefore, my recommendations focus on a machine that is good enough for now, with specifications that would hopefully add enough to carry over for a little time to come. Any professional who keeps up with technical publications can tell you that ratings change faster than the weather. Also, new machines and technology keep changing.

So how's a person to choose?

Typically, in the past, the common time frame was to hope for a machine that would last 5 years before being outdated. Today, the best equation I can offer is that it's like buying a new car. How much can you live with, before getting something that has great new features?

With that being said, let's look at the core components of a computer with what, in my opinion would be the minimum for a Windows machine to last for a little while. These choices are based on using equipment with name brand components and include web sites where applicable for further research of these products. I strongly recommend that if you are considering an alternate to name brands, you research that brand.

Some comments about Apple computers follow after the discussion on recommendations for Windows machines.

OPERATING SYSTEM – Windows XP (any version) – Windows VISTA (Home Premium or better)

Since the release of VISTA, many computers are still being offered with Windows XP. VISTA Home basic is considered by most professional reviewers as less desirable than any version of Windows XP. While there has been a lot of VISTA bashing, some of the derogatory statements are not true. For clarification and a better understanding of problems related to VISTA see: <http://blogs.zdnet.com/Ou/?p=785>

It is definitely true that some peripherals like various printers and some other devices do not work with VISTA. However, it needs to be said that at some point, progress needs to preclude older technology. For example, how many people can work on their automobiles like they used to. It takes much more sophisticated and expensive equipment. To see what devices will be affected by VISTA, download and run upgrade advisor. Even though you are not upgrading but considering a new computer this will let you know what devices will be affected by VISTA.

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/windowsvista/buyorupgrade/upgradeadvisor.mspx>

CPU - PROCESSOR - Intel® Core™2 Duo or AMD equivalent.

<http://www.intel.com/> - <http://www.amd.com/us-en/>

RAM (base memory) – Window XP -1GB (or more – consider 2GB) – Vista -2GB(or more)

The type and specifics will be controlled by the computer model you select. One consideration is to allow for expansion at a later date. Check to see if there are open slots to add additional memory. It can be worthwhile and can save in the long run to pay a little more upfront by having the memory configured to allow for this upgrade. While Windows Vista states 1GB as minimum, you probably will want 2GB.

VRAM - Video Ram (Memory on your graphics card) – 256MB (or more)

This is frequently ignored by inexperienced shoppers, but can make a world of difference on the performance of a PC. For a detailed explanation see http://searchstorage.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid5_gci213325,00.html

A few popular graphic card manufacturers: <http://ati.amd.com/products/index.html> <http://pnny.com/> <http://nvidia.com/>


Continued on page 35

Volunteers Wanted

Call the Learning Center to volunteer to assist ongoing classes. For more info, call 736-0700.

STUDY GROUPS

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-63.



100% gray cotton golf shirts with pocket and embroidered full-color

Alamo PC logo

Available at the Learning Center in a wide variety of sizes.

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

HARD DRIVE – 100GB (or more)

Most new hard drives use a newer type of interface referred to as SATA (Serial ATA). Look for this specification unless you have an older hard drive you wish to use in your new computer (which is more likely a PATA (Parallel ATA)). One of the newest technologies is a FLASH Hard Drive. Currently this is primarily for notebooks (laptops). It has some definite advantages but also some drawbacks. It's expensive and has limited capacity. It may be the upcoming future of Hard Drives. See <http://www.pcworld.com/article/id,126833/article.html> for a PC World review.

A couple of popular hard drive manufacturers: <http://seagate.com/> (note that Maxtor has been acquired by Seagate Technology) <http://westerndigital.com/>

POWER SUPPLY – Varies with the devices built into the computer. If you believe that you may be adding internal devices, consider a computer with a power supply that has more capacity than needed for preconfigured devices. This can be a little complicated, but should be an answerable question to the person selling the computer (get someone who has technical awareness). For an explanation of the power supply see: <http://computer.howstuffworks.com/power-supply.htm>

There is also an excellent video at this site to gain a basic understanding of the core components.

MOTHERBOARD – Normally this will be controlled by the computer model you select unless you are purchasing with the option to customize. Being aware and specifying the other core components listed, the motherboard should be suitable and not normally something you choose independently. If you are buying a desktop, you may want to inquire about available PCI slots or other expansion capabilities. In the past, this has afforded the ability to economically install hardware upgrades which may keep your machine current for a longer period of time. Laptops do not, as a rule, offer the same capability to expand and upgrade other than memory and optical drives.

OPTICAL DRIVE AND OTHER PERIPHERALS – There are many choices and most computers today offer a DVD drive with read/write (this is the ability to play and create DVD and CD disks). Ask what it has and what it will do – also compared to other options.

Notes on Apple Computers - While I do not have firsthand knowledge about Mac (by Apple) computers, the reviews and information I've seen tends to make me believe that the new Mac's are superior to many other brands of PC's. I would emphasize new versus computers manufactured prior to 2007. One of the indicators that this is true, is the fact that while sales of other PC manufactures are falling, Mac's have realized an increase in sales. They are, however, more expensive.

If I had the money I would look seriously at a new Mac with the idea of loading Windows as a second OS (operating system). Mac has a feature called Boot Camp which accommodates adding other OS's. Boot Camp is software included with Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard that lets you run compatible versions of Microsoft Windows on an Intel-based Mac. While they do not offer technical support for other OS's, Mac's will run multiple OS's (including VISTA) as well as other PC OS. You, of course, have to own or buy the additional OS's to be installed.

See: <http://www.apple.com/>

Notes on Linux OS – Again, I do not have firsthand knowledge about Linux OS's. However, I've been led to believe that they make a lot fewer demands on the computer. From what I've heard, you probably in most cases do not need a new computer to install and run.

For more information see <http://www.linux.org/>

Volunteers Wanted

Call the Learning Center to volunteer to assist ongoing classes. For more info, call 736-0700.

STUDY GROUPS

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-63.



Compatible
inkjet Cartridges
starting at \$5

www.tdinksales.com
tdinksales@satx.rr.com

L & M Bookstore
1716 N. Main Ave.

Qwik Pack & Ship
1205 N. Loop 1604 W Suite 221

Great Northwest Postal Center
8745 Grissom Road

American Shipping & Mail Boxes
8452 Fredericksburg Rd

Ink Spot
6420A Bandera Road

Read Before Opening!

by **Bruce Jacobs**, Editor, Phoenix PCUG, Arizona, <http://phoenixpcug.org/>, editor@phoenixpcug.org

So you just bought a brand new computer. Before you get all settled in there are a few steps you should take to help make your new computer safer and more fun. Note: I am assuming that you bought a computer from a major manufacturer and that the computer has a Windows operating system installed.

If you are eligible for any rebates, make sure you collect all of the information needed to submit the rebate and place the paperwork in a place where you will not forget to send it in.

Check for the Windows COA (Certificate Of Authenticity) sticker. It is very unlikely that this will be missing unless the computer was purchased from a disreputable company. If it is missing, take the computer back at once! This is what allows you to run Windows. If your machine does not have this it is not legal. While you are looking at the back of the case, write down the computer's serial number for insurance purposes.

If the computer is visibly damaged or missing parts either return it or ask for a free extended warranty and a discount.

Before assembling the computer make sure you have read the manual. (OK. I know you will not read all of it) Find the section that talks about how to do a full restore of the computer. One of four strategies will be in use by the manufacturer to allow the operating system and drivers to be restored.

- **Media Supplied.** All the CD/DVD materials are in the box with the computer.
- **Hard Disk based.** A program is on the computer which will create the CD/DVDs needed to do a restore. The files are probably on a hidden partition
- **A combination** of the above where you boot a CD and it gets some of the files off a hidden partition
- **A request based system.** Where you ask for the media from the company.

Method 1 above is the best but rarely used. In my opinion, anything else is rudeness to a customer. Unfortunately, it is also slightly more expensive, so most manufacturers don't do this anymore.

Method 2 is quite common. They save 2 dollars(or so) and you spend lots of time making disks when you could be using your new computer. I strongly urge you take the time to create these disks before you connect your computer to the internet or install any software. If the disk is corrupted, before you get to creating them, it can cost you some money to recover from the problem.

Method 3 is also common. If you cannot find a way of creating backup media when this method has been used, contact the manufacturer. Tell them you might upgrade the disk drive and need to do a clean install.

Method 4 is the nastiest of the four. Many people never ask for the media until after the

support has expired. Then, when you eventually need to reinstall, you have to pay extra costs. (Note: if you are currently in this situation, and you are legally licensed for Windows, a group member can probably help without having to pay for another copy of the media)

(optional) I will scratch build any computer after this point for a couple of reasons. I can test the restore media to make sure it works (it does not always work). It is helpful to do this before the warranty expires. Usually I can repartition the disks as I see fit without paying extra for other software. It may also give me a chance to remove any unwanted software that was installed at the factory. I don't like to be prompted to sign up with other ISPs for example. If you purchased a demo/floor model computer, always scratch build as you can never know what teenagers may have installed on it.

It may be best to install your long term antivirus solution at this time. If you like McAfee and the computer comes bundled with a 30 day trial of Norton Antivirus, consider installing the McAfee right away. This way, you do not need to worry about any files of the Norton Antivirus not being completely cleaned up when it is removed.

If you are eligible, now is a good time to go to the company's website and apply for the free Vista upgrade. When it arrives you may not want to install it unless you have set up an extra partition. But there will probably be a time when you will want to have a copy. Finally, figure out how you will be doing backups. If you are like me, it is very easy to put this off until you have a problem.

How To Answer the Question?

by Mike Kerwin, President, Central Maryland User Group,
kernary@comcast.net, <http://mycmug.org/>

OK, I'm not being mysterious but addressing an issue that most Geeks encounter often. I suspect that most of you have been asked The Question many times by friends, relatives, and acquaintances. I refer to the expectant "What do you recommend as the best _____?" (Fill in the blank for PC, notebook, PDA, digital camera, camcorder, DVR.) Folks who know me and my penchant for gadgets and gizmos frequently ask me this. Lately the most popular subject is notebook computers. Now I do get a bit of a stroke that I am asked for my opinion about things digital, and I do understand the seemingly overwhelming number of choices being marketed, but I also get frustrated when my response elicits blank stares.

My thinking is that people ask this due to despair at the multitude of choices currently available and the wide range of pricing options. And, of course, the options lead to even more confusion. A few years ago the world seemed to be simpler when the number of manufacturers of notebook PCs diminished to just a handful. Today, despite the consolidation, the remaining firms now offer several complete "lines" of notebooks along this continuum: superlight, ultralight, mobile performance, entertainment, general purpose, budget, desktop replacement... You could probably suggest even more categories. Now too we have designer notebooks in a range of case colors and

branded logos (Ferrari, LiveStrong, Hello Kitty). Then there is screen size and the directly linked weight factor; since LCD screens use glass front panels and glass is rather heavy, the larger the screen the heavier the device is to lug about.

Answer a Question with a Question

So what do I have to offer in the way of advice? I've learned to follow the experts on my reply: from the online Buying Guides back to Socrates, the recommendation is to answer with a question. (I don't think Socrates knew about decision trees, but that's what we have here.) Specifically I first ask, "Do you have a price point in mind?" followed by "Do you have a brand preference?" These two questions narrow the choices considerably. I know some individuals and organizations are strictly wedded to one brand, such as Dell, and that becomes a major factor in deciding on what is the "best" in that environment. Price is also a great divider of the pack with budget machines being advertised under \$500 and high-end performance units listed for prices around \$3K - a very wide range.

The next question along this tree is, "What do you intend to do with the computer?" The answer will be very different for a Road Warrior backed by a corporation which can deduct business expenses versus a student heading off to college, or someone who just wants to use it for email at home without being tied to a cable. For example, the weight of a notebook can be a major consideration if you travel frequently, as everything gets heavier at the end of a long flight or stressful day of sales calls. For travelers the features needed can also be important considerations as some of the lightest notebooks don't have built-in optical drives (see Dell) but use optional peripherals which can add to weight, bulk, and extra parts to keep track of recommendation is to have as few pieces as possible for simplicity's sake.)

The Fine Print

Speaking of weight, you must read the fine print of the specifications, as I learned this week looking at the new Toshiba Protégé line of notebooks. This company is making great claims for this "superlight" line. Digging a little further one soon discovers that the quoted weight is for the main clamshell case and

internal parts. This is really light at under 2 lbs and is possible through the use of solid state memory in place of a traditional spinning disk HD. But, it won't do much without a battery, which adds at least 0.6 lbs additional for the limited capacity, standard battery; an optional, long-life battery weighs more. And then there is the transformer (aka brick) which weighs in at 0.5 lbs. Then one might look at whether the 68 GB of HD equivalent would be sufficient running Vista which reportedly takes nearly 10 GB just for the OS and then allocates an additional 15% of the HD for Restore points. These can take up lots of the internal HD and then one would have to consider carrying an external drive for storing data, presentations, pictures, etc which could add additional weight. And for all of this one would pay nearly \$3K.

Continued on page 37

At the other end of the price scale are the budget models which barely have enough onboard memory (or capacity) to run the old WinXP. As more Vista applications become available over the next couple of years, these machines may be left in the dust, unable to accommodate current versions of software. This could lead to early replacement before the expected lifespan of 3-5 years.

Then there are optional/necessary features you might want in a notebook. One feature is an optical drive which most, but not all, units have as a standard feature. Then there are different flavors of CD/DVD readability and writability. Virtually all of these units will read and write CDs and DVDs, but perhaps not all three formats of DVD, plus the capability for dual layer data storage and, in some cases, LightScribe technology to burn labels on the back side of special disks. Unfortunately the industry has not settled on a standard technology for a new generation of disks to store HD movies (and eventually data), so if this feature is important to you, you might plan to add the capability externally sometime in the future.

Another common feature is WiFi. This technology has advanced from A to B to G and now to N, but not all notebooks support all of the types so again you have to read the fine print.

For a notebook to be sent off to college, you might look for a built-in webcam to keep in touch and help ward off homesickness by the young adults. You'll also want to look at anti-theft features such as locking adaptors and "phone-home" software. Some of the new anti-theft features are biometric password-type locks such as fingerprint scanners and wireless proximity alarms (if the PC goes one way and the owner with the alarm gets too far away then the alarm sounds).

Another consideration is the warranty provided. Notebook PCs are very compact so popping the top to add or replace defective parts is not something to be undertaken lightly. I recommend checking to see how long any unit is under warranty and what is covered, such as what is the turnaround for repairs and where are they done (and who is responsible for getting it there).

In the end, I think the process is straightforward, though it may require several decision branches to arrive at the "Best" recommendation for a specific individual. These details always seem nagging pests when searching for instant gratification, but the old adage of "Buy in Haste, Repent at Leisure" can be avoided by taking just a little time up front to make a good choice. I hope this approach might of use to some of you.



When to Turn Off Personal Computers

U.S. Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.
A Consumer's Guide to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

www.energy.gov/forconsumers.htm

If you're wondering when you should turn off your personal computer for energy savings, here are some general guidelines to help you make that decision.

Though there is a small surge in energy when a computer starts up, this small amount of energy is still less than the energy used when a computer is running for long periods of time. For energy savings and convenience, consider turning off

- the monitor if you aren't going to use your PC for more than 20 minutes
- both the CPU and monitor if you're not going to use your PC for more than 2 hours.

Make sure your monitors, printers, and other accessories are on a power strip/surge protector. When this equipment is not in use for extended periods, turn off the switch on the power strip to prevent them from drawing power even when shut off. If you don't use a power strip, unplug extra equipment when it's not in use.

Most PCs reach the end of their "useful" life due to advances in technology long before the effects of being switched on and off multiple times have a negative impact on their

service life. The less time a PC is on, the longer it will "last." PCs also produce heat, so turning them off reduces building cooling loads. For cost effectiveness, you also need to

consider how much your time is worth. If it takes a long time to shut down the computer and then restart it later, the value of your time will probably be much greater than the value of the amount of electricity you will save by turning off the computer.

Power-Down or Sleep Mode Features

Many PCs available today come with a power-down or sleep mode feature for the CPU and monitor. ENERGY STAR® computers power down to a sleep mode that consume 15 Watts or less power, which is around 70% less electricity than a computer without power management features. ENERGY STAR monitors have the capability to power

down into two successive "sleep" modes. In the first, the monitor energy consumption is less than or equal to 15 Watts, and in the second, power consumption reduces to 8

Watts, which is less than 10% of its operating power consumption.

Make sure you have the power-down feature set up on your PC through your operating system software. This has to be done by you, otherwise the PC will not power down. If your PC and monitor do not have power-down features, and even if they do, follow the guidelines below about when to turn the CPU and monitor off.

Note: Screen savers are not energy savers. Using a screen saver may in fact use more energy than not using one and the power-down feature may not work if you have a screen saver activated. In fact, modern LCD color monitors do not need screen savers at all.

Simple file management enhancements

by Linda Gonse, Editor, Orange County IBM PC Users' Group,
www.orcopug.org, editor@orcopug.org

Besides the obvious - a stable system that performs fast, without vulnerabilities - I have thought of a few things I'd like to see integrated into the Windows 7 OS which may be released in 2009/2010. When it comes right down to it, I don't care if I can use 10 fingers to Paint with or other iPhone-like multi-touch features, or if Internet Explorer can recall a previous browsing session. Simple file management enhancements are at the top of my wish list.

I want to be able to print a list of my files and file information - a print directory feature. In the "old days" of DOS, you could do this. And now, you can use third party programs to accomplish this, but why isn't this already built-into Windows? In Windows 3.11, there was a simple undelete feature. In later versions, the Recycle Bin gives you a chance to recover files you delete in haste or ignorance. But, what about files you deleted from the Recycle Bin? If you don't have a third party program installed, the files are really history.

Wouldn't it be great to have autofiltering in Windows Explorer? Clicking on the top tab in a folder allows you to sort by Size, Date Modified, Type, etc. - but you still have to scroll through all the files in a directory to get to the specific file you are looking for. If you could set an autofilter, such as Excel has, you could choose which extensions would be viewable, click on one, and only those files would be visible.

Windows 3.11 had the capability to only show certain types of files. This was closer to what I'd like, but it was a little involved to set it up and then be sure you reverted to the default file view afterward. And, what about being able to flag a file and see the flag in Windows Explorer? Or, jot a post-it like note and attach it to a file?

DOS also allowed you to rename extensions on an entire directory of files. That would be a handy tool now. What happened to the "quick view" inside of a word processing file in a directory? I want it back again. A constant aggravation is the Open and Save As boxes in Windows and applications. Sometimes there is a miniscule box to view an entire directory in bitesizes. Why can't all the boxes be large ones? And, why can't they be modified permanently so you can always view them the way you like them, such as you do in Folders?

Another drawback to these windows is that despite file names that are not very long, to the right of the file name I have to slide the first two columns - Size and Type - closer, scrunching them together, so I can see the Date Modified tab in the same window. Sometimes you can scroll to see the Date Modified tab, but that is still not handy.

I have rearranged the headings to suit my need for selecting files by the most current. But, after closing and reopening an application, I have to modify the list again. Why can't my modifications be permanent? Also, I'd like to see these types of windows open up larger or have a resizing option to drag a corner border to make them larger.

Why do directories sometimes get scrambled? They aren't alphabetized or in any other order. Before I can open a file (not every time), I first have to click on the Name bar to alphabetize the directory. (Yes. There is a trick to closing a window to retain the order when it's reopened. Hold the Shift button down as you click on the "X" in the corner. But, you shouldn't have to do this.)

I'd also like to be able to format file names and related information in a directory. Maybe make some bold and orange, or some a bit smaller. Or, add stars or a ranking notation to files. The logical next step would be to set-up a sort function to be able to look for all items in a certain color or in 8 point type, or the file ranking. Do you see the usefulness of these changes in sorting files? Modifying directory listings can be very helpful. It would allow users to see at a glance which items are important, or used most often, etc.

Computer Problems?

Call Now to get your computer working for you!

Cramer's Computer Services

(210) 865-2933

www.pcpro4u.com

In-Home/On-Site Service Specializing in:

- Troubleshooting & Repair
- Virus/Spy ware Detection & Removal
- Hardware Upgrades
- Networking & More



Continued on page 40

Hype about Skype

Skype is a VoIP (Voice-over-IP) telephone service. For PC-to-PC users, there is no charge. Charges incur when wanting to have voicemail, call a landline number, call a mobile number, or have a landline number or cell phone reach a Skype account.

PC Magazine recently listed their survey for various technologies, and Skype was down from last year.

My purpose in trying Skype was to see if it was a viable low-cost replacement for a mobile phone. How would that work? There are various scenarios, none of them simple. The barrier is roaming across Wi-Fi networks. (Actually, this obstacle was addressed in a recent Sybase iAnywhere Mobile presentation at DACS.) My target device is my Palm TX running PalmOS. A recent test of Skype to my brother out west has us talking for over an hour over a very clear connect. I was using a USB LCD phone connected to my laptop, connected to the home router by way of Wi-Fi. My brother similarly connected, except just speaking open air using his laptop mic and/or speakers. The sound quality was clearer than any cell phone call I've had.

© 2007 WILLEM F.H. BORMAN. THIS ARTICLE MAY BE REPRODUCED IN ITS ENTIRETY ONLY, INCLUDING THIS STATEMENT, BY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN THEIR MEMBER PUBLICATIONS, WITH MENTION OF THE AUTHOR'S NAME AND THE SOUTHWESTERN INDIANA PC USERS GROUP, INC.



We specialize in individual and small business tax preparation

Laura B. Grover, E.A.
 Tax Preparation & Financial Consulting
 14350 Northbrook Drive, Suite 240
 San Antonio, TX 78232

(210) 402-6100
 Fax (210) 402-2888

laurab@lauragrover.com
 www.lauragrover.com



Enrolled to practice before the Internal Revenue Service

Mac vs. PC

By Sandy Berger, Compukiss.com, www.compukiss.com,
sandy@compukiss.com

We have all seen the popular Apple television commercials encouraging computer users to switch from Windows to Mac. Not only are the commercials convincing, but Apple has made some moves that make the Mac a viable option for computer users. In years past, the biggest drawback to purchasing a Mac was that Windows software was incompatible with a Mac. You couldn't use Windows software that was not available in a Mac version so switching from a PC to a Mac meant repurchasing all your software applications.

Then Apple made the move from Motorola processors to Intel processors. This made the Apple hardware compatible with Windows software. Any Mac that you purchase today is able to run both the Windows and the Mac operating system. You can do this by using a free Apple program called Boot Camp that is available to all Mac users. Using Boot Camp, you have to reboot the computer every time you want to switch between the two operating systems. Another option makes using Windows on a Mac even easier. If you purchase a simple virtualization product like Parallels, you can switch on the fly.

Being able to run Windows on a Mac has been a boon to Apple. In 2004 their market share in the operating system segment was a little over 3%. Today it is close to 8% and growing.

There are fewer worries when using a Mac. For the most part, Macs are almost completely virus and spyware free. It's not that Macs are actually more secure, it's just that with the viruses and programs that infiltrate computers to steal information and to send out spam are operating system-specific. In other words, the hackers have to create their programs to run on either Windows or Mac. Since the Windows operating system is currently running on over 90% of computers, that operating system is the most likely target for the bad guys. So right now, Macs are ignored by most hackers.

It can also be said that Macs run their software better than PCs. The reason that this is true is that because Apple produces all of the hardware they can have strict control over every hardware component. So the software producers know exactly what hardware their software will run on. In the PC world, slight differences in the hardware can cause software headaches. As you know, with HP, Dell, Acer, Sony, Gateway, and many others producing the hardware, there is compatibility, but not necessarily full hardware/software compliance.

So why doesn't everyone switch to the Mac? Well, it can be summed up quite easily in one word, "Price". Macs always have been, and are still are, more expensive than PCs. Often Macs can cost several hundreds of dollars more than comparable Windows machines. This week Apple announced their first sub-\$1,000 laptop computer. The MacBook will now be selling at \$999. Their higher-end MacBook Pro will start at \$1,999. In contrast, you can buy many Windows laptops for under \$1,000, and some are now even under \$500.

Another thing that makes the Mac more costly is that when you purchase an Apple computer it comes with the Mac OS X operating system. If you want to run Windows on your Mac as well, you will have to purchase a full version of Windows. As I write this, Amazon is selling the full version of Windows XP Home Edition for \$179. A full version of Windows Vista Home Premium is currently selling at Amazon for \$222. If you want to add the ability to easily switch between the two operating systems, you will have to dish out about \$80 more for Parallels or another good virtualization program. In some cases those added costs can almost double the cost of a cheap PC.

The other reason that some people won't switch to a Mac is that they don't want to have to learn to use a new operating system. But if you are currently using Windows XP and you purchase a new computer now, you will have at least a slight learning curve to make the transition to Windows Vista.

If Apple would lower their prices and create a free program that would let you run Windows without rebooting, I wouldn't mind purchasing the additional Windows software necessary to be able to run both operating systems on a Mac. In fact, I think that those two changes would have people flocking in droves to the Mac. But then, if the Apple operating system gains a bigger market share, hackers will start targeting it as well as Windows. Oh well, I guess life in the computer world really does mirror life in the real world. It seems that nothing will ever be perfect in either world.

Parallels Desktop for Mac is the first solution for Intel-Macs that give you the flexibility of running Windows on a Mac OS X simultaneously without rebooting. C

Traveling Then and Now - "Technically" Speaking

by Gregory West, Editor for the Sarnia Computer Users' Group
[SCUG], Canada, www.scug.ca, prospector16@gmail.com

(This article was originally published in Sarnia's "FIRST MONDAY" magazine, August 2008 issue)

In 1974 Richard Nixon was the first US President forced to resign, while gasoline pricing rose to a whopping 55 cents a gallon US (14.5 cents a liter). They claim the reason was that "gasoline shortages and price increases throughout the world help to cause problems in most of the western worlds' economies" (www.thepeoplehistory.com).

Sound familiar? What isn't familiar is the technology that accompanies us on vacations.

I remember in 1974 driving to Fort Wilderness Disney World, Florida in a Volkswagen van built into a homemade camper, all decked out with plywood beds and a Coleman cooler for a fridge with a never-ending request for ice. CAA supplied the trip tik maps that marked out the route and the construction sections of the highway. We had the best of the best for navigating the trip. As well, we had a brand new Instamatic camera with 7 rolls of 126 film that cost us a small fortune. Our son, four years old, rode a small tricycle back and forth inside the van to while away the hours and hours of monotonous driving as seatbelt legislation was non-existent.

Today, we still face the gas increase excuses and we are well aware of the price of a liter of gasoline today. In that regard, nothing has really changed, only the numbers and

the fact that we are all buckled into our seats. Although, one thing that has changed for travelers in 2008: "tech toys"; they have now become a "must have" for every family that does ground travel on vacations.

Our kids have been replaced by grandkids and the Volkswagen homemade camper van is long gone. People today are now hauling RVs of all sorts that host most of the comforts of home.

The CAA maps and my son's tricycle have been replaced by the latest technical and computer gadgets. Let's have a peek at how technology has changed road travel, some 34 years later.

Kids today are buckled tightly into the back seats as airbag protection in the front restricts them to the back seats only. While in the back seat they have the option of viewing DVD movies run through a DVD player onto 2 separate monitors that attach to the head rests of both front seats. They listen to the movies via the vehicle stereo system or individual headphones. When they tire of the movies they can play video

games by switching over to their PSP or a PS2 that plugs through the inverter. Of course there is always travel bingo if the tech stuff gets boring, but we won't hold our breath on that one.

For the driver and co-pilot there is a GPS display with voice directions, saving the hassle of trying to read the fine print on wrinkled and torn maps. Many travelers bring along laptops while traveling as their uses are many. For example, you can record your trip's information, download pictures and videos from digital cameras. The big thing these days with computers is reading digital books, or listening to audio books that

Alamo PC Organization now offers members private or semi-private tutorials

☞ Keyboarding/Typing
☞ Basic Computer Skills
☞ Microsoft Word

Rates for one student

\$35 per hour
\$300 for 10 hours

Rates for two or three students

\$20 per student per hour
\$150 per student for 10 hours

Enjoy private instruction on days and at hours
that fit **your** schedule

Call or visit the Learning Center to register
(210) 736-0080

have been previously downloaded from the Internet. Of course, when a live Internet connection becomes available (most RV parks have free Wi-Fi) you can check email, use Skype to call home, and research the places to see, all from your laptop.

The days of praying that there will be a pay phone nearby if we break down are long gone as many people have both a Canadian and American cell phone. For instance, one can purchase a Motorola TracFone that works only in the USA for under \$10 and buy a “pay-as-you-go” card, making long distant calls back home cheaper and giving one more security on the highways in the USA.

Don’t leave without your MP3 player. Podcasts of your favourite shows and lectures can be easily downloaded from the Internet. All MP3 players come with headphones that make for easy listening and do not disturb the other passengers or driver.

Walkie talkies are not a new item while on vacation, but the price certainly has come down and the range has expanded greatly. A quick stop in the grocery store for supplies will help you utilize your group to ensure precision targeted shopping whereby we all search out different items and meet at the same cashier, thus saving time. The walkie talkie is also used in many other scenarios for security and locating purposes. These units are a must have for anyone traveling with children. The Instamatic camera has been replaced by the digital camera, thus allowing people to take hundreds of pictures during a trip without any real cost. If some of the pictures are not that great they are easily deleted and forgotten without the worry of paying for more film.

An inverter will allow the truck battery to convert power from DC to AC so you can run the laptop while traveling to edit photos, read books, watch movies and connect to Wi-Fi hotspots. This also allows for the use of a PS2 plugged into the truck battery power as if you were at home plugging into a wall outlet. You can even plug in a refrigerated cooler with this inverter, making life just that much easier.

We can only imagine what traveling 34 years from now will be like and what 2042 will offer its road travelers.



Password Protection

By **Sandy Berger**, Compukiss.com, www.compukiss.com,
sandy@compukiss.com

When technology is good, it is very, very good, but when it is bad it can be truly atrocious. So it is with the hacking of Sarah Palin's Yahoo email account. The bad guys are out there using technology for their own advantage. Whether they are serious hackers who want information for devious purposes or young students who just want to show their technological prowess, this theft shows that everyone is vulnerable.

The recent hijacking of Sarah Palin's email account is also a great example of how a hacker can gain access to an email account and how email accounts need to be better protected against such penetration.

We currently rely on passwords to protect most of our online activity. Professional hackers often use "password crackers" to guess passwords. Anyone can easily find these hacker tools on the Internet. They can even be purchased on CD. There are wordlists for common passwords and dictionary combinations of possible passwords in a variety of different languages. These tools are all aimed at giving a person all the technical tools that they need to guess passwords.

In Sarah Palin's case, however, the perpetrator didn't even have to use tools like this. A hacker identifying himself as "Rubico" claims to have been able to change the password on Sarah Palin's Yahoo Mail account quite easily. All he had to do was use her email name to log into the Yahoo Mail's interface and select the option to reset the password. Yahoo then asked him to provide her birth date and zip code, which have become public knowledge. He then had to answer her self-chosen security question which was where she met her husband. After several television interviews of Sarah and her husband, the answer to that question also became public knowledge.

Sarah Palin was thrown into the public arena quite quickly, but even those of us who are not public figures may find that their passwords and answers to security questions can be easily guessed. Do you use the name of your spouse, children, pet, favorite sport, birthday, or wedding date as your password? Have you entered security questions like place of birth or favorite color that are easy to guess?

Privacy as we knew it before the Internet is now a thing of the past. With the Internet, more of our lives are online than most of us realize. Many people use blogging as a past time and post information on MySpace, Facebook, and other social networking websites. Once posted, all of that information is publicly known. And the Internet is archived, so even when you remove current information, previously posted information can still be found in Internet archives. That information can be used to guess passwords and access personal information.

So here are a few ground rules that may help keep your private information a little safer online:

1. Use passwords that are not easy to guess and cannot be easily cracked. (Look for more on how to choose good passwords in next week's column.)
2. Choose a security question that others will not be able to guess the answer to. Or answer the security question with an answer that you create which is not necessarily the true answer.
3. Use unique passwords, especially for important services and websites like banking sites and email.
4. Keep your passwords private. Don't leave them on a sticky note on your computer screen or keep them in an unencrypted file on your computer.
5. Change your passwords often.
6. Do not change your password by clicking on a link in an email from someone claiming to be a system administrator, bank representative, or other seemingly reputable party. They may not be who they say they are. When you want to change your password, always type in the address yourself so you know you are at the real website rather than a bogus one.
7. Use one credit card for all online purchases. This will limit your financial exposure.
8. Keep your operating system up-to-date.
9. Use a good anti-virus and anti-spyware programs.
10. Consider using an encrypted password manager program.

Check the Compu-KISS website at www.compukiss.com for more information on choosing good passwords.

Let Me Count the Ways I Like Linux

by **Kerry Miller**, a member of the Front Range PCUG, Colorado,
<http://www.frpcug.org>, n0wiq@comcast.net

I used to use Microsoft Windows up to Windows 98. I then switched to Windows NT in a dual boot system with Linux. However, when I went to boot NT one more time and NT gave me a message to the effect “I’m sick, fix me,” I said goodbye to Windows and Linux has been my main operating system since. I found Linux applications to match all my user data. I was able to move all that data from the NT file system (NTFS) to the earlier Windows file system (FAT). From there I copied all the data into the ext2 file system, which was used by Linux at the time.

Now let me count the ways I like Linux:

1. Linux resembled the HP-UX operating system (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HP-UX>) I was using at work. This made going between work and home easier.
2. The roots of the Linux operating system go back to the late 1980’s. By the time I decided to switch to Linux, it was a viable (if little known) multi-user, multi-tasking operating system for Personal Computers. That meant I could establish more than one user for my PC and run multiple programs simultaneously—I was not restricted to either the Windows or MAC operating systems for those PC capabilities. And, of course, Linux was (and still is) free.
3. Linux comes with a distribution of the X windows protocol produced by an international consortium. To understand this capability, think of it as “...providing the basic framework for building Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs), and moving windows on the screen and interacting with a mouse and/or keyboard.” (extracted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X_windows). Because this capability was (and is) not built into the operating system, it provides greatly enhanced flexibility for anyone creating Linux applications.
4. For those familiar with the Windows and MAC operating systems, it is surprising to realize that the software that creates what you see as the “desktop” can actually be a separate application program. I use the GNOME desktop together with X windows. This desktop (one of several that can be used with Linux) allows me to use a number of different screens and switch between them as I wish. This allows me to open an application on one screen and switch to a different screen to open another application. From <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNOME>: “The GNOME project puts heavy emphasis on simplicity, usability, and making things ‘just work....’”
5. There are a wide range of user applications available, as well as tools to write your own applications.
6. Linux has (and has had for some time) a reputation for stability. The operating system doesn’t crash unless the user does something to make it crash. Around 1997 (about the time I decided to change to the Linux operating system) I read an article (in a Linux magazine) professing to use two computers as near identical as production processes allow. They loaded one computer with Microsoft Windows and the loaded the second computer with Linux. They ran similar bench mark programs on both computers. The machine loaded with Microsoft operating system crashed in a short time. The machine loaded with Linux continued to run for as long as the comparison experiment was set to run.
7. Many distributions of Linux are as easy, or easier to install than Microsoft Windows.
8. A person can customize and/or build a Linux operating system to meet individual needs.
9. Many distributions of Linux include such primary applications such as the Firefox web browser, OpenOffice, an office suite similar to Microsoft Office (word processor, spreadsheet, presentations, etc.), and a number of other “name brand” applications.
10. Linux can be cost free. There are hundreds (or more) of applications written for Linux and there is a growing library of applications.

Microsoft Windows was the new kid on the block at the time I switched to Linux from my point of view and it did NOT do many ordinary things well.



Computer Experts

Is your PC acting strange?
Wonder if it has a virus?
We’ve been fixing weird problems
since 1995. For PC or Mac
solutions, Call the experts...

Computer Experts
(210) 771-7075



Moving on to Vista – Part 10

by **Neil Stahfest**, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group,
Washington, www.tapcug.org, ncstahfest@msn.com

Most of us who upgrade to Windows Vista from an older version of Windows encounter compatibility problems. Vista doesn't want to recognize some programs as valid or authorized Windows programs even though they worked with Windows XP. Does this mean that you have to abandon them or upgrade to a new "Vista" version of your favorite programs?


I wish I could say no but the real answer is maybe not. Microsoft has included something called a Program Compatibility Wizard with Vista. The idea is that, if you have an older program that doesn't work with Vista, you can use this program to automatically make some modifications to make it compatible and make it work.

To access the wizard, go to Start, Control Panel and then click on Programs. Next, under Programs and Features, click on ?Use an older program with this version of Windows?. This will start the wizard. Now follow the step-by-step, on-screen instructions. When you finish, try to run your program. I'm told that most programs that worked with Windows XP will work after you do this but programs that worked with older versions of Windows may not. You shouldn't try to use the wizard with disk utility programs, system programs and anti-virus programs. They usually won't work and may actually cause damage to your computer's system.

While we're on the subject of compatibility and changes, let's look at the Start button, or jelly bean as some call it, in the lower left corner of your screen. Place your mouse the right hand side of the task bar at the bottom of the screen. The box next to Hide Inactive Icons is checked by default. If you click on the Customize button to the right you will see why. You'll probably see dozens of icons listed here. Most are turned off. If you make changes and don't like the results, click on the Default Settings button and then click on OK. We're almost done with the Notification Area box.

The bottom half of the box shows which system icons will show. This is a personal preference (well, so is all of this). If you are using Vista's Clock gadget you can probably uncheck the Clock function because it is redundant. I like to leave Volume checked. It's a convenient place to turn sound on and off and control the volume. I also leave Network checked. It makes it easy to see if my network connection is working. The Power option is useful if you have a laptop computer, otherwise turn it off.

I think we've covered enough for this month. Are you getting comfortable with Windows Vista? I am. For those of you still using Windows XP, don't be in a hurry to change! Wait for Windows 7 if you can (coming in 2010).



100% gray cotton golf shirts with pocket and embroidered full-color

Alamo PC logo

Available at the Learning Center in a wide variety of sizes.

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Volunteers Wanted

Call the Learning Center to volunteer to assist ongoing classes. For more info, call 736-0700.

STUDY GROUPS

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-63.

Another USB gizmo

There's an inexpensive USB LCD handset phone available for use with Skype. The UP-730 seems to work as expected and sounds better than expected. The unit was purchased for under \$10 on-line. It allows scrolling through the USB contacts through the handset. Is it really necessary? No. But, it has a longer cord than most headsets and it made using Skype feel more like regular phone service, especially on longer calls.



© 2007 WILLEM F.H. BORMAN. THIS ARTICLE MAY BE REPRODUCED IN ITS ENTIRETY ONLY, INCLUDING THIS STATEMENT, BY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN THEIR MEMBER PUBLICATIONS, WITH MENTION OF THE AUTHOR'S NAME AND THE SOUTHWESTERN INDIANA PC USERS GROUP, INC.

**20+ YEARS
SERVING
SAN ANTONIO**

TAKE IT TO BJ's - THE LAPTOP SPECIALIST!
IF WE CAN'T FIX IT, NO ONE CAN!

AWARD WINNING SERVICE SINCE 1982
Residential, Corporate,
Education, Government,
No job is too small.

WE SERVICE ALL BRANDS!

- New/Refurbished Notebooks
- Accessories Notebook Drives
- Ac/Adapters Wireless Solutions
- Batteries Networking
- Parts/Memory LCD'S/Screens



YOUR MOBILE COMPUTING PRO!

BJ ASSOCIATES OF SAN ANTONIO

10823 GULF DALE, ISOM AND 281N NEAR THE AIRPORT
HOURS: 9-6 MON-FRI Carry in/On-site
EMERGENCY/AFTER HOURS SERVICE AVAILABLE

210-344-4563 San Antonio
800-366-7104 Metro and out of Area
www.bjassociates.com info@bjassociates.com

TOSHIBA

DELL

SONY



IBM

Gateway

Alamo PC Organization now offers members private or semi-private tutorials

- ☞ Keyboarding/Typing
- ☞ Basic Computer Skills
- ☞ Microsoft Word

Rates for one student

\$35 per hour
\$300 for 10 hours

Rates for two or three students

\$20 per student per hour
\$150 per student for 10 hours

Enjoy private instruction on days and at hours
that fit **your** schedule

Call or visit the Learning Center to register
(210) 736-0080

Microsoft Releases Photosynth Panoramic Image Creator

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Advisor; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; radio and TV show host, Iwilsker@apcug.net

Many of us take a lot of digital photographs. I have hundreds of digital photos from two recent weddings; others may have vacation photos, family photos, scenic images, or other content. Would it not be interesting if a collection of photos with some degree of commonality could be seamlessly “stitched” together creating a 3-D panoramic view of the subject? For example, if I took the wedding pictures of my daughter’s recent wedding, the images could automatically be merged into a single three dimensional, easily navigable image of the entire wedding ceremony and reception. The panoramic image can be manipulated, rotated, zoomed, and viewed from any direction. If I can do this with wedding pictures, imagine what you can do with landscapes, theme parks, or other images. This new service from Microsoft, known as Photosynth (photosynth.net) is currently free, but does have several provisos, one of which is that all images created will be considered as “public”, and can be viewed by anyone on the Photosynth website.

Photosynth is graphics intensive, and may not run on older computers lacking adequate video power and capabilities. It will run on Windows XP (SP 2 or SP3), and on Vista. Mac users can use Photosynth if running Boot Camp. Images are displayed on a browser, and Internet Explorer 7 as well as Firefox 2 and 3 are supported. 256mb of memory is the absolute minimum to run Photosynth, and 1gb is recommended. In order to function, Photosynth installs two programs to the computer. One is a web browser plug-in (both IE and Firefox compatible), and an application aptly named “Photosynth” which is used to create panoramic images. Install of both programs is fast and easy, and is accomplished with a single download. Since the actual processing is done by Microsoft, the images (or parts of them) are uploaded to Microsoft by the Photosynth software, which requires a broadband connection. Microsoft has posted a warning, “All synths are public. Your photos will be visible to everyone on the Internet. In order to create images, it is necessary to sign up online; users who have a Windows Live ID can use it for Photosynth access.

Photosynth performs two material functions; it reconstructs the scene or object from several two-dimensional digital photographs, and then examines the images for similarities, and mathematically use that information to estimate the real shape of the object, and the vantage point the photos were taken from. Using the digital data, the three dimensional space is created, and the merged photos can be easily navigated as if they were a single photograph. Microsoft’s new “Seadragon” technology delivers only the required pixels to the browser, making the loading of images that may have included hundreds of individual photos a fast and pleasing experience.

On the main page for Photosynth (photosynth.net) are dozens of samples of the output than can be created. Some of the examples are the Sphinx, composed of 239 photos taken by National Geographic; a walk around Eton College, 427 photos; The Taj Mahal, 179 National Geographic photos; the Space Shuttle, 246 photos; and many others. It is important



WaterWare

Home and Small Office
Computer (Win & Mac) Support



support@waterware.net
In business since 1983

- All Types of Computer Training
- Hardware & Software Installation
- Web Page Development
- Your Location / Your Schedule

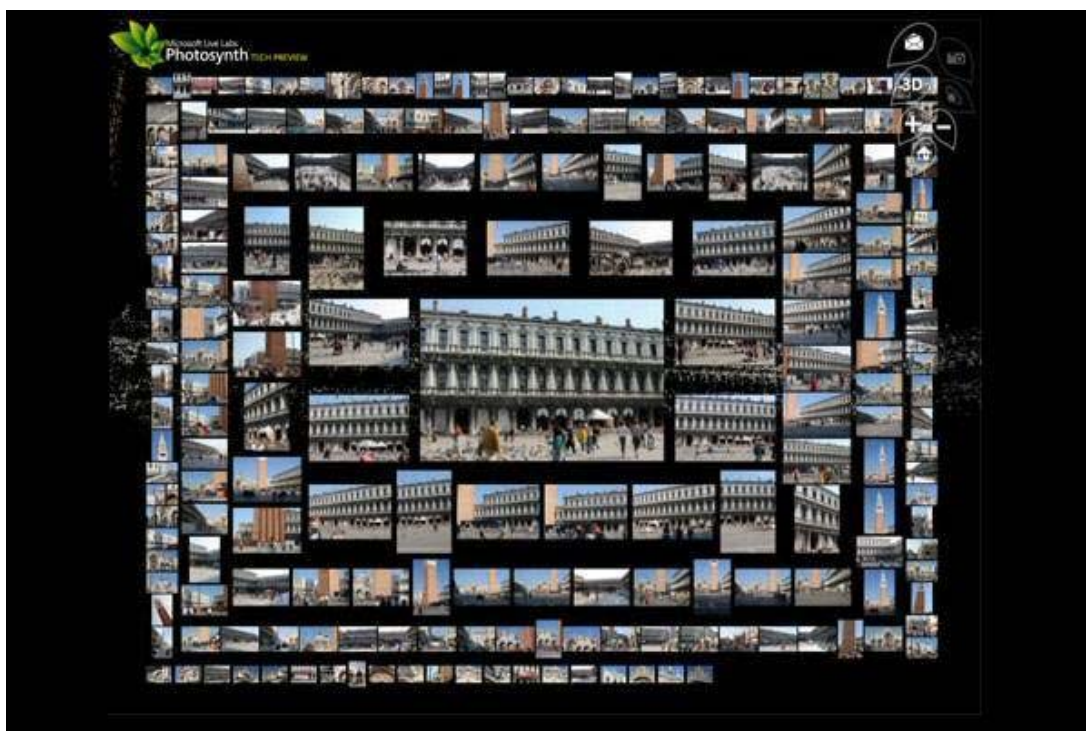
210-219-2560

www.waterware.net
Durand C. Randy Waters

to note that this computing power and service is available for free to all of us who are willing to make our images public. The "Recently Synthed" link shows the most recently created scenes (many dated today, as I type this), which include street scenes, still life, sunsets, Hawaiian scenery, Nathan's Hotdog Eating Championship – 2008, backyards, portraits, kittens (cute), athletic events, and other topics. It is a lot of fun just browsing these synths and seeing what others are doing and what the system can do for digital images.

The potential applications for Photosynth are almost endless. It could be used by real estate agents to easily create an interactive three dimensional view of a house or an apartment; industries could use it for training purposes; products can be promoted via 3D images that allow the viewer to explore the details of a product; likewise car dealers and manufacturers could easily create interactive views of any cars in inventory. Criminalists (as in CSI) could easily create 3D crime scene images; the potential uses are unimaginable.

If you are willing to release your image to the public (in the current iteration), and would like to create interactive 3D panoramic photos from your digital photos, then Photosynth would be a great place to experiment. At present the service is free, only requiring a Windows Live ID registration. If you have any interesting photos of the same subject, try synthing them.



Student Practice Lab

Polish those new skills - A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis.

Call (210) 736-0080, or (210) 736-0700

Visit the Alamo PC Learning Center

Media Center

Learn all about computers with hundreds of books and dozens of video tapes. Enjoy our large selection of techno-fiction.

A comfortable seating area is available.

Call (210) 736-0700.

Shortcuts anyone?

Why do some icons on your desktop have a little white arrow embedded in the picture? These are shortcuts (sometimes called links). They are small files that represent and “point to” the real thing. When you double-left-click on a shortcut icon, Windows reads the location of the file to open from within the shortcut file, then opens the target

file. Shortcuts are, in the lingo of computer programmers, symbolic links to actual files. They don’t contain any of the file’s information—they just point to it. In real terms: if Peoria, Illinois was a file, then its shortcut would be the map telling you how to get there.

Why do we use shortcuts? Why not just put the real, actual file on your desktop? There are several reasons. First, since a shortcut does not contain any of the target file’s information, it can be deleted without damaging the file it points to. Therefore, placing shortcuts on the desktop (or in any directory) is safer. Accidental deletion of these links will not affect anything other than you may lose track of where your file was! The other reason is that you can have many shortcuts and place them anywhere you might need quick access to your file. For example, when we give away computers, we organize the software links in various folders on the desktop. There’s a folder for Educational software and Game software links, and for the software that is both Educational and Fun, we put links to the same program in both the Educational and Game folders. You can rename shortcuts to anything you want, and it won’t affect the real name of the file they point to.

Shortcuts are also portable! If I know for sure that a program will be in a certain place on nearly every PC, I can e-mail a link to someone and tell them to place it on their desktop. Double-clicking on it should open that file on my recipient’s PC! E-mailing a link is much more of a sure bet than e-mailing an executable file—because most e-mail servers just won’t allow executables (files ending in .EXE) to be sent!

How does one create a link? The best way is to find the file you want the link to refer to, then do a single right-click on it. This brings up a context menu where you can create the shortcut. Once the shortcut is created you can move it to any directory or to the desktop. For creating desktop links, Windows provides a shortcut wizard that allows you to create a shortcut for any file type including a web page or another folder. From anywhere on the desktop, right click and select ‘New’ and then ‘Shortcut’ to activate this wizard.

© 2007 WILLEM F.H. BORMAN. THIS ARTICLE MAY BE REPRODUCED IN ITS ENTIRETY ONLY, INCLUDING THIS STATEMENT, BY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN THEIR MEMBER PUBLICATIONS, WITH MENTION OF THE AUTHOR’S NAME AND THE SOUTHWESTERN INDIANA PC USERS GROUP, INC.



SAN ANTONIO • PC-HELP

(210) 748-5311 • SAPCHELP@ATT.NET

Seniors — Computer troubles ?

We understand that making the jump to computers, E-mail and the Internet can be a real challenge.

When you are stuck or your computer just doesn’t seem to be working as you expected, call us. In the comfort of your own home, let us help you work through the problem. We provide on-site service for the individual PC user and small to medium size business.

Call PC-Help today!

SE HABLA ESPANOL

(210) 748-5311

9 AM - 4 PM • Monday - Friday

Chicago Computer Society makes history with Skype presentation

By **Irene Ganas**, a member of the Chicago Computer Society,
www.ccs.org, wsickels@sbcglobal.net

History was made by the Chicago Computer Society, as its Digital Imagery SIG, hosted by Sanford Kolinek, gave its first Main Presentation at our local meeting by its presenter from two thousand miles away.

As one of the largest member turnouts this year assembled in their seats in Lisle, Sanford passed the popcorn for all to enjoy and Jack Jackson, a long-time member of the Chicago Computer Society who now lives in Utah, presented his slide-show of gorgeous photographs of Goblin Valley and Arches National Park with his live narrative from his home in Utah. Assisting Jack at the meeting were Alvin Reisbeck and Jerry Sass.

Here is how this unique program came about and was done. Jack had mailed me a DVD of his photographs that I took to the February Digital Imagery Meeting for Show-and-Tell. We had a beautiful show but no tell and our members discussed how nice it would have been had we been able to learn more about how to make such wonderful images by being able to ask Jack about his camera, the settings he chose and why, what post-processing he did, etc.

That led to the idea of using Skype at our meeting. Jack mailed several more DVDs to Alvin and Jerry. Jack downloaded the latest Skype from www.skype.com and then Sanford, Jerry and Jack worked out and practiced the details ahead of time which made the evening's presentation run perfectly.

The DVD was run from Jerry's notebook PC on site at the meeting. A small "eyeball" video camera connecting to Jerry's notebook allowed "Utah Jack" to see Jerry and a video cam on Utah Jack's computer allowed Jerry to see Jack. When Jerry's notebook was connected to the projector and sound system at our meeting, all of us at the meeting could see and hear Utah Jack.

Here's the fun part: when the video cam "eyeball" was turned around and passed around, Utah Jack was able to see all the members at the meeting to "Howdy" us, each by name because he could see each of us.

The video cam eyeball was then positioned to "look at" the screen so that Utah Jack could look at the same show that all of us at the meeting were seeing. It was this setup that enabled Jack to present his live running commentary on the slide show. During the show, people asked Jack questions about everything from the technical aspects of his photographs, the music he chose for the show, commented on "his house" and laughed together about it because it was a photograph of an historic log cabin at a park in Utah.

This historic technical event and the hot popcorn compliments of Sanford made the evening one of the most enjoyable meetings of the year.

!Danger: Music Download!

"On September 8, 2003, the recording industry sued 261 American music fans for sharing songs...."

That partial quote is from an Electronic Frontier Foundation article (<http://www.eff.org/wp/riaa-v-people-years-later>) that provides an in-depth description of RIAA (Recording Industry of America) activities, with many references. Lawsuits filed by the RIAA over the past five years have resulted in severe financial hardship to individuals that were targets of RIAA legal action—and some of those defendants claimed that they were not aware that they had violated the law.

Legal consequences for anyone caught in a violation of copyright infringement laws have now increased.

On October 13th, 2008, a new law, the Prioritizing Resources and Organization for Intellectual Property Act was signed that provides new federal enforcement powers and higher penalties for copyright infringement.

For details, see this CNET news story:

http://news.cnet.com/8301-13578_3-10064527-38.html.

Briefly, (from the CNET story©—used with permission from CBS Interactive, Inc., copyright 2008, all rights reserved) "...the law consolidates federal efforts to combat copyright infringement under a new White House cabinet position, the intellectual property enforcement coordinator, who will be appointed by the president. ... The law also steepens penalties for intellectual-property infringement, and increases resources for the Department of Justice to coordinate for federal and state efforts against counterfeiting and piracy. The so-called Pro-IP Act passed unanimously in the Senate last month and received strong bipartisan support in the House."

We often forget that under our legal system, ignorance of the law is no defense. For those readers with family members, friends and acquaintances that are casual computer users, now may be the time for a reminder that, however tempting, free music downloads may result in serious legal problems. And, for any member of those same groups that use the internet as their primary source of music, that reminder may be an absolute necessity.

To paraphrase a different warning, "free music downloads may be injurious to your financial health." You, your family, friends and acquaintances all need to be informed consumers before downloading "free" music or sharing music files.

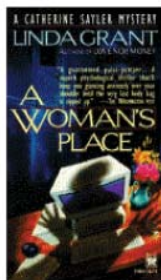
by Mike Morris, Editor-in-Charge, Front Range PC Users Group, Colorado, <http://www.frpcug.org>,
twriterext@gmail.com

Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

A Woman's Place

By: Linda Grant,
Reviewed by Susan
Ives Paperback,
Fawcett, 1994,
\$5.99, 248 pages



Private investigator Catherine Saylor and her partner, Jesse, are hired to go undercover in a software company where the women are being harassed. While Jesse handles the technical aspects, such as stolen passwords, Catherine insinuates herself into the company. The harassment escalates, a woman is murdered, and Catherine becomes the next target.

This is a compelling case study of sexual harassment in an industry where women were - and still are - in the minority. Interesting look at the software industry, just as corporations were starting to drift away from their mainframes and over to networked PCs.

Good writing, tense plot, interesting characters. This is an excellent series. Recommended.

Monkeewrench

By: PJ Tracy, Reviewed
by Susan Ives Hardcover, Putnam's, 2003,
\$23.95, 384 pages



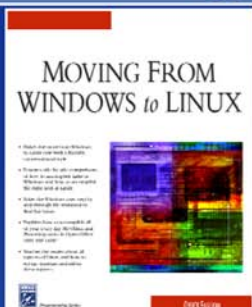
The staff of Monkeewrench software is devastated when three local murders follow the scenarios of the beta release of their new computer game, Serial Killer Detective. They are an oddball crew, college friends who had been traumatized by a friend's murder. In fear for their own lives, they changed their names, skipped town and developed a game where the killer is always caught. Initially hesitant to blow their cover by calling the St. Paul police, they come to the sober realization that there are 17 more scenarios available for download from their

Web site - and 17 more potential victims. The killer could be one of the beta testers, their old nemesis come back to haunt them - or one of the Monkeewrench crew themselves.

P.J. Tracy is the pseudonym of a mother-daughter writing team. This is their first book and it is a sure-fire winner. The plot was fast-paced, the ending a shocker, and the Monkeewrench crew crackled with tension and energy. The technical challenge of figuring out which beta testers have progressed far enough into the game to have knowledge of the fatal scenarios is a clever puzzle that database gurus will enjoy. Highly recommended.

Susan Ives, past president of Alamo PC, claims that computers are a mystery to her. Remember the Alibi Bookstore at 8055 West Ave. #101, San Antonio, TX (at the corner of West Ave. and Lockhill-Selma), (210) 344-7776, tries its darnest to keep the recommended books in stock.

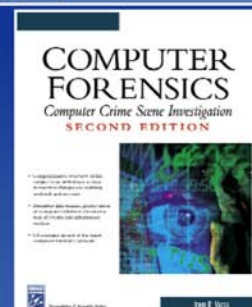
COMPUTER BOOKS THAT DELIVER



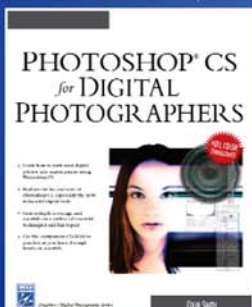
1-58450-280-0 \$44.95



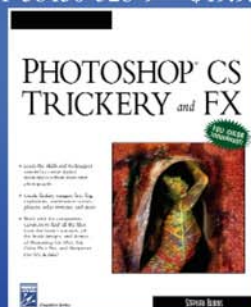
1-58450-328-9 \$49.95



1-58450-389-0 \$49.95



1-58450-321-1 \$39.95



1-58450-297-5 \$39.95



1-58450-387-4 \$41.95



20% OFF AT WWW.CHARLESRIVER.COM

ALSO AVAILABLE AT AMAZON, BARNES & NOBLE, BORDERS, AND OTHER FINE RETAILERS.



Software Review

Pinnacle Studio 12

Published by Pinnacle

Reviewed by Beth Pickering, Sonoma Valley Computer Group, California, www.vom.com/svcg, bethpick@emailx.net

I would love to compare video editing programs and declare Pinnacle Studio 12 the easiest one to use, but to be honest . . . this is the only video editing I have ever done. To be precise: I had a borrowed laptop I had never used before, a few unrelated video clips (not mine), a few pictures (not mine), less than 24 hours to make a demo movie for my presentation, and a history of attracting glitches.

Because Studio 12 is supposed to be easy for a beginner to use I decided to go out of my comfort zone and put this software to the ultimate test: Like many users, I skipped reading the instructions. I have to admit to a little help. I had seen a live demo at a convention and watched some very short informational clips on www.pinnaclesys.com.

The hardest thing I had to do was choosing the options I wanted to use. The closest I got to a glitch was that the video card in my borrowed computer wouldn't support "Magic Bullet Looks".

Starting with a "Montage", I began my quest. I already knew image editing had to be done on the main timeline and that any type of image could be used. The numbers showed what image went where. Moving the images around was as easy

as drag and drop. "Undo" and "delete" were also handy. Mixing sections from different Montage themes didn't cause any problems. Leaving Montage boxes empty didn't either. The playback only showed an appropriately numbered space. With just a click of a button you can review your creation full screen. When you are editing that particular

section of the orange bar turns green.

There are hundreds of transitions on hand. Picking a category brings up a screen with thumbnail "A/B" boxes. Clicking on one activates the A to B transition so you can see how it looks. After deciding which one to use, you simply drag and drop it into place on the timeline. The other features use thumbnails of the image you are editing to show what the final look will be. All you have to do is select the one you want. As you become more skilled you can alter the feature itself. Some (like "Magic Bullet Looks") have visible boxes to adjust (see above) while others (see Boris Graffiti below) have an advanced mode to select. There are prompts where you can enter text and examples to see what it will look like. Any font that is on your computer can be used. Correcting red eye and removing the black bars so your images fill the movie frame can be done with the click of a button. It is possible to interweave up to 18 video tracks in minutes.



Pinnacle Studio 12 has two dedicated sound tracks - one for special sounds and the other for background music. You can import songs to use as is, or you can add them to “Scorefitter” – your own original background music composer. It is as easy to use as the image editors. Several choices have been pre-loaded in the software. You simply pick a style, pick a song, pick a version and listen to the result. If you don’t like it, you just start over. The length can be changed by dragging the beginning or ending points. The “song” can be changed at anytime by using the “accept changes” button. also easy. You select the media, then the drop down box choices, and click the “Create” button.

I didn’t do it, but I understand that outputting is also easy. You select the media, then the drop down box choices, and click the “Create” button.



My experience with Pinnacle Studio 12 was effortless and fun. Users with no experience can easily make professional looking movies while knowledgeable editors can tweak their movies to an all time high.



Software Review

SnagIt

Published by TechSmith

By John Roy, President, The Personal Computer Users Group of Connecticut, <http://tpcug-ct.org/>, johnroy1@comcast.net

So what is SnagIt? It is a screen capture program (Like base level PrintScreen). Every computer user needs the ability to capture information off of the screen. Your basic operating system has always provided rudimentary capability to print or capture a full screen but it is woefully inadequate in today's environment. How many times do you need a screen region or maybe an area that scrolls off the display as many web pages do? How about having the ability to extract only the text or capture screen actions? All of these functions and many more are easily addressed with SnagIt.

SnagIt has been around since 1990. I remember my first exposure to this great utility back in those early years when computer expositions were held at the Javitz Convention Center in New York City. While today's functionality greatly supersedes those early days the neat scroll capture was the cool feature of the times and is still a main-stay tool.

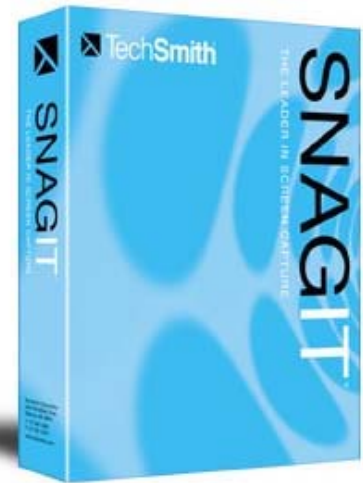
For a screen capture program to be useful it needs flexibility beyond Microsoft's dismal screen and window capture. SnagIt provides every imaginable capture you could ever want with Image Capture, Text Capture, Video Capture, Web Capture, and Printer Capture. Each of these modes has additional control options such as delayed capture, capture the mouse cursor, set a timer, or capture multiple areas, to name a few. Video capture provides a very useful tool for creating instructional clips. You can play back the video or even save individual frames. The ability to capture editable text from dialog boxes and other screens where it ordinarily can't be copied is extremely useful.

To make life easier you have the ability to set up profiles to reflect the way you like to work. Profiles coupled with a defined hot key can grab and process a clip all the way to the intended application. You can configure input, output, effects and options. Add-ons are automatically and/or optionally installed into several applications such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point and Internet Explorer) and other popular products. Wizards and toolbars are available to simplify setting up profiles.

Having many capture options is only the front end of this versatile utility, there is also an overabundance of tools to annotate, mark up, organize, convert, edit and share captured content. The processing tools suite includes a very powerful editor that will bring your clips to life. No longer are you stuck with a blasé clip. With very little effort you can spruce up your clips by adding effects, borders, stamps, and hotspots to name a few. You can operate on one or many images at the same time. A batch conversion utility allows the user to modify and output a collection of clips into a wide selection of formats. This utility allows you to set up your output to selections such as File, FTP, Email, Printer, etc. The output properties are fully customizable.

Since SnagIt stores every capture you make, a first reaction would be "how does one find the clip of interest"? Well search capability is automatically built into the software and can be further enhanced by the use of tags. Every capture you make saves the time, date, and URL information that will allow you to quickly return to the site of the capture.

To fully appreciate the value of this great program, download the 30 day free trial and/or view some of the extremely informative and clearly illustrated tutorials available on TechSmith's website <http://www.techsmith.com/>. SnagIt lists for \$49.95, runs on all newer Windows operating systems including 64-bit Vista. A minimum of 1 GHz processor and 512 MB of Ram is required but double that for smoother operation. TechSmith has developed and improved on SnagIt over the years and has a product that belongs in every computer user's tool box.



dvnation.com

The miniPC: The smallest Windows / Linux PC ever
* small spaces * CAR COMPUTER * any room * point of sales machine *

BASE MODEL FEATURES:

- * Window XP computer
- * dimensions: 6.5 in X 6.5 in X 2.5 in !!!!
- * 1.4 GHZ Pentium M (Celeron)
- * 512 GB RAM
- * 40 GB hard drive
- * DVD / CD-RW combo drive
- * 10/100/1000 (GIGABIT) LAN
- * 2 x USB, 1 X firewire (IEEE 1394) ports
- * DVI video output - VGA adapter included
- * TV output, S-video & component **HDTV out!**
- * Sound: stereo out, mic input, internal speaker
- * Software included: Nero CD burning, Drivers, Windows XP, full Office suite (Open Office)
- * **Unlimited expansion** via USB and firewire

UPGRADES

CPU	up to 1.7 Ghz
Hard drive	up to 160 GB
RAM	up to 1 GB
b / g wireless LAN	
Optical Drive DVD Recordable	
Install your own OS	subtract \$50

ALL this for just \$599
(Only \$549 if you install your own operating system)
Call Jason, 210-669-2156

Software Review

QuickMonth Calendar

Published by Code Dawn

By Ken Peters, Product Review, Hilton Head Island Computer Club, South Carolina, <http://hhicc.org>, product.review@hhicc.org

If you're tired of double clicking the clock to get the calendar up, then this program is for you. <http://www.codedawn.com/qmc/quickmonth-calendar-download/>. QuickMonth Calendar is a freeware program which displays a small popup calendar on your Windows desktop whenever your mouse hovers over the clock in the system tray. The calendar display may also be toggled on and off by using the Windows+Q keyboard shortcut. The program works with XP and Windows 2000. Click the clock once to make it appear. Vista already has a popup calendar.

You can get QuickMonth Calendar by visiting the download page. QuickMonth Calendar is free and does not include any adware or spyware.

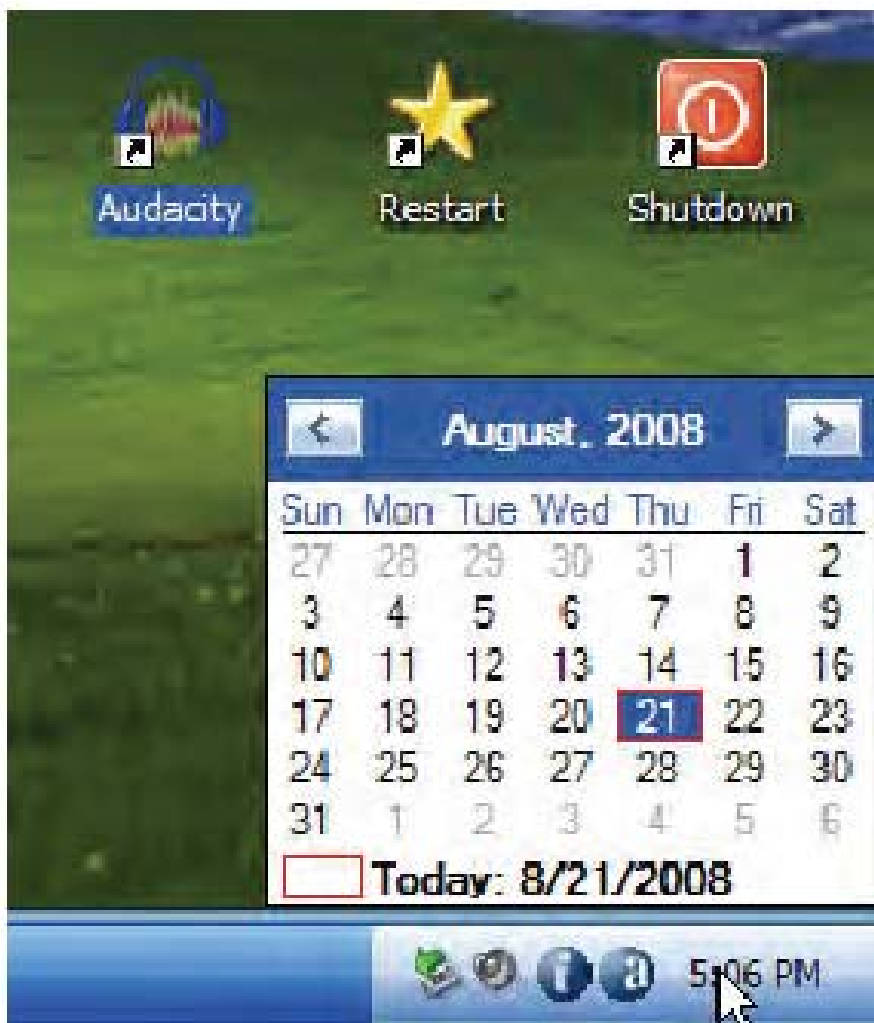
NOTE: Some antivirus programs have incorrectly detected QuickMonth Calendar as a Trojan horse. Do not be alarmed — this type of erroneous detection is called a false positive. If you receive a virus warning message regarding QuickMonth Calendar (qmc.exe), please report the false positive to your antivirus software manufacturer so they can update their definitions. Here are a few of QuickMonth Calendar's features:

To quickly jump to today's date, right-click on the calendar or left-click the bottom of the calendar where it says "Today." Use the buttons at the top of the calendar to change the month. You can also left-click on the name of the month to see a popup menu of all the months.


Left-click on the year to quickly change the year.

The calendar automatically detects the location of your Windows taskbar, so if you move the taskbar to the top, left, or right side of the screen, the calendar will still display next to your system tray clock (you may have to restart Windows once for the change to take effect).

The look of the calendar changes according to what your system colors are (as determined by your current Windows theme or visual style). The calendar will appear in any program when you put the pointer over the clock. I have found this program very handy when trying to find a date when writing an email or other document. When I need to look up a date, it's very nice to have the calendar popup just by hovering the pointer over the clock. It's also helpful when on the telephone and trying to settle on a date.



DECEMBER 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 BOD 6:30 PM.	3	4 (a/r) High Growth Stock Investing 6:00 - 8:00 PM.	5	6
7	8 General Meeting @ Crossroads Convention Center 7 - 9 PM. Presenter:	9 Alamo Coders (DotNET - Web Development Technology) 6 - 8 PM.	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Resource Center is closed.	26	27 Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 PM.
28	29	30	31 			PRR = Pre-Registration Required

ALAMOPC ORGANIZATION

The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

I have some news for you that is important! Please read the entire message.

Alamo PC Organization will be closing the Crossroads Mall Computer Learning Center by the end of December. This is NOT the entire organization, JUST the Learning Center. The reasons for closing are numerous including; falling membership, lack of students, volunteers, new members, and the high cost of maintaining this facility. (Rent, telephones, internet, insurance, and utilities just to name a few) An announcement regarding sales of equipment, furniture, etc. will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

All Classes and Study Groups held at the Learning Center will cease to meet after November 15th, unless the individual Class or Group leaders make arrangements to continue elsewhere. Alamo PC is continuing to look at options to maintain a Learning Center on a smaller scale elsewhere, If you can help please contact membership@alamopc.org

The High Growth Stock Investing Study Group will continue to meet and private tutoring will still be available.

The Dr Is In Computer Diagnostic Clinic will hold it's last session on Friday November 14th.

Questions, comments or helpful suggestions regarding the closure may be referred to membership@alamopc.org You ask the desk staff to pass comments along.

It has been a real honor and pleasure to work with all of you and I hope Alamo PC will find some means to continue classes and to let you know soon if that is a possibility.

Thanks,

Linda Bianchi

Director of Education

Alamo PC Organization

Alamo PC Coders

Alamo Coders is a FREE San Antonio area IT professionals Users Group that focus on the tools, technologies, and programming languages that help a software developer/architect/manager in today's industry. If you would like to learn more about software development or the tools that are involved in that process, or if you just want to learn more about what Alamo Coders has to offer the San Antonio area IT community, then please join our group.

More information about this group may be found at <http://www.alamocoders.net/Home/tabid/36/Default.aspx>

When: Second Tuesday of every month

Time: 6:00:00 PM: Food, drink, meet & greet

6:30:00 PM: Presentation

7:30:00 PM: Q&A, meet & greet

Location: ALL meetings are held at New Horizons Learning Center, 8200 West IH 10, Suite 500, San Antonio, Texas 78230, (210) 308-8200.

Directions: New Horizons is located at 8200 West IH 10, Suite 500. From IH 10 West Exit Medical/Callaghan. Take the turnaround and remain on the access road. The New Horizons building is located on the right side pass Benihana. Turn right on Mid-Horizon Boulevard the parking garage is located on the right side. From IH 10 East exit Medical/Callaghan. Remain on the access road. The New Horizons building is located on the right side pass Benihana. Turn right on Mid – Horizon Boulevard the parking garage is located on the right side. Parking for New Horizons students is provided in the parking garage or on the parking area under the trees.

HGSI Study Group

The premise of the HGS Investor SIG is, "Knowledge becomes stronger when passed on to others." We have created an environment for continuing education and open discussion between well informed members and guest speakers in matters of using Fundamental and Technical Analysis for the buying and selling of equities.

Contact: Maynard Burstein

<maynardb@juno.com> 735-3288

When: 1st Thursday, 6:30-8:30pm

Where: Contact Maynard for location

Pre-registration: Call Maynard

Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

Private or Semi-Private Tutorials - \$

Develop your skills at your own pace and at a time that fits your schedule. Introductory private tutorials for one, two, or three students. Choose from:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Basic Computer Skills, or
- Keyboarding/Typing

Contact: Learning Center (210) 736-0080 or 736-0700

When: Days and hours are arranged between the student(s) and teacher.

Where: Learning Center

Fees: 1 student: \$35 per hour, 10 hours for \$300. 2 or 3 students: per student—\$20 per hour, 10 hours for \$150

Pre-registration: Yes—call or visit the Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

Alamo PC Organization now offers members private or semi-private tutorials

☎
☎ Keyboarding/Typing
☎ Basic Computer Skills
☎ Microsoft Word

Rates for one student

\$35 per hour

\$300 for 10 hours

Rates for two or three students

\$20 per student per hour

\$150 per student for 10 hours

☎
Enjoy private instruction on days and at hours
that fit **your** schedule

**Call or visit the Learning Center to register
(210) 736-0080**

Technical Content Ratings

★ For the beginner, no experience necessary and no prerequisite.

★★ Assumes some basic familiarity with the subject but is not a technical course.

★★★ Assumes that the student is somewhat familiar with the subject and will discuss.

★★★★ Assumes that the student is competent in the material and will be technical.

Help Numbers

Can you help a new member with a new computer? Are you proficient in software not listed? Can you help with a title currently showing only one volunteer? Call Linda Bianchi at 226-2460 or email her at <education@alamopc.org>.

1 Look down the list for the software program you need help with; note the number in front of the title.

2 Then look down the list to the right for the corresponding number for the person who may be able to help you.

Please observe the times given by the volunteers name to call for phone help.

Step One

- 1 Computers for Beginners
- 2 Windows 98
- 3 Windows XP

Microsoft Office

- 4 Word
- 5 Excel
- 6 PowerPoint
- 7 Publisher
- 8 WinFax Pro

Corel Office

- 9 WordPerfect
- 10 CorelDraw
- 11 Quattro Pro
- 12 Paint Shop Pro

Photoshop

- 13 Adobe Photoshop

Internet and E-mail

- 14 Internet Basics / ISP Connection
- 15 Web Page Development
- 16 Internet Explorer
- 17 MS Outlook Express
- 18 Opera
- 19 Mozilla
- 20 Dreamweaver
- 21 .Net
- 22 Flash
- 23 RoadRunner

Open Office

- 24 OpenOffice

Financial

- 25 Quick Books
- 26 Quicken

Auction Online

- 27 eBay

Genealogy

- 28 Family Origins for Windows
- 29 Genealogy

Communications / Management

- 30 Time&Chaos
- 31 Act
- 32 Goldmine

Data Base

- 33 Access
- 34 AlphaFour
- 35 dBase
- 36 Paradox
- 37 MySQL

Networking

- 38 Networking

Other

- 39 Hardware / Setting Up A New PC
- 40 Maintenance and Security
- 41 Home Help

Step Two

Expertise	Name	Phone	Availability	E-mail
(1, 5, 6, 3, 12, 23, 26, 38, 41)	John Bolton	658-3060	6pm-9pm M-F	
(1, 3, 14)	Joe Barth	696-5783	7pm-9pm Tu, Th, Sat	jbarth@swbell.net
(2, 3, 4, 16, 17, 23, 29, 38, 39, 40, 41)	Bruce Cramer	865-2933	9am-3pm M-F, Sat	service@pcpro4u.com
(3, 5)	Bill Eastridge	223-8743	10am-6pm M-F, Sat, Sun	
(4, 15, 17, 33)	Bill Hudson	490-6513	7pm-10 pm M-F, Sat, Sun	bhudson3@satx.rr.com
(4, 9, 14, 27)	William Hudson	824-6910	3pm-8pm M-F, Sat	rwsh@earthlink.net
(19, 24, 30, 37)	Chris Montgomery	490-2415	7pm-9pm M-F / noon-6pm Sat, Sun	
(3, 16, 17)	Ted Ressler			catechist@gmail.com
(1, 3, 14, 16, 17, 40)	Don Robinson	497-3737	9am-5pm M-F, Sat, Sun	dl7266@swbell.net
(10)	Stephen Tech, Jr	675-2880	5:30pm-9pm M - F	stephentechjr@yahoo.com
(9)	Cynthia Thompson	655-1058	7pm-9pm M-F / 10am-4pm Sat, Sun	cynthom@satx.rr.com
(4)	Christel Villarreal			christel.villarreal@gmail.com

If you are unable to find help in the list above, consider contacting the desk staff volunteers at the Alamo PC Computer Learning Center. 736-0700 or 736-0080. 10am - 4pm M-F, Sat Remember these volunteers are all levels of expertise and some may not be able to answer your questions, but may be able to find someone who can.


Advertisers Index

BJ Associates of San Antonio	37
Charles River Media	53
Computer Experts	45
Computer Fest	11
Corona Visions	14
Cramer's Computer Services	39
David's Essential Domains	19
DV Nation	56
Global Travel Trends	31
Holiday Ink	34
Inksell	IFC
Laura B. Grover, E.A.	40
New Life Toner	IFC
SA PC Help	51
United Service Association for Health Care	24
Water Ware	48

Classified Ads

E-mail your ad to the Editor, PC Alamode at: editor@alamopc.org. Copy deadline is 10th of month preceeding publication. Classified ads are free to members of Alamo PC.

- For Sale** Windows XP Professional disk. New and unopened. Discount. Contact Carl Marmion at 494-6797
- For Sale** 3 Camera Bags - Universal Style 5" wide X 9" long X 6" deep, Sony DSC F828 case with shoulder strap Lowepro Micro 100 Trekker. All in good condition. Contact Bob Ramert rpramert@sbcglobal.net.
- Wanted** Classified ads from members of Alamo PC. It costs nothing and it's a good way to sell or buy any computer-related item.



100% gray cotton golf shirts with pocket and embroidered full-color **Alamo PC logo**
Available at the Learning Center in a wide variety of sizes.

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at **736-0700**

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

Your membership number entitles you to a full year of membership privileges. Established in 1983, this non-profit, all-volunteer organization is dedicated to helping members keep up with trends and technologies.

Monthly Meetings

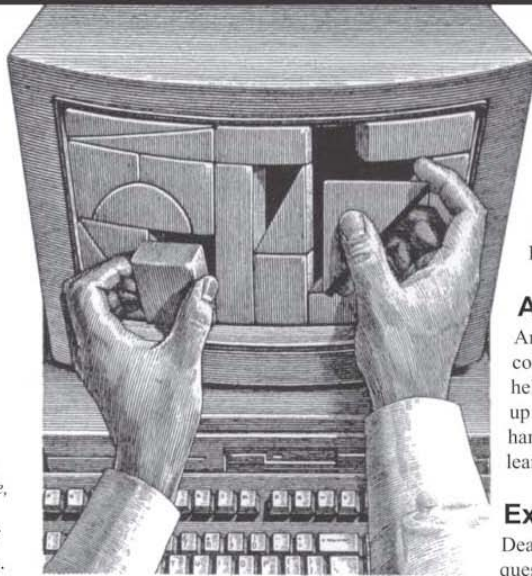
Every month you can attend a presentation meeting, which is open to our 2,500 members. Local and national companies provide the first glimpses of new products and discounts on existing products. There are also drawings for FREE hardware and software.

Award-Winning Magazine

When you join Alamo PC, you'll receive its award-winning magazine, *PC Alamode*, each month. You'll learn of group activities and you'll enjoy the reviews of new products from your fellow members. Regular columnists will give you insight to this fast-paced, dynamic industry. As a member, you can sell your outgrown stuff in our FREE Classified ads section.

Special Interest Groups and Classes

Alamo PC offers more than 30 Study Groups and classes on specific software programs for beginners to expert. These small groups typically meet once a month in one of our two hands-on computer labs or classrooms and provide an opportunity to get answers in an informal setting. There are groups for word processing, Web design, graphics and programming and even study groups to help you get Microsoft Certified. You can attend as many SIGs as you'd like and, as you become experienced, even lead one!



Internet (www.alamopc.org)

Alamo PC is on the Internet, and more importantly, Alamo PC can help you get on the Internet too. If you're already on the Internet, attending one of Alamo PC's Internet SIGs will help you to become a savvy Internet surfer.

Alamo PC SeniorComp

Are you age 45 or older and not into computers or the Internet yet? Let us help. Contact Alamo PC today and sign up for the very next class. Classes are hands-on at a pace to match your learning style.

Expert Help

Deadlocked with a computer problem or question? Get access to personal help from expert Alamo PC members. Just call! If you need someone to diagnose hardware and software problems, try "THE DOCTOR IS IN," a free clinic where members bring in their computers and allow our experts to help diagnose and often fix many PC ailments.

APPLY FOR YOUR NUMBER -- JOIN NOW!

To join, return the application below or sign up online at www.alamopc.org. Your \$45 dues covers your entire family!e. You may use your credit card or send your personal check. If you need more information, call (210) 736-0700. Shortly after joining, you'll receive a membership card entitling you to all rights and privileges and discounts. **JOIN TODAY!**

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE: Call 210-736-0700 for details.



Membership Application -- Apply for your number today!

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS. This information will be kept in confidence - it will be used for planning purposes only

FIRST: _____ MI: _____ LAST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE H: _____ W: _____ FAX: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ OCCUPATION: _____

EMPLOYER: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please accept my membership for: ☐ 1 year - \$45 ☐ 2 years - \$85 ☐ 3 year - \$120

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

Method of payment: ☐ Check ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Credit Card# _____ EXP DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

Make checks payable to Alamo PC Organization and mail to: **Alamo PC, PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180**

☐ IMPORTANT I do not authorize Alamo PC Organization to release my name, address, and phone to selected vendors

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Renew Now!

Isn't it about time for you to consider all the benefits of membership with Alamo PC? Renew your membership before the year is over!

For more information call the Learning Center at
210.736.0700



Consider A Matching Donation, or a Donation To Alamo PC Organization

Increasing members knowledge and effective use of personal computers, and providing other membership services and access to the expertise of other members, does not happen without an associated monthly expense. In recent months, although member dues and ads have offset the majority of the required monthly expense, and cost-saving measures are constantly being reviewed, the total amount of monthly funds generated has been less than the monthly expense. The shortfall has had to come from reserve funds, which have been severely depleted. We would like to offer everyone the opportunity to help rebuild the reserve fund.

If your employer has a "Matching Donation" program, please consider that you can double a donation amount by participating. All donations are tax deductible and can be dropped off at the Alamo PC Learning Center in Crossroads Mall (near the underground parking entrance, accessed from Fredericksburg Road) or mailed to **Alamo PC Organization, PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX, 78265-5180**. Checks, Money Orders, etc., should be made payable to **Alamo PC Organization** and identified as "Donation."

On-line donations can be made at <<https://training.alamopc.org/donations>>. If you do not have on-line access, credit card donations can be made by mail if you legibly provide the following information on a piece of paper: Full Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Phone Number (to verify you want your card charged), Name of Card, Card Number, Card Expiration Date, Donation Amount, and your usual Signature. Please help us keep our membership dues low, meet our monthly expenses and rebuild the reserve fund.

