



SCUG REPORT

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Pierre Houle

SHARING INFORMATION

I find the Internet amazing. I would guess that just about any bit of knowledge could be found in cyberspace somewhere. Of course the problem is first, finding the information, then assessing whether it's reliable.

I am always finding new ways to use 'net information. Should I prune my tree now, or wait until after the leaves fall? Where are the autumn colours at their peak? How many people use the Internet? Is the TV at the local store such a deal? If you solder a faucet, will it be damaged by the heat? Do I have to wear an extra sweater tomorrow? Did my lottery numbers come up? These are just a few questions I have had answered by Google.

For most fact finding, I use Google. It's the fastest, and the best

Misinformation and hoaxes are a big problem. I do quite a bit of Internet research, both for my club activities and for my personal interest, and I always try to verify facts by checking several sources. Universities and known authorities are usually safe.

Be aware of viruses, spyware, adware, trojans, worms and malicious code. Use a firewall, spyware checker, virus checker, and never open an e-mail attachment.

If you don't know what I'm referring to, ask! That's what this group is all about....sharing information and knowledge. 6

Sarnia Computer Users' Group
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N7V 2N5

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Internet Site: www.scug.ca

Please submit articles for November's SCUG Newsletter before Nov. 16th. to: editor@scug.ca.

**Member of the Association of
Personal Computer User Groups
(APCUG)**
www.apcug.org

SCUG MEETINGS

St. Bartholomew's Church
718 Cathcart Blvd.
Sarnia, Ont.

Last Wednesday of the month
7:00 p.m. social time
7:30 p.m. call to order

Next Meeting
November 26, 2003

**Sarnia Computer Users' Group
2003-2004 Club Officers**

President	Pierre Houle	president@scug.ca
Vice President	Iain Smy	vicepresident@scug.ca
Treasurer	Dorothy Alexander	treasurer@scug.ca
Recording Secretary	Bob Kiteley	secretary@scug.ca
Membership Secretary	Val Conway	membership@scug.ca
Shareware Librarian	Dan Bilger	library@scug.ca
Editor - SCUG Report	Greg West	editor@scug.ca
Public Relations	Norm Lamoureux	pr@scug.ca
Program Coordinator	Bill Colotelo	coordinator@scug.ca

www.scug.ca

Special Interest Group Leaders

Genealogy Group	- Kathy Witheridge	- genealogy@scug.ca
Drop-In Group	- Pierre Houle	- president@scug.ca
Windows Group	- Pierre Houle	- windows@scug.ca

Advertising Rates

Full Page	1x - \$30.00	3x - \$25.00	6x+ - \$20.00
Half Page	1x - \$20.00	3x - \$15.00	6x+ - \$10.00
Business card	\$10.00 per year		

*One year = 9 issues, September to June
Full and half page rates are per insertion*

Disk Prices

CD Only	Members	Non-Members
Monthly Disk	Free	\$2.00
Utilities	\$1.00	\$2.00
Additional Disks	\$1.00	\$2.00

NOTE: Some of these programs are Shareware which must be registered and paid for if you like them and decide to keep them on your machine. This is your responsibility!

Please visit: www.scug.ca

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Your Secretary's Notes

by Tom Deeprise
secretary@scug.ca

SCUG Executive Committee Meeting Sept. 29th.

Present were Pierre Houle, Val Conway, Dorothy Alexander, Bill Colotelo, Norman Lamoureux, Iain Smy, and Bob Kiteley. Regrets from; Dan Bilger. Tom Deeprise was on vacation. Bob Kiteley recorded the minutes of this meeting.

Val presented her Membership and Newsletter report;

Stats as of Sept.30th are;

87 Members + 37 Associates = 123 Total Members.

New3 Members + 3 Associates

Renewals,,,,,,9 Members + 2 Associates

Guests.....5

Lapsed memberships..1 Member + 0 Associates

Total Meeting Attendance....70

100 Newsletters were printed and the same number will be made for November.

Dorothy presented her Treasures report and it was accepted.

Dan relayed the information that 45 members took the new Sept. CD.

Everyone was tremendously impressed by Iain's Web Page and his demo. The President of COMP Computer Club wrote an excellent review in the Newsletter. Iain report that he is seeing about 15 to 20 hits a day.

October's program will be burning L.P's to CD's

November's will be "Computer Lingo"; ask the experts all your computer related question. No Meeting Dec.

January's program will be "Computers for the Blind" by Erik Burggraaf.

Bill says he has made arrangements for the Church room for the remainder of the year and he is hoping for new programs for the volunteers to review.

(Any suggestions for future programs are welcomed. See Pierre)

It was agreed that anyone missing a meeting is to arrange for his or her replacement.

Norm reports that he has 2 Prizes for the Oct. meeting and he and Pierre will look at things at the show in London for possible additions. 6

**70 members attended
SCUG's September meeting!!!
Bring a Friend next month.**

Business Card

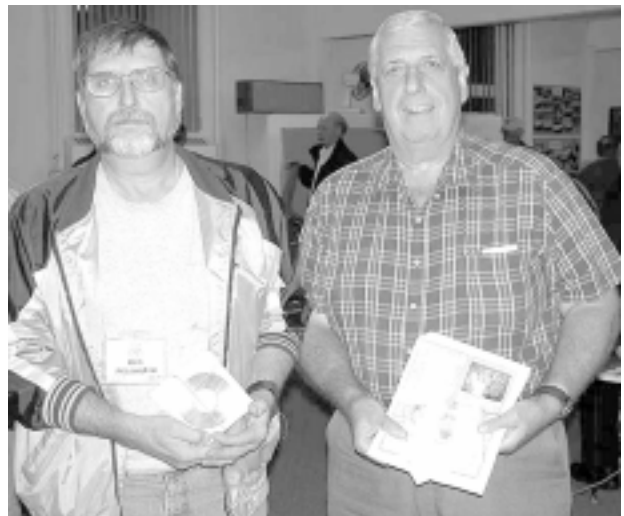
**You can have your card
published in SCUG for one full year
for only \$10**

For information contact Norm 542-5757

Compuprize Winners

The winners of the September's Compuprizes

Blank CDs - Bob McLaughlin
Send Photo - Ian Campbell



SIG REPORTS

Genealogy SIG

Kathy Witheridge
genealogy@scug.ca

The Genealogy SIG was held on Monday, October 6, 2003 at the office of Ebtech, 559 Exmouth Street, Sarnia.

We had 17 people in attendance, and the topic was Tips and Tricks in obtaining the 1901 British census online. Handouts and discs were handed out and I trust those of you who attended were able to obtain lots of information.

Our next meeting should be on Monday, November 10, 2003, and we will be looking at obtaining Army records in Canada, US and England.

Windows SIG

Pierre Houle
president@scug.ca

Twenty two members attended the October Windows SIG. Bill lead the group with a discussion of home networks. A site was found on the internet that went through the basic setup. In the second half, Pierre went over how to set up a Windows system for several users using the Users applet in Control Panel. Finally, several people asked about computer problems. Some were even answered!

The next Windows SIG meeting will be held Thursday November 20th, 7:00 P.M., at Grace United Church, corner of Indian Road and Cathcart Blvd..

The discussion will include going back to basics.

Points we will be discussing:

- 1) What is: a Program, an Operating System, Data, and how they interact.
- 2) Why does (almost) everyone use Windows
- 3) A general Q & A

Hope to see you there! Bring a friend!

Drop-In SIG

Pierre Houle

president@scug.ca

It looks like it is going to be a good meeting!

There were 10 members attended the first meeting of the Drop In SIG at St. James Church. Most members had very interesting questions and comments, and there was quite a bit of discussion amongst the group, which is encouraged.

The next meeting of this new SIG will be Wednesday, November 5th, at St. James the Apostle Church, 140 N Lansdown, 7:00 P.M. in the basement.

This is a informal, general discussion meeting, in which members are encouraged to discuss anything with anyone..one on one, or as a group. I will bring a computer, and will show how to put in a hard-drive, how to format it, and install Windows.

Come out to make this SIG a success

SCUG Calendar November 2003

5th - **Drop-In SIG** - 7:00 p.m.
St. James The Apostle Anglican
Church, 140 Lansdowne Ave N

10th - **Genealogy SIG** - 7:00 p.m.
Ebtech Building

20th - **Windows SIG** - 7:00 p.m.
Grace United Church, Room 10

26th - **SCUG General Meeting**
Social time - 7:00 p.m.
Call to order - 7:30 p.m.
St. Bartholomew's Church

*Systems
Success*

343 Bright Street,
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(519) 336 9272
ssuccess@ebtech.net

Paul Witheridge

*Personal Computer Consultation
Set-up * Software Training
System Optimization * Professional Remote Backup Service
Member Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce*

**SARNIA COMPUTER USERS' GROUP
FINANCIAL SUMMARY
AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2003**

Information removed - members only.

**The Computer Operators of Marysville and Port Huron
(COMP)**

This computer group meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at St. Clair Community College, in Room 201 in the C.E.M. Library in Port Huron, Michigan. **SCUG members are welcome!**

St. Clair Community College is directly across from McMorran Place.

www.bwcomp.org/

SCUG MEMBERS SAVE UP TO \$60 AT EBTECH

EBTech offers up to \$5/month discount to SCUG Members!

- * Contact Paul Witheridge (336-9272, kathpaul@ebtech.net) and ask to be on the EBTech Discount List.
- * At your next EBTech renewal, simply identify yourself as a SCUG Member
- * Paul notifies EBTech of eligible members so no further proof of identification is required.

10 hours per month - \$10 per month, \$2.00 per additional hour

SCUG members save on 6 & 12 month packages

100 hours per month - \$20 per month, \$1.00 per additional hour

SCUG members save \$5 per month

* if you decide to upgrade your existing account, you can apply the discount immediately!

What We Should Have Learned By Now

By Ira Wilsker

Hopefully by the time you read this column the attack of the SOBIG-F worm should be history, as it was scheduled to self destruct on September 10. That does not mean that all attacks will cease, as there are still many users who have incorrect dates on their computers. That means if your date is "slow" then any Sobig-F worms that may be residing on your computer will not know to self-destruct, and will continue to send infected emails to others without your knowledge.

I routinely received readers' messages which have headers placed by their email program giving the wrong year. Unless the computer is under the control of an administrator who does not allow changes, the time and date can easily be reset by simply clicking on the clock and resetting the date and time. If for some reason the clock is frequently incorrect that may be an indication of a more serious error, and possibly a pending problem. For those who would like to keep their computer clocks correct there are several programs available that will automatically reset the clock to some standard, such as the Naval Observatory, NASA, or the National Bureau of Standards. My personal favorite is "About Time" available for free download at vps.arachnoid.com/abouttime. I use About Time to reset my computer clock to U.S. Naval Observatory time on an almost daily basis.

Sobig-F, and its predecessors, flooded our inboxes with undesirable emails that eventually became easy to detect and identify. I would estimate that on all of my email accounts I received over 10,000 Sobig-F emails. Since each was about 100k in size, I received about a gigabyte of trash email due to Sobig-F alone. If I had to download those messages before deleting them, that would be an enormous amount to download. At broadband speeds, the time needed to download all of those bogus emails would be considerable; at dialup speeds the volume and frequency of Sobig-F emails may mean that downloading all of the email could be interminable. Since I still get along at home with dialup internet access, I needed a method to screen my email before downloading it to my computer. This allowed me to delete or otherwise process spam, and delete possible virus-bearing and other unwanted email. My local ISP accounts provide for some type of web based method to view email without physi-

cally downloading it to my computer. By viewing suspicious emails using web mail without physically downloading them, a degree of protection from dangerous content is provided. I choose to view online email in text only, and not in HTML. Almost all web mail systems offer this option, and I strongly advise that users choose to view emails in text format only, and configure their web mail to that setting.

In local discussions, I have found that many internet users are unaware of the availability of web based email from their ISPs. I suggest that such users either check their ISP website support link, or contact their ISP to inquire about web based email. One warning; many web mail systems place deleted messages in some form of online trash folder. Please remember to purge that folder frequently. Once unwanted email has been deleted using the web based email viewer, there is less email to download, and a decreased chance of catching an email borne virus or worm.

"The three most important words in computing are: Backup - Backup - Backup."

There is an excellent utility available that can provide assistance in identifying email that possibly contains spam or viruses, and I use it on all of my computers. It is MailWasher, published by Firetrust, of New Zealand. Available in a free version, or a more powerful "Pro" version (\$29.95), MailWasher allows for the easy screening of emails.

MailWasher is very fast, even on a dialup connection, because it only downloads the message headers, and a selected number of lines in the body of each email, rather than the entire email. Utilizing some of the internet "blacklists", services that compile information on spammers, many suspicious emails are labeled by MailWasher as possible spam. Using the integral "bounce" feature, spam can be bounced back to the sender giving the appearance of a defective email address. While I can give no proof that spammers delete bad email addresses, and there is always a risk of a forged email address, it is fun to bounce those critters. Many of the Sobig-F infected emails were labeled as "possible virus" making them easy to identify and delete. Since Sobig-F infected emails were about 100k in size, I sorted the list of emails by size, and the Sobig-F emails all clustered together, enabling fast deletion of them all from the mail server. Emails can also be sorted by any column, such as date sent, size, from, subject, status, and other factors. MailWasher can be set to automatically check for new email at any desired interval. MailWasher is available for download at www.mailwasher.net.

Continued on page 7.

TID BITS

Internet sites are born by the minute these days. Here are some interesting, useful and just fun sites to explore. Hope you pick up a few new tips and have a bit of fun learning some of the how-tos. Take Russell Brown's stange manerisms while he takes you deep into Adobe Photoshop. Have a look at what's new with spam and privacy issues. If you have any favourite, interesting sites you would like to share with SCUG members please forward them to: Greg West - editor@scug.ca

Open Office Program

Open Office (on the SCUG September CD) has been upgraded to version 1.1. It's a 63.5MB download but you can read about it at:

http://www.openoffice.org/dev_docs/features/1.1/index.html

Submitted by Paul Witheridge.

Time Machine Online: 12 million pics...

More than 12 million historic photographs were uploaded to the net earlier this month. Britain's Independent Television News (British Pathe) used its extensive newsreel copy of 3500 hours of film and produced one picture for every second of film which is posted on www.britishpathe.com. According to the National Post pictures range from "the Boer War to the D-Day landing, to Pathe's coverage of the swinging sixties." As one can only imagine, this brings to life memories from the turn of the 20th. This site has a search box where you just enter a name or place or event, and for the more adventurous news hounds you can use an "Advanced" section which enables one to check specific dates and periods in time. Warning: You will find this site EXTREMELY BUSY.

www.britishpathe.com

GOOGLE IPO TO GO BY APRIL

IPO stands for "initial public offering", the event of a firm's first sale of stock shares.

With Google's 1000+ employees the company is registering itself on the stock market as the hottest Internet company. Rumour is that Google's revenues this year could be in the range of US\$700-million to US\$1 billion. (National Post). Let's hope they stay free and clear of charging customers for such an excellent service.

NORTON ANTI VIURUS RELOAD:

Easy...

Last week my hard drive quit functioning in a proper manner - imagine that! I am sure I am not alone with this problem, but one question I did have was about my Norton Anti Virus. I bought the program (CD Disc) version 2001. After the program time allotment expired I continued using Norton and paid via the net for continued use of the anti virus product. The problem I had when my hard drive quit was how to get my Norton program back in operation...the only records I had was the 2001 CD disc. While at Data Tek I posed this question to one of the techs, Andrew, who told me just to reload the 2001 Norton Anti Virus disc into my computer and the new system will activate the older CD and I could go online to get the current anti virus updates. After loading the old CD, I simply clicked on the icon in the tray and clicked on Live Updates - the rest is history.

Submitted by Greg West, SCUG Editor.

HIGH SPEED BLUES?

According to PCWorld many with DSL connections sometimes find they cannot connect to the Internet and there is a simple solution to try. "When you lose your Internet link, start your troubleshooting with a simple 2-minute reboot of your DSL modem [turn it off] (it works for cable modems, too). The mystery is why there isn't a diagnostic too to tell you when to reset your Internet access device." Like everything else, we are told to "wait until next year."

Continued from page 6 - Learned By Now.

A companion product, "Benign", works with MailWasher, and is available from Firetrust at www.firetrust.com (\$34.95). Benign adds additional email screening and filtering functions for viruses (in addition to your antivirus software), malicious code, and other possibly harmful content from email before reaching your computer.

Ira Wilsker is the Advisor for Region 8, APCUG Representative & Bylaws Chair for the Golden Triangle PC Club, a columnist for The Examiner in Beaumont, Texas, and has two radio shows. He also graciously shares his articles with the APCUG editors. 6

Editor's Note: *There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this review as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. This review is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member.*

Feeling Annoyed With Your PC? Fight Back!



by Steve Bass
Contributing Editor, PC World
(and allegedly famous author)

Editor's Note: Steve Bass tackles six of his most irritating annoyances—from the dumb logos manufacturers plaster on screen during bootup to removing weird lines in Word.

My name is Steve Bass and I hunt down PC annoyances. What's funny is that it doesn't matter how many annoyances I fixed in *PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things About Your Personal Computer*. More sit-in-the-corner dumb things keep cropping up.

Admittedly, most annoying things are easy to find—just boot up your system, spend a few minutes with Windows, and blammo, you're annoyed. The challenging part, and the reason I wrote the book, is the thrill of finding fixes for the annoyances. I dug around and found solid solutions that work instantly and don't require a degree in computer science to understand.

Oddly enough, as I wrote the book, I bumped into even more Windows, Office, Internet, email, and hardware irritations. I didn't have time to include all of them in the book, but rather than waste them, I thought I'd share them with you. (Caution: shameless plug to follow.) And if you like what you see, well gosh, maybe you'll be motivated to buy the book. Several copies of the book. Maybe a case of books (you know they're ideal for gift giving...). You can get a copy here: <http://snurl.com/annoyances>

By the way, you don't know me so this may come as a surprise, but I'm inherently lazy and will always find something to do other than meet a deadline. My favorite deadline avoidance trick is nothing new—I browse the Web; I'll share a few time-wasting, funny, and occa-

sionally weird sites I've discovered.

Six Irritating Annoyances-and Six Fixes

These are actual annoyances contributed by annoyed PC World readers.

System Restore on Your Desktop

The Annoyance: I took the advice in your book about creating a Restore Point every time I install new software or fiddle with my PC's settings. The hassle is navigating through the Start menu to get to the buried System Restore dialog. There's gotta be a quicker way.

The Fix: It would be handy if Microsoft already had prefab desktop shortcuts for many of Windows' system functions. But it's pretty easy to do it yourself. Dig around and find the System Restore icon and drag it onto the desktop and when the dialog appears, choose "Create Shortcuts Here.")

As you might imagine, you can do the same for other items. For instance, open Control Panel, right click on any icon, and choose "Create Shortcut." Th[e] dialog appears when you drag and drop the System Restore icon onto the Desktop. Answer Yes. SysRestore, and click the Finish button. Double-click the shortcut and up pops the System Restore dialog.

Kill Some Time: You thought duct tape was just for fixing leaky radiator hoses and covering wall holes under the kitchen sink? Wrong. It's good for decorative wall hangings. See <http://snipurl.com/walltapings>

Remove Weird Lines in Word

The Annoyance: Whenever I enter underlines by themselves in a Word 2002 document, they're automatically transformed into solid, thick horizontal lines. That's not what I want. I think it's a bug in Word and it's driving me nuts.

The Fix: So you're saying you don't like Word's overly ambitious AutoFormat feature that turns your lines into borders? Because that's exactly what's happening—every time you type more than three asterisks, hyphens, underscores, or equal signs, Word applies a character or paragraph border style. It's an easy—dare I say, gratifying—fix. From Word's toolbar, choose Tools—>AutoCorrect, click the AutoFormat As You Type tab, and uncheck the Border lines box. (In Word 2000, uncheck the Border box.)

If you uncheck Border lines, you won't have to suffer
Continued on page 9.

Continued from page 8 - Feeling Annoyed...?

with Word automatically turning your lines into borders.

Stop Annoying Crash Reports

The Annoyance: I'm getting really tired of XP asking me if I want to send an error report to Microsoft every time a program crashes. I think the company should spend its time reducing crashes, don't you?.

The Fix: I'll bet Microsoft's tired of taking all your reports, too, but that's another story. Stopping these report prompts takes five minutes. From the Start Menu, click the Control Panel, then double-click the System icon. If Windows XP is in the Category View, click Performance and Maintenance, then double-click the System icon.

In the System Properties box, click the Advanced tab, then the Error Reporting button. If you want absolutely no notification about errors, check "Disable error reporting" and make sure the "But notify me when critical errors occur" box is unchecked. (FYI: I leave notification checked so I can see details of the crash, something that helps me troubleshoot system problems.) Click OK then OK again.

Eliminate annoying error reporting by marking "Disable error reporting."

Kill Some Time: Looking for something to do besides worrying about underlining in Word? Try the Snarg site. After the first few images flash on screen, click the tiny pound sign on the right, then click the "squeee" or "framina" link (To exit either, just close the window.) Hint: Move your mouse around and click here and there until patterns emerge, or until your significant other walks in and asks how that defrag is going. <<http://snipurl.com/snarg>>

Big Hard Drive Corruption

The Annoyance: Ever since I upgraded my PC with a 160GB hard drive, hibernation has stopped working correctly. Every so often, my system annoyingly restarts rather than resuming from hibernation. I've run ScanDisk and defragged the drive, but the problem still occurs. What gives?

The Fix: Someone once said you can never have too much RAM or too big a hard drive. Unfortunately, without a fix from Microsoft, Windows XP will choke-and possibly corrupt data-on any drive that exceeds 137 GB. There's a quick and easy downloadable fix at <<http://snipurl.com/atapi1>>. And if you're interested in the background, check out Microsoft's Microsoft Knowl-

edge Base Article: 331958 at <<http://snipurl.com/atapi2>>.

Kill Some Time: Almost everyone gripes about Windows. If you want to file a complaint, however, you'll have to take a number: <<http://snipurl.com/complaint>>

Stop Quick Launch Pop-ups

The Annoyance: Whenever my cursor hovers over the Quick Launch toolbar, enormous yellow pop-ups appear with tons of text. It blocks the other icons, and besides, I already know what program the icon represents.

The Fix: The biggest offenders are-surprise, surprise-Microsoft applications. Word's descriptive pop-ups are billboard size, and definitely annoying.

Hover your mouse over Word's Quick Launch icon and it insists on providing a lengthy explanation of what it does for a living.

Rather than eliminate the pop-up, shrink it down to size. Right-click the icon in the Quick Launch Toolbar, choose Properties, and change-or remove-the text in the Comment field. Easy, eh?

Remove the text in the Comment field and you'll no longer see Word's built in advertising.

Ban Annoying Boot Logos

The Annoyance: I just bought a new PC. When the system boots, all I see is the manufacturer's irritating logo.

The Fix: IMHO, watching the logo screen is more than just annoying; it's depriving you of valuable troubleshooting and diagnostic information that's served up while the PC's booting. This annoyance is pretty easily dispensed with, provided your system's BIOS allows you to turn off the logo screen.

As you're booting up, tap the Delete or F1 key. (Pay attention during boot-up: The system usually displays the proper key on screen.) Browse through the various BIOS options until you find something similar to "disable the Logo Screen," and change the setting to not show the logo. 6

Copyright © 2003 by Steve Bass and O'Reilly Press. Reproduced with permission. Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and a founding member of APCUG. He's also the author of PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things about Your Personal Computer, O'Reilly Press. It's available on Amazon at <http://snurl.com/annoyances>

HOME COMPUTER SECURITY

by Ira Wilsker
APCUG Region 8 Advisor
ira-wilsker@apcug.org

Recently the History Channel aired a show on cyberterrorism. While much of the program showed the types of attacks that have occurred and will likely occur in the future against government, military, infrastructure and commercial targets, it also showed how home users could become the victim of such attacks. As home users we may not believe that we can become terror targets, but imagine if our personal information was stolen, and our data files and financial records were altered or destroyed. These are not some hypothetical risks, but real threats that have already happened to countless home users, and will likely increase in number and severity in the future. Readers of this column are well aware that these topics have been written about before, but the risks are still there and becoming more prevalent.

The Software Engineering Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, in Pittsburgh, hosts a group referred to as CERT®. CERT® has produced a very comprehensive website with explicitly detailed information on securing home computers from attack at www.cert.org/homeusers. Funded with federal money, this site was produced for the Federal Computer Incident Response Center (FedCIRC) and the General Services Administration. The information can be viewed on the web, or downloaded in PDF format from a link on the page.

CERT® recommends a series of tasks that all computer users must accomplish in order to protect their computers from attack. First on the list is “Install and Use Anti-Virus Programs”. This has been preached in this column numerous times. Viruses, Trojans, and computer worms are becoming an increasing threat; they are becoming more common, more powerful, and more destructive. Good antivirus software properly installed, configured, and updated at least daily is a strong first line of defense against these software threats. Since decent antivirus software is available inexpensively or free, there is no reason not to have it. Some of the more popular free antivirus software titles are AVAST from www.avast.com, and AVG from www.grisoft.com.

The second necessary task that we all must accomplish is “Keep Your System Patched”. Microsoft and many other software publishers often release security or other critical updates to patch or close potential security holes. In most versions of Windows, these patches can be simply located and installed by going online, and clicking on START – WINDOWS UPDATE, and following the on-screen instructions. Some Windows products have a feature that automatically seeks and downloads critical updates.

Another task, also mentioned frequently in this column is “Use Care When Reading Email with Attachments”. Many of the endemic computer viruses, Trojans, and worms arrive at the victim’s computer as an innocent appearing email, often from an acquaintance or a known organization. Unpatched versions of the popular email programs Outlook and Outlook Express can activate these malicious programs by simply allowing them to appear in the preview pane, without actually opening the email, or clicking on the attachment. Be very suspicious of any email attachments.

“Install and Use a Firewall Program” is the next task necessary to protect computers from outside intrusion, or prevent illicit programs from sending information from a compromised computer. Many commercial antivirus programs now come with an integral firewall, and other firewall software is available for purchase or download, sometimes for free. Two popular and excellent free for personal use firewalls are Zone Alarm, www.zonelabs.com, and Outpost, www.agnitum.com.

The three most important terms in computing are “Backup, Backup, and Backup”. CERT® implores users to “Make Backups of Important Files and Folders.”

The copies can be on floppies, CDs, tape, external drives, or other forms of storage. A good backup is imperative in order to restore data from damaged or corrupted machines.

“Use Strong Passwords” is next. Names, birth dates, phone numbers, zip codes, addresses, and other commonly used passwords are easy to guess, and quick to find using some common hacker utilities. While hard to remember, passwords of at least six characters using a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and some punctuation marks is often considered as reasonably secure. Do not post copies of passwords where

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**“The three
most important
words in com-
puting are:
Backup,
Backup,
Backup”**

Continued from page 10 - Home Security

an intruder can easily find them.

“Use Care When Downloading and Installing Programs.” Many innocent looking programs may contain some sort of spyware, allowing third parties access to your information or computer. File sharing software, such as KaZaA and Morpheus are notorious for this. Spyware detectors and killers, such as the free Ad-Aware (www.lavasoftusa.com) and Spybot Search and Destroy (spybot.safer-networking.de) are excellent at this. Spyware detectors need to be updated periodically.

If a network is used, the recommendation to “Install and Use a Hardware Firewall” should be followed. Hardware firewalls protect networks from intrusion. These hardware firewalls can either be freestanding, or integrated with a network router.

Since files and other critical data can be compromised, users should “Install and Use a File Encryption Program and Access Controls”. Encryption makes it far more difficult for hackers and spyware to utilize any information stolen from the victim’s computer.

Completing the tasks listed on the CERT® site at www.cert.org/homeusers/HomeComputerSecurity will make your computer highly resistant to most threats, and allow for the restoration of critical data if the worst should happen. 6



Ira Wilsker

Currently: Association of Computer User’s Groups (APCUG) Board of Advisors (2nd term); Past President, Past Vice President Golden Triangle PC Club

History: Presenter on CyberCrime at Spring and Fall APCUG events; Host, computer call in show KLVI; President, Faculty Senate, Lamar Institute of Technology

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How to Choose a DVD Writer and Create DVD Disks

by Linda Gonse
Orange County IBMPC User’s Group
“Nibbles & Bits” Newsletter

DVD writers and recordable DVDs are a fairly new entry into Personal Computerland. Consequently, most of us still need to know what to look for in a DVD writer and how to record DVDs.

Almost everyone knows that a DVD is a type of optical disc that looks like a CD, but has a significantly larger storage capacity.

What you might not know is that the capacity of a DVD may vary depending on different physical formats technology, ranging from 4.7 GB to 17.1 GB. And, while CDs are recorded only on one side, some DVDs such as DVD-RAM, support two layers per side and are rewritable up to 100,000 times. (This type of DVD is enclosed in a plastic case similar to a floppy disk which protects its surfaces and provides a label area.)

Another reason DVD drives are growing in popularity is that they can read most CD media as well. With such impressive features, it isn't surprising that DVDs are expected to become the next CD-ROM. In many cases, manufacturers are even building new PCs with DVD drives instead of CD drives.

The DVD "started in 1994 as two competing formats, Super Disc (SD) and Multimedia CD (MMCD). DVD now is the result of an agreement by both camps on a single standard to meet the requirements of all the various industries involved," according to Deluxe Global Media Services (formerly Disctronics). But, media formats still split into two groups: + (plus), or - (known commonly as minus; manufacturers may refer to it as dash). The quality comparison is close, and some DVD players will recognize both, while other models will only accept + or -.

Although there are many aspects of DVDs that we still need to learn, one of the basic questions people inevitably ask is, "What do the letters in DVD mean?"

Continued on page 12.

Continued from page 11 -DVD Writer...Create.

The letters originally stood for Digital VideoDisc. As the technology gained in importance to the computer world, the word "video" was dropped, and the media and the technology was simply D-V-D. Later, it was given the name Digital Versatile Disc by the DVD Forum, which sets DVD standards. Most people just say D-V-D.

For an excellent overview of DVD technology and disks, history, specifications, formats, DVD-5, -10, -9, -18, hybrid formats, file systems, copy protection, and DVD Forum, go to http://www.disctronics.co.uk/technology/dvdintro/dvd_intro.htm. (Thanks to Merrick Iszatt, Deluxe Global Media Services, for permission to use their web site information in this article.)



The DVD writer is a Philips Jackrabbit JR32RWDVK — "Smart, Mobile, Multi Purpose, DVD Player, CD Rewriter / DVD Read Combo, Audio MP3 CD Player. The first 'All-in-One' device that converges your Home and PC environments."

Digital SIG?

SCUG is looking to startup a new Digital Technology Special Interest Group and is looking for a volunteer leader(s). If you have some experience with a digital camera etc. and are interested in helping get this SIG off the ground please contact:

**President of SCUG,
Pierre Houle
344-9051
president@scug.ca**

Please Note: Pierre is currently Windows SIG leader. Pierre is willing to lead the Digital SIG if anyone would be interested in leading the Windows SIG. SCUG is your club and it needs volunteers - please get involved!

INSIDE SCUG

Welcome to our New Members:

**Mike and Nancy Berry, Bruce Allen,
and Ian Campbell**

6 6 6

Welcome back for another year:

**Anne Miller, Gord Camano,
Steve Haywood,
Vi Henderson, Stanley Routley,
James Verdon,
Jon Vidler, and Joe Zatylny.**

6 6 6

As Pierre mentioned in the President's Perspective on the front page, "If you don't know...ask! That's what this group is all about...sharing information and knowledge."

Please don't forget your name tags - it helps!

6 6 6

**What To Do With *Old* Computers?
Are They Worth Trying To Fix,
Even Just For The Experience?
You Bet They Are!!!**

Anyone interested in discussing your old computer and what you can do with it? Or do you have an old hard drive that doesn't want to drive anymore, but seems to want to start. How about the motherboard with the broken RAM clips...well why not come out to SCUG;s Drop-In SIG and join in with other SCUG members - who are just like you - wanting to discuss various computer related problems and ideas.

This is a great way to learn for the novice and for the pro, well a good forum to show off your talents. All-in-all, this SIG is a very fun and educational session - and hey...IT'S FREE!!!

Editor's Note: See page four for more...

There's Something New Under This Sun

Jeffrey Harrow

This is an excerpt from "The Harrow Technology Report," a free multimedia technology journal written by Jeffrey Harrow, Principal of The Harrow Group. A more extensive version of this discussion, as well as others around the innovations and trends of computing and technology, are available at www.TheHarrowGroup.com.

'Big Brother' May Have An English Accent.

Commenting on several of our recent discussions that touched on "location awareness" (such as RFID tags, GPS in cell phones, security cameras and more), reader James Watts points out that a somewhat lower-tech version of personal surveillance, which is nevertheless sufficiently accurate for many needs, has now left the shady realms of spy novels and covert government agencies to walk the streets of London, and the hills and dales throughout the UK (which is already known for the greatest density of city surveillance cameras, in London).

It's available right now for anyone who wishes to pay a monthly fee of about thirty pounds.

Called "mapAmobile" (<https://www.mapamobile.com/> and <https://www.mapamobile.com/aboutproduct.php#1>), this service can locate any phone registered for the service on several of the UK's largest mobile phone networks. It doesn't require GPS chips in phones, but it uses "triangulation," single-tower-based location technologies, and related methods to determine the location of the designated-trackable phones. (And ONLY those phones. It says.)

(In order to designate a phone as "trackable," the person who owns the phone/account must explicitly opt-in and designate specifically who will be able to track them. So the tracked phone user doesn't forget that they're under Big Brother's thumb, the service periodically sends each tracked phone a "reminder" text message that they are being location-monitored, and by whom.)

The person doing the monitoring can find out the phone's location at any time via a text message query from his/her registered mobile phone, or from any telephone (requires a PIN), or from a Web site. Each such request costs 30 pence that is deducted from a balance maintained with the company. A typical response might be,

"Gemma is in the vicinity of Carnaby Street, London W1,' together with the date, time and accuracy of the location."

We Now Have The Technology, But...

Such a service could certainly be useful, say for keeping track of kids (who will likely rebel at just the age it could be most valuable), or elderly or mentally incapacitated people. But also for monitoring employees (which is not improbable - just ask many long-haul truckers

in the U.S. - their company always knows just where their trucks are...)

Note that similar services, such as this one from Pointer (http://www.pointersolutions.com/eng/hunting_dog_gps.htm), are already in place to keep track of your family pet -- a harness holds the equivalent of a GPS-enabled cell phone that can be queried remotely; it then gives you Fido's exact location, and even a "cookie crumb" trail of his movements while you're out hunting him down. I believe you can also converse with your pet over the phone portion of the device to sooth him. Or, if you have an unusually good relationship with your pet, to get him to participate in his rescue as you get near ("Fido - SPEAK")!

As suggested above, many businesses that issue cell phones to their employees might be interested in mapAmobile's services, and I see nothing that would restrict them from using it (it's their cell phone and their account with MapAMobile) -- even outside of working hours if they desired. Then, of course, there's the issue that government agencies (or nefarious hackers?) might have access to a non-public option that neglects to advise the tracked phone that it is indeed being tracked...

On Becoming An 'Open Book...'

I'm sure that you can think of additional values for such a service, both good and bad. But my point in bringing this up isn't to single out mapAmobile, but to remind us that these elements of Big Brother are ALREADY here, now, and that such services are not inherently "bad." Which of course makes determining what is socially acceptable vs. not, much more complex.

This particular example of a loss of privacy (if agreed-to and well-intentioned) may (MAY!) be an appropriate and acceptable tradeoff for some, or many, people and societies. But we shouldn't just allow such significant changes to our privacy to "sneak in." We should know about them; we should understand their pluses and minuses, and how they will affect the overall fabric of our society. Only through such knowledge can we assure that things don't go "too far" (however we choose to define that term in each of our very different societies.) And a comprehensive set of privacy laws, rather than today's startling mishmash (see <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/02/technology/circuits/02priv.html?th> for an example) might help.

We should each be educating ourselves, and our representatives to government. Because in many countries, such things are supposed to be under our control.

Let's just assure that we're not "surprised" by the outcome, least George Orwell begin nodding in his grave...

ISLAND INKJET



The Refill Guys!

RON AND KAREN RUPERT
Owner/Operator(s)

Lambton Mall
1380 London Road
Sarnia, ON, N7S 1P8
Tel: 519.542.0184 Fax 519.542.5917
lambtonmall@islandinkjet.com
www.islandinkjet.com

The Harrow Technology Report

This is an excerpt from "The Harrow Technology Report," a free multimedia technology journal written by Jeffrey Harrow, Principal of The Harrow Group. A more extensive version of this discussion, as well as others around the innovations and trends of computing and technology, are available at www.TheHarrowGroup.com .

Big Little Things

Commenting on our previous discussions of RFID tags and how huge retailers such as Wal-Mart have been planning a rapid adoption of the tags, reader Mike Donegan pointed out that Wal-Mart in fact backed-off from a planned massive "store shelf" test with Gillette. (They are, however, continuing to implement RFID tags for "back room" merchandise tracking - http://news.com.com/2100-1019_3-1023934.html?tag=techdirt).

Interestingly, from the tone of Wal-Mart spokesman Tom Williams' comments, I read between the lines to believe that it was the potential "privacy issues" that we've discussed in previous issues, rather than technological issues, that caused them to, for the moment, keep RFID tags off of individual products on the shelves:

"The [RFID-reading] shelf was never completely installed... We didn't want it. Any materials that were there (in Brockton, MA) were removed. We never had products with chips in them."

Given RFID tags' obvious benefits (which we'll further explore in a moment), I suspect that they or their equivalent will, eventually, find their way into consumer items. But this very public reversal by the largest U.S. retailer (following a similar reversal by Benetton) suggests that privacy concerns ARE being heard -- and listened to.

Ubiquity - Even Now.

Although you may not realize it, you've probably already been involved with Radio Frequency Identification tags (RFID tags). Some early crude versions are buried in the paper labels attached to video tapes and other merchandise. If the cashier hasn't intentionally "blown them out" by overdriving them during the checkout process (notice them waving your purchase over a special place on the counter?), the tag will set off an alarm when you pass through the security gate. (The tag has no battery

- its circuit is powered by the transmitter within the security gate as the RFID tag passes by, which causes it to transmit its existence, or the information it carries.)

Many early tags simply signaled that they exist, but more current tags each have a unique ID number embedded within them, and they transmit that number when they're queried. So not only do these tags announce that they're "there," but the computer monitoring the security gate knows exactly WHICH tag (and through an inventory database 'which explicit item') has left. And that may be very handy for future automated checkout schemes where you simply roll your full grocery basket through the gates: each item in the basket spews forth its ID, and your credit card is debited automatically. (I do hope that as this is implemented, they build frames full of open grocery bags into the carts -- that way there's never an unloading at all, other than lifting the full bags out of the cart and into the car. Of course, we will have to learn not to pack the bread at the bottom of a bag...)

These Are SMALL!

Early tags were fairly large, such as the paper labels, or those annoying pincer-like plastic clamps often found on clothing. But not for a while now. Brought to our attention by reader Don Lyle, in 2001 Hitachi announced an RFID chip that was only .4mm square. It did require the attachment of an external antenna, but it was still pretty small. Now though, they've improved upon the design by using on-chip bump-metallization technology to form an internal antenna so that no external antenna is required at all!

These literally 'speck of dust' sized chips simply work as-is (no power supply needed - remember?), and they can easily be embedded in just about anything from videotapes, to food packages, to individual dollar bills, and even into clothing. (<http://www.hitachi.com/News/cnews/030902.html>)

(Hummm -- These chips are already SO small, that I wonder what would happen if (when?) you breathe one in or ingest it in some food. Are YOU then traceable forever...? Now that YOU are "chipped," the checkout gates will record the ID of YOUR chip along with the IDs of those chips in the products you're purchasing. Then, a small comparison of purchase databases could easily identify YOU, even if you pay by cash. From then on, the wide network of such chip sensors would automatically track your every move...)

Fascinating technology. Of course as I suggested above, such "traceability," if carried too far, could have negative implications for free societies. So as is the case

Continued on page 17.

ADOBE ACROBAT Version 6.0 Standard Edition

A Program Review
by Val Conway

SCUG Membership Secretary
membership@scug.ca

Here is a little background on Acrobat and the free Acrobat Reader:

ADOBE ACROBAT is the program which converts a file from any program into the PDF (Portable Document Format) file. The resulting PDF file keeps the look of the original document and can be read by anyone who has the free Acrobat Reader installed. Version 6, Standard Edition, which is covered in this review is used for Creating and Reviewing. For those requiring more specialized features there is a Professional Edition.

ADOBE ACROBAT READER is a free program available for download online. It allows everyone who doesn't have the Acrobat program to read and print PDF files but only the Acrobat program itself can manipulate the data. To get the benefit of all the newest features Acrobat Reader should be updated as new versions are available.

Adobe Acrobat V. 6 Standard comes in a box which included two CD's containing Acrobat V. 6 Standard and the Acrobat Reader V. 6 and a small "Getting Started Guide" but no printed manual. I thought I was doomed but I took out the CD and the installation went smoothly. The first thing I did was open the Acrobat's Help file. WOW! This help file was exactly like a printed manual right down to the index and table of contents but I didn't have to turn pages because everything linked and I didn't have to store another big manual. Looking at the help file itself let me see how many of the features of the program would act before I even got started.

Toolbars were very clearly marked and one click would give a drop down menu with all the choices I needed. Once a choice was made the menu retracted keeping the working space clear. The left side of the screen holds tabs for accessing bookmarks, layers, pages, signatures,

and comments. Clicking on the tab opens the related panel on the left hand side.

There is nothing like a project to get me excited about a new piece of software so I started by creating a book from various file formats including documents from a wordprocessor, database, spreadsheet, desk top publishing, scanned images, and web pages. From the Microsoft Office programs PDF files could be created with a click of the mouse. When using other programs PDF files are created by printing to "Adobe PDF" that was installed as a printer file during installation. These documents are not actually printed to paper but saved as a PDF file. Then Acrobat's "Create a PDF using Multiple Files" was used to put the documents in order and create one large PDF file. Once the book was together I made links to the table of contents sections, added hyperlinks to web pages and put in headers and footers to add a consistent look. In a very short time my book was complete.

Making complex documents easily is the most important feature of Acrobat. Genealogy is my hobby and with Acrobat I have been able to put together many documents and charts on families and send them off by e-mail. At the other end those viewing the documents see them formatted as I intended and they can navigate and search easily with the free Acrobat Reader.

Creating PDF files from Web pages is another great advantage for anyone doing any kind of research and the bonus is it's simplicity and smaller files. I tested the S.C.U.G. Web Page and the file was about two-thirds the size of the original html files. With a click of "Create PDF from a Web Page" I put in the url and checked off the number of links I wanted, and Acrobat immediately started converting everything into a fully searchable PDF document with all the links intact.

To test this, I went to <http://www.familysearch.com> and searched for my ancestor Joseph Blair and the results of that search became part of the finished PDF document. Then I linked to

another site and those became part of this one document. When I finished I decided what I wanted to keep and deleted the unwanted pages and my project was complete and all my search results were in one place. The file was now small enough that I could e-mail it to someone else.

"Genealogy is my hobby and with Acrobat I have been able to put together many documents and charts on families and send them off by e-mail." - Val Conway.

Continued on page 16.

Adobe Acrobat Review - Con't. from page 15.

Creating a PDF from a Scanner is also very helpful and easy. The scanned documents can also be put together and made searchable.

Added to this are many tools contained within the program to assist with reviewing and proof reading for groups of people who have Acrobat. The Reviewers submissions can be tracked while they make corrections, insertions, deletions and comments in time-stamped notes. These comments can be sorted and displayed by reviewer, status, or checked state (done or not done). If you have Word 2000 there is an added ability of bringing the reviewed document into Word with all the comments displayed next to the text they reference.

Acrobat 6 surprised me with the ability to add sounds by attaching a WAV or AIFF sound to denote a comment or a verbal comment with a microphone.

Lastly, we are all worried about security these days and Acrobat has covered those bases too. The PDF files can be protected with 128-bit encryption passwords to prevent unauthorized people from viewing sensitive documents or viewing may be allowed but printing and changing may be restricted. Even the reviewers can have restrictions.

As with all their other products Adobe offers much in the way of tutorials and valuable information at their site. I had no need to contact the support site because the documentation and program worked as it should however I do know from past experience that Adobe provides much help when needed. In my opinion the only thing stopping more people from owning Acrobat is the high price for home users but the price is not unreasonable for office use. Now that I have experienced the program and what it can do for me I will never want to be without it. In my opinion this one is a winner. 6

Adobe Systems Inc.

345 Park Ave., San Jose, CA 95110-2704 <http://www.adobe.com> \$299.00 US System Requirements for Windows: Intel® Pentium® processor/ Microsoft® Windows® 98 SE, Windows NT® Workstation 4.0 with Service Pack 6, Windows 2000 Pro with Service Pack 2, Windows XP Pro or Home, or Windows XP Tablet PC Edition / Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.01 / 64MB of RAM (128MB recommended) / 220MB of available hard-disk space / 800x600 screen resolution / CD-ROM drive Also available for Macintosh.

SHAREWARE CD

SCUG Shareware Librarian

Dan Bilger

library@scug.ca

Welcome to the new "SHAREWARE CD" This months program is "CD ROLLER." There is a 14 day trial period and a cost to buy if you like it of \$24.50 US.

CDRoller is a powerful, easy-to-use, and low-cost toolset for CD data recovery. The program finds, retrieves, and copies the lost data from CDs that seems to be inaccessible for Windows standard tools. It effectively retrieves the data from the discs created by drag-and-drop CD-writing software; it recovers CD data created by Sony digital cameras that record directly onto discs; it retrieves CD data from scratched, damaged, or defective discs; it extracts tracks from audio CDs; it tests CD readability; and it extracts ISO image files. All features are integrated into a common intuitive shell similar to Windows Explorer. TO INSTALL Open CD, October, run CDroller433."

September: "Open Office" Freeware Office Suite.

Please Note: Next month bring the CD back with you and exchange it for another CD with a new program loaded on it. Repeat this procedure each month. If you forget to bring your CD back next month you can get another CD for the nominal price of \$1.00.

Also, you keep the CD that you get at the last meeting in June. This CD will contain the entire year of the SCUG SHAREWARE LIBRARY programs.

Non-members can purchase a CD for only \$2.00, however when you do become a SCUG member you will then receive the full CD included with the price of your membership.6

Editor's Note: Please see the older Shareware programs on the last page of this paper. Also, Dan has informed me that the older Shareware reference on the back page "should remain for one more month and then it can be dropped."

Continued from page 14 - Harrow Report.

with most technologies, we need to carefully understand the risk/benefit tradeoffs of RFID tags as we begin to implement them into our societies. They (and other technologies) may turn out to be totally benign to a given society. Or they may clearly be beyond the pale. Or, it may turn out that the risk/benefit tradeoff may still weigh in on the side of implementing the technologies -- with appropriate controls. But we don't want to "fall into" such decisions with our eyes wide shut; we want to make those decisions with a wide panoply of knowledgeable eyes very wide open.

Because, after all, we will have to quite literally live with the results of our actions (or inactions).

More On 'Security.'

By the way, the broad world of "security," of which RFID tags are just one tiny player, similarly requires such careful thought. I recently read a new book by security expert Bruce Schneier called "Beyond Fear" (<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0387026207/>), which I found to be an interesting and very readable exploration of "security" in general (not specifically computer security, although that does find its way in).

The book demystified some of the 'security mystique,' it helped me to understand a rational way to look at and talk about security as a whole, and it used many anecdotes from the world around us to demonstrate "security theater" vs. "security reality."

Bruce provides a voice of thoughtful reason in the murky "security" world. I recommend "Beyond Fear" if you have an interest in this pervasive and important area.

*Jeff can be reached at
EmailatJeff@TheHarrowGroup.com.
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Jeffrey R. Harrow, all rights reserved.*

FOR SALE

Digital camera, (352x288), \$20.00
128 meg. SDRAM, \$30.00
TV Capture Card \$30.00
Norm
542-5757

Grandma's on the Net!

Grandma used to make us cherry pies
and call us on the phone.
She would talk to us for hours; now
she leaves us all alone.

We miss her homemade biscuits and
I'll make this little bet -
If you want to contact Grandma,
you'll have to surf the net.

Grandma's surfin' the net, yes, she's
surfin' the net.
We've been calling her all morning
and we haven't got her yet.

She's on her e-mail network with all
her electronic friends.
If you want to talk to Grandma,
you'll have to surf the net.

Grandma's never surfed at Malibu or
caught a wave at Waikiki.
She's never seen a surf board; hang
ten doesn't mean a thing, you see.

She's never met a beach bum;
to her Moon Doggie is just a pup.
But when she heads to her computer,
you know the surf is up.

Grandma's getting older and her eyes
are getting dim.
Her random access memory is
half of what it's been.

When St. Peter comes to call,
she'll say I can't go yet.
He'll have to wait on Grandma,
'cause Grandma's surfin' the net.

- written by just another old Grandma -

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this review as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. This review is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member.

SPOTLIGHT ON SHAREWARE

Favorites Search is a browser plug-in that adds the ability to search within your Favorites. Works with all major browsers but may take some "finding" after initial installation. Give it a word and it will find all Favorites containing it. Very handy if you have a lot of favorites/bookmarks. Freeware.

Ad Muncher is a program which removes adverts, popups and general browsing annoyances including background music, javascript alerts, mouse modification and even non-advert material from all popular browsers and web-utilizing programs (as well as most banner-displaying and popup-generating programs). Options to mask page requests, preventing tracking and IP Scramble feature to hide where you are connected from. Shareware -- 30 days free, \$15US.

Restoration restores files which are deleted from the recycle bin or deleted while holding down the Shift key by mistake. Conversely, this program has another function that makes it almost impossible to restore all deleted files. **RAM Defrag** is a tool that monitors and defragments your system's RAM at any given time. The intelligent defrag routines will give you a significant speed bonus, and reliable performance even on exotic configurations. **EmailStripper** removes the >> 's from e-mail and even helps reformat snippets pasted from the WWW. All three programs are FREEWARE.

Aida is similar to Belarc Advisor - it collects detailed information about your computer system, both hardware and software. Had I discovered Aida first, I wouldn't have offered Belarc Advisor. Aida is extremely detailed in the info it provides, even producing a browser-readable report with hot links to the makers of your 'wares for support and/or drivers! No installation, it'll run right from the floppy disk. FREEWARE.

POPfile is an e-mail classifier. It positions itself between your POP3 e-mailer (Outlook Express, Pegasus, Eudora, Netscape Mail, etc.) and your ISP mailserver. Choose your mail categories and POPfile applies the tags which you can then use to filter your mail (spam, infected, "ok", etc.). It uses Bayesian logic so you don't have to keep writing new filters. The best tool yet in the war against spam. Freeware.

Xmas02 will unpack two separate interactive animated Christmas cards into a Xmas folder on your desktop. Run them anytime from there or send them to your friends either separately or together. Merry Christmas from the Sarnia Computer Users' Group!

Digital Camera Enhance is a free tool that helps you clean up your photos, whether you have a digital camera or not. With a push of a button, it automatically reduces noise, performs skin smoothing, and adjusts color balance. If an image is already fine, you won't see much of a difference. Sliders for Auto Balance, Midtones, Color, Enhancement Details, and De-noising let you make precise adjustments. BMP, JPG, PCX, PNG, TGA, TIF, WMF, and PAX formats.

TRACE.BAT is an MS-DOS batch process which uses standard network query utilities to work up a handy report on a given Internet address. It does so automatically and fairly quickly, in a simple format and in a logical sequence. It provides a report in plain text which it opens in Notepad when done. It gives some screen feedback while in process. All the user needs is one of the following: an IP address, a hostname, an email address or a URL. It's a sort of super-WHOIS utility. Win9x,ME.

BelArc Advisor, WinErrs BelArc Advisor builds a detailed profile of your installed software and hardware. It runs on Windows 95/98/Me, NT4, Win2k and XP, and in just a minute or so creates a local web page containing a rundown of all the hardware in and attached to your system, plus information on all the installed software including license and version numbers. Makes a handy Reference! **WinErrs** is a database of 1,554 Windows error codes and their definitions. These codes are extracted directly from Microsoft Windows and are their descriptions. Both are FREEware.

Star Loader v1.05 This super speedy manager will split the file up, resulting in a much faster download time. You can also resume broken downloads (perfect for 56k folks) and it comes with it's own unzipper. "Download speeds are further increased by downloading the file from the fastest mirror sites. With the scheduler, you may download files at certain times of the day. Star Downloader may also automatically connect to your ISP and hangup upon completion of downloads." Integrates with IE, Netscape or Opera as well as with command line virus scanners for automatic scanning on completion of the download. FREEware and no spyware!

Drive Rescue [Win9x,ME,NT,2k] can find and restore lost and deleted data on your hard disk even if the partition table is lost! Lost data that is the result of a system crash can also be recovered. Recover important file system tables of your hard disk, including partition table, boot record, FAT and file/directory records.

Total Uninstall monitors any changes made to your system during installation of a new software product and allows you to perform a complete uninstall without having to rely on the supplied uninstall program (which may leave files or changes behind). The program takes before and after snapshots of your system and all changes are displayed in a nice, graphical tree view. Total Uninstall will save these changes and if you decide to uninstall the application, it will reverse all changes to the previous state. FREEware.

FProt Updater Win9x, ME, [Free]. The hardest part of using F-Prot for beginners was keeping it updated. Now that is no longer the case! This simple utility checks for and then downloads and installs any updated F-Prot files! Run it from a desktop shortcut or run it from a 'Link' button on your browser bar. Dials up if not online. On the first use, it downloads and installs ALL F-Prot files so you can use this even if you've never used F-Prot before and don't yet have it installed!

Startup Control Panel [90k] W9x FREE Shows all sources of programs run at boot-up and allows you to toggle them on or off, add or remove others.

Startup Programs List is a stand-alone browsable database of most common start-up programs found to load at boot up and advice as to their necessity (or lack thereof).

Utility Disks - \$1.00 each diskette

1. Utility disk containing Power Archiver, F-Prot Updater and several other useful tools. (2-diskette set - \$2)
2. Clean boot disk (for virus checking).
3. SCUG Handbook and Constitution.

Editor's Note: *This is the last month for this page.*