



SCUG REPORT



Award Winning Newsletter & Website
Published for the Sarnia Computer Users' Group

www.scug.ca

Volume 22, Issue 3

\$1.00 Per Issue - Yearly Membership \$35

November 2004

IN THIS ISSUE

Club Information	2
Secretary's Notes	3
Compuprize Winners	4
Shareware Report	4
SIG Reports	5
Finacial Report.....	6
TID BITS	7
Ira Wilsker - SP2.....	8
SCUG Gets Request.....	9
Remove Spyware.....	10
Review - Paul Witheridge.....	11
Ten Commandments.....	13
Genalogy - Do It No.....	15
GPS Final Part.....	17
Review - Bill Colotelo.....	19
Information Tear/Off page.....	22

SCUG EVENTS

JANUARY 2005 GENERAL MEETING

“Sean Hanlon, the manager of our local Staples and some associates, are doing a demo on the newest technology available. Staples will also be offering a door prize at this meeting.”

SCUG CAR POOL

SCUG members are trekking to the computer show this month. If you want to join in on this venture contact Norm Lamoureux at nlamoure@ebtech.net

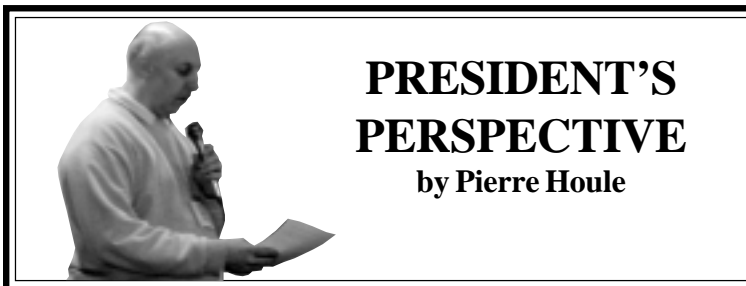
See page 22.

SPECIAL NOTE

YES there is a Digital SIG meeting **next month**: December 1st.
see page 5.



Don't forget your camera!



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Pierre Houle



With December just a few days away, many of us are (or should be) thinking of the holiday season. What to get your loved ones for Christmas? Perhaps a high-tech gadget? One word describes the latest trend: convergence. Camera phones, Internet (voip) phones, camera PDAs, media centre computers,

Internet over power lines...you get the idea. Just remember to keep the receipt just in case.

Is it just my imagination, or is Spyware getting out of control?

Recently, I have serviced several computers that were literally unable to run because of spyware and viruses. Many users are oblivious to prevention measures, and cannot understand why their state of the art computer is so slow.

Please pass the word to your less knowledgeable friends! As user group members, we have an obligation to educate others! Please promote firewalls, like Zone Alarm, spyware removers like Spybot S&D and Ad-Aware SE, and most importantly, tell users not to download, click on, or agree to any software, toolbar or freeware without reading the ULA or the fine print.

Avoid file-sharing schemes unless you are absolutely sure they are legitimate. If in doubt, contact the scuglist.

Please remember that there will be no General meeting or Windows meeting in December. There will be a Graphics meeting December 3rd.

Finally, I would like to wish every one of you and your families the very best holiday cheer. Enjoy, and be at peace. Please think of the less fortunate, and donate to the charity of your choice.

**Sarnia Computer Users' Group Est. 1982
2004 - 2005 Club Officers**

President	Pierre Houle	president@scug.ca
Vice President	Iain Smy	vicepresident@scug.ca
Treasurer	Dorothy Alexander	treasurer@scug.ca
Recording Secretary	Tom Deeprose	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

VISIT SCUG ONLINE: www.scug.ca

(SIG) Special Interest Group Leaders

Digital Photography	- Fred Abma	- digital@scug.ca
Windows Group	- Pierre Houle	- windows@scug.ca

**SCUG Report
Editorial Department
editor@scug.ca**



Greg West - Editor



Vic Sterry
Proofreader

SCUG Report looks forward to member's articles and reviews for publication. Please submit via email to: editor@scug.ca - Please note that all SCUG reviews will be handled by Bill Colotelo, SCUG's Review Coordinator. Bill sends the companies a copy of the review of their product. Anyone, who has submitted something for publication in this paper will receive an acknowledgment of receipt and a PDF copy of their draft. If you have not received an email from us please contact editor@scug.ca

Sarnia Computer Users' Group
718 Cathcart Blvd.
Sarnia, Ontario
N7V 2N5
Email: info@scug.ca
Internet Site: www.scug.ca

Please submit articles for the January SCUG Newsletter before January 16th. to: editor@scug.ca.

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

SCUG MEETING

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

WHEN?

Last Wednesday Each Month
7:00 p.m. social time
7:30 p.m. call to order

**Next Meeting
January 26, 2005**

**SCUG Editorial
Policy**

*The SCUG accepts no
responsibility for errors
or omissions in this
newsletter.*

*Advertisements are
paid for and should not
be considered as en-
dorsements by SCUG.*



Your Secretary's Notes

by Tom Deeprose
secretary@scug.ca

SCUG Executive Meeting, Nov 1st, 2004 at St. James' Church, 140 Lansdowne Rd. North. Dan & Greg sent regrets.

1. Membership Report. Val reported that, as of today, membership stood at 134

(89 Members and 45 Associates) with 3 Members and 3 Associate renewals, 2 new Members and 2 lapsed Memberships. Attendance at the last meeting was 67, including 4 guests, an excellent turnout. Newsletters - it was decided to continue with a printing of 100 for our November Meeting.

2. Vice President's Input: Iain-Nothing from this post at this point, see item 8. Webmaster

3. Secretary's Input. Newsletter pick-up and distribution working smoothly.

4. Treasurer's Report - Dorothy. A minor billing error for the NLs sorted out. The money order sent to ACPUG is still to be received by them; hopefully it is simply slow mail. Dorothy is following closely. Both Sept. and Oct. Financial Statements accepted, but we will only publish October's.

5. Software Library Report - Dan. Oct. 48 CDs were given out and Sept. 32 CDs received. One CD was sold to a member and one to a new member plus a Utility CD. Index to this year's software has been included in the CD. It was suggested that adding the month of issue to each item would help finding it. This months DOM still to be chosen. SP2 discs from Microsoft were given away with the DOM to XP users. We have one left. An enquiry about a source of educational CDs to another club has not proven productive.

6. Meeting Program. Jim Greenshield's presentation on Photoshop CS was very well received. Jim successfully aimed to be both informative and simple to appeal to members unaware of the power of this software. He illustrated the techniques with both tuition standards and personal photos. For November Bill Colotelo with his LP to CD. For January-Someone from Staples on what is new in the gadget world. For February-Dorothy on Buying and Selling on eBay. For March-Craig Hunt on Landscaping/Floor Plans. For April? Ebtech. For May-Scott Elliott on? etc.

7. Newsletter Editor: There has been a noticeable improvement in the quality and service with our new printer, Staples, a most satisfactory situation.

8. Webmaster. Iain. Situation stable. Many international hits as before, with an average of about 32 hits/day from both home and abroad. In addition, there were 2 new website and newsletter signups and the mailing list now has 30 subscribers and is quite busy.

9. Program Co-coordinator & Accommodations-Bill- On the latter, status quo. Several program reviews in the pipeline: PhotoElements, AKVIS Stamp1.1, Photo Album 2.0, Disk Uneraser 2.01, Pro Shop Gold, Better JPEG 1.3 and a book Digital Photo Hacks. A delay in publishing a review on SpinRite was due to it not reaching the editor due to an e-mail mix-up. Apologies to the reviewer, Paul Witheridge. It should, of course, be re-emphasized that any member is free to review any program from any supplier as a private project. However, to make it official SCUG business and have it published in the Newsletter, which is usually the aim of the supplier, it must always be co-ordinated by Bill so he can approve and prioritize the request and arrange the review

10. Promotions. Norm listed current compuprizes. Two optical mouses, Mail Washer CD, Display Resolution CD, MapQuest for Dummies Book, Ms Technet, MS T-shirt, Paper packs and an Adobe plugin. It was decided to offer a number of dated prizes on a first come, first served basis on the NL table and to hold a 50/50 draw at the Nov. Meeting. Approval was given to buy two \$25 gift certificates from Staples for future prizes.

11. SIG News and Ideas. Digital-Going strong under Fred with still camera work at the next theme. Windows-Still popular. Spam control next topic, Popfile and Mailwasher etc. Genealogy-Group currently in abeyance.

12. New Business- The possibility of using mandatory volunteers for jobs such as setting up the chairs etc. was discussed. Iain will follow up with an announcement to the members at the Nov. Meeting and will devise a sign-up sheet for people to record their preferred dates for these duties. A problem with "drop-ins" not signing in at SIGs was aired. It was suggested that the sign-up sheet be circulated at the meetings in addition to just signing upon entry.

13. Old Business- Many Thanks to Ann Miller for filling in for the absent Treasurer, Kathy Witheridge for graciously agreeing to look after the coffee and Vic Sterry, the first member to volunteer as this year's Newsletter proof-reader. Permission for using a lawn sign on day of meeting was obtained from the Church Elders. Suitable wording was debated (Computer Meeting Tonight, 7 p.m., Guests Welcome, Rear Entrance). Iain will look into the cost of something suitable. Pierre voted in the ACPUG election for the well-qualified Canadian candidate.

**Next Executive Meeting
November 29th**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Stats as of

90 Members + 45 Associates = 135 Total Membership
 New Members.....2 Members + 0 Associates
 Renewals..... 4 Members + 3 Associates Lapsed
 Memberships.....1 Member + Associate
 Guests.....4 Guests
 Total Meeting Attendance....67
 Papers Printed 5 left



**SHAREWARE
CD
SCUG Librarian**

Dan Bilger
library@scug.ca

Welcome to SCUG. We have finished the first year of the Shareware CD. I heard one constructive criticism to add a text file to let you know what was on the CD. I will be implementing that this year. If there are other ideas that I have not thought of please let me know along with favourite programs that you think others in the club might enjoy or find useful.

This month, November: Some Christmas fun including a Christmas Screen saver and a couple of games DUOtris: Truly original and hugely addictive arcade puzzle action, featuring twists, surprises, 2 game styles, 4 game speeds, powerups, an online highscore system & much, much more. Choose from either Arcade Mode's fast paced, powerup enhanced gameplay or Classic Modes slower, more strategic but equally challenging puzzling. DUOtris - Double the puzzle, double the addiction, double the fun; and Hex: Hex is a Tetris game based on hexagonal cells, thus making the game more addictive and a bit more difficult.

October: Starter 5.6.1.38 Highly configurable and easy to use utility for managing your windows startup. One can choose which programmes are allowed to run when Windows is starting up. Disable an annoying application in one click of mouse! Terminate an unwanted or hanging process, even a Windows service. Freeware among a lot of analogues.

September: on the CD, you will find: Mozilla: (formerly Netscape navigator) Deepnet Explorer: the first web browser to offer fully integrated P2P file sharing capabilities and a built-in RSS/ATOM news reader.

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 wait until the following month or you can get another CD for the nominal price of \$1.00 .

Please Note: Ta-Da, at the June meeting. This CD will contain the entire year of the SCUG SHAREWARE LIBRARY programs and it is yours to keep. 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. Utility Disks - \$1.00 each diskette.

Spotlight on Shareware

There is a link on SCUG's www.scug.ca where you can download any of the programs that were listed in the Spotlight on Shareware in past issues of this Newsletter.

Please go to the SCUG website under:
"Other Areas - DOWNLOADS"

Welcome to New Members:

Donald Urry and David Johnston

Welcome back to our renewals:

Mike & Nancy Berry, Cary & Karen Thacker, Pat & Harold Carter, and Joe Zatylny.



Compuprize Winners

Here are the winners from
October's Draw



Tom Deprose , Photoshop Tutorial, Gutenberg CD and MS T shirt

Pat Carter , Adobe Plug in and MS Tshirt

Dick Carpani , Photoshop CS book

Special Interest Groups
SIG REPORTS



Windows SIG
Pierre Houle
windows@scug.ca

Huge Turnouts at Windows SIG

Thirty Five people attended the November Windows SIG, including two guests.

Pierre started the meeting with information about Spam: a definition, why we get it, and how to combat it. Most of those attending related their spam complaints, and various strategies were discussed.


Iain installed and configured Popfile on the club laptop, with the help of various members. A question and answer session occupied the second hour of the meeting. Many topics were discussed.

For a more comprehensive synopsis, please check the website.


The next Windows SIG meeting will be January 20th, 7:00 P.M. at Grace United Church, room 10, located at the corner of Indian and Cathcart. The January meeting topic will be: How to clean up your hard drive of useless files, and of course, Q and A.



Sorry we do not have any donuts or coffee at the Window's SIG. But we do have a lot of interesting discussions about the evolving world of computers and the associated problems. Please come out and tell us your computer horror stories - we love them!



Digital SIG
Fred Abma
digitalsig@scug.ca



Notes from our October Digital Meeting held at St. James Church at 140 N. Lansdowne at 7 P.M.

**Portrait photographing,
the professional method.
SCUG members get a
hands-on style seminar.**

Thirty-six people signed in plus Pierre, Robert and Fred. After the welcome, Pierre explained the guest and membership guidelines. Guests are always welcome but it is suggested that guest become members after three free meetings. Iain Smy asked for volunteers to help with setting up and returning the room to normal.

Next, I explained that the meeting was a workshop type meeting with opportunities to take pictures with tungsten lights. I suggested that members find the menu controls in their cameras to turn off the flash.

Next, I suggested that in order to take proper colour pictures with tungsten light the white balance (WB in my camera) should be set to tungsten lighting. My camera shows a symbol of a light bulb. Robert was an excellent model and many photographers took pictures of him using one light and a reflector for good portrait lighting.

I suggested that portrait pictures should be taken at the telephoto setting of the lens. The second set-up was with two lights with flowers and a black background, which gave photographers some difficulties with exposure because they included too much black background. We finished the meeting with a question and answer time.

NEXT MONTH'S MEETING: There will be four set-ups to take pictures and I have plans to have it better organized so there will be more opportunities to take pictures. Members may bring their own items to be photographed. Members will learn how to use the macro setting on the camera and how to use the over and under exposure control. How about photos of Christmas lights?

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, December 1, 2004 - bring your camera!

**SARNIA COMPUTER USERS' GROUP
FINANCIAL SUMMARY
as of April 30, 2004**

% OF BUDGET YEAR	CURRENT Month Y.T.D.	BUDGET Y. T. D.
-----------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------------------

This information is for members only.



Many Reasons to be a SCUG Member

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| * Special Interest Groups | * Meeting Cancellation Notification |
| * S.C.U.G. REPORT | * Local Discounts |
| * Want Ad | * Earn 1 Month Free Membership |
| * Paid Advertising | * Join in on Software Reviews |
| * Disk of the Month | * Executive Postions |
| * Utility Disks (Set of 2 Disks) | * E-mail Reminders |
| * Members Only Web Pages | * Special E-Mails |

FOR FULL INFORMATION ON SCUG BENEFITS SEE www.scug.ca

SCUG MEMBERS SAVE - UP TO \$60 AT EBTech

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

- * Contact Val Conway (membership@scug.ca) to be on the EBTech Discount List.
- * With your next EBTech renewal, simply identify yourself as a SCUG Member
- * Val 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

- * Upgrade your existing account and you can apply the discount immediately!

TID BITS



Collected by
Greg West - SCUG Editor

Please send your Tid Bits, or interesting web sites
to: editor@scug.ca

Internet Explorer has new foe Firefox 1.0 beats Microsoft browser in several areas

MOZILLA's Firefox launched the much-awaited version 1.0 of the Firefox browser November 9, 2004.

Award-winning Web Experience

The Mozilla Firefox browser has already garnered rave reviews and awards for its stability, trustworthiness and innovative features.

Pop-up Blocking - Firefox includes an integrated pop-up blocker that lets users-not websites-choose when they will view pop-ups. Mozilla continues to set the standard in assisting users avoid annoying pop-ups.

Online Fraud Protection - Firefox helps users protect themselves against online fraud such as "phishing" (attempts to trick users into giving away their passwords) and "spoofing" (fraudulent sites masquerading as popular, trusted sites) by clearly displaying the true identity of secure sites.

Faster, Easier, More Accessible Search - Firefox tightly integrates support for leading search services into the toolbar, including Google search, Yahoo!, eBay, Amazon, Dictionary.com, Creative Commons, and more. The new Firefox Start Page also provides access to Firefox information, resources and application tips, coupled with an integrated Google search box.

More Efficient Browsing - Firefox's innovative Tabbed Browsing allows many web pages to load within the same window, improving the speed and utility of web browsing. Firefox also introduces Live Bookmarks, which allows users to easily glance through the latest news and blog headlines.

Extensible with Hundreds of Add-ons - More than 100

extensions are available for Firefox today, including the A9.com, Google, and Yahoo! toolbars, which make Firefox even more customizable and convenient to use. Easy Migration - With Firefox it's easy to switch from Internet Explorer and other browsers. Firefox imports your existing bookmarks, passwords, cookies, and other data" (Mozilla). Many leading computer reports are praising Firefox and say that IE should pay attention.

"Firefox has won praise from some Internet experts for being more innovative than Microsoft's Internet Explorer and less susceptible to malicious programs that routinely attack the Microsoft browser."

<http://business.newsfactor.com>

Do yourself a favour today and read up on this great innovative and updated BROWSER: www.mozilla.org

Asking Santa for Something Digital? Research It First

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO STAY IN THE DARK ROOM ANYMORE there is great help out there!

www.dpreview.com/ is a site I use quite often to start my search about a certain digital camera and some how-tos. In their "Learn" box you can get information on, Specific Cameras, a Glossary, Image Techniques (which I found neat), Lighting, Photography Techniques (another great section) and of course printing for those who have lots of money LOL.

Seriously, I have been receiving their newsletter for about a year now and it helps keep one abreast on the new stuff coming out and the various reviews that are coming on board. Also, there is a "Forums" section where one can find "real people" comments on their cameras and other items. Also, you can ask questions, such as one guy asked about laptop buying, the good-bad and what else to look for...great stuff here! This the "Message thread" section where questions are asked and answered from cameras, burners, computers, to even Spyware talk. In fact, this Message thread is too vast to mention here, but it is a must see for anyone needing scads of info. Check the site out...you will not be wasting your time! www.dpreview.com/

DEFRAGGING: Defrag the best way...do it in SAFE MODE. This was mentioned by Paul Witheridge at the Windows SIG November 18th. "To get into safe mode press the F8 key on windows start up." (Paul).

ADAWARE SE: There is a new **upgrade to Adaware available now...a must have:** Adaware SE. www.lavasoftusa.com/software/adaware. You will find many more invaders now with this upgrade. SCUG members have found up to 400 spyware, even after using Spybot Search and Destroy!



What Time Is It? Set Your PC Clock

by Ira Wilsker

APCUG Board of Directors and
Columnist for The Examiner, Beaumont, TX

I get a lot of emails that have an incorrect time stamp on them, placed there by their computers that have an incorrect time and date. I was asked on my radio show, "So what's the big deal about having a wrong time and date on my computer?"

There are several reasons for having a correct time and date on your computer. One reason is that if your computer has an incorrect date and time, and you send email with that incorrect time, it may not be noticed by the recipient and remain unread, or it may be filtered out by some spam filters. I sort my incoming email by date so I will always see the newest messages first. If the sender has a clock that is set "slow", then that email will not be near the top of my list, and if the clock is too slow, then I may not see the message at all because it may show up as an old, out of date message. Since many spammers purposely set the date and time either far in advance, or far in the past, so that their spam email always appears first or last on an email list, many of the spam filters delete emails that are extremely off in their dates and times.

Another reason to have a correct date and time is to better enable searches on your own computer. Almost all versions of Windows have had as a search function "date and time" to find files created, accessed, or modified in a specific time frame. If downloaded or shared files are received with a correct time, and the computer clock is significantly off, there may be discrepancies making some file searches difficult.

Many professionals bill their clients based on time, and those that use their computers to bill the time need an accurate time on their computers in order to bill accurately. There may also be legal ramifications in having a correct or incorrect time on the computer. I recently did a forensic analysis on a computer involved in a legal case, and there was a question explicitly about when certain things were done with the computer. The defendant in the case was a professional engineer, and billed clients for his computer time, using a utility expressly for that purpose. He used a program that frequently checked his computer clock against the official government time (www.time.gov), and logged any differences, which were slight. Since his computer clock was accurate, always within a second during the period in question, there was

evidence so strong in his favor that the case was dropped. If his computer clock had been significantly off, there may have been a strong case against him, as a key piece of defense evidence would have been missing.

There are several reasons for computer clocks not having the correct time. Some computer users never set their computer clock, similar to the flashing "12:00" on many VCRs. I have worked on computers that had the wrong time zone set, simply because the user never reset the time zone and clock after it was purchased, and still had the default time zone set by the manufacturer. Many computers lose time on their computer clocks due to a well documented interference with the clock from some "soft modems", "controllerless" modems, or "WinModems" that sap processing power from the CPU chip while online. A symptom of this is sometimes a "jerky" cursor that does not move across the screen smoothly while online. Another reason for losing time on a computer clock is a weak battery in the computer. Most users are unaware that there is a small battery in their computers, often a watch or calculator battery, which powers the CMOS chip while the computer is turned off. While some newer computers use a small rechargeable battery, which has a longer but still limited life, the typical computer battery may only last for a few years until it must be replaced. One necessary proviso is that the user should use one of several utilities to back up the CMOS data before replacing the battery, or the system defaults will be used. After replacing the battery it is almost always necessary to reset the clock.

There are several utilities that will automatically reset the clock with little or no user intervention. These range from integral Windows XP utilities, to freeware, and commercial software. XP has a free built-in time check utility that can transparently reset the computer clock. It can be found by clicking on control panel - date and time - internet time. Additional information is available by clicking on start - help - and entering the search term "time synchronization". I recommend using the nist.time.gov link which will set the time to "official" time. The XP time utility may not function properly or give an incorrect time if the utility is blocked by a firewall, or if it is set to a local network time, which may also be inaccurate. The clock can also be set manually by double clicking on the clock and entering the time; just be sure that the time zone and daylight savings time are set correctly from the "time zone" tab.

I also use an excellent free utility to check my computer clock, AboutTime 4.8. It is available for download at www.arachnoid.com/abouttime, along with detailed instructions and trouble shooting. Personally, I have it set to the U.S. Naval Observatory time at www.tick.usno.navy.mil *



Do you have a particular bug or problem which peeves you off? One that you just cannot overcome and beat? Well, there is help coming soon.

Once again Marsee Henon [marsee@oreilly.com], from O'Reilly Publishing, is requesting our help. They are looking for your problems with Word program. Remember Steve Bass' book: "PC Annoyances"? Well, this book is based on the same principles of design. Much of the book is based from real life computer problems from people like us. Everyday users, as well as professionals. Marsee takes our problems to task and finds the workable answer. This is the foundation of the new book and we have a chance to be a part of this exciting project.

Marsee has sent SCUG this request:

O'Reilly [Publishing] is pulling together a new book called "Word Annoyances" and, once again, we'd like your help! As you might guess, "Word Annoyances" ponders the problems, snarls, quirks, bugs, and just dumb things about Word that drive users nuts. The annoyances will encompass a range of topics: general misbehavior, creating and saving documents, text entry and editing, formatting and layout, printing, tables, macros, etc.

Word is the most ubiquitous--and probably the most annoying--word processor on the planet. If any members of your group have annoyances they'd like to see solved, have them email marsee@oreilly.com with "Word Annoyances" in the subject line. Just have them note what version of Word and Windows they're using.

As always, thanks for sharing. We'll make sure to get copies of "Word Annoyances" sent to your group shortly after publication.

--Marsee (email received November 15, 2004)

***** An example:**

The Annoyance

The wretched animated paper clip keeps appearing every time I try to get help from Office, and sometimes even when I'm just working. How can I get rid of it?

The Fix

Some people love the Office Assistant characters--Clippit (the paper clip), Rocky the Dog, the Office Cat, the Genius, Mother Nature--but I've never met these people. Everyone who mentions the Office Assistant wants to get rid of it. And anyone enthusing about the wonders of Merlin is a good candidate for the target end of a fire-hose demonstration.

To prevent the Office Assistant from appearing, right-click the Office Assistant character that's currently bugging you and click Properties on the shortcut menu. On the Options tab of the Office Assistant dialog box, clear the Use The Office Assistant check box. Click OK.

What if you want the Office Assistant back? Simply choose Help > Show The Office Assistant, and the brute is back with you. Invoking the Office Assistant like this selects the Use The Office Assistant check box on the Options tab of the Office Assistant dialog box, so you'll need to clear this check box when you want peace and quiet again.

Editor's Note: THE HOW AND WHAT TO:

Please give this project some thought, as Marsee and O'Reilly Publishing is a great supporter of SCUG and in return we like to do reviews for this company. But more important, it is a great chance for us, as a group, to get in on the ground floor of a new computer book...at least we can help out a bit.

So, if you have any questions or problems or ideas, please do not hesitate in contacting Marsee or Bill.

Email Marsee at:

marsee@oreilly.com



For any of you who do not know Bill, here he is. Bill is SCUG's official coordinator who deals directly with computer companies to get us deals. He also contacts the companies for requests to review computer programs. If you have a book or computer program you would like to review, please contact Bill. And remember, you will not be alone, as many within

SCUG, including Bill will gladly help you along with the review.

If you contact Marsee, please send a copy to Bill: Bill Colotelo, SCUG's, Program Coordinator, at coordinator@scug.ca

SICK of Hearing About This?**Don't Be...Be Aware**

* * *

**Remove *Spyware*
and
Get Free Utilities
By Ira Wilsker**

Good and frequently updated anti-spyware are now every bit as necessary for safe computing as anti-virus software and a firewall.

Several spyware products, including Lavasoft's Ad-Aware (www.lavasoftusa.com), Spybot Search and Destroy (free at www.safer-networking.org), Aluria's Spyware Eliminator, Webroot's Spy Sweeper, System Mechanic Pro (www.iolo.com), and Computer Associates' Pest Patrol have all been reviewed here. All are very good, and each has strengths and weaknesses such that many experts recommend that more than one spyware product is installed, updated, and used to compliment each other. Personally, I use in order of frequency, Spybot, Ad-Aware SE (free edition), and Pest Patrol the most, but sometimes scan with the others just for increased security and peace of mind.

It is not well known, but the free Spybot Search and Destroy has some excellent additional utilities included in its latest version 1.3 that most computer users may find very useful. If you do not have Spybot, I strongly suggest that you download the latest version from one of the links on its site at www.safer-networking.org. After downloading, install it; it will first backup your registry (a very useful activity), update itself, and then offer to immunize your PC from many of the spyware threats that can infect your machine. Run the "Search and Destroy" function and "Check for Problems". By clicking on the sideways arrows on the right side of the window an informational panel will open and close describing most of the spyware products found. Generally, any spyware found should be quarantined or deleted.

While detecting and deleting spyware, and immunizing the computer from some future infections is quite laudable, Spybot has some more interesting functions. Click on "Mode" on the menu bar, and select "Advanced". On the left, three additional selections will appear. The "Settings" icon will allow the user to customize the way

Spybot works. For most users, the default settings are appropriate, but for those who like to tweak their software, this feature may be fun to try.

The "Tools" selection is really the heart of the additional functionality in Spybot. These tools are very helpful, and if properly utilized, can significantly improve the performance of most computers. Many of us produce confidential files that we would not want others to access, once we no longer need them.

The "Secure Shredder" function permanently deletes files such that anyone short of the FBI cannot recover them, unwanted files can be dragged and dropped into the shredder. The default number of "chops" is five, which also removes any usage tracks to the shredded files. Be very aware that lacking any sophisticated forensic tools, files shredded with the Spybot shredder are unrecoverable by the user, and are permanently deleted.

The "System Internals" icon will check for some common registry inconsistencies. This utility will try to repair missing help files, shared DLL files, application paths, erroneous uninstall information, and broken desktop links. Spybot includes a warning that if the user is not sure about what he is doing, then it may be best not to correct these errors.

Possibly one of the best ways to improve system performance is to stop unnecessary programs from loading when the computer is booted.

Possibly one of the best ways to improve system performance is to stop unnecessary programs from loading when the computer is booted.

The System Startup utility eases this function, and makes it much more user friendly than Microsoft's "msconfig" utility. Utilizing a simple checkbox along with the side-arrows on the right side of the window, most startup entries are not just listed, but explained such that the user can make an informed decision. The supplemental information is from one of the best online resources for startup information, Paul Collins' outstanding "Startup List" at www.sysinfo.org. Almost any items listed in the startup list shown by Spybot that are not listed in the right window of "System Startup" can likely be found on the Collins Startup list, along with a note describing if the item is necessary, unnecessary, or user's choice.

Other tools are included, including a directory of uninstall information that is usually more comprehensive than Microsoft's "Add - Remove" function.

There are many useful anti-spyware programs available, some such as Spybot Search and Destroy which are free, and I recommend that all users use at least one or two of the better programs to protect their computers and personal security.



PROGRAM REVIEW

SpinRite 6.0

Gibson Research Corporation
by Paul Witheridge
 SCUG Member

SpinRite 6.0 Gibson Research Corporation <http://grc.com> Free movie overview: <http://www.grc.com/sr/themovie.htm> \$89US <http://www.grc.com/cs/prepurch.htm>

As a long time user of SpinRite, I must declare a potential bias up front. But I think you'll find this report not to gloss over any of the difficulties I encountered this time around. Since previous SpinRite versions were unable to deal with NTFS drives, I was eager to unleash SpinRite 6.0 when an NTFS Drive was noted to be making 'ticking' noises and the drive was soon after reported to be "missing". All this occurred prior to SpinRite 6 arriving and when this laptop was returned to the supplier, they reported the drive to be dead and only an expensive data recovery service would be able to recover data from it. SpinRite 6.0 (SR6) to the rescue!

SR6 was able to see the drive and the recovery process (level 2) was begun. Unfortunately, after running part way through the drive, it stopped making progress. Some 'ticking' noise had also been heard again. SR6 did not appear to be "frozen" as the various screens could be cycled through, but nothing short of a power-down would allow an exit from the program once it became "stuck". Tech Support recommended noting the exact percentage completion point and restarting SR a few % past the trouble spot. This is an excellent feature! But sadly with this particular drive, it soon reached another impasse and another power-down and restart past the trouble spot was the only option. This reoccurred at least a half-dozen times before the entire drive (minus the small gaps at trouble spots) had been covered. This was one sick drive! SR Tech Support seemed to think that SR was waiting for a response from the drive and this was not forthcoming causing SR to refuse to exit via the onscreen instructions.

Now for the moment of truth! Would the drive boot? It did! Unfortunately, the time was midnight and I should NOT have shut it down because the following morning, it would not reboot. Back to SpinRite. Repeat the entire operation again, complete with forced power-downs and restarts. Following this, nothing but blue screen reports of an unmountable boot drive could be achieved when attempting to boot from the drive.

On a recommendation from SR Tech Support, the drive was then removed from the laptop and connected via an adaptor as a slave to a desktop PC running XP on NTFS and the majority of the files were once again visible! CDs were urgently burned to save as much as possible, but not all files were salvageable before the drive simply stopped responding. Back to SpinRite. The above process was repeated, again with stalls, some requiring power-downs and restarts. Once again returning to XP and the remaining files of concern were salvaged and burnt to CDs. The story has a happy ending inasmuch as the data was recovered, but sadly it confirmed that the drive is indeed toast. If it hadn't been for SpinRite, the supplier's diagnosis would most certainly have been right.

The presumption is that there might have been a physical "sticking" or jamming of the drive heads which may explain the 'ticking' noises as well as the repeated stalling of SR. On checking with SpinRite author Steve Gibson, he comments "The "hanging" behavior is something we've seen before. Having customers upgrade their motherboard BIOSes when possible typically cures the problem. Or, when that's not possible, having them move these drives to a different machine has always cured the trouble. So we have surmised that some subtle BIOS/drive conflict is the culprit. SpinRite is at the mercy of the user's hardware since hardware is always the final 'boss', so there's a limit to what we're able to do. But when data absolutely must be recovered from a drive that's hanging in this fashion on one system, relocating it to another (or sometimes just using lower-noise 80-conductor cabling) typically allows SpinRite to get the job done."

As luck(?) would have it, a further opportunity to test SR6 presented itself only a few days later. A FAT32 drive in my wife's desktop had, earlier this year, produced some unnerving rattling noises before failing. SR5 had been run at that time and immediately reported that the drive parameters had been incorrectly set. Better still, it reported what the correct settings HAD been / SHOULD be. Once I rebooted to the BIOS and manually reconfigured the parameters, SR5 was able to see the drive and ran perfectly through it. The drive was returned to use and has performed flawlessly for six months.

But now, once again, the drive had become inaccessible. ScanDisk reported some unreadable clusters. To my surprise, SpinRite 6 couldn't see it at all. During boot-up, the rattling noise was again heard. Thinking that perhaps the same "incorrect parameter problem" had again occurred, I changed those (as it turns out, the parameters were OK and I changed them to the

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11 - Review.

WRONG values) and restarted SR6. This time, SR6 saw the drive but reported that it was an unknown format and would be treated as "unformatted"! Not wanting to lose data and knowing it was a FAT32 formatted drive, I re-checked my records and found that the parameters HAD been correct (as corrected six months ago) and I reset them back again. This time, SR6 could see the drive! SR6, now that it could see the drive, proceeded through the recovery (level 2) process and as a result the drive was once again behaving. Nonetheless, I immediately copied it to a DVD as soon as it was once again "alive", something I would not have been able to do without SpinRite. And it's fortunate that I did since, as I go to press, the drive has failed again. Steve's comments on this: "Unfortunately, if a drive is going to fail, if it's determined to do so, there's nothing any software can do to prevent that inevitability. SpinRite can keep a drive running absolutely as long as possible, and it can be used *exactly* as you did, to rescue and pull data from such drives even during the drive's dying gasps."

But I was curious why SR5 was able to detect incorrect parameters and provide the correct settings while SR6 simply saw it as "unknown format" and was prepared to treat it as UNformatted. Again, Steve Gibson explained that while that feature had been introduced with SR3.1 to solve the problem of drive parameters lost due to system battery failure / lost BIOS, it occasionally gave false positive reports and since true drive parameter loss was resolved completely over the past ten years with the movement away from packs of dry-cell batteries, it was therefore removed in SR6. Steve also hinted that it might return in an upgrade of SR6 in modified form. I, for one, will be glad to see it return as I never would have recovered that FAT32 drive without being advised by SR5 that the parameters had been messed up. In the meantime, for FAT32 drives at least, I'll keep my copy of SR5 nearby as well!

So, as both sagas illustrate, drive recovery is never fun, but at least with SpinRite it's an option!

* * *

What the heck is PHISHING?

The term phishing has been around for some time. According to a definition in Wikipedia, the art of phishing is explained: "In computing, phishing, short for password harvesting fishing, is the luring of sensitive information, such as passwords and other personal information, from a victim by masquerading as someone trustworthy with a real need for such information. It is a form of social

engineering attack."

"The term was coined in the mid nineties by crackers attempting to steal AOL accounts. An attacker would pose as an AOL staff member and send an instant message to a potential victim. The message would ask the victim to reveal his password, for instance to "verify his account" or to "confirm billing information". Once the victim gave over the password, the attacker could access the account and use it for criminal purposes, such as spamming.

Today, online criminals put phishing to more directly profitable uses. Popular targets are users of online banking services, and auction sites such as eBay. Phishers usually work by sending out spam e-mail to large numbers of potential victims." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phishing>).

Not long ago, SCUG invited two OPP Officers from the Anti-Crime Squad in London who warned us about several computer-related SCAMS. The OPP maintain an excellent website with loads of information on the current fraudulent usage of the computers and the Internet. Here is some advice from the OPP:

How to Avoid Phishing Scams: OPP

"The number and sophistication of phishing scams sent out to consumers is continuing to increase dramatically. As a general rule you should be careful about giving out your personal financial information over the Internet. The following is a list of recommendations that you can use to avoid becoming a victim of these scams."

- Be suspicious of any email with urgent requests for personal financial information.
- Phishers typically include upsetting or exciting (but false) statements in their emails to get people to react immediately.
- They typically ask for information such as usernames, passwords, credit card numbers, social insurance or security numbers, etc.
- Phisher emails are typically NOT personalized, while valid messages from your bank or e-commerce company generally are.
- Don't use the links in an email to get to any web page, if you suspect the message might not be authentic.
- instead, call the company on the telephone, or log onto the website directly by typing in the Web address

TEN COMMANDMENTS

for Happy Windows Computer Owning

by **Robert Spotswood**
Hal-PC, Houston, Texas

How to reduce your computer headaches

I work as a computer tech and I see lots of different computer problems. But I see certain problems again and again.

While it means more business for me, lots of those problems could be easily avoided saving my customers money and aggravation. Here are ten commandments, which, if followed, will greatly reduce your computer headaches.

I. Use a Virus Scanner

Get one and keep it up to date. The brand doesn't make a big difference. Keeping it up to date does! A virus scanner that has not been updated recently (recently being about 1 or 2 days), is only slightly better than no virus scanner at all.

Keep the virus scanner active and do regular scans of your system. Trying to install a virus scanner after you already have a virus infection usually isn't going to do any good. If the viruses are active, most will attack any virus scanner and prevent it from working or installing properly. The only way to stop this is to have an up-to-date virus scanner active when the virus first tries to infect you.

II. Protect Yourself from Spyware

Viruses aren't your only threat. Spyware is another, and virus scanners do almost nothing about it, although that is just starting to change. Spyware, aside from invading your privacy, can crash your computer, make it run slow, hijack your browser (especially Internet Explorer), annoy you with pop-up ads, and download porn. These things have cost people jobs and ruined relationships (see www.wired.com/news/infostructure/0,1377,63391,00.html).

Spyware can come in with other "free" programs, or can be installed silently if you use Internet Explorer (termed drive-by-downloading). If a window pops up asking to install software, say no, unless you were expecting it.

While not all "free" programs are bad, avoid "free" programs without checking them out first. As a general rule, open source programs are unlikely to have spyware.

Don't use Internet Explorer (use Mozilla or Opera instead), and check for "little pests" regularly. Spybot and Ad-aware are two free and good programs for dealing with spyware. Spyware "experts" tend to prefer Spybot over Ad-aware, but both are good programs. Prevention is the best medicine however.

III. Don't Open Strange Emails

Never, ever open or respond to an email that in any way seems suspicious. Don't even preview it, especially in Outlook or Outlook Express. It doesn't matter who it appears to come from. That can be faked unless you use digital signatures correctly, and most modern worms do fake the sender.

Don't rely on your virus scanner to protect you either. Email viruses can spread around the world in minutes. Your virus scanner will be at least a day behind the most current threat.

No legitimate company will want you to open an attachment or enter your user info in a form from an out-of-the-blue email. Companies also do not send patches (see commandment VIII) via email. Should you actually find a company that does these things, find somebody else to do business with. Your information is not safe with them.

If at all possible, do not use a Microsoft email client. Use a Mozilla or Opera based program (among others) instead. Microsoft's poor security record AND actively being targeted make for a lousy combination.

IV. Never Respond to Spam

Never respond to or buy something from an email that you even THINK is spam or unsolicited, even if it's something you are interested in. Spammers spam because it is profitable. It is profitable because enough people buy or respond. Buying anything from or responding to spam is just throwing gasoline on a fire. In addition, often, the spam involves something either fraudulent or illegal. If it's something you are still interested in, do a web search, and buy from there.

Always be careful of where you put your email address. Putting your email address in some form (paper or electronic) is one way the spammers get your address, especially contest promotions, i.e. fill out a form for a chance

Continued on page 14.

Continued from page 13 Ten Commandments- .
to win a prize and the form asks for an email address among other things. Posting your address on a website or Usenet are two other ways spammers get your address.

V. Perform Regular Backups

Sooner or later, it's going to happen. Something important gets deleted. It doesn't matter if it was a virus, equipment failure, or just not paying enough attention when hitting the delete key. This includes not just erasing files, but overwriting data. The recycle bin or undelete programs can't help you then. Doing proper backups are your best, and cheapest defense against these disasters.

Take care of your backup media. Don't leave CD's lying in the sun or tapes near magnets. Finally, don't forget to test the restore process once in a while! A backup you can't restore is worthless, and the practice you get in restoring will help you avoid mistakes and panic when the time comes to do it for real.

VI. Help the Tech

Having computer problems is normal. Sooner or later it happens to everyone. When it is time to seek help, don't lie. Chances are the tech will see through the lie very quickly, and even if he doesn't, it only makes it harder for him to help you. Be as specific as you can. Write down the exact error message. Tell him anything you think might be important. He can't read minds and he wasn't there when you did ____ (fill in the blank).

Don't "clean up" your computer before you bring in (or take the computer to) the tech. This can, in rare cases, disguise the cause of the problem.

If getting phone support, be in front of your computer, have it turned on and booted up, and have the application(s) already open (if appropriate). Many phone support techs are rated (and promoted or fired) based on how many calls per hour they answer, not on whether they actually help you. Take too long and you may find your problem is "We do not support that. Good-bye." Be patient and describe everything you see. Phone support is one of the hardest types of support to do.

Finally, swearing like a sailor or threatening the tech will not get your system fixed any faster or cheaper. In fact, the reverse may happen.

VII. Get Some Computer Training

You don't have to be a mechanic to drive a car, but you still have to have training. No one is born knowing how

to drive, and no one is born knowing how to use computers. Know the basic terminology, specs, and workings of your computer. This knowledge can reduce your need for professional help (aka the tech) and make working the tech more productive when you do need it.

Think of the training as an investment in yourself. Once you learn how to use your computer your [computer] life will become more productive and enjoyable. HAL-PC offers a variety of free or low cost training. Take advantage of it.

VIII. Apply Patches Regularly

Programming is easy, but creating perfectly secure programs is very hard to impossible. Mistakes happen. When they do, fixes (often called patches) are issued. While some of these patches may cause problems, it is usually better to install the patch than not.

Free and open source software usually just issues new versions rather than patches, so don't forget to upgrade. There are mailing lists you can sign up for to tell you when new patches and new versions are issued.

Using Windows update regularly is a good way to stay current with your patches. Be warned, however, that Microsoft does not always issue patches in a timely manner, and neither do some other software companies. You can't patch without a patch.

Sometimes, a patch will not fix the problem it was intended to fix or may even open up other security holes. Do not make the mistake of thinking that just because you are current on all your patches that you are safe. You're not!

IX. Pay Attention to Your Computer's Security

The wrong types of people are interested in your computer, even if you are just a home user on dial-up. Even if you don't have any valuable data (unlikely; credit card info, banking info, perhaps work info are just a few examples), your machine could be used as a source of spam, used to host illegal materials, or even as a launch pad for attacks on other systems.

A dial-up user, or someone with a connected modem, could be disconnected from his ISP (Internet Service Provider) and silently reconnected to another overseas. The next phone bill will be quite shocking.

While there is no product that can make your computer secure, a firewall and virus scanner are a good start. Running more than one firewall and one virus scanner at

Continued on page 15

Continued from page 14 - Ten Commandments.. the same time is usually a bad idea. It does little to increase your security, while greatly increasing problems you will have.

X. Give Your Computer Regular Maintenance

Computers, like all things, work better if they receive occasion maintenance. A scandisk and defrag every month will help keep your computer running smoothly. Dusting inside your computer every so often is also a good idea. Seek professional help if you are unsure how to do this. Smaller computer shops will often teach you how to do this yourself for free or a small fee or you could make a friend at HAL-PC. Finally, your computer case is not a refrigerator door. Don't stick magnets on it.

Robert Spotswood, a HAL-PC member, is active in the Linux SIG and a freelance computer professional. He can be reached at robert@spotswood-computer.net.

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

Continued from page 12 - PHISHING - OPP in your browser.

Con Avoid filling out forms in email messages that ask for personal financial information.

- you should only communicate information such as credit card numbers or account information via a secure website or the telephone.
- Always ensure that you're using a secure website when submitting credit card or other sensitive information via your Web browser

- to make sure you're on a secure Web server, check the beginning of the Web address in your browsers address bar -it should be "https://" rather than just "http://"

What To Do If You've Given Out Your Personal Financial Information

Phishing attacks are growing quite sophisticated and difficult to detect, even for the most technically savvy people. Please review the advice provided in the identity theft section of this site on what to do if you are in this situation. (www.gov.on.ca/opp/antirackets/english/phishing.htm)

Do It Now
by Elizabeth B. Wright
Computer Club of Oklahoma City

That is not new advice. In fact, it borders on being trite. However, I am talking about getting things down on paper (electronically) before it is too late.

Many of the over-50 group have begun to delve seriously into genealogy. And that is a good idea. However,

Editor's Note:
But is this any reason to give up on your Genealogy Research?
I'll bet SCUG members would say No!
Any comments? email editor@scug.ca

we are in danger of doing a lot of hard work and then having it completely lost because

our children are not yet interested in "roots" things. They give a little lip service to our efforts, but mostly they don't seem to think any more about it than we did when we were younger. And they mostly do not have the programs we use on their own computers.

There is a good range of programs for genealogical research and most of them can be used by beginners rather easily. That is not to say that all of the available features will magically become useful to first-timers, but most of the essential information can be entered by just about any level of user competence.

That information, however, is going to stay right where it is, on the computer, until something happens to it. That something could even be a computer crash or virus which might wipe out all the hard work put into developing family history. There are options, usually, to save the files to an external disk, CD, or other backup-type media. This should be the very first step after inputting important data into a program.

Then comes the reason for this article. Nearly all of the current programs have choices to output the data into reports of various types. There are always the tree charts which have become so familiar to all of us. Usually there are other types of reports which sort the information in ways other than a typical family tree. Using reports, it is possible to download the essential data into hard printed copy to share with children, grandchildren and other interested relatives.

Many programs have very good options for printing
Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15 - DO IT NOW!

books. Most also have the ability to include photographs in the output. And photographs don't always have to be of people. Most serious genealogists include photos of important documents, as well as maps, places, buildings, and objects of interest such as clothing, trophies, jewelry, grave markers, etc. Photographs can greatly enhance the value of the information as well as making it more enjoyable to read.

Our family members who are not yet interested in genealogy have a tendency to treat our efforts with some humor, thinking perhaps it is a rather quaint way for "seniors" to spend time on an amusing hobby. Of course, the day usually comes when they wish they had the same information. And the efforts we make now can provide them with a great start. There really is practically no limit to how much research can be done on any family line.

But what if you don't want to get into deep family research?

We have such a golden opportunity to use our computers to just put in print our own memories of family. As we age, and we all seem to, some of those memories begin to be hazy.

We need to DO IT NOW, while we have the ability and the means to accomplish it. And when we finish writing a particular memory, we need to transfer it to the same external medium, and also print hard copies of it. With a little luck, younger family members will at least put it somewhere for future reference.

Worst case scenario is going to the trouble to give someone your hard work only to have it be given a cursory glance and possibly be thrown away.

Using your word processor, simply typing out a story and by including any available photographs in the document, you can begin to build a family history starting with YOU.

My favorite example from my own case is typing the family "lore" of how my grandmother grew up. She was left motherless as a toddler, put in an orphanage and foster homes before finally being taken from her native Iowa to Kansas by her older (by just a couple of years) brother and possibly her father.

The story was always murky, but consistent, told to me by both my mother and my aunt. When I finally began doing serious family research, I came across enough information to confirm the story, almost word for word the way the "lore" had passed it down to me.

Both my mother and my aunt had been dead for many years before I began the search for my grandmother's family, and had I not finally written it down, it would have ended with me. No one else has ever been remotely interested in my grandmother except my mother, my aunt and me. Now I am hoping my son and my daughter and their children will keep the information and expand it someday, along with the other branches of their family tree.

Editor's Note: This article was sent to SCUG by Judy Taylor, APCUG Representative, who says, "*Many of the over-50 group has begun to delve seriously into genealogy. And that is a good idea. Not into genealogy? We have such a golden opportunity to use our computers to just put in print our own memories of family. What a great and easy way to use your word processor to give your younger family members a sense of the family's history.*"

What is your New Year's Resolution?

**Maybe it is time
to give this topic
some extra thoughts.**

Maybe, by simply doing text reporting on genealogy data is not enough, and one way to colour our data is with family stories and photos. Several SCUG members have published their family's genealogy with fantastic results. Maybe down the road we can look into this some more and feature a few SCUG members and what they have done in this area? Again, your thoughts and comments are requested. Please email SCUG: editor@scug.ca

Is it time to think about a resurrection of our Genealogy SIG for the New Year :) - Some SCUG members have been wishing for this...



Help support YOUR club.
Give a thought to volunteering
with SCUG in the New Year

GPS and Mapping Software

by Joe Schmitt

Tampa Bay Computer Society

Part 3 of 3

Editor's Note: *Over the past two months we ran Joe's first two parts on his article about Global Positioning. Here is the third and final edition. Please let us know how you like this type of series articles, and whether you like Joe's personal insight to this great technology. Please send your emails to editor@scug.ca*

This is the last in a three article series on the Global Positioning System. The first explained what the system is and how it work, the second dealt with GPS units, and the third discusses the various software available to interface with the units.

While out on the road or trail, the GPS can be indispensable for navigating. It tells you where you are, where you're heading, and can track distance and speed. When you arrive at an interesting locale, you can mark it with a waypoint. Now all that is great, but one of the more interesting aspects of GPS ownership is the ability to link it with your computer for additional functionality.

In a unit that displays maps, only the most major roads and surface features are pre-loaded. This is known as the base map. The base map cannot be erased and is particular to the region that the unit is purchased in. For example, my Garmin receiver is loaded with a North American road map that contains US highways and interstates. This is great for a long trip, but doesn't really help you around town. Luckily, additional specialized maps are available.

Each of the manufacturers have street level mapping available for purchase; unfortunately, the maps available are almost strictly proprietary. For my Garmin unit, there are instructions on the web to make your own maps, but is a long complex process involving multiple pieces of software. I could dedicate an entire article to that process alone. Another limitation with the mapping software comes with the opening of new roads. None of the software can be updated with the latest roads, so you must purchase the newer version at full price. Be careful though, sometimes it takes a few versions for the newer roads to be displayed at all. If you can live with data that is a couple of years old, places like EBay can be great for getting a deal on some older version.

Even if you do not have a GPS with mapping capability,

quite often that receiver can be tied to a computer to process the data it receives. Most units utilize a serial cable to connect to a computer. Although a serial connection is much slower than USB it has been a standard with receivers for a long time and manufacturers are slowly coming out with USB capable units.

In addition to the proprietary software you can purchase from the manufacturer, there are pieces of software that can transfer waypoints and tracks from a GPS. A great waypoint manager, EasyGPS (www.easygps.com), is a free utility that allows you create, edit, and transfer waypoints from your computer. It works with Garmin, Lowrance, and Magellan receivers. Creating a waypoint with the receiver itself can be a long process since the unit does not have a keypad, and you will have to scroll through menus and numbers to set the coordinates. EasyGPS allows you to do this on your desktop computer with the keyboard.

Its bigger cousin, ExpertGPS (www.expertgps.com), displays your waypoints and routes on topographic maps and aerial photos. This software is not free, but you can download a demo. ExpertGPS uses an internet connection to retrieve maps as you scroll around.

There are several places you can get maps for free on the internet. You may already be familiar with some internet mapping websites for street cartography. Arguably one of the most popular is MapQuest (www.mapquest.com), but also popular is Microsoft MapPoint (mappoint.msn.com) and Maptech Mapserver (mapserver.maptech.com). In addition to these street map websites, many others offer topographic and aerial photos. Maptech offers topographic, nautical, aeronautical, and aerial photos, though they'll want you to register.

For topographic maps, TopoZone (www.topozone.com), is a great site that displays maps in various resolutions and datum. TopoZone allows you also to search by geographic features such as mountain peak names as well as city names, states, zip codes, and coordinates. Another excellent site that combines topographic and aerial photos is TerraServer USA (terraserver.microsoft.com). At this site you can flip between maps and photos.

Although these sites are helpful for viewing and printing maps, they do not offer any sort of data transfer with the GPS receiver. For that kind of functionality you must install some software. A great free application available for download is USAPhotoMaps (jdmcox.com). This program installs on your machine and then uses an Internet connection to download topographic and aerial

Continued on page 18

Continued from page 17 - GPS photos. It can be linked with a GPS to transfer waypoints, tracks, and routes. The maps are compiled from free sites on the web. Be aware, though, that maps are quite large in file size and a slow connection will make getting the maps a long process. Once downloaded, the maps are stored locally on your computer so be sure that you have enough hard drive space.

The next realm in mapping software is independent mapping programs. Two of the most popular stand-alone street mapping programs is Microsoft's Streets & Trips (www.microsoft.com/streets/default.asp) and Delorme's Street Atlas (www.delorme.com/streetatlasusa/default.asp). Both programs offer detailed street mapping in the US and have the ability to link in various ways to the GPS receiver.

Streets and Trips allows you to link to your GPS and display your position on a map. It does not complete data transfer such as waypoints and routes. It has the ability to import data from Excel and text files, but an intermediate program will be needed to get the data from the GPS unit to the file for import. A bonus with Streets and Trips is that also comes with Pocket Maps that allow you to save maps to a Pocket PC.

Street Atlas allows you the same position display with a GPS. In addition to that function, it also allows you to plan a route and provides turn by turn instructions as you navigate. Of course, to be of any use it needs to be installed on a laptop. Unlike Streets and Trips, you must purchase the pocket mapping software separately. Streets and Trips runs about \$40 and Street Atlas about \$50. I have a copy of Streets and Trips that I got for \$20 after a mail in rebate. Both programs are excellent and selection boils down to personal preference more than anything else.

Delorme also makes a topographic program, Topo USA (www.delorme.com/topousa/default.asp). This program runs about \$99 and includes streets as well topographic contour maps. The topographic maps are at a 1:100,000 resolution. More detailed 1:24,000 maps, more suitable for hiking, are available on a state by state basis. Your GPS will interact in the same manner as Street Atlas.

A more cost effective way to go for a topographic program is National Geographic's Backroads Explorer (maps.nationalgeographic.com/topo/backroads.cfm) that costs around \$40. Although it lacks some of the features of Delorme's software, it does include street maps as well as topographic information. Backroads Explorer also allows direct connection with a GPS for transfer of waypoints, routes, and tracks. It lacks the

3D topographic mapping the Delorme product offers, but it does have shaded relief to better define contours on the maps displayed.

For those that are into creating their own maps there is a program, called 3DEM (www.visualizationsoftware.com/3dem.html), that allows you load elevation data and generate a 3D terrain image. The terrain image can be overlaid with maps to form a 3D map. The primary data used to generate the terrain models are from radar topography. NASA scanned about 95% of the earth's surface during shuttle missions and there is a wealth of sources available where you can download the data. These models can also accept data from your receiver so that you can see a track of where you've been in a 3D representation.

There is lots of additional software available on the market, too many to discuss them all here. A lot of programs offer various ways of linking with a GPS directly or are a great way to search and print maps before you leave on that next trip. There are also a number of utilities which can format data so that it can work with a number of programs.

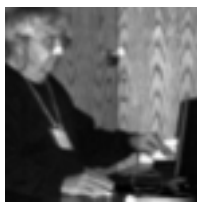
GPS receivers are innovative and fun gadgets that can really be a powerful tool for navigation. Every day people come up with more interesting uses for the receiver. From handheld to vehicle mounted receivers, these devices are changing the way the man moves through the world. Have fun and I'll see you on the road!

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

You are the ones who make it work!



THANK YOU
and have a safe holiday season



SCUG Review
Adobe Photoshop
Elements 2.0
 by **Bill Colotelo**

System Requirements Photoshop Elements can be installed on either Windows or Macintosh computers. For windows you need: Intel Pentium processor Windows 98, windows 98 SE, Windows ME, or windows XP
 128MB RAM 150MB available hard disk space
 Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher Colour Monitor with resolution of 800x600 or greater CD-ROM drive

For Mac users you need: Mac OS 9.1, 9.2x, or Mac OS X v.10.1.3-10.2 350 MB of available hard disk space 128MB of RAM with virtual memory on Colour Monitor with 800x600 resolution CD-ROM drive.

Installation

The installation of the software (which came on a disc) is straightforward. You must install Photoshop Elements onto your hard drive; you cannot run it from your disk. Just follow the on screen instructions and you cannot get lost.

I found the downloading easy and relatively simple. However if you have difficulties help can be obtained from the Adobe web site, but I doubt that you will need any in the downloading. However help will probably be welcomed in getting started. A comprehensive USER GUIDE is provided which has over 250 pages of "good stuff. In addition a HELP guide is provided in the software.

Features

Photoshop Elements 2.0 can be divided into three main areas, 1. Digital Photography, 2. Sharing images over the web and 3. Being creative with your photos.

Digital Photography includes importing photos from your digital camera CDs, and scanner, removing red eye, cropping, adjusting contrast colour, and focus. In addition you can blend images into seamless panoramas and

create masks.

Sharing images over the web includes such features as automatically compressing photos and being able to attach them to e-mail, featuring your photos in Web galleries, creating GIF animations, and creating slide shows.

Being creative with your photos is, as the data provided by the company says, and I quote "Spark your imagination with the inspirational Recipes, which guide you through complex editing techniques, paint with amazing realistic brush effects, and instantly apply frames, edges, drop shadows, and more simply dropping effects onto your photos." Since I am not a very creative person I sort of by-passed this section in my review. However, another part of being creative included printing multiple photos in various sizes on one page. This I liked.

My thoughts on Photoshop Elements 2.0:

Although Photoshop Elements 2.0 made be considered by some as the poor cousin of Photoshop 6 or Photoshop CS, if you can master Photoshop Elements 2.0 to its fullest, you have a program that can satisfy the bulk of the work you may wish to carry out on your digital photos. I would not hazard to estimate that 98% of the people

enhancing digital photos would find Photoshop Elements quite sufficient for their needs. I did not find this software easy to master, in fact I do not believe that I have mastered it to- date and it would take me much more work to reach a level that I would be comfortable with the full program. I contribute this to my interests lie in only certain aspects of the program and in these areas I tend to concentrate. By no stretch of the imagination was I able to exam every aspect of the program, however those areas that I did review, I found the program responsive and did what it said it was going to do.

I would recommend this program, Photoshop Elements 2.0, for anyone interested in enhancing his or her photos, and wanting to share their photos with others. As for the creative portion, I leave that to those who have a flare for that type of work.

**A GOOD PROGRAM,
 WELL WORTH CONSIDERING FOR
 DIGITAL PHOTO ENHANCING AND MORE.**

Interested in doing a review?

Email me: coordinator@scug.ca

- * **automatically compress photos**
- * **attach photos to e-mails**
- * **featuring your photos in Web galleries**
- * **creating GIF animations**
- * **creating your own slide shows**

**A Big Thanks Goes Out to
PHOTOSHOP and Jim Greenshields**



Jim Greenshields Presents Photoshop To SCUG

Jim Greenshields, a SCUG member since 2001, demonstrated the Adobe Photoshop CS (Creative Suite) at our General Meeting last month. This demonstration, a well received one instigated several members questioning Jim and it was agreed that this program does so much, and is quite involved, that the Q&A session could have gone on all night long and not lost interest.

You may recall, in March 2004, SCUG Report ran Jim's written review of this product, wherein he stated, "As this software is a complex software package, it probably was not intended for the novice who wishes to enhance the odd photo." But Jim quickly added that, "...for the more serious user it is an extremely excellent program that can provide excellent results."

More and more people are ditching their instamatic cameras for the latest digital camera model, simply so they do not have to purchase film and they can discard bad or unwanted pictures at no cost, as well as pick and choose which pics they want to have developed. A very fussy group of photographers is slowly emerging in today's society. Programs such as Photoshop are becoming more and more in demand as amateur photographers are reaching for better quality in their photos, as well many are experimenting with the many added features these types of photo editing programs offer. We are seeing a whole new hobby emerging and some of the results of editing are with mind blowing effects, where at one time only people such as those at Disney could produce such effects.

Jim works with a Kodak digital DX 3900, 3.1 megapixel camera. Before Photoshop (he got to keep this program for doing his review for SCUG), Jim was using a photo-editing program, a version of Printshop by Broderbund. "The comparison [to Photoshop CS] is like roller blades to a sports car," reports Jim. When asked what features he uses most in Photoshop, Jim answered, "I use the Picture package, Red eye reduc-

tion and Exposure correction very often." Jim says he is continually learning new and different features within Photoshop and has worked on "removing objects from a photo and am now trying to get objects into a photo." Jim believes that if he can perfect this technique, he will be able to "demonstrate why photographs are not valid in court cases." Is this a new career for Jim???


**A recap of Jim's October's presentation
"what I tried to show"**

1. The workspace layout of the Photoshop program.
2. Retaining and using a color in the Swatches of the color Palette.
3. The camera metadata of a photograph .ie camera type, exposure info, etc.
4. Red eye reduction two different colors.
5. Exposure correction for dark or light photographs, over or under exposed.
6. Color changing of in image and typing on a path.
7. Photomerging ie 3 separate photos into a panorama.
8. Photopackage ie different photolayouts for an 8x 11 sheet.
9. Some designs around a flower blossom to demonstrate some of the uses of the Layers palette.

* * *

If you are interested in doing a review for SCUG please contact Bill Colotelo: coordinator@scug.ca

More and more people are ditching their instamatic cameras for the latest digital camera model




LEARN ABOUT TECHNOLOGY

Don't forget SCUG's Digital SIG meeting
December 1st.
For more info go to Fred's column on page 5.

ISLAND INKJET

RON AND KAREN RUPERT
 OWNER/OPERATORS
 Lambton Mall
 1380 London Road
 Sarnia, ON, N7S 1P8
 Tel: 519.542.0184
 Fax 519.542.5917
 lambtonmail@islandinkjet.com
 www.islandinkjet.com
 The Refill Guys!

**Advertise in this space
 for only \$10
 Your ad will appear for a full season in
 SCUG Report.
 Also, your ad will reach out to the world
 as this newsletter is posted live on
 www.scug.ca every month!**

 **SELLING
 YOUR VEHICLE?**
Advertise your car for FREE!
Visit...
www.SarniaUsedCars.net


FRUSTRATED by your computer's actions, or non-actions? Do not take it out on your machine; come out to a **SCUG Special Interest Group (SIG) for help**. Other members have probably wanted to do this too! So, come out and learn, share, and talk computers. Meet other computer users who discuss solutions to problems. First 3 meetings free. *See page 5 for more information.*

**Slide and Film Scanning 35 mm
 High Resolution**
Call Pierre for a free quote
Phone: 344-1379
Email: pahoule@sympatico.ca

SCUG 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!

SCUG 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*

SCUG MEETINGS
2004 - 2005
 Guests are Welcome
www.scug.ca

THREE FREE MEETINGS FOR ALL GUESTS

Simply come to a meeting and receive a Guest Pass which entitles you to sample our various meetings over a 3 month period. If you find the group is helpful we hope you will join. An annual family membership in S.C.U.G. is \$35. This includes entrance to all meetings, a free shareware program each month, and a copy of the monthly SCUG Report - check us out: www.scug.ca

	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr	May	June
<u>Executive</u>		3/31	28		4	2/30	
<u>Digital</u>	1	5	2	2	6	4	1
<u>Windows</u>		20	17	17	21	19	16
<u>General</u>		26	23	30	27	25	29



Meetings begin at 7 p.m.

Please bring a friend.

Any ideas for up-coming meeting presentations please email president@scug.ca

* **Exec and Digital** meetings at St James Church-140 Lansdowne North

* **Windows** meeting are held at Grace United Church, 990 Cathcart

* **General Meetings** are held at St. Bartholomews Church, 718 Cathcart

Computer Show in Toronto:

November 26-28
www.compusale.ca
 Several SCUG members are going.
 Contact Norm
 for more information.
pr@scug.ca

SCUG Car Pool



Just in time for Santa's Wish List

A Special Thanks

goes out to
Ann Miller
 for volunteering
 to do the treasurer's job
 in Dorothy's absence.



**Happy Holidays
 and a
 Safe New Year**



Have any new ideas for SCUG demonstrations or SIG meetings? If so, please contact the leader your each group. We really appreciate input. SCUG needs your help. PLEASE give a thought to volunteering in 2005.