



SCUG REPORT

Sarnia Computer User's Group

Award Winning Magazine & Website

www.scug.ca



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April 2005

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SCUG EVENTS

Digital SIG

Next Meeting on May 4th.

Fred shares his secret tips on "How to Take Better Pics"



Windows SIG

Next Meeting
May 19th.

Pierre has a surprise topic that will interest all computer users. Don't miss this one!!!

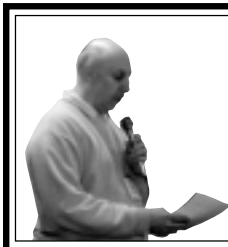


General Meeting

Next Meeting on May 25th.

Market Research Wizard

Erik Burggraaf demonstrates how people are marketed (or targeted) by Internet Retailers and much more!



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Pierre Houle



Nominations for Executive elections are NEXT MONTH!

Have you thought of becoming an executive? Do you have a few hours a month to spare to help this EXCELLENT organization maintain it is high standard of presentations and organization?

You do not have to be a Geek, or know anything about computers! Just bring a few organizational skills to the table, and be willing to help. I am sure you have ideas for improving SCUG. Now is your chance to act on them. See Iain about nominating yourself, or someone else you would like to see bring their unique talents to the executive.

Time is short. Nominations start at the May meeting, and close at the start of the June meeting, followed by elections. Check the website for available positions.

I have been President for four years, and I think it is time to step down. I will still be active within the club, and still be on Executive as Past President...but it is time for others to make their mark. Please step forward!

I hope that you will notice an improved image on the screen tonight. The club has bought a new projector, with about three times the brightness of the old one. Let us know what you think. If you have any suggestions for improving anything within the club let up, know!

Tonight's program features Iain Smy giving us insight into how to set up residence online. He will walk us through getting a unique Domain Name and buying web space.

For complete details go to www.scug.ca

**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	- digitalsig@scug.ca
Windows Group	- Pierre Houle	- windows@scug.ca

If you want SCUG to form a **new** Special Interest Group, please email president@scug.ca with your idea!



Greg West - Editor

Editor's Corner

editor@scug.ca



Vic Sterry
Proofreader



I joined SCUG in 1998 to learn more about the Internet and of course computers. I have enjoyed the experience and insight SCUG members have afforded to me over the past eight years. However, since becoming a SCUG volunteer a couple of years ago, I have fast-tracked to learn the intricacies of cyberspace and computering. While working with the club's executive on a regular basis and arriving early to club meetings, maybe just to help setup some chairs or help with the coffee, has afforded me an opportunity to learn so much more from other members, much more than one does by simply showing up at the odd meeting. As the world of computers and the Internet is in a state of constant change, so must we be learned in that respect just to keep abreast of how our computers work, what's new with the latest gadgets, and of course it is extremely important to keep on top of the ever-increasing enemies in cyberspace (we all have met them at one time or another). Clubs such as SCUG survive only by having members who volunteer to help keep the club going. Sometimes, the volunteering entails a simple matter of setting out a few chairs, or helping to run an extension chord, or just standing around and shooting the breeze about your latest computer beef to someone who may know what your problem is - Nothing like eliminating the high cost of a technician coming to your home for something that is easily explained at a SCUG meeting. Please give some thought to helping out your club. Please show up early for meetings and pitch in a tad...maybe you might even get the bug to get more involved and learn even more. Remember that the SCUG elections are coming up in June - the positions are not difficult and there are many members will jump at the opportunity to lend a helping-hand to anyone who asks. - Greg...



Your Secretary's Notes

by Tom Deeprise
secretary@scug.ca

SCUG Executive Meeting
April 4th, 2005 at St. James' Church,
140 Lansdowne Rd. North.
Dorothy & Val sent regrets

1. Membership Report. Val's report showed that, as of today, Membership stood at 95 (plus 46 Associates) with 8 Member renewals, 2 new Members, and no lapsed Memberships. Attendance at the "Floor Plan Program" meeting was 69, including 2 guests, another excellent turnout. Newsletters - We stay with a printing of 100 for our April Meeting.

2. Vice President's Input: Iain- In preparation for the coming elections, the definition of all the Executive positions is on the Web site for members edification. Not much interest being shown but Iain will keep pushing. The set up team volunteer's book is working at the moment, but an occasional reminder is indicated. A big "Thank You" goes to the members who have responded so far.

3. Secretary's Input. No current items.

4. Treasurer's Report. In Dorothy's absence, a brief current expense table was accepted.

5. Software Library Report- Dan. 50 Shareware CDs were given out, plus 2 utility disks and a 2004 CD. 44 CDs were received. Still working on 3 or 4 options for the DOM choice. The Jetico Personal Firewall, an improved anti-hacker program, will also be added to the choice after last meetings installation problem.

6. Meeting Program. Ian & Craig Hunt took a very interested audience through the preparation of a house design using the "Floor Plan 3D" program that they had already reviewed and actually used. They gave lots of explanations and showed how to juggle many options. It stimulated a worthwhile Q & A session from what seems to be a multitude of budding architects. For April- a presentation from Iain along the lines of "What is a Website, Why do I need or want one and, if so, how do I go about it?" For May- Eric Burggraaf on Market R Wizard, a help program for setting up a small business. For June- In the planning stage, an update from Hewlett-Packard on what's new in techno-gadgetry.

7. Newsletter Editor: Greg is comfortable with the

current quality of the printing of the Newsletter. We might experiment with a different grade of paper for April's NL.

8. Webmaster. Iain. Situation volatile with local and member's usage continuing to be lower than desired but world wide visits/day up from 73/d in February to 77, with an international spectrum of users. The photo gallery is again showing increased interest.

9. Program Co-coordinator & Accommodations- Bill-On the latter, status quo. With regards to the reviews, we have had a great run to date with 14 completed in the current season, with a further eight due over the next few months. The need to stimulate interest in the Review Committee is obvious if we are to get more members involved than just the Executive, where the current workload mostly resides.

10. Promotions. Norm listed current compuprize plans. For April, the standard 50/50 draw. For May, considering another Thumb Drive, an optical mouse and the Display Resolution CD. For June's Meeting, the DVD Burner plus Pro-Show Gold. Various odds and ends of CDs, Mail Washer and paper etc. are in hand to round out the secondary prizes

11. SIG News and Ideas. Digital-Digital Photo Tips for April Windows-Crash Prevention! Genealogy-Group currently in abeyance.

12. New Business- The membership approved the addition of the position of Web Master to the Executive Committee to reflect its importance to the club. The Constitution will be amended accordingly ASAP. Iain requested extra storage capacity for the Web site and also suggested that a small drive be purchased for the convenience of presenters to pre-record their demonstration. The purchase of both a USP 160-200 GIG drive and a suitable Thumb Drive was approved, with selection and purchase to be made by Pierre. Current estimates of the market indicate a total of about \$200 will suffice. On the subject of a new 800x600 projector, the brightness and bulb replacement costs were the key issues. Pierre and others will look into what's available and come up with a proposal.

13. Old Business- Nothing on APCUG perks and discounts this month. Parking for club members at St. Barts. and possible conflict with the Jubilee Apts. parking. There are 55 spaces available for the church, so, unless there is a concurrent church event, there should be enough for our general meeting. A reminder at the next meeting is planned.

Next Executive Meeting- May 2nd/2005.

Welcome New Members:

Jack Howden, Bill & Betty Nowesad and Don Janes

Welcome back:

Doug Lidstone, Rich & Dianne Dolby, Ian & Craig Hunt, Debbie & Dan DiBrita, Lorne Longley, Ed & Sharon Bilodeau, Fordie Smith, Leo Yasuchenko, Bruce Richie, Bruce Montgomery, Mary Jamieson, and Frank McGregor.



TIP

Get more out of SCUG and become involved. Volunteer for a committee, an executive position, and help keep SCUG strong. All volunteers will be fully trained - help is always only a click or two away!

Compuprize Winner

Here is the winner from SCUG's February 50/50 Draw



And the winners this month are:

Lorna Huggett won the mouse (not alive)
Chesley Colwell for USB Thumb Drive



Dan Bilger

**SHAREWARE
CD
SCUG Librarian
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: April:

Award-winning registry cleaner to fix Windows errors and optimize software performance. Registry Mechanic is an advanced registry cleaner for Windows that can safely clean and repair problems with your registry in a few simple mouse clicks! Easily fix problems with the Windows registry that are a common cause of crashes and error messages. Registry Mechanic feature highlights

- Repair invalid registry entries that are a common cause of Windows crashes and error messages
- Improve system performance and stability by removing orphaned references
- Scan your hard drive for invalid and incorrect program shortcuts
- Safely make backups of any registry change made by Registry Mechanic
- Unlimited free upgrades and e-mail technical support for one year
- Works with Windows XP, Me, 98, 95, NT and 2000

March: Guard Bar-Spyware-Adware Blocker 1.0 for Win9x/NT4/ME/Win2k/XP

The program blocks spyware and adware from infecting your PC, and eliminates pop-up ads. It can clean cookies, temporary Internet files, and recent and history files. You can get your local weather information on the toolbar and search the Internet from any Web page. You can search Google, Yahoo, MSN, AOL, and Lycos, with a click of the mouse directly from the toolbar.

Jetico Personal Firewall 1.0.1.47 for Win9x/NT4/ME/Win2k/XP

Jetico Personal Firewall protects your computer from unwanted hacker's attacks from outside as well as from malicious programs "living" secretly inside your computer's memory and hard drive.

Three levels of protection are included: low-level network packets filtering, application-level network events filtering and filtering of user-level process activity.

Jetico Personal Firewall checks every packet that comes in or out of your computer. Using configuration sets for

Continued on page 10.

Special Interest Groups

SIG REPORTS



Windows SIG

Pierre Houle
windows@scug.ca

Thirty members attended the April Windows SIG

I led a presentation on computer freezing: what causes freezing, and how to fix the problem. Much discussion ensued, and an overall prevention plan was arrived at.

I also asked for ideas for future topics. One suggested was compiling a list of safe computer practices for the members.

This was followed by a question and answer session. Again there was tremendous input from the members.

The next Windows SIG meeting will be held Thursday May 19th, 7:00 P.M., at Grace United Church, corner of Indian and Cathcart. The topic to be announced



Come out and learn how to operate your computer better...save on high repair costs, and of course, meet others who share your love for computers.



Digital SIG

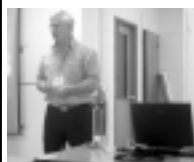
Fred Abma
digitalsig@scug.ca



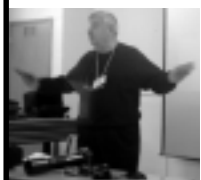
Thirty people attended the April Digital Photography SIG, including three guests. Unfortunately, Fred couldn't attend due to illness, so we were left to our own devices.



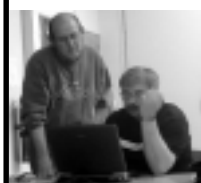
Bill Coombs started the meeting by showing a couple of digital photographs of birds he had taken, and how this was done.



Rich Dolby followed with a talk on organizing your digital photo files so that they can be retrieved.



Bill Colotelo explained about a digital imaging CD that he handed out for samples to members. The CD's were supplied by PHOTODEX, demonstrating ProShow Gold and CompuPic.



Iain Smy showed those attending how to upload their photos to the website for viewing. Thanks to Iain the tech end of the night ran quite smoothly.



I finished off the meeting with a few photo taking tips, and a general question and answer session.

Thanks to everyone for pitching in.

The next meeting of the Digital SIG will be Wednesday, May 4th, 7:00 P.M., at St. John the Apostle Church, corner of north Lansdowne and Athlone. Fred will be back, and will give us some tips for taking better pictures. Hope to see you there!

Pierre Houle.

There was another interesting Q&A tonight!



The Financials will be posted next month.

ANNOUNCING - - DIGITAL S.I.G. PHOTO GALLERY

Available to All SCUG Members

Show off your photos on the SCUG web site

<http://www.scug.ca/digital-sig>

1. Register for an account
2. Activate account as per e-mail
3. Log in and upload your photos
4. Once your account is verified your photos will go online instant!

Whenever you are at a friend's house, or travelling with your laptop, and have the urge to show off your pictures, now you can simply log onto www.scug.ca and your pictures are there for all to see, hassle free.

You can also forward the URL to friends and relatives so they too can peek in from time-to-time. Join in on this free service for all SCUG members today! Any question you may have, the answer is just an email away: webmaster@scug.ca



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 Reveiws |
| * 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

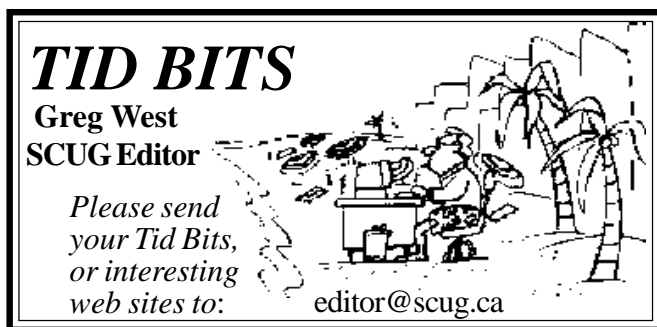
EBTech offers up to \$5/month discount to SCUG Members!

- * 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!



FIREFOX - Tab Browsing Experienced!

No one who has switched from the "OTHER" browser to the new and exciting FIREFOX browser looks back. In fact, most people cannot believe the speed and efficiency of this program. One of the most exciting aspects of FIREFOX is its unique function called: Tab Browsing. Nevertheless, what is all the hype about this feature?

Here are a few examples:

"Firefox lets you create and use tabs, which are basically additional browser screens that have all the power and features of a separate instance of the browser." It is so simple to open new tabs...you just go to File / New Tab / or do it the easy way and click Ctrl + T and a tab bar appears with tabs for the original window and the new window"

One big advantage is that you can open many websites at the same time (great for those who still are on Dial-Up service) because "opening multiple tabs is that each tab has its own history that lets browse back and forth without affecting what's appearing on the other tabs."

Anyone who has ever been searching out information for vacations, new products, or grocery sales will have to admit that when they did find a great site it was soon lost as they went further and could not find that special site after about 10 minutes in Cyberspace. No more...Firefox tab browsing helps you save those sites you visited and if they are common everyday sites you like to look up, well with Tab Browsing you simply click on Open All Tabs and each one of your favourite sites opens at the same time...no more waiting for one site to open at-a-time.

One other great feature is the "Live Bookmarks" wherein you can go to your bookmark folder and have all your bookmarks come alive at once...in each folder. This saves you vast amounts of time and hassle. How does one make a bookmark come alive you ask. It is easy. "Opening live bookmarks in tabs is as easy as opening any

other bookmark in other programs. Click the live bookmark to display the news items, right-click the news items you want to open, and then select Open in New Tabs from the context menu. The selected story appears in a new tab. You can even open every news item in the live bookmark in tabs all at once by right-clicking the live bookmark, selecting Open in Tabs on the context menu, and poof! You're instantly well-informed on the topic of your choice."

"Tab browsing allows the user to multitask vigorously; whenever I think of something else I want to look into, I just open a new tab and start a new line of inquiry. It's fast, powerful, and amazingly useful."

Editor's Note: *All quotations are excerpts from Firefox & Thunderbird Garage. (See review on page 13 here in SCUG Report). Remember, you are only a Ctrl+T away from a new experience in browsing, one that you will never have a need to return to the "Other" browser. Oh, I just cannot help but toss in one more Tid Bit: "Keeping your bookmarks organized into categories is not only a good idea in general, it can make tabbed browsing a lot easier... which in turn can make your surfing that much more effective. If you have bookmarks organized into discreet groups, it's easy to open an entire folder in tabs without a lot of extraneous or outdated websites."*

Every find yourself opening the door, searching for those Flyers that seem to be either all scrunched up or soaking wet, or not even there? Search outside no more. Click on the new and updated Flyer site for the most up-to-date shopping deals in Sarnia. This site hosts so many stores now there is something for everyone. Unlike the paper flyers that come late or not at all, now you have the ability to check out the store flyers even before the stores get them. Just click on this site for the best buys in town:

<http://www.flyermall.com/web/flyer/store.html>

Oh yes, and don't forget to make this one your first Tab Browsed bookmark for faster loading.

Spring is here, well sort of, and you may be thinking of cleaning up the mess inside of your computer. For those who are using Windows XP you have a great tool called System Restore. Before you begin to clean out the junk in your computer, make sure you set a Restore Point - just in case you happen to toss out something you may regret down the road. I set mine today, but before I did this, I updated my anti virus, Spyware programs, and ran a scan disc and defrag. Now to start deleting those half dozen copies of the same pictures, the text files I don't even remember saving, and those free programs I don't even know why I downloaded...only because they were free?



WEBSITE:

<http://housecall.antivirus.com>
(note that there is no "WWW")

by Ira Wilsker

Hopefully by now, all of my readers will have installed a good antivirus program, firewall, and spyware detector. I have written about the threats that we all face on a daily basis, and have done my best to inform you of them, and how to protect yourselves from those risks. Despite our best efforts, it is still possible that some virus or other form of malware might penetrate our defenses, and create a threat to our safe computing.

Antivirus software, regardless of brand, is generally reactive, rather than proactive, in that the publisher must receive a copy of the virus before it can analyze it, and come up with an effective defense against it. According to published studies this may take anywhere from a few hours to a few days for the antivirus publisher to add the new virus signature to their updates. Another way to look at this is to think of your morning daily newspaper; when you read it today, it was really yesterday's news, not today's news. That is somewhat how antivirus updates work; today's update may be mostly viruses discovered yesterday (or before), leaving you unprotected against any of today's new viruses or other threats. Even if your antivirus software offers updates as needed, sometimes several times a day, these updates are still generally viruses found earlier, with a significant time lag from discovery to update. Those computer users who update their antivirus software less frequently than daily are at an even greater risk of having their computers infected by the new virus of the day. Several of the antivirus publishers are now releasing updates hourly, or as frequently as necessary, in order to reduce the gap between discovery and protection. My antivirus is set to check hourly for updates while I am online, and while there is often not an hourly update, I do see frequent updates with one or two new virus signatures added to the database. On a daily basis, it is not unusual for 50 to 70 new viruses to be detected, rendering those users or antivirus programs that update less frequently extremely vulnerable to infection, or worse. It bears repeating here, as mentioned in a previous column, that many of the new viruses contain a payload which will deactivate and effectively kill most major brands of antivirus software, leaving the system totally unprotected. If one of these new viruses should attack a system before the protection against it is installed, then the antivirus protection on the infected computer is useless. The user will not likely know that his computer and security has been compromised, as the antivirus icon will still appear near the clock, and automatic updates will still run, apparently successfully, but these new viruses destroy the heart

“Those computer users who update their antivirus software less frequently than daily are at an even greater risk of having their computers infected by the new virus of the day.”

of the protective antivirus software, leaving the computer unprotected and open to additional attacks.

Fortunately, for those who may be a little lacking in the security department by not having their antivirus software updated frequently enough, or those that would just like a little peace of mind that their computer is reasonably clean of viruses, Trend Micro offers "Housecall", a free, online scan for viruses, Trojans, security problems, and other forms of malware. Trend is not alone in offering free online scans, as several other companies, such as Panda, NOD32, McAfee, and Symantec also offer free scans, but in my opinion the Housecall is the best of the group. Trend keeps Housecall updated on a continuous basis, making it as current as possible.

Housecall can be found at housecall.antivirus.com (there is no WWW), and requires that Internet Explorer be used as the browser. Upon going to the website, the user has two choices, the original antivirus only scan, and the new Housecall version 6.0 "beta". I would recommend that everyone tries the new version by clicking on the appropriate icon. You may be presented with a choice of a virus only scan, or a full security scan; select the complete scan option. Another page will open asking the user to select the country that they are connecting from; this is the only personal information that is gathered and I for one am proud to select "United States". The reason for selecting a country is for the purpose of maintaining a real-time virus infection map, also available on the left edge of the webpage. The next step is to download a small file from Trend (if your computer presents a security warning, it is OK to download). Once downloaded and self-installed, a drive map will appear. I recommend that you select all of the hard drives on your computer by checking the appropriate boxes.

After the scan is completed, Housecall will present a list of any infections or other threats found. By clicking on the name of the threat, a browser window will be opened providing comprehensive information, if desired. Housecall can delete, remove, or quarantine almost all identified threats, including viruses, spyware, and other forms of malware. If a virus is found that destroys the antivirus software which is installed, it will be necessary to first remove the virus, and then reinstall and update the antivirus software. Scans such as this should be done on a frequent basis in order to insure the virus security of a system.

It must be noted that while online antivirus scans are very effective at detecting and removing any infections on the computer, they offer no continuing protection. An online scan should never be used as a substitute for good antivirus software, installed and configured properly, and updated very frequently.

How to Report Tech Problems to Get Answers

By Gabe Goldberg
APCUG Advisor and Columnist
AARP Computers and Technology Website
ggoldberg@apcug.net

Using computers and technology means having questions and problems. But you can't get answers and solutions without asking the *right* questions. A little preparation can be a big help in solving annoyances, mysteries, and disasters.

The more we use computers and technology, the more questions we have and problems we need solved. But it's hard to get answers and solutions without asking the *right* questions and describing the problem at hand. We're specific when visiting the doctor or auto mechanic: we describe what's wrong and when it began. We may even imitate the noise our car makes for the mechanic.

But when faced with computer oddities and malfunctions we sometimes revert to unhelpful generalities such as "My email is broken" or "My printer stopped working" or "I get an error when I start Word". Problem reports such as these don't allow diagnosing a problem; at best, they elicit a response like "Tell me more".

It saves time to collect as much information as possible before asking for help. As a bonus, gathering problem details and considering relevant factors can often allow solving problems oneself!

Just as a doctor or mechanic needs details, someone analyzing a computer problem must know the environment in which it occurred. So describe your computer (hardware/software/networking/application/etc.) to provide context. Mention your operating system (Windows 98/ME/XP, Mac OS, Linux, etc.), what version of what application failed (Internet Explorer 6.0, MS Word XP, etc.), what Internet connection is used (dial or cable/DSL), and any other details that may help.

Don't omit details -- it's better to have too much information than to miss a crucial factor. Sometimes it's worth capturing screen images showing a problem; tools for doing this will be described in a future article.

Other important steps in describing symptoms and get-

ting help are:

Distinguish facts from guesses and interpretations.

If an error message was issued, write it down, word-for-word. Then check it for accuracy. (Often searching Google for the error message text or a distinctive chunk -- entered in quotation marks -- will yield information on a problem.)

Note what you did just before the problem occurred and whether anything else odd happened since you last rebooted and before the problem at hand.

Mention whether the problem happened before, and if so how you resolved it.

List whatever (hardware, software, settings, network, *anything*) changed recently.

Explain if you attempted to solve the problem and what resulted. (Remember that rebooting often cures problems, though without explaining them.)

Note where you've already looked for information (product manual or Help, company Web site or FAQ, etc.).

Reread your query imagining you know nothing about the problem except what's in the query. Add what's missing that someone else needs to know in order to help.

To help friends or service personnel respond to your question -- and to let the question be filed and found -- use a meaningful Subject line, not Help!, Urgent, or Question. Describe the context (e.g., Windows XP) and the problem (e.g., Windows Update never finds new patches).

To help your helper help you -- Be clear about your overall goal, don't focus on an intermediate step you think

Just as a doctor or mechanic needs details, someone analyzing a computer problem must know the environment in which it occurred.

is necessary -- you may distract someone into addressing how you're trying to do something rather

than what you actually want to do.

Ask for help in the right/best place. AARP's Computers and Technology Web board <<http://community.aarp.org/rp-computers/start>> hosts many people with deep and diverse experience who are most generous with their time offering help and advice. And the Internet hosts thousands of mailing lists and newsgroups specializing in every imaginable topic. Searching for find the best place to

Continued on page 10.

Continued from page 9 - Reporting TECH Problems
 pose a question will get you better and more complete answers and avoid your seeming like a novice for posting out-of-place queries.

As you work with an individual or a group, collaborate -- don't try to overpower them. Be respectful, not belligerent; don't make them feel stupid even if you feel they are. They may have missed a detail, you may not have conveyed the whole story.

If you're working with someone at a company help desk, don't try to "pull rank" based on age or experience or professional credentials. Mention past interactions with the company, emphasizing positive outcomes.

Finally, a longish document from Eric Raymond -- an influential leader of the "open source" (shared software development) movement - at <http://www.catb.org/~esr/faqs/smart-questions.html> provides useful tips, though it's a little too harsh in places for my taste. But his comments on how to ask questions and where to seek help are interesting and helpful.

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Internet Site:	www.scug.ca
Please submit your articles for the next SCUG Newsletter before the 16th. to: editor@scug.ca .	
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Continued from page 4 - Shareware
 Security Policy you define how your computer is connected to the local network and the whole Internet. Your computer may be completely hidden from any unfriendly attempts to access your hard drive while you are able to access any web sites you want and you decide on which applications are allowed to access Internet and which are not.

With Jetico Personal Firewall you feel secure, safe and protected while enjoying all Internet activities.

February: PC Security Test 2005 3.3 for Win9x/ME/Win2k/XP is a free program for Windows that checks computer security against viruses, spyware and hackers.

January: Backup4all 1.3.0 (last freeware version) OS: Win95/98/Me/NT/XP/2000. Backup4all is a powerful backup utility..

November: Some Christmas fun including a Christmas Screen saver and a couple of games DUOtris: Truly original and hugely addictive arcade puzzle action. 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.

Go to the SCUG website under: "Other Areas - DOWNLOADS"

A SCUG Review GetDataBack for NTFS by Runtime Software

by Pierre Houle

GetDataBack is one of many data recovery programs that claim to recover data from computer drives that have had data deleted, or corrupted. Unlike some of the others, this one works. GDB comes in two types, GDB for FAT and GDB for NTFS. This review concerns GDB for NTFS only, however, I have used both with success.

Name of Program: GetDataBack for NTFS version 2.31

Company: Runtime Software

Runtime address in North America: Fairview Dr., Carson City, NV 89701

Tech Support: Runtime phones: 775-884-3922 (telephone), 818-475-1741 (fax)

Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. - general questions, [HYPERLINK "" support@runtime.org](mailto:support@runtime.org) - support team

Price: \$79US for personal use

System Requirements: Pentium processor, 32 MB of RAM. Can be installed on Windows 95/98/Me, NT, 2000 or XP. To be used for recovering files on an NT based file system.

Pros: Easy to understand interface. It works well. If the disk will spin up, and the files haven't been overwritten, GDB will recover your data. Excellent documentation and website. Will work with removable media.

Cons: Will only work on NTFS. It would be nice if it could work on both NTFS and Fat. This program can take some time to work, if scanning a large drive.

Details: I downloaded GDB from the Runtime website in order to recover data from a failed hard drive. I offered to do a review and they agreed, sending a registration key so that I may use the full capabilities of the program. The installation went smoothly. I quickly reviewed the documentation, and discovered that the program must not run from the drive you are attempting to recover. Since the problem drive was removed from another computer, this wasn't a problem. I installed the

bad drive as a slave to my current drive. After starting the computer, I opened the program from the start menu icon located under the Runtime folder.

The opening screen shows Step 1 that is a list of drives on your computer. You have the option of scanning any or all drives. I chose just the one that needed recovery. It may not be immediately obvious which drive to choose, as GDB includes all partitions, physical drives, and logical drives, including removables. There is also a choice for placing temporary files. They strongly recommend these not be on the target drive, so I chose a different one.

Clicking the "Next" button takes you to the second screen, "Step 2, select source". Here are listed in an explorer window, the drive(s) you chose in step 1. Selecting the drive shows a detailed view in the right pane, which gives particulars about that drive, including size, and amount of space used.

Once the desired drive was selected, I chose "Next" again, and went to "Step 3 - select range and file system". Here you can choose to scan the whole partition, or a selected area. Since I didn't know which area of the drive contained the lost files, I chose "Search whole drive"


Clicking "Next", "Step 4, selecting the file system" launches a scanner that shows the sectors being scanned, along with the time remaining and a progress bar across the bottom of the screen. Depending on the size of the drive, this could take some time. On my test drive, which was 40 MB, the scan took about fifteen minutes. Once the scan is complete you are presented with a list of file systems found. Here you must choose between available "found file systems", and click next.

In step 5, the found files are extracted, and displayed in a recovery tree. These files are colour coded for easy identification. Here you must select the files you want to recover. Opening them can check the quality of the recovered files.


In my test, I recovered all the files I needed to. The key to recovery is not to use the affected drive as soon as the problem is found, to run the recovery program from a separate drive, and to save the found files there.

Conclusion: GetDataBack for NTFS works well, is easy to use, and has a comprehensive Help file. I recommend it for NTFS data recovery. It is much less expensive than taking your drive to a commercial data recovery lab.

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Stats as of Feb 28 2005

93 Members + 46 Associates = 139 Total Membership
 New Members..... 3 Members + 1 Associates

Renewals..... 13 Members + 6 Associates
 Lapsed Memberships..... 0 Members + 0 Associates
 Guests..... 7 Guests
 Total Meeting Attendance..... 68

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
March 30, 2005

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Norm 542-5757

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 N7V 2N5

Email: info@scug.ca
Internet Site: www.scug.ca


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

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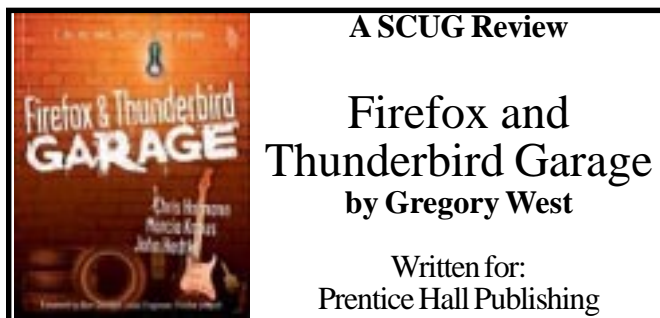


SCUG is proud to announce that Dorothy's published article on ebay that appeared in the March edition of SCUG Report is now being circulated by APCUG as a feature article for APCUG member editors to pick up for their magazines and newsletters. Way to go Dorothy - it is a very informative article. We look forward to more on this subject.

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A SCUG Review

Firefox and Thunderbird Garage

by Gregory West

Written for:
Prentice Hall Publishing

I have been researching the Internet since the early 90's, experimenting with many different browsers and none compare to the new Firefox for speed, security, and functionality. Since Firefox's inception in 2004, I have found myself clicking around inside Firefox, playing with some of the latest features including its fantastic new concept with "Tab Browsing", but only touching the surface with these programs. Then along comes this new book: FIREFOX AND THUNDERBIRD GARAGE and now my browsing experience has blasted off to places I have never been before and at warp speed.

This book is mainly for Windows users, however Linux and Mac users will quickly pickup on the few differences without much problem. This book offers a wide spectrum of information about web browsing and emailing, a book for the beginner to the advanced user.

Many computer books simply put you to sleep with their hard-to-read technical data, their lack of screen-shots, and their material that does not pertain to the average user. This book is a very readable one, with tons of illustrations and great screenshots, tips, and extremely useful reference guides that are continuously cross-referenced. The book has helped me fine-tune and utilize Firefox's functions to their fullest potential, and all spelled out in easy-to-follow steps for the average computer

This book shows you how you will have complete control over your web browsing, gain high security levels against pop-up invasions and lead you into the unbelievable functionality with tab browsing; all this helps makes your surfing run at high speeds. Beginners to advanced users will find this book incredibly useful in that there are extensive short cuts to exciting new functions and tips wherever you may want to explore the programs at a deeper level. In addition, you will learn how to customize your web browser to fit all your personal needs. With this book you will quickly learn about:

The history of browsers and the latest technology advancements these two programs have achieved.

Faster search methods with tab browsing.
Total control with your Internet downloads

and the download status bar.

How to create more "Real estate" - more space you your screen.

Enable quick virus scans.

How cookies work and their good and bad aspects.

Registry cleaners.

The specifics of search engine features.

How to find dead URLs and make them come alive again.

Everything you need to know about emailing.

Much, much, more than can be stated here.

If you want to surf the net in a fast, safe, and extremely organized fashion, this book has it all. With the extensive cross-referencing, the FAQ boxes, sidebars, relevant screenshots on most pages, and of course the far-reaching examples of workarounds and shareware sites, your Internet experience will forever change for the better.

This book is a must have for anyone who wants to get the most from web browsing and emailing.

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.

Editor's Note: One of the most fascinating features this book describes is the infamous TAB BROWSING wherein it points out that for people who experience slow Internet connections, or those who simply want to surf the net at extremely high speeds with sites that normally take forever to load, tab browsing allows you to look at one web site while numerous others are loading at the same time. It is like flipping the pages of a magazine once the tab browser is operating, and not to forget the "Live Bookmark" feature that opens as many bookmarks at the same time - thus saving you time and frustration. There are too many features this book explains in PLAIN ENGLISH to mention here in SCUG Report. The book is a definite 10+.

For more information go to Prentice Hall site at:
<http://vig.prenhall.com/>

SARNIA COMES ALIVE



Hold onto your hat, Leo is taking us into the future with Wireless Internet...and it is FREE.

Finally, someone has taken the initiative by providing this city with what most others have had for quite some time. Sarnia has now joined the rest of the world through a wireless Internet connection thanks to Leo Stathakis, the owner of

Coffee Lodge in Sarnia. We now have an Internet café...and wireless at that!

Last week Iain (SCUG Webmaster) and I met at the Coffee Lodge to discuss some new ideas for SCUG. Iain had his Mac laptop and I had my Toshiba laptop. With a simple flick of a switch, we were speeding away on the Internet, thanks to the Wi-Fi router provided by Coffee Lodge. The Wi-Fi connection was handy, in that Iain was helping me with a connection bug and we were able to go online and work out the problem. We were also able to connect to the SCUG website and discuss certain aspects therein.

I must say that I am prejudice, favour Leo's dark roast coffee over most others, and have been a customer since he first opened his coffee shops. Now, I have an added excuse to go to Coffee Lodge...Wi-Fi with lunch is a perfect mix. Over the past few years there have been only a few laptops spotted in and around Sarnia, but I am certain that the trend will change as more. This just might be the place where we can go after a SCUG meeting and enjoy what Leo has to offer.

As Leo says on his website that Coffee Lodge is a great place to "Enjoy a conversation with a friend, or a moment for yourself at Coffee Lodge. Sit by the fire and relax to the sights, sounds and aromas that make Coffee Lodge Sarnia's most unique coffee house café. Please check our entertainment page for dates and times of our live fireside entertainment." And now we have the added feature of the Internet.



Leo Stathakis' Coffee Lodge
www.coffeelodge.ca

RSS Feeds

By Greg Lenihan

Editor, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society

I believe I am an information junkie. I get more e-mail and subscribe to more newsletters than I can read. And yet I'm still searching for more. A few months ago, around the time of the presidential election, I discovered the world of Blogs (or Weblogs). These are online journals where authors post opinions and commentary and often link to the articles they are discussing. These often track back to more Blogs, and more authors worth reading, and before you know it, you can spend a good deal more time than you can afford searching for obscure opinions and facts.

After collecting a number of these sites as favorites in my browser, it became difficult to keep up with them every day. There are all kinds of subjects to choose from, but my favorites are news sites, political sites, and especially--technology sites. Most of these sites had or icons, which I knew had something to do with "feeds," so I decided to find out how to obtain the reader software necessary to subscribe to these feeds (or "channels").

RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary. RSS is a text-based format (XML, actually) that contains various tagged items like a title, summary, and a link to a URL. Instead of you having to continually go from site to site to see if there have been updates posted, these sites are able to "feed" their updates to you. All you need is a news reader or what is called an RSS "aggregator." This is a program that collects and organizes these feeds periodically so you can read them when you want. Then you can subscribe to these sites and automatically get these new postings. It's like creating favorites or bookmarks, except you don't have to continually go there. They come to you.

I started by going to http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-10088_7-5143460.html to read reviews and to gather recommendations. I found more options and more reviews of readers at http://email.about.com/cs/rssfeedreaders/tp/top_rss_windows.htm. There are many different readers; some free, some not, with different goals. Some are standalone, others work with Internet Explorer, and one worked with Outlook. But the one that caught my eye was free and did not require a software installation. Bloglines (<http://www.bloglines.com>) is Web-based, which means I can access it from any computer with an Internet connection. I could be at home, at work, on the road, and I could still get my info fix.

The signup was quick at the Bloglines.com site. I was just asked for a username (e-mail address), password, time zone, and language. A confirmation message is then sent to your e-mail account. You simply click on a link they provide, and you're confirmed. In addition, the site posts the top Blogs people enjoy, and with the click of a

Continued on page 16

An Examination of Google's Gmail

By Richard Johnson
Member of TUGNET, CA
www.tugnet.org

The two most useful features of Gmail are (1) its huge storage capacity, which essentially eliminates the need to delete messages, and (2) a lightning-quick search facility, allowing the user to retrieve any message almost instantly.

Gmail also touts its unique labeling system, that replaces other email services' folders (for filing incoming messages), its "conversation" grouping of messages, and its lack of banner ads or pop-ups. In this writer's opinion, the value of the labels is overblown. To label incoming messages is time-consuming and on the whole not particularly helpful. Unlabeled messages may be retrieved easily either from the main window (with the "Search Mail" button) or with Gmail's advanced search (accessible via "Show search options" on the main window). This writer uses the advanced search routinely, for finding messages.

It should be noted that Gmail is not ad-free. It's just that the ads are text ads (similar to the ads on Google's search pages).

At this time a Gmail user can receive HTML mail but send in plain text only. For security purposes, graphics are excluded by default from incoming messages, and you can vary this instruction on a message-by-message basis only.

Spam control. Gmail features its own rudimentary spam filtering system, discussed in greater detail below. While imprecise, this system cannot be turned off. Although you can create your own additional filters, the only way to stop Gmail from diverting legitimate mail to its spam folder is to add the sender to your contact list. (You can do so either directly or by marking a "Spam" message "Not spam.") At this writing Gmail still follows a quirky protocol under which bounce messages are diverted to the spam folder.

Should You Switch? Gmail is not for everyone. You should not switch to Gmail:

- if you find Web-based email just too slow,
- if you want pictures on your incoming messages, and don't want to have to bother with Gmail's one-click instruction (to include graphics) for each such message,
- if you need

- if you don't want to have to periodically check the spam folder for legitimate mail or bounced messages,
- if you prefer to read in your inbox all incoming mail, even mail that might be spam, or
- if you're happy with what you have, and feel it's not worth the trouble to notify folks of your new address.

You should consider switching to Gmail

- if you'd rather not fuss with setting up folders for messages that you've read and want to keep, but still want to be able to retrieve such messages speedily,
- if you like Web-based email such as Yahoo Mail or Hotmail, but are fed up with the banner ads and popups you encounter,
- if you don't want to have to decide which incoming messages to keep and which to delete,
- if you've ever wanted to view an old incoming message only to realize that you'd permanently deleted it,
- if you presently use a disk-based system like Outlook or Outlook Express, and don't want the hassle of backing up your messages to protect against their loss in a disk crash,
- if you find your present email filtering scheme too complicated, or
- if you like the idea of grouping related messages in "conversations," for easier reference.

Gmail Compared to Outlook Express Nearly all new Windows computers come bundled with Microsoft's Outlook Express. This fact may explain the overwhelming preponderance of that program among users. Both Gmail and Outlook express are free. But although price is not one of them, there are various reasons for choosing one over the other

Storage There are pluses and minuses to using a Web-based email system like Gmail, with respect to storage. A plus is that since messages are stored on the Web, they'll always be accessible to the user, regardless of any hard disk catastrophes. Moreover, an accumulation of large numbers of stored messages will not affect either the available disk space or speed of access. (However, Internet access-especially dial-up-can be uncomfortably slow, compared to disk access.)

One minus with a Web-based system is that the provider's server will accommodate only a limited amount of storage-typically much less than will easily fit on a user's hard drive. So the user may find older messages simply gone. This distinction is turned around by Gmail-which allows a gigabyte of storage, and in fact discourages the user from deleting any messages.

Filing With any email system, sent messages may be retained in their own mailbox. The conventional way of filing an incoming message for later reference is to move

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15 - Google's Gmail. it from the inbox to another mailbox of the user's choice. This is the filing system used by Outlook Express. The user may need to create anywhere from a few new mailboxes to dozens, with names like "Purchases," "Events," "Subscriptions," "Bills," "Software reference," "Confirmations," etc. A simpler choice might be to send all such saved messages to a "Hold" mailbox.

Gmail has revolutionized email filing. (In its terminology, it doesn't even offer filing!) Rather than send it to a particular mailbox, the user simply "archives" the message. Archived messages in Gmail go to "All Mail," which is just like the "Hold" mailbox referenced above, except that it includes outgoing as well as incoming messages. A Gmail quirk is that while a user's draft will be found in All Mail, messages that Gmail considers spam will not.

Gmail's "labels" or keywords, can at least in theory facilitate a message search, in addition to the usual search criteria (sender, subject, date range, etc.). Multiple labels may be assigned to one message.

As would be expected with a system created by Google, searching for messages is lightning-fast. This rapid retrieval of messages actually renders Gmail's labeling system largely unnecessary, in this writer's view.

Spam Diversion Gmail has been criticized for having an insufficiently sophisticated spam blocking system. It's actually miles ahead of that of Outlook Express-but OE users often can use spam controls supplied by the Internet Service Provider. For this writer, Gmail's system is more than adequate.

Gmail controls spam by means of (1) message filtering-similar to that of Outlook Express, and (2) spam blocking.

With either Gmail or Outlook Express, the user can set up filters to bypass the inbox and send the subject messages directly to "Trash" [Gmail] or "Deleted Items" [Outlook Express]. Outlook Express also has a "Block sender" option to keep those senders' messages from reaching any mailbox.

Using its own criteria, Gmail will divert incoming messages to its "Spam" folder. This criteria can be overridden by the user's action either manually to add messages to the spam folder or to remove them. This action by the user will continue to affect all messages from the same sender.

Further Considerations Any retrieved Gmail message will be accompanied by other messages in the same "conversation." You can think of this as your girlfriend's

bringing her female cousins along with her on every date. It may be convenient if you want to relate to a cousin, but you need to remember who is the girlfriend and who is the cousin. Whether Gmail's "conversation view" is a positive or a negative is a call you'll have to make.

Gmail out of the box will not notify you when you have a new message. Keeping your Gmail window open won't tell you anything unless you refresh the page. And even with a fast connection, refreshing can be tediously slow. You can download the Gmail Notifier, but only if you use Windows 2000 or XP (or a later Windows version).

Additional points will become apparent with use. For example, a minor annoyance is Gmail's closing your history/favorites/search sidebar whenever you click on a link in a message. The best way to make up your mind about Gmail is to try it.

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Continued from page 14 - RSS Feeds.

button you can subscribe. Of course, you are not limited to their selections. Any Blog or site with an RSS feed can be added to your aggregator. That is how you can use those XLM icons. If you click on one you'll see a lot of tagged text, much like HTML. But it supplies the link that enables you to subscribe by pasting this link into your aggregator.

Once you have your aggregator and get it running, all that is left is to find sites or Blogs whose content you are interested in. The site where you obtain your aggregator will probably offer you a number to choose from. To get an idea of what is out there, go to <http://www.blogstreet.com/search.html> and see the number of topics to pick from. I frequently subscribe to something that looks interesting and if it is not what I expected, it only takes a matter of seconds to unsubscribe. But actually right now, I have more feeds than I have time to read.

<http://ppcompas.apcug.org/>

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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!

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<u>Executive</u>	<u>Digital Photo</u>	<u>Windows - PC</u>	<u>General Meeting</u>
2-May	4-May	19-May	25-May
30-May	1-Jun	16-Jun	29-Jun

SCUG Meeting Places

- * **Exec and Digital** - at St James Church-140 Lansdowne North
- * **Windows - PC** - at Grace United Church, 990 Cathcart
- * **General Meetings** - at St. Bartholomews Church, 718 Cathcart



Come on out to the next SCUG Executive meeting and learn more.