

# SCUG



# REPORT

Sarnia Computer User's Group

Est. 1984

[www.scug.ca](http://www.scug.ca)

Volume 23, Issue 8

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May 2006

## Digital Photography

Next meeting is June 7., 7 p.m.

Pierre Houle  
Group Leader  
[digitalsig@scug.ca](mailto:digitalsig@scug.ca)

## Genealogy Group

Next meeting is June 27, 7 p.m.

Val Conway  
Group Leader  
[genealogy@scug.ca](mailto:genealogy@scug.ca)

## Windows Computer

Next meeting is June 15, 7 p.m.

Pierre Houle  
Group Leader  
[windows@scug.ca](mailto:windows@scug.ca)

## Linux Computer

Next meeting is June 13, 7 p.m.

Rick Elnor  
Group Leader  
[linux@scug.ca](mailto:linux@scug.ca)

## General Meeting

Next meeting is June 28, 7 p.m.

We welcome all guests. Come out learn and have fun.

**Club Information:**  
Email: [president@scug.ca](mailto:president@scug.ca)

Check out the SCUG website:  
[www.scug.ca](http://www.scug.ca)

For more meeting info see the back page of this newsletter.

## Executive Board

### President

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[president@scug.ca](mailto:president@scug.ca)

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## NEXT MONTH

### June General Meeting:

John Mills (General Manager) and Brian Sawkill (Senior Technical Consultant) of Staples will show us the newest toys presented at the computer show in Las Vegas.

Nominations will be held for 15 minutes at the June meeting. Please consider helping YOUR club by sitting on the executive.

### Reprint Policy

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**PRESIDENT'S  
PERSPECTIVE**  
by Dorothy Alexander

The month of May has traditionally been when we open nominations for the SCUG executive positions. This year is no different. So far we have two positions that need to be filled. Namely, Vice President and Public Relations.

Neither of these jobs requires a lot of your time. Give it some thought; step forward and volunteer for one of these positions. If you know of someone, whom you feel could fill these positions, please nominate them, or at least prompt them to step forward. You can

contact either Dan Bilger or Bill Colotelo who are handling the nominations. It is personally rewarding to be part of the executive by helping make SCUG a better computer club.

Ladies, it is lonely being the only female on the executive so why not join me?

The current executive has worked hard to get interesting topics for the general meetings. We intend to continue in this direction in the coming year. Nominations remain open for the first fifteen minutes into of the June general meeting, then the election is held.

How many times have you installed a piece of software only to find that it was difficult to use? I am sure that all of us have been there and done that. Frustration sets in and things really start to go wrong. Many of you have expressed that this has happened when using Microsoft WORD. For instance the indents move on you, when you do not want them to. In fact sometimes it is as if it has a mind of it's own. Well then, do not miss our May General Meeting as we have Wendy Warner, Computer Department head of Northern Collegiate Institute & Vocational School, as our guest. She will show us some of the tricks to use so this problem hopefully will not occur.

Next month we will have John Mills (General Manager) and Brian Sawkill (Senior Technical Consultant) of Staples to show us the newest toys presented at the computer show in Las Vegas.

**GET INVOLVED**

**BE SURE TO COME NEXT MONTH AND VOTE - WE NEED YOU!**

*Editor's Korner*

Send Letters to: [editor@scug.ca](mailto:editor@scug.ca)  
Greg West - Editor



**WE NEED YOU!**

Last month we sent out a request for submissions by SCUG members to send us some names of members of whom they know are involved as volunteers within our community. We must assume there is more than one volunteer within the SCUG

membership, and sadly, we only received one submission from a SCUG member (see page 7).

SCUG has an election next month and we need you to help your club. Please think to help your club by either volunteering for an executive position or simply volunteering to help set-up a couple of meetings.

As well, SCUG is seeking articles for this newsletter. Nobody is sending in any interesting finds on the Internet, nor are we receiving any TID BITS that we know you have probably come across during your Internet travels. Do not keep these gems to yourself. Share with your club members...please send in your interesting finds on the Internet...those neat little programs that you just cannot do without...maybe the person sitting beside you can use that program as well. Please participate in YOUR club. Send emails to: [editor@scug.ca](mailto:editor@scug.ca)



## Your Secretary's Notes

by Tom Deeprise  
secretary@scug.ca

### SCUG Executive Meeting

May 1st, 2006 at St. James' Church

Ian and Jim sent their regrets.

**1. Approval Of Previous Minutes:** Accepted as written

**2. Membership Input:** In Jim's absence Ed reported that, as of April end, membership stood at 136 (96 Members & 40 Associates) with five Members renewing, plus nine current Guests. The meeting attendance for the Carmen's presentation was 63 appreciative Members and Guests. On the Newsletter, it was decided that a 105 would be appropriate for the May GM.

**3. Vice President's Input:** No report

**4. Secretary's Input:** Nothing secretarial and accommodations are as published.

**5. Treasurer's Input:** Ed's current Financial Report for April was approved with minimum comment.

**6. Software Librarian's Input:** Pierre reported 44 disks given out at April GM plus \$4 sales. DOM for this month will be a program, Autostitch, enabling a panoramic merging of landscape pictures

**7. Newsletter Editor's Input:** Greg is satisfied with the current printing quality but is disappointed with a lack of response to a request for feedback from the membership

**8. Program Coordinator's Input:** Norm reports that we have five reviews finished and nine outstanding at various stages of completion.

**9. Public Relations Input:** Iain stated that the Compuprize for May will be a 50/50 draw, and for June, a choice from a Wireless Router, USP Unit and possibly a donation.

**10. Webmaster's Input:** Iain reported Website still busy with international visits with the rate in March and April at about 250/day. A couple of SIG leaders laptops have been revised to accept wireless at St. James.

**11. Meeting Program:** Helge Buddenborg's presentation on "Slides and Negatives to Computer Storage"

was enjoyed by all and gave a variety of options in dealing with the transfer of all those old slides in the closet to a handier medium.

**May:** Wendy Warner, Head of Computers at Northern, major on WORD and minor on EXCEL

**June:** Staples' John Mills and Brian Sawkill on new technology from the Las Vegas Computer Show

**Ideas for the future:** Computers in the medical field, for instance, in Personal Insulin Control; using Quicken etc.; the latest AskSam; MasterCard re. the computer technology to be used for prepaid credit cards; how do you prepare a DOM; making rubber stamps using the computer; computer scrap booking. Some of these could be combined as mini-presentations

**12. Old Business** - The revised Constitution. Tom will announce to members at the May GM that the vote on the revised constitution was originally set for May 31st. However, due to a minimum of input we thought we would remind everyone that we would accept comments up to next Sunday, the 4th June for review at the Exect. Meeting on the 5th. Any changes will be made and a new copy sent to all members in preparation for a vote at the June GM.

- The old projector- it was reiterated that it will remain as backup and is also available to members on loan after brief instruction on its TLC. Disposal, when deemed appropriate, will be by sealed bid or auction to members only.

**13. New Business** The only positions open for the June election are the VP and Public Relations. Ads for the May meeting are too expensive to use (\$80/day for the Observer) Pierre will look into cordless microphones for presenters since prices and variety have changed since we last evaluated them.

Next Executive meeting will be Monday, June 5th 2006



*Remember that it is volunteers who help make SCUG the great club it is - SCUG needs your help with the upcoming Executive Election. Please give some thought to helping your club by volunteering to run for a position. We need you to help ensure SCUG continues for many years to come. Throw your hat in the ring and have some fun.*




**SHAREWARE**  
**SCUG Librarian**  
 Pierre Houle  
 library@scug.ca

Free Program of the Month

Due to vacations there will be no report this month. Look for the reports next month.

Some more *TID BITS* from the editor@scug.ca




**WINDOWS VISTA DELAY AGAIN**  
 “An influential analyst firm is predicting that the next version of Microsoft Corp.'s Windows operating system will come out even later than Microsoft has already forecast. Researchers at Gartner Inc. said in a report Tuesday that they believe Windows Vista won't be broadly available until sometime between March and June of 2007” ([http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/060502microsoft\\_windows.html?v=3](http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/060502microsoft_windows.html?v=3)).

**TIP**



**MORE HIGHER-TECH SPAM**  
 “Unless new weapons are designed to keep junk mail at bay, spammers are about to get the upper hand in the war in cyberspace. Canadian researchers have figured out a way to create spam that could bypass the best filters and trick even the most savvy computer users into opening messages they would normally delete” ([www.courierpress.com](http://www.courierpress.com))

**TIP**



**DON'T PAY PER READ**  
 How many times have you searched for some news item, only to find that the site that hosts the article wants you to set-up an account and pay them money? Once is enough. The site usually gives you a teaser paragraph to entice you to pay. **STOP right here.** Next time, simply copy the first sentence and paste it into the Google search box. Make sure you put brackets around the text then hit SEARCH. You will find many other sites that host the very same article for **FREE**. Of course this does not work all the time, but it is well worth the try (Editor SCUG).

**TIP**




**Computer SIG**  
**&**  
**Photography SIG**  
 Pierre Houle  
 windows@scug.ca

**Windows SIG**

Due to vacations there will be no report this month. Look for the reports next month.



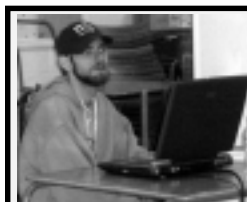
**SKYPE - FREE PHONE CALLING**  
 “Skype, eBay Inc.'s Internet telephone subsidiary, has stopped charging users for dialing up people on traditional landline and mobile phones in the U.S. and Canada. "Millions of consumers around the world are flocking to Skype every month, and we believe free SkypeOut calling will rapidly accelerate Skype adoption in the U.S. and Canada," said Henry Gomez, general manager of Skype North America” (Globe and Mail). Check out free phone calling now at: <http://www.skype.com/>

**TIP**



*Remember: Make sure to get your ticket when you come to the SCUG General meetings so you too can have a good chance at winning some of the great prizes each and every month.*

**SCUG ELECTION COMING SOON**  
 Please give some thought to helping out your club by volunteering for a position on the SCUG Executive. Learn first-hand how the club works, join in on the decision making, and bring your ideas to the table. Oh yes and there is help...you will have lots of support in your new position. All you have to do is contact an Executive member or Dan Bilger and Bill Colotelo for info.



## Linux SIG

Rick Elnor  
linux@scug.ca

This past month at the Linux SIG meeting we took a look at how to optimize Ubuntu Linux to use less system resources and speed up overall system responsiveness. We also revisited the Crossover Office application, which allows Windows programs to run within Linux. There were only two members who attended the meeting, however I am hoping to see a greater interest in the future. I thank everyone whom has attended our SIG meetings so far and am looking for any suggestions on how to make the Linux SIG a greater success.



TIP

“A WIDELY backed effort is under way to create a standard Linux desktop to help break Microsoft’s stranglehold. It is an effort to create a single starting point for Linux distributions based on standard elements.

As well as including the desktop and the ISO standard, LSB 3.1 includes aligning LSB’s roadmap with those of major Linux versions, such as Asianux, Debian, Novell and Red Hat. Linux has a foothold as an operating system for servers, but it has little of the desktop market.” (australianit.news.com)



## SCUG Compuprize Winners



The whole gang of prize winners.

Many thanks to Helge Buddenborg, manager of Carmen’s foto source for his kind offering of prizes.

## Genealogy SIG

Val Conway  
genealogy@scug.ca



A dozen members were present for the April 25 Genealogy SIG meeting at St. James. The topic was "Genealogy Software". We discussed the need of using a program and the availability of totally free and trial software.

The three widely used programs available online are:  
\*Personal Ancestry file by the LDS which is free ([www.familysearch.org/eng/paf](http://www.familysearch.org/eng/paf))  
\*Legacy will give you version 5 free ([www.legacyfamilytree.com](http://www.legacyfamilytree.com))  
\*Family Tree Maker has a Starter Edition to use as a trial (<http://tinyurl.com/nmmu4>).

Other programs can be found by going to [www.download.com](http://www.download.com) and entering "Family Tree" in their search. A Review of the top ten genealogy programs can be found at <http://genealogy-software-review.toptenreviews.com>.

Kathy Witheridge demonstrated Legacy Version 5 showing many of it's finer points including how easy it is to create a book. Val Conway demonstrated Family Tree Maker Version 11 showing the features she found helpful. Both Kathy and Val answered questions during the demonstrations and discussed different techniques of recording information.

This month's meeting was held on Tuesday May 30. The topic was "Keeping your Data Credible" (Entering Evidence - Sources and Citations). We learned the definition of a source, why we need to record them how to record them and where.

The last Genealogy SIG meeting for the SCUG year will be held on Tuesday, June 27 at St. James the Apostle Church, 140 Lansdowne North, at Athlone from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Once again this is the day before the General Meeting.


Topic: City Directories, Newspapers, Inter Library Loans, and other resources. +



Please get involved with your club and run for office. Elections next month.

**TID BITS**

Greg West  
 SCUG Editor  
 editor@scug.ca



**LOCAL POLICE REACH OUT - ONLINE**

In today's society we are seeing an overload of crime. To help combat this the authorities utilize the Internet in ways that in yesteryear was virutally unheard of, but now is a reality.

The OPP have launched a new site wherein they actually show remains of crime victims in hopes that someone will recognize these people. "The Ontario Provincial Police and the provincial Office of the Chief Coroner launched a Web site on Tuesday to help track down missing persons and solve decades-old crimes.

The Web site, available through the OPP's main portal, features pictures of missing persons and representations of unidentified human remains. Distinguishing marks and characteristics height, weight, piercings, tattoos, scars, etc. are also provided to provide the maximum amount of detail to visitors of the site."

[www.opp.ca/Investigative/UnidentifiedRemains/index.htm](http://www.opp.ca/Investigative/UnidentifiedRemains/index.htm)

Closer to home Lambton County now has crime media releases online from the local OPP:

[www.crimealerts.net/lambton.htm](http://www.crimealerts.net/lambton.htm)

Windsor Police have their own online crime pages:  
[www.police.windsor.on.ca/Media%20Releases%202006/index.htm](http://www.police.windsor.on.ca/Media%20Releases%202006/index.htm)

London Police have a Wanted section online:  
[www.police.london.ca/WhatsNewhighriskwanted.htm](http://www.police.london.ca/WhatsNewhighriskwanted.htm)

Back home again in Sarnia, we have our own boys in blue reporting various local crimes:

[www.police.sarnia.on.ca/](http://www.police.sarnia.on.ca/)



**GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR CLUB TODAY**

Last month we put out a request for members to let us know about SCUG members of whom they know are volunteers in our local community. Sadly, only one member sent in a submission. This club needs member participation. Please start getting involved with your club and help out.

SCUG member Pat Carter sent this letter to the Editor:

I would like to tell you about Norm Lamoureux. He is a wonderful dedicated volunteer in the Community. He has been a member of SCUG since 1984.

In 1996 he started to Volunteer his time with Information Sarnia Lambton [www.information.sarnialambton.org](http://www.information.sarnialambton.org) a database of community services in the City. He is currently the database Manager who updates the Website.

He also helps a blind person with grocery shopping, taking him to Doctor's appointments He helps VIP, a local organization with volunteering, fixing computers, and many other things they ask him to do,

He also Volunteers twice a week at the Local Food Bank.

Myself a SCUG member he is always ready to help me (a beginner in Computer) in many ways. I owe a lot of my knowledge to him and his teaching and the fact he always told me to try new things, without this urging I would be less knowledgeable. (Pat Carter)

Please give this project another thought and send in your submissions to the SCUG editor: [editor@scug.ca](mailto:editor@scug.ca)

**SCUG Book Reviewers Wanted**



SCUG is looking for members to review computer books for O'Reilly Publishing. Anyone interested in doing a book review, please contact:

**Program Coordinator**  
 Norm Lamoureux  
[coordinator@scug.ca](mailto:coordinator@scug.ca)

For a complete list of books at O'Reilly's go here:  
<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/prdindex.html>



A SCUG Review

## Microsoft Digital Image Suite 2006

by Rich Dolby  
SCUG Member

Product Name: Microsoft Digital Image Suite 2006, V11.0.422.0

**What It Is:** The suite is comprised of two elements - A digital image Editor and a Library system for naming, archiving and finding digital images.

**Website:** <http://www.microsoft.com/products/imaging/ProductDetails.aspx?pid=003> provides an overview and a video tour of the product.

**Tech Support:** <http://www.support.microsoft.com/> the same for all Microsoft products.

**User Manual:** A 276 page manual in PDF format can be downloaded for free from <http://www.microsoft.com/products/imaging/companionguides.aspx> Chapters 12 through 15 are recommended reading for anyone interested in topics such as Taking Great Pictures, Successful Scanning, Optimizing Your Monitor, and Digital Photography Tips & Tricks.

**Price:** Taxes not included - \$99.95 US after \$30 rebate as advertised at Microsoft product website. Pricing applicable to SCUG members in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada - Staples website price is \$119.99 CAN after a \$40 rebate. For Digital Image 2006 Standard Edition which is the editor only, price is \$49.95 CAN after \$20 CAN rebate. Future Shop website pricing is \$69.99 CAN after \$30 instant savings plus \$40 mail-in rebate for the Suite, and \$19.99 CAN after \$10 instant savings plus \$20 mail-in rebate for the Standard Edition. This price differential was double-checked at time of writing. The winner is... <http://www.futureshop.ca/search/searchresult.asp?logon=&langid=EN&search=adv>

**Product Box Content:** Two-disc wallet plus 276 page hardcopy User Manual.

**System Requirements:** Win 98SE/Win ME/Win2000/Win XP operating systems will support Microsoft Digital Image 2006 Suite. 256MB RAM minimum, 512MB recommended. Minimum of 400MB hard-disc space. If Windows Internet Explorer is not already installed,

then an additional 60MB HDD is required. This will not replace your primary browser if other than Win IE already installed.

**Installation:** The review was done using an AMD 1.15Ghz with 512MB RAM, operating with Win XP Home edition Service Pack 2. An earlier version of Microsoft "Picture It" or Digital Image" was detected and remained operable after installing Microsoft Digital Image 2006 Suite. A Typical Installation requires about 380MB, but I chose Full Installation forecast at 1300MB which includes Clip Art, Templates and Sample Pictures. There were no issues about installation to contend with, just quick and easy.

**What It Does:** Microsoft Digital Image 2006 Editor works on all digital images to enhance appearances, soften or remove skin blemishes or wrinkles, do automatic red-eye removal, straighten horizons or water lines, remove unwanted artifacts or dust particles, extract objects from images and create new images with multiple layers in PNG format. There are Filters, Effects, Brushes, Project templates for card-making, and Panoramic Stitching together of multiple pictures. It is considered a very complete works, and a review such as this has limited space to deliver an impression. If it is photography you want this program for, then this is for you, very affordable, an easy learning curve suited to all family members. For the artists in the family, Editor takes a picture and can create many special effects beyond photography. It is highly recommended that time be taken initially to view the video Tours, since it tickles the imagination and generates confidence that you can do it too. For comment about Microsoft Digital Image 2006 Library, please fast-forward to conclusions at review end.

### What it Does For Me:

1. Import digital camera uploads directly from Editor, with opportunity to prefix filenames which are then suffixed with an ascending three-digit serial number. For example "20060430Canatara-001". The files are then stored in a folder of choice. Can also import directly from a scanner by the same method. Both my camera and scanner were recognized by 2006 Editor. After files have been captured, I can get to work on editing and enhancement.

2. There are as many ways as there are people to use 2006 Editor. My way is to initialize as follows: Setup > View > select Common Tasks, Stack, & Rulers. Then go to Tools > Options > Units Of Measure, and change Inches to Pixels. There are at least two target audiences for this product - Photographers whose intent is print

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7 - MS Digital Image pictures at traditional standards of 4x6, 8x10 in inches etc. Then there are people such as the reviewer who rarely prints anything, preferring instead to view pictures on a typical 4:3 ratio monitor. As such, pixel size and ratio are catered to. For example, 2048x1536, 1600x1200, 1024x768, 640x480, and many sizes inbetween those. When I crop or resize a picture it is always with regard to maintaining ratio.

3. My main requirement is to edit and enhance digital camera pictures. They can be edited one at a time or by a Batch process that performs basic functions on many pictures at a time. Picture file sizes, Batch size and available RAM are factors that will affect time for batch completion. If large multi-megabyte pictures, start with a small batch size of say 5 pictures, then increase batch size if time taken to execute the batch was acceptable. When batch size is big relative to RAM, HDD space takes over, and execution time takes much longer. Batch has been found very useful for enhancing thousands of scanned pictures of various colour quality and condition. I also have an old 0.8 Megapixel camera, and the results are always improved by in turn correcting Level, Contrast and Exposure. Colour correction by batch correction can have varying results. Unless all colours are faded the same in a batch, unwelcome results can occur that can however be reversed by Edit > Undo.

4. You can make as few or as many corrections and enhancements as you see fit, and have time for. For quality digital camera editing, I generally start by running a batch of about 20 pictures each 3 megapixel size, and correcting Level, Contrast & Exposure. Any picture requiring straightening is then done. Pictures are then cropped individually to improve composition and to lower the file size. The "Rule Of Thirds" gridlines box is checked to assist cropping decisions. Colour correction is then done at this time, since working with JPEG's is not lossless compression - each Save loses something. My preference for colour correction is to Edit Curves which enables individual controls for Luminosity, Red, Green, Blue, and Saturation. I adjust each in the order given, and finish once again with Luminosity. The objective is to enhance the picture to make it real as was seen, with minimal adjustment of the "triangular handles" at each end of the Curve. The Curve itself may also be dragged by the mouse cursor, which can quickly lead away from reality. You might conceivably pull the curves if a picture was wildly off base to begin with. Luminosity is also applied sparingly so that shades of white are discernable rather than being a white wash-out.

5. If close-ups of people are being edited, then review need for red-eye reduction and Smart Erasure of unwanted objects. Use Touchup > Other Photo Repair >

and select Remove Wrinkles, or Remove Scratches or Dust, or Restore Old Photo. If close-up of a woman, consider using Blur to soften skin texture, or use Sharpen or Sharpen More if wanting to emphasize a non-person image such as plumage or flowers. Blur or sharpening should be the very last act done by editing and after final re-sizing since extra pixels are added to create sharper detail.

6. Some pictures can be made to be more dramatic by using Effects > Filters > All Filters > select All, and toggle down to Emboss Subtle, which defines object edges in a chiselled way. The effect can be repeated several times, and use Edit > Undo repeatedly to reset. It is good advice to work on a copy of your "original" when working in an artistic world where results are not predictable. Another interesting Filter is Glow: Edges, and Change Advanced Options enables adjustment to those parameters that create the effect, such as Transparency, Edge Width, Edge Brightness, and Smoothness. If you have time and inclination, there is much more to explore. For example: Special Edges. Adjusting the width of Soft Edges is a particularly nice effect for emphasizing the picture focal point, great for multi-picture collages in PNG format, which saves on ink too!

### Conclusions:

1. After establishing that you are comfortable with the new 2006 Suite, I recommend that any previous version of Picture It or Digital Image Pro, be removed since they are redundant and nearly 1GB of HDD space can be reclaimed.

2. The Library management scheme is definitely not for me, even if were free. I could not coax Library to sort and show Thumbnails by filename, instead forced to view either by Folder, Date, or Label. The latter is typically Keyword, People, Places, Events, Flags, Ratings; and more Label descriptors can be created to suit user needs. In essence, the user must take time to build the library using this Labeling system. Given the many thousands of pictures already on my PC, I have no intention of doing this. My "Labels" were built into the filename at inception, and include such things as names of people, date and place. Win XP Search feature is used to find filename keywords, and copy results to a folder of choice. If Library had the ability to view Thumbnails by filename order, then I would keep the program, although then more a repeat of what I already enjoy about ACDSsee and Irfanview, the latter being freeware.

3. The lifespan of 2006 Suite should be considered before choosing what to buy. Expect further refinements to be made in future, sold as stand-alone software, not

Continued on page 9

Continued from page 8 - MS Digital Image as upgrades to existing software. What if the Label system in Library was discontinued in future or your own labeling scheme cannot be carried forward to a newer edition? Your time investment could become obsolete. Keeping it simple, I whole-heartedly recommend buying just Microsoft Digital Image 2006 Standard Edition, it does exactly what is needed in support of Digital Images, and beyond. Instead of having several freeware programs which if used consecutively might achieve similar results to 2006 Editor, go treat yourself to this all-encompassing program.

4. A hardcopy User Manual is a rarity these days, but it is clear that cost of production was lowered by having only small black & white pictures which at times were inadequate to show before-and-after comparisons. An opportunity to address this problem was missed by not having the website User Manual in colour with larger pictures. The PDF document is about 5MB, easily increased to achieve intended purpose.

5. If Microsoft Internet Explorer is not your primary browser, it is said by product literature that it will not become so, as a result of installing Digital Image 2006 Suite. One reason for this install is so those valued Flash type SWF instructional videos can be viewed.

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### One-click Access to Frequently-Used Programs, Files and Folders by Glenn Richards

Member of the Lake-Sumter Computer Society  
Leesburg, FL  
grich32(at)yahoo.com www.lscs.us

There are certain files, folders, programs, and websites I access frequently during the day. To make this easy I create shortcuts to them in my Quick Launch toolbar that I keep normally hidden on the left side of my Desktop. Moving the mouse cursor to the left side of the screen unhides the toolbar, and a single left-click opens the shortcut.

Every entry in the list at the left is a shortcut, so any can be deleted without loss of the underlying program or file. However, Internet shortcuts like YQ will be deleted if the icon is deleted (but I keep a copy of it in my Favorites folder).

The one thing that takes getting used to is that sweeping the mouse cursor to the left edge of the screen may unhide the toolbar, thereby obscuring icons on the Desktop or menu choices on a window. This is just a matter of not letting the sharp point of the cursor get too close to the

edge of the Desktop window.

Since this toolbar auto-hides, it does not take up any Desktop space. When unhidden, by moving the mouse cursor to its position, it moves out over icons at the left edge of the screen, and does not force those icons to shift over.

To start the QL Toolbar right-click an empty spot on the Taskbar, Toolbars, Quick Launch. Make sure the Taskbar is not locked (right-click the Taskbar to see). Move the mouse cursor to the "Handle" at the left end of the QL toolbar to result in the double-pointed arrow), press and hold the left mouse button, drag to the left edge of the screen, and release the mouse button. Drag the edges of the resulting toolbar to the shape shown. Right-click an empty spot on the toolbar and click "Always on top" and "Auto-Hide". Other right-clicks on this toolbar can lead to other options (I am using large icons and no text).

I have created my own icons for many of the choices so I can identify the functions from just the icon - but that is another story.

To add a shortcut to this QL toolbar, right-click the toolbar, uncheck Auto-Hide. Then right-drag a program, file, or other choice to the toolbar so a dark horizontal bar appears, release the mouse button, click "Create Shortcut Here." The icon can be dragged up or down the toolbar to whatever position you like. Once added, right-click the toolbar again and hide it.

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“The Internet has grown in importance at America’s work places to the point where 37% of fulltime workers, and 18% of part-time workers, have Internet access at work. Some 38 million fulltime workers in the nation have Internet access at their jobs and two-thirds of them (67%) go online at least once per day.” PEW Research



## Why Do You Get So Much Spam?

by **Vinny La Bash**

Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users  
Group, Inc.

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The earliest recorded instance of what may be described as spam occurred on May 3, 1978. A sales representative for Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) named Gary Thuerk sent a message to everyone on the Arpanet data base (now known as the Internet) on the West coast of the United States. Thurek wanted to notify the recipients of an open house that his company was hosting a demonstration of new models of the DEC-20 computer.

In 1978 the Arpanet had a certified "acceptable use policy" which said it couldn't be used for anything except research and education. Thuerk's action was a very clear violation, and when DEC got a very strong response from the Arpanet community objecting to the misuse, the company promptly promised to stop. Spam would not appear again for many years.

Today, estimates of the amount of email that is defined as spam range from 66% to 94%. Whatever the actual figure is, the good news, if you want to call it that, is that spam appears to be leveling off.

Congress has passed anti-spam legislation. Spam receivers are angry, Internet Service Providers try to filter out spam messages, and spammers are loathed by the general community of internet users. Why do spammers continue to operate in the face of all this general repugnance?

In an article for Wired Magazine, Brian McWilliams provides a very depressing answer. McWilliams discovered a security flaw on a website operated by a group selling pills guaranteed to enlarge the male sexual organ. The reporter found that over 6,000 orders for the product had been placed in a time span of about a month. Business and medical professionals, athletes, and even women bought the pills. Many buyers made multiple purchases at \$50 per bottle, despite an obvious lack of credit card security on the site. The web site provided no way to contact the company except by placing an order.

Being a good reporter, McWilliams was not deterred by the company's efforts to hide behind fake registration data, disconnected phone numbers, and phony email addresses. Eventually he revealed that the company was owned by a 19 year old high school dropout, and a neo-Nazi adherent.

The business appears to be highly profitable, net costs being about \$15 per bottle of pills, but according to the FDA, there is no credible evidence that the product works.

Now you know why you get so much spam. It's because people who should know better respond to it and buy products from these companies.

Selling products of dubious value is not the only kind of spam on the net. This week alone I have won three European lotteries, and there are at least a dozen people in Nigeria who each want to give me \$12 million dollars for helping them launder money. Notification came just yesterday that Bill Gates is going to give me \$500,000 because I forwarded a few emails for a good cause.

Perhaps the best way to reduce the number of people buying from spam is to educate people about the problem. Unfortunately that takes time, but if we don't take the time to tell people why they shouldn't buy from spam, they will continue doing it.

If you are responding to spam, please stop. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

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## SPRING CLEANING

Gerry Says

By **Gerry Gerstenberg**

1st Vice President

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Here are some suggestions to get your computer back up to speed.

**Viruses** Check your system for viruses and Trojans, make sure that your antivirus definitions are up to date. Viruses, worms, and Trojan Horses can all create serious system slowdowns.

If you're already running anti-virus software, make sure the virus definitions are up-to-date. I use AVG from <http://>

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/www.Grisoft.com. It is free as is Avast at <http://www.Avast.com>. Only run one Virus Checker at a time.

Spyware/Malware Second, check your system for spyware and malware. This can be done by using a spyware detector like Ad-Aware found at <http://www.Lavasoft.com> and/or Spybot Search and Destroy, found at <http://spybot.com/en/index.html>. Keep them up to date. I also use Microsoft Antispyware. It can be downloaded from <http://www.Microsoft.com>.

Improve Online Security Install and configure a firewall. Turn off unnecessary networking software. Download and install Windows updates on a regular basis. Secure your Web browser by using such options as setting its "security zones."

Remove System Clutter Delete any unneeded icons from the Windows desktop and Start menu tree. Each one requires a little time to process when the system is booting up, and each one eats a little bit of system memory. It seems like every bit of software you install these days wants to claim its space on your desktop, whether you need the program or not. Right click on Start then Properties then the Start Menu Tab.

Clean out fonts. Fonts are wonderful things. But unused or useless fonts are a drag on system performance. Windows loads all your fonts at bootup, just to keep them handy in case an application needs them. But the more fonts you have, the more resources Windows consumes in keeping track of them. You probably have dozens of fonts you won't ever need. Periodically go into Windows Fonts folder - Start then run and type in (C:\Windows\Fonts) and remove any unused Fonts. Select each font (hold down SHIFT or CTRL while clicking to select contiguous or noncontiguous groups, respectively) and choose Delete from the File menu. Double-click a font to view a sample.

Do a disk cleanup. This will remove some of the junk that is cluttering up the temporary file folder. Click on Start then All Programs then Accessories then System tools and finally Disk Cleanup. Follow the instructions. This process will take a few minutes.

Uninstall any software you will never use. Examples are the AOL and other ISP installations preloaded at the factory and any other preinstalled software. Access the Control Panel, select Add/Remove Programs (Add/Remove Programs in Win98 and WinMe), and systematically remove anything that isn't absolutely necessary. You need to decide what is necessary to you. Reboot after each uninstall for the best results.

Run MSCONFIG Go to Start then Run. Type in msconfig and click on the startup tab. Then uncheck any program you do not want to start when the computer starts. These programs take time to run when the system starts up, and they take up precious system memory. This will keep the icons from appearing in the Windows Navigation Tray on the right side of the task bar.

Defragment the hard drive. A full hard drive isn't your only potential problem. Even with plenty of free space on a drive, the file system can become so fragmented that Windows can't efficiently access and store data. The OS stores information on a hard drive in sectors. When there aren't enough contiguous sectors available, Windows stores parts of files in different places on the disk and then keeps track of them all in a file allocation table. Removing files and applications further scatters sectors on the disk. Thus, over time, fragmentation occurs as more and more files are split up and stored in more and more places. And, because the system has to search more places to find files and work harder to put them together, fragmentation is a major drag on system performance. Run Windows Disk Defragmenter tool to rearrange files in the most optimal way. You may have to reboot and defrag several times to get the hard drive defragmented and the files compacted completely. From the Start menu, open Programs, Accessories, and then System Tools. Open the Disk Defragmenter utility. In WinXP, let the utility analyze each drive to assess its level of fragmentation and determine whether it's worth defragging.

Do you have any running processes that don't need to be running? Check this by doing Ctrl, Alt, Delete, choose Process tab, make sure that everything that is running is necessary. You can also try this to see what is preloading: Start > Run, type in "msconfig" (without the quotes) Click the Boot.ini tab and then select the /SOS switch. Now instead of seeing that black and white progress bar you will now see in real time what files are being loaded. This can give you a clue where it is hanging up.

Keep it simple. WinXP's default set of animations and transitions is pleasing to the eye. But it doesn't do your PC any favors, especially if your hardware is a couple years old. All that sliding, fading, and shadowing takes a toll on memory and processing power. But WinXP animations aren't an all-or-nothing proposition. You can customize which effects to use or let Windows handle the decisions. Access your System Properties from the Control Panel (or by right-clicking My Computer and selecting Properties). Select Advanced then select Settings under Performance. Select Adjust for best per-

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Continued from page 11 - Spring Cleaning performance. All entries will be unchecked. You can then selectively check any animations and transitions that you would like to keep. Click apply and OK.

Windows' Disk Cleanup utility will help you free up hard drive space, giving Windows and other applications more room to work.

Navigate to the Advanced tab and select the Settings button in the Performance category. Prioritize performance, appearance, or let Windows choose a middle route. Alternately, choose the Custom option and enable or disable specific visual effects by checking or unchecking their respective entries.

File System. Organize and maintain your files to keep your PC running smoothly. Here are some tips for the specific areas.

Make room. A full hard drive will bog down your system on all fronts. For one, as the drive fills up, Windows has to search more and more data to fulfill each request. More importantly, though, a full disk hinders the OS' ability to move files around temporarily and to manage virtual memory. First, empty the Recycle bin. You can easily lose hundreds of megabytes to files just sitting around waiting to be fully deleted. Then, run Microsoft's Disk Cleanup utility. From the Start menu, you will need to go to Programs, Accessories, and System Tools. Open Disk Cleanup, select the drive, and click OK. The utility will analyze the system and offer suggestions. Check each box and click OK. Next, uninstall unused applications. From Windows' Control Panel, select Add/Remove Programs. Remove any programs you don't use, especially applications preinstalled by the manufacturer. Finally, archive infrequently used data to removable storage.

Remove temporary files. Disk Cleanup doesn't get rid of everything. Free up even more space by manually searching for and deleting temporary files. Most applications use temporary files to store session-specific information, back up active files, and (in theory) delete them when you close the program. But sometimes, for a variety of reasons, temporary files aren't deleted. So they sit, taking up valuable disk space, and not doing anything remotely useful. Open Windows' Search tool (called Find in Win98) from the Start menu. Find all files beginning with a tilde (~) (search for "~\*.\*)" and all files with a .TMP file extension (search for "\*.tmp"). Remove any that aren't immediately associated with an open file or application.

Perform regular maintenance. Don't make Disk Cleanup, temporary file removal, Disk Defragmenter, and anti-

virus scanning one-time activities. Without proper maintenance, system speed will continue to degrade needlessly. Schedule these activities using built-in tools (as with most antivirus programs) or using Windows' Task Scheduler. From the Start menu, navigate to Programs, Accessories, and System Tools. Open Scheduled Tasks. Double-click Add Scheduled Task to launch the Scheduled Task Wizard. Choose an application you want to run (Disk Cleaner, for example), set the schedule, and enter the login information of a user with permissions to run the program.

A Little Goes A Long Way The secret to optimal PC performance is recognizing that every little improvement helps. By implementing a variety of techniques, including those we just described, you'll slowly but surely see system performance improve and maintain itself at a peak level.

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## Web 2.0 and Portable Computing

**By John Abbott**

Member of the Bentsen Grove Resort Computer Club  
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Portable Computing has always lagged behind the rest of the computing market. This is probably because there are currently less mobile devices than computers. But that is about to change. According to Steve Rupel (leading PR company on the planet) billions of mobile devices will reach the market this year and by 2010 there will be 50 million of them sold quarterly.

Mobile device? You won't be calling them Pocket PC or Cell Phone long; maybe PCC for Personal Communication Center. The merger of all forms of digital communications is rapidly taking shape. Cell phones now contain very limited access to the web, receive very limited email, and take limited resolution pictures - oh and they work as phones too. With smaller and more low powered devices quickly coming on scene these limits will expand exponentially.

My project over the past month has been the installation of an Operating System on a USB Flash-memory Device (UFD). I started with a full blown Linux distribution on a USB 80 gigabyte micro hard drive. Well after

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some real torture and lots and lots of reading I managed to get it operational. However, in editing the boot file I managed to misspell something and now I've got to start all over again.

But I did find a couple of small Linux distributions: Damn Small Linux and Puppy Linux. I downloaded the ISO files for each and started working on a flash drive. Today I managed to get the thumb drive fully functional. Along the way I've learned a lot about what I still need to learn about executing from a CD or a UFD. But DSL in a tube really works.

Why do this? Well because I know that Web 2.0 is going to dominate the future of the web. With more and more of the platform being located on the Internet, less and less will be required on your local computer. The computer will take on more and more of the role of thin client (from a client/server relationship where all the applications are on the server). This in turn will have a direct impact on the cost of computers which will no longer have to come with expensive 3rd party software. So I created a portable thin client.

Web 2.0 (platform on the web) will take away a great deal of the chest thumping over O/S because the web interacts with all operating systems. The feature rich web already offers on-line mail processing that works perfectly with thin client or host computer. I am an advocate of Google's Gmail. I can access it on the web where it neatly threads my messages and stores up to 2.5 Gigabytes of mail in the in-basket or in the search able archive. From within that mail system I can also originate chats with my friends and maintain my calendar. I can make my calendar or part of it accessible to colleagues for event coordination.

I can use Zohowriter.com for my word processor. Zoho is a full strength word processor with all the power you find in Works, Word or Open Office (or any of the dozen or so word processors available. I am able to store my documents on-line, download them to my computer, publish them on the site so they can be collaborated by associates whom I have previously arranged access. I can upload files from remote files (my computer or yours) and modify and store or simply store them on-line. And as an added feature I can use Zoho as a mail client; sending, receiving and originating email. Zoho automatically assigns you an email account when you register (free).

There will be some who say: "well I can have several programs open at once on my desktop." And my response would be, fine, I have multiple web pages open

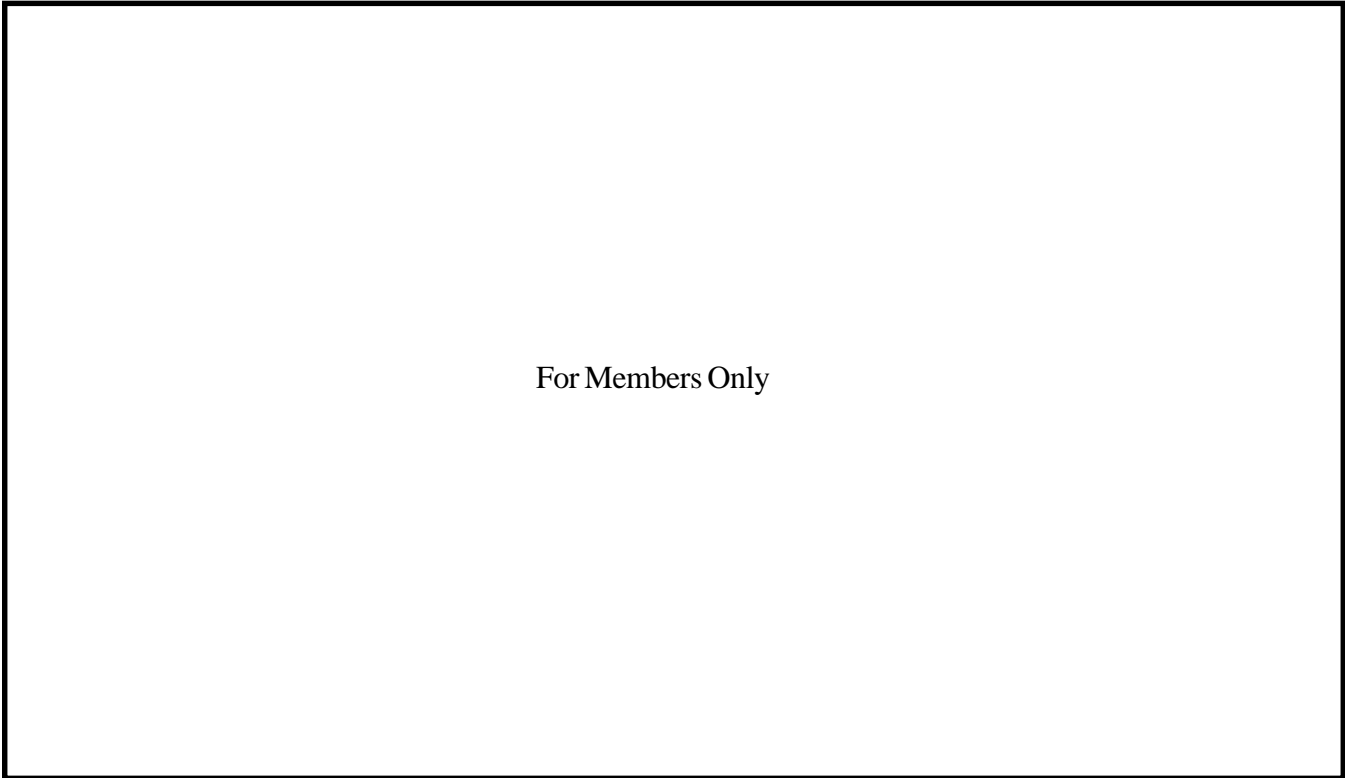
on my computer as I use Zoho to write this. I have a page set up with Wikipedia to check facts, the weather, my Google mail, my personal mail web account, XM radio playing great jazz. And in a few moments I'll open another and watch the news on TV - all from my thumb drive. I sure hope my Gizmo or Skype phones don't ring during the news!

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## SCUG THANKS HELGE AGAIN



Once again, SCUG had the privilege of Helge Buddenborg, manager of Carmen's foto source giving SCUG members an amazing talk on the future of Photography...the Q&A session at the end is always a great hit with members. This is where we learn from the experts. Helge is a regular guest who has also spoken at our Digital Special Interest Group meetings.



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- \* **Windows - PC** - Grace United Church, 990 Cathcart
- \* **General Meeting** - St. Bartholomews Church, 718 Cathcart
- \* **Genealogy Meeting** - St James Church-140 Lansdowne North
- \* **Linux Group** - St James Church-140 Lansdowne North

**SCUG MEETING SCHEDULE**

Executive	Digital Photo	Windows-PC	General	Genealogy	Linux
Jun 5	Jun 7	Jun 15	Jun 28	Jun 27	Jun 13

***SCUG ELECTIONS COMING SOON***

If you want to help out on the SCUG Executive please contact anyone in the Executive. You can also contact two past Executive members who have volunteered to assist in the Election process:

Dan Bilger: pinguyca@yahoo.ca  
 Bill Colotelo: bcolotelo@cogeco.ca  
 SCUG email address are found on page 1.

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