The Outer Edge

Newsletter of the Channel Islands PC Users Group

Visit our Web page at: www.cipcug.org
e-mail: helen@cipcug.org
OS/2:http://www.vcnet.com/os2-corner

The Friendly Computer Club Helping Make Computers Friendly

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
★ **Attendance at the** ★
★ **February general meeting** ★
★ **105 MEMBERS** ★
★ **& 8 GUESTS** ★
★ **WE WELCOME** ★
★ **4 NEW MEMBERS** ★
★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

To Contact CIPCUG

The Outer Edge...........(805) 485-7121
General Information.. . . . . . . (805) 983-4741
Mailing Address...P.O.Box 51354, Oxnard, CA
93031-1354

ROOT DIRECTORY

COMMAND.COM

By George A. Lakes, President,

By the time you read this, we will have had the second meeting of the nominating committee on Thursday, Feb. 15, at our home at 7 p.m. The committee members are Jim Pass, Ron Pinkerton, Roland Fleig and Laura Pacheco. They have their work cut out for them. Our membership chairman, John Godwin, has provided them with a query of names of the people who have attended at least eight meetings during the past year. There are four positions that definitely need to be filled. The committee will be calling on people to fill these vacancies.

The first is the president, as the current president (yours truly) will have completed his two years in office as of the June meeting by the limits set by the constitution and bylaws. You can bet your life that even though the bylaws are going to be brought into compliance with our previous changes, changing presidential limits will not be one of them. The new president will assume duties at the July meeting. These duties consist of running the general meeting each month with a prepared agenda, introducing officers and asking for their reports, and introducing committee chair people who have reports to make. Open up discussions of any old and new business. Run the Executive Board meetings with an agenda. Take care of any administrative business and problems that may arise. Delegate responsibilities regarding club activities. I have personally made it my responsibility to try to stay on top of illnesses and deaths among the membership by sending appropriate cards. I, also, personally have taken on the task of acquiring picture frames and assembling the certificates of appreciation that Helen Long has been making for the club since we began doing this for our program presenters. I recently began picking up the doughnuts and bringing them to the meetings. These last tasks could be delegated to other people.

We are very fortunate in having an excellent group of people working together as officers and chair people. Many of these people will still be in place to help carry on and make the club run smoothly.

Executive Committee Meeting Notes

February 2001   By Laura Pacheco

The Executive Committee met at the home of George and Arline Lakes on Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2001, at 7 p.m. Attending the meeting were George Lakes, Craig Ladd, Art Lewis, John Godwin, Helen Long, Toby Scott, Ralph Duchacek, David Minkin, Norm White and myself.

The Web News, Financial, Membership, SIG, and President's Command.com are represented in this TOE.

We would like to welcome to our club, Bain and Evelyn Dayman, Alyce Radocay, and Russell Torgerson.

Due to trying to cut back on redundancy, this secretary is forced to stick to the basics and stop repeating herself.

See you in March.

(This month's minutes are shorter than usual because Laura's computer crashed — Editor)

Still available:
APCUG CD with the top downloads from Tucows
and other useful programs.
Just $5 at any meeting.

Coming up: Programs and SIGs

March program

It's another one of those months. As TOE is being prepared, Craig Ladd is still seeking the March presenter. Rest assured, there will be a program, so check the Web site later in the month to see what he came up with.

SIG schedule

Wednesday, Feb. 28: Quicken, meets at Gateway, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Moderator: Alex Zuromski. Keeping track of your finances.

March SIGs

Monday, March 5: WIN 98, meets at Gateway, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Michael Shalkey will discuss setting up your desk top with WIN98.

Saturday, March 10: OS/2, meets at Toby's office, 9 a.m.-noon. Steve Carter will lead the SIG on alternate operating systems. Check OS2 Corner through the CIP-CUG Web site for advance information.

Tuesday, March 13: ISP Tech Support, Toby's office, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Toby Scott will conduct a training class

March door prizes

The door prizes are going to be:
Symantec CDPlus (Norton Ghost, AntiVirus and Virtual Drive)
Internet Keyboard
Epson 440 Printer
Microsoft Works 2001

We have two types of prizes, those from the presenter and those we buy. If the presenter has prizes, members will get one free raffle ticket; if the presenter does not have any prizes, there is no free ticket. Tickets for the prizes listed above are $1 each or six for $5.

SIG reminders available by e-mail

To keep members up to date on coming SIGs, Andy Toth has agreed to offer an e-mail reminder service to club members. Sign up and he will automatically send you a reminder about two days before each SIG, indicating the topic, location, and date.

Command.com: Nominating committee's task

The second person that has to be selected by the nominating committee is that of membership chairman. John Godwin has outlined the duties and responsibilities of the position. MS ACCESS is the database program used to keep all of the membership records. The volunteer taking over this position must either be reasonably proficient with this program or willing to learn the necessary functions of the program. John is very willing to help the new person get started and become familiar with the program and the necessary record-keeping. When John took on the job, he did it the hard way. He learned it on his own from scratch and has organized and fine-tuned it. He is now ready and willing to pass on his knowledge and skills to the new membership chairman.

The third position that needs to be filled is the Computer Show Chairperson. At this time, it is suggested we find someone living in Oxnard. Since the Ventura County Fairgrounds has increased the parking fee from $1 to $5 per car, the computer shows will probably no longer be held there. All shows are currently going to be held at the Community Center in Oxnard on Hobson Way. So it makes sense to have the chairperson live in Oxnard, as this person is the one who brings the club equipment and sets up the booth and takes it down again at the end of the show, or makes arrangements for having it done. The chairperson also lines up the roster of volun-

teers: two people from 10 until 12, two people from 12 until 2 and two people from 2 until 4. The last two people help disassemble the booth for pickup by the chairperson or other designated person to take home and store until the next computer show. The computer shows are scheduled months in advance. The nice thing about working the show is that when you are finished with your two hours, you can tour the show for free.

You can look at, compare, and see some of the latest things in technology, hardware, software, etc. Paddy Ruzella is willing to help the new person get started.

The fourth chairperson we need is for the advertising of the following: computer-related materials, businesses and services only, in our monthly newsletter. Gracia Marks has resigned because of her teaching workload. It has been suggested by members of the nominating committee that we could have volunteers in each of the cities, including Thousand Oaks/Newbury Park, Camarillo, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura and possibly Ojai, to procure advertisements. Having an individual volunteer who lives in each city would simplify the workload with fewer miles to cover and time expended.

Please think seriously of filling one of these pairs of shoes so our club can continue to go forward and prosper and have continued success.

Q&A: Nominations; is this a TAPI conflict?

Answered by Toby Scott

Reported by Laura Pacheco

Before we go into the Q&A, let me discuss the Nominating Committee. We have elections in June and we will need new officers. This club operates pretty well for a volunteer organization, but every year, some people who have been volunteers just need a break. Somebody has to step forward and fill their shoes.

A lot of you get intimidated because you think, "well I don't know much about computers and I'm not really computer literate." There are a lot of things that need to be done that do not require a tremendous amount of computer literacy. One of the things was mentioned earlier: We need somebody who has a large vehicle who will be willing occasionally to go down to the storage room and pick up the boxes, books, etc. and help bring them here. We need someone to coordinate the volunteers who go out to the computer shows and hand out fliers, etc. That's primarily a telephone job and, again, if you can dial a phone, talk to people, read, and keep track of lists you have enough computer literacy to do that. There are a lot of things you can do with a minimal amount of computer literacy.

So I would encourage any of you who have the time and inclination, enjoy the club and would be willing to spend a little bit of effort to try to make it a better club to step forward because, if someone doesn't step forward, this club is going to run out of oomph. There are several of us who feel like we've been putting up more than our fair share. It's not like we feel used, but we would like someone to help shoulder some of the load. E-mail these committee members to tell them you would be willing to volunteer to do something and can work with them to find something you would be willing to do. We sure

can use the help.

(Member asked about president's job) I've been there. Primarily it's an administrative job. If you can e-mail, you have about all the technical skills needed to do the job. The main thing you need is a fair amount of time, because it is time-consuming. You need the organizational ability to keep after things until they are completed, get things to the right person, make sure they get done, take notes, follow through from meeting to meeting. But the follow-through can be on paper or on computer. So dedication is more important than computer literacy. I will continue to do the technical advice for the club for the new president for the next two years.

Q: He has a Creative Modem Blaster Flash56 on Com 3. It works fine for e-mail and phone calls but he cannot configure it for fax. He says the program for fax is on port TAPI.

A: That's not a port. TAPI is Telephone Application Peripheral Interface and that's a protocol for how devices arbitrate who has control of the phone line. Well, you say, "How does it arbitrate?" Suppose you have your fax configured to sit on the modem and listen for incoming phone calls so it can answer the fax. If it were doing that without TAPI you couldn't use your modem to dial out to go to the Internet. Another application would have control of the device. TAPI says listen for a phone call unless or until you get this interrupt sequence. When you get that immediately give up control of the device so something else can use it. Listen then for this signal and when you hear that signal, start listening for phone calls again.

Q: (Continued) When he tries to configure it to send and receive faxes, his mouse pointer disappears. Is it possible that Com 1 and Com 3 conflict?

A: Com 1 and Com 3 do not conflict at all. However, by

More on SIG schedule …

for CIPCUG's ISP tech support. All attendees will be listed in the newsletter to give ISP Tech support in your area.

Monday, March 19: MS Works, Gateway, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Gracia Marks will show you the flexibility of MS Works. Thursday, March 29: HTML, Toby's office, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Andy Toth will lead a Q&A on HTML. If no questions surface, Andy will plunge into frames.

Volunteers from the membership lead Special Interest Groups. If you'd like to put on a SIG, please let us know. There is no charge for members to attend.

Most SIGs are held at the Gateway Computer store, 1700 Ventura Blvd., Oxnard (near the Auto Center), from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Some SIGs are held at Ventura County Computers, 2175 Goodyear Ave., No. 117, Ventura, at the

same time (Toby Scott's shop).

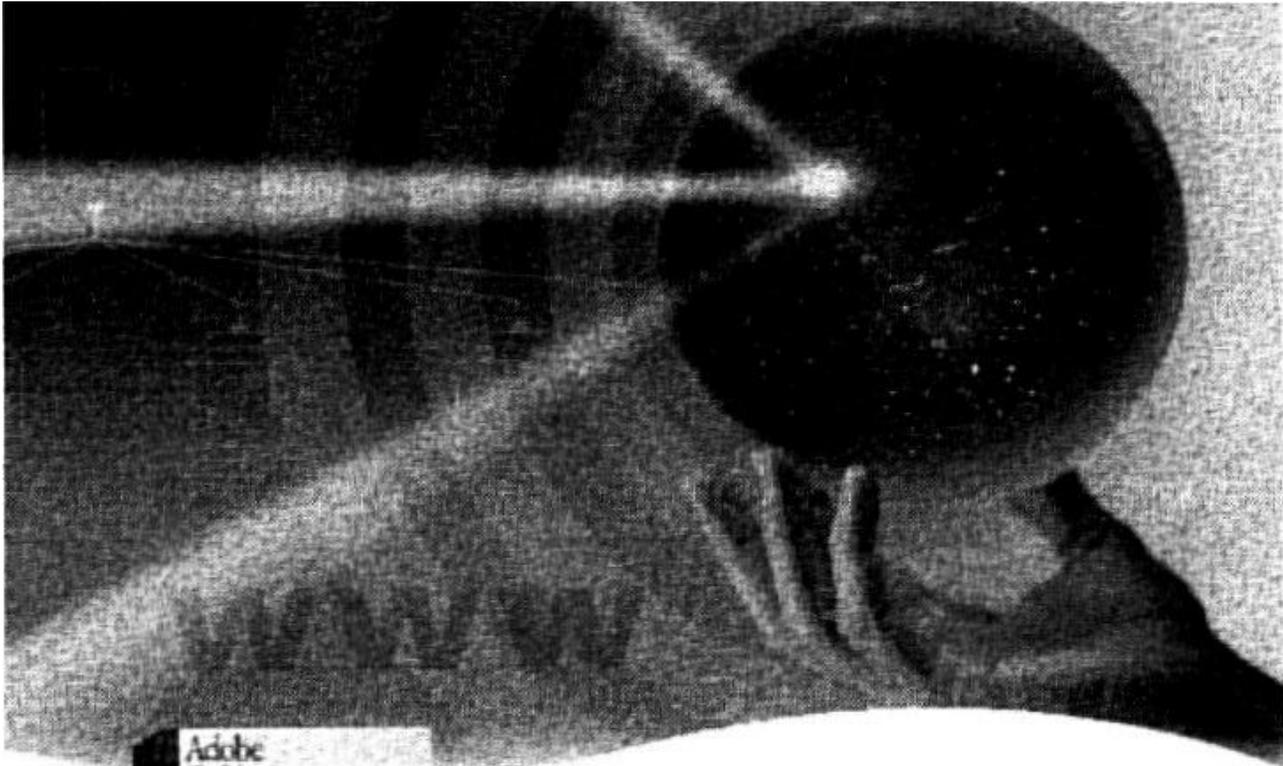The SIG schedule is updated regularly on the CIPCUG Web site.

If no moderator is listed for a SIG, it is not officially scheduled. Check the Web site before you attend.

More on SIG reminders ...

We hope that this service will remind more people about coming SIGs. Check the front page of the CIPCUG Web site in the "Latest Page Revisions" or at the bottom of the SIG INFORMATION page.

Or, if you want to sign up without going to the Web

Adobe·
GoLive· 5.0

Professional Web
authoring and site management

Adobe® GoLive® 5.0 software gives you industrial-strength design, production, and management features so you can create professional dynamic-database-driven Web sites. Tightly integrated with other Adobe products such as Photoshop®, Illustrator®, and LiveMotion®, Adobe GoLive software protects your code from modification and corruption while offering industry-leading site layout and management functionality.

Q&A: What updates should I install?

default Com 1 uses IRQ4 and Com 3 uses IRQ4, and if both devices are using the same IRQ they most certainly do conflict. Mouse pointers conflicting with modems — particularly on old computers, and this is a Win95 computer, so we know that this is ancient territory — is quite frequent. If you don't have something on Com 2, I would encourage you to put the modem on either Com 2 or Com 4, because Com 2 and Com 4, by default, use IRQ3. Alternatively, you can configure your modem to use a free IRQ. So if IRQ9 is not being used, you can set it on IRQ9. Some old software doesn't like changing the IRQ; some of them are hard coded on IRQs and you will have trouble with that. My preferred choice is to change to Com 2 or 4. It's not the com ports that are conflicting, it's the default IRQs for those com ports, and that's a source of much confusion. If you have a PS2 mouse, it does not conflict at all. Hardly anybody is using serial ports anymore. With USB some of the computers are coming without serial ports.

Q: I have a couple of hard drives donated, don't know if they work. If I boot to a floppy, do I put Fdisk on a floppy?

A: Yes. So this is complete for the record, he had some old hard drives and didn't know if they were good. They appeared to power up OK, and he asked for a good way to test. I said the first quick test would be to boot to a floppy — the hard drives wouldn't boot, they were donated — and use Fdisk to look at the partition table and see if it can read it. If the information appears to be correct according to Fdisk, you can try to format them and see if you can put an operating system on them. If Fdisk can't find anything, the drives are shot.

Q: Microsoft critical updates are a considerable source of confusion for me. In your e-letters, you give us advice on what to use and what not to use. Is there a list anywhere of what updates are and are not recommended? If not, could you put one in TOE?

A: It's very, very difficult to provide a recommended list as to what you need because different people need different things. Generally speaking, I don't like the Office 2000 Service Release 1; I thinks that's pretty awful and the update for it is marginally better. I would be very careful about doing the Office update. I am pretty religious about doing all of the critical update on Internet Explorer or other Internet connectivity or vulnerability. Occasionally, I might be slightly unhappy until they update the patch, but the patches come out pretty quickly. I really don't want to leave my system vulnerable to an attack that somebody has figured out. Everybody knows that software has bugs and that, if it's communication software, there are vulnerabilities. Somebody can configure a program to talk to your program in a manner that you didn't really want it to. Your best protection, of course, is that your hackers are ignorant. A lot of people do not know how to exploit all of these weaknesses. But as soon as somebody

starts to write up how to exploit them, how to get on them and how to use them, the threat goes from the theoretical to the practical. I do think it's important if you are online significant amounts of time, particularly if you have a permanent connection to the Internet, that you do the critical updates. When you go to the Update page, the first category that's there is Critical Updates, and they are communication updates. They are hacker vulnerability updates. Rather than determine which ones are good and which are bad, probably you are well-served to simply install them because, occasionally, you will get one that has a small bug in it which Microsoft will fix reasonably quickly. The small bug will be less of a nuisance than leaving yourself vulnerable to hacker attacks for longer periods of time while someone decides whether this is a good update or not. Now, when they have updates for programs I am much less likely to want to install them. I might install the updates on a "do I need it?" basis. If they come out with updates for any of the Microsoft programs, I would think about it a lot. NT 4 is up to service patch 6A, and I know several ISPs who have stuck with service patch 4, thinking it's the most stable. If you are not doing a lot of multimedia stuff, service patch 5 is quite good. I don't particularly have a problem with 6A; our CIPCUG server is using that one. If you're running some applications, I would tell you don't do NT 6A and to never do 6 because it was buggy and 6A replaces it. Generally, what you are running in the Office Suite, I don't recommend the service packs, but there are some applications where you are well-advised to install the latest service pack. There isn't an authoritative answer. It's hard to say, well, you should do this until we know what you are doing and what your operating system and programs are.

Q: How can I keep things from loading on Systray?

A: Basically when you install programs, this is the ego problem. Everyone who writes a program thinks it's the most important program in the world and that you would be nuts not to have it on the desktop, not to have it in the system tray, not to load it every time you start your computer, etc. If it's in your system tray and you want to get rid of it, you can right mouse click on it and get rid of it, but it will show up again next time you boot. If you want to get rid of it next time you boot up, go to START, RUN, type in msconfig, hit ENTER, and a dialogue box will appear. The tab on the extreme right is STARTUP, and in there are check boxes and all the things that go on at start up are there. You can uncheck anything you want to. BE CAREFUL. For instance, if you uncheck Explorer you will come up without a desktop, without a toolbar, without the start menu, and the only way you can start a program is to use control/alt/delete. This is not the world's best way of getting into Windows. Trying to get back to msconfig to put Explorer back is tricky, so as a general rule of thumb, unless you know what you are doing, do

Q&A: Determine what starts with msconfig

not, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, uncheck anything that is in the Windows directory. The check boxes give you the name of the program and to the right of that is the path to the program. Look at the path. If it says C:\Windows, something or other, don't uncheck it. There are a couple of exceptions to that, but let me just leave it at this: Unless you know what you are doing, leave these all checked. The other stuff, you can pretty well tell what it is. If it says C:\Program files\Symantec, it's going to be Norton Antivirus or another Norton program. McAfee will be one of the McAfee programs, Quicken is likely one of the bill minders.

Q: Is msconfig under Windows95?

A: No, you are into hand-editing in Windows95, going in to the registry and deleting registry entries.

Q: If I go into msconfig and uncheck one of the entries, can I still, if I find I want to run the program, go back and click on it?

A: Yes. When you uncheck it, all that means is that it will not start at boot up. It does not uninstall it and in no way impairs the operation of the program. It simply means you have to manually start the program, on the desktop, or wherever it is.

Q: Going back to msconfig, I have a freeware program called Startup Cop that comes up with little buttons and it might work with Win95. *(Startup Cop is a free program available from <zdnet.com>.)*

Win98 comes with FrontPage Express. Can I put up my personal Web page with this?

A: Absolutely. FrontPage Express is eminently suitable for putting up a Web page with one or two or three pages on it. If you get to 20 pages, managing the pages with Front-Page Express will be a real chore. The industrial strength FrontPage does a much better job of handling all of your pages as a project and allowing you to switch from one page to the next and having your menus populate correctly when you change the menu. FrontPage Express does not handle the site stuff. You have to do everything individually.

That said, I do all of mine with a text editor.

Q: I recently got a new computer with Windows Me on it. If I install some of the programs like Office 97, would I have to upgrade to Office 2000 to make it operate optimally? Also, what would be the best fax program to use — Winfax, or is there another one out there?
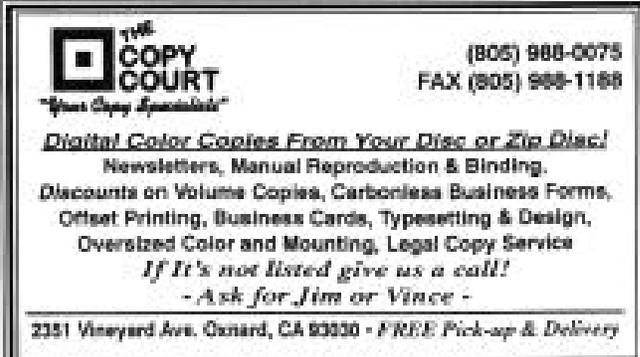
A: First of all, I wouldn't upgrade from Office 97 to Office 2000. I use Office 2000 because I have to support it for customers. At one time, I was using Office 97 at home and Office 2000 at work. They were close enough that you think they are the same program when you work on them, until you run into the place where the menu moved and then you kill yourself until you realize you are on a different version. It's so frustrating that I had to upgrade the home computer to Office 2000 simply because my mind was just not flexible

to move from one to the other easily. For an individual user there is very little in Office 2000 that is not in Office 97. The primary improvements in Office 2000 are something that you would really want if you were in an office — the ability to handle multiple people modifying the same file with revisions, being able to go backward in revisions, knowing who made what changes. The advances are monumental. But, if you are a home user and the group is you, the benefits are small. The program itself is quite a bit larger, it runs quite a bit slower, it uses up a lot more resources on any computer, and for a home user, I don't think it's an advantage. Even on a 1 Gigahertz machine it's a bit slower. Office 97 is leaner, meaner and faster and has everything I need.

"FrontPage Express is eminently suitable for putting up a Web page with one or two or three pages on it. If you get to 20 pages, managing the pages with FrontPage Express will be a real chore. The industrial strength FrontPage does a much better job of handling all of your pages as a project and allowing you to switch from one page to the next and having your menus populate correctly when you change the menu. FrontPage Express does not handle the site stuff. You have to do everything individually."

● ● ● ● ● ●

Q: I wasn't here last month, but in TOE for February, you said "if you have Outlook 97 and you get an upgrade to 98, it's well worth it. I would be using Office 97 without 98." What does that mean?

A: It was a transcription error. It should be "I wouldn't be using Office 97 without Outlook 98." Outlook 97 is not a particularly a good program. Out of the Office 97 suite it is the only one that really has some serious limitations and bugs. Microsoft was ashamed enough of it that it came out with Outlook 98 fairly quickly thereafter. If you can get Outlook 98 and are running Office 97, I strongly urge you to upgrade to Outlook 98.

Program: It's a jungle in the cyberworld

By John Weigle

Cybercrime may be something like pornography: No one can define it exactly, but we all know it when we see it.

That, at least is one conclusion that can be drawn from the presentation at our last meeting by Michael Thomas, an investigator for the District Attorney's Office who is assigned to the office's Computer Crimes Unit and who received his forensic computer examiner certification in January 2000.

He said there is no generally accepted definition of computer crime or cybercrime but that a lot of it exists. It ranges from the theft of computer chips to the theft of identities, from the sale of pirated software at the local computer shows to the sale and distribution of child pornography on the Internet, from the theft of passwords and computer card information to counterfeiting money on today's high-resolution printers, from cyberstalking to network invasions (denial of service attacks, for instance) and from sending viruses and other destructive programs to stealing cellular phones and information. And those are only some of the problems.

Fighting computer crime is almost as hard as defining it, he suggested. For instance:

— Many lawyers, judges and potential jurors don't understand computers, so it's often difficult to get convictions for complex crimes. (Consider how many eyes glaze over during parts of the CIPCUG question-and-answer session and then think about how complex the whole session would sound to people who've never used a computer.)

— Many companies don't report computer crimes for a variety of reasons: They don't want everyone to know they were scammed, they don't want to reveal weaknesses in their systems or they don't even know they're victims. Companies also know that they can be put out of business if law enforcement seizes their computers and networks to search for evidence, "and that's a legal issue we have to deal with," he said. Judges are hesitant to issue warrants that could put 400 people out of work, he said.

— The size of today's hard drives makes searching them, recovering information and preserving it both difficult and time-consuming.

— The number of law enforcement people trained to deal with computer crime is limited.

— Many police agencies see stopping violent crimes as more important than fighting computer crime and believe that taxpayers agree so they're reluctant to take officers and investigators off the streets to fight computer crimes.

— Computer access is available in so many locations — homes, work, libraries, cybercafes and other sites — that it's difficult to track.

The FBI gets 20 to 30 reports of computer crimes every day and pushes many of them down to local law enforcement agencies, he said.

Computer crime isn't something that happens only in the biggest cities, he emphasized.

For instance the office is investigating a Simi Valley teen-age boy who is suspected of distributing child pornography on the Internet. As that investigation proceeded, he said, information developed that he was also gathering AOL passwords and credit card numbers with a spam e-mail and AOL-like Web site.

The e-mails to AOL members said the company was developing a new version of its software and seeking beta testers. Anyone interested was told to click on a link in the e-mail and went to what appeared to be an AOL page that asked for passwords and credit card information. The information went to the teen, not AOL, of course.

Users could have foiled this plot easily, Thomas pointed out, by right clicking on the link to see where it really went rather than assuming the name was accurate. That's something we should all do more often, he said, rather than blindly trusting that we'll be sent to wherever the link says we're going.

Thomas made one point that he didn't expand on, although it would have been useful to us all if he had. He said he visited a local computer show and easily found pirated Microsoft software for sale. It would be helpful to know how he recognized it and what the rest of us can do to guard against buying it unknowingly.

Identity theft "is very, very big," he said. While it might not result in major costs because of laws limiting liability for stolen credit cards, "it just plays havoc with it (credit) for two or three years." He said everyone should use a shredder — preferably a cross cut one — to destroy credit card applications and any other papers with information that could help someone steal an identity. Pre-approved credit card applications are especially dangerous, he said, because people who get them from your trash could open accounts in your name and have the bills sent to a different address.

He also said everyone who connects to the Internet should have a firewall. While he can not recommend one as a district attorney's investigator, he said, he uses the free Zone Alarm at home and is pleased with it. Users should test their computers at Steve Gibson's Gibson Research Corp. Web site <grc.com> both before and after installing a firewall to see the difference, he said.

He noted that, along with the many good Web sites, there are also many illegitimate ones that generate seemingly valid credit card numbers and provide instructions on how to write viruses and Trojan horses and even provide the code to download.

He also said that law enforcement is concerned by the amount of programming done to solve the Y2K threat. They fear, he said, that Third World programmers might have planted logic bombs (destructive programs that operate after

More program: Are other Y2K problems still coming?

something else happens — a certain date passes, a program is opened some number of times or a programmer isn't paid, for example) or the insertion of back doors to let programmers into systems without the knowledge of system administrators.

Another problem, he said, is people who leave a company and take computer or trade secrets along with them, although this is not limited to high-tech industries.

"Understand we only catch the dumb ones," Thomas said of computer criminals, so there's no way to be sure how much cybercrime exists. Many computer criminals are caught, he said, because "it's bragging rights. It's pride. It's ego." Criminals who post their crimes on Web sites and chat rooms tend to get caught; those who don't might not get caught.

More information about computer crime and security is available on the Web at the Computer Security Institute's Web site <www.gocsi.com>, he said.

> "Understand we only catch the dumb ones" — Michael Thomas, Ventura County District Attorney's Office, on computer criminals

Who is Michael Thomas?

Michael Thomas has been a sworn peace officer in California for 21 years, serving as a district attorney investigator for the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. He began his law enforcement career as a special agent with the Department of Defense, Naval Investigative Service, in 1975. His investigative assignments included risk and threat analysis of computer systems and the investigation of computer crimes.

Joining the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation in March 1980, he has continued to use his computer investigation skills to assist local and federal law enforcement. He is assigned to the Computer Crimes Unit, which conducts computer and network forensics and investigates network intrusions and other crimes committed via the Internet.

He is involved in the design and equipping of a forensic computer laboratory in Camarillo, which is scheduled to become operational by mid-March 2001. The laboratory, funded by the state Office of Criminal Justice Planning, will provide technical assistance and support to local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

Thomas is a vice president of the Southern California Chapter of the High Technology Criminal Investigators Association and a member of the International Association of Computer Investigative Specialists.

Letters: Our members speak out

Is coverage worth the cost?

Is the cost of a 20-page newsletter justified when so much is just transcription of meeting events? I suspect most members present at meetings skip the write-up of what they heard at the meeting. Members who cannot attend meetings get some value from minutes in the TOE, but the board might wish to consider value received vs. cost ($ and write-up time).

Henry Tanner, No. 358

The interruption

I was shocked to read the info in "The Outer Edge" on the unpleasant event that occurred at the January meeting. We are a large family of individuals who enjoy meeting to discuss computer-related issues and learning. We are bound to have disagreements, from time to time, but we should strive to accept the will of the majority.

I have known Bob for quite a few years, and you can't have a more dedicated and hardworking member in our club. In fact, he is one of the backbones, along with his wife, Lois, of our club and has always conducted himself in a very friendly and responsible way.

And, on the other hand, CIPCUG President George is also a well-respected and longtime member of our club.

It pains me very much to read about these two fine gentlemen at odds. President George has readily admitted he made a terrible mistake and is truly sorry for it. He also has guaranteed that it will never happen again. Let's accept his remorse and "get on" with the business of having one of the best computer clubs in California. And for Bob, let's forgive and be the fine person that I know you are.

(New Subject) I haven't attended a meeting for some time (1998) due to my wife's serious illness and subsequent death. I plan to return to the meetings in June. Also, The Outer Edge is the only contact I have been using to stay informed with the club's activities. Keep up the good work.

Eugene J. Dedeaux, No. 53

Good for those who can't attend

In response to your request:

Since I am out of town a fair amount, and cannot attend all the meetings, I very much appreciate the extensive coverage given in TOE.

Gunnar Green

Zone Alarm issues

Following the talk Saturday morning, Feb. 3, I went home and installed Zone Alarm on our computer. This evening while retrieving a form from the IRS Web site, I received four separate messages:

The firewall has blocked Internet access to your computer (ICMP Echo Request ('Ping')) from 192.168.27.25, 192.168.27.24, 192.168.27.26, 192.168.27.23.

The firewall has blocked Internet access to your computer - - - from 192.168.27.21.

The firewall has blocked Internet access to your computer (TCP Port III) from 211.250.170.1 (TCP Port 1937)

The firewall has blocked Internet access to your computer - - - from 10.100.130.13.

I use a dial-up 56k modem on our phone line. These intrusion attempts may just have been from a server I had recently visited or may be someone scanning for entry.

In any event, it was quite instructive to see that someone tried to get in and Zone Alarm intercepted the attempt and stealthed my computer.

If you feel it would give emphasis to the review of the talk, then add any of the above that seems to be worthwhile.

Art Lewis

What did the warnings mean?

(Sent to Art Lewis and John Weigle by Toby Scott) If you care to make use of this, here is a bit of analysis of your information:

>>192.168.27.25, 192.168.27.24, 192.168.27.26, 192.168.27.23.<<

All of the 192.168 addresses are non-routable. These pings did not come from the Internet. They came from someone within your ISP. Because of the shortage of IP addresses, there are some reserved addresses that go to no computer on the Internet, so they can be used within multiple intranets.

Your ISP can have a computer with the address of 192.168.27.23 and my ISP can, and thousands of companies can, etc. If they didn't have non-routable addresses, you'd be forced to give all your computers arbitrary IP addresses — and if you chose Microsoft's addresses, none of your computers would be able to go to Microsoft's site. There can only be one destination for each address. Since you cannot normally route pings to or from these addresses, they have to have originated in your subnet. If the address of 192.168.27.25 has a subnet mask of 255.255.0.0 it could ping anyone with an address that started 192.168. but no one else. The 255 means you must match, and the 0 means you don't have to. If the subnet mask were 255.255.255.0 then he could only ping computers with addresses in the range of 192.168.27.x where x can be any number between 0 and 255.

>>211.250.170.1<<

This is a real address. It exists on the Internet. I could ping it.

>>10.100.130.13<<

Another non-routable IP address, but it is hard to figure how it got into here. Normally, there isn't a way to go from one non-routable class to another. Was this a separate login or different ISP? There is no subnet mask that would let this address ping one of the 192.168's.

Anyway, I hope this is clear (but fear it isn't). Let me know the degree to which I confused you.

Toby Scott, Ventura County Computers

Web page: Lots of pictures are up

By Helen Long

<helen@cipcug.org>

Hallelujah! I finally got some more pictures posted. I was not as far behind as I thought I was because Jerry either wasn't at a couple of meetings or he forgot his camera. There were no pictures from September or December meetings.

I have created a "Club Photos 2" page, and we will have about six months worth of pictures on each site, which means they may not take as long to download when you are browsing. I have added pictures to the "Board of Directors" page and also to the "Behind the Scenes" page.

I was checking out some of Ronnie Ray's favorites, and he has an interesting site called "How Stuff Works," where you can find the workings of anything from engines and sunglasses to nuclear reactors and earthquakes and cable modems. There is also a nifty site on Windows Annoyances with handy tips. (I got six levels deep into this one!) There is also the '60s Jukebox section with over 100 of the greatest tunes to come out of this era. It certainly was a trip down memory lane for me! Check out some of his sites and let me know what you think of them

Andy Toth has been doing a great job with his SIG messages. If you are one of those people who can't remember when SIG meetings are, sign up for Andy's message reminder. It is at the bottom of the PAGE REVISION section on the front page of CIPCUG.ORG. It is also available from the SIGINFO page just after the SIG listings. Let Andy tie a string around your finger to remind you of the next SIG. He sends them out about two days prior to each SIG. Currently, he has over 25 people on his mailing list, but we should have many more than that. Sign up today. Try it! You'll like it!

The GARAGE SALE page needs to have some activity or perhaps I should retire it for a while. Don't any of you have leftover hardware that has been upgraded that you would like to find a home for? That just may be the thing that someone else is desperately looking for.

Helen Long, our Web master, maintains the CIPCUG Web site at <www.cipcug.org>

Membership report: Is it time to renew?

By John Godwin

Welcome to the following new members: Evelyn Dayman, Bain Dayman, Alyce Radocay and Russell Torgerson.

Total membership: 354

Attendance at the February 2001 General meeting:

105 Members

8 Visitors

RENEWAL INFORMATION

The renewal dues are $25 single membership, $30 for a two or more family membership.

Please send renewal payments to: CIPCUG MEMBERSHIP, P.O. BOX 51354, OXNARD, CA 93031-1354

Or you can make payment at the monthly general meeting

January and February 2001 renewals due:

Member #	Last Name	First Name	Paid to Date
569	Benson	Bob	200101
911	Black	Ann	200101
1006	Breault	Randy	200101
1005	Cabrera	Gilberto	200101
1003	Casey	Richard	200101
053	Dedeaux	Gene	200101
947	Ellis	Dick	200101
054	Erickson	Elden	200101
953	Hill	Keith F.	200101
540	Jennings	Clay	200101
757	MacArthur	James	200101
951	Palme, Jr.	Lennart	200101
752	Stanek	Jerry	200101
1004	Surwin	Alfred	200101
1007	Wise	Bonnie	200101
792	Yeaman	Rabia	200101

Member #	Last Name	First Name	Paid to Date
914	Alderson	Bev	200102
299	Boshoff	Henri G.	200102
915	Clayton	Phil	200102
663S	Craig	Wallace	200102
180	Daily	John	200102
913	Guedel	John	200102
843	Isaman	Harry	200102
1010	Jackson	Rusty	200102
912	Krinsky	Richard	200102
179	Lee	David	200102
842	Menees	Ralph	200102
656S	Mori	Ken	200102
306	Presutto	Joseph	200102
297	Sabatka	Edward F.	200102
655	Simmons	Gene	200102
658	Skeeters	Cline	200102
187	Tracy	Bob	200102
98	Vlazny	Don	200102

March 2001 renewals due:

Member #	Last Name	First Name	Paid to Date
963	Anderson	Arvid	200103
S	Bailey	Carl	200103
853	Bak	Chan	200103
858	Bennett	LeRoy	200103
960	Birkett	Ken	200103
669	De Wolfe	Terry	200103
667	Dirrim	Allen	200103
1016	Falconer	Margaret	200103
1018	Goodwin	Maggie	200103
426	Guyton	Wayne	200103
916	Jensen	Ted	200103
917	Johnson	Barbara	200103
573	Kelly	Scott	200103
1011	Kimball	Eugene	200103
138	Lakes	Arline	200103
137	Lakes	George	200103
425	Ledner, MD	Robert	200103
066	Lee	Terry	200103
859	Lewis	Simone	200103
1014	Marcovitz	Morton	200103
1015	Marcovitz	Betty	200103
100	McLoud	Jerry R.	200103
768	Nifong	Robert	200103
423	Phelps	Patricia	200103
177S	Ross	Donald	200103
571	Swingle	Phil	200103
136	Thornton	Jim	200103
221	Thornton	Dianna	200103
575	Van Sickle	Michael	200103
1017	Vaughn	Connie	200103
430	Volpe	Victor	200103
1013	Willson	Martin	200103
1012	Yates	Jeffrey	200103
771	Zuromski	Alexandra	200103

You can always determine when your membership expires by checking the address label on The Outer Edge. Dues may be paid by mail or at any general meeting.
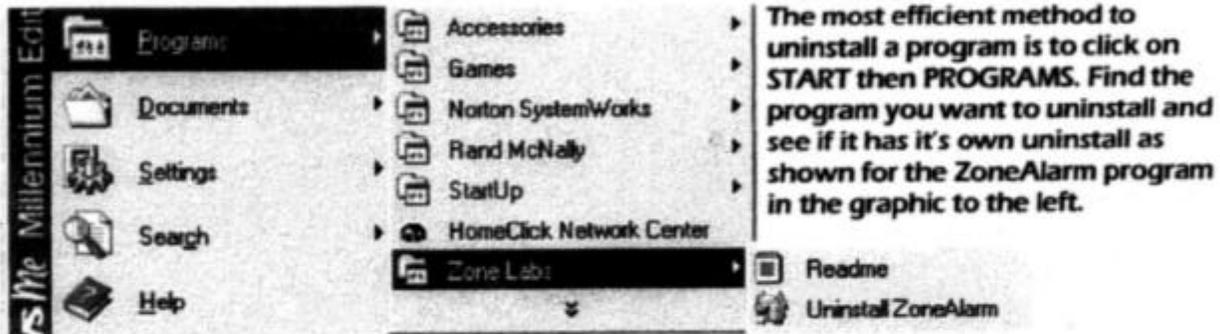
BEGINNERS CLASS

February 2001
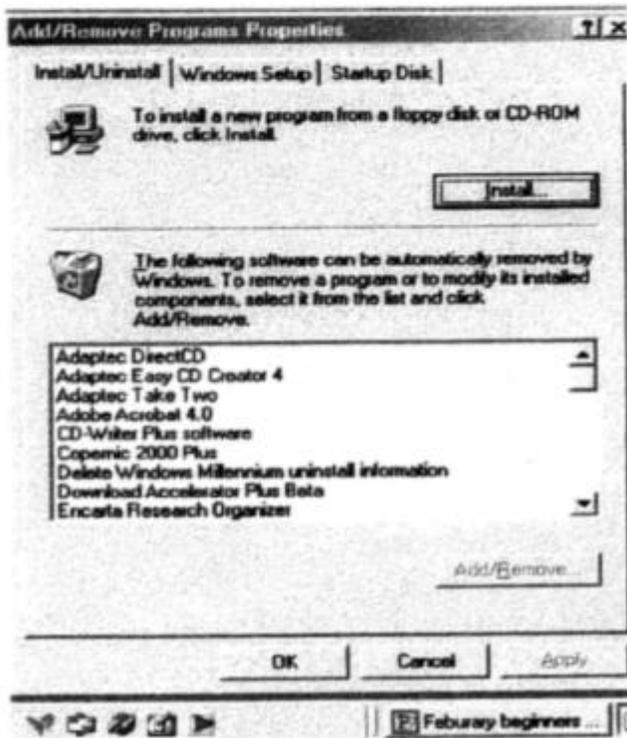Mike Strecker   roostermike.roosterm@gte.net

UNINSTALL PROGRAMS

If you highlight an icon on your desktop and delete it, that just removes the
shortcut to that program, it doesn't remove anything else!

Programs ▶	📁 Accessories ▶
📁 **Documents** ▶	📁 Games ▶
📁 **Settings** ▶	📁 Norton SystemWorks ▶
🔍 **Search** ▶	📁 Rand McNally ▶
📖 **Help**	📁 StartUp ▶
	💿 HomeClick Network Center
	📁 Zone Labs ▶ 📄 Readme
	🔧 Uninstall ZoneAlarm

The most efficient method to
uninstall a program is to click on
START then PROGRAMS. Find the
program you want to uninstall and
see if it has it's own uninstall as
shown for the ZoneAlarm program
in the graphic to the left.

After you check the program to see if it has it's own uninstaller, and you find
it doesn't, then click on START, SETTINGS ,CONTROL PANEL.
In the Control Panel click on the ADD/REMOVE icon, you will get the menu
shown below.

Add/Remove Programs Properties

Install/Uninstall | Windows Setup | Startup Disk |

To install a new program from a floppy disk or CD-ROM
drive, click Install.

[Install...]

The following software can be automatically removed by
Windows. To remove a program or to modify its installed
components, select it from the list and click
Add/Remove.

Adaptec DirectCD
Adaptec Easy CD Creator 4
Adaptec Take Two
Adobe Acrobat 4.0
CD-Writer Plus software
Copernic 2000 Plus
Delete Windows Millennium uninstall information
Download Accelerator Plus Beta
Encarta Research Organizer

[Add/Remove...]

[OK] [Cancel] [Apply]

The bottom half of this menu is for
removing programs from your hard
disk. The procedure is very simple,
just highlight the program you
want to uninstall then click on the
ADD/REMOVE button and that's all
there is to it.
If you couldn't find the program in
the uninstall list, you need to get a
separate uninstall utility. There are
many available, these programs not
only allow you to remove programs
safely and completely, they also re-
move any duplicate files and any
other files you don't really need,
thus reclaiming space on your hard
drive. We will discuss these Utilities
in class.

Power problems and your computer

(This article is reprinted from Toby Scott's CIPCUG E-Letter of Feb. 5, Vol. 3.07. While some of you have already read it, it's important enough that all members should be able to have the information. Toby is one of the partners in Ventura County Computers. – Editor)

By Toby Scott

Just in case you aren't sick enough of discussions about California's energy problems, let's talk about some of the ramifications for computer users. In case you are hit by one of the rolling blackouts, be sure to turn off all your electrical appliances while the blackout is in force. You do not want the jolt of returning power to knock out your TV, refrigerator, hands-free phone, or most especially your computer to be ruined by a sudden surge of power.

Most of us have at least minimal surge suppression protection. These work fine in normal times. But your $6.95 drug store power bar will do little in the face of a large hit. As it dies, it can let power through that can damage whatever you have plugged into it.

Your best course of action when the power goes out is to unplug everything except for one light — so you'll know when power returns. Wait a few minutes afterward for the spikes to die down and then slowly start plugging things back in and turning them on. While this is quite a nuisance, it is far less of a nuisance than having a sudden surge fry your refrigerator.

And did you know that too little electricity is as hard on your computer as a voltage spike? And that a surge suppressor only protects against spikes? True. Sudden, small power dips can cause serious problems with delicate electronics. Exactly the kind we have been having with increasing regularity as the electricity generating system groans under the load.

In the past, we have not pushed Uninterruptible Power Supplies on customers for workstations and stand-alone computers. Normally, if the data is stored on the server there is little risk in running the workstations without backup power. For home users, usually if they lose a document or two when the power goes out it isn't too traumatic.

But things have changed with the power problems we are having. Our repair business is booming, thanks to the scattered outages and inconsistent power. With more of these in the offing, we expect to see even more repairs of hard disks, memory and motherboards. Now that excellent UPS units are available for $100 and decent ones for less, it doesn't pay to take chances. If you leave a computer on most of the day, you really should have a UPS for it.

The best UPS units are "line interactive," which means the computer actually runs off the battery at all times and the UPS recharges itself with whatever power it can get. Your computer receives smooth, excellent quality electricity all the time. When you install the software and plug the UPS into your serial port, the UPS will automatically close all your programs and shut down your computer any time the power is out for a minute or so (you can set the length). If you don't plug your monitor into the UPS you should have about half an hour's worth of power. With the monitor, you'll have about 10 minutes. Either way, you have more than enough time to get things shut down gracefully when you are hit with a blackout.

> "Your best course of action when the power goes out is to unplug everything except for one light — so you'll know when power returns. Wait a few minutes afterward for the spikes to die down and then slowly start plugging things back in and turning them on."

There are more inexpensive units called "stand-by," which keep their batteries charged but let your computer run off the existing current. As soon as they perceive a power dip or outage, they cut over to battery backup. The momentary power outages are a bit hard on your computer, but far less harmful than running without any UPS, so no matter what kind of UPS unit you get, you'll be way ahead of the game.

Of course, if the only computer you have is an ancient Pentium 133, it probably isn't worth protecting it with a $100 appliance. The more expensive your computer and peripherals are, the more sense it makes.

The only thing that doesn't make any sense is to assume you can continue as you have been. Spend a moment to rethink your power strategy.

(Copyright 2000 by Toby Scott and Ventura County Computers for the Channel Islands PC Users Group, reprinted with permission. Anyone may subscribe to the monthly E-Letter. Simply send a blank e-mail message to <support@scotts.net> with the subject of "subscribe.")

Hints on making MP3s

By Larry Hudson

I've been involved in a large project recently — making MP3 files out of my large collection of CDs and even larger collection of LPs, then burning them onto data CDs.

What's MP3? It's a way of compressing digital audio. The compression is about 10:1 for near CD quality. According to one chart I've seen, you can get about 24:1 compression for AM radio quality and 96:1 for telephone quality sound. For example, a CD audio or a CD quality .WAV file is about 10 megabytes per minute of sound. An MP3 file at CD quality would be 1 MByte/minute; AM quality would be 416 KByte/minute, and telephone quality would be 104 KByte/minute.

There is a huge quantity of MP3 files available on the Internet. Although I understand a good deal of them are unauthorized copies of copyrighted recordings and, therefore, illegal, there are also a good number that are OK. I haven't personally checked out what's on the Net; I'm just making my own from my own collection of recordings. (This is legal, by the way, as long as it's for your own use and you don't give them away or sell them — or put them on the Net.)

A large selection of shareware and freeware MP3 players is available as well. The one I use the most is WinAmp. It's one of the most popular and considered to be one of the best — and it's freeware. It's available at all the usual shareware sites, and the latest version is always available at the WinAmp Web site, <www.winamp.com>. It plays virtually all the available types of sound files in addition to MP3s, and will play CDs as well. It also has hundreds of plug-ins available that add additional functions and capabilities. WinAmp also has a huge number of "skins" or add-ons that don't change the functionality, just the appearance. Some of these are really far out. I've downloaded some of the skins but none of the plug-ins. One skin I find particularly amusing is called KingAmp2 — it looks like a sloppy, hand-drawn sketch, complete with a few random ink blotches.

I really don't know all that much about MP3s overall, but I will describe what I've been doing.

CDs

I've typically been getting 10 to 13 audio CDs on a single MP3 CD — about 10 or 11 hours of music. Converting CDs is pretty easy and straightforward; the software will do it pretty much automatically. And it's fairly fast — on my system (400 MHz P-II) it will convert a 60-minute CD in about 20 minutes. It works well in the background — you can continue doing your "real" work (like playing Free Cell) while the conversion is running.

I have been using a commercial software package called Audio Catalyst by Xing. I picked it up at Comp USA for about $30. There are a lot of shareware and probably freeware versions available as well. I've tried only one shareware package and that on only one file. But I found it was more than 10 times slower than Audio Catalyst, so I dumped it. Unfortunately, since I deleted it, I don't remember its name. I can't comment on any others since I haven't tried them.

Initially the program will detect the number of tracks on the CD, but will simply label them "Track01," "Track02," etc. However, if you're online, one of the toolbar buttons will connect you with <www.cddb.com>, which is a huge on-line database of CDs, and it will automatically fill in all the track names, the record name and artist. Even if you're

More on MP3s: Some how-to-do-it tips

not currently online, I find it practical to log on, click the CDDB button, and it's usually done within five seconds so I can log off again. Of course, if you don't have Internet access or simply don't want to bother logging on for this purpose you can name the tracks manually.

Audio Catalyst allows you to control the MP3 file names by selecting track number, track name, album name and artist — any combination of these in any order. I expect other software is similar. My preference is track number followed by the track name. I like using the track number as the leading part of the filename because when the file names are displayed in a sorted list (for example, in Windows Explorer or an MP3 player playlist) they are automatically shown in their proper order.

Now it's simply a matter of clicking the start button. The process of extracting the audio data from the CDs is usually called "ripping," but Audio Catalyst calls it "grabbing." It first extracts the audio data to create a temporary .WAV file, then it encodes this into the .MP3 file and deletes the temporary file. It does it one track at a time.

One thing to note is that it does need a good deal of free disk space. The intermediate .WAV files are big — about 10 Megabytes per minute of playing time. And if, like me, you want to write them to data CDs, you need about 650 Megabytes to hold the MP3 files until they're ready to be written.

LPs

LPs, tapes or other analog sources are a bit more involved and much more time-consuming. Since these are not digital audio, they have to be digitized first. This adds an extra step, and much more manual handling.

The computer sound card will do the digitizing. Mine is a Creative Labs SoundBlaster, but all current sound cards should be suitable. It requires a cable to connect your sound source to the Line Input of the sound card. If your computer and stereo system are near enough to each other, it's not a problem. In my case, however, the stereo and computer were in two widely separated rooms and it wasn't practical to put them together, but I was able to move the turntable by itself. This still left the problem of a preamp — the output of a phonograph cartridge is too low to directly drive the sound card input, and it requires frequency equalization as well.

I found a phonograph preamp at Circuit City that is ideal for this. It's a little "black box" about 1.5 x 2 x 4 inches and is intended to be used to connect a phonograph to a stereo system that doesn't have a phono input. It works great to drive the computer sound card input as well. However, it was a bit expensive — about $40.

You need a program to control the sound card to digitize the input. I have been using two different programs — one called Wave Studio, which came with the SoundBlaster card, and the other called Sound Editor, which came with the Adaptec CD writing software. They both work fine, but in comparing them, of course, each has its good and bad features. Overall, I find the Wave Studio a bit easier to use, but the Sound Editor is a bit easier to edit with — which I do occasionally, but not often. Generally my editing is limited to simply cutting off excessive leading or trailing silence, and that's easy to do with either of them.

There is also sound-editing software that can clean up the sound — removing ticks, pops, etc. But I haven't tried any of these so I can't comment on how effective they are. So far I've been content to simply live with the "LP sound," ticks, pops and all. But I occasionally manually edit out some of the bigger, more prominent pops.

Doing LPs is much more time-consuming than CDs because the CDs are already digital sound data and the software can read and process this data directly. The sound doesn't play as it's working, and it runs much faster than "real time" — for example, about 20 minutes to process a 60-minute CD on my equipment. But LPs have to be digitized first, and this must be done in "real time" — they have to be played normally in order to digitize them to the .WAV files.

As I see it, there are three approaches to splitting the bands on the records. You could do a whole side of the record as a single .WAV file and convert that directly. This would be the least desirable because you can't select the individual bands when you play the MP3 file. You could do the whole side as a single file and then use the sound editing software to split the bands into individual files before they're converted. I tried this but found it to be too awkward and difficult — but perhaps better editing software would make it easier. Finally, you can do each record band separately as an individual file. Although this requires more manual handling, I find it to be the easiest. (As usual, your mileage — or opinion — may vary ...)

After the .WAV files are created, Audio Catalyst will convert them to the MP3 files. Just select the source to be "files" instead of CD. I find it most convenient to do a whole record side at a time — digitize (play) and save each band, then convert them all. You can start playing and digitizing the next side while the MP3 conversion is running in the background.

Another thing I find convenient is to first create a text file of all the record band names — these will become the filenames. This has several advantages:

1. It's easier to proofread before actually saving the files.

2. It's easier to name the files when they're saved. Simply copy (Ctrl-C) from the text file and paste (Ctrl-V) into the Save-As dialog box.

3. These text files can become an index to the MP3 collection.

4. Finally, it's easier to watch the length of the filenames. Unlike Windows 9x and its kin, which allow 255-character

F1—Your Help Key
(Revised Dec. 11, 2000)

CIPCUG INTERNET SERVICE

(For general Internet and Communications programs, see Communications/Internet)

Jerry Crocker,   486-0308, 6-10 p.m.
    normsplumb@aol.com,
Roland Fleig,   983-8707, mornings
    schwable@cipcug.org,
George & Arline Lakes,   983-2969, 2-10 p.m.
    thelakes@cipcug.org,
Helen Long   642-6521
    helen@cipcug.org
David D. Minkin,   484-2974, 5-12 p.m., weekends
    dddave@compuserve.com,
Claude Whelchel,   482-4017, 8-12 a.m.
    claude@cipcug.org

COMMUNICATIONS/INTERNET (GENERAL)

World Wide Web	DM, TS
Compuserve.	DM
Note Tab Pro.	TS
Procomm Plus	DM, WB

DATABASES

dBASE.	GM
MS Access	LP

DOS   RP

EDUCATIONAL / CHILDREN TZ

E-MAIL

Lotus:CCMail.	DM
Outlook	TS
Outlook Express	TS

FINANCIAL

Quicken	JD

GENEALOGY   TL

HARDWARE, UPGRADING JM, JD

HTML   TS

NETWORKS   TS

OS/2   LZ

SPREADSHEETS

Lotus 1-2-3	GM
Microsoft Excel	DM, LP
Quattro Pro	DM

UTILITY PROGRAMS

Norton Utilities	DM, JD
PCAnywhere	DM
PC Tools .	WB
XTree Gold.	DM

WORD PROCESSING

Microsoft Word	BW, DM, MR
WordPerfect.	DM, GM, JD

WINDOWS

Windows 3.1	DM, JM
Windows 98, 95	DM, JM
Windows 2000	TS
Windows NT	TS

Initials	Name	(805)
BW	Bart Wood	482-4993 (e)
DM	David Minkin	484-2974 (e);
	d: voice mail	339- 1729
GM	Gracia Marks	484-7572 (e)
JD	John Daily	650-0029 (b)
JM	Jerry McCloud	(818) 889-6176 (e)
LP	Laura Pacheco	L5Enigma@Earthlink.net
LZ	Len Zakas	388-8452 (b)
MR	Marvin Reeber	984-1974 (b)
RP	Robert Provart	498-8477 (b)
TL	Terry Lee	tdlee28@hotmail.com
TS	Toby Scott	289-3960 (d)
	tech@cipcug.org	
TZ	Trish Zakas	388-8452 (b)
WB	Dr. William Burger	653-6889 (e)

Phone: (d) = days; (e) = evenings; (b) = both

ISP = $15 Monthly
Sign up now!

Are you tired of looking at all the ads on your free Internet or free E-mail Service? Are you looking for a reliable ISP at a reasonable price? How does $15 per month plus $15 processing fee sound to you? You will also have the advantage of a special DOMAIN name, however, it may not be a name of your own choosing. It is the name of the club that provides this service to it's members; CIPCUG.

To sign up, contact one of the clubs Techies on the F1 — YOUR HELP KEY (page 17 TOE) listed in the right hand column under CIPCUG ONLINE — Tech Support. Call one of them you may know or one in your area and they will be glad to provide you with the details necessary for signing up. Checks should be made payable to CIPCUG and forwarded to Treasurer, % CIPCUG, P. O. Box 51354, Oxnard CA 93031. Don't forget to include the $15 set-up fee to your first sign up check. You may make payments in three month, six months or annual increments. (Renewals can also be mailed to Treasurer, just be sure to mention the dates that your check is to cover).

We have changed our ISP provider to ISWest (Internet Specialists West) which is a major regional carrier. As in the past, CIPCUG will provide tech support for our own club members. There is no program to install, you will be making use of the programs that are already on your computer. If you are the least bit timid about setting up your computer a club member will be glad to come to your house and make the necessary set up arrangements. How many ISP's do you know who will do this? Our agreement will also give you a 5 MB Web Page allowance.

We have undergone a rather painfull change in our ISP and we think we have all the bugs worked out. We have been up and running for several weeks now and hopefully we will not have any major problems in the future.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call any of the Tech Support team and they will either answer the questions or find out the answers for you.

More on MP3s...

filenames, CDs are limited to 64-character filenames. I'm not sure if this is a limitation of the Adaptec CD writing software or the standards for CD-ROMs, but I think it's the CDs.

After the conversion to MP3 is done, the .WAV files can be deleted. They are temporary intermediate files — and they're big, typically 200 to 300 megabytes for one side of a record.

Conclusion

That's all there is to it. When there's enough done to fill a CD, I write the MP3 files to a CD and delete them from the hard disk. I'm not going to describe making the CDs — if you have a CD writer, you already know how to do it, and these MP3s are no different from any other set of data files. If you don't have a CD writer, a description won't be very helpful.

A couple of final words: To be completely honest, there's probably no really good reason to create MP3 CDs from the audio CDs. Since they are data files they can be played only on a computer, not a normal stereo system (although this may change in the future). And because the audio CDs already play fine on the computer, the MP3 versions just add more disks to your collection. But it is nice to have them in this more compact form — about 10 hours of music per disk. I feel it's rather like the traditional reason given for mountain climbing — "because it's there." I enjoy doing these MP3 CDs "because I can."

> "Creating CDs from LPs is more useful. It converts them from their very fragile form to a digital format on a media that isn't as subject to wear and is potentially more permanent.

On the other hand, creating CDs from LPs is more useful. It converts them from their very fragile form to a digital format on a media that isn't as subject to wear and is potentially more permanent.

Another possibility is to create "real" audio CDs from the LPs. Programs to do this are included in version 4 of the Adaptec CD writing software. The version that came with my CD writer was 3.5, but I upgraded to 4.0 and this was one of the enhancements. Similar software is available from other sources.

The process of making these audio CDs is virtually the same as creating any other data CD, but it allows using CD tracks, .WAV files or .MP3 files as the source, and the result is a standard audio CD that will play on any normal stereo CD player.

I hope you have as much fun making your own MP3s as I have.

Editor's corner: A warning about warnings

In my "real life," I'm a copy editor at the Ventura County Star, which means I read stories before they appear in the paper to catch mistakes in facts, English and punctuation and write headlines that accurately reflect the story and entice readers to read it. Sometimes my fellow copy editors and I do this very well and sometimes we don't see the horrible mistakes until they leap off the page at us the next day.

One of the columns I read recently concerned scams and other dangers directed at seniors. The first one was a warning about the "Klingerman virus," which supposedly was being distributed through the U.S. mail in a large envelope marked "A gift for you from the Klingerman Foundation." Inside the envelope was a sponge containing a virus that had made many people sick when they handled it.

"Wow," I thought to myself. "What a horrible trick that is" and kept reading.

The next several items concerned other viruses — the computer kind — and they set off alarm bells because I've received enough phony virus alerts to recognize the signs: lots of CAPITAL LETTERS, overuse of exclamation points (!!!!!), citing of authorities like Microsoft and AOL, and pleas to send copies of the warning to everyone in my address book. This combination screams hoax!

So I started checking the Web to see if I could find more information about any of the items. As I suspected, the computer warnings were either hoaxes or overstated warnings about old viruses (Melissa, for instance).

By then, of course, I had severe doubts about the Klingerman virus, too. A query about it took me to the Centers for Disease Control <www.cdc.gov/ncidod/kingerman_hoax.htm> where I found this information:

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently received several inquiries concerning an e-mail message about people who have been infected with 'Klingerman virus' after opening gift packages delivered to them in the mail. According to the e-mail message, a number of people became ill with a viral infection after handling a sponge contained in a package marked, 'A gift for you from the Klingerman Foundation.'

"The e-mail is a hoax. There is no 'Klingerman virus,' and the information in the e-mail notice is untrue. If you receive an e-mail message about 'Klingerman virus,' please do not forward it to others. Although the e-mail message is a hoax, if you are concerned about the contents of a package you receive in the mail, contact your local post office. It is a criminal offense to send potentially hazardous agents through the mail for the purpose of deliberately causing harm to human health. When such an incident occurs, the local emergency response system should be activated by dialing 911 in most communities; in communities without 911 systems, local law enforcement authorities should be notified. The local FBI field office and local and state public health authorities also should be notified."

I reported the problem to my bosses, who contacted the writer and told her what we had found. She apologized and said she was certain her sources had been reliable. I didn't talk to her, but my guess is that she received all the items from well-meaning friends, who had also received them from well-meaning friends and so on, but no one had bothered to check the stories out. Would another copy editor have recognized the problem? I don't know. I was just glad I did because it meant the Star didn't spread some frightening misinformation to all its readers.

The Web has been called today's version of the wild, wild west, with little or now regulation and lots of scams and hoaxes — and those criticisms are certainly correct. But the Web also has the solution to the problem: sites that track hoaxes, urban legends and virus myths and post the facts. We've listed them in past issues of TOE, but if you don't have the list, start with the Web site of your anti-virus program and then use a good search engine to look for such phrases as "urban legend," "urban myths" and "hoaxes."

And, please, if you get such e-mail warnings, check them before sending them to everyone you know. You'll save a lot of Internet bandwidth by not clogging it with hoax warnings, and you'll prevent a lot of worry by everyone in your address book who looks up to you as a — as we say in the news business – "a usually reliable source."

— John Weigle, editor

Treasurer's report
Jan. 1-31, 2001
By Art Lewis, *Treasurer, <treasurer@cipcug.org>*

Income	
ISP Income	555.00
New Members	170.00
Publication	107.80
Raffle	- 65.00
Renewals	450.00
Software Sales	35.00
TOTAL INCOME	**$1,252.80**
Expenses	
Coffee-Doughnuts	$ 19.65
Insurance	693.00
ISP Expense	352.00
Miscellaneous Expense	45.15
Service Charge	2.00
Storage	45.00
TOE	574.30
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$1,731.10**
TOTAL INCOME – EXPENSES	**-$478.30**
Unrestricted Funds	$4,587.57
Restricted Funds	$ 627.50
Bank Balance 1-31	$5,215.07

The Outer Edge

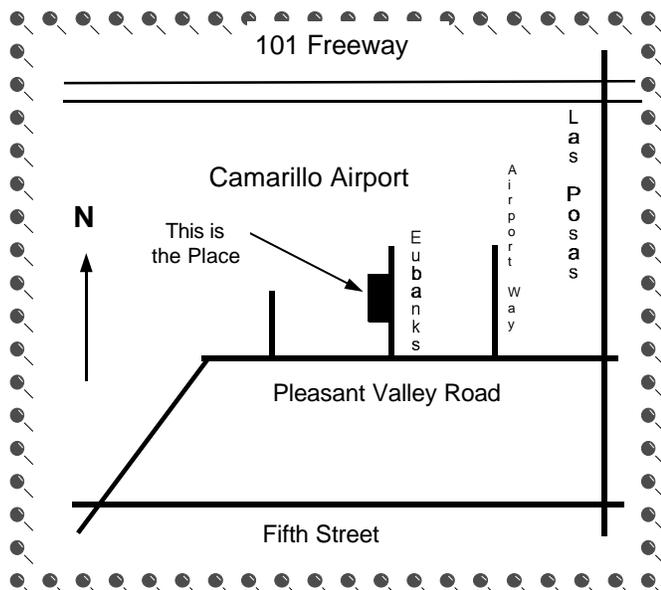Channel Islands PC Users Group
P.O.Box 51354
Oxnard, CA. 93031

DATED MATERIAL
Please Do Not Delay

If the number after your
name is 0011 then your
membership dues are pay-
able in November 2000

MARCH 2001 MEETING OF
CHANNEL ISLANDS PC USERS GROUP

Saturday morning, March 3,
at
Freedom Center, Camarillo Airport
515 Eubanks (at Pleasant Valley Rd.)
Camarillo, California

Meeting Schedule:
0845-0930 Beginners SIG
0845-0930 Internet SIG with Toby Scott
0930-0945 Business Meeting, announcements
0945-1030 Q&A Help session
1030-1055 Break - Please contribute requested
amounts for coffee & donuts
1100-1200 Presentation: TBA