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Attendance at the
February general meeting
56 members and guests

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

To Contact CIPCUG

The Outer Edge......................805-485-7121
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Inside

COMMAND.COM
By Rick Curry, President

Thanks to Michael Shalkey for handling the entire meeting in February, and thanks to the Ventura Police Department for demonstrating its showcase CAD (Computer-Aided Dispatch) emergency response system: PremiereOne. We all share in the benefit of Dave Wilson's research and negotiations that result in science fiction-like capabilities for Ventura authorities.

Curry

Virtual Land Mines

Land mines are generally not a problem for the people who put them there … until they are forgotten. There were fun and games at the Curry household recently as two forgotten land mines got together and reached critical mass.

The first petard we hoist ourselves upon was that someone (who shall remain nameless) was using a weak password for multiple (some of them important) things.

The second land mine was my contribution to having an interesting life. I knew my son was being careless with security. We had discussed it, and I decided my best option was to put firewalls around his machine and allow him to find out for himself why virus protection and a modicum of caution were good ideas.

The way these two land mines got together seems to have involved some social engineering that got our nameless adult to type in the common password on my son's virus-collecting virtual biology experiment machine. The next thing we knew, thousand dollar Paypal charges to strange online games were showing up on a credit card. We managed to catch the last couple of Yahoo e-mails reporting the latest charges in the Trashcan (same password for e-mail too; the person would make the charge, then log into e-mail and delete the reporting of the charge).

There was nothing clever about what was being done with the accounts. This appears to be much more of a childish prank than organized crime. So machines in my demesne have been owned by a script kiddie with little more technical expertise than a trained chimp because I left virtual land mines around to step in. I'll probably continue to see Homer Simpson staring back at me in the mirror for a while, but a few new passwords and cheerful chats

Root Directory

CIPCUG NEWS

GENERAL

ADVERTISEMENTS

2006 Southwest User Group Conference: second place in both the newsletter and Web site contests.

Channel Islands PC Users Group

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The Outer Edge

Advertising in The Outer Edge

Advertising is accepted for computer-related materials, businesses and services only. Rates are for Camera-Ready copy (clear, clean black and white masters). Typesetting and graphics are available at an additional fee.

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Ad copy deadline is the 5th of the month of publication.
Make all checks payable to CIPCUG**.**

Members' classified ads are free but are limited to 105 characters, including spaces.

Coming events

Safekidzone.com to be shown in March

Programs

A business that provides a panic button for children's cell phones will be the topic of the March 26 meeting. We'll meet at the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club, 1500 Temple Ave. (Ponderosa Drive and Temple Avenue), Camarillo. (See the map on the last page.)

This information is taken from the safekidzone.com Web site:

"Protect Your Family Anywhere, Anytime

"Your child can summon immediate help with the push of a Panic Button

"You are instantly alerted when your child is in danger

"Direct call routing to nearest 911 responder

"Put a Panic Button on your child's cell phone. If in danger, they press it, instantly sending a text and e-mail to you,

Door prizes

We have two types of raffle tickets: one for prizes offered by the presenter and one for club-provided prizes. The tickets for the presenter's prizes are free and limited to one per member.

The tickets for the club-provided prizes are $1 each, $5 for six tickets, $10 for 13 tickets, $15 for 20 tickets and $20 for 27 tickets and are available to anyone. Those who can't stay until the drawing may sign their tickets and give the person selling the tickets a list of the prizes they would like in the order they'd pick them. Winners' prizes will be held until the next meeting.

Consignment table

A consignment table is set up at every meeting. Anyone can buy, but only members can sell.

The club gets 10 percent of the sales price. Sold items must be picked up at the end of the day's meeting.

Any items not picked up will become the property of CIPCUG and will be subject to disposal at the club's discretion.

CIPCUG is not responsible in any way for items bought or sold at the table. Each item is sold as-is unless otherwise stated.

Meeting, SIG notices

If you would like e-mail notices of regular meetings and SIGs, go to www.cipcug.org, where you'll find a link on the home page to sign up. The URL is cipcug.org/listserv.cfm.

You will need your membership number, which is on the back cover of TOE, to complete the sign-up.

Minutes of the February board meeting

By Diane Mortensen
Secretary

The CIPCUG Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on Feb. 26, 2011. In attendance were President Rick Curry, Vice-President Craig Ladd, TOE Editor John Weigle, Treasurer Art Lewis, Helen Long, Membership Chairman Ken Church, and Secretary Diane Mortensen

The meeting was called to order by Rick, who asked if there was any old business. There being none, the meeting was opened to new business.

Art submitted the January 2011 Treasurer's report to board members in addition to presenting it in today's business meeting. A copy of the Treasurer's report appears elsewhere in TOE. Art stated that he has paid our annual insurance premium and that the club's financials are in good order.

Craig remarked about the interesting meeting that was presented today by

Mortensen

Cmdr. David Wilson from the Ventura Police Department on PremiereOne, the next-generation safety and service application. For March's meeting, Craig is intending to have a presentation on Safe Kids Zone, a cutting-edge cell phone application and service connecting a network of family, friends and the company's 24/7 Response Center. The call center connects all to a live conference call and, if needed, routes the emergency directly to the nearest 911 responder with GPS location and vital information. This is life-saving protection for families. Craig is still working on the April and May meetings, noting that there will be a Boy's & Girl's Club event on May 21, the date of the club's regular monthly meeting.

A general discussion was had regarding the repositioning of the screen on the stage and that it was difficult for some to see the visuals. When the room was being updated, the screen was moved further back from its original place. It was decided that when chairs are put up before each meeting the rows will begin further

up providing more space for chairs to be positioned in the center of the room. Also, working tables will be set up along the opposite side of the stage for those staffing the tables to have a better view.

Diane presented information regarding CIPCUG's possible use of the community room at the Camarillo Library for a meeting or meetings. Now that the library is no longer in the county system and is controlled by the City of Camarillo, obtaining the community room for CIPCUG's meetings may be possible. She shared the information she obtained through the library's staff and the library's Web site.

Board members agreed that having a meeting or regular meetings at the library would provide great visibility and create more members. Diane will be in touch with the contact person, Dean Wendel-Smith, a city employee, for more details and report back to the board at April's meeting.

With no further matters to discuss, it was moved, seconded, and approved to adjourn the meeting.

Q&A

Moving the taskbar, Internet's effects on policy

Michael Shalkey handled both the Internet SIG and Q&A session in February because Toby Scott was at a Lions Club event. — Editor

Internet and networking SIG

Reported by John Weigle

Task bar moved

Q: My grandson was playing with my keyboard and somehow moved the taskbar to the top of the screen. I can't move it back.

A: That can happen from people and even a cat that's sleeping or playing on the keyboard. To fix it, right click on an empty spot on the taskbar and uncheck Lock the taskbar if it's checked. Then left click on the taskbar and drag it to the left or right edge and then to the bottom. Checking Lock the taskbar should keep it from getting moved again accidentally.

Effects of the Internet

Michael: I want to discuss the effects of the Internet, and especially Facebook and Twitter, on recent news in the Middle

More on coming events ...

their friends, and our 24/7 Response Call Center. The call center connects all to a live conference call and, if needed, routes the emergency directly to the nearest 911 responder with GPS location and vital info. This is life-saving protection for your family."

Prices range from free to $12.95 per month. The corporate offices are in Sherman Oaks.

The doors open at 8:30 a.m. The Internet and Networking SIG and the Hands-On Training meeting (Computing 101) will start at 8:45 a.m.

Other meeting dates this year are:
April 23
May 21 (the Boys & Girls Club is using the club on our regular meeting date)
June 25: Kristen LaBonte from California State University at Channel Islands, digital resources at the CSUCI library.

July 23
Aug. 27
Sept. 24
Oct. 33
Nov. 19 (third Saturday)
Dec. 17 (third Saturday

SIGs

Except for the Thousand Oaks PC Club Photo Group, the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are sponsored by CIPCUG and led by volunteer club members.

Unless otherwise noted, the CIPCUG SIGs run from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Ventura County Computers, 2175 Goodyear Ave., Unit 117, Ventura; phone 289-3960. From the 101 Freeway, exit at Telephone, take Telephone south to McGrath, turn left and go one block. Turn right on Goodyear and right again into the second driveway. Unit 117 is the back, right corner of the building.

The pre-meeting SIGs are at 8:45 a.m. at the Boys & Girls Club. The after-meeting SIG is at 1:30 p.m. at The Star, 550 Camarillo Center Drive, Camarillo.

There is no charge for members to attend the CIPCUG SIGs.

Until further notice, the Photo Group is not accepting new members or guests because it is close to outgrowing its meeting room. The TOPCC Photo Group, which meets at 6:30 p.m. at the Thousand Oaks Library, 1401 E. Janss Road, charges $3 per meeting for those who are not members of the Thousand Oaks PC Club. The Web site is http://topcc.org/dnn/SIGsPrograms/PhotoGroup/tabid/65/Default.aspx.

The general schedule:
First Monday (except in months that have holidays on or near the first Monday): TOPCC Photo Group. **It is not taking new members or guests until further notice.**

Fourth Tuesday: Linux.

Fourth Saturday (or the regular meeting day): Hands-on Training (Jessica Scott and Mark Maidel) and Internet and connectivity SIG, 8:45 a.m. Michael Shalkey's after-meeting SIG at The Star, 550 Camarillo Center Drive, Camarillo. **The Star's meeting room will not be available in March, July and October.**

The March and April schedules :
March
Tuesday, March 22: Linux SIG. Topic: Installing LibreOffice on the CIPCUG PC.

Saturday, March. 26: Regular meeting, pre-meeting SIGs, and Michael Shalkey's after-meeting SIG, *if a new location is found for the month.*

April
Tuesday, April 26: Linux SIG. Topic: TBA.

Saturday, April 23: Regular meeting, pre-meeting SIGs and Michael Shalkey's after-meeting SIG.

Be sure to check the calendar on cipcug.org for updates on event programs, dates and times.

More on Command.com ...

with our banks have cleared up most of the mess.

The good news is that since we decided to remove all of our old land mines, the virus-collecting machine has been reinstalled with Windows 7. This is on a pre-2007 machine. The installation went great, and the performance is noticeably better than XP. I will be supervising the configuration of Security Essentials next!

Happy computing!

(Continued from page 4)

East. Many observers say that Facebook was a major way that people were alerted to rallies, marches and other events, without having to distribute fliers or other written material. For many people around the world, Facebook is replacing e-mail, and, in fact, the fastest-growing segment of users is those over 50. Facebook messages were used to convey information, sometimes with code words. The number of women at one of the Egyptian rallies was reported to be the most women in the square in recent history.

Search engine optimization

Q: Can you explain how search engine optimization works?

A: A lot of the hype for it is just snake oil, but the idea of search engine optimization is to make your Web site move to the top of the list — or at least the first page of search results. Google has not fully explained how sites are ranked, but two things are clear: Keywords that people would use in a search should be in the title of your page, and the more legitimate sites that link to your page, the higher your ranking will be.

Optimization is most important to people using the Web for sales because people generally don't go far beyond the first or second page of results when they search. People who sell search engine optimization, also called SEO, will usually be involved with the site for several days and charge large amounts.

So-called "link farms" can hurt your ranking, rather than help it, and Google has declared war on blog sites that are just link farms. One good way to get more links to your site is to take part in discussions and message boards that cover the material you're trying to sell. At first, just post information or answer questions from others to promote yourself as a knowledgeable person. Later, post a note about your site, with the URL, and explain how it can be helpful to those reading your notice. Lots of people who take your money for SEO will promise lots of things they can't deliver and do things that might hurt your ranking.

Although it can make for long titles, your page title should have all the words that might be used in a search, something like "Paul's amazing beech wood bird feeders and bird houses for your backyard."

Rick Curry: Cascading Style Sheets are also supposed to be important, according to what I've read.

Michael: Interesting. I hadn't heard that.

Another approach to improve your ranking is to ask webmasters of related sites that are good to link to you.

Wireless devices

Q: Is N the best wireless standard right now?

A: Yes. Wireless routers and other devices have changed over the years because of frequencies they use. You might have noticed sometimes that a portable telephone has problems if someone turns on your microwave (the two run on the same frequency). N is the newest standard and has the longest range between the base station and the device.

Q: What's the best brand of router?

A: That's often a matter of opinion. Most of the Internet runs on Cisco. Those of you who remember IBM computers might remember its laptops. When IBM decided to get out of the laptop business, Lenovo, which made the laptops, asked if it could buy the business and for the last two years before IBM got out of the business Lenovo asked to use both names on the laptop: IBM ThinkPad by Lenovo. As time went on, the Lenovo name got bigger and IBM got smaller until it disappeared. The same thing, I believe, is happening with Cisco, which bought Linksys. I think the name Linksys will ultimately disappear.

I don't think there's that much of a

difference, but as a tech guy who has to work on the things, I want a company that lets me talk to a human being when there's a problem.

We've trained the computing industry that we want to pay as little as possible for a device, and that means there's not going to be much support. The exception is Apple, which costs more but provides the support. If you buy a $300 netbook and something goes wrong, you might as well throw it away because it'll cost $200 to fix it. High-end, expensive items are an exception. If you pay $800 for a gaming motherboard, there will be support for it.

Tracking links to Web sites

Q: Is there a way to track "back links," that is, sites that have linked to you? My ISP said it has a way to do it.

A: I've never heard of that, but if it does exist it would be expensive, not something you'd download for free, because of the limited interest in such a tool.

'IPocalypse'

Michael: I'm usually the person who comes up here with things to scare you, but I want to discuss something that will get a lot of attention even though it will have little effect on most of you anytime soon. There are only 4.3 billion possible numbers for Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, and the last one was given out last week. While 4.3 billion sounds like an impossibly large number, if everyone has five devices that need an IP address,

(Continued from page 5)

such as cell phone, computer, router and so on, the number of addresses in use grows quickly. The current IP is IPv4, which is listed in this format: 207.178.213.229. The newest version, which will make many more addresses available, is IPv6, which will be shown as 2001:0db8:85a3:0000:0000:8a2e:0370:73 34. (The first address is for cipcug.org; the second is a sample of the new protocol.) For the moment, this makes no difference to people who already have IPs. It will ultimately mean changes to routers to allow the additional addresses. Most of you will never have to worry about this. For instance, do any of you know what IP you have at home? It is probably not 192.168.1.1 but something from your ISP like 72.75.79.244 (mine at the moment). There IS a possibility that yours could be 192.168… from the ISP, but if that's the case, it's running a router on its end to take care of all of this for you (and to manage its pool of addresses). Bottom line: There is probably nothing you will ever need to do about this subject.

New search engine

Michael: There's a new search engine you might want to try at bleko.com. It's still in beta, but you might want to try it. I like its clean page, which doesn't have a lot of ads, as opposed to some search sites like Yahoo that fill the page with all kinds of ads and other things.

Search requests

Q: How do search engines handle search requests?

A: Basically, the same way your home computer handles a search for a single word. It is a database that uses similar search technology as your word processor or spreadsheet. When you type Ctrl F (find) and a word in the search box, the program will compare that with the index of what's in the document and take you to that part.

Q: What if I use a question like "What is the best router for home use"?

A: It seeks out the most important words, "router," and "home use." "What is" will lead to one set of results, "How do I" can lead to another. You can trim most searches to just the key words.

Q: Does capitalization make a difference?

A: No, but quotation marks do: "find

these words" will show results containing those words in that order, while find these words (no quotes) would give results for the individual words. (There are other ways to limit searches, but if you don't want to learn all the Boolean methods, Google offers its advanced search, which lets you search for exact words, some words but not others [i.e. cats and dogs, but not raining] and site-specific searches, among other things. — Editor)

I think Watson sort of cheated on "Jeopardy" because the computer got a text file of the question and didn't have to understand English like the rest of us do. Watson was doing a massive search. But the fact that the computer beat the people is still a groundbreaking move for artificial intelligence and its search abilities.

On another related matter, there was a kerfuffle between Bing and Google recently, with Google charging that Bing was stealing its algorithms because search results of the two engines were remarkably similar. Google said it proved it by developing a Web page with a made-up word, and within three days the results were the same as Google's. Bing said of course it looks at Google results and furthermore that those results would be the same because the Google page was the only one that had that word. Most of the industry agreed with Bing in this case. The results weren't exactly the same, and that's not surprising.

Rupert Murdoch

Michael: The death of newspapers is not a big surprise to most people because, while many older people read papers, the younger ones are getting their news from the Internet and other sources. Rupert Murdoch of News Corp. is starting a paid news site for only the iPad that is more magazine-like than newspaper-like. He's hiring lots of reporters for just the site, but one of the problems he'll have to face is that there will be very few stories that will be exclusive to the new site and not available on the many free news sites.

Movie and TV DVDs face a similar problem. I was in a Thousand Oaks Blockbuster not long ago looking for the sixth season of "MI5," a British TV show. Blockbuster is in bankruptcy, and I was talking to the clerk about how things were going and whether she had the show I wanted in stock. She had never even

heard of it. The variety and volume of content available through the Internet can never be matched by a physical store with physical products. I think the future of all video is on the Internet through such things as Roku, which has many free channels and several hidden channels, including TV.com, which has CBS, Showtime, CW and several other networks with full shows the day after they're on TV. (It is probably also coming directly to your TV as it gets smarter and more Internet aware as the months/years go by)

Regular Q&A

Reported by Diane Mortensen

Future of WiFi

Q: Will WiFi be the thing of the future rather than using cable?

A: Let me put it this way, people do not drive horses and buggies any more, but there are still horses. There are still horses and buggies for daily use if you are Amish. They will not disappear forever, but I think wireless will be much more prevalent. One of the reasons is that as a person working at Ventura County Computers we have many clients that are offices of doctors. They by law cannot have this computer wirelessly connected if it has patients' data on it because of the Health Insurance Portability and Protection Act (HIPAA). I am not a lawyer or a doctor, but it my understanding that this data cannot be wireless. If you go to your doctor, the person behind the counter will be using a computer. It is illegal for it to be wireless. No, there are certain applications that must be hard-wired. Now, if the law changes, the computer hookups could also change regarding data stored on a computer.

In another situation, I do not want my ATM to be wireless. I want it to be hard-wired inside the bank because I do not want someone in a van out in the parking lot when I am using the ATM somehow receiving wireless copies of something I am doing. There will be certain applications that will always be wired until things change. I could be wrong, but that is where I stand right now.

Understanding megas

Q: Please help me to understand different types of megas. Some have to do with amounts and others with speed.

Sometimes I have to pay a certain amount for a storage device of a certain size, and other times I am paying for a service that provides me with download speed. What is the distinction and practical way to go?

A: I can see you are holding up a smart phone with a data plan. You have a device that can connect to the Internet, but you are not connected to this building's wireless router and connecting to the Internet through it. You are connected directly to your carrier's cellular connection to the Internet. There are two numbers: The first number refers to the speed that comes from the air, from the cell phone towers to the device, and you have a number which is your monthly cap. You can upload or download only so much volume of stuff; there is a limit. When you go over that limit, you will pay a huge amount of money, which means you do not want to watch "Hawaii 5-0" on that device. Two days of watching stuff from the Internet, getting your e-mail, watching You Tube, etc. and you are done for the month, you will have hit the cap. The speed in which the material you want from the Internet comes down is totally a different number. You can have a huge fire hose, but how useful would that be if there is nothing behind the firehouse except one 5 gallon bucket of water? That is where you have a difference.

For home users, you do not normally have a cap on the volume you can get from the Internet. Whether you are on dial-up, which would be a tiny trickle of a faucet to DSL (which, if you imagine water, is a good way of thinking about it) your Internet Web pages come in a little faster and finally you get Verizon FiOS (fiber optic). You are talking fire hose there; that is the fastest available in this area, and, as long as you are unlimited, perfect. Do <u>you</u> need a fire hose? My home DSL — I just upgraded from the basic plan and went to the 3,000 or 3 Mbps (megabits per second). I am not getting that, I am only getting 1.5 Mbps, but that is fine for me. Let me demonstrate with my Roku box here. Watch the screen. Here, at this meeting site, our speed is amazing. See how long that retrieving took? At home, the retrieving may be a little slow, but once it starts it will be fine. The slow connection I had

three weeks ago would get to about here and the whole thing would freeze and it would just say "catching up, catching up." See the blue progress bar? As for me, I do not need anything faster than 1.5 megabits per second. Any more than that is a waste of speed (and my money).

Speed home users need

Q: How would that apply to a home user and what speed might be available one could practically use?

A: Basically, video is the big thing. For e-mails, it makes no difference how fast your connection is. Do any of you think your e-mails come in too slow? Nobody really cares (unless you're still on dial-up and people are e-mailing you pictures). If all you're doing is e-mails it does not matter, but where it does come into play is video. This is the future, and if you are not watching videos in your house coming from the Internet yet you probably will. How many of you do not own one of these boxes (Roku or Netflix streaming DVD player) or are slightly interested in it certainly before Christmas time? How many of you already have one? Look at those hands. This is the future. The good news is you do not need more than 1.5 Mbps; 3 Mbps would be great. (Toby would mention latency about now, but since that is not a price option from your DSL providers, I won't bring that up now.) DSL is still coming through the phone line and then converting to Internet stream. My phone line coming into my house is not clean enough to get faster than 1.5, so it is a waste of money to pay for any more. At your house, you may have a different connection.

Testing a phone line

Q: How would I find that out?

A: You will need to call the phone company and ask it to test your lines and it will tell you how far you are away from the switching office. Do you have DSL at all or are you thinking of upgrading it?

From the audience: I have DSL, and it is great. I also qualify for a faster rate. I paid for the faster rate, and I am still 1.5. So I called AT&T, saying I might qualify electronically from your schematics, which appeared that I would get the speed, but I am not getting that speed. They sent out a technician to verify that I did not get that speed, and they refunded my money. The point is, if you ask for the

3 do not pay for the 3 until after you test it because you may still be getting 1.5.

A: Very good point. In my case, the price of the 1.5 and 3 Mbps was the same. I have had my 3Mbps for only 72 hours. I think the thing that makes the most difference is how far from the hub or switching office you are. If your house is at the end of the line, that will make a huge difference than if you are right next door or close to the switching center.

Computer turns off if printer goes on

Written question: Desktop computer turns off when laser printer is turned on and off.

A: Your computer is powered by an uninterrupted power supply (UPS)? Tough question. If your laser printer is connected to your computer by a USB cable, I would replace that cable.

In the future, there will be no wires at all. As you were saying before about wireless, I am reminded that someone gave me a fax, printer, scanner machine, which is now in my home. My computer is not connected to the printer by a wire at all. What I did was to connect my printer to my router so that when my wife is in the living room, she is actually getting a lot of work done. She has a laptop on the coffee table, and she works while the TV is on. Now she is thrilled that all she has to do is hit Ctrl + P to print. and in the bedroom it spits out whatever she was working on. That's cool for her. She doesn't need to know how it works, or why it works.

Q: The printer is not connected to the computer when it is switched off. They are not plugged into the same power supply.

A: This sounds more like a wiring problem in your home. When a laser printer is turned on, it causes a big surge of power. It also sounds like your laser printer is old.

From the audience: I had the same problem with my laser printer. I had a four-box circuit, 20 amp panel I brought from my office, and that solved the problem.

The house wiring was not adequate to accommodate the entire load when that printer came on. It did not turn anything off, but lights dimmed, and you knew it was sucking a lot of energy.

(Continued from page 7)

Time Warner pricing

Q: Can you talk some more about Time Warner because I have the middle tier?

I also have another question — the CDs that are sold at Costco and other places, like we have for raffle prizes, for music — are they the same type of disk as for data now?

A: Any cable speed is higher than the highest DSL, which would be at least 3 Mbps.

Time Warner offers "up to 10 Mbps," "up to 15 Mbps" and "up to 20Mbps." (Fig. 1.)

Verizon, my telephone provider at home, offers DSL at 768 kbps to 1 Mbps, 1.5 Mbps to 3 Mbps, 4 Mbps to 7 Mbps and finally 10 Mbps to 15 Mbps (Fig. 2). According to these charts, you are getting the best deal of the two (price over speed).

As to CDs for music and data, yes, they can be used for both.

How many of you have an iPod or an MP3 player, and how many of you still put plastic into your car radio? The radio installed in your next new car will probably not have a disk slot; it will have a hole into which you plug a jack that connects to a portable device.

Good news, they do make CDs that are just blank music CDs. If you want to spend the money, go for it. I believe the music CDs differ from other blank CDs and they are supposed to last longer and be of higher sound quality. However, if you are going to play the CD only twice in the next 100 years, what difference does it make what quality it is? On the other hand, if you play music every day, go ahead and get the more expensive blank music CDs.

Fig. 1: TimeWarner offers "up to 10 Mbps", "up to 15 Mbps" and "up to 20Mbps".

Fig. 2: Verizon offers DSL at 768 kbps to 1 Mbps, 1.5 Mbps to 3 Mbps, 4 Mbps to 7 Mbps and finally 10 Mbps to 15 Mbps.

Using headphones while driving

Q: Did you say that you use your iPod and headphones while you are driving?

A: No. What I am saying is that my car radio has a hole in it so I have a mini jack wire that has one end that goes into the headphone jack on the iPod and the other into my car radio and then music comes out of the car speakers. I also have a car radio that has a USB jack and an SD card slot so I can have a USB stick with all the Beatles on it and I plug it in and it literally goes through all of their albums. When I am tired of listening to the Beatles, I unplug the USB stick and plug in a stick for Mozart or something else.

Defragging issue in Windows 7

Q: I had a quick question. When I had XP and defragged the hard drive, a graphical interface came up and showed you how badly it is fragmented. In Windows 7 it does not show up. Is there a way to see that?

A: That is interesting. No, the Windows 7 version of defrag doesn't have that pretty graphical display as it works. By the way,

(Continued from page 8)

Windows 7 SP-1 is out and by the time you read this in The Outer Edge you can find it through Windows Update. If you want it today, you can Google it and get to the Microsoft download page (http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/en/details.aspx?FamilyID=c3202ce6-4056-4059-8a1b-3a9b77cdfdda) and you can manually download it and be up and running. It is a huge up-date so they cannot give it to everybody at the same time. If you go to the Web site it is available for 32-bit and 64-bit. Size of the SP1 is 500 MB for 32 bit and 800 MB for 64 bit. The Service Pack would not be an optional update.

From the audience: I was gone for three weeks, and when I got back, my Windows 7 had 14 updates it downloaded during the time I was gone.

A: To tell what version of Windows you are using, go to Start, right click on Computer, left click to Properties, and it will tell you what version you have in the middle of the screen under system like you see here (Fig. 3).

If you are buying a new machine and want to have 64 bit, you are going to need at least 2 GB of RAM, and 4 GB RAM would be better, a very good processor and new hardware.

The safest and more economical all around is with 32 bit, especially for those who are upgrading old hardware and have not had any higher than 32-bit machines on XP.
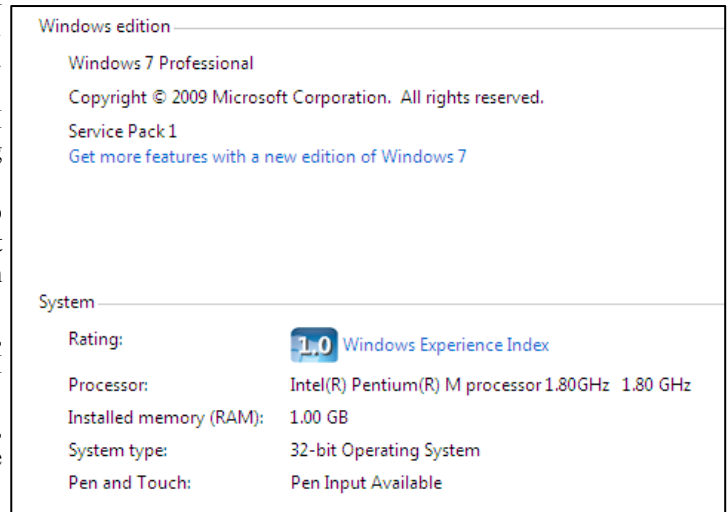
Fig. 3

Defragging in safe mode

A: Every couple of weeks I defrag my computer, and while I was waiting for it to defrag, I read the fine print, where it says for best results, defrag in safe mode. Is that actually true?

Q: Yes. Partly because of the speed. When you try to defrag in regular mode in Windows 7 it will work; it just takes a lot longer.

For best performance and speed, I use a third-party defrager which I believe is on the CIPCUG freeware flash drive. I do not even use Windows defrag.

It is Auslogics Disk Defrag, a free and extremely fast disk defragmenter that will speed up your computer by optimizing the file system. If you Google it, there will be a free Download — for Auslogics Disk Defrag and Auslogics Boost Speed (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4

Degragging the registry

Q: From the audience: What about defraging the reg-istry?

A: Anything to do with the registry, I tend to be a bit leery of. I have discussed this with others, and anyone who claims they can do something to the registry to make your computer 100 percent faster — well, a lot of registry stuff is snake oil. It really does not do what you think it does, it is just one big text file. No big deal, but if you want to play with yours, you can. Just make sure you back up everything before you try anything with the registry.

Repartitioning in Windows 7

Q: Is repartitioning the hard drive in Windows 7 easy?

A: Using the Computer Management tool in Windows 7, it looks like this (Fig. 5, next page). I got there by tapping the Win-dows key and typing "computer" into the search box. Computer Management will then show up at the top. Click it and then dou-ble click on Storage, double click on disk management and you will see your drive 0. Here you see mine is divided into System Reserved 100 MB NTFS (DO NOT TOUCH THIS) and C: 148.95 GB NTFS.

Now you are saying you have two partitions, a C and D is that correct? You would like to shrink D and make C bigger. OK — the first step is BACK UP. This process is not for everyone.

A: Start with D: Right mouse click and select Shrink Volume (Fig. 6, next page). Let it do it. Click apply and then go into your C drive and extend.

FOR EVERYONE: Back up everything before you attempt this, just in case. For instance, if you had someone in the house running a laser printer at the same time, you would not see anything again.

As I understand it, you may want to just eliminate the D partition and give all the space to C. Great, just make REALLY sure you have copied everything out of the D partition. and then you would use the above steps but select Delete Volume. Then you can Extend the Volume of your C to use your whole drive.
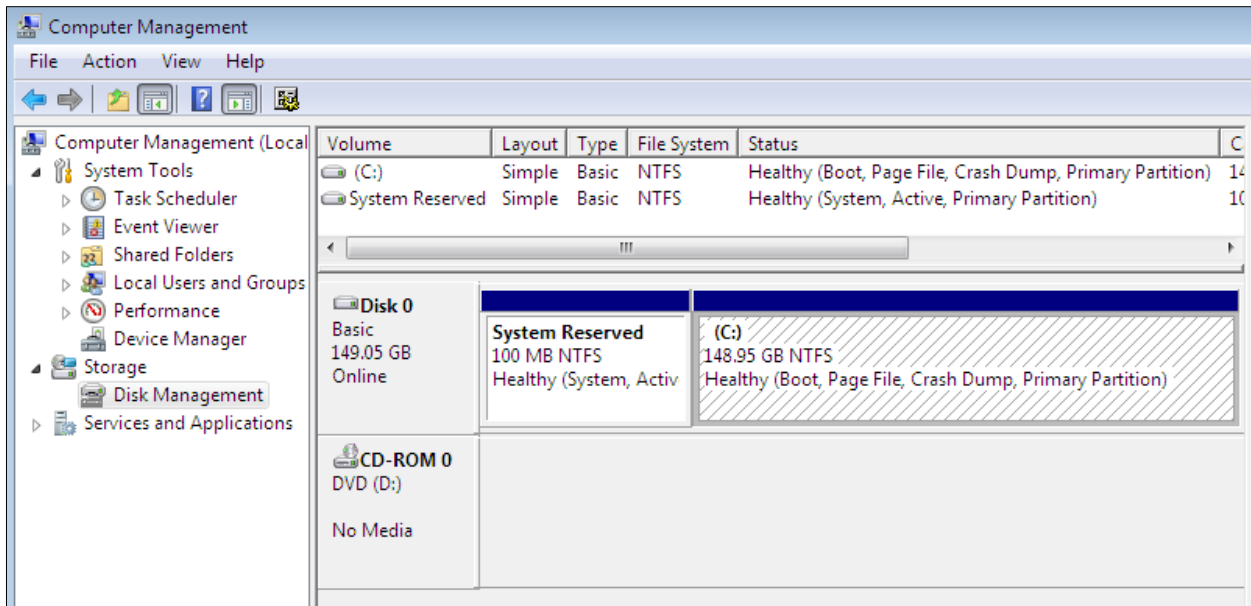
Fig. 5, above, and Fig. 6, below right.

(Continued from page 9)

Backing up in Windows 7

Q: With Windows 7, can you back up to more than one drive and also to an external drive?

A: Yes. In fact, the Windows 7 backup is designed to accept an external drive or even a secondary drive inside your computer. It works best not in the C drive but somewhere else. In fact, there is one available now at the raffle table. It is a 2 TB external hard drive. If I take that out of its box, plug it in now to this machine to which it has never been attached before, plug it in, wait 10 seconds or so until it is recognized, and go to back up, it will immediately realize what it is and be able to back up to it. Tomorrow, I get a different one, I plug it in and I want to back up again, and it will do it just as easily. I can make a backup image to every hard drive in the world if I wanted to; there is no limit. How do you recover?

How many of you have your Windows 7 install CD? Actually, that is not really important. When you finish the image backup, on the left of the screen, it will say Create System Disk; click that, get a blank CD, plug it into your drive, it will burn it. Label it "Recovery CD" and put it somewhere special. Now some day I discover that this hard drive is dead. I literally unscrew it, pull it out and put a brand new hard drive in, turn the computer on with the CD in the disk tray and it will boot to the CD and say, "There is nothing on this hard drive, what do you want to do?" Pick I want to restore the image on the external hard drive.

Starting the image program

Q: Where do you go to start image?

A: Very simple. Click on Start, (or tap the Windows key) type "backup" and you will see "Backup and Restore" at the top (Fig. 7).

Click on it once and you will see the screen in Fig. 8 (next page).

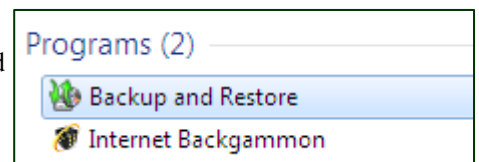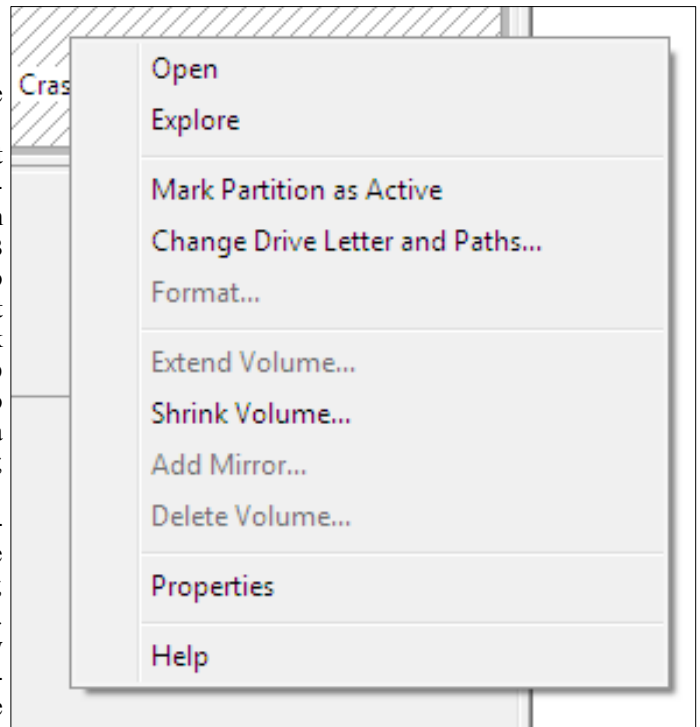On the left you will see Create a system image.

Click once.

Fig. 7

(Continued from page 10)

If you have more than one drive in your computer or an external hard drive like the wonderful door prize today, a 2 TB HD, then when you click on the Create a system image your computer will ask "Where do you want to save the backup" and if your external is plugged in, it will see it and suggest that as the best place to back up to (Fig. 9).

After you create your system image, grab a blank CD and click on "Create a system repair disc" as seen in Fig. 8, click and boom, done. The repair disk is

Fig. 8.

really cool. It is not an entire copy of Windows, it is just enough for you to restore your image. It also does a little bit like a check disk on there in case your computer does not boot, you can try the repair disk to do a general check disk, that sort of thing. Again, this was so smart to have built this into Windows so that you do not have to worry about third-party stuff anymore. They got that right finally.

Now if something should happen and you do not have a Windows Disk to re-install Windows, no problem — just boot with that system repair disk, make sure your external HD is plugged in and it will restore EVERY-THING — programs, e-mail, data — automatically.

This is really helpful if this hard drive starts running out of room and you want to get a bigger one. This is exactly what you do. You back up to an external hard drive, create a CD, which is part of the program, put in the brand new, <u>bigger</u> hard drive, restore your image, and you will then not need me anymore. I should not give away my secrets.

Fig. 9.

Partitioning is unnecessary in Windows 7 (my opinion). I remember back when Gene Barlow was promoting Acronis, a backup program, in fact he did a webcast for one of our meetings. I understand the concept of having separate partitions for Windows, data, etc. for the purposes of backing up (partly, I understood, because the backup medium was smaller than your whole HD), but it is no longer needed with Windows 7 and external hard drives. If you want to keep doing it, so be it. It is your computer.

If you want, there are already videos on YouTube that demonstrate all of this.

There is something new coming soon called Windows Premiere, Microsoft Premiere. However, we will discuss that when it drops. Right now, it is not available to the public.

Support for MailWasher

Q: I have MailWasher for free, but I do not know how to run it. Do you know where to get the specific instructions on how to use Mail Washer?

A: Basically, you can Google "MailWasher." What I understand is that it's a third-party spam fighter. It looks at your e-mail when it comes in, and it washes it by trying to separate your Viagra ads, getting them out of the way and junk you do not care about. I am not sure if it includes a free anti-virus program. Google it and see if there are frequently asked questions or how to use it.

Q: I have done that, and it comes up with a lot of third-party comments and so forth.

A: If you get a free program, you can guess what kind of support you are going to get. However, you came to the right place, you paid your membership and you are getting free advice from other users. Getting something free on the Internet — and I have heard about MailWasher and it is not written by someone in the Ukraine trying to sneak something behind you, but supporting it is tough for the people who made it because they let it be used for free. So I do not know the answer, but I know people who have it installed. I do not know how good it is, or how it does what it does. If you do find out, please come to the SIG next month and share your information with all of us. You could try reading this:

http://www.mailwasher.net/frequently-asked-questions

(A quick start guide for the paid version of the program is at http://www.firetrust.com/en/products/mailwasher-pro/quick-start-guide. — Editor)
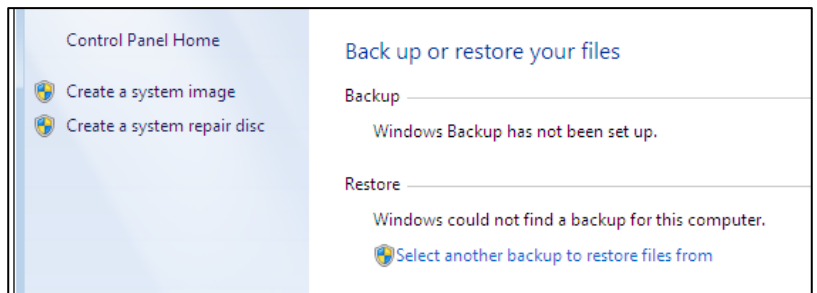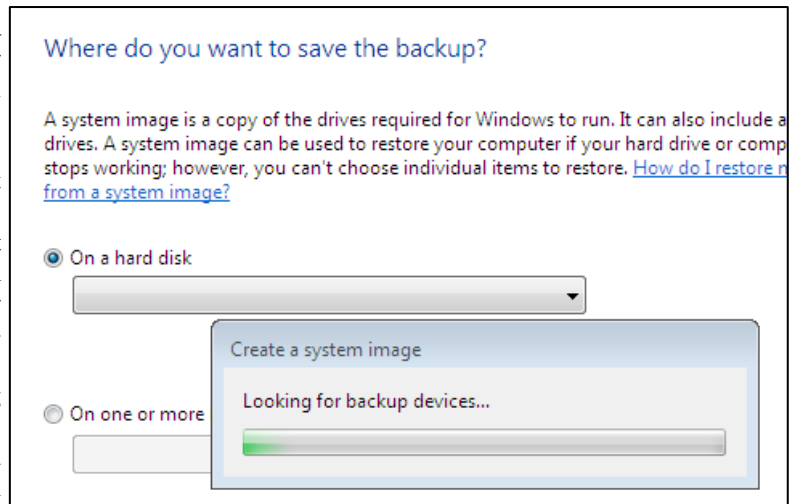
Program: PremiereOne

Computers help catch Ventura's criminals

By John Weigle
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Computer technology is helping the Ventura Police Department catch criminals and improve its record-keeping, our February speakers demonstrated.

Cmdr. David Wilson and System Specialist Matt Moore showed Motorola's PremiereOne software, which helps dispatchers and officers in the field have as much information at their fingertips as possible for every call, and the audience interest was made clear by the many questions.

"Most modern police departments, even smaller ones, have a basic what we call a computer-aided dispatch system," Wilson said. Dispatchers put information into the system and it starts the record-keeping. Earlier, all that information had to be handwritten by officers in the field and then transcribed for the records by a different person.

Ventura was probably the first department in the county to have computers in officers' cars, he said. The department has been computerized to some extent for 20-30 years for three major purposes: computer-aided dispatch, mobile use and records management. A few years ago, Motorola had bought several smaller companies that produced police software and decided to develop a single new program, PremiereOne, to replace them. The company searched nationwide for a police agency to be a beta site for the program and chose Ventura.

The computer-aided dispatch system and mobile system went online in June 2009, after about two years of development. "Like anything, unless you use it in a live environment, you can't really get the flavor for it," Wilson said. Tweaking continued as officers reported what features they used and didn't use, what buttons should be placed where, screen contrast and even the size of the box to type in license numbers they're checking —

More Q&A: Picasa, automatic defragging

Support for Picasa

Q: How about Picasa and how to use that program?

A: This is a free photo editing program, although you can Google "Picasa users group" or something like that and see what tips and tricks and suggestions are given. I like IrfanView (also on the CIPCUG flash drive) because Picasa to me is a little more complex than IrfanView. It does the same thing, but Picasa, I feel, is really more for Adobe Photoshop users who do not want to pay for the Photoshop program, but still want to have all the tools and the tool bars and things like that. However, it can be very confusing. Ask if anyone else uses Picasa and what they think of it. (The official Picasa help site for the program and its albums is at http://picasa.google.com/support/bin/topic.py?hl=en&topic=14609. — Editor)

Browsers are slow

Q: I have Internet Explorer, and it is taking forever to open up any Web sites; however, Firefox takes even longer. Is it the settings, or what could be the problem?

A: Just do not use Internet Explorer; seriously, use Google Chrome, just install it temporarily, go the same Web sites and see how fast they load. Only use Internet Explorer when you absolutely have to for possibly your bank or other sites that need it. I am actually even moving away from Firefox, but Internet Explorer security holes are being found all the time. PARTICULARLY Internet Explorer 6 and 7. Also make sure you have all the latest Windows updates.

Check how many toolbars you have, whether you see them or not. To uninstall them, go to Add/Remove Programs, uninstall because although you do not see them, they are still there and could be one of the problems.

I had a customer in the shop yesterday asking, "How did I get this?", "How did I get that?", etc. A lot of you see pop ups that say Java needs to update or Adobe Acrobat needs to update and those you <u>need</u> to update. However, when they come up and say, "OK, we are updating. Do you also want the McAfee Security Scan?" and it is already checked, "also do you want the Ask toolbar?" and that is already checked, etc. Be very careful and look for the extras with boxes already checked and uncheck them if you do not want them. You just want the update, nothing else, no free additions such as toolbars, some complexities, and other stuff. There are a lot of those hidden things now. The good news is that almost all of them have a check box saying, "I also want this, that and I also want to sign up for the newsletter, e-mail advertisements, etc." Uncheck all of those because you want only the update.

Automatic defrag in Windows 7

Q: Windows 7 automatically defragged my hard drive. Why would I want to defrag manually when it does it automatically?

A: You just ignore others and let Windows do what it is going to do automatically. Now, there are some people who want to be in control of their computers. They can do whatever they want, but you do not have to.

Russian spam

Q: What is happening with the e-mail ads I am receiving? I thought I got rid of most of them, but now I get some from Russia.

A: Matt Cutts is the man who is responsible at Google for cutting down spam in gmail, and it is his job to write algorithms.

Google is taking it very seriously, but it is an arms race. Eventually someone will find a way to get around it and they will come back.

important when the number is punched in while the officer is driving, Wilson said.

Reports are now taken directly on the officers' computers, which can be removed from the car, rather than being handwritten by officers and then typed in by someone else. Reports can now be in the system within half an hour after the officer files it, he said, adding, "We're trying to automate everything we do."

The license plate check searches databases around the country to find information on whether the vehicle was stolen or involved in a crime. Previously, dispatchers had to run the searches and then relay the information to officers by radio.

A people search seeks information about missing persons; federal, state and local wanted persons; DMV records; and internal records. If any returns show that a person is wanted or armed and dangerous, the listing is in red, giving officers an obvious warning.

The system includes map overlays, starting with a GPS routing system, along with maps of multifamily complexes, building footprints with addresses for them, and sometimes even photos of homes. A list of any police calls to the location, along with lists of any special hazards there or within a certain radius, comes up. The radius warnings could include something like "the resident of the home three doors away has a large collection of guns and hates cops," Wilson said.

Most newly hired officers are used to computers and learn the system fairly quickly, but that wasn't the case when computerization began, Wilson said. "We went live with these several years ago, 10-15 years ago. They were fixed computers in the cars. Touch screens drove with them. Now we have portable laptops. Matt encountered a couple of broken screens a couple of times, probably based on a little frustration."

In answer to a question about cameras in the city, Wilson said some are cameras to detect traffic, and others are to take pictures of cars going through red lights.

When a dispatcher gets a call that Matt Moore is involved in a disturbance, she searches the databases for information about Moore. She can send that information, and a picture if one is found.

"The databases that we have access to are amazing," Wilson said, and provide all kinds of information about names of people and addresses in the city. "No one else can do that right now. We're just about the only agency that can do that," Wilson said.

"Before an officer is even on scene, we can have a really good idea of what his (Moore, in the example) criminal record looks like, we can have a photo of him, if we have a hazard on him, meaning that, let's say, an officer stopped him a week ago and when he took him to jail Matt said. 'Next time I see a cop, I'm going to kill him.' That happens a lot. We'll flag him in our records management system and in our dispatch system, and that information will come across," Wilson said. Similarly, useful information for addresses will be pulled up almost immediately.

Devices are even available so officers can take fingerprints and match them to those in several databases.

The system can access DMV photos and booking photos from most law enforcement agencies in California. Local information on gang monikers, tattoos, scars, prosthetics, and other identifying information is also available.

"All these tools are crime-fighting tools," Wilson added. Aliases used by people arrested are linked to their real names.

Cell phone photos can be imported into the system through e-mail, he said, and be distributed to officers within minutes. This is especially useful in cases of missing children because many parents have photos of their children on cell phones.

Asked what people can do to prevent crime or help police catch criminals, Wilson said people should be alert for strange happenings in their neighborhood and be willing to report them to police. Let the dispatcher walk you through the information needed, both to remain calm and to be sure everything useful is relayed.

License plate numbers, even if they're not complete, are especially useful, he said. "If you ever doubt if this a 911 call, call 911. We're not that busy," Wilson said, and Moore added, "It's better to call than to regret *not* calling."

Moore said the officers use ruggedized laptops running Windows XP. The next upgrade will be to Windows 7. The department's servers are run by Microsoft SQL 2005, which will be upgraded to 64-bit SQL 2008 in the next few months. The application is CPU- and memory-intensive.

The computer system "is such a critical part of our work that we have a lot of support behind it," Wilson said. Motorola's techs in Chicago can dial in to help with problems.

Police agencies from Australia and the East Coast have visited Ventura to see how the system works, he said.

"It's hard to articulate," Wilson said, "but it really has saved lives, because if you can get to the scene 10 seconds, 15 seconds quicker, or the officer can get that data ahead of time so he goes, 'hey I'm going to park about a block away and walk in on this one because this guy is a little weird,' all the information you can get to them saves lives," he said.

Moore added that the move to PremiereOne has made his job much easier because it's all based on one system. The department had one server dump itself and shut down, but the dispatchers never knew about the glitch, even though Moore did because his phone was ringing immediately.

The Police Department has UPS backups and a generator and is working on major upgrades to its dispatch center, Wilson added.

"We've helped build this system from what it was two years ago to what it is today," Wilson said, and the department is proud of the work that it has put into PremiereOne.

Local law enforcement agencies can communicate with each other by radio, but some information must still be exchanged by telephone, he said in answer to a question.

The department does not have access to OnStar's GPS system, but OnStar has dispatchers who deal with police when missing vehicles are located, he told another questioner.

"We know video is the way to go," Wilson said, and the department has already used home security systems to catch criminals. It hopes to increase its access to video cameras of schools, for instance, during emergencies, such as shooting incidents. It already shares access to the Pacific View mall's cameras.

Members' classified ads

For sale

Wanted

Other categories as needed

Classified ads are free to members. Each ad is limited to 105 characters, including spaces and to one ad per member per month. Copy has to be to John Weigle, editor of TOE (editor@cipcug.org), within the week after the regular meeting. Otherwise, the ad is held to the following month.

The Outer Edge is printed and prepared for mailing by:

Practice safe computing: Back up, back up, back up
(And then test the backup to be sure it worked)

LibreOffice — is it the next-generation OpenOffice suite?

By Bill Wayson
bwayson@gmail.com

Penguin's Lair

Wayson

OpenOffice.org has long reigned as the premier open source office application suite and as a serious contender to the dominant Microsoft Office. Recent events have cast a cloud over OpenOffice.org, its openness, and its future. This month, I will discuss some of those events so that you can make an informed decision when choosing an open office application suite.

First, a bit of history. StarDivision Corp. was formed in 1984 to develop, maintain, and sell StarOffice, a cross-platform office application suite. By the late 1990s, they had a version that ran under Linux, and free versions became available in 1998, gaining it a significant user-base of Linux aficionados. In 1999, Sun Microsystems purchased StarDivision Corp., and soon released StarOffice under an open source license, renamed OpenOffice.org. Sun continued to sell StarOffice, but it was based on OpenOffice.org. It was during

More on PremiereOne ...

Moore said it would be helpful if everyone who has video home security knew how to get the video off so police could use it.

The department hopes to develop more cameras at intersections in downtown Ventura, which, he said, is becoming an entertainment center where fights can break out. Dispatchers would be able to get feeds from cameras at intersections closest to police calls.

Police would also like to have dash cameras in all police cars, but that's expensive and won't happen immediately. "Video is our future, and we're probably about four months away from really getting our command center going," Wilson said. "We need to wirelessly connect our city, and we're looking at a lot of different options right now, but, again, it comes down to money."

The city does not plan to have officers carry video cameras at all times because of the costs of the support, he said.

An audience member asked if it's legal to put a video camera in the front of your house. The answer is yes, Wilson said. However, it's not legal to aim the camera into a neighbor's window. Just to be safe, however, if the surveillance is in the house, Wilson said, he'd probably put a sign on the door warning his visitors of the surveillance.

(Continued from page 14)

Sun's ownership that OpenOffice.org became the office application suite of choice for most major Linux distributions and users. Sun, in turn, was purchased by Oracle Corp. in 2009. Thus, Oracle has become the sponsor of OpenOffice.org and its community. Since then, the relationships between Oracle and the various open-source project communities it acquired from Sun have grown more tense almost daily.

Having Oracle as the sponsor of open-source projects quickly raised concerns in open source communities. Oracle's position as a project sponsor gives it quite a bit of power. For various reasons, it is able to unilaterally make important decisions that affect those projects, and Oracle wasted no time making decisions. For example, it killed the Open Solaris project, and enticed IBM away from the Apache Harmony project, which aims to produce a completely free and open version of Java (Oracle also obtained Java through its purchase of Sun). At the same time, Oracle was not exactly being clear about its intentions for OpenOffice.org. Additionally, its community had long

been frustrated with the slow pace of change in the OpenOffice.org suite under Sun's, and now, Oracle's sponsorship, and had chafed at Sun's reluctance to incorporate new features in the official released versions.

All of this led a core group of major developers in the OpenOffice.org community to create the separate Document Foundation in September 2010. While not quite stated this way, the foundation's goal is to wrest control of OpenOffice.org's future away from Oracle and vest it in an independent group of community members. Toward that end, the foundation announced it would fork the OpenOffice.org code and release its own version, calling it LibreOffice, and invited Oracle to join and participate. Oracle's response took many open source observers aback. It declined to participate at all, maintaining there was no need for a competitor to OpenOffice.org. And it all but demanded the resignation from the OpenOffice.org governing council of those members who formed and joined the Document Foundation. From the community's perspective, Oracle declared war.

Which brings us to the current situation. There are recently released new versions of two open office application suites: OpenOffice.org 3.3.0 and LibreOffice 3.3.1. While both are based on essentially the same code, there are differences. Because the communities behind them are split, particularly the developers, that split will likely widen. Many smart developers who once were major contributors to OpenOffice.org now develop for LibreOffice. Many of the major distributors of Linux have announced their intentions to replace OpenOffice.org with LibreOffice. Knoppix has already converted, and the next releases of distributions such as Ubuntu, Fedora, openSUSE, and others will include a preference for LibreOffice. In other words, there are two choices right now. One has attracted the major developers. One has attracted the major Linux distributions. The direction and future of the other is still largely a guess — the sponsor, Oracle, has yet to say anything definitive about that. There is some precedent for this situation. Years ago, the graphical desktops on almost all Linux distributions were driven by soft-

Where do we go from here?

"Where do we go from here
"Now that all of the children are grown up?
"And how do we spend our lives If there's no one to give us a hand
"I don't wanna live here no more
"I don't wanna stay
"Ain't gonna spend the rest of my life
"Quietly fading away"

Rick's rant

Smith

When I'm confused and don't know what to do or say, I go to three places for inspiration: The holy Bible, which is somewhat short on the technology side; "The Godfather" movies, which have a great quote for almost all of life's situations; and popular music, which always has a good song for me. In this case, it's The Alan Parsons Project, with their hit song "Games People Play" from 1980.

What's going to happen to the world of PCs in the next few years? I think this song describes the identity crisis the PC is having right now. It is a little bit confused right now about what it is and what's going to happen to it. Will it continue to stay a desktop with a separate screen, mouse and keyboard? Will it be an all-in-one unit with a touchscreen monitor made popular by Apple and HP? Will it be a notebook or netbook? Will it be tablet or iPAD type of design? Will it be a home entertainment device encompassing TV, music and PC? Will it be a super-ultra-smart-genius phone device that fits in our pockets or small purse? Will it be an implant under our skin or in our brains so we won't have to bother carrying anything around with us. (Come to think of it, I've seen some people with sufficient metal sticking out of their bodies to build a PC.)

Whatever form the PC morphs into, we can all be assured things are not going to stay the same. Upon my polling of PC users to see where they think the future of PCs is going, which consists of Toby and Michael, nobody seems to agree. On one hand, one person thinks everything will be going to cell phone type of devices, and the other thinks the home entertainment will take the lion's share of the market. I, your ever so humble PC repair guy, haven't a clue. What I do know is a lot of changes seem to be generational, and the older people get, the more we hang on to what's familiar. Meaning that we're less apt to change the way we do things once we've learned a certain way. So it takes some time for a new generation to roll through to really implement change. So my prediction is most of us will wander in wilderness for 40 years while our children and grandchildren will take us into the promised land of computing. So for now I'm going to keep doing what I've been doing until society finally makes the plunge into one direction. If I'm lucky, I'll be able to continue repairing PCs until I retire as they go the way of postage stamps and the Yellow Pages.

Can you imagine what would happen to computers if they were subsidized by the federal government? What if the feds all of a sudden decided that it was in the population's best interest to promote a certain kind of computing or brand. Just think if you were the vendor who couldn't sell your product on the market by its own advantages but needed the government to prop up your product by offering tax breaks and subsidies to get people to buy your product. Maybe if I was one of those companies I would get real cozy with the current administration and volunteer myself as a tech czar for the good of the people. I can see it now … The People's PC, everything is standardized, one computer for the people, one choice, one standard that everyone can get behind whether they want to or not. And for those who do not get behind our "new deal" or "change," we will pursue them relentlessly with fines, fees and surcharges till they see the error of their ways and give up any individuality they possess and submit to the will of the state. It will be glorious! E Pluribus Unum! PC for the People. Those who cannot afford the PC for the people will be provided one by those who can afford it. They will be asked to volunteer their resources for "The good of the People." If for some reason they cannot see the wisdom, they will be forced to participate in the people's PC program. And, of course, since we will be providing everyone with the people's PC we will also reserve the right to download any propaganda we deem fit. So to make use of the People's PC you will have to watch a daily infomercial to make sure you completely understand our way of thinking. This way, we all move

More on Penguin's Lair ...

ware from the Xfree86 project. But some discontentment arose, leading to the founding of the X.org project, which forked Xfree86 and continued developing and maintaining their own version. In far less than a year, all the major Linux distributions converted to X.org with little or no disruption noticed by users, and today for most of us, Xfree86 is little more than a historical memory. So far, the same scenario is playing out between OpenOffice.org and LibreOffice. Anyone using or considering an open source office suite should be giving serious consideration to LibreOffice. It looks like the favorite in this horse race.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about Linux and FOSS, come to the March Linux SIG meeting on Tuesday, the 22nd at 6:30 p.m., at Ventura County Computers in Ventura. We will install LibreOffice on the CIPCUG PC and take a look at it. See the CIPCUG Web site for more information.

If you have a question or topic you would like the Lair or Linux SIG to cover, drop me a line at bwayson@gmail.com. Until next month, happy computing.

Security risks in social networking sites

By Mindi McDowell

The popularity of social networking sites continues to increase, especially among teenagers and young adults. The nature of these sites introduces security risks, so you should take certain precautions.

What are social networking sites?

Social networking sites, sometimes referred to as "friend-of-a-friend" sites, build upon the concept of traditional social networks where you are connected to new people through people you already know. The purpose of some networking sites may be purely social, allowing users to establish friendships or romantic relationships, while others may focus on establishing business connections.

Although the features of social networking sites differ, they all allow you to provide information about yourself and offer some type of communication mechanism (forums, chat rooms, e-mail, instant messenger) that enables you to connect with other users. On some sites, you can browse for people based on certain criteria, while other sites require that you be "introduced" to new people through a connection you share. Many of the sites have communities or subgroups that may be based on a particular interest.

What security implications do these sites present?

Social networking sites rely on connections and communication, so they encourage you to provide a certain amount of personal information. When deciding how much information to reveal, people may not exercise the same amount of caution as they would when meeting someone in person because:

● The Internet provides a sense of

More on Rick's rant ...

forward to the future as one.

Wow, I'm so excited I think I'm going to run for public office right now. "The right PC, right now" will be my slogan. Onward and into the breach, my friends.

anonymity.

● The lack of physical interaction provides a false sense of security.

● They tailor the information for their friends to read, forgetting that others may see it.

● They want to offer insights to impress potential friends or associates.

While the majority of people using these sites do not pose a threat, malicious people may be drawn to them because of the accessibility and amount of personal information that's available. The more information malicious people have about you, the easier it is for them to take advantage of you. Predators may form relationships online and then convince unsuspecting individuals to meet them in person. That could lead to a dangerous situation. The personal information can also be used to conduct a social engineering attack (see Avoiding Social Engineering and Phishing Attacks for more information). Using information that you provide about your location, hobbies, interests, and friends, a malicious person could impersonate a trusted friend or convince you that they have the authority to access other personal or financial data.

Additionally, because of the popularity of these sites, attackers may use them to distribute malicious code. Sites that offer applications developed by third parties are particularly susceptible. Attackers may be able to create customized applications that appear to be innocent while infecting your computer or sharing your information without your knowledge.

How can you protect yourself?

● Limit the amount of personal information you post. Do not post information that would make you vulnerable, such as your address or information about your schedule or routine. If your connections post information about you, make sure the combined information is not more than you would be comfortable with strangers knowing. Also be considerate when posting information, including photos, about your connections.

● Remember that the Internet is a public resource. Only post information you are comfortable with anyone seeing. This includes information and photos in

your profile and in blogs and other forums. Also, once you post information online, you can't retract it. Even if you remove the information from a site, saved or cached versions may still exist on other people's machines (see Guidelines for Publishing Information Online for more information).

● Be wary of strangers. The internet makes it easy for people to misrepresent their identities and motives (see Using Instant Messaging and Chat Rooms Safely for more information). Consider limiting the people who are allowed to contact you on these sites. If you interact with people you do not know, be cautious about the amount of information you reveal or agreeing to meet them in person.

● Be skeptical. Don't believe everything you read online. People may post false or misleading information about various topics, including their own identities. This is not necessarily done with malicious intent; it could be unintentional, an exaggeration, or a joke. Take appropriate precautions, though, and try to verify the authenticity of any information before taking any action.

● Evaluate your settings. Take advantage of a site's privacy settings.

The default settings for some sites may allow anyone to see your profile, but you can customize your settings to restrict access to only certain people. There is still a risk that private information could be exposed despite these restrictions, so don't post anything that you wouldn't want the public to see. Sites may change their options periodically, so review your security and privacy settings regularly to make sure that your choices are still appropriate.

● Be wary of third-party applications. Third-party applications may provide entertainment or functionality, but use caution when deciding which applications to enable. Avoid applications that seem suspicious, and modify your settings to limit the amount of information the applications can access.

● Use strong passwords. Protect your account with passwords that cannot easily be guessed (see Choosing and Pro-

Tor provides free anonymity online

By Dick Maybach
n2nd (at) charter.net
(Reprinted by permission)

Tor protects your privacy when you are online in two ways: (1) It prevents other users of the network you use to reach the Internet (for example a public Wi-Fi hotspot) from seeing the data you exchange and with whom you communicate, and (2) it hides your identity from those with whom you communicate. For most of us, item (1) is more important. For example, when we use a Wi-Fi hotspot to access the Internet, every byte we send and every one we receive is accessible to all its other users. One defense would be to add a separate defensive tool for every offensive one, which is the approach taken to foil Windows viruses. The result will surely be the same — an ever-increasing kit of defensive programs to counter the never-ending supply of offensive programs. A much sounder approach is to run *Tor*, which defends against all such attacks; as a result, you need install only one tool. Item (2) is probably less important to you; it prevents sites you visit from knowing who you are or what other sites you've visited. We are seeing ever more intrusions into our privacy by

governments and businesses, and Tor was developed to help us preserve our privacy, safety, and dignity in the face of this. Although Tor is legal in all countries, you can do illegal things using it. In this way, it's similar to the gas pedal on your car, which is essential if you want to go someplace, but must be used with restraint to avoid awkward and expensive discussions with the law.

Tor hides not only what you say, but also whom you say it to. You could use it to communicate back home from a location where disclosing your country of origin or religion might expose you to unpleasantness or risk. This feature also allows you to circumvent restrictions that your ISP has placed on the Web sites you visit. It's used by individuals, businesses, activists, reporters, the military, and law enforcement for investigations and to protect themselves, their organizations, and those with whom they communicate. Using it, you can surf the Web, exchange e-mail, use instant messaging, and transfer files. However, please don't just install it and assume you're safe. You need to change some of your habits and reconfigure your software. Tor by itself is *NOT* all you need to maintain your anonymity.

Tor consists of two parts — a public,

secure virtual private network (VPN) and the software to access it. The software is free and available for Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, and some smart phones at http://www.torproject.org. Most PC and Mac users will want the *Tor Browser Bundle*, which includes the Firefox browser. (For reasons you can read on the Tor Web site, neither Internet Explorer nor Safari is suitable for secure browsing.) The Tor VPN is distributed and accessible worldwide, is free, and is provided and maintained by volunteers. Because the network consists of thousands of independent Web sites, it's quite robust; there is no single point of failure.

How does Tor work? When you access the Internet with it, you first communicate with a *Tor Directory Server* over an encrypted link (one with a URL beginning https://). Here, you obtain a list of available *Tor Nodes*. The Tor software on your computer selects at least three of these; call them Node 1, Node 2, and Node 3. It then sets up a secure link to Node 1, which forwards your traffic to Node 2, which forwards it to Node 3. All these links are secure, and only Node 3 can decrypt your packets. Finally Node 3 sends your packets to your desired end

More on social networking dangers ...

tecting Passwords for more information). If your password is compromised, someone else may be able to access your account and pretend to be you.

● Check privacy policies. Some sites may share information such as e-mail addresses or user preferences with other companies. This may lead to an increase in spam (see Reducing Spam for more information). Also, try to locate the policy for handling referrals to make sure that you do not unintentionally sign your friends up for spam. Some sites will continue to send e-mail messages to anyone you refer until they join.

● Keep software, particularly your web browser, up to date. Install software updates so that attackers cannot take ad-

vantage of known problems or vulnerabilities (see Understanding Patches for more information). Many operating systems offer automatic updates. If this option is available, you should enable it.

● Use and maintain anti-virus software. Anti-virus software helps protect your computer against known viruses, so you may be able to detect and remove the virus before it can do any damage (see Understanding Anti-Virus Software for more information). Because attackers are continually writing new viruses, it is important to keep your definitions up to date.

Children are especially susceptible to the threats that social networking sites present. Although many of these sites have age restrictions, children may mis-

represent their ages so that they can join. By teaching children about Internet safety, being aware of their online habits, and guiding them to appropriate sites, parents can make sure that the children become safe and responsible users (see Keeping Children Safe Online for more information).

Related information
● Socializing Securely: Using Social Networking Services

On the Net: This document can also be found at http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/ST06-003.html

For instructions on subscribing to or unsubscribing from this mailing list, visit http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/signup.html.

Want a happier, longer life? Volunteer!

By Sr. Dorothy Robinson
Editor, Olympia Microcomputer Users Group, WA
December 2010 OMUG News
www.olymug.org / newsletter (at) oly-mug.org

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Although there may be some situations where volunteering would not necessarily get you a longer, happier life (any veteran could fill you in on that), there are now studies showing that people who volunteer at least two hours a week do, in fact, receive health benefits from volunteering.

According to an article by Adam Voiland at http://health.usnews.com, a 2007 report that drew on the results of 30 studies said volunteering can indeed be good for your health. Voiland says the report indicates that "people who volunteer enjoy longer lives, higher functional ability, and lower rates of depression and heart disease."

Volunteering keeps a person active and interested, as well as helping stay connected with other people.

Voiland quoted Steven Post, director of a research group at Case Western Reserve University that focuses on the "scientific study of altruism, compassion, and service," as saying, "The helping impulse is very fundamental. When it is locked off we do not flourish."

If we look around, there are friends, neighbors, and family who could use a helping hand now and then. There are also nonprofit organizations whose mission is to help people. You may be belong to one. In fact, if you're reading this newsletter, chances are you belong to The Olympia Microcomputer Users Group or some other user group.

Any group needs leadership, and OMUG is no exception. All our officers and key members are volunteers, and if you talk to any of them, my guess is that you'll find they enjoy taking an active part in our computer users group, keeping it alive to fulfill its mission.

OMUG's purpose, according to our bylaws, "shall be to provide a non-profit, educational, self-help organization for personal computer users; to cultivate cooperative relationships among computer users in our community; and to promote knowledgeable use of personal computer hardware and software."

Think about why you joined OMUG, and why you keep renewing your membership each year. Maybe you have computer expertise to offer and you enjoy helping others. Maybe you don't know a lot about computers and are looking for help. Whatever your reason, computer expertise, or lack of it, is irrelevant to participating in leadership of our group. People with many different lives, leisure and work experiences have served as OMUG officers. You can, too.

More on Tor ...

site. Note that if the end site is secure (indicated by a URL beginning with https://), even Node 3 can't read your data. Packets coming to you follow the reverse path, Node 3 encrypts them in such a way that only you can do the decryption. As far as the end site knows, it is communicating with Node 3; it has no way of finding your computer's URL. An observer on your local network knows only the URL of the Tor Directory Server and Node 1; he can't find the location of the end site or read any of your packets. Only Node 1 knows your location, and only Node 3 knows that of the end site. Note that Node 3 can also see the data you exchange, unless you're using end-to-end encryption, i.e., talking to a site with a URL beginning https://.

When you install Tor, you will also install the Torbutton add-on for Firefox, which allows you to turn Tor anonymous browsing on and off. Turning Tor on changes some of Firefox's operation.

None of the cookies you acquired during normal browsing will be available. This is because cookies can tell the site you are communicating with a lot about you and which sites you've visited. As a result, you will have to re-enter passwords where they are required. These cookies will return when you toggle Tor off.

Some sites will be displayed in a foreign language. Since they don't know where you are, they assume you are located in the same country as Node 3. See the Tor site for work-arounds.

You will see moderate delays while surfing the Web. There are at least three intermediate sites on the path to your final destination, and several layers of encryption are involved.

While the delays are noticeable, I haven't found them to be obnoxious, and I consider it a good trade-off to achieve better security.

Many users need only browser access to the Internet when away from home, since through it they can also exchange e-mail and transfer files. (I've found that the FireFTP add-on is convenient for the latter, but see the Tor site for instructions on how to configure it and follow these exactly.) If you want to use secure instant messaging, use *Pidgin*, which Windows and OS X users can obtain by installing the *Tor IM Bundle*, available on the Web site. (Pidgin is in most Linux repositories.)

You can't use Tor for file sharing, i.e., using BitTorrent; instead use the I2P network, http://www.i2p2.de/. See the Tor site for how to configure other Internet access programs, including some that provide access to your home computer. However, if you really need access to files on your home computer, it would be better to transfer them to your laptop or to a cloud service before you go. Otherwise, a power transient or other failure could disable your computer until you return home to restore it. Accessing the Internet away from home without Tor is like driving without insurance; you can *almost* always get away with it. That doesn't mean it's a smart thing to do.

Pictures clarify this month's Q&A report

Editor's corner

Weigle

This was an interesting issue to work on because of the addition of eight graphic elements to the Q&A report. When Michael Shalkey checked the transcription for errors and to make any necessary clarifications, he added all the graphics that you see in this month's issue. After juggling the graphics in both two- and three-column formats, I decided to simply follow Michael's lead and set the portion of the Q&A with the graphics a single column. The lines might be a little difficult to read — I hope they're not, but 10-point type might be too small for that long a line — I decided to try it rather than making the graphics so small they wouldn't be legible anyway.

I made one other change this month to see if anyone noticed. I'm not going to explain what it is until the meeting just to see if anyone remembers the change well enough to mention it.

* * *

The article about volunteering on page 19 was part of a package of articles provided by Judy Taylour of APCUG, and is fitting at any time of year. You've heard the request many times before, but CIPCUG can always use more volunteers, both to give some relief to the regulars and to bring in new ideas. CIPCUG runs only because of its volunteers; no members are paid for the work they perform.

For those of you who have already accepted the challenge, we all thank you for your efforts.

And let me thank once again the contributors to TOE, without whose help my job would be considerably more difficult. I've tried to list all the names of this year's contributors in the next column, but if I've missed someone, please let me know. And if you'd like to see your name on the list, prepare an article or write a tip on one of your favorite programs or Web sites. I'd still like to run a regular list of members' favorite Web sites, even though the last time I tried not many people submitted URLs.

You might have noticed that a couple of regular items are missing this month. Jeff Levy hasn't posted any news Windows 7 lessons, and I've gotten the feeling at meetings that most members have moved up from XP and Vista by now. If I'm wrong, please let me know. Helen Long and Bob de Violini didn't submit anything this month because they had no ideas or work commitments, and I haven't received Smart Computing tips for a couple of months. I fear that might be another cutback in the magazine's activities.

Despite the missing features, there's lots of good information in this issue, so be sure to read it. There must be something that will help you, a friend or a relative with a computer problem or a bit of useful information. Enjoy.

— John Weigle, editor

Treasurer's report for January 2011

By Art Lewis
treasurer@cipcug.org

Lewis

1-1-2011 through 1-31-2011

Category Description	
INFLOWS	
Donation	44.00
Membership Income	
Renewals	325.00
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	325.00
Raffle	14.05
TOTAL INFLOWS	**383.05**
OUTFLOWS	
Rent Paid	150.00
TOE	335.32
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	**485.32**
OVERALL TOTAL	**-102.27**
Unrestricted Funds	7,260.36
Restricted Funds	0.00
Bank Balance 1-31-11	**7,260.36**
Year to Date Income	3,217.98
Year to Date Expense	3,062.88
Net Year to Date	155.10

2011 contributors to The Outer Edge

Your name can appear here, too. Share your knowledge with other members by sending an article, letter or computer tip to editor@cipcug.org.

Ken Church
Rick Curry
Bob de Violini
Jeff Levy
Art Lewis
Helen Long
Dick Maybach (APCUG)
Diane Mortensen
Sr. Dorothy Robinson, Editor, Olympia Microcomputer Users Group, WA
SANS Institute
Sharon Parq Associates Inc.
Toby Scott
Michael Shalkey
Rick Smith
Smart Computing magazine
US-CERT
Bill Wayson
John Weigle
Jonathan Wylie, Worldstart computer tips, www.worldstart.com

Membership report:

Is it time to renew?
By Ken Church

email address: *membership@cipcug.org*

CHURCH

Welcome — New Members: Needed, bring a friend.

Attendance at the February 2011 general meeting: 56 members and guests

Total membership: 196

MEMBER RENEWAL INFORMATION
$30 for single membership,
$35 for two or more family membership.

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION
$40 first year for single membership,
$55 first year for two or more family membership in same household.

Please send your payment to:

CIPCUG MEMBERSHIP
P.O. BOX 51354
OXNARD, CA 93031-1354

Or bring your payment to the sign in table for the March 26, 2011, meeting.

January 2011 renewals payment due:

Mbr#	Last Name	First	Pd to Dt
1217	Donohue	Joseph	201101
1102	Morris	Geri	201101

February 2011 renewals payment due:

Mbr#	Last Name	First	Pd to Dt
1129	Escobedo	Ray	201102
1063	Field	Dwayne	201102
1063	Field	Sharon	201102
1116	Hazeltine	John	201102
0843	Isaman	Harry	201102
0566	Meeker	Kirsten	201102
0565	Meeker	Mary	201102
0656	Mori	Ken	201102
1184	Murray	Tom	201102
1218	Panczel	Marika	201102
1232	Riggan	Lee	201102
1135	Sherbrooke	Rosalie	201102
1169	Smith	Donald	201102
1083	Stoutz	Hank	201102
1140	Wayson	Bill	201102
0130	Whelchel	Claude	201102

March 2011 renewals payment due:

Mbr#	Last Name	First	Pd to Dt
1060	Bailey	Carl	201103
0544	Beardshear	Paul	201103
1233	Cadinha	Frank	201103
1233	Cadinha	Marilyn	201103
1003	Casey	Richard	201103
1227	Chapman	Bob	201103
1227	Chapman	Louise	201103
1171	Corser	Caroline	201103
0054	Erickson	Elden	201103
1172	Hargett	John	201103
1172	Hargett	Pongpan	201103
0917	Johnson	Barbara	201103
1220	Johnson	Vic	201103
0138	Lakes	Arline	201103
0137	Lakes	George	201103
0425	Ledner, MD	Bob	201103
1196	Smith	Chuck	201103
0571	Swingle	Phil	201103
1050	Wennerholm	Ernest	201103
1051	Wennerholm	Naomi	201103
0771	Zuromski	Alexandra	201103

F1—Your Help Key
(Revised Sept. 7, 2008)

COMMUNICATIONS/INTERNET (GENERAL)
World Wide Web   DM

DATABASES
Access   BR

DOS   RP

E-MAIL
Outlook   MS
Outlook Express   BR, DM
Thunderbird   MS

GRAHICS PROGRAMS
IrfanView   MS
Paint Shop Pro   DM
Photo Shop Elements   BR
Print Shop   BR

SPREADSHEETS
Microsoft Excel   DM

WORD PROCESSING
Microsoft Word   DM
WordPerfect   DM

WINDOWS
Windows 98, 95   DM, MS (98)
Windows 2000   BDV
Windows XP   DM

Initials	Name	(805)
BDV	Bob de Violini	rjddev@gmail.com
BR	Bill Robinson	389-2997 (b) bill@bzus.com
DM	David Minkin	469-6970 (cell); 484-2974 (home); dddave@cipcug.org
MS	Michael Shalkey	mshalkey@cipcug.org
RP	Robert Provart	498-8477 (b)

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

If you would like to volunteer to help others, please send your contact information and programs you're willing to help on to editor@cipcug.org.

. . . .

WEB HELP SITES (Updated 1-23-11)
Annoyances Central blog (from authors of the O'Reilly Annoyances series, including Steve Bass): www.annoyancescentral.com
Steve Bass TechBite Newsletter registration page: www.techbite.com
DSL reports: www.dslreports.com
Steve Gibson: www.grc.com
Kim Komando: www.komando.com
Leo Laporte: www.leoville.com
Jeff Levy: www.jefflevy.com
Linux distributions: www.DistroWatch.com
Microsoft: www.microsoft.com
Online safety tips: www.OnGuardOnline.gov
PC Pitstop: www.pcpitstop.com
PC World: www.pcworld.com
Recalled products: www.recalls.gov
SANS Institute — Computer Security Education and Information Security Training: www.sans.org
Smart Computing: www.smartcomputing.com
Spyware Warrior: www.spywarewarrior.com
User Group Relations (Gene Barlow): www.ugr.com
Ventura County Computers (Rick and Toby's shop): www.vccomputers.com
Virus Bulletin: www.virusbtn.com/index
Windows Secrets: www.windowssecrets.com
Windows The Official Magazine (UK): www.officialwindowsmagazine.com/

If you have a favorite help site on the Web, please forward it, so we can expand the section. If you find a link that doesn't work, please tell us that, too.
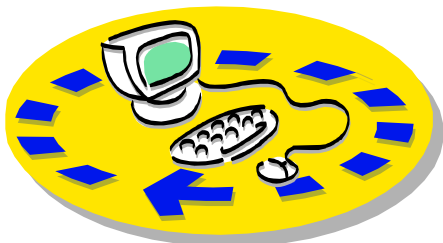
Why join Channel Islands PC Users Group (CIPCUG)?

Every month, members of the Channel Islands PC Users Group have access to:

♦ The Outer Edge newsletter, which includes a list of members willing to help other members.

♦ The general meeting, featuring a question-and-answer session and program on new software or hardware.

♦ Special Interest Groups — special meetings held several times a month.

♦ Door prizes at the regular meeting. Other benefits include:

♦ Special user group discounts on books and software.

♦ A flash drive containing many useful freeware programs.

♦ A chance to make friends with people who have similar interests.

♦ The ability to put your knowledge to good use by helping other members. The whole concept of user groups is members helping members.

Please clip the coupon below and send with payment to CIPCUG-Membership, P.O. Box 51354, Oxnard, CA 93031-1354.

Please make checks payable to CIPCUG.

Dues for new members

Individual member, $40.

Family membership (same address), $55.

Renewals are $30 and $35 per year respectively.

TOE subscription only (in the U.S.), $20.

CIPCUG E-MAIL ADDRESS

Members who would like to have an e-mail address through CIPCUG in the form of YourName@cipcug.org may obtain one for $15 per year.

CIPCUG MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Amount enclosed: _____

Please Print the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____, State:_____

ZIP Code: _____

Phone (Home): _____(Work): _____

E-mail address: _____

User level: Novice _____; Intermediate _____;

Advanced _____

Can you help the club as a volunteer? If so, what would you be interested in working on?

Date _____ Member # _____

Channel Islands PC Users Group Inc.

P.O.Box 51354
Oxnard, CA: 93031

DATED MATERIAL
Please Do Not Delay

DUES REMINDER

If the number above your name is 2011MAR, your membership dues are payable in March 2011.

MARCH 2011 MEETING
OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS PC USERS GROUP

The map shows the easiest route to the Boys & Girls Club, but if you prefer, you can take the Carmen Drive offramp to Ponderosa Drive, which leads to Temple Avenue.
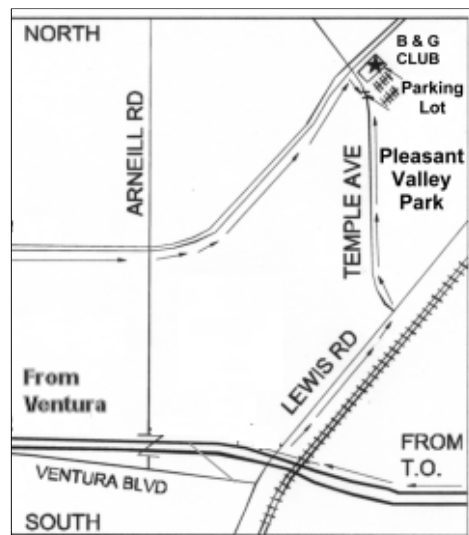
Saturday morning, March 26, at the Boys & Girls Club, 1500 Temple Ave. (Ponderosa Drive and Temple Avenue), Camarillo.

Meeting Schedule:

8:30 a.m.	Doors open
8:45-9:30	Internet and networking SIG, Hands-on Training
9:30-10:30	Business meeting, Q&A
10:30-11:00	Break — Please contribute requested amounts for coffee and doughnuts
11:00-12:00	Program — safekidzone.com Drawing
1:30	After-meeting SIG by Michael Shalkey (if location can be found)