The Outer Edge

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The Friendly Computer Club Helping Make Computers Friendly. On the Web at www.cipcug.org

Attendance at the February general meeting:
48 members and guests.

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Chess Titans, which comes with Vista and Windows 7, brings an old game to the computer.

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Rick's rant covers the big three choices for types of Internet service providers.

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Former webmaster Helen Long is CIPCUG'S fifth life member.

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COMMAND.COM

By Jim Brown, President

This month I would like to offer our congratulations to Helen Long. Helen has been a very dedicated member of our user group and board of directors. Although she had the responsibility of maintaining our website as her primary focus, she also would do just about anything that was requested of her. She was awarded a life membership in our user group in recognition of her dedication and hard work. She joins a group of members who are few in number who have received this recognition. Helen, we thank you.

Brown

We welcome Andy Toth to the board. Andy is a past president, and he has volunteered to maintain our website. I know his knowledge of our group will be useful and will be an asset to the board.

Additionally, longtime member Jim Thornton is contributing articles to TOE. If anyone has an interest in specific software, please let John Weigle the, editor of our newsletter, know, and he will pass your request on to Jim.

I would like to acknowledge the work of a few other members: Sandy Gelso; who sells the raffle tickets with a smile; David Minkin, who controls the audio so that the Q&A can be heard and transcribed; Curt Davison, the assistant sound tech; photographer Jerry Crocker, who provides pictures for the website, the Facebook page and TOE; and the varied members who carry the microphones to our members who ask questions during the Q&A. We appreciate your work. Thank you.

As you can see, the tasks of putting on our monthly meetings are varied, and we appreciate the volunteers who make it all happen.

Remember to bring a guest, and give them a copy of TOE.

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

Channel Islands PC Users Group

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Lois Evans de Violini……...1989-1991
Terry Lee……...1991-1993
Jerry McLoud……...1993-1995
Robert Provart……...1995-1997
Toby Scott……1997-1999
George Lakes ……...1999-2001
Andy Toth……2001-2003
David Harris……2003-2005
Lois Evans de Violini 2005-2007
Paul Westefer……2007-2009
Rick Curry……..……2009-2011
(With the exception of the immediate past president, past presidents are not board members.)

Life members

Frank Segesman*
Toby Scott
Lois Evans de Violini
Art Lewis
Helen Long
*Deceased

CIPCUG is a member of APCUG, The Association of PC Users Groups

The Outer Edge

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BUSINESS CARD ad	$15.00

Discounts for multiple issues (3, 6, 9 and 12 months)
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

Showdown: Google Docs vs. Windows Live Docs

Programs

Toby Scott and Michael Shalkey will compare Google Docs and Windows Live Docs at the March meeting, which starts at 8:45 a.m. March 24 in the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club, 1500 Temple Ave. (Ponderosa Drive and Temple Avenue), Camarillo. (See the map on the last page.)

The doors open at 8 a.m. The Internet and Networking SIG and the Social Media SIG start at 8:45 a.m.

For more information about Google Docs, visit http://support.google.com/docs/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=49008 .

For more information on Windows Live Docs go to http://explore.live.com/skydrive.

Other meeting dates for this year:

April 28: Avast

May 26: Abby Stokes, author of "Is This Thing On?"

June 23

July 28

Aug. 25

Sept. 22

Oct. 27

Nov. 17 (**third Saturday**)

Dec. 15 (**third Saturday**)

SIGs

The Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are sponsored by CIPCUG and led by volunteer club members. They are free to CIPCUG members.

Other than those presented during or just after the regular meeting, the 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 locations to be announced on the meeting day.

The general schedule:

Fourth Tuesday: Linux.

Fourth Saturday (or the regular meeting day): Social Media SIG (Jessica Scott and Mark Maidel) and Internet and

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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 of directors meeting

By Diane Mortensen

CIPCUG board of directors held its monthly meeting on Feb. 25, 2012. In attendance were Jim Brown, Andy Toth, John Weigle, Toby Scott, Art Lewis, Helen Long, and Craig Ladd. The meeting was called to order by President, Jim Brown at 12:15 p.m.

Mortensen

President Jim Brown introduced Andy Toth as the new webmaster. Andy is a past president of CIPCUG. When Andy moved out of the area, he maintained his membership with the club. Andy informed the board that when he was an active member of CIPCUG, he attended a majority of Toby's HTML classes but that he had never been exposed to Cold Fusion, the program that Toby uses for the website. He asked members of the board to be patient with him until he has an opportunity to become acquainted with the program.

Art presented the January 2012 treasurer's report which appears elsewhere in TOE. The board approved the report.

Jim reported his findings regarding the book "Secret Guide to Computers & Tricky Living." He had questioned several people for reactions to certain sections of the book. He found that there were people who were offended and others who were not. Jim intends to write a letter to the author, Russ Walter, stating the club's position on the book and the responses from several of our members.

Toby has been working with the City of Camarillo Library setting up a Web page for the Friends of the Library. He anticipates this will encourage the group's membership as well as the club's.

There was a brief discussion regarding CIPCUG'S 25th anniversary celebration. Craig and Diane will be working on preliminary plans for the event to present to the board.

Social Media SIG, Q&A

Features of Toshiba Thrive are discussed

Reported by John Weigle

Internet, email, social media SIG

This month's SIG concentrated on the use of a tablet, which Toby Scott bought from Staples after January's presentation by three of the store's technicians.

"It's another cool little tool that you can use," Jessica Scott said of the tablet, which she has been experimenting with since it was purchased. Tablets are portable, fit easily in a purse, satchel or briefcase and use apps rather than programs so are faster than laptops, she said.

Although it's possible to type on the onscreen keyboard by swiping — running your finger across the characters you want on the screen — she uses a stylus to keep the screen clean. No matter how careful people are, they always have some oil on their hands, she pointed out, and the dirtier a screen gets, the more likely the tablet is to produce strange results.

Android apps available for the tablet, a Toshiba Thrive, include games, social media, email and many others. Users can take notes with Google Docs, writing by hand or connecting a keyboard and mouse to the tablet. The tablet allows Internet connections. The tablet depends on Wi-Fi connections. It can't be plugged into a router to use wired Internet because it has no Ethernet jack, she said.

"The screen is awesome," she said, and the tablet has HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) and USB connections and two cameras, which can be used with Skype, among other programs. The HDMI connection lets users display the computer's screen on a TV screen and its sound on the TV sound system.

This month's Q&A topics:

Regular Q&A

Firefox bookmarks
Backing up partitions
Bookmarks on flash drive
Removing Thunderbird profile
Windows 8
Display turns 90 degrees
Popup message
Vista
Firefox installation

Ninety-five percent of the Android apps are free, Jessica said, and most of the paid apps cost $2.99 or less. The tablet came with a few apps installed. The others can be downloaded from the Android store (android.com).

Toby said he bought the tablet from Staples because the three presenters appeared at the club and provided the information that let him decide what tablet he wanted. It was only fair that he buy the tablet from the store, he said.

Some Android apps are available only for the phones that use the system, Jessica said.

In answer to a question, Toby said that some tablets, including some by Samsung, have 3G, and a member of the audience said iPads have 3G and Wi-Fi.

Jessica demonstrated Google Maps, which provides a street-level view of the area on the map. Using compass mode on the tablet shows what a person standing on the street and turning 360 degrees would see. "I travel the world all the time on my couch" because of that feature, Jessica said.

Jessica told a questioner that she is searching for an app that will create an Excel file with better results than Google Docs does.

Another questioner asked about speech-to-text apps, and Jessica said none of the Android apps she has seen are as good as Apple's Siri. Toby said Windows 8 will have better speech recognition than Siri.

Michael Shalkey added that Android developers are working with Majel Barrett-Roddenberry, widow of "Star Trek" creator Gene Roddenberry, so that the Android speech recognition program will sound like the show's computers. In addition to playing Nurse Christine Chapel on the original "Star Trek," Barrett-Roddenberry was the voice of the shows' computers.

Jessica said she needs speech-recognition software that is more than "pretty good" because she doesn't have time when working to go back and correct lots of errors.

People considering a tablet should not get "a cheap tablet because you get what you pay for," adding that she knows someone who bought an inexpensive HP tablet and who ended up not liking it. Toby noted that the HP tablet was being sold at a low price because the company had abandoned it after it didn't sell well at the original price. He suggested getting a Kindle, not the Kindle Fire, if you're looking for a less expensive tablet.

A questioner said the tablet and a refurbished Apple iPod both cost about $400 and asked Jessica to compare the

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More on coming events ...

(Continued from page 3)

connectivity SIG (Toby Scott), 8:45 a.m. The location of Michael Shalkey's after-meeting SIG is announced at the meeting.

The March and April schedules:

March

Saturday, March 24: Regular meeting, pre-meeting Social Media and Internet SIGs.

Tuesday, March 27: Linux SIG. Topic: Q&A session.

April

Tuesday, April 24: Linux SIG. Topic TBA.

Saturday, April 28: Regular meeting, pre-meeting Social Media and Internet, connectivity SIGs.

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

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two. Jessica said she has never used the iPod so can't compare them. Toby said the iPod speech-recognition will be better and the apps will be more expensive.

A questioner said he has a Kindle Fire that goes crazy when he puts his finger on the screen. He said the screen is clean and that a software update that was supposed to fix the problem did not. Jessica and Toby said he should take the Fire back to where he bought it while it's still under warranty. At least, Toby said, start a trouble ticket quickly to cover yourself.

Toby also said the tablet has an SD card, which the iPod does not. A member of the audience said that a USB device can be attached to the iPod to use an SD card, but, Toby said, that will be much slower than the tablet's SD card.

Asked why he chose the Thrive over the other tablets shown at the meeting, Toby said he was impressed by the gorilla glass and the full-sized USB and HDMI connections. Other tablets require tiny connectors, which makes connecting peripherals far more difficult.

Both Jessica and Toby praised the Thrive's battery life. Jessica said she has used the tablet for eight hours without recharging, and Toby said the battery is rated for 11 hours. The recharging took about half an hour, Jessica said.

The camera is good, Toby said, and Jessica showed a video made with the tablet of her playing Scirabin's Nocturne for Left Hand (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSI4Jdnkm1Y).

The tablet's cameras also work with Skype, they said.

Regular Q&A

Unless otherwise noted, questions were answered by Toby Scott. Michael Shalkey handled the computer duties.

Firefox bookmarks

Q: We have a Dell computer with two accounts. One account uses Firefox and one uses Internet Explorer. The Firefox user exported bookmarks to HTML, but when the file was opened it showed the IE bookmarks of the other account holder.

A: Mozbackup is the weapon of choice for all the Mozilla products. I'd try that. I don't know why the backup got IE bookmarks instead of Firefox but suspect a user error of some kind.

Mozbackup is the weapon of choice for all the Mozilla products. I'd try that. I don't know why the backup got IE bookmarks instead of Firefox but suspect a user error of some kind.

Michael Shalkey: Mozbackup is on the CIPCUG flash drive. It's free and backs up all the settings and other material you need to simplify reinstalling or setting up a new computer.

Q: Where does it put the backed up files?

A: Wherever you tell it to. We recommend using a flash drive.

Michael: You can have several profiles, and all of them can be backed up.

Toby: We've never had a problem with it backing up the wrong files or missing needed files.

Backing up partitions

Q: I'm using Acronis 2009 and want to back up a specific partition.

A: Acronis lets you pick the partition you want to back up and the location you want to back it up to. It can image an entire disk, a partition or selected files (such as My Documents).

Bookmarks on flash drive

Q: Can you put your bookmarks on a flash drive and then use that flash drive on a library or other public computer so that there's no trace of what you did on the computer?

A: Yes, if the public computer allows the use of flash drives. Export the bookmarks to an HTML file, which will show the bookmark name and the full URL. Then just click on the URL.

Related to that, PortableApps, which is also on the CIPCUG flash drive, will let you create and store documents on the flash drive while working at any computer that allows a flash drive to be connected. When you leave, there's no trace of what you did on the computer — assuming you remember to take the flash drive.

Removing Thunderbird profile

Q: I created a profile in Thunderbird (questioner at first said Firefox) but can't figure out how to remove it.

A: From the Thunderbird Help file at http://support.mozillamessaging.com/en-US/kb/using-multiple-profiles?s=profiles&as=s:

"Using Multiple Profiles

"As described in the Profiles article, Thunderbird saves personal information such as messages, passwords and user preferences in a set of files called a 'profile,' which is stored in a separate location from the Thunderbird program files.

"When you install Thunderbird it creates a profile called 'default.' This profile is used automatically. However, you can create additional profiles, each with their own set of account configurations, messages, etc. (Note, however, that you can access multiple email accounts within a single profile as well.)

"To create additional profiles, use the Thunderbird Profile Manager.

"Enabling the Profile Manager

"The Profile Manager is used to create and delete profiles, and to select the profile to use for a Thunderbird session. It is not displayed by default. Instead, you must invoke Thunderbird with a 'switch' that makes the Profile Manager appear. After that, the Profile Manager will be displayed every time Thunderbird starts, until you check the **Don't ask at startup** option.

To enable the Profile Manager:

Select Start | Run... from the Windows Start menu (use the search box on Vista and 7), then enter 'thunderbird.exe –ProfileManager' and click OK."

That brings up a box with the options to create, rename and delete profiles.

Windows 8

Q: Windows 8 is supposed to be coming in October. Do you recommend trying the beta version and is there a significant difference from Windows 7?

A: If you want to test the beta version, I recommend doing it with VMware, which we'll discuss during the program presentation, so let's hold this until then. However, Windows 8 is an early beta and

(Continued on page 6)

More on Q&A ...

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I'd never recommend using a beta on a production machine. It's strictly for testing.

Michael: An early release is expected in March.

Toby: Commentators whose opinions I respect are saying the biggest effect will be on smartphones and tablets, rather than on desktops. Desktop computer sales are way down.

Display turns 90 degrees

Q: Sometimes when I leave my computer on all night, the display has rotated 90 degrees when I take it out of hibernation. Do you know why?

A: The only time I've heard of that is from a worm several years ago.

Michael: Ctrl-Alt-Up will fix it, according to this website, but it doesn't say what causes it.

(A different site, http://xperiencexp.blogspot.com/2005/09/display-rotated-90-degrees.html, suggests this:

("The Resolution: Open Control Panel>Display > Settings tab > Advanced, navigate through the tabs to find a rotate display option. This option has come due to the graphic card you have installed. The option should allow you to rotate the display back to its original orientation.")

Popup messages

Q: I'm getting popup messages that say I've won something. I ignore them, and things seem OK.

A: Run Malwarebytes (http://www.malwarebytes.org). The first thing that malware does is try to disable all your anti-malware programs and then install more and more malware. After a while, what would have been a comparatively simple problem to solve becomes a difficult, expensive one to repair. I compare the problem to one with a car: If your car is banging and making other strange noises, do you keep driving it until it won't run or do you take it to a mechanic?

Vista

Q: Do those of us using Vista have to worry about upgrading to Windows 8?

A: No. Vista was rushed to the shelves earlier than it should have been because the marketing folks at Microsoft were saying revenues were down and they needed a new version of Windows to boost sales. Since then, the patches have made it a very good operating system. In fact, Windows 7 is really just a minor upgrade of Vista. Vista is now so close to Windows 7 that there's nothing to talk about except for a few security fixes, but if you have the latest service packs I wouldn't spend the money to upgrade. I'd put the money into RAM or a solid state drive, which improves the responsiveness of your computer so much that you'll wonder why you didn't do it before.

Michael: A solid state drive will spoil you, just as two monitors will, when you use a computer that doesn't have them.

Q: What's involved if you upgrade to a solid state drive?

A: If it were my machine, I would do a fresh install of my operating system and programs on the solid state drive. This gets rid of the gunk in the registry, which grows every time you install software and is not always cleaned when the programs are removed. You can install a new drive for data or simply remove the programs from the old C: drive and leave the data on it. If you do this, be sure you know where all the data is because some programs store it in the program files. An 80 Gig solid state drive will run Vista and Windows 7 and your other software with no problems.

Q: How stable are the solid state drives?

A: It's hard to say with any certainty because they're so new, but the manufacturers are giving them 5-year warranties, while cutting the warranties for standard hard drives to one or two years. Solid state drives have no moving parts so should have long lives. They'll also conserve energy and will be especially good for the battery life of laptops, with a 50 percent improvement

Q: Do you need to defrag them?

A: It's not required, and you don't want to do it.

On standard drives, the head has to skip around the drive to find the bits and pieces of files, taking much longer. The solid state drives have no moving heads, so there's no time lost in finding the pieces.

Firefox installation

Q: I installed the new Firefox and when I clicked on the icon nothing happened.

A: Try starting it in safe mode. Go to Start > Run and type "firefox –safemode" (without the quotes). This will let you troubleshoot the program.

Another method from the Firefox Help page (http://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/Safe%20Mode):

"How to start Firefox in Safe Mode

"At the top of the Firefox window, click the Firefox button, go over to the Help menu and select Restart with Add-ons Disabled.... Firefox will start up with the Firefox Safe Mode dialog.

"For Windows XP, click the Help menu and select Restart with Add-ons Disabled....

"Note: You can also start Firefox in Safe Mode by holding down the shift key while starting Firefox."

The page notes that safe mode in Firefox is not related to the overall Windows safe mode. Safe mode in Firefox disables all add-ons.

If you don't find the problem, uninstall the program, download it again in case the download was damaged and reinstall.

Q&A reminder: Please wait for the microphone to ask, answer or comment on a question so the information can be recorded for use in TOE.

Program: Potpourri

Spam, Internet cameras, VMware, DOSBox discussed

By John Weigle
jweigle@vcnet.com

Opting out of spam, Internet camera dangers, VMware and DOSBox were the subjects of our February program by Toby Scott and Michael Shalkey.

Opting out of spam

The longstanding rule about spam has been to never click on an opt-out link because that merely confirmed that the email address was valid, and it would be added to lists of email address lists that were for sale, Scott said. It turns out that the CAN-SPAM Act is actually working.

The only person he has ever known who tried the opt-out procedure is Rick Smith, also of Ventura County Computers, and Scott gave him many warnings, and a lot of ragging, for it. But Smith, who has burned down several email addresses over the years, said he could do that again if the opt-out didn't work.

Much to Scott's chagrin, Smith's spam has decreased to two or three a day, although the change didn't come overnight. It takes some companies awhile to eliminate opt-out addresses, and some of the spam, such as FTD and OrGreenic cookware, comes from marketing companies and mail-sending organizations, and each one requires a separate opt-out notice.

Scott has cut his spam from 400-500 a day to 20-30 after several weeks, he said.

The CAN-SPAM Act says mailers must:

- Tell recipients where they're located. This must include a valid postal address (includes P.O. Box).
- Tell recipients how to opt out of receiving future email from them.
- Honor opt-out requests promptly.

And finally, the key provision is that, once people have told you they don't want to receive more messages from you, you can't sell or transfer their email addresses, even in the form of a mailing list.

"It's been pretty effective," Scott said. "I won't say it's 100 percent effective." One reason for that is that the law has no effect on the usual Nigerian scams and other mail from foreign countries.

Because of the amount of spam he was getting, Scott created an opt-out folder in his email program that he moved the spam to, and when nothing else was going on in the office or he was on the phone waiting for a company tech support person, he'd go into the folder and start clicking on the opt-out links. Home users with fewer messages might be able to do the job as they check their email.

One member asked if blocking domains is a good idea, and Scott said it isn't. If you're not careful, you can do a lot of damage and pretty soon you won't be getting email from anyone because many of the email addresses on the worst spam are throwaway addresses that disappear quickly.

The CAN-SPAM Act has been in effect long enough — and enough people have been arrested for violating it — that spammers have decided to follow it. "I was astounded," Scott said by the decrease in his spam. "I thought Rick was committing electronic hari-kari" when he started clicking on the opt-out links.

Another member asked if he would affect his wife's email if he opted out of messages about quilting. As long as he and his wife have different email addresses, his decision would have no effect on her email, Scott said.

Internet cameras

Shalkey's "what to be scared of this month" discussion involved a flaw that can make Trendnet Internet security camera feeds available to anyone who might want to see them — which could be a danger for cameras that were watching children among other things.

The idea of Internet cameras is that the users can set them up and watch what's happening at a home, business or other site from anywhere they are. Users are supposed to need a user name and password to log in, but the software allows "anonymous."

Scott said that one of the cameras was in a law office's conference room and that the picture was so good that a viewer could read documents in the area. It was also equipped with sound so viewers could listen to client consultations as well.

The cameras don't plug into a computer as webcams do, so it doesn't matter whether your computer is on or off, Shalkey said. The problem does not involve cameras on laptops, he emphasized.

Trendnet can't easily notify all users of the cameras of the problem because many people don't bother to register the product. A fix has been posted on Trendnet's Website, and it's recommended that the cameras be unplugged until the fix is installed.

Those who hack into the camera can see an IP address, which is easy to track to a specific area, which will generally be somewhere close to the location of the camera, but any IP address can be tracked, so that's not a weakness in the cameras.

Shalkey also discussed the PC Anywhere code theft that came up at the January meeting. Code for the program had been hacked, which would allow hackers to get into computers using the program. The solution to the problem is to upgrade to the latest version if that's possible or to change the port it uses if you must stay with an older version. The default port is 5631, and it can be changed to any other port.

VMware

The Vista and Windows 7 Home Premium 64-bit editions will not run certain old programs, Scott said. The pro versions of the operating system have XP Mode to run such programs, but it can't be done in the home versions.

Users who have old games or business software that they want to run can solve the problem with VMware Player 3, which also allows the use of multiple operating systems. It can run full installations or ISOs of operating systems that can boot from a CD, as many versions of Linux do.

Scott showed the software on his old laptop, which has just 2 Gigs of RAM, the minimum the program requires. He had both Windows XP and Linux Mint on

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machine. VMware will also be a good way to test an early ISO version of Windows 8, he said.

VMware Player takes about 20 minutes to install, so he did not show us that process. The steps necessary to use VMware follow:

Download VMware Player 3 (see URL in the box at right), and be sure to pick the free version of the player. You'll have to log in and create an account with your name and email address.

You'll get an email with the download link. You don't need a key code. If you look at your Internet connections, you'll see additional ones for VMware after it's installed.

Install the VMware.

Do a full install of the operating systems you want to run unless you're using an ISO version. You will need the key code. The Windows XP installation was a full Windows installation just as if you were installing it on a regular computer. You need the key code to install, but don't need to install the hardware drivers as VMware tunnels through to the drivers for your Windows 7 or Vista install.

The Linux Mint install was with just the ISO. It runs just like it would if you burned it to a CD and ran Linux directly from the CD. It wasn't installed. VMware gives you the option when you start the install process whether to do a full install or just run from an ISO. Scott said he could have, if he'd had more free hard disk space, done a full install of Linux.

The system being run in VMware prints to the host system's printer like a print to file. As long as your printer is working properly, you should be able to print from VMware, at least according to the manual.

A member said Dreamweaver will not run in his Windows 7 64-bit system and asked if VMware would solve his problems. Scott said he has no problems running it in 64-bit Windows 7.

Scott said he could copy the XP folder that VMware created, put it on another computer along with VMware and run the program on that computer, too.

The 64-bit version of Windows 7 Home Premium doesn't have a compatibility mode for XP, he said.

It takes a fair amount of time — about 2 hours on the computer being demonstrated — to set up VMware, Scott said.

In answer to an additional question, he said he believes a user could install an OEM distribution of XP with a COA (Certificate Of Authenticity is frequently referred to as the "key code") from a different version. He said he didn't think a person could can use a retail COA and an OEM disk.

VMware is designed for use with legacy software and sold by the distributors of the programs.

DOSBox

People who have old DOS games that they'd still like to play can do so in DOSBox, a free program that has not been updated recently but which still does the job. It also is on the CIPCUG flash drive.

After downloading and installing the program (see URL in the box), you will need to edit the configuration file (dosbox.conf). Right click on it and send it to a text editor (not Word or a similar word processor). At the bottom of the file, type:

[autoexec]
mount c C:\[path to your DOSbox setup]
c:
cd [program name — should be under the DOSbox folder]
[program name].bat

Then go to the directory containing the game, right mouse click on the game's batch file and send it to the text editor. The game might need an ANSI interpreter; Zork, the game being demonstrated, needs nnanci.com. Once it's installed in the Zork folder, the game will run. Add these lines to the game's batch file:

nanci.com
cls

Zork is text-only game and is much more difficult and challenging than the later graphic versions, Scott said.

Zork Nemesis, one of the Windows versions of the game, is much easier to win, he said.

Instructions to set up many of the old games can be found on the DOSBox website, along with a link to a site that has the games.

On the Net:

Toby Scott's full article on opting out of spam: http://vccomputers.com/OptOut.cfm (the article also appeared in the February issue of TOE)

The Trendnet camera dangers: http://securitywatch.pcmag.com/security/293855-coding-error-turns-trendnet-safety-cams-into-spy-cams

Trendnet's download page for the firmware fix: http://www.trendnet.com/downloads/

Article on general Internet camera dangers: http://www.disaster-resource.com/articles/07p_096b.shtml

VMware: http://www.vmware.com/

Linux Mint: http://linuxmint.com/

DOSBox: http://www.dosbox.com/

Back up, back up, back up ...
and test the backup to be sure it worked.

Review: Chess Titans

Vista, Windows 7 bring old game to the screen

By Jim Thornton
jasthorn@gmail.com

Chess Titans is a good chess game that you play on your computer, and the game comes with Windows Vista and 7. The chessboard is a typical chessboard with eight rows of alternating black and white squares. There is a choice of chessboard appearances that you can play on, including porcelain, marble and wood. Plus, you can choose the style of chess pieces that you want to play with, and the most popular one is Black_Gold.

There are numerous options to choose from, including play against computer with white or black pieces; display animations; play sounds; show tips; always continue saved game; always save game on exit; show last move; show valid moves; rotate board when playing head to head; top down view; rotate board back after free view; show 3D view; high detail pieces; show reflections; high gloss shine; smooth edges; and graphics quality. Playing head to head means the game automatically rotates the board when you are playing with another player sitting beside you, and top down view means going back to a 2D view. Plus, you can select the level of the difficulty ranging from 1 to 10, with 1 being the easiest and 10 the hardest.

Your statistics are kept, including the games played; the games won; the win percentage; the games drawn; the draw percentage; the longest winning, drawing, and losing streaks; and your current streak.

The standard chess features are available, including castling, where your king places his first move two spaces toward the rook and the rook moves to the opposite side of the king. Another feature is En passant, where your pawn moves two squares ahead and can capture the opposite's pawn on an adjacent square on either side. And one of the more important features is the upgrading of a pawn that it has moved all the way across the board. The best choice is to exchange your pawn for another queen; the other choices are a rook, knight, or bishop.

This is a screen shot of Chess Titans.

Chess Titans is a complex strategy game. Winning this game requires you to plan your moves ahead, watch your opponent's moves, and make changes to your strategy as the game progresses. The object of the game is to put your opponent's king in checkmate. As you capture more of your opponent's pieces, it is more likely that the opponent's king cannot move without being captured, thus you have won the game.

How to start the game: Click on the Start button > All Programs > Games > and Games Explorer. Double-click on Chess Titans, and if you don't have a saved game, Chess Titans starts a new game. If you have a saved game, you can continue your previous game. Each player starts with 16 pieces, arranged in two rows and the players moves their pieces across the board. Click on the chess piece you want to move and next click on the space where you want the piece to move to.

Players take turns moving their pieces across the board, and whenever a square is occupied by another piece of the current player, the first piece can't move into that square unless the square is occupied by the opponent piece, which then will be captured.

The pieces and quantities per color are as follows:

Pawns (8) are the smallest piece and can move only forward, one square at a time, except on its first move, when the pawn can move forward either one or two squares. Pawns can capture an opponent piece only by moving diagonally forward, except when doing an En passant move.

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Getting help for open source software

By Bill Wayson
bwayson@gmail.com

A myth about Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) such as Linux is that you are on your own when it comes to support because support does not exist. Users of FOSS know better and realize, in many cases, the open source support system is better than that provided by commercial software vendors. This month, I will suggest some sources of support for FOSS, most of which is offered just as the software is: freely. There is no shortage of people and places willing to help. Here are some places to start.

Penguin's Lair

Wayson

The Internet

The best source of FOSS support is the Internet. The Internet is where members of the open source community, including users, meet. The Internet provides open forums where you will find real-time feedback on FOSS as it is updated and patched. Tap into these forums through your favorite Web search site. Creative search terms, such as an error message, can result in just the solution you are looking for.

These forums fall into three categories: FOSS-oriented sites, FOSS vendor and project sites, and FOSS mailing lists and discussion forums. FOSS-oriented sites are great gateways to information and support. A favorite site is LinuxQuestions.org (www.linuxquestions.org). Users of any Linux distribution can be found there. Many other such sites exist, and each deserves a look. One which merits special attention is The Linux Documentation Project (www.tldp.org). It is the home of the HOWTO collection, a community-maintained documentation project, as well as guides, FAQs, and other distribution-agnostic Linux information. Topics covered there range from first-time user help to setting up a Web server. Some HOWTOs are old, but others actively follow the latest developments.

Most distributions of Linux have their own Web sites, and it should be your first stop for support once you've installed a specific distribution. Search on Linux Mint, openSUSE, Red Hat, or Ubuntu, to find their home pages. The home pages will have links to documentation, support forums and bug tracking. Purchasing a vendor's official Linux distribution usually entitles you to free installation support and, in some cases, access to reserved websites.

Searches for support usually return links to messages in mailing lists and discussion forums. The online forum has become a standard support offering of almost all providers of software. People post their problems in the hope someone can help and post the answer. These postings and solutions contribute to a growing archive of the software, issues, and solutions. Find a good one, make it a regular online hangout, and contribute solutions you discover.

On your PC

Open source software often includes its own documentation. If you have installed the Linux source code, you will find information in /usr/src/linux/Documentation/. The information there can be very helpful if you are having trouble with a specific type of hardware. Application documentation can be found under /usr/share/doc. This information will range from very terse to extremely deep. You may also find HOWTOs under there.

You may find "Help" icons on your Linux desktop or application menu — most distributions include a help system. And don't forget the "man" (short for manual) and "info" (short for information) pages. Use a terminal window

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More on Chess Titans ...

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Rooks (2) can move forward, backward, or sideways in either direction for as many squares as you want.

Knights (2) move two squares in any direction, and then one square to either side, making an L-shaped move. Knights are the only piece that can jump over other pieces.

Bishops (2) move diagonally, in any direction, for as many squares as you want always staying on the same color squares.

Queens (1) move in a straight line forward, back, sideways, or diagonal for as many spaces are you want. The queen is the most valuable piece, except for the king.

Kings (1) can move one space in any direction, except when doing a castling move.

Chess Titans is designed for new players, so when you click on a piece to move, the proper squares to move to are highlighted in blue and if any opponent pieces are in the blue line, they will be shown on red squares, indicating that you can capture one of them. Plus when you move a piece, a little sound is played. And whenever a king is in check, his square is highlighted in red and a short musical sound is played.

Chess is a popular game, and there is a weekly chess column in the Los Angeles Times newspaper on Sundays. When I was an engineering manager at General Telephone Co., I frequently played noncomputer chess at lunchtime. My wife currently plays noncomputer chess games three times a week with her brother, who lives in a retirement home, and I play Chess Titans on my computer daily.

My previous computer chess game was Chessmaster, but I have found Chess Titans a better game with more options.

The current version of Chess Titans is 6.1, Build 7601, Service Pack 1, in 2009. It is one of the more than 200 free games available from the Microsoft website at http://www.microsoft.com/games/playyourgame/chess.htm.

The main event: cable vs. DSL

By Rick Smith
rants@vcmail.net

If you're like me you've been around long enough to watch the Internet online revolution. It started with 33k external modems that were eventually kicked up to 56k and culminated with US Robotics putting out a dual bonded 128k. If you had two phone lines, it would dial out on two lines and bond the connections together for the ultimate dial-up experience. Of course, as I've already pointed out in previous rants, America Online was king of the world. If you needed to go online during peak hours you would often get the dreaded busy signal instead of "You've got mail." Alas, those days are gone for good for most of us. I even remember being a member of a BBS service downloading pirated software at 28k and experiencing the beginnings of rudimentary chat. As the old Bensen & Hedges commercials used to say, "You've come a long way, baby." Needless to say, now we're experiencing a renaissance of online experiences with social networking, streaming movies, music and video and the cloud. Which, by the way, is hovering over all of us, ready to consume us if we let it. But I'll save that subject for another day. But there has been some movement in the market the last couple of years with some trends developing, and I'll try to share some of my insights with you. If you're on the cusp of making a decision to switch Internet service providers, maybe these insights will help — or then again, if you consider the source, put all of this where it belongs. You decide.

Rick's rant

Smith

I'll start with the main players in our area today. You have AT&T, Verizon, Time Warner and Charter Cable. It pretty much works out that you have three choices from where to get your Internet service. You can get DSL service from your telephone company, cable provider or your wireless phone service. All of them have advantages and disadvantages. I shall elaborate.

1) Wireless Internet: The "GRID," as I call it, has improved greatly over the past few years. Gone are the days of "Can you hear me now?" You are hard pressed to find a spot with no cell reception in Ventura County unless you get up into the Los Padres National Forrest. Companies have mounted cell towers everywhere disguised as palm trees and other natural objects. Some people say if you have prolonged exposure to the microware energy output by these transmission towers it can lead to health problems. Consider yourself being cooked for a long period of time in a microwave oven set at the lowest setting. They say the new smart meters from SCE have the same effect. I just got a notice that Edison is replacing the row of meters directly on the other side of my shop wall this next

(Continued on page 12)

More on Penguin's Lair ...

(Continued from page 10)

under Linux to enter the command "man man" and "info info" to get started. The man system is the traditional source of application and utility reference information. The newer info system, which is slowly replacing it, sports hyperlinks and better document organization.

User groups

User groups can be great sources of information and support. CIPCUG has its Linux SIG. The Ventura County Linux Users Group meets regularly — see www.vclug.org. And there is the Simi/Conejo Linux Users Group (www.sclug.org), which has been around quite a while. SCLUG started the annual Scale conferences in Los Angeles, which draw presenters and participants from all over the world. A trip to one of its meetings could be worthwhile. To find other user groups, simply search for "linux user group" and a city. This is sure to bring back results for any city of any size. These groups often have very good websites and mailing lists of their own, and I have never had a problem joining their mailing lists.

Magazines and books

A trip to the computer section of any large bookstore will offer you many, many books that cover a variety of Linux and open source subjects. Books help you learn at your own pace. Some series to look for are the O'Reilly books, the SAMS Teach Yourself in 24 Hours series, and No Starch Press books. To help choose a book, go to the bookstore with three or four real questions. Look at several books to see how well each answers your questions, and choose the book that does the best job.

Also look for magazines that cover Linux, such as Linux Pro (www.linuxpromagazine.com) and Ubuntu User (www.ubuntu-user.com). These are sold at the larger bookstores. Some Web-only magazines are completely free.

Information is there just for the asking

It is true that there are very few instances of "1-800" support, and most of these cost money. But once you start using resources such as those described above, you will discover that there is no shortage of support for, information about, and documentation of Linux and other FOSS. As you realize this, "you are on your own" will disappear as a reason to not use Linux and FOSS. It all starts with looking.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about Linux and FOSS, come to the CIPCUG Linux SIG meeting at 6:30 p.m., March 27 at Ventura County Computers in Ventura. The meeting will open up the floor to you. Come and ask any question you have about Linux and FOSS. We will do our best to get an answer. If there is something you would like the Lair or Linux SIG to cover, drop me a line at bwayson@gmail.com. Until next month, happy computing.

(Continued from page 11)

month, so I will be exposed to the radiation of almost 20 of these critters on a constant basis. If my testicles swell up to the point I'm walking around with a wheelbarrow I'm going to blame somebody. Edison says there are no health risks, but I'm not so sure. Anyway, you can now get Internet service for your PC, notebook, netbook or handheld device for about $50 a month last time I checked. The main advantage to this service is you are able to get to the Internet anywhere there is cell phone coverage. This is a huge asset for some people who are not in static location when the online need arises. The main disadvantage is that the service is more expensive than other plans and has much slower connection speeds. There are also issues with bandwidth throttling. If you use this service too much, your service will be throttled down with some plans. Definitely something to consider when shopping for a plan.

2) DSL: This service is the most popular because of many factors. Mostly because it will piggyback on your existing phone service. In the beginning, when people had separate phone lines just for Internet service you could cancel your second line and pay for the "new" high-speed service. At that time, any DSL speed was extraordinary. DSL does have its limits though. It is totally dependent upon line quality and distance from the main switchbox on the street. Certain areas — rural locations and also those near the ocean — have a difficult time. In DSL it's location, location, location. If you don't have it, you're screwed on bandwidth. In fact, just because a company promises you a certain speed, it really doesn't have to deliver it. The slowest service is 1.5mbps download. Companies say up to 1.5, but what you don't know is they will guarantee you only half of that. I have had clients getting only 768k download and AT&T support says that's all you're going to get and you might as well be happy about it. If you get angry with them and order DSL Extreme or NetZero, you still have to carry the signal over the phone company lines. There are those out there who argue that one DSL service is better than the others, but if you ask me, they all have problems. Don't get me wrong, I have AT&T DSL at home, and it works quite reliably. I have to call them occasionally to lower my bill when they jack it up, but other than that I'm satisfied with the service. On the other hand, some of my clients in trouble spots have AT&T tech support horror stories all day long. Sometimes you just have to hope on the luck of the draw. So the advantages of DSL are fast service starting at under $20 a month, with easy add-on of service with your existing phone line. You can even order a dry line and have DSL service even if you have no other phone service now. The disadvantages of DSL are slow speeds in bad locations and the fact that they jack up your rates after the first year, and if you don't call to complain you get charged too much for service. One more thing though. Even at the high rates it's still slower than cable. This brings us to our last category.

"Cable providers had gotten a real bad reputation the past few years for poor customer service and shoddy quality due to virtual monopoly of service. Since then, most providers have upgraded the cable systems, and competition has fostered a renewed desire to keep existing customers and reclaim those who have left."

3) Cable: By far the fastest of all the services. The three big players in our area are Time Warner, Charter and Verizon's FIOS. FIOS comes with a maximum home user plan of 50/20 — available as individual or bundle tier. The tiers are distinguished by data transmission speed measured in Mbit/s downstream and upstream. Time Warner has a 30Mbit download and Charter has an Ultra 100Mbp package for $60 a month. Now that may sound good, but to get that price you have to bundle, and the price is good for only 12 months. Cable providers had gotten a real bad reputation the past few years for poor customer service and shoddy quality due to virtual monopoly of service. Since then, most providers have upgraded the cable systems, and competition has fostered a renewed desire to keep existing customers and reclaim those who have left. The pricing has improved so much that they can offer better service for less than DSL. Let me give you an example. I have some good clients, a retired couple living in Ojai. They had AT&T's elite service of 6mps download speed. Their $25 per month teaser rate for one year expired, and they were bumped up to the $43 per month. I called AT&T to see if they could drop the price under threat of switching to a competitor. I was placed on hold for 45 minutes. During that time, I ordered Time Warner Internet services 10Mpb download service for $29.99 a month. Mind you, it gave the couple a free modem with no service contract agreement. The rate would go up after a year, of course, but at that time my clients could then switch back to AT&T at the discount rate. Time Warner showed up to run cable and lo and behold when we ran a speed test it showed a whopping 27.5Mbps download speed — almost three times the rate contracted for. I told the couple to go down right away to the store and buy as many lottery tickets as they could afford because they were hot and should not waste their good fortune. Anyway, they ignored my lottery idea. But this goes to show that I believe that right now cable is turning out to be the best Internet service available. You get the ability to effectively stream movies without delay. The prices are now competitive, and the service is on par with others, if not better at times. All in all, having competition and multiple providers is all good. I can't predict what would happen tomorrow or else I'd be buying lottery tickets. But I do know now that cable is shaping up as the consumers' choice for Internet service.

Be sure to keep your anti-malware programs up to date and run regular scans.

eBay adventures: 'So what gives?'

By Rick Eblaw
Vice President, Southern Tier Personal Computing Club, N.Y.
August 2011 issue, Rare Bits
www.stpcc.org
ekblaw (at) juno.com

If you spend some time on eBay, you'll find all kinds of interesting stuff offered for sale. There are lots of collectibles, some of which would be hard to locate unless you were willing to travel the country going to flea markets. There are items that you can find in stores that are sometimes offered at a substantial discount. And then are some items that are hard to explain ...

Here's a recent example. There's a fellow in China who is currently selling a lot of "Mini USB 2.0 Wireless Bluetooth Adapter Dongle" items, which you can readily find by searching eBay for "usb wireless" and sorting by "Price + Shipping: lowest first." That in itself isn't interesting; there's no shortage of sellers offering USB Bluetooth adapters. What's interesting about this one is that the minimum bid is $0.01 (one penny) and free shipping is offered. You don't have to be a financial genius to see that if only one person bids on one of these auctions, the seller is going to lose money. Since the seller is in China and presumably has direct access to the manufacturer of these devices, he's probably paying just a few pennies for each one. But he still needs to pay the international postage, and if you check the feedback you'll see a number of folks who did get their device for just $0.01. So what gives?

I had $1.08 in eBay Bucks "burning a hole in my pocket," so I figured I'd give this a shot. On my first attempt I set my maximum bid to $0.99, and a couple of people tried to outbid me in the last few seconds of the auction, but the highest attempt was a $0.50 bid, so I won with an automatic $0.55 bid. I then tried to bid on another, but I was only allowed to bid on one of these items from the seller in a 10-day period — so the seller was not going to allow someone to buy a whole bunch of these for $0.01 each in a short period of time. So I found another seller of the same item for the same price and put in a maxi mum bid of $0.53, figuring that at worst I'd use up my eBay Bucks (which is "bonus money" based on how much you bought on eBay in the previous month). Again, I had someone else bid, but they only tried up to $0.36, so I won my second dongle for $0.41. When I paid the sellers using my eBay Bucks, I discovered that both "sellers" had the same PayPal account, so there was really just one seller using multiple eBay accounts.

Back to the "So what gives?" question. I see at least three possible ways to explain this:

1. The seller is hoping that the $0.01 price will bring in bidders, but there will be enough people bidding on these so that the final bid will be high enough to make a profit, on average, over a large number

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"Full price every day is our way"
So come on in to the store where you pay more.

(Continued from page 13)

of sales. This doesn't seem to be happening, I see lots of people getting these for $0.01, and even my two quick attempts on this didn't raise the price to a point where the seller could break even.

2. The seller is offering these dongles as a "loss leader," just like a retail store, in hopes that you will buy from the seller again when you want something that is being sold at a reasonable profit. While the "loss leader" concept has shown some success in the retail store market, on eBay and the Internet you have many choices available instantly so I don't think this concept is going to work.

3. This is my best guess to explain these auctions: The seller is trying to quickly raise his total number of feedbacks, his positive feedback percentage, his detailed feedback ratings, and to be a "Top-rated seller." To understand why these measures are important, you have to be familiar with the eBay rating system and the preferences of most eBay buyers. I'm not going to go into the details here, but it's clear that the majority of eBay buyers want to buy from the "Top-rated sellers," they like seeing big feedback numbers, and they want to see positive feedback near 100 percent. Normally, to achieve these sorts of numbers you have to sell a lot of items over a fairly long period of time, which is why most buyers feel that they can trust" a "Top-rated seller" — they have a "proven track record." This seller is effectively trying to "buy" a solid reputation in a short period of time at a relatively low cost — the loss on each individual sale of these dongles is the business cost of building his reputation — he's basically giving away USB Bluetooth dongles to get a large number of positive feedback ratings.

You might wonder why a seller would use multiple eBay accounts. If a seller gets too many negative feedbacks in a short period of time, eBay may ban the account, or require the seller to take specific actions to "repair their reputation." Even a handful of negative feedbacks in a week will turn off buyers even if eBay doesn't take any action, so many of the "big sellers" have multiple accounts so that they can "throw away" an account that has been "poisoned" by negative feedback ratings.

Beware of messages purportedly from your bank, PayPal or other financial sites asking for personal information, such as your login name, password or Social Security number. They are likely to be from scammers who hope to empty your bank account. If in doubt, go to the site of the institution by typing in a known URL, not by clicking on the email link, and look for messages there.

Members' classified ads

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.

Free

For sale

Wanted

Other categories as needed

The Outer Edge is printed and prepared for mailing by:

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Former president Andy Toth named webmaster

By Helen Long

Yea! I am free! Bless his heart, Andy Toth has volunteered to take over as webmaster of the CIPCUG website. Andy was president of CIPCUG from 2001 to 2003. He has been a member much longer than that. Shortly after 2003, he moved up north, but he kept in touch with the club. After seeing my pleas for help for three months in a row, he finally stepped forward so that I could retire before I did some real damage to Toby's Web page. Please, everybody, welcome him back into the fold. It will take him a bit of time to get used to the Cold Fusion that Toby uses for the website, so please be patient.

Bits & Bytes

Long

Our program for March will be a comparison type thing. Michael will explain Google Docs and Toby will explain Windows Live. If you don't know the difference, neither do I, but it should be very interesting, so bring your questions and don't forget to turn the light bulb on.

For April the program will be Avast Internet Security, one of the best freeware programs.

Art Lewis still has some "Secret Guide to Computers" if you haven't been jaded by our problem with the book. The book is one of the best computer aids out there, but for some reason or other Russ added "Tricky Living" to the book this year. "Tricky Living" has absolutely nothing to do with computers, and it has met with a bit of controversy. Some people were offended by it and some were not. If you can ignore that section, you will have a great assistant to help you with the many computer problems that we come up against from day to day computing.

HAVE YOU RUN YOUR ANTI-SPYWARE PROGRAMS LATELY?

Helen Long becomes a life member

Long-time webmaster Helen Long joined what Toby Scott called "a very select group of people" at the February meeting when she was named a CIPCUG life member for her continuing service to the society.

Scott presented the award on behalf of the board of directors, saying that Long has been active in CIPCUG as long as he's been a member. She is one of the signers of the articles of incorporation and has held several offices, including secretary.

"She has done more work than the whole rest of the board for a number of years," he added. "For as long as I've been a member of the club, she's been a stalwart."

Scott said she has been his right-hand person on the website, which he designed but which Long has been keeping up to date. He also announced that Andy Toth, former CIPCUG president, volunteered to assume the Web page duties, which Long has been trying to be relieved of for some time because the job is becoming more difficult and complex.

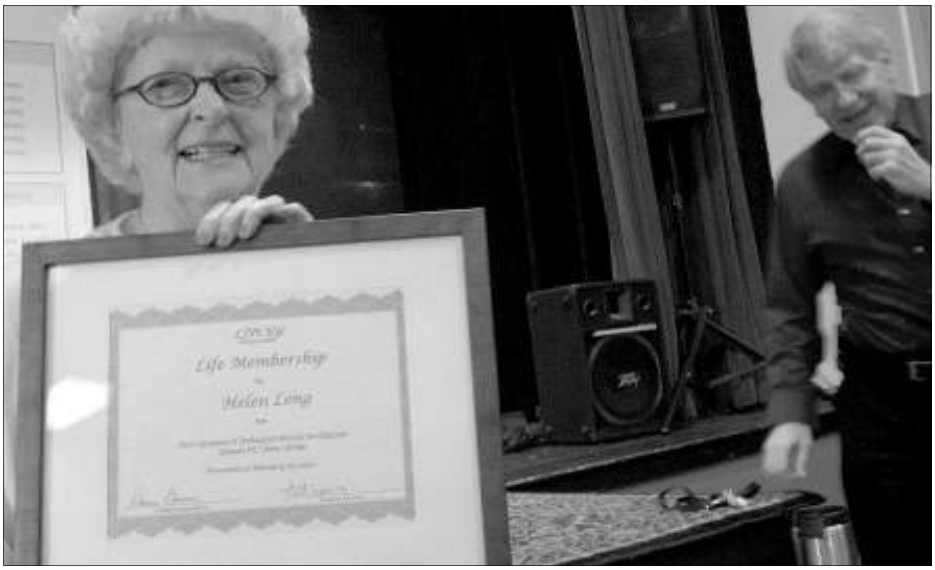


Photo by Jerry Crocker

Helen Long, left, displays her life membership certificate presented by Toby Scott, right.

Long will continue to write the Bits & Bytes column.

The other life members are the late Frank Segesman, Scott, Lois Evans de Violini and Art Lewis.

KVTA adds computer show to Saturday line-up

Radio station KVTA (1520 on the AM dial) has added a local computer show to its Saturday morning schedule. "Tech Today with Ken May" airs at 7 a.m. Saturdays.

May is the author of "The Boss's Guide to Smarter IT."

His website is at http://kenmay.net, and his Facebook page is at http://www.facebook.com/techwithken.

Kim Komando is scheduled on Saturday afternoons but is often pre-empted.

Hey, kids, what time is it? The IRS is waiting

Editor's corner

Weigle

By the time you read this, most of you will have probably completed your tax returns, even if you haven't mailed them yet (or am I being overly optimistic?). I listened to my answering machine before I started writing this March 6 and found a message from my tax preparer that my returns are ready. I'll find out later what the bad news is.

I'm assuming there will be bad news because much of my after-retirement income last year came with only federal taxes withheld. I'm told that employers can decide whether to withhold state taxes from pension payments or not. The Star, or more properly, Scripps Howard, decided not to. I don't understand the logic of that — but I don't understand tax laws in general, so I'm expecting to just increase my federal withholding on everything I can to provide some money next year to replace what I have to pay the state.

I know common knowledge says I should be happy to have to pay taxes because that shows I had an income. I'd be a lot more willing to accept that argument if I didn't feel like I'm watching dysfunctional governments at both the state and federal levels and not hearing much from any candidates about how to make things better.

I've been asked why I don't use income tax software and prepare my own returns. I fear that I'd misunderstand some instruction or put a number in the wrong place and end up owing even more money after the penalties are levied.

What's up on Facebook?

The board suggested last month that I list some of the most interesting posts on the CIPCUG Facebook page to encourage more members to both join the page and add to the posts, so let's take a look (sorry, no links or details here; you'll have to visit the page for those):

- Finding an Alternative to the Free Picnik Photo Editor
- When I tried to download Malwarebytes, it warned me that my anti-virus software would not work. Is this true? I use Norton AV 2011.
- Windows 7 Problem Steps Recorder
- Internet Archive's Repository Collects Thousands of Books
- iPhone Security Flaw Gives Developers Access to Photos
- About Google Cloud Connect - Google Apps Help
- Introduction - Cloud Print — Google Developers
- Office Web Apps
- Is Google's Privacy Policy Evil?

— John Weigle, editor

Treasurer's report for January 2012

Lewis

By Art Lewis
treasurer@cipcug.org

1-1-2012 through 1-31-2012	
Category Description	
INFLOWS	
Coffee income	6.00
Donation	12.00
Memberhip Income	
Renewals	380.00
Publication sales	160.00
Raffle	149.00
TOTAL INFLOWS	**707.00**
OUTFLOWS	
Corporate Expense	310.00
Insurance	899.00
Raffle prizes	87.18
Rent Paid	150.00
TOE	458.89
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	**1,905.07**
OVERALL TOTAL	**-1,198.07**
Unrestricted Funds	4,836.12
Restricted Funds	0.00
Bank Balance 1-31-12	**4,836.12**
Year to Date Income	5,319.75
Year to Date Expense	6,270.96
Net Year to Date	-951.21

2012 contributors to The Outer Edge

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

CIPCUG MEMBERS
Ken Church
Art Lewis
Helen Long
Diane Mortensen
Toby Scott
Michael Shalkey
Rick Smith
Jim Thornton
Bill Wayson
John Weigle

OTHERS
Rick Eblaw, vice president, Southern Tier Personal Computing Club, N.Y. (APCUG)

Membership report:

Is it time to renew?

By Ken Church
email address: *membership@cipcug.org*

CHURCH

Welcome –
New members: Wanted

Attendance at the February 2012 general meeting: 48 members and guests

Total membership: 187

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 24, 2012, meeting.

January 2012 renewals payment due:

Mbr#	Last Name	First Name	Pd to Dt
0926	Curry	Rick	201201
1217	Donohue	Joseph	201201
1132	Hales	Clifford	201201

February 2012 renewals payment due:

Mbr#	Last Name	First Name	Pd to Dt
1168	Brown	James	201202
0412	Guess	John	201202
1116	Hazeltine	John	201202
0843	Isaman	Harry	201202
0566	Meeker	Kirsten	201202
0565	Meeker	Mary	201202
0656 T	Mori	Ken	201202
1184	Murray	Tom	201202
1218	Panczel	Marika	201202
1082	Perry	Jim	201202
1232	Riggan	Lee	201202
1135	Sherbrooke	Rosalie	201202
1169	Smith	Donald	201202
1083	Stoutz	Hank	201202
1140	Wayson	Bill	201202
0130	Whelchel	Claude	201202

March 2012 renewals payment due:

Mbr#	Last Name	First Name	Pd to Dt
1060	Bailey	Carl	201203
0544	Beardshear	Paul	201203
1227 A	Chapman	Bob	201203
1227 B	Chapman	Louise	201203
1171	Corser	Caroline	201203
0054 T	Erickson	Elden	201203
1172 A	Hargett	John	201203
1172	Hargett	Pongpan	201203
0917	Johnson	Barbara	201203
1220	Johnson	Vic	201203
0138	Lakes	Arline	201203
0137	Lakes	George	201203
0425	Ledner, MD	Bob	201203
0571	Swingle	Phil	201203
1050	Wennerholm	Ernest	201203
1051	Wennerholm	Naomi	201203
0771	Zuromski	Alexandra	201203

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

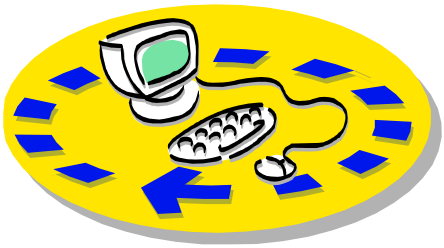
If you would like to volunteer to help others, please send your contact information and programs you're willing to help on to editor@cipcug.org.

. . . . . .

WEB HELP SITES (Updated 2-7-12)

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
OnGuard Online: http://www.onguardonline.gov
PCMag: www.pcmag.com
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 email address through CIPCUG in the form of YourName@cipcug.org may obtain one for $20 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

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OXNARD. CA
PERMIT NO. 1785

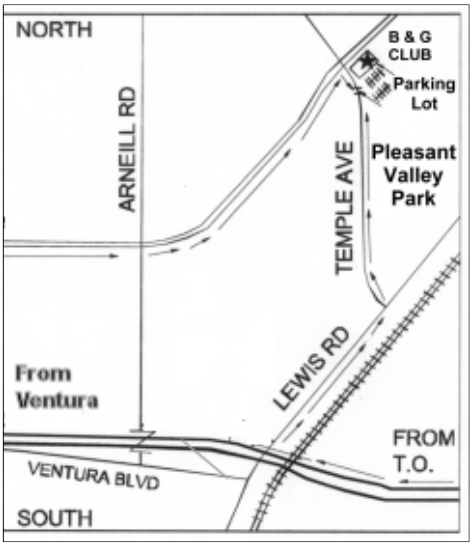
DATED MATERIAL
Please Do Not Delay

DUES REMINDER

If the number above your name is 2012 MARCH, your membership dues are payable in March 2012.

March 2012 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 24, at the Boys & Girls Club, 1500 Temple Ave. (Ponderosa Drive and Temple Avenue), Camarillo.

Meeting Schedule:

8:00 a.m.	**Doors open**
8:45-9:30	**Internet and networking SIG, Social Media SIG**
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 — Google Docs vs. Windows Live Docs**
	Drawing