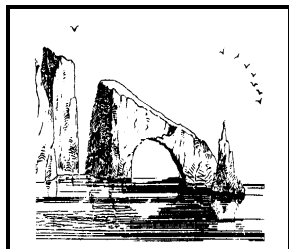


# The Outer E

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Newsletter of the Channel Islands PC Users Group



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Visit our Web page at: [www.cipcug.org](http://www.cipcug.org)  
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The Friendly Computer Club Helping Make Computers Friendly

\*\*\*\*\*  
★  
★ Attendance at the  
★ August general meeting  
★ **94 members and 4 guests**  
★ **We welcome one new member**  
★  
\*\*\*\*\*

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## COMMAND.COM

By Andy Toth, President

Ken Church and I just returned from the 9th Annual Southwestern Regional User Group Conference in San Diego, Aug. 9-11. I do not believe we have ever sent anyone to this event in the past. This will be a yearly event for CIPCUG. User groups are still alive and vary in size from a few dozen to 2,500+.

I will also admit this was the one of the most grueling conferences I have attended. It was nonstop from 6 p.m. Friday to 3 p.m. Sunday. Well, there was one other, a personal improvement conference I went to that started at 8 p.m. on Friday and by 2 a.m. on Saturday each attendee walked a 40-foot burning bed of coals in bare feet; then it really got hard.

The conference concentrated on issues relative to user groups and the changing relationship between user groups and vendors. This relationship is changing, not disappearing. The conference hosted one meal; the remainder were by sponsors: Adobe, Jasc, Intel, Handspring and Microsoft. These meals included a presentation by the vendor and, of course, very generous raffle prizes. For your information, Dave Whittle, who has done numerous presentations for us, is now a consultant for Intel. Some of the presentations concentrated on new products, others were more of a technical nature, but all were positive toward the user group-vendor relationship. There were more than 50 participating sponsors and vendors for this conference. Every member of this group has software and hardware from many of them.

How is that relationship changing? I have a feel for it, but I cannot express it absolutely. As a group, we are considered passionate about computers. However, we are not the only group. "Gamers" are an example of another group of the many in this category. Each group has talents and assets that make it attractive to maintain a relationship. We have demonstrated and are demonstrating our passion for computers. What we need to do to evolve to the next level is not exactly clear. We are evolving as I write this, independent of the discussions that took place at this conference. We are, can, and will continue to provide the vendors with what they are looking for. How will we do this? Simply, by just putting into action the very reason each of us joined CIPCUG in the first place.

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# Executive Committee Meeting Notes

August 2002 By Martha Churchyard

The CIPCUG Executive Committee Meeting was held on Aug. 6, 2002 at the home of Andy Toth.

Present: George and Arline Lakes, Andy Toth, John Weigle, Art Lewis, Helen Long, Ralph Duchacek, Martha Churchyard.

Ken Church and Andy will attend the APCUG Southwest User Group Conference in San Diego Aug. 9 to 11.

SIGs and other coming events were discussed.

Carla Kincaid has offered to take over the job of generating address labels for TOE. A volunteer is still needed to manage advertising for TOE.

There have been a couple of inquiries about giving people the option of downloading the TOE instead of having it mailed; the pros and cons of this were discussed.

## Why join CIPCUG?

Here are just a few of the reasons: Monthly SIGs, a monthly program, a monthly newsletter, a discounted Internet Service Provider, a library of computer books and videos, discounts on a variety of books and software, access to computer help through F1—Your Help Key, friendships with other computer users and the chance to help others with your knowledge.

## Coming up

# Executive Software to show products

## Programs

Executive Software will show its products at our Sept. 7 meeting in Freedom Center at Camarillo Airport (see map and schedule on back page).

Here is some information on the company's main products from its Web site <[www.execsoft.com](http://www.execsoft.com)>.

**Diskkeeper** (for Windows 95 on): Fragmentation occurs on all computers, no matter how advanced your system is. Fragmentation slows down your computer — and that means slower access to Web pages, files and programs. Diskkeeper eliminates fragmentation automatically, so you can get the most out of your computer all the time.

The built-in defragmenter that comes with Windows® must be run manually on one drive at a time. Diskkeeper can be set to run automatically and will work on all the drives on your system. While the built-in is running, you won't be able to run other programs. There is no interruption when Diskkeeper is running. Diskkeeper also defragments important system files that the built-in can't handle.

**Undelete** (for Windows NT, 2000, and XP): You know how frustrating it is to delete a file only to find that you need it later. Undelete® is a unique file-recovery system that catches deleted files that bypass your desktop recycle bin. Undelete replaces your recycle bin and holds your deleted files safely. You can even recover files you deleted before Undelete was installed on your computer. Buy Undelete and you'll never again be at the mercy of lost data.

**DiskAlert** (for Windows NT, 2000 and XP): If you knew ahead of time that the hard drive in your computer was very likely to crash, would you do something about it? You bet you would.

For most people, the first inkling of hard drive problems is a crashed disk — too late to save your data. Is there ever a convenient time for a disk crash?

DiskAlert is a must-have program that transparently monitors your hard drives and alerts you by screen pop-up, e-mail, pager and phone when your hard drive first gets into trouble so you can do something about it.

Works on SCSI and IDE disks.

The company promotes each program as just "Set It And Forget It"®.

Other coming meetings:

Oct. 5: Orv Beach, of the Simi/Conejo Linux Users Group, Linux.

## SIGs

All our Special Interest Groups are presented at Ventura County Computers. From the 101 Freeway, exit at Telephone, take Telephone south to McGrath, turn left

## September door prizes

The club door prizes for September are:

Norton Antivirus Pro 2002

Microsoft Internet Keyboard Professional

Epson Stylus C40UX Inkjet Printer

Estimated retail value \$200

We have two types of raffle tickets: one for any 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 and \$20 for 26 tickets and are available to anyone.

## SIG reminders available by e-mail

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

We hope that this service will remind more people about coming SIGs. Check the front page of the CIPCUG Web site in the "Latest Page Revisions" or at the bottom of the SIG INFORMATION page. Or, if you want to sign up without going to the Web page, send an e-mail to <[siglist@cipcug.org](mailto:siglist@cipcug.org)> with the subject line "subscribe" to be placed on the list.

and go one block. Turn right on Goodyear and then right again into the second driveway. Unit 117 is the back, right corner of the industrial building.

The Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are sponsored by CIPCUG and led by volunteers. There is no charge for members to attend. If no moderator is listed, the SIG is not officially scheduled. Check the Web page before you attend to make sure there will be a moderator.

Here's the SIG schedule for the end of August and all of September:

Thursday, Aug. 29: Andy Toth, Open Office, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Andy will give us a preview of Sun Systems new Open Office.

Monday, Sept. 8: Michael Shalkey, Irfan View, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Michael will show how to download and use this free downloadable graphics viewer and editor. It reads a vast number of graphic formats and saves to just as many. He will demonstrate resizing, color manipulation and how to create a slide show. (This will be a great demo folks, don't miss it.)

Tuesday, Sept. 16: Rick Smith, XP Operating System, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Rick will present the first of a four-part series on XP Core, including administrating and managing user accounts and global settings. (If you are using XP, you don't want to miss this one.)

Thursday, Sept. 25: Andy Toth, CD Writer, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Andy will demonstrate how to re-write to your CD writer.

## Q&A

# Windows critical updates help stop viruses

### Business meeting summary

Treasurer Art Lewis gave the Annual Report, printed elsewhere in this newsletter, and the report for July. In answer to a question, he said that restricted funds are the payments received for the ISP. These payments are made at the beginning of the quarter and disbursed monthly.

The other officers also gave their reports. The October meeting will be a presentation on Linux by a very experienced Linux manager, author and teacher. Andy hopes to find someone to give a SIG on using your CD-RW, especially to create backups.

Mary Steppes-Cole and Donna Catton of the Oxnard Adult School gave an overview of their classes, which are held at the Camarillo Airport. The classes are reasonably priced and cover Windows and basic Microsoft Office applications, as well as graphics, genealogy, and quilting. For more information their phone number is 385-2578. (For more details, see page 6.)

Toby apologized for not doing the E-mail system update this month due to a back injury. He is leaving soon for a long-scheduled vacation, and will reschedule when he returns.

### Q&A session

**Q:** We had a question about critical updates during the Internet SIG. The .NET update takes 2½ hours or thereabouts to download. Microsoft says it is critical; it isn't. The .NET framework is one of two competing technologies, and it isn't clear that .NET will be the winner. Microsoft is pushing it very hard, but it is not really out yet.

However, there are many serious viruses now that you can get even with an up-to-date virus checker if you don't also have the critical updates up-to-date. Hackers are getting better and more inventive, and infected e-mail is proliferating at an alarming rate. To get the updates, use the Windows Update entry on the Start menu. Unless someone has changed the settings, every Windows computer has an entry for Windows Updates on the Start menu — not Start, Programs, just Start, up above Programs. If you don't see it there, you can open Internet Explorer and click on Tools, Windows Update Page. Click on this and go to the Update Page. It will automatically look at your system and list what you need. I know it is long for modem users, but you must update to DirectX 8.1. DirectX is what installs programs when you need modules that are on the Internet. The older versions of DirectX will allow the installation of things you don't want.

**Q:** How do I know if I have DirectX 8.1 already? I haven't been able to find that information on my computer.

**A:** You don't need to worry about it. The list on the Windows Update page has two sections, Critical Updates,



Photo by Jerry Crocker

**Mary Steppes-Cole, left, and Donna Catton describe the computer classes offered by the Oxnard Adult School. The latest semester of classes starts Sept. 3. Classes are offered all year.**

and Recommended Updates, and other things. When you go to the Update Page, your computer downloads a list of the current version of everything on the update site. Your computer checks itself against that list. It checks whether the program is installed, and if it is installed, what the version is. If the version on the computer is different than the version on the list just downloaded from Microsoft, or it has not been installed at all, then it will be listed on the critical update page. If you see anything on that list, you don't have it.

Internet Explorer should be updated to either 5.5 Service Pack 2 or version 6.0. If you have XP, it will be at 6.0 automatically. If you are at version 5-something, I would still suggest that you upgrade to 5.5 Service Pack 2 rather than to 6.0. There are still some things in 6.0 I'm not too thrilled about, but if you have anything less than 5.5 Service Pack 2, you need to upgrade because of security problems.

Direct X 8.1 and Internet Explorer 5.5 SP 2 will be in Recommended Updates, not in Critical Updates, but you really must do them. And everything in Critical Updates must be done. Go there at least every month, maybe two or three weeks, and download all the critical updates.

**Q:** You said that if you see it, you don't have it. But when I go to Critical Updates I have a checkbox, and if the checkbox is checked, on the right it will say, "already installed." How do you account for that?

**A:** The personal settings have been changed to include the option "View all installed and uninstalled modules," and then you get a slightly different page. But the default page that most people will see is as I described.

**Q:** If it says they have been installed, though, indeed they have.

*(Continued on page 5)*

# More Q&A: What are networked drives?

*(Continued from page 4)*

**A:** Indeed they have.

**Q:** This is also a Windows critical update question. Under the recommended updates it says “map drive shutdown update.” I don’t even know what a mapped drive is, but it says it is for Windows 98 Second Edition. Should I download it or not?

**A:** A mapped network drive is used in an office or a networked environment where you have a lot of other computers, and you have a server, say, where all of the correspondence files are saved. In order to make it work a little bit faster you map drive X: to the server correspondence folder. Drive G: is one, drive H: is that one, drive I: is another, and they are all folders on other computers. If you have a lot of these mapped drives to different folders, you can have a problem with things hanging up. If you have a lot of mapped network drives you will want to download the patch. If you are at home you probably don’t map drives — your husband’s or wife’s computer isn’t networked to yours — and you can forget about it, you don’t need it.

If you are running Windows 98 and you have any problem at all with the computer not shutting down properly — when you click on shutdown, it sometimes hangs, and doesn’t get shut down all the way — download the shutdown patches. There are several of them. You need to read the text, but they will help in the shutdown process.

They are not guaranteed to fix the problem. There are about 114 things you can try to fix Windows 98 shutdown problems, and the last one on the list is, “Reformat the hard drive and reinstall Windows.” Microsoft hasn’t quite figured that one out yet.

And they are no longer supporting Windows 98. When I say they aren’t supporting them, I mean you can’t call into tech support, even if you pay for the call, to get a live human being to talk to about a problem if you have one; and no new features will be added. But they do continue to provide the online updates and so forth. They haven’t supported Windows 95 for years, but all the patches and so forth will still update. They will even support Windows 3.1 when appropriate. They do all of the critical updates to keep your computer running well. It isn’t really all that critical; how many of you have paid \$200 for a Microsoft support call anyway?

**Q:** I’m running Windows 98 now. If I was going to update, what should I update to?

**A:** From Windows 98, I would not upgrade to Windows Me. I went to a Microsoft dog-and-pony show to teach technicians how to install XP more efficiently. At the beginning of the meeting a Microsoft employee asked, “How many of you used our tools to roll out Windows Me for your customers?” A group of us raised our hands, and he said, “Microsoft apologizes.” (Laughter)

In Microsoft’s tech support documentation, there are a bunch of places where patches and fixes are described, and

they apply to every other version of Windows but not Windows Me. Microsoft would just as soon it had never existed, I think. So don’t install Windows Me. But if you have it and it’s running OK, don’t change.

**Q:** What are the system requirements for Windows XP?

**A:** Officially, not much. I think it’s about a 300 MHz computer, 128 MB of RAM, and maybe a 4 GB hard drive. But let me go back to the original question, which is, what would I recommend for somebody running Windows 98.

I do not recommend upgrading an older computer to Windows XP. Period. Number one, older hardware not on the Hardware Compatibility List can cause big problems. Number two, even when the computer and everything in it is on the compatibility list, if you upgrade, it moves over the older settings from the registry, which has caused terrible problems, such that every upgrade we have done has actually been a new install.

If you have a computer that is presently running Windows 98 and you want to run Windows XP on it, and you have verified that every piece of hardware, the exact model, is on the Hardware Compatibility List, then do yourself a favor and install to a new hard drive. If you want to save the old data, make the old drive the slave drive, the D: drive, and install XP on a new drive as the C: drive. You can even set it up then to dual boot XP and 98, and move your data over, and so forth.

Upgrading to XP is a nightmare. If you are really having trouble with Windows 98 and want a more robust system, something that probably is going to work — nothing is guaranteed when you upgrade, baby, you can have problems anywhere — Windows 2000 is still what I prefer to use. Rick is doing all these nice SIGs on XP and has it running fine.

**Q:** Are there any problems upgrading to XP from Me?

**A:** Yes, upgrading from anything other than Windows 2000, even from NT 4, is a problem. I particularly do not recommend upgrading from the Windows 9x code base — although I don’t think you can upgrade from 95, I forget. But supposedly there is one from 98 and Me. I won’t say upgrades never work — we’ve actually had them work a couple of times — but for very knowledgeable people it is a pain in the neck to do. We run into all kinds of difficulties. If you think you can do it at home relatively painlessly, and you only have the one computer, you’re asking for trouble. I know there are some people who have done it easily, but the probabilities are not in your favor.

**Q:** Can you use the upgrade disk to get a clean install from 98 to XP? And related to that, is there a utility that we can use to scan our computer to determine if it is compatible, that we can download?

**A:** In answer to the first question, I suggest you buy a new hard drive, use your old hard drive as drive D: and set your computer to boot off the CD, so that Windows 98 is

*(Continued on page 6)*

# More Q&A: Upgrading to XP can be difficult

*(Continued from page 5)*

now installed on the D: drive, you will have no trouble. It will upgrade when it finds another operating system to upgrade from.

By the way, if you want to dual boot, you will need to use Partition Magic or some other utility to change the Windows 98 registry references for Windows from C: to D: so Windows 98 will run from the D: drive.

If you have a spare hard drive, just install XP on that drive, and stick the existing Windows 98 in as drive D: so it can be found by the install. Wait to change the drive designations from C: to D: until you have XP up and running because it may or may not work. XP is tricky to get running. In the process of building computers we have found combinations of stuff we can't get XP to install with. So then we know, we won't use that CD-RW with that motherboard any more. That kind of thing. You might have to replace some hardware in order to get it to work. That's just the nature of XP. It is a lot pickier about hardware.

In answer to your other question, how to check compatibility on your old computer, if you go into Windows 98, in the Control Panel>System>Device Manager, there is an option to print all the devices you have on your computer. Take that list and go to the Hardware Compatibility List on the Microsoft Web site, and compare them. I don't know of a reliable tool. There is one you can download, but I've not found it very reliable. But you can try it. It is available on the XP Web site.

Before you go home thinking this is a bad thing, it really is not. One of the reasons that the Mac users make fun of Windows users is that Mac won't let you install any hardware that isn't basically Mac hardware, or that emulates Mac hardware so well that it fools the system. It's not

very forgiving of things that work differently.

In the Windows environment you'd be amazed at the different ways video cards figure out how to display video on your screen. They don't use the same resources, they don't use the same calls, they don't use the same locations in memory, they don't use the same pointers, they don't use the same anything. It's really a mess out there, and there are a lot of instability problems in Windows that are caused by the lack of standardization.

You may say, "This device driver works perfectly." It does work perfectly, but if you have another device that uses the same memory location and is hard-coded to use it, and you can't change them, the two of them are going to crash each other every time. Everybody blames Windows, but the problem is Windows doesn't have enforcement of standards. Anybody can do anything they want, and if it runs on most of the stuff it is considered to be compatible. Windows XP tightens this up significantly. Once you get XP running, and get it bulletproof on your system, it's a very good operating system. Most of the drivers are out now, most of the teething problems are behind us. The problem is getting it up and running, because it is very particular about hardware.

**Q:** I have a problem with my new HP laptop. I wanted to install a Windows 98 partition, and the partition is OK, but the video driver doesn't seem to function right. I can't get the HP video driver to work on the 98 partition. I also tried to install an external driver that has functioned in other computers with Windows 98, and it doesn't work either.

**A:** The problem is that for laptops the video cards are almost always proprietary. The manufacturer only creates drivers for the operating systems that they sell it with. They

## Oxnard Adult School offers computer classes

The Oxnard Adult School offers computer classes at the Camarillo Airport Center "virtually year-round," Mary Steppes-Cole, a school representative, said at the August meeting. Donna Catton, who teaches introduction to computers, keyboarding and a variety of graphics classes, showed some of the work of her graphics students.

The next term of classes starts Sept. 3 and lasts through Oct. 25 at the Camarillo Airport Center, 280 Skyway Drive, Camarillo. A few of the classes are taught in Oxnard.

Morning, afternoon and evening classes are available and cost from \$22 to more than \$45. Those 60 or older get a \$5 discount. Some of the classes require books, which are in addition to the basic course fee.

Although most of the classes are taught in Camarillo, registration is conducted at the Oxnard Adult School, 1101 West Second St., Oxnard, 93030, phone 385-2578; at the Jobs Career Center, 635 S. Ventura Road, Oxnard 93030.

Students may also register by phone and mail.

The computer lab may be found on the Web at <home.earthlink.net/~sumitak/v3\_document.htm> or <ouhsd.k12.ca.us/sites/adult/computers.htm>.

Classes scheduled for the next term – although some could be canceled if there isn't sufficient enrollment – are Introduction to Computers, Introduction to Internet, Greeting Card Plus, Photofun, Computer Basic (senior), Internet Basic (senior), Word Processing (beginning), Presentation, Genealogy, Electric Quilt II, Computer Basic with Keyboarding, and Introduction to Computers (Spanish). Some of the classes require Introduction to Computers or equivalent knowledge and the Word Processing class also requires 25 words per minute keyboarding. Other classes offered, although not scheduled this term, are Introduction to Computers II, Excel, Genealogy and Desktop Publishing and Web Design.

# Program

## Find the best deals on PriceGrabber.com

By John Weigle

<jweigle@vcnet.com>

Online shoppers can find information about prices — and reviews of products and sellers — at PriceGrabber.com, which bills itself as “the smart place to start your shopping.” Pamela Swartwood, manager, communications, described the free site at our August meeting. She was a last-minute speaker obtained after the August issue went to press and just a few days before the meeting.

PriceGrabber was founded in March 1999 with coverage of just computer hardware. It has since added the categories of software, electronics, movies, music, books, video games and toys and the following services: BottomLinePrice, technical specifications, professional and consumer product reviews, side-by-side product comparisons, merchant reviews and e-mail notification when a product is being sold at the price you picked.

PriceGrabber does not sell products. It is a shopping comparison site, which means it tracks information of various merchants who join the service and lists it when users asks about a specific product. Yahoo! Internet Life magazine named it as the best shopping comparison site in its January 2002 issue.

The site attracts some 6 million unique visitors per month, she said, and its lists 1.5 million to 2 million items. The merchants give PriceGrabber.com information about what’s in stock, price, shipping, taxes and other information that affects the total cost, thus the site’s BottomLinePrice. PriceGrabber also makes its engine available to other sites, including PCWorld.com, which is one of the ways it makes money (it also gets paid for each click-through from its site to a merchant’s site, allows banner ads and sells placement on the first listing of products). It does not accept pop-up ads and won’t sell its e-mail addresses or buy opt-in e-mail lists, she said. PriceGrabber does offer its own irregularly published newsletter. “Featured Merchants” have paid for the placement, but lists can be sorted by price, too, in which case the designation makes no difference in placement.

The site allows searches for a specific product or by type of products (such as digital cameras) and by price of the product. The product search asks for your ZIP Code so it can determine costs of shipping, but it does not track that information and doesn’t identify its users, she said. If users insert the ZIP Code, they get a highlighted best price.

The results page also gives users access to reviews of both the product and the sellers, although she noted that some negative reviews must be read carefully. For instance, reviewers are asked how long they’ve had a product. A negative review by someone who has had a product for only a short time might indicate that it isn’t especially user-



Photo by Jerry Crocker

### Vice President Craig Ladd helps speaker Pamela Swartwood, manger, communications, of PriceGrabber.com during the drawing for PriceGrabber T-shirts at our

friendly or that the reviewer doesn’t have much experience with that kind of product or doesn’t read manuals, she said.

When she looks at reviews of merchants, she said, she always reads the one-star (lowest) ratings to see what’s said. But she also considers the number of negative reviews compared to the total number of reviews.

“Sometimes if there’s only one bad review on a page, I wonder about the person who wrote it,” she added.

Merchants who get too many bad ratings are removed from the site, she said. Merchants sign a contract requiring positive business practices. Bait-and-switch will result in listings being pulled, but a list is maintained that shows those who have been pulled. Online merchants, especially, don’t want to be removed because they get so much business from PriceGrabber, she said. The site also has links to such consumer-oriented groups as the Better Business Bureau.

“We want to help everybody have a good online shopping experience. And so that means everything from customer service to pricing,” she added.

The home page lists most popular products, based on the number of searches for it.

Information about merchants’ hours, phone number, location, delivery options and policies on returns is also listed. A restocking fee “is a little bit of a red flag for me,” Swartwood said.

If the prices listed are too high, users can ask for e-mail notification when a merchant offers an item for a specific

*(Continued on page 8)*

# More on PriceGrabber...

(Continued from page 7)

price. This feature lets you exclude merchants (in case you've had a bad experience with someone) and limit the merchants to those with high ratings, among other filters. The product-tracking service does not include shipping or other costs, just basic prices.

Movies can be searched by genre, decade, ratings and Oscar winners. Music can be searched by genre but not yet by music awards, partly because of the number of them. "We want to add a Grammy filter," she said.

Rebates are listed, but they aren't included in the bottom-line price because of the time required to get them. "You know how it always says it's going to be four to six weeks or six to eight weeks? I've never seen a rebate come back to me in less than 12 weeks. So we figure since that's money that's out of your pocket from the get-go we're not going to calculate that into your bottom-line price," she explained.

The site recently added Storefronts, an online marketplace for individuals and smaller merchants. Those who sign up can click on a "sell yours here" button from anyplace on the site. There is no cost to list an item, and the commission rate is 99 cents plus 7½ percent of what the item sells for. The site also offers Storefront's Buyer Protection Program through Lloyds of London, a \$500 insurance program for sales conducted through the site. Storefront listings appear with all the other listings, not on a separate page, she noted.

So far, the site has only online stores, although it's working with some companies that have both online and brick-and-mortar stores so users can determine if they can find items near them.

The site doesn't specifically say if sellers will ship to a post office box, but it includes e-mail links so users can ask directly.

When PriceGrabber started, she said, most online stores were reluctant to be listed because they feared they'd get no business if they didn't have the lowest price. "What we found out is ... 85 percent of people do not click through on the lowest price. Doesn't that sound amazing to you? It turns out ... that price is just one factor in how people make a purchasing decision. Whether or not they've heard of this company and whether that company has good reviews makes much more difference than price, especially on something where there's not a big difference. If you're only talking about a \$5 difference and one guy looks kind of shady, I'll spend five extra dollars with the reputable company."

In answer to a question, she said there are no plans to list cars because it would be difficult to directly compare items. PriceGrabber uses manufacturers' SKU (Stock Keeping Unit) numbers so it's always clear that the same products are being compared. Sellers who fudge SKU numbers will get kicked off the site, she said, but it hasn't been a major problem. She did note, however, that when you click on a merchant's Web site, you are taken to the merchant's site, so it's



These two screen captures show the opening page of PriceGrabber.com and the rebates page for a specific product.



always a good idea as you read the information to be sure it's for the item you're shopping for.

To another questioner, she said that some sellers are asking for additional numbers on credit card sales as a security measure, she said. The numbers are on the back of the card.

PriceGrabber.com is in Culver City and the Web URL is, obviously, <www.pricegrabber.com>.

Swartwood's presentation was done without an Internet connection, just the cached pages on her computer, and Toby Scott commented after the drawing on the difficulties of doing that: "She made it look effortless, but I trust it was not." He also said he has been using the service for a couple of years and highly recommends it.

Help your fellow members.  
Volunteer to lead a SIG.



Web page  
**New CIPCUG mail server delayed**

As all of you probably have figured out by now, the ISP upgrade is still "in the works." Toby twisted his back out midway through the process and was unable to complete the project prior to his departure. If any of you have ever done something as simple-sounding as twisting your back (Been there! Done that! And I don't want to do it again!), I'm sure you can remember how utterly painful it can be. I can't imagine that sitting in an airplane for 18 hours would do much to help it out either. Hope it didn't make your trip too uncomfortable.

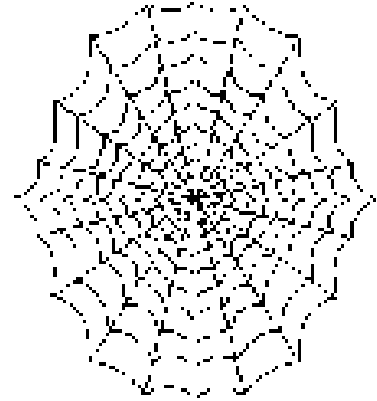
I don't know just when the upgrade will be completed, but if you have problems getting online in September, just give me a call at 642-6521, and I can at least give you a status report. I do want to repeat the instructions again because they are important. I strongly urge all of our CIPCUG ISP members to check out Toby's page concerning the new server upgrade information. Go to <<http://www.vccomputers.com/newmail.cfm>> for complete details and information on changes to make in your Outlook Express or other e-mail program. The changes *will* come, and I will send out a group message when it happens. Believe me, you WILL KNOW when it happens!

The new server program will have Web access

(excellent advantage to those of you who travel and want to check your e-mail from out of town).

The Web access is a great advantage, but some of you may want to consider changing your password to something with a little more industrial strength to it. Make a combination of letters, numbers, and punctuation marks (but no spaces) not to exceed 12 characters.

In case you are a little leery of using the Internet to change your password, you may call me at 642-6521. If I am not in when you call, just leave it on my answering machine. I promise that Callie will not tell anyone.



(Continued on page 10)



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# XP 2000

*Roxy Says:*

**"That's too fast for me"**



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# Technology not always the solution

By John Weigle

<jweigle@vcnet.com>

**High-Tech Heretic, Reflections of a Computer Contrarian**, by Clifford Stoll, Anchor Books edition, September 2000; copyright by Clifford Stoll, 1999; 240 pages, \$12.

**Double Fold, Libraries and the Assault on Paper**, by Nicholson Baker, Random House, 2001, 384 pages, \$14. Digital version available.

Sometimes the old way is still the best way.

That's one way to summarize both these books, which should be on the required reading list for everyone who thinks technology can solve all the world's problems.

Clifford Stoll is best known for "The Cuckoo's Egg," which recounts his efforts to track down a worldwide hacking ring after he discovered a small overcharge in his school's computer department. But he has since written two books – "Silicon Snake Oil" is the other – that point out some of the problems of computerizing the world without thinking about the effects.

"I see my role as injecting – perhaps without success – a few notes of skepticism into the utopian dreams of a digital wonderland," he writes. "For I believe that techies have a

responsibility to challenge hyperbole, false promises, and gross exaggerations."

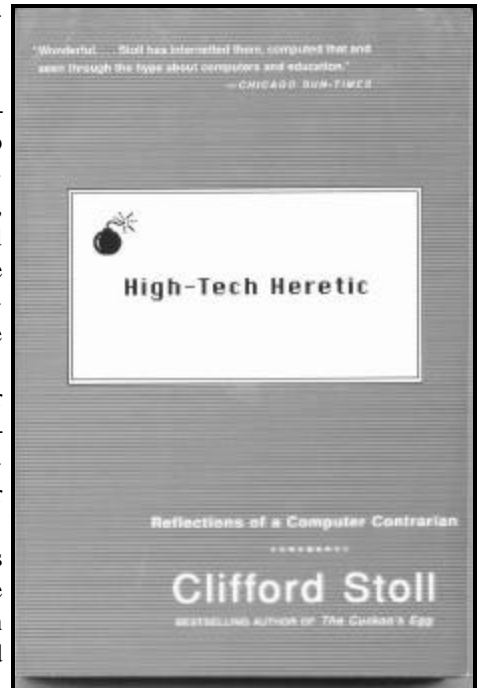
He continues in the introduction: "It's easy to talk about computers' speed, memory, and novelty. More difficult to grapple with the frustrations they generate, their costs (both obvious and indirect), and their side effects. Yet these downsides may be more important than the overhyped benefits. What's

lost when we adopt new technologies? Who's marginalized? What valuable things get trampled?"

Ventura County doesn't fare well when Stoll starts listing his concerns. He notes, for instance, that St. John's Lutheran Church in Oxnard placed a multimedia video screen above the altar, complete with sound system and PowerPoint projects. He continues:

"One Sunday, Pastor [Mark] Beyer asked his congregation to raise their hands and sing to God. Then he turned and joined his parishioners in looking up at the giant computer display. If God had retained the same sense of outrage he displayed in Daniel 5:25, they'd have seen the flashing message 'Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharishn.' Instead the venerated PowerPoint screen answered the supplicants with the message:

*(Continued on page 11)*



## More on Web page...

*(Continued from page 9)*

WITH EGG ON MY FACE! I must admit that when giving out the alternate phone number for the Camarillo people, I transposed a number. The Camarillo people use the 200-1000 number or 601-0166. ;-( (Sorry about that!)

Sometime in late July I trashed my hard drive. I just didn't have anything else to do so I put my foot through the computer. I had to drag the pathetic thing in to Rick to have him extricate my foot. His first question as how long ago did you back up? After I hit him, he said, well maybe it isn't that bad! He called me later to give me good news and bad news. Bad news first, the hard drive is dead; the good news, it was still under warranty. I had done a document back up in mid-June, so it really wasn't too devastating. Bless that good ole CD writer! I am now a believer. My brother assures me that if I back up every 30 minutes I will be OK. I started this long dissertation because I finally posted more pictures on the Club Photo 3 page and the Behind The Scenes pages and have added Andy Toth and Martha Churchyard to the Officers page. And I will be adding the July Garage Sale pictures to the Club Photo 3 page. That is, if I can keep my foot out of my computer.

# More on 'Heretic,' 'Double Fold'

(Continued from page 10)

“ ‘For though, Lord, art high above all Earth. I exalt thee.’ ”

His chapter on libraries begins:

“Sandi Webb, a councilperson in Simi Valley, California, wants to close the community library system: ‘We need to rip out those useless bookcases, filled with outdated books that are seldom opened, and replace them with low-cost computers and CD-ROMs and high-speed Internet access lines.’

“Yee-haw! Computers will eliminate those pesky libraries. Get rid of them books. After the book-burning festival, let’s eliminate local politicians, now that computers and telephones let us instantly vote on issues.”

Well, yes, but can’t computers give our children a better education? Stoll doubts it, noting that a flashy PowerPoint presentation won’t make a bad teacher any better, or a dull, boring lecture any more interesting. And computers don’t come cheaply, even if volunteers wire the classrooms. The hardware must be kept working and periodically upgraded, software has to be purchased and installed, and students and teachers must learn how to use it, meaning that training time can’t be used for something else.

And the idea of handing every student a laptop computer is likely to be even more costly. Laptops get broken, misplaced and stolen and “have far shorter lives than textbooks,” he writes.

“Now contrast a ten-year-old textbook with a ten-year-old computer,” he suggests. “The history book still covers a massive amount of human history but misses a decade of current affairs. The ten-year-old computer simply doesn’t work – you can’t get any software for it. It’s landfill.”

Turn the students loose on the Web for information? “... For every obsolete book, there’s a Web site that’s inaccurate, out of date, one-sided or no longer maintained. For all that educators grinch about textbooks (and there’s plenty to complain about!) at least someone’s reviewed them for content, applicability, grade level, accuracy, and balance. That’s simply not true of 99 percent of what’s on the Web. Giving students the latest information has little to do with presenting them with quality information or well-organized lessons.”

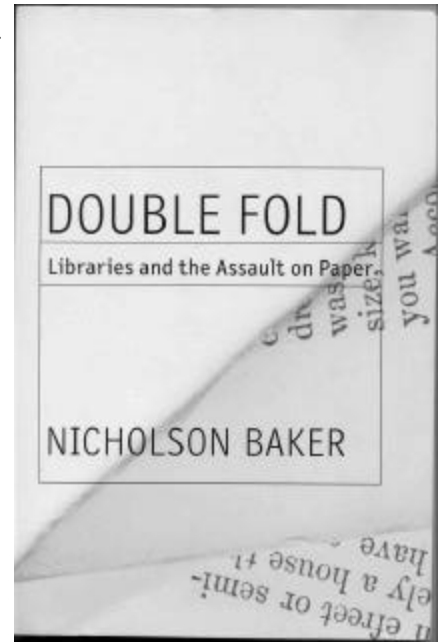
As for students having to learn computer skills to survive, Stoll points out that the main skills needed are typing and the ability to move a mouse. How hard are they to learn? (Obviously, every program its own quirks, but the only way to learn them is to use the program, either on your own or with guidance of someone who knows the program.)

Computers shouldn’t replace life and other activities, he insists, and that’s what many proponents seem to want.

“Double Fold,” although concerned with how libraries treat and store material, touches on some of the same

themes as “High-Tech Heretic.”

Nicholson Baker, a writer of both fiction and non-fiction, attacks the philosophy that libraries must replace all their books, newspapers and other paper-based material with some high-tech version such as microfilm, photocopies, CD-ROMs and so on. He raises many of the same issues covered in “Dark Ages II,” reviewed in the June TOE, especially the problems of software that can’t read media prepared on other software.



But the book is primarily a blistering attack on the primary assumption that has led to such efforts: the idea that paper is slowly crumbling to dust and must be replaced if the world’s knowledge is to be preserved. In his eyes, it’s another case of “we had to destroy the village in order to save it” because books and other items that are microfilmed (or now “saved” electronically) are cut apart to make it easier to feed the pages into the camera or scanner.

This might not be a major issue if many copies of the material involved survived, but Baker emphasizes that once copies are made, other libraries are urged to replace their paper versions with the microfilmed versions. He concentrates especially on the loss of bound copies of newspapers, which usually go to landfills or to dealers who separate the volumes and sell individual newspapers as birthday souvenirs. To save some of these papers, Baker established the American Newspaper Repository to salvage some such collections.

One could ignore Baker’s case that the feel of paper and the ways it’s made are as historic as the words and images on the paper if the microfilm/microfiche/other methods of saving material resulted in useable copies. But as he points out – and as anyone who has tried to do research on microfilmed rolls of newspapers knows – the primary saving is in storage space; the new methods are not user-friendly. The images are hard to read, the color is gone and there is little likelihood that a user will stumble across helpful information as can happen when a reader is turning pages of a newspaper.

(Continued on page 12)

# Windows XP: As good as it gets

By Steve Bass

*Pasadena IBM Users Group*

Kvetching about an operating system is therapeutic. Believe me, I've done lots, saving regular visits to my shrink. But my complaining has almost bottomed out since I made the full-time switch to Windows XP Pro.

You caught that, right? I said almost. The reason is that even though I'm wildly pleased with XP, there are still a few features — and loose ends — I don't like. I'll describe a few of them in this and subsequent columns, and show you how XP has built-in ways to make the changes. (Of course, that's one of my primary kvetches — finding the spots to modify XP isn't obvious and requires digging.)

To play fair, I have to warn you that I'll also do some proselytizing. I'm going to do my best to win you over, so to speak, for your own good. That's because once you get over the hassle of Product Activation, and Microsoft's annoying single license policy, I really think your computing experience will increase substantially.

I need another soapbox minute or two. Many of the PC World letters I receive complain, sometime bitterly, of a Microsoft conspiracy to force you into upgrading your system. Readers go on to say that in order to use XP, they'll need to replace some of their devices (printers seem to be the first one not to work), or stop using old, 16-bit programs written for Win 95.

I'll concede and agree with many of the readers that Microsoft should have done a better job with previous Windows versions; then we wouldn't be stuck in the corner having to upgrade.

But the reality is that if you want a slick operating system, one that's likely to make your computing day smoother and your workday more productive, you'll have to upgrade. [Set Soapbox to Off].

## No more stinkin' crashes

You probably know that XP is a pretty interface hung on Windows 2000's architecture, so it resists crashes ex-

*(Continued on page 16)*

## More on 'Heretic,' 'Double Fold'

*(Continued from page 11)*

Don't believe it? Check out the picture section of the book — which ironically is bound upside down in the edition I bought — and compare the loss of detail between the original page of "The Man in the Silk Mask" from the Feb. 11, 1912, issue of the *New York World* (salvaged from the British Library) to the microfilm version from the New York Public Library.

Even more frightening is the lack of quality control of such copying. Portions of pages, entire pages, even entire issues might be unreadable or simply missing. It's expensive to check all the pages, and since saving money is one reason given for the procedures, many of the companies and buyers simply assume the job was done properly, he says.

In "library speak," he explains, conservation and preservation are not synonymous. "... In fact, they are more often antonymic, although library spokespersons have been known to rely on the lay confusion that surrounds their undisclosed redefinition. *Conservation* refers to the repair or restoration of the original object, the book or manuscript, the empirical, thumbable thing; *preservation*, on the other hand, though it may embrace the act of conservation, has more generally come to mean, in response to powerful euphemistic requirements, any act that carries on or propagates, in any chosen medium (e.g., the original pages, photocopies, fiche, film, tape cartridge, Microcard, diskette, CD-ROM, Norsam metal disk, and so on), the words or images of the original object. Thus *preservation* can mean dumping or other more remu-

nerative forms of dispersal, whereas *conservation* never does, although of course conservational practices have at times caused unintentional harm. (The Scotch-taping of the Dead Sea Scrolls comes to mind.)"

Baker also points out — again, as anyone who scanned more than a few documents knows — that many documents don't scan well. Letters are misread, and the poorer the original, the worse the scan will be.

The book's title, "Double Fold," refers to a test that is used to show how paper can't survive. Fold a corner of a page — fold it back the other way — keep doing so until the corner falls off, as it will, sooner or later. But Baker argues convincingly that the test doesn't prove much. People turning pages carefully don't cause the kind of stress that the double fold test does. Old newspapers that have been properly stored can still be read. Old books — even old dime novels — are still available and readable.

And anything treated that way — steel, iron, wire, pipe — will eventually break.

Even if the test proved that all paper would finally crumble away, Baker notes that microfilm has its own set problems. It, too, often bears the seeds of its own destruction because of chemical reactions that destroy the film.

The book has prompted at least one Web site and a book challenging Baker's conclusions, but if even half of what he says is accurate, he makes a strong case for saving original copies of everything — at least until we're positive that the newer methods of saving information are better than the old.

# Odds and ends

By Jim Thornton

<jthorn@adelphia.net>

## A SURE WAY TO GET INTO THE SAFE MODE:

As the result of my January 2002 TOE article on the advantages of using Windows' Safe Mode, a special diagnostic mode that is most helpful as it significantly reduces the total running time of Windows' Disk Defragmenter, several members have asked for a more fail-safe way to enter into the Safe Mode. Here is a positive route into Safe Mode for the Windows 98 and Me users:

1. After you have powered up your computer and your desktop appears, click on Run from the Start menu.

2. Type in the Run Open window "msconfig" (without the quotation marks) and click on OK. Note: msconfig is an abbreviation for Microsoft configuration.

3. After the System Configuration Utility window appears, click on the Diagnosis Setup button from the General tab. This will change the startup sequence of your computer from its Normal Startup mode into a special Diagnosis Setup mode.

4. Click on Apply and OK.

5. After the System Setting Change window appears, click on Yes, and now your computer will automatically reboot.

6. When the Microsoft Windows 98 Startup Menu or Microsoft Windows Millennium Start Menu appears, select the Safe Mode option, and your computer will go into its Safe Mode and your desktop will run and look different — it will appear to be slower and the icons may be larger (due to a screen resolution of 640 x 480 pixels) with fewer colors (only 16 colors instead 256 or higher).

7. Now you can run your Disk Defragmenter program.

8. When the Disk Defragmenter program is done, be sure to go back into your System Configuration Utility window via the msconfig routine and reset your startup back up Normal

Startup.

**MORE ON REFILLING INK CARTRIDGES:** In the August 2002 issue of the TOE, I reviewed the Kalvin "Universal Colorfast Ink Technology 6 Color (Photo) Kit" and didn't recommend it because of its poorly designed plugs and plug extractor and their substandard telephone technical support and documentation. In January of this year, Jeff Levy, KFI's computer program host, advised his listeners not to refill their Epson cartridges and, in fact, he no longer personally advertises the product on his twice-a-week programs. Thus it appears that since our evaluation involved the Canon cartridges and Jeff Levy warns against refilling Epson cartridges, the product was originally designed around Hewlett-Packard (HP) cartridges and the manufacturer attempted to quickly expand his market to all other non-HP cartridges without doing a through product field trial. This seems to be supported by the fact that over 14 pages of their 36-page manual are devoted to HP cartridges.

**LASERJET PRINTER REPAIR:** Since 1988, I've been using a Hewlett-Packard (HP) LaserJet 4 Plus printer, which is accessible by three computers on my home network. During this time it has failed only once. I researched the local authorized HP repair facilities via the Internet and found several in the Camarillo, Oxnard, Thousand Oaks, and Ventura areas.

For years, I have purchased HP printers and had them repaired, both for my private use and for my employers, from a major well-known Ventura HP dealer, but I found their repair quote to be out-of-line in both price and time. I finally selected a Newbury Park company, which quickly repaired, cleaned, and tested my printer and it was back in my hands in less than 24 hours. I highly recommend Ken Culpepper and his staff at the Voler Corp.

## Computer shows on the Internet

In addition to the AM radio computer shows that we periodically list in TOE, at least three such shows that can be heard on the Internet have been recommended by a member.

To listen to them, you'll need a program, such as Windows Media Player, that lets you listen to online broadcasts.

The "Personal Computer Show" is broadcast on WBAI <www.wbai.org> at 5 p.m. PST on Wednesdays. WBAI is one of the Pacifica Radio stations.

"Technology Bytes," a computer call-in show with Jay Lee and crew, can be heard at 6 p.m. PST on Wednesdays on KPFT <www.kpft.org>, another Pacifica Radio station.

The Digital Village can be heard from 10 to 11 a.m. on Saturdays on KPFK <www.kpfk.org>. RealAudio archives

are maintained for a few months, along with several past favorites. The archives are available via HTTP Pseudo-Streaming, which, the list explains, means "is that it's difficult to skip around the program. Rather, it's best to listen to each part from beginning to end."

Archived material includes programs by Jack Davis on PhotoShop; Lisa Brenneis on Final Cut Pro; Anson Lee from Symantec; Jeff Chester of the Center for Digital Democracy; Tom Geller on theSpamcon Foundation; Christian Boyce on Macworld 2002; Michael Rubin on Little Digital Video Book.

The site has link to download the Real Audio player if you need it.

## Software review

# Printkey 2000 proves highly useful

By Jim Thornton

<jthorn@adelphia.net>

A year ago, I reviewed a small freeware program that restored the print screen feature to your Windows-based computer. Several years earlier, Microsoft had changed the function of your PrintScr key from directly printing a copy of what was being displayed on your monitor's screen to temporarily placing the copy into a special area of your computer's memory called the clipboard. Their intent was to give you the flexibility of moving the image into the program of your choice — Microsoft Paint, Word, WordPad, Jasc Paint Shop Pro, etc. — so that you could enhance the image, add text, etc. If you wanted to capture only the smaller active window within the full screen, then you would depress the Alt and PrintScr keys together, and that image would be sent to your clipboard.

The current version of PrintKey 2000 is 5.10, while the one that I previously reviewed was 4.01. Several new items have been added to this later version and all of its previous features were retained. After you open the program, you can print the picture; copy it to or paste it from the clipboard; load, edit, or save the picture; define hot keys; play a sound when a picture is taken; take a picture of the entire desktop, of its active window, or of a defined rectangular area of your choice. In addition, you can swap, invert, or substitute the colors; control the brightness, contrast, saturation, and individual primary colors; plus many more options. You can center, stretch, convert to monochrome, and print the image in landscape or portrait modes. These options may be totally bypassed when the program is configured to immediately print the image when you click on the PrintKey icon on your desktop and at the top of the printed image will be the current date and time, if you have previously selected this option. You can even pre-select your favorite graphic file type (BMP, EMF, GIF, JPG, JPEG, or WMF) as the default format. Newer features let you add footer text (text outside and below the image); designate the image editor of your choice; define your folder, extension, and filename; include or exclude the cursor within your selected image; etc.

This free 558K compressed or archived program is compatible with Windows 95, 98, Me, NT4.0, and 2000, and is downloadable from <<http://dabcc-www.nmsu.edu/info/labs/lab85/download.htm>>. PrintKey 2000 is the fifth program listed on this download Web page and is identified as printkey510ef.zip. Since the program from this Web site is available only in the compressed mode, you'll need to use an uncompressing program like PKZIP or WinZip or a utility program — XTreeGOLD or ZtreeWin — to expand the program into its executable version. Be advised that the developer no longer supports this program as it is being replaced by his newer shareware version and apparently the

freeware version is being removed from the Internet. Should you not find the program on this page, just use your favorite Internet search engine and search for "PrintKey 2000." The program is still available from several stateside Web sites and many foreign sites, especially in Europe. In the latter case, be careful that the text — both on the displayed program and within its associated help file are in the language of your choice. Since you may be searching the Internet for this program, see if you can find the executable version — the filename extension ends with exe instead zip.

PrintKey 2000 is one of my favorite programs as I use it in several ways, from making a copy of my msconfig window (a listing of all the programs that load when you power-on your computer) to printing only selected items from a Web page (like the closing daily stock symbols and prices from msn.com), etc. I highly recommend it.

The newest version is an 839K-shareware program titled PrintKey-Pro, version 1.02, and it comes with a free 30-day trial period and provides more features. For example, there are four more graphic file types available (PNG, TIF, TIFF, and PCX); in addition to selecting the usual rectangular area, a circular option is available; you may now preview before you print; add your free hand drawing; insert text; send the image directly by email; etc. The \$19.95 program is available from <[www.warecentral.com](http://www.warecentral.com)>.

**Author's Note:** Here are the names of the various graphics types mentioned in this article. BMG = Bit-Mapped Graphic; EMF = Enhanced Metafile Format; GIF = Graphic Interface Format (pronounced "jiff"); JPG and JPEG = Joint Photographic Expert Group (pronounced "jay-peg"); PCX = PC Paintbrush program (pronounced "p-c-x"); PNG = Portable Network Graphics (pronounced "ping"); TIF and TIFF = Tagged Image Format; and WMF = Windows Metafile Format. These names are typically the extensions of filenames, i.e., vacation.gif. The bit-mapped types include BMG, GIF, PCX, TIF, and TIFF. BMP and WMF were originally intended for internal Windows use while GIF was for the Internet usage including CompuServe. JPG and JPEG provide good image compression as does TIF and TIFF and the latter format types are compatible with Macs as well as PCs.

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# Membership report: Is it time to renew?

By Ken Church

<membership@cipcug.org>

Welcome to the following new member:

Carmela Cinque

Attendance at the August 2002 general meeting:

94 Members

4 Visitors

Total membership: 344

## RENEWAL INFORMATION

The renewal/New Mbr dues are

\$25/\$35 for single membership,

\$30/\$50 for two or more family membership.

Please send your renewal payment to:

CIPCUG MEMBERSHIP

P.O. BOX 51354

OXNARD, CA 93031-1354

Or bring your payment to the September meeting.

## July 2002 renewals past due, Final Notice:

| Mbr # | Last Name  | First Name | Pd to Date |
|-------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1067  | Aldrich    | James      | 200207     |
| 1067A | Aldrich    | Julie      | 200207     |
| 0714  | Bryan      | Robert     | 200207     |
| 0227  | Caminer    | Jerry      | 200207     |
| 0364  | Kirkwood   | George     | 200207     |
| 0974  | Leake      | Cynthia    | 200207     |
| 0676  | Pearson    | Floyd      | 200207     |
| 1067B | Poucher    | Brenda     | 200207     |
| 0575  | Van Sickle | Mike       | 200207     |
| 0233  | Wolfson    | Ann        | 200207     |
| 0332  | Wright     | Don        | 200207     |

## August 2002 renewals past due:

| Mbr # | Last Name | First Name | Pd to Date |
|-------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 0027  | Burger    | William    | 200208     |
| 0028  | Fiedler   | Art        | 200208     |
| 1069S | Francis   | John       | 200208     |
| 0242  | Hilley    | Charles    | 200208     |
| 0806  | Hurme     | Seppo      | 200208     |
| 0159  | Knopf     | Gerald     | 200208     |

## August 2002 renewals past due (continued):

| Mbr # | Last Name | First Name | Pd to Date |
|-------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1032  | Peoples   | Erik       | 200208     |
| 0867  | Pryor     | Dorothy    | 200208     |
| 0474  | Pryor     | John       | 200208     |
| 0892  | Scott     | Ilona      | 200208     |
| 0229  | Scott     | Toby       | 200208     |
| 0492  | Skinner   | Donald     | 200208     |
| 0492A | Skinner   | Vivian     | 200208     |
| 0723  | Smith     | Bernadine  | 200208     |
| 0722  | Smith     | Gary       | 200208     |
| 0803  | Snyder    | Harlan     | 200208     |
| 0802S | Taylor    | Audrey     | 200208     |
| 0158  | Volpi     | Ralph      | 200208     |
| 0244  | Zilm      | Charles    | 200208     |

## September 2002 renewals due:

| Mbr # | Last Name | First Name | Pd to Date |
|-------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1035  | Brooks    | Richard    | 200209     |
| 1070  | Byrnes    | Bob        | 200209     |
| 0499  | Chakires  | Andy       | 200209     |
| 0811  | Crocker   | Jerry      | 200209     |
| 1071  | Curtis    | Richard    | 200209     |
| 0894A | Duchacek  | Jane       | 200209     |
| 0894  | Duchacek  | Ralph      | 200209     |
| 0613  | Green     | Gunnar     | 200209     |
| 0249  | Greenway  | Frank      | 200209     |
| 0373  | Houle     | Robert     | 200209     |
| 1072A | Jerkovich | Judy       | 200209     |
| 1072  | Jerkovich | Richard    | 200209     |
| 1037  | Lerner    | Robert     | 200209     |
| 0990  | Mehr      | Steve      | 200209     |
| 0716  | Nichols   | John       | 200209     |
| 0372  | Pizza     | Tony       | 200209     |
| 0989  | Shobe     | Ivan       | 200209     |
| 1036  | Smith     | Howard     | 200209     |
| 0938  | Stroud    | John       | 200209     |
| 0733  | Wall      | Sinclair   | 200209     |

Unable to figure that computer out all by yourself? We can all use some help from time to time. Well then, come and join us at a SIG.

# More on Windows XP ...

(Continued from page 12)

traordinarily well. That's true for XP but not necessarily for programs that still plow headfirst into the bit bucket. For instance, Eudora, my e-mail program, locks up when I try embedding what it considers a too large image into a message. And Internet Explorer also has a way of choking and freezing on some sites, doing its best to imitate a deer in headlights.

With Win 9x, the Eudora and IE crash could bring the system down; even if it didn't, I'd reboot to clear out any leftover holes in memory. Win XP contains the crash and stops it from contaminating the rest of the system. Using Control - Alt - Delete, the three-finger, soft-boot salute, calls up Task manager, one of XP's shining lights. Click on the toasted app and it's history.

## Crash reports? No, thanks

Of course, with Microsoft at the helm, nothing as cool as Task Manager's handling of a crash can be left alone. Microsoft insists on meddling by sending itself the details of the crash. No doubt, the crash report does provide clues, often vital ones that you can review, to explain why a program crashes.

But once I've looked at a report — say, Eudora's `page32.dll` bug that Qualcomm won't fix — I'm no longer interested in seeing it pop up. So I've turned parts of the feature off. (From Start, Control Panel, Advanced tab, Error Reporting.) This dialog gives me choices, and they're good ones. I can get the report but not send it, opt to hear only about programs or XP's errors, or even add specific programs to watch.

## Zap, you're restored

GoBack was the first successful utility to save snapshots of a PC's hard drive and let you restore the drive to a time when things were running well. It shouldn't surprise you to see a similar feature in Windows XP. (Roxio's GoBack, \$40, download at [www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com).)

Quick aside: Many of Microsoft's niftier features are from the brain trusts of third-party companies. Woody, creator of dozens of Office, and specifically Word add-ons, said that to me in a private e-mail recently. More in another column.

XP's System Restore does just about everything GoBack does, just not as well. Nonetheless, it's an improvement over the way it worked in Windows ME, and a handy tool. I create a Restore point just before installing a new application. If the installation goes kablooey, I use System Restore to jump five minutes into the past and get my system going again.

I use it so often, I pinned it onto my Start Menu for easy access. Try it: Find System Restore in All Programs, Accessories, System Tools and right mouse click on the icon and choose Pin on Start menu. Easy, no?

## System restore's problems

The problem? System Restore isn't perfect. While I haven't had a problem in the 25 times I've used it, some reports on the Internet talk about DLLs that should be gone after a System Restore, are still on the system.

One thing Microsoft doesn't tell you is that each Restore Point (and system checkpoints, those restore points XP does automatically) takes up disk space.

You can dump all but the last system point by using XP's Disk Cleanup tool. Open Disk Cleanup, by clicking Start, choose All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, select Disk Cleanup, and choose the More Options tab. (Shortcut: From Start, Run, type `cleanmgr`.)

In the next series of columns, I'll show you other features built into XP that can keep you focused on productivity rather than rebooting two or three times a day or recovering from crashes.

*Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check PCW's current edition at*

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## F1—Your Help Key

(Revised Feb. 10, 2002)

### CIPCUG INTERNET SERVICE

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

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

### COMMUNICATIONS/INTERNET (GENERAL)

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

### DATABASES

dBASE. GM

### DOS

RP

### EDUCATIONAL / CHILDREN TZ

### E-MAIL

Eudora JT  
Lotus:CCMail. DM  
Outlook TS  
Outlook Express TS

### FINANCIAL

Quicken JD

### GENEALOGY

TL

### HARDWARE, UPGRADING JM, JD

HTML TS

NETWORKS TS

OS/2 LZ

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Microsoft Excel DM  
Quattro Pro DM

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

### WORD PROCESSING

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

### WINDOWS

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

| <u>Initials</u> | <u>Name</u>    | <u>(805)</u>  |
|-----------------|----------------|---|
| BW              | Bart Wood      | 482-4993 (e)  |
| DM              | David Minkin   | 469-6970 (cell) (5-11 p.m. weekends);<br>dddave@QuixNet.net |
| GM              | Gracia Marks   | 484-7572 (e)  |
| JD              | John Daily     | 650-0029 (b)  |
| JM              | Jerry McLoud   | (818) 889-6176 (e)  |
| JT              | Jim Thornton   | 987-1748 (d)  |
| LZ              | Len Zakas      | 388-8452 (b)  |
| MR              | Marvin Reeber  | 984-1974 (b)  |
| RP              | Robert Provart | 498-8477 (b)  |
| TL              | Terry Lee      | tdlee28@hotmail.com   |
| TS              | Toby Scott     | 289-3960 (d)<br>tech@cipcug.org                             |
| TZ              | Trish Zakas    | 388-8452 (b)  |

**Practice safe computing:  
Back up  
Back up  
Back up**



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

To sign up, contact one of the club's techies in the F1 — YOUR HELP KEY (page 17) under CIPCUG INTERNET SERVICE. Call one of them you may know or one in your area and they will be glad to provide you with the details necessary for signing up. Checks should be made payable to CIPCUG and forwarded to Treasurer, c/o CIPCUG, P. O. Box 51354, Oxnard CA 93031. Don't forget to include the \$15 set-up fee in your first sign-up check. You may make payments in three-month, six-month or annual increments. (Renewals can also be mailed to Treasurer; just be sure to mention the dates that your check is to cover).

We have had over a year of flawless service to our club members. There is no program to install, you will be making use of the programs that are already on your computer. It is a simple matter to talk you through the set-up as it is today — much easier than it was in the past. If you are the least bit timid about setting up your computer for our service, a club member will be glad to come to your house and make the necessary set up arrangements. How many ISPs do you know who will do this? Our agreement will also give you a 5 MB Web page allowance.

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

# Treasurer's report

By Art Lewis

<treasurer@cipcug.org>

## Annual Report FY 2001-2002

|                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Assets</b>                 |                    |
| Cash                          | \$ 8,636.39        |
| Equipment (depreciated value) | \$ 5,069.00        |
| <b>Total Assets</b>           | <b>\$13,705.39</b> |

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| <b>Liabilities</b> |      |
| Accounts Payable   | none |
| Contracts          | none |

Cash assets increased \$1,668.64 during FY 2001-2002. The club has no liabilities.

During the year, the following items of equipment were purchased:

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Audio Tape Recorder | \$ 107.00          |
| Computer            | \$ 1,261.00        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>\$ 1,368.00</b> |

|                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Total Revenue FY 2001-2002       | \$18,464.10 |
| Total Disbursements FY 2001-2002 | \$16,795.46 |

This report has been prepared without audit from the books and records of the corporation, and is believed to fairly represent the financial condition as of 7-1-02.

### July 2002

| Category Description | 7-1 through<br>7/31 2002 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
|----------------------|--------------------------|

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| <b>INCOME</b>       |                 |
| Donation            | 90.80           |
| ISP Income          | 990.00          |
| Raffle              | 12.75           |
| Renewals            | 425.00          |
| Software Sales      | 2.00            |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b> | <b>1,520.55</b> |

|                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <b>EXPENSES</b>       |                 |
| Coffee-Doughnuts      | - 10.00         |
| ISP Expense           | 496.00          |
| Storage               | 50.00           |
| Tax                   | 42.00           |
| TOE                   | 460.16          |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b> | <b>1,038.16</b> |

|                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>TOTAL INCOME – EXPENSES</b> | <b>- 482.39</b> |
| Unrestricted Funds             | \$ 6,780.78     |
| Restricted Funds               | 2,338.00        |
| Bank Balance 7-31-02           | 9,118.78        |

Editor's corner

# Did you know TOE is available on the Web?

For reasons I'm still not sure of, I discovered a couple of weeks ago that I had no hard copy and no original pages for the December 2000 issue of The Outer Edge for my own or the club's files (OK, I'm not the best person in the world when it comes to that kind of work). The discovery gave me a chance to test something I've seen on the CIPCUG Web site many times but never needed to use. I downloaded a copy of the issue and printed the pages, which I'll have copied and file with the two sets I keep.

They won't be in magazine format like the original TOE, but they'll have all the information that was in the original copy, including the ads.

I wouldn't want to do it with every issue, but it's certainly a wonderful feature to have available when it's needed.

The experience does bring up something that a couple of members have asked about. Would the group save any money by letting readers who want to do so abandon the hard copy version and simply read TOE on the Web.

The answer is a definite "who knows?" It would depend on how many members wanted to get TOE that way. To keep our nonprofit bulk mailing permit, we have to send a certain number of copies every issue. I'm not positive what the number is, although 250 sticks in my mind. We'd need to determine that figure first. Cutting the number of copies printed would save money, but the figure wouldn't be very high unless we cut a lot of copies — and cutting that many copies might lose us the mailing permit.

Still, the idea might be worth considering. I know of one out-of-state member who reads TOE on the Web, and there may be other I'm not aware of.

What's your reaction? Would you prefer to get TOE on the Web or to continue to get hard copies? We'd like to know, especially if you'd prefer the Web version. If everyone preferred that method — which I doubt would be the case — we could make a change fairly quickly. If only a few wanted it, we'd have to adjust our mailing labels program, but that shouldn't be terribly difficult. The tough decision would be if just enough members wanted it to lose us the bulk mail privilege.

\* \* \*

**Corrections and clarifications:** Jerry McLoud's name was misspelled in the last issue. I found two versions — one in the masthead and one in F1 — Your Help Key — and picked the wrong one.

The headline on the Web page column in the last issue was incorrect. It was not changed from the previous issue.

Volume numbers on the last two issues were incorrect. If you're keeping copies, you might want to change the 17

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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(Work): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Other: \_\_\_\_\_ Speed: \_\_\_\_\_

Operating System: Win 95/98 \_\_\_\_\_; Win Me \_\_\_\_\_;  
XP \_\_\_\_\_; Win 2000 \_\_\_\_\_; NT \_\_\_\_\_; Linux \_\_\_\_\_;  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

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Cable Modem: \_\_\_\_\_ DSL \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Scanner: \_\_\_\_\_

Other equipment: \_\_\_\_\_

What programs do you use regularly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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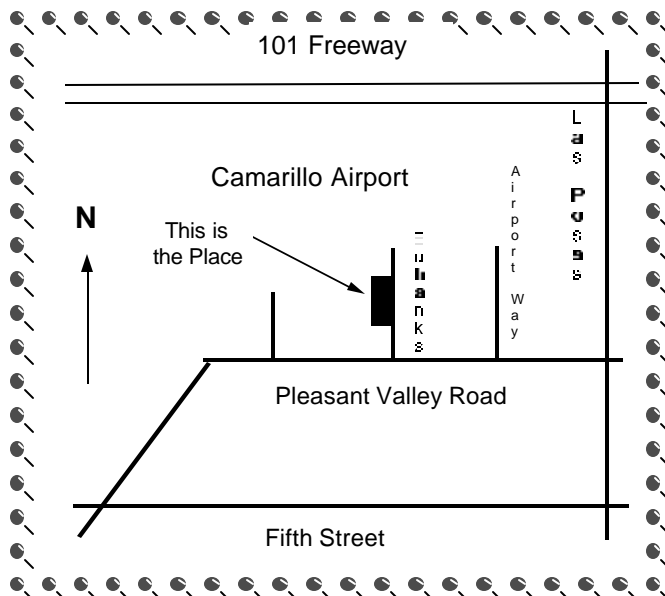
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## SEPTEMBER 2002 MEETING OF CHANNEL ISLANDS PC USERS GROUP



**Saturday morning, Sept. 7,**  
**at**  
**Freedom Center,**  
**Camarillo Airport**  
**515 Eubanks (at Pleasant Valley Road)**  
**Camarillo, Calif.**

### Meeting Schedule:

- 0845-0930 Beginners SIG
- 0845-0930 Internet SIG
- 0930-1030 Business meeting, Q&A
- 1030-1055 Break - Please contribute requested amounts for coffee & doughnuts
- 1100-1200 Program (Executive Software) and drawing