What is Outlook?

Outlook is one of the products developed by Microsoft to make our office run more smoothly, be better organized, help us be more responsive to customers, and keep us from dropping things through the cracks. It manages contacts' names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. It tracks appointments, lets us assign tasks to each other, and does meeting requests. It does amazing things with and to our e-mail messages, some of them handy and some of them very "annoying." Outlook is a member of the "personal information manager" (PIM) family.

This book was written by three individuals who are obviously experts in all of the Micro-soft office products. They have written books on "Word 97 Annoyances," "Excel Annoyances," and "Office Annoyances," as well as this Outlook book. They know the software well enough to have created new software to modify, enhance, and add on to these basic office suite modules.

Even though all these products can be extremely useful, there are many problems with them; there are idiosyncrasies, difficulties, and actual bugs, showing a lack of coordination among the designers, product release before thorough debugging, and in-sufficient testing. The authors consider Out-look 97 a beta-cycle product, and Outlook 98 the actual version 1.0, camouflaged with an 8.5 version number. This book describes many of the problems, tells you how to work around them or avoid them before they get you, and enhance the products yourself.

Outlook Express versus Outlook 97/98

Outlook Express is NOT Outlook 97/98. Outlook Express (an upgrade of Microsoft Internet Mail and News, IMN) is only a mail handler. It is shipped as a freebie with Inter-net Explorer 4.0, and has many nifty features for handling mail over the Internet. However, it does not include any of the other personal information manager (PIM) features included in Outlook 97/98, and is not the main focus of the book. In fact the address book is not even compatible with the address book for Outlook 97/98. When "Outlook" is used in this report, it will mean Outlook 97/98 unless otherwise specified.

Chapter 1—It's a Bit Like Whacking Your TV Set

In Chapter 1, the authors describe a major problem that they have had with Outlook, and the difficulties they had in solving it. The pro-lem was that mail stopped leaving the out box to be sent. Incoming mail worked fine. The Microsoft Knowledge Base (MSKB) was checked, and article Q16423 looked promising: "How to Troubleshoot Mail Stuck in the Out box," but it didn't help. Several other things were tried, and Microsoft's pay-per-incident tech support was called. After talking to two different MS engineers, there was no improvement. Eventually they found out from another person at MS that a version 8.02 SR-1 update should help. Before installing the CD, however, the system started working again on its own!

A major problem with Outlook is that VBScript is used as a development language, rather than the more flexible Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) used for the Office 97 products. No consistency! Even so, Outlook is considered to be "a marvelous combination of e-mail and personal-data tracking capabilities with numerous compelling—even astounding—features."

Other annoyances include lack of customizable toolbars, inability to start reading mail until all messages are loaded, user interface which is not compatible with other Office products, and in general, there are still too many bugs in Outlook 98.

Chapter 2—Vital Changes, Settings, and Customizations

A definition is given of the latest version of Outlook 98 (ver. 8.5, at the time of book publication). Also check for version changes or updates on the MS web site. In order to save a lot of annoyance, start a new installation of Outlook with the latest version. Even better, wait a few months for Office 2000 (reviewer's opinion).

Outlook stores everything in a single file called mailbox.pst, the "PST." Take good care of this one! It contains names and ad-dresses, appointments, to-do list, notes, and e-mail. Everything. Back it up. After a few months it can grow to 30-50 MB, according to the authors. You can save some space by limiting the items tracked by the Journal feature. Also, the PST can be compressed periodically to save space by getting completely rid of deleted items.

Rules can be established to do fancy things with e-mail, like transferring all mes-sages from a particular source to a folder; or to automatically delete certain types of junk mail. Various profiles can also be established for groups of services, users, etc. Instructions are given for setting up e-mail options. An important rule is to use Plain Text for all mail. Experience shows that sometimes messages are received as plain text, even if they have been sent out in other formats; and sometimes they are received as attachments, when sent in formats other than plain text. Another tip for e-mail, is to not use Word for an e-mail editor. Word has too many nifty auto-correct features, which modify e-mail messages more than you wish it would.

A bug with e-mail, is that when using a Personal Address Book (PAB), messages often go out over the wrong e-mail service. The authors give ways around this problem. Spell check also fails to work properly, stopping rather suddenly without warning. This requires a reinstallation procedure described in the book.

To enhance the performance of Outlook, customization of the toolbar is highly recom-mended. The procedure is explained.

Chapter 3—Outlook Repair Tactics

If Outlook is the nut of the Office suite, e-mail is the kernel. Of all the various capabilities of Outlook, e-mail by far is the most important. If e-mail doesn't work, forget about the rest, and get an e-mail program. The subheadings of this chapter illustrate some of the problems with Outlook e-mail:

?? Solving the Name and Address Storage Puzzle
?? Problems Sending E-mail
?? Problems with Personal Folders
?? Problems with Individual Information
?? Problems with profiles
?? Problems with your e-mail provider.
      (ISP or Online Service)

The Ultimate Scorched Earth Solution

The last section, the "scorched earth" solution, involves uninstalling and reinstalling the complete Office suite. If all else fails, a step-by-step procedure is given for doing this, such that all your settings—custom toolbars, keyboard shortcuts, options, OSB, e-mail service, etc.—are retained.

Several checklists are provided for solving various problems in Outlook e-mail. For example, a fairly common problem is to compose a message, ask Outlook to send it, and nothing happens. Checklist 3.1 has 25 items for tracking down the source of the problem and fixing it:

1.   Do not open the message before sending.
2.   Make sure the current profile includes the appropriate e-mail service.
through
24.   Uninstall and reinstall Office.
25.   Upgrade Windows 95/98 (see http://www.microsoft.com/windows95/info/systemupdates.htm).

Admittedly some of the steps are drastic, but drastic action may be required to solve the problem. Checklist 3.2 gives steps to solve Personal Folder (personal store, or PST file) problems. This is where all the data resides–address list, journal items, task lists, notes, etc. Checklist 3.5 gives a 22-step procedure for backing up, uninstalling, and reinstalling Office.

A couple of my favorite solutions:

Hopping on one leg while stripped down to your underwear in full view of your work associates while chanting "annoyance be gone" over and over again. One of Marty's favorites also—shutting down the PC, getting a good night's sleep, and hoping the problem will be gone when you boot up the computer the next morning. (By the way, these are frivolous, but not typical of the useful tips and solutions throughout the book.)

Another excellent tip, which applies to any software requiring setting up profiles, preferences, options, or whatever: take screen shots (CTL + PrintScreen) of all such dialog boxes, paste them into a document, and put them in a notebook, so you can refer to them later, reconstruct the same setups, etc. Chapter 3 is the gold in the mine of this book. If you use Outlook as part of your Office suite, you need to keep Chapter 3 handy at all times!

Chapter 4—Enigmatic Journal

If e-mail is the key component of Outlook, then the Journal is the least important. This depends on your perspective, however. If you are a consultant, and require records of all messages, phone calls, files modifications, documents, time spent on all tasks, etc. then you need Journal. If you're retired, like me, however, then you don't need all that detail. If you need it, Journal can record all the data automatically. This is great, except that the amount of storage consumed can grow rapidly to several megabytes.

Journal entries include 20 different types, including Conversation, Document, E-mail message, Fax, Letter, Meeting, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, etc. Each entry includes a subject, type, contact, start time and duration, categories of this item, and shortcuts to files used. Journal options can establish which items are automatically re-corded, which will help to conserve space if you don't need everything. Items can be inserted in Journal automatically and/or manually.

Chapter 5—Outlook's Key Ingredients

This chapter describes other facilities included in Outlook which are the traditional aspects of PIM's—scheduling, address book, to do list, and a place to record miscellaneous information. These are called Calendar, Con-tact, Task, and Notes, respectively.

Calendar distinguishes among Appointments, Meetings, and Events. It will also help you schedule meetings by considering your schedule and the schedules of other possible participants. It may be aware of others' schedules through Exchange Server running on a LAN, or other facilities. E-mail invitations can automatically be sent to invitees.

Contact is a good listing of, well, contacts. Task is also useful, and Note offers unique features. You can store notes about all kinds of things in this simple database. When you want to retrieve something, you can search on the contents of all notes. Tips are given for using, customizing, and getting around the annoyances in these features.

Chapter 6—A Cookbook for Conversion

This chapter covers the methods for importing data from external sources into Outlook, and how data can be transferred between Outlook's own modules. It starts with another one of the great checklists for preparing external data for import. Outlook does not make this task very easy, so thorough preparation in accordance with the instructions are required. This is information which would be hard to uncover without this book, I am firmly convinced.

Once the data is prepared for import, the import can the be accomplished in most cases by using one of Outlook 98's 28 or so built-in data converters—ACT! to Outlook, Eudora to Outlook, Lotus Organizer to Outlook, etc., etc. Outlook 97 has fewer converters—about half as many. There are other data converters available from various sources on the web—see the References section of this report. If no data converter is available, an export feature in the source may be able to convert the data to a mutually compatible format.

One common conversion is from a Personal Address Book in Windows Exchange to Outlook. This seems like it ought to be easy, but five pages of the book are required to circumvent the various idiosyncrasies involved.

A case study is presented as an example of converting data from an Excel workbook to Outlook's Contacts folder. Then Checklist 6-2 is given for doing the actual import. Then, another checklist is given for cleaning up the data after import. Finally, a discussion of Outlook's AutoCreate capability is presented, whereby Outlook uses IntelliSense to transfer data around within Outlook's principal tools. A discussion of the annoyances occurring during these transformations is given, but it is a powerful and elegant capability of Outlook. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the importance of Back-up, and the differences between Backup and Archive.

Chapter 7—Beyond the Basics

Many of the featured capabilities of Outlook are described in this chapter:
Finding, Viewing, and Filtering
User Interface Tips
Categories
Reminders
Set a Recurring Activity
Get E-mail Smart
Integration with Word

These are powerful tools which work pretty much as advertised, with a minimum of annoyances. Many of these tools are far from intuitive in their use, however, and the book provides a great service by giving the details on how to access and use them.

Chapter 8–Introduction to VBScript, the Outlook Object Model, and Custom Forms

This chapter describes the macro language used for Outlook. The big annoyance here is that while the other Office products use Visual Basic for Applications (V.A.) as their macro language, Outlook uses the much more limited VBScript. If you are a programmer, and want to write your own macro features for Outlook, then this chapter is for you. Otherwise you can skip it. Topics include concepts behind office programming, a comparison between V.A. and VBScript, the Script Editor, how to get VBScript, forms, and object model help, and some examples of VBScript subroutines. Major sections of this chapter are as follows:
Outlook and VBScript versus Office and V.A.
The Script Editor
Writing Outlook/VBScript Programs
Controlling Office Applications Using Object Models
OLE Automation

Chapter 9—Where and How to Get Help

A wealth of references are included in this chapter and in other places in the book, for all aspects of Outlook design, usage, and annoyances. Some of the references in the book are as follows:
General-www.microsoft.com/outlook/, www.microsoft.com/outlook/documents/thirdparty_addons .htm, www.microsoft.com/outlook/optimize/
www.microsoft.com/officedev/

www.microsoft.com/office/Office97/

support.microsoft.com/support/kb/, the Microsoft KnowledgeBase.

www.slipstick.com, www.slipstick.com/exchange/gallery.htm,

www.slipstick.com/exchange/add-ins.htm

www.outlook.useast.com/outlook/

www.activeie.com/oe/, Outlook Express

        Microsoft Product Support Staff at 425-635-7145 (Prod. ID # req'd)

Newsgroups: msnews.microsoft.com at microsoft.public.outlook_beta, etc.

Outlook's "Help -> Microsoft on the Web," on the cascading menu.

Wizards, templates, addons,etc.— www.microsoft.com/OfficeFreeStuff/

Programming:

www.microsoft.com/vbscript

www.devx.com/

Magazines:

PC Computing

Office Computing and its web site www.zdnet.com/pccomp/oc/

Visual Basic Programmers Journal and its web site www.devx.com

Microsoft Office & Visual Basic for Applications Developer and its web site www.informant.com/mod/index.htm

Access-Office-VB Advisor and its web site www.advisor.com

The Authors:

www.primeconsulting.com/, info@primeconsulting.com WOW, Woody's Office Watch, a free weekly electronic bulletin; subscribe on the web at www.mcc.com.au/wow/index.htm, or ohwow@wopr.com www.wopr.com, wow@wopr.com, ask.woody@wopr.com, Woody's web site and e-mail addresses www.oreilly.com/, www.ora.com, books@oreilly.com, the publisher

The book is an excellent book by knowledgeable authors, and a must for anyone working a significant amount of the time with Microsoft's Office suite.

Photo Recall Deluxe
by Charles Flum

    If you are at all interested in computer graphics, you probably have a whole library full. The problem is, how do you find what you want? That is where Photo Recall Deluxe can be a wonderful aid.

    First the basics. What are the require-ments? Minimum is a 486/66, Pentium re-commended; 16 MB RAM, 32 recommended; 20 MB free disk space; CD-ROM needed for installation; 256 color (or higher) graphics adapter, SVGA monitor with 800 x 600 resolution; Win95 or NT 3.51 or later. Optional: Sound card & speakers, printer, Twain scanner or digital camera, ISP, MAPI enabled e-mail client. In other words, it is not a big resource hog.

    Photo Recall Deluxe allows you to place photos and graphics in libraries in my order which makes sense to you. You then add whatever key words you wish to make searching easier. The pictures can be on your hard drive, on CD-ROM, on a floppy, or even on the Internet. There are many graphics on the net. Find some you like, catalog them as to where they are on the net, and save disk space.

    One major problem: the manual. It says there are many things you can do. For ex-ample, e-mail a picture to someone but it does not give step-by-step instructions how to do it. You can create a new library. I had to figure it out myself, using trial and error. The manual is definitely NOT user friendly.

    I found the program to be fairly easy to use. However I suspect a novice, without a clear manual, would have a great deal of frustration.

    Would I recommend the program? Yes, to more experienced users. Once the manual is well written, with clear directions how to use the program, I would recommend it to any-one who needs to catalog graphics.

    Photo Recall Deluxe is produced by G&A Imaging, of Hull, Canada. www.photocell .com

[From the web site of the Computer Club of Ocean County, Toms River, NJ.]

Quick Books Pro
by Bill Heberlein

How Easy and Does it Cover Your Small to Medium Business?

I have loaded Quick Books Pro on my system. The system is on an IBM Thinkpad 365ED. The chip is a Cyrix 586-100 with a 4X CD ROM and a 540 Mb hard drive. The drive has about 340 Mb of free space before loading Quick Books Pro (from now on I will call Quick Books Pro QBP.} Also has a sound card.

First I will give you the hardware requirements for QBP.
- IBM or compatible PC with a memory chip of 486 or greater.
  CD ROM MPC compliant.
- Hard disk space of 43 Mb for CD ROM or 33 for floppy.
- 6.2 Mb for Netscape Navigator but is optional.
- 4 Mb for the timer with CD ROM or 9 Mb with floppy but is optional.
- 8 or 16 bit sound card but it is optional.
- VGA or better monitor running 256 colors.
- Modem of 2400 baud or better but is optional. Windows 3.1 or better.

The version I am installing is the CD ROM version and since I do not have a modem attached to the Think Pad I did not install the Netscape Navigator. I also did not install the timer at this time. The installation went smooth except for two stops. One was because I didn't install Netscape Navigator and the other was the system could not find the web. The installation documentation was very good and explained the installation steps. It's called, strangely enough, Installation and Conversion Guide. It also explains how to convert data from either an older version of QBP, or from Quick Books, or from Quicken. There also is a nice how to manual to start or continue your business.

After the installation was completed. and since this was the CD ROM version there is a walk through of how to start your company in QBP. The walk through has an audio along with a good visual display. I went through it and then started the setup of a business from scratch.
1. A new company where the program takes you through an interview and using the information sets up your company.
2. The interview menu now builds your forms with your help.
3. Next comes your rates that you charge for your products or services.
4. With that done you set up your necessary reports.

Once this is done QBP then starts the data entry mode and you enter the necessary data to bring QBP up to date. For example; enter the company bank statements, any outstanding bills, debts, and payroll information. This will bring the companies records up to date with the starting date you selected.. You can then start operating your business with the power of business analysis to help you. It can show who owes you, who you owe and why these statements are true. Also it will help with your taxes, quarterly filing, what were business expenses and why, and how much you made.

I give this program a "good job" on the overall setup and use of this business system. I recommend it's purchase if you are doing any type of home business and have to keep your facts straight for Uncle Sam. www.intuit .com/quickbooks/

[Reprinted from the Milwaukee Area IBM-PC Users Group's web page.]

A Cardinal rule of
Computer Maintenance: Part 2
by Ken Fermoyle

My approach to computer maintenance and cleanliness was, I suspect, similar to that of most computer users: haphazard to mini-mal. I vacuumed around my work area, used an air duster and disk drive cleaner occasion-ally, and used anti-static wet-dry wipes to clean monitor screens when dust build-up got really bad. That was about it; two things recently prompted the most thorough and organized clean-up and maintenance effort I have yet attempted. One was the research I did for *Keep It Clean, Part 1* of this series. Second was addition of a new flatbed scanner to the system. Since accommodating the scanner meant completely reorganizing my work station, I took it as a sign that I should practice what I was preaching.

Normally I would have done the minimum amount of work necessary to make room for the scanner and get it operating. (Especially since I had been waiting impatiently to get it up and running for five weeks, but that's a subject for another article, Scanners, Part 2.) This time I unplugged everything, making sure all cables, wires and connections

were clearly labeled so I could hook things up quickly and correctly later. Some people may be so familiar with their system that they can skip this step but I don't rely that much on my memory and expertise. I find that clear labels (I use masking or white correction tape a lot) save time in the long run.

Next I cleared everything from my work area: mini-tower, monitor, printer & stand, desk organizer, manuals, and all the odds and ends that accumulate on, under and around a desk. Out came the vacuum cleaner with hose, brushes and crevice tool so I could get rid of the appalling amount of soot, dust and assorted crud this revealed. Then I got out some sponges, clean rags and spray bottle of 409 cleaner and scrubbed the desk and shelves.

Now it was time for the system components. I followed all steps outlined in Part 1: vacuum air intakes and vents on computer case and peripherals; use compressed air duster liberally; clean crevices with cotton swabs; clean keyboard (I used Staticide's Keyboard Cleaning Kit) and mouse (Logitech trackball, in my case). Next I turned to our laser printer. Staticide makes a Laser Printer Cleaning Kit that includes cartridge cleaning papers, cleaning solution, lint-free swabs and anti-static wipes, plus ink remover hand wipes. It eased the task considerably. I also recommend *The Underground Guide to Laser Printers*, a book from Peachpit Press that should be on the reference shelf of anyone who owns a laser printer. It not only includes more detailed maintenance tips than I could possibly include in a short article, but is chuck full of other info that can save you money and help you make better use of your laser printer.

Two warnings are appropriate: Be very, very careful when cleaning the fine corona and transfer wires (they are fragile and expensive to replace), and beware of the fuser area (hot, could burn you). Also, check your printer manual for information on filter location(s) and maintenance recommendations. The *Underground Guide* mentioned above also offers invaluable information on ozone filters. It suggests that your nose is a good guide to tell you when an ozone filter needs replacement.

"Ozone at ground level gives off a pungent, acrid odor. You may have noticed this aroma around high-tension power lines, toy trains, or after a lightning storm." The ozone smell is noticeable at levels well below the recommended safe level, the book notes. But if you detect that characteristic ozone odor, it means the ozone filter is getting clog-ed and should be replaced. Excess ozone contributes to smog and can cause health hazards ranging from dryness and irritation or eyes, nose and throat to nausea, headaches and possible premature aging, or even worse at very high levels. (Our ink-jet I left for later, because I plan to do a future article on color ink-jet printers; it will include buying tips, pros and cons of refilling ink cartridges, plus cleaning and maintenance information.)

Next I turned to the disk drives, using an air duster to clean around the openings to the CD-ROM and Syquest EX 135 removable cartridge drives. I inserted an Allsop drive cleaning disk into the floppy drive (after adding cleaning solution per instructions) to clean the drive heads.

Wires and cables had been a snarled mess when I started, after having been changed, unplugged and replugged, and re-routed many times. Doubtless most of you reading this need only look behind and under your desk to see what I mean.) I routed everything care-fully, coiling and tying excess phone wires and power or connecting cables. The labels attached to cables and connectors simplified things.

I had cleaned the exterior of many of the components earlier with ComputerBath's PowerCleaner solution, using the two-sided cloth: one side to wipe the cleaner on, the other to wipe a surface clean. Now I went over those I had missed. The monitor got extra attention; where I had stuck Post-its needed two applications and some elbow grease. Eventually everything looked like new and spotless.

The whole process took most of a morning, but it was time well spent. (And it will go much faster next time if I don't neglect my cleaning duties for too long.) I can't prove that my efforts make my system more efficient, but I suspect the preventive maintenance will pay off over the long haul...and I'm enjoying that smug, righteous feeling that comes as a reward for a job well done!

Computer Law
Year 2000-
is it time for Plan 9?
by Bill Wood

It always pays to have a backup plan.

Some of you may remember *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, the "movie" by Ed Wood. Aliens were visiting the Earth to save their home planet. It never explains what really went wrong and it also never explains what happened to the first eight plans. But the movie was so bad it became an award winning cult classic. More than thirty years later Martin

Landau received an Oscar for portraying Bella Lugosi, *Plan 9*'s star, in the movie about Wood's life. [Yes, we are related, Ed Wood was my uncle.]

Many experts on the Year 2000 computer challenge are on their ninth plan. The fateful weekend is now less than 500 days away. In most cases, agencies and companies are deep into assessment and remediation plans.

But lawyers are debating the, "What if it doesn't work and we get sued" questions. Some counsel clients that it isn't really a matter of "if," but when they get sued and by whom. No matter how well prepared you and your computer system may be, there is no guarantee that supplies will arrive when needed or that your customers will be able to make normal purchases when January, 2000 arrives.

The Practicing Law Institute (http://www.pli.edu) is a premier resource for continuing legal education. For many months it has sponsored a listserv discussion group on the legal aspects of the Y2K problem. The comments have been both entertaining and educational. Some are almost panicky, but others are calm and reasoned.

Lately the discussions have gone past attempting to assess blame to contingency planning. On September 9, 1998, David C. Kurland posted a terrific message that brought well reasoned suggestions to the interchange. Mr. Kurland describes himself as "in-house counsel for a large manufacturing company." He has given me permission to pass on some of his ideas. It's interesting that his suggestions apply to a home computer, a home office or a world-wide conglomerate. His thoughts (with my comments in parentheses):

1. There is no way to cover every contingency. Identify the most likely adverse events and evaluate the seriousness of each.

2. Document how the decisions were made and why. (If something goes crunch on that New Year's Day, at least you will have evidence that you did recognize the risk and had a plan. It may not eliminate liability, but at least it may keep things in context.)

3. Plan for the most serious and reduce the plan to writing. The best plan in the world is worthless if the employees don't know what is in it.

4. You have very little control over your suppliers. If you manufacture things or must have certain supplies, stock up in 1999. (Don't trust assurances that everything is fine. Something will go wrong. From medicine to gasoline, if you need it, have extra on hand.)

5. If you only make a backup of the information on your computer system one time in your life, the last week of 1999 would be an excellent time to do it. (Store it off-line because it doesn't do any good if your system is down.)

6. On-going activities may consider a complete shut down for that week-end. Of course in the medical field and many manufacturing programs, that isn't possible. For other, it may be a very good idea to start over on Monday, January 3, 2000, step by step. (If nothing else, it could make problem identification easier.)

Dave Kurland puts it in perspective. "In some circumstances, Y2K contingency planning may look a lot like process safety management and emergency preparedness. Right now (never mind the millennium change) a manufacturer should have a well-tested and practiced Standard Operating Procedure for the orderly shut down of each production process in the event of failures, including failures of the control system, electrical power, etc."

The Y2K movie will be made. The question is will it be directed by Tom Hanks or the ghost of Uncle Eddie?

E-mail Configurations
Ann Harney

I get great amounts of e-mail that includes all the forwarded addresses and copies of each e-mail forwarded included in the body. It makes for a very large file, and is difficult to read. Often I just delete them. The *VA Pilot* ran a similar article on e-mail the week of November 15th. The Ten Commandments of E-mail. Learn how to minimize size of e-mail and create alias, nicknames lists in your e-mail package–please! The mail will go faster, we can help diminish clutter on the Internet, and the mail might even be read!

Eudora

In this software: Select Tools, Address Book. Create a new Nickname. Call it my friends, clients, family or whatever is relevant to your list. Enter the e-mail addresses in the right hand pane of the window. Save the file.

Next time you want to send e-mail to a group, select tools, address book, select on the nickname file, and select on Bcc. Make the To field to your best friend (not included in the nickname or aliases list) or to yourself. That way one only received e-mail addressed to themselves, a bit more personal, and it does not add 50 other e-mail addresses.

Netscape Messenger Communicator V4.5

Messenger Address Book. Note that this info is for the current released NC. Contact management is another term used. I do not have a contact to help me give the information necessary to create a contact file in this app.

Internet Explorer

I believe that IEx only uses Outlook or Outlook Express for e-mail in V4+. In Out-Look Express, choose Address Book, New Group. List all your e-mail addresses and give it a relevant name. In your address book properties, select send e-mail using plain text only. In your e-mail message select Format and choose plain text. Again, I have V 4+ of the browser.

In all the above instances, send a group file by Blind copy (Bcc) and address it to yourself. That way it will seem addressed personally instead of a mass mailing!

E-mail Formatting

Send e-mail and attachments in plain text format. Everyone uses different e-mail soft-are, and text is the best cross platform. If you send a tech request to your ISP in HTML format and they use Unix mail, you may have no cause for complaint for no response! For example, MS Outlook defaults are only good if everyone you know uses Outlook. NOT!

Eudora

From Tools in the Menu bar, select Options. In the Attachments section, select Mime. In the Eudora Light version there are no options for fancy text. Yeh! There may be in the Pro Edition. Again select plain text if you have that option.

Netscape

Do not have the details here. NS page

Outlook 98 To set the default message format to Plain Text, follow the below instructions: Select: Tools, Options... , Mail Format. Under the Mail Format tab at the top of the window is the Message Format section. Its pull down menu offers these choices: HTML, MS Outlook RT, Plain Text and MS Word. Select "Plain Text."

Thereafter, when you open a New Message window, you can determine what format the message will be in by noting the Title bar. If it is plain text, you'll see "Message (Plain Text)." If it is not plain text, select the New Message window's Format menu and select Plain Text.

Outlook Express

Select tools, options. Under the send tab select plain text in all places. There are many options to study here.

Let's help stop the proliferation of giant e-mails online! You might just be able to surf faster and smoother.

[Reprinted from *The Umbrella*, the online Journal of the Hampton Roads (VA) Computing Community.]

President's Column

January 1999

First, I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve the Society as its president for one more year. After that, it should be someone else's turn. Of course, I expect that there will be times when Frank Howden and I will be called upon for short term duty to deal with some problem or other. Even so, the main responsibility will belong to someone else.

Let's turn now to some of the topics that I expect will occupy us during the coming year.

Wider Participation

I hope that by the time Frank Howden and I leave office the number of people holding leadership roles will increase markedly. In the past we have operated as though the society belonged to someone or to the small group of officers. By now it should be clear that the society belongs to all of us. I hope that in the future we would not tolerate a small clique of people taking the organization where they want it to go without much regard for desires of the membership at large.

One piece of insurance against that kind of hijacking of the society is to have a fairly large group of folks actually running things. So, expect to be called on to serve on committees. So much of our work has been carried out by one or two heroic souls who have given up a normal life to make sure that the organization functions the way it ought to. It's time to put that model aside and start functioning as a set of groups. Each of us, then, will have some responsibility for ensuring the continued health of the society. When someone asks you to serve on a committee, please accept with some enthusiasm and join in heartily, contributing your time and talent as they are needed.

A Bigger Board?

The current board will consider how to make itself more effective while making itself more inclusive. Several models exist among computer societies around the country. We may want to take a look at what other people are doing and fashion that approach to fit our needs.

For example, some organizations have developed a sequence of offices that people hold on the way to the presidency. When people are elected to the first office in the sequence, they know that it's only a matter of a finite number of years before they assume the presidency. That's one approach that may prove useful for us.

Another is keeping the Old Guys (which may, of course, include women) around as past president and maybe past vice-president. That way all the experience doesn't vanish when new folks are elected.

In other words, there are ways to keep ourselves on an even keel, avoiding the lurching that often comes when leadership changes wholesale each year at election time. Continuity is the name of the game here.

A New Calendar?

Right now our year, fiscal and otherwise, starts in January. There's some sense to that approach, but it maybe foregone by now. It seems to me that the year really begins in September with the opening of school. The people in the ancient Near East recognized the importance of the autumn. We have the Rosh Hashana holiday after all. Perhaps we would do well to follow their lead.

We could elect officers in the late spring, May or June, and have them take office in September. During the interim the new folks could be learning from the "old" ones over the summer, thus making for a smooth transition. Just a thought, but I hope we can begin thinking about all this in a serious way.

Not-for-Profit Status

I know that some of our number have wondered if our new incorporation status will really have any beneficial effect. Incorporation alone will give us a few helps here and there. But the important benefits will come with being recognized by the Feds as a not-for-profit organization.

Incorporation is a prerequisite to be-coming, as they say in Fed-ese, a 501(c)(3) corporation.

The term "501(c)(3)" refers to a section of the IRS Code which defines not-for-profit, tax exempt organizations. It's section 501, subsection c. Of that subsection another subsection, namely 3, defines the status. Though it sounds like mumbo-jumbo, it is in reality a simple reference to a straightforward section of the IRS Code quite understandable to those folks who work in the field of Federal taxation.

With that status we will be able to work closely with other non-profits, including the City schools. We become eligible also to receive goods and services from other non-pro-fits when they are being disposed of. Old, outdated computers come to mind. We can acquire them for our refurbishing campaign to be redistributed to other non-profit organizations, like schools, hospitals and the like. There are lots of old machines out there that could have a new life if they could become available to us.

We will also be more welcome on a number of doorsteps when we want to offer our services and to recruit members. Heretofore we have not been received with a lot of enthusiasm because we had no status.

We almost got lucky in the past couple of weeks. A local person wants to give some sixty acres of land to a tax-exempt organization. He wants the tax advantage. And, he figures the organization could use the land itself or sell it and use the proceeds for its own tax exempt purposes. The person decided to give the land to the Girl Scouts. Partly because we would not have our 501(c)(3) status before the end of 1998. But we were within a hair's-breadth of suddenly having some land to sell to create an endowment for the society. Other opportunities will come our way.

In becoming non-profit and a 501(c)(3) organization we open ourselves to a whole new world of possibilities of being of help to others and therefore also to ourselves.

The Future

Over the next few weeks I will ask a number of people to serve on an ad-hoc committee that we will call "The Future." I've outlined some of the things that are coming down the pike at us, but there are a lot more things we need to think about. And we need to do it in an organized way. While, for example, we can organize ourselves in anticipation of some aspects of our life together, new and unexpected ones will be coming along too. We need to be organized so that we can be flexible enough to withstand the pressures, on the one hand, and to profit from them, on the other. When asked to serve, please say, "yes." This can be one of the most exciting adventures of the year.

The New Year

As the new year opens, we can look forward to some real changes in our society and in our programs. We can ourselves learn, but we can also be of help to others less knowledgeable than ourselves. Being helpful to others always makes us feel good. Let's continue to learn and to help others. And to feel good about it, too.

We would also like to express our profound appreciation to Bill Wells for his many years of stalwart service as secretary.

Vice Pres. Frank Howden opened *Help's Half Hour* and Marty Bechtel took over within minutes. It was a lively session. A portion was about Win98. Some users seem to have problems and some do not. Pres. Joe Pia announced that application for corpora-tion was refused on a minor technological point which was fixed, reintroduced and accepted.

Elections were held and the slate below was elected for one year :

President   Joe Pia
Vice Pres   Frank Howden
Secretary   Archie Neisz
Treasurer   Steve Staub
Board Member at Large   Jim McGrath

All members wish them well.

Vice Pres. Frank Howden urged that a Nominating Committee be formed no later than September to avoid last minute haste.

Also, in the long held tradition of Presidents serving no more than two consecutive terms he further stressed that replacements for President and Vice President, if serving as a team, should be considered early.

Program Chair Tom Bowllan introduced Tim VanDerMaid, Account Executive of New Horizons Computer Learning Center. He briefly spoke on the advantages of learning the in and outs of mastering the computer and urged member and guests to consider classes for that purpose.

He can be reached at:

New Horizons
60 Corporate Woods Suite 300
Rochester, N.Y. 14623 716-274-9618
tvandermeid@nhrochester.com

Program Chair Tom Bowllan brought to center stage the main attraction for the evening.

Gordon Brown and Brian Fox, representing Kodak Digital Science gave an interesting and entertaining talk on Kodak's progression in the digital field. With an array of cameras ranging from the first developed to the latest they held forth in a lively and knowledgeable manner.

The comparison between a leading VGA camera and Kodak's megapixel camera was amazingly in Kodak's favor in brilliant color and detail. Proving that if you want to print your pictures with great clarity you need megapixel technology.

A visual aid on the screen and the replies to questions made for a very pleasant session.

I believe as the digital science unfolds in the future they will be back to bring us up to date.

The New Users Group met as usual at the Henrietta Media Play on December first. There were only nine attendees, lower than the average of over 15 per meeting.

The opening discussion involved printing on a computer operating with Windows 98. With the somewhat sketchy details provided, it was thought that the printer had not been set up properly.

In Windows 3.11, printers are set up by opening Control Panel and selecting Printers. This opens a dialog box which shows the de-fault printer, installed printer drivers and whether the print manager is being used, plus buttons for Cancel, Connect, Setup, Remove, Add, and Help. Selecting Add expands the dialog box to include a list of over 250 printer models with an Install button making it easy to add the printer drivers to the operating system.

Printing is initiated by clicking on the printer icon in the tool bar or by selecting Print from the File menu. Either method opens a dialog box for setting the number of copies, pages to print and quality (draft or other). Some attendees said their machines were capable of selecting non consecutive pages to allow back to back printing.

Selecting Print Manager opens a window with tool and icon bars, a list of printers available to the system and the status of their job queues. Jobs in the queue, which are normally printed in the order in which they were initiated, can

be realigned or canceled.   Windows 95 and 98 offer a much longer list of printer drivers. Opening either Control Panel or the My Computer folder and clicking on the printer icon are only two of the ways of starting the printer driver installation. Jobs are initiated and the queue modified in similar ways.

This led to a question about printing on a Panasonic 1124 pin dot matrix printer. A desktop operating with Windows 3.11 presented a different type font and printed much faster than a laptop using Windows 98 to print from WordPerfect for DOS.

Recommendations included verifying that the correct printer was identified to the system; upgrading the Panasonic driver to the most recent version; being sure that Fast Find was turned off; and verifying that print manager was being used. The user also considered installing a used Cannon bubble-jet printer for increased speed.

A user who has just gone on line was quite concerned about viruses. He has both McAfee's and Norton's virus checkers. He felt that McAfee had a better reputation but preferred the documentation, control and ease of use of Norton's. He was immediately warned not to have both operating simultaneously. It was suggested that he could include McAfee's in the startup file so it would run in the background until he finished any Internet activity. At that point he could close McAfee's and open Norton's to specifically check any files just downloaded. When checking was complete, he could close Norton's and reopen McAfee's if he wanted to. He was also cautioned to turn off automatic open in explorer and navigator to prevent virus's from being enabled before the in-coming files could be checked and to visit the respective web sites frequently to down load new virus code upgrades as they were avail-able. There was a related question about Windows virus checker. In the book, Windows 98 Secrets, Brian Livingstone and David Straub state that Microsoft has decided to leave virus checking to other developers.

Recalling last months question about sorting picture files, the discussion turned to several CD clip art collections. The Power Album software that accompanied them uses a concept of albums (directories) with categories (sub directories) containing pictures (files) that are related. For example an animals category might contain several pictures of bears, cats, dogs etc. When an album is opened, categories are shown as index tabs on the right hand side of the screen. Clicking on an index tab displays thumbnails of the first 24 pictures in the category as an open book, with the ability to turn pages forwards and backwards for other pictures in the category. Key words can also be associated with each picture (file) to allow key word searches instead of scanning. This graphics program works with .bmp, .cgm, drw, .epi, .eps, .gif, .jpeg, .pcx, .tif, and wmf files as well as Kodak .pcd files. Multiple albums can be established and pictures can be added to, deleted from or moved between categories, or albums. In addition, categories can be added to, deleted from or moved between albums, making this a simple but powerful filing system. Any selected picture can be shown full size and, if acceptable, be put on the clip-board for export to other graphics programs for cropping, enlarging, rotating, or other forms of manipulation.

The importance of backups was stressed when a user, whose new machine came with Windows preloaded and no back up, lost several dll's (dynamic link libraries) through error shutdowns. He wondered if an upgrade purchased for his previous machine would correct or degrade the preloaded version. It was suggested that he check the numbers of each version to be sure he was correcting to the latest version. In addition he could visit Microsoft's web sites, download and install any fixes that were available. At that point, he should back up the modified system in case of future problems.

A user asked if anyone knew of a package called Lynx which would download from the Internet but without graphics. Although no one had specific knowledge, it was thought that this would preclude access to most Inter-net sites because they contain graphics.

After the meeting concluded and the re-corder was turned off, several people were discussing the format of the new users meeting. In the past this has been questions and answers like *Help's Half Hour*. Many of the people attending use older hardware, 286's to early Pentium, operating either in DOS or Windows 3.1 or 3.11, while others have Pentium II's with Windows 95 or 98 environ-ments. Questions have ranged between very simple, by people confused and frustrated with computer jargon, to highly technical, from sophisticated users performing their own hardware upgrades. A review of the meeting notes for the last year indicates continuing interest in these general areas:

- Windows basics—opening, closing, menus, tool bars, scrolling, moving, resizing, simultaneous operations, cascading, tiling.
- File handling—directories (including root), subdirectories, files, copy, move, rename, delete, undelete, and suffix meanings.
- Housekeeping chores—backup, scandisk, defrag, etc.
- E-mail—service providers, techniques, trouble shooting.
- Upgrading—Windows 3.x to Windows 95 or 98, Windows 95 to Windows 98..
- Trouble shooting—Startup sequence, bios, autoexec.bat, config.sys, emergency startup disks.

It has been suggested that each meeting be devoted to a specific topic such as one of the above Guest speakers working in different environments (3.x, 95, or 98) could jointly discuss a topic for about a half an hour with the rest of

the meeting devoted to questions, either related or not. If you have other topics to suggest or would be willing to volunteer as a guest speaker, please contact John McMillan at highlandlt@aol.com.

Additionally, a quiet meeting place with a blackboard would be quite desirable. A place with computer availability and overhead projection capabilities would be ideal. On our limited budget ($.00) Media Play's fee would be hard to beat. If anyone has suggestions please send them to me at the e-mail address above and I'll be happy to pursue them.

The Lighter Side

Heard through the grapevine:

I used to hear of words like "data input" and "beta version." They confused me. I wanted desperately to know what people were talking about, what Big Secret resided in the computer industry.

Now that I've worked in a computer company for a few years, I've gained an insider's perspective. I decided to share my knowledge with the uninitiated by creating the following brief, handy glossary:

Alpha Software undergoes alpha testing as a first step in getting user feedback. Alpha is Latin for "doesn't work."

Beta Software undergoes beta testing shortly before it's released. Beta is Latin for "still doesn't work."

Computer— The first computer was invented by Roger "Duffy" Billingsly, a British scientist. In a plot to overthrow Adolf Hitler, Duffy disguised himself as a German ally and offered his invention as a gift to the surly dictator. The plot worked. On April 8, 1945, Adolf became so enraged at an "Incompatible File Format" error message that he shot himself. The war ended soon after Hitler's death, and Duffy began working for IBM.

CPU—Central propulsion unit. The CPU is the computer's engine. It consists of a hard drive, an interface card, and a tiny spinning wheel that's powered by a running rodent; a gerbil if the machine is old, a ferret if it's a Pentium, and a ferret on speed if it's a Pentium II.

Default Directory—Black hole. Default directory is where all files that you need disappear.

Error message—Terse, baffling remark used by programmers to place blame on users for the program's shortcomings.

File—A document that has been saved with an unidentifiable name. It helps to think of a file as something stored in a file cabinet except, when you try to remove the file, the cabinet gives you an electric shock and tells you the file format is unknown.

Hardware—Collective term for any computer-related object that can be kicked or battered. (This form of repair is known as percussive maintenance.)

Help—What we all need. Actually, it is the feature that assists in generating more questions. When the help feature is used correctly, users are able to ☺ navigate through a series of Help screens and end up where they started without learning anything.

Input/Output—Information is input from the keyboard as intelligible data and output to the printer as unrecognizable junk.

Interim Release—A programmer's feeble attempt at repentance.

Memory—Of computer components, the most generous in terms of variety and the skimpiest in terms of quantity.

Printer—A joke in poor taste. A printer consists of three main parts: the case, the jammed paper tray, and the blinking light.

Programmers—Computer avengers. Once members of that group of high school nerds who wore tape on their glasses, played *Dungeons and Dragons*, and memorized *Star Trek* episodes; now millionaires who create "user-friendly" software to get revenge on whoever gave them noogies.

Reference Manual—Object that raises the monitor to eye level. Also used to compensate for that short table leg.

Scheduled Release Date—A carefully calculated date determined by estimating the actual shipping date and subtracting six months.

User-Friendly—Of, or pertaining to, any feature, device, or concept that makes perfect sense to a programmer.

Users—Collective term for those who stare vacantly at a monitor. Users are divided into three types: novice, intermediate, and expert.

Novice Users—People who are afraid that simply pressing a key might break their computer.

Intermediate Users—People who don't know how to fix their computer after they've just pressed a key that broke it.

Expert Users—People who break other people's computers.

Information Super Highway

"Think of the Internet as a highway."

There it is again. Some clueless fool talking about the "Information Super Highway." They don't know didley about the net. It's nothing like a super highway. That's a rotten metaphor.

Suppose the metaphor ran in the other direction. Suppose the highways were like the net. . .

A highway hundreds of lanes wide. Most with pitfalls for potholes. Privately operated bridges and overpasses. No highway patrol. A couple of rent-a-cops on bicycles with broken whistles. 500 member vigilante posses with nuclear weapons. A minimum of 237 on ramps at every intersection. No signs. Wanna get to Ensenada? Holler out the window at a passing truck to ask directions. Ad hoc traffic laws. Some lanes would vote to make use by a single-occupant-vehicle a capital offense on Monday through Friday between 7:00 and 9:00. Other lanes would just shoot you without a trial for talking on a car phone.

AOL would be a giant diesel-smoking bus with hundreds of ebola victims on board throwing dead wombats and rotten cabbages at the other cars, most of which have been assembled at home from kits. Some are built around 2.5 horsepower lawnmower engines with a top speed of nine miles an hour. Others burn nitrogylcerin and idle at 120. No license plates. World War II bomber nose art instead. Terrifying paintings of huge teeth or vampire eagles. Bumper mounted machine guns. Flip somebody the finger on this highway and get a white phosphorus grenade up your tailpipe. Flatbed trucks cruise around with anti-aircraft missile batteries to shoot down the traffic helicopter. Little kids on tricycles with squirt guns filled with hydrochloric acid switch lanes without warning.

NO OFFRAMPS. None.

Now that's the way to run an Interstate Highway system. -- by Don Singleton, Tulsa Computer Society *I/O Port.*