

Review

PerfectDisk 2000 Defragments Windows Drives by Richard Corzo *Danbury (CT) Area Computer Society*

The more you use your computer, the more files you create and destroy on your hard drive. When a new file is first created, an allocation of space is reserved from the available free space. If the data in the file grows, as for instance in a log file, additional space is reserved as needed. Depending on the file system you use on your Windows machine — FAT, FAT32, or NTFS and the partition size, the allocation units may be as small as 512 bytes or as large as 32K bytes. There is no guarantee that all the clusters in a file are contiguous. In fact this is less and less likely as you use your computer.

If your machine seems to have gotten slower than when you first got it, it may be because the files on the hard drive have become highly fragmented. It takes more time to read a file if its pieces are scattered over different places on the hard drive. Windows 95 and 98 have a built-in defragmentation utility that you can invoke by right clicking on a drive in My Computer, selecting Properties, then the Tools tab. Alternatively you can start the program from Start Programs | Accessories | System Tools. Windows NT does not have a utility built in, but Windows 2000 does.

Built-in Utility

The new Windows 2000 Disk Defragmenter was developed by Executive Software and is a pared-down version of the full-featured Diskeeper program. Executive was early into the Windows NT defragmentation utility market, and for Windows

NT 4.0 had a freeware utility called Diskeeper Lite. Diskeeper Lite is no longer available now that Windows 2000 has been released. The Windows 2000 Disk Defragmenter is similar to Diskeeper Lite, which I had used on Windows NT 4.0, but is different from the Windows 95/98 Disk Defragmenter that was developed by Norton.

PerfectDisk 2000

There is a new competitor in the Windows disk defragmentation market. A company called Raxco Software offers PerfectDisk 2000. It works on all the 32-bit flavors of Windows: 2000, NT, 95, and 98.

Why might someone look for something more than the built-in Windows 2000 utility? Without some programming there is no way to schedule the built-in utility. It only defragments files and, in the case of NTFS drives, also directories. It doesn't defragment the NTFS master file table (MFT), system files, or the paging file (used to provide virtual memory beyond the physical memory in your machine).

Executive Software's Diskeeper 5.0 NT Workstation is one alternative (\$39.95). I haven't tried the full product, but in my experience with Diskeeper Lite it often seemed to require multiple passes to completely defragment a drive. With Raxco Software's PerfectDisk 2000 (\$44 for download, \$49.95 on CD-ROM), this usually wasn't necessary. PerfectDisk also seemed more likely to succeed on drives with little free space (10-15 percent).

Defragmentation Strategies

PerfectDisk 2000 has a different strategy for defragmenting a drive. Diskeeper Lite and the built-in Disk Defragmenter pack all the defragmented files at the beginning of the drive and leave all the free space at the end of the drive. Existing files that get modified frequently aren't necessarily near

the free space and so would get re-fragmented quickly. PerfectDisk's approach is to put the free space in the middle of the drive, the least frequently modified files on the outer edges, the occasionally modified files next to those, and the most frequently modified files closest to the free space. This reduces subsequent fragmentation and is supposed to make future defragmentation pass more quickly.

Another strategy optionally taken by the Windows 98 Disk Defragmenter is to place the clusters in the order in which they are actually accessed as a program loads. This in theory makes programs load faster. I didn't notice a discernable difference in load time when I defragmented my Windows 98 system drive using PerfectDisk 2000 instead of the Disk Defragmenter tool.

To defragment FAT directories, system files, or the page file, PerfectDisk 2000 has an "offline" defragmentation capability that works with the drive temporarily disconnected if files are not open; otherwise it kicks in the next time the machine boots. A command-line version of PerfectDisk is included for those who would like to schedule defragmentation using Windows 2000's Task Scheduler.

There is a trial version of PerfectDisk available, *if* you decide to buy it, you may have better luck buying it from one of Raxco Software's resellers rather than directly from Raxco.

Conclusion

I have been very satisfied with PerfectDisk 2000's ability to do the job. I would recommend the application to anyone who is already considering a third-party defragmentation utility for Windows 95 (OEM Service Release 2), 98, NT, or 2000 (1 Minimum memory required is stated as 16

MB, with 64 MB recommended.

Richard Corzo is a computer programmer currently working for Apelon, Inc. in Ridgefield, CT.

Ken's Korner TidByte

Firm Offers Free Tool To Fight 'Love You' Virus by Ken Fermoye

A temporary free solution for the "I Love You" virus and its various mutations, latest in the epidemic of malicious viruses, is available from Binary Research International (BRI). Other sources also offer information about and help stopping the virus. The virus, called the "worst in history," began to appear as "Joke" files and possibly other mutations within 24 hours or so of its birth. It acts as a worm and those who use Microsoft's Outlook Express seem to be most vulnerable.

Those interested in BRI's solution can download the e-mail content filtering program MailMarshal directly from BRI's web site www.binaryresearch.net/. Alternatively, Binary Research will ship the software to those who prefer to receive it on CD. While the normal evaluation period for MailMarshal is 21 days, Binary is offering to extend that an additional three weeks to ensure the "I Love You" threat has subsided.

The widespread and devastating impact of the virus caught individuals, governments and corporations of all size off guard. Estimates of lost productivity and commerce as a direct result of this one virus attack are in the billions of dollars and still climbing.

I have not yet tested MailMarshal V.3, a third-generation e-mail management software tool from Designer Technology Ltd., an Auckland (NZ) software developer.

I plan to do so MAP but wanted to get this word out quickly as possible because of the urgency of the virus problem. Also, BRI's track record is excellent.

BRI is the former wholly-owned subsidiary of Binary Research Ltd. of New Zealand, best known as the original developers of Ghost (now Norton Ghost), the hard-disk cloning utility that was acquired by Symantec Corp. in 1998. BRI is also the master distributor for RemotelyAnywhere, SkunkLabs1 Media Studio, Win², News Clipper and WebMarshal.

Reportedly, MailMarschall offers immediate, simple, effective e-mail protection, without requiring users to download the latest virus definition enhancement. By relying solely on an anti-virus solution, organizations need to wait several hours or even days for a potential fix.

"With its ability to scan incoming messages, MailMarshal denies or quarantines messages based on a variety of criteria. It can control the movement of commercially sensitive data and proprietary information, give legal liability protection, block junk mail and eliminate inappropriate use," a company spokesperson reports. By monitoring and controlling key words (lexical scanning), users or system administrators can effectively remove the threat of malicious viruses, including the current "I Love You."

One last word of caution, the equivalent of "Don't quit your day job!" Don't ignore your other virus protection software. True, it sometimes takes time for the virus-killers to work out and post their solutions, but they remain valuable tools to help keep your system from being vandalized.

Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM PC Users Group and PC World columnist offers the following advice. "You may have already received one [copy of the virus e-mail]. if

not, be patient. Because the "I Love You" worm is heading your way. (I got four already.)

"Two rules to follow: Update your virus ifie right now. Scan every e-mail attachment before opening, if you're interested in the details, read *PC World's* New article <www.pcworld.com/pcwtoday/article/0,1510,16582,00.htm>. Or look behind the scenes with Steve Gibson www.grc.com> compilation below.

The *PC World* article reads in part:

"Like the Love Letter virus, the variant spreads when the 10307-byte attachment is opened. In the original version, the message text reads, 'kindly check the attached LOVELETTER coming from me.' In both versions, the .vbs extension indicates a Visual Basic Script, if you open the attachment, the script inserts a number of files into Windows system directories. The virus then sends a copy of itself to all the addresses in a Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express directory."

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Review

ClipCache Plus
by Larry Anders
Tampa PC Users Group

Occasionally I come across a program that's a real keeper, and I'll admit it's been a while since I've found one, but ClipCache Plus version 2.6 fits

the bill. In a past newsletter article (February 2000), where I listed some killer software, I mentioned another program similar to ClipCache Plus, called Clipmate for Windows, which is also a clipboard extender. By that I mean it allows you to save more than just the last text or graphic copied. While Clipmate does a good job of saving your clips, that's about all it does. ClipCache Plus, on the other hand, is a clipboard extender with quite a few other options.

ClipCache Plus sits in your system tray monitoring all clipboard activity and automatically saves clipboard objects to a currently active group folder. Your clips may then be retrieved within minutes, hours or whenever you need them. You can also create new folders where you can drag and drop a clip into that folder for long-term storage. Any text clip can be edited on the spot using any of the many handy cleanup functions I'll discuss later. There are no limits on the number of clips ClipCache Plus can store and organize, other than the usual disk space and memory requirements.

ClipCache Plus has several text editing and formatting operations. For example, the one that got my attention was its ability to strip, or remove, certain characters from your clips, like that gosh-awful bracket indention (>) on forwarded emails. I refuse to forward an email without first removing all the greater-than signs, which sometimes takes a little while. Not any longer. Just highlight and copy the text to be forwarded and click on "clean-up text". Put a check in the box next to "trim bracket indentation">' and voilà, it's done. Other text operations and changes that can be made are: Trim 'I' indentation, Trim ':' indentation, Trim space indentation, Trim tab indentation, Trim custom character indentation, Make upper

case, Make lower case, Transpose case, Sentence case, Sentence strict case, Word ease, Word strict case, Remove empty lines, Remove line breaks, Remove CR/LFs, Paragraph spacing, Strip < >from email addresses, Strip HTML tags, Trim Left, Trim Right.

A Cleanup Text dialog box allows all formatting operations to be simultaneously processed. Your favorite settings can be saved as pm-sets for later use. Text items may be merged into one clip, the order of the clips to merge may be reorganized., and/or text may be inserted between existing clips. Append mode allows the appending of copied text to the current clipboard contents. And the preview pane supports in-place editing and a context menu that includes Find and Replace and Undo commands.

ClipCache Plus adopts a standard Windows look and feel (drag and drop, property pages, context menus) and its highly intuitive and configurable options cater to the individual needs and preferences of all kinds of users. if you prefer to use hotkeys, the system tray, the main application window, they're all configurable.

The ClipCache Plus main window is divided up into three separate areas (panes): Group, Item and Preview panes. The Item pane may be sorted by clicking (or right clicking) on the required column (name, size, format, date or source window); click again to toggle between ascending or descending sort. Items may be dragged from the item pane to different groups or to different applications which support that format.

QuickPaste automatically pastes into the most recently used application, while FormPaste can paste automatically into the most recently used application and then tab

to the next field of that application, ready to paste the next item handy for filling in forms. If AutoPaste is enabled, then everything copied (from any application) to the Windows clipboard will automatically be pasted into a chosen target application. Ideal for collating snippets of information. A Find feature allows quick and easy location of any items, and clips can be printed or sent by email.

While future versions plan to support more formats, currently the clipboard formats supported are: Text (plain text), Rich Text (font type, size, colour, etc. is retained), OEMText (Text displayed in an OEM font), Bitmap (Device Independent Bitmap), Enhanced Metafiles, Drop (files copied to the clipboard are imported as text file names).

The following are just some of the cool things you can do with ClipCache Plus:

- Storing of text clips from applications for reading later or pasting into other applications.
- Copying text and making changes to it prior to pasting.
- Instant retrieval and pasting of frequently used text clips.
- Removing unwanted forwarding indents ">>>>" from emails.
- Removing white space and large gaps from text copied from web tables or e-mail.
- Formatting text prior to pasting
- Assign hotkeys to your favorite functions.
- Clip hotkey assignments can be managed from a central Hotkey window.
- Collating several text snippets into one pastable clip.
- Use as a text editor.
- Fill in web forms.
- Storing of images for later viewing or

transferring to an image editor.

- Ideal research tool for copying information (text/images) from various sources.
- Game cheats: visit your favorite game cheat site and copy any cheats to a "cheats" group, then print them out with ClipCache Plus later.
- Create Text Clips allows sticky notes usage, which can be pasted any time.
- The three pane view (Group, Item and Preview) allows easy management of clips.
- Easy to use explorer style interface.
- Displays clip attributes: Name (supports renaming), Size, Format, Date & Source Window.
- Sort clips based on any clip attribute.
- Edit clips by typing directly in the preview pane.
- Merge selected clips to a list or with any separators you wish, such as commas, semicolons, hyphens, etc.
- Append text to the clipboard, rather than replacing the clipboard.
- Save captured clips to individual files.
- Manage folder/group size using the "purge" feature, or set size limits for each folder.
- Trashcan group avoids accidental deletion of clips.
- No restriction imposed by ClipCache Plus on number of clips.
- Expanded Search/Find facility with highly effective "Search and Replace".
- FormPaste facility pastes selected clip into the most recently used application and then automatically TABS to the next field.
- QuickSelect hotkey shows a tooltip of the currently selected clip below the mouse pointer.
- ClipMenu displays captured clips as a popup menu under the mouse pointer.

- Emptying the Windows clipboard to free up memory.
- Many custom configurations possible.
- Drag & drop clips from the item pane to applications.
- Drop selected text from the preview pane to applications,
- Drop data from applications to the Group, Item or Preview pane

A trial copy of this handy utility that Microsoft left out of Windows can be downloaded at <http://www.xrayz.co.uk/>. If you like it—it's only \$19.95. I believe I'll be keeping this program for a long time.

From the May 2000 Tampa PC Users Group newsletter, *Bits of Blue*.

Writing and Publishing Your Family History

by Richard Writt

1960 PC Users Group of Houston

About 12 years ago, my younger relatives started asking questions about our ancestors. I was embarrassed by not knowing the answers. Of course, my parents and grandparents had all passed on. Nobody starts acquiring family history information until all the old ancestors die, do they?

Fortunately, my mother had saved and identified many old family photographs, some dating back to circa 1880. She had written some notes with family names and dates. My uncle also had done some research. So with that start, I began my research with numerous trips to the Clayton Library, ordering microfilm from the LDS Library and writing letters to relatives asking for photographs, family stories and etc.

Of course, viewing microfilm rolls, accumulating tons of notes and copies, writing letters to County Clerks and several trips to

localities where your ancestors lived are all part of the fun. All Genealogists go to the LDS Library in Salt Lake City whether they need to or not. Our son was working near Salt Lake City at the time, so it gave us an excuse.

While browsing through the Clayton Library one day, I found a biography of my great grandfather, published about 1900. It stated he was the grandson of Major General Joseph Warren of Revolutionary War fame. Hey, this is pretty exciting! However, after checking the details, I found the good General was killed in battle in 1775 and didn't have a son named James nor could he have been born in 1778 as stated in the biography. Don't believe everything you read! I later found my true ancestor, Captain William Warren. He was roaming the woods of Kentucky shortly after Daniel Boone first arrived and was fighting Indians. In January 1996, I retired (for the first time) and decided with all this information and wonderful old photographs, I needed to do something with this and pass it on to our children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, cousins and anyone else interested in our family history. It's really sad to see unidentified old family photos at flea markets that are somebody's lost relatives.

I discovered a second cousin had five old portrait paintings of ancestors dating back to the early 1800's. These photographs needed to be in the family genealogy book. So with camera and tripod in hand I flew to Tampa. While there, I visited some old friends and another cousin.

In the meantime, I was called on to do some consulting work and the genealogy project was placed on temporary hold. Finally, in October 1998, I hung them up for good and got down to serious business of

writing and publishing the family genealogy book.

The first priority was to buy a new computer as my old 486, 25 MHz, 4 MB RAM, 250 MB hard drive wouldn't even come close to what was needed with all the photos that needed to be digitized. So I purchased a Pentium; 400 MHz, 64MB RAM, 13.6GB

hard drive with a HP 5100G scanner and a HP 722C inkjet printer. Of course, I needed to upgrade my Family Tree Maker (FTM) Software from DOS to Windows 98. Fortunately, all the data upgraded without incident. (I had backups, just in case)

While organizing, typing and scanning, I began searching for a publisher for the family history book. I decided to go with a hardback library bound book. One of my pet peeves in searching for information at libraries was a book without a title on the spine and unable to stand under its own weight on the shelf. After discussion with several printers, the consensus was the best quality printing would be from my disc directly to a commercial Docutech printer. In addition to some 50 family photographs, I needed to download maps from ancestry.com to show family migration patterns. The biographies were written in Microsoft Word. The photos were scanned into Word and edited as necessary in Microsoft Photo Editor. The FTM family history reports,

ancestor and descendant charts were cut and pasted into Word. Of course, back-ups were frequently made, even to the extent of taking the Iomega 100MB Zip discs to my safety deposit box about once a month.

One of the more difficult parts was developing an index. One of the frustrations in doing family research was finding an interesting book without an index. After running several trials, I decided to use the concordance method which requires setting up a two-column table. Word will search the text, list the identified names, places, etc. and print the resident page numbers for each.

In the meantime, I wrote a second letter to all known family members asking for any additional photos (present or past), family stories, etc. I gave them the approximate size of the book (276 pages) and cost. As you might expect, some didn't respond, but most were quite excited about the project and very willing to contribute.

Finally in June 1999, I chose a printer and binder. I took my 3-100MB Iomega Zip discs to the printer and they printed one hardcopy to proofread and make the necessary corrections. The next day they printed 50 sets on 24# coated paper and I delivered them to the binder. I chose the color of the hardcover and lettering. The title for the cover and spine was previously printed on a sheet of paper as a pattern for the cover. By



July, I was mailing out books to relatives. I also donated copies to the Clayton, LDS, and several state and local libraries in Kentucky and Virginia where my ancestors lived. The printing cost was \$8 and the binding was \$11.75 per book.

While it took some work and dedication, it was a very satisfying project. On a personal note, one morning my wife and I were having breakfast, a music box sitting on a chest upstairs with family photographs began playing. The box had not been played in years. I don't believe in ghosts, but this makes me wonder.

From *PC News* the newsletter of the 1960 PC Users Group of Houston, TX. For more details on this article the writer can be contacted at rwratt@pdq.net.

Windows Start Menu

Sorting and Editing

by James C. Smith

NOCCC April Orange Bytes

The Windows Start menu allows you to launch any program that is installed on your computer. Each time you install a new program it adds itself to the Start menu. Some programs give you more control than others when it comes to where the program is added to the Start menu. For your Start menu to be truly useful, you need to customize it to fit the way you use your computer. You can put almost anything you want in the Start Menu including programs, documents, web sites, batch files, or anything you access frequently. You can also arrange the items in the Start Menu so things you use most frequently are easy to get to.

Windows 95/Windows 95 allows you to edit the Start menu a couple different ways. You can click Start/ Settings/ Taskbar and

Start Menu. Next click on the Start Menu Programs tab. From here you can use wizards to add and remove items or you can click advanced to get full control of your Start Menu. You can organize the Start Menu by creating groups or submenus and moving item from one submenu to another. For example, you could put all your graphics editing programs in one group/submenu called graphics. You could also move the programs you use most often to the root level of the Start menu so you don't have to open the Programs submenu to get to them. Windows 95 always displays the item in the Start menu in alphabetical order. If you want to control the order of the items, you can rename them to start with numbers or letters. A program name prefixed with a 1 or A will be near the top of the menu and an item prefixed with 9 or Z will be near the end of the menu. Another way to edit the Start menu in Windows 95 is to simply right click on the Start button and select Open or Explore. From here you can rename, delete, copy, move, or add items to the Start Menu.

Windows 98 — All the editing techniques mentioned above work in Windows 98 plus 98 has some very nice new features, These features are very useful, but so subtle that you may not even know they are there. Any time the Start menu is open (simply left click on the Start button like you always do) you can actually edit the menu in place. Simply click and drag an item in the menu to move it up and down in the menu or even to a submenu. For example, if you play solitaire often, you can move it to the root level of the menu at the top or bottom or anywhere else that is convenient for you. Just click Start/Programs/Accessories Games. Now move your mouse over Solitaire then press and hold the left mouse button. Now you can drag the Solitaire menu item

to a new part of the Start menu. if you use Solitaire often, you may want to drag it all the way to the root level of the Start Menu. This will move it to that new location permanently. If you would rather just put a copy in the root level of the menu, but also keep the existing copy in the Games submenu, you can do that by dragging the Solitaire item with the right mouse button. When you drop it in the new location with the right mouse button, a menu will appear with options to Move Here, Copy Here, or Create Shortcut Here.

You can also use this drag-and-drop technique to move something from the Start menu onto your Desktop or into a folder. Just drag any item out of the Start menu and drop it on your desktop. You will get a shortcut on your desktop to the program your dragged. This also works in reverse. You can take any item on your desktop and drag it over the start button. Hover over the start button for a few seconds without dropping the file. The Start Menu will appear. Now continue dragging to put the item anywhere you like in the Start menu.

You can rename, delete, copy and paste Start Menu items by right clicking on the item in the menu. By default there is an item in the root level of the Start menu call Windows Update. You can rename it to Patch Windows by just clicking the Start button, right clicking on Windows Update, and selecting Rename from the context menu. Now type in Patch Window or any other name you like. Or you could right click on Windows Update and select Delete to get rid of that item if you never want to use it.

Unlike Windows 95, Windows 98 does not automatically sort items in the Start menu alphabetically. This can be convenient because you can use drag-and-drop or copy-

and-paste items to rearrange them into whatever order is best for you. There is no need to put letter or number prefixes on program names to get them to sort the way you want. However, if you just want the items sorted alphabetically, you don't have to manually drag them. all around. All you need to do is right click on any item in the Start Menu and select Sort by Name from the! context menu. This will sort all the items that are current. New items that are added later will be added to the bottom of the menu. You will have to select Sort by Name again later to re-sort. the new items into the menu.

The Start menu can be a great way to get easy access to the programs you use most frequently. Unlike your Desktop, the Start menu is always accessible. However, most people find the Start menu inconvenient to use because there are too many items and they are not properly organized. US. the techniques described above, you should be able to reorganize: your Start. Menu. so that all the programs or documents you use most frequently are easy to access with one or' two clicks of the mouse.

Book Reviews

by Susan Ives

The Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Butterfly Lost

by David. Cole

pb, Harper Mystery, 1999

373 pages., \$5.99

Laura Winslow is a parti-Hopi Ritalin junkie who moved back to Arizona to work. as an "information midwife" for a bounty hunter. She lives in a trailer near' the reservation where she was raised and. hacks. into computer systems to track down. fugitives. She's good at it— she's a

fugitive herself When her business partner goes off on a tangent trying. to track down a horse mutilator, she reluctantly accepts: a case of her own tracking down a young girl whose grandfather thinks she has been abducted by Navaho skinwalkers. Dragged away from her safe computers into the real world, she's forced to confront her troubled past to catch a killer before he strikes again.

Tony Hillerman fans will feel right at home with *Butterfly Lost*. Laura is a compelling heroine and her computers are a running theme throughout the book, although the Native American plot overshadows the technical detail. David Cole's: the founder of the Internet's award-winning Native Web. This is his first novel. I hope there are more.

The Truth Machine

by James L. Halperin

pb, DelRay, 1997

394 pages, \$6.99

When he is five, Pete Armstrong's beloved younger brother Leonard was abducted and killed by. a recently paroled sociopath. While a student at Harvard, the haunted young genius vows to develop a truth machine that can detect with 100 percent accuracy truth and falsehood, to prevent such unreformed killers from ever being released from prison again. The action stretches from 1991 through 2050. Pete graduates from Harvard, invents his truth machine and becomes the richest man in the world.

Along the 'way he harbors a terrible secret that only he, of all. the people in the world, has the power to hide and which, if discovered, could cost him his life and all the good he has worked for. Of all the computer crime books I have read, this is the only one that claims to have been written by a computer. This novel is

speculative fiction, envisioning a future where *technology* has changed every aspect of our lives, with a special emphasis on the truth machine and its impact on the criminal justice system. This is an accessible, provocative, issue-oriented book that forces you to confront the future on its own terms. This is a first novel for Dallas-based Halperin. It's become a cult favorite and I recommend it. He maintains a web site at www.truthmachine.com where you can read sample chapters and cast your vote on the wisdom of really building an infallible lie detector.

The Dealsguy

by Bob Click

Greater Orlando Computer User Group

Ireceive infected e-mail attachments more often than you might think from unknowing people. Recently, I received one called PrettyPark.exe from a friend. What might have fooled me is that I know the sender has Mc.Afee on her machine, and I have Norton Antivirus. No virus alert was issued by mine. I checked with that person later, and as I suspected, she didn't even know she had sent it, but by that time she found she had a virus. The problem — neither of us had updated our virus protection that month, but my precaution of not opening a .exe file attachment saved me anyway.

A friend swears by F-Prot as his anti-virus protection and it is free for home users. Since I hadn't deleted the suspected virus I downloaded F-Prot. After installing F-Prot, it found PrettyPark immediately and gave me the option to delete it. F.Prot can be found on various download sites, His favorite site is [<ftp://ftp.telusplanet.net/pub/simtelnet/msdos/virus/>]. Find the current F-Profile starting with fp and ending with zip.

For updates, go to [<http://www.complex.is/f-prot/Download.html>].

I was hesitant to change, so I ran Norton's live-update, but my subscription had expired. Next morning Customer Service immediately updated me at a cost of only \$4.95 for the year and gave me a confirmation number. I signed on right away using that number to update my Norton Antivirus. I think that's cheap protection for a whole year, but granted, a free one is also very good.

Many people sending a virus don't know it happened because some viruses run in the background using the address book. Virus protection is so cheap, even free. Do your Mends a favor and acquire the protection — PLEASE. People don't realize that a virus does not always inform you that it's there. Some even initialize your modem unbeknownst to you and send to every address in your address book (one version of PrettyPark does so every half hour. Happy99 sends an extra email containing its virus, without your knowledge each time you e-mail someone. Be very cautious of ANY .exe attachments to incoming e-mail

In last month's specials, I thanked PowerQuest for the deals that also listed "Open Linux." P11 bet some folks cringed a bit on that one. I was reminded that it's by Caldera. It didn't say Caldera on the price list. Sorry guys. By the way, the PowerQuest items and the Wizcom pen scanner in last month's column should both still be good.

I'm Featuring Some Reader's Feedback This Month.

I e-mailed Dave Teschner of Hilton Head Island Computing Club after reading his virus article in their newsletter. He acquired a tough version of PrettyPark.exe. He answered my questions and sent me a

government site on viruses that you might find interesting [<http://www.nipc.gov/nipc/nipcaaw.htm>]. It has information on 40,000 different viruses. His version of PrettyPark (there are three) didn't yield to the normal virus cleaners and required special cleaning instruction acquired off the aforesaid site. Dave is experienced, but used a Microsoft certified technician this time.

Other Interesting Feedback

Bob Wexler of Western NY Computer Society tells me that PC Connection and Mac Connection (mail order catalogs) have a policy of offering free ground UPS shipping to all legitimate members of a user group if you mention that when you order. I checked and it's true. Phone 1-800-800-5555 for a catalog.

Murry Davis of the Akron/Canton Users Group sent me the following: "[www.bargaindog.com] is featured in an article in the Circuits section of the *NY Times* on page D4 (4-20-00) as a source of hundreds of deals on many, many items?

I checked it out and there are all kinds of interesting items, not just computer stuff, and I assume things change all the time. It will even do comparison shopping for you. Feedback In The ISP Dept.

Melvin Turetzky of the Boca PC Users Group e-mailed me a Web site that he says gives unbiased evaluations of ISPs — [www.dogwolf.seagull.com]. Mel agreed with my good opinion of Mindspring until lately.

Since the merger with Earthlink, his confidence faltered because of problems accessing his Web site, but their tech support came through again. Now I'm having similar problems they have yet to solve.

John Chmura of HAPCUG in Daytona Beach gave me this URL — [<http://nzlist.org/user/freesip/index.htm>] — and tells me

he has found no less than 48 free ISPs available in the Daytona Beach area with local access numbers. He tried the free Juno service, but says he gets disconnected a lot, which I've heard before.

And this detective work from John Hedinger of Manatee PC User Group: Concerning K-Mart's "BlueLight.com"; by following and snooping behind the links, it appears that this service is part of [www.spinway.com] free ISP service. Besides [www.bluelight.com], Spinway seems to be providing the software, or engine (and perhaps the advertising) behind a number of free ISP's, including [www.collegeclub.com], [www.nettaxi.com], and [www.webland.org]. Try (www.alladvantage.com); they actually pay you to be on the Net. And the beat goes on?

Mike Ungerman of Central Florida Computer Society in Orlando sent me this. "FINALLY, there is a FREE Internet access service with e-mail accounts without any banners, pop-up windows, floating bars — you name it. It works nationwide (in US) with a great amount of local access numbers. How do they do that? Tell you the truth, I do not know. But yes; no banners, no ads, no floating bars — unlimited and stable connection. So, go grab it!! [<http://freewarehome.com/services/internet.html#91384050fl>]. And while you're at it, the link to the Freeware site which also has some great free downloads. Note I said 'free' and not 'shareware.' There are no registration fees required using the programs located at [<http://freewarehome.com/>]."

Mike also sent this URL for checking out virus alerts and hoaxes — [<http://www.911viralalert.com/home1/home1.html>]. Want To Plan The Perfect Trip?

This is a subscription service by Planet-

Ware, but there is some free stuff here too. For the traveler, it can be a great help in planning your trip, especially overseas. The PlanetWare Travel Encyclopedia, the largest, searchable source of travel attraction data on the Web, is on-line at [<http://www.PlanetWare.com>]. The PlanetWare site helps travelers search for travel gems related to their special interests, provides visit decision details and serves as a one-stop source for making judgments about the relative merits of tourist attractions

The PlanetWare Travel Encyclopedia is probably the largest site of its kind on the Internet with over 110,000 pages of attraction data. While the bulk of data is available by monthly subscription at a cost comparable to that of a single paper tour guide book, about 10,000 pages are free. The free data includes all photos, complete details of a featured city of the month (currently 550 attractions of London, England with maps), lists of the top-rated sites, suggested walking and driving tour sequences, plus lists of the 8,000 towns currently featured on the PlanetWare site.

All PlanetWare maps are interactive. Cursoring over a map shows attraction names. Similarly, rolling over a list of attraction names pinpoints each site on the map. Clicking either the name or the pinpoint on the map brings up attraction details. There's more, but my readers can get a two-month subscription for the price of one month (\$20.00 US). The minimum is two months, maximum is twelve months. If this catches your attention, e-mail [info@planetware.com] and provide:

1. The secret word 'dealsguy' in the subject line to qualify,
2. An e-mail address where they can send the password,
3. The name on the credit card you are

using,

4. Visa, MC or AmEx,
5. Card number,
6. Expiration date.

They'll then send you your secret password. If you take a two-month subscription to plan any trip, it should more than pay for itself. I think \$20.00 for two months is cheap for what they offer.

Does Your Computer IQ Fit This Category?

Below is a note from Marcia Laughry, author of the book "Active Directory for Dummies."

Intimidated by Windows 2000's Active Directory?

"With all the media hype surrounding the release of Windows 2000 Server, you may already be a bit intimidated by the prospect of working with Active Directory. You've seen the presentations and articles discussing trees, forests, sites, and namespaces. Not only must you assimilate a new technology, but you must also pick up an entire new language just to understand what everyone's talking about. But Active Directory doesn't need to be difficult! In this book (Active Directory for Dummies), you find out in clear and simple language what Active Directory is, what it does and what benefits it brings to your organization - and to your job.

"To Order, simply type WIN2000NEWS in the referral field on the Shopping Basket Checkout page. [<http://www.fatbrain.com/shop/info/0764506595?from=XUU975J>]. This is good for 10 percent off the online price of \$19.95."

That's it for this month. Thanks for all your wonderful feedback. Looks like I've exceeded my word count again. Sorry Editors! Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special

offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of, products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [dealsguy@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns.

Society News

President's Column

by Joe Pia

As the school year draws to a close so does our Society's season of meetings, after this upcoming June meeting, we will have one in July and a picnic in August. We'll start up again in the fall with the new officers in charge.

Let me now say a word about my own position next year. Elsewhere in this issue is the list of officers for the 2000-2001 year. While we have a couple of new people on board — Charlie Grover and Ron Matteson, there is a good deal of continuity. Frank Howden is going off the Board, and then there's me.

I think it would be helpful if I outlined what I expect to be doing next year. Even though I was elected to fill the Vice President slot, I am looking forward to our finding someone else to do that job. I am eager to bow out of that position as early as possible. We need someone in that slot who is interested in becoming the Vice President and doing all the things that the by-laws say s/he should do. I agreed to run for that position to make sure that it would be filled at election time. But here's what I really expect to do.

An Outreach Effort

In last month's *Monitor* I talked about

other computer organizations around the country. Many of them have really large memberships. At present we are running about 125 members. We can, and should, be one of the larger organizations in the country. My job will be to develop that membership in the course of the year. I figure another year will allow me to concentrate on that task. If I do a good job, we will have a nice arrangement to hand to the next person. He or she can continue the good work and generate a whole lot more new members.

The major efforts will focus on two issues: (1) recruitment and (2) community service. My title will be something like Chairman, Outreach. I will be calling on others to join my team.

Community Service

The community service aspect of the job has already started coming to us. One outfit, that will be named when the deal is complete, wants our non-profit selves to provide computer instruction to kids from what the establishment calls the wrong side of the tracks. We all know there isn't any what the reference is to. We will know by this time next month if this arrangement will work. Stay tuned.

If this arrangement works, we will no doubt be presented with other opportunities. Those of us who have any experience with teaching people will be called upon to deliver instruction in a variety of settings new to us. There will be ways to participate meaningfully in this enterprise even if teaching is not what you do. For example, teaching materials need to be copied and then toted to the places of instruction.

Places of Instruction

The places of instruction represent the next challenge. We hope to have locations around the area where we will have com-

puters, tables, and chairs and such. Those will be the places where people will be invited to appear to learn how to operate computers. There will be a fee, most of which will be the fee for membership in the Society for a year. The rest of the fee will go for materials and perhaps space rental. We'll see.

Developing a coterie of beginners who want instruction will be the major thrust of the effort. There is no point in developing such a group of eager beavers until we have some place to put them. If all goes well, we can get spaces organized over the summer and be ready for the fall.

Size of Our Membership

One upshot of all this is that we will have a much larger membership. But we will not expect all those people to attend the monthly meetings of the Society. Instead, those newbies will be meeting in small groups learning particular kinds of software. Some will learn word processing, for still others on things like Quicken, etc.

Monthly Meeting Attendance

As these folks become more sophisticated, they will find themselves interested in the monthly meetings. Usually only a portion of the membership of a volunteer group attends the monthly meetings. We have been running at about 50 percent of our membership. A more common experience is 10 percent to 30 percent. If we have a total membership of about 1K, having 250 people at our meetings would not be an unreasonable expectation. Anything over a hundred would make our Society a very attractive target for manufacturers and all kinds of vendors.

The Small Group

Even with large monthly meetings the group's main effort, I would expect, would be the small group meetings. Eight to ten

folks, a group leader, and a bunch of computers that the Society owns in whole or in part will be the primary meetings. And they will meet more frequently than once a month. For retirees several meetings a week would be a reasonable expectation. For people still working once a week is a more likely option. The actual state of affairs will guide us to the right combination of times, places and people. It will take us awhile to get it all sorted out. And there will be many frustrations along the way. But in the long run the path will smooth out.

Finally

No doubt other things will develop between now and September, possibilities that will attract our attention. After everything else, newbies will find themselves doing two things simultaneously: (1) Working on their own stuff learning new programs and such as their needs and desires dictate while (2) enjoying being part of a large group of computer users learning to be not only literate but helpful to themselves and others.

I look forward to seeing you at the July meeting and the August picnic. It has been a wonderful two and a half years sitting at the helm of this group. And while my watch does not end until September arrives, I'm enjoying saying goodbye and good luck to so many of you who have been so supportive over the whole term of my office. Thank you.

Planning Meeting

May 16, 2000

by Charles Grover

Secretary-elect

Joe Pia called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m. at his home. Also present were Joe Varga, President-elect; Steve Staub, Treasurer; Frank Howden, Vice President; Ron Matteson, Trustee-elect;

Larilyn Bauer, Member at Large; and Charles Grover, Secretary-elect. Jim McGrath, Member at Large, arrived at 7:30. We began by considering program possibilities for June and other meetings. The possibility of Microsoft appearing is for October. *SoundBytes* may be a possibility. [Comments about the current ITEC show were made and it was suggested we might have a booth another year. LUGOR has a booth this year. However, it was pointed out that ITEC is a high-end gathering and may not be appropriate for RCSi.

Frank suggested trying to schedule *SoundBytes* for September. Inviting other groups might require us to use the main auditorium at East High. Joe Varga said he would work on setting up a *SoundBytes* program.

For June, Joe Pin will check with Sally Springett about showing us how she uses WordPerfect to compose the Monitor.

Steve told us about changing the Postal Permit to reflect our not-for-profit corporation status. He spoke about the need to have names and addresses in time to prepare for the mailing. Some discussion followed about newsletter production. About 237 are mailed. Appreciation for Sally's work was voiced.

Steve told us it may be too late to find a site for the picnic, but the search is still on.

Steve has decided to check other banks as an alternative to Charter One and mentioned some possibilities. He next spoke about acquiring mugs as gifts for program presenters and for sale to members. The board chose to wait to make a decision in regard to ordering mugs.

Sites for the summer program meetings were discussed. Libraries are possibilities.

The June planning meeting will be at Joe Pia's and in July planning meetings will

move to the offices of Heveron and Heveron.

Joe Pia led a discussion about the drive to increase membership. He envisions a post for membership development and would like to relinquish the Vice President position (to which he has been elected) in order to work on membership. This will require finding another person to fill the term Vice President.

Frank and Joe Varga talked briefly about dealing with software.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

New User Group Meeting

May 2, 2000

by John McMillan

The meeting started with a discussion of vulnerability when you are logged onto the internet. In addition to sites you visit that may try to download cookies, your machine can be attacked by others who may randomly scan open lines. Fire walls such as Zone Alarm, (a free download from <http://www.zonelabs.com>) and Black Ice (a more sophisticated program that retails for about \$40 from <http://www.networkkice.com>) prevent such attacks. Zone Labs is purported to have a new version for sale which includes logging. Gregg Sayre also reiterated the need for using a virus checker which is updated at least bi weekly.

The next question concerned how Road Runner could be introduced into an older house that did not have cable television installed. Normally Time Warner would run a line from its closest source to the house, make an entry (preferably into the base-merit) and then run wires from there to whatever rooms were desired. There is a one time connection charge which varies by the number of rooms. They might run vertical wires through cold air returns

if possible or "flsh" them between studs. Wireless connections are a more expensive alternative but might also require networking knowledge.

Soyata computer, a Road Runner agent, was suggested as a source of additional information about the various choices, Frontier Telephone's DSL (Direct Subscriber Link) service was also mentioned as a possibility.

The speed of Celeron chips was questioned. When these were first produced, they had very limited cache memory which made them much slower than the rated speed. Cyrix was also mentioned as having some compatibility problems and AMD chips were suspected of causing unexplained lockups. In one years experience with an AMD K6 400 MHz chip, I have had no problems.

A user described a problem in which his CD player would play music but would not read program or data CD's. There is a possibility that this could be a macro virus. His McAfee virus checker, 3.0, is no longer supported so he needs to buy a new checker. It was news to other users that in addition to downloading new virus updates, they need to change the search engine at regular intervals.

CD readers come in three flavors, the original type, (CDR), which would only allow CD's to be read; a second type, (CDW), which would also, let you write to a writable CD I time; and a third type (CDRW) which permitted erasing and writing to a CD an unlimited number of times, thereby providing the equivalent of a 650 megabyte removable storage media. It was recommended that he delete the device from the system and then reload it. This is fraught with danger because he could not reload the drivers which came on a CD. The critical

files could be transferred to a floppy disk before the deletion and then reloaded from the floppy when the CD reader was reinstalled. The drivers had not been identified and the off brand manufacturers tech support and web site were not helpful. The user thought Safe Mode was involved in the original setup so it was suggested that he use procedures described in *Windows 98 Secrets* by Livingston & Straub. This reference book, which is used by several members of the group, also has a Windows 95 version.

A user wondered how to transfer word processor files from a Windows 3.1 environment on a 386 machine to a Windows 98 environment on a pentium II or III computer. Several considerations were discussed but Star Office seemed to offer the most automatic method short of networking the two machines. Another possibility would be to install the original word processor software on the new machine and then just copy files to a floppy for migration purposes.

At this point, talk generalized around the functions and effectiveness of the New Users Group. We do Windows, which meets at Ziff Davis in Corporate Woods, was cited as an alternative for our forum. In recent months, meetings, though interesting, have not involved many new users. Ideas put forth that might reopen the meetings to an influx of new users included advertising our presence in Genesee Gateway and free publications. Several Internet users groups were identified, including those of the Monroe County Library System, that help newcomers get up and running. Various uses of the internet were described including researching a topic and capturing music on your hard drive by downloading from the NARSTER site.

Several of the attendees stayed an extra

twenty minutes to explore points of interest.

Treasurer's Report

by Steve Staub

Income	
Dues	\$230.00
Rebate on paper	<u>29.00</u>
Total Income	\$259.00
Expenses	
Rent on copier	\$100.00
St. Stephens	115.00
Address labels	27.81
Pizza and pop	<u>13.47</u>
Total Expenses	\$256.28
Balance as of 5/29/2000	\$2,849.80

The Lighter Side

Microsoft Copyrights the Semi-Colon

In a move expected to have far-reaching impact, Microsoft today announced that it had successfully copyrighted the semi-colon. Hereafter, the ";" will be replaced by " ;© " In a prepared statement, Mr. Jose Fuentes, chief technical lawyer for Microsoft said:

"Microsoft has today successfully copyrighted the semi-colon. While some may decry the removal from the public domain of a standard keyboard and ASCII character, in fact, few, if any, non-technical writers use the semi-colon. Those who do so, use it incorrectly. The major use of the semi-colon is confined to the C and C++ programming languages, and frankly most people who work in those languages are employed either directly by Microsoft or through subcontracts. The subcontracts will be written to mitigate the impact of the user fee, to be established in the near future."

While he did not elaborate, sources close to Mr. Fuentes have intimated that the user fee will be determined on a per-use basis of the semi-colon, and is expected to be approximately 0.061 cents per use. The same sources would riot comment on rumors that Microsoft is pursuing copyright action on the parentheses.

If Microsoft Ran the IRS

Government should be run like a business." We've all heard that chestnut. Here is how the Internal Revenue Service (nobody's favorite government agency) would be like, if only it were run like Microsoft Corp. (a successful private enterprise).

The IRS, as always, announces new tax forms will be mailed the week before the new year. However it will follow Microsoft's example and actually ship them the following May.

Responding to pressure from some large corporations and a users' group, some early copies of the tax forms will actually be released in March. The recipients must sign non-disclosure agreements.

In June, the forms will be recalled because the IRS loses a suit for appropriating some other country's intellectual property.

When you move, the IRS will continue to send mail to your previous address forevermore, just like Microsoft sends its product upgrade notices.

When you upgrade from form 1040 EZ to 1040 A, and then to 1040, you will pay an upgrade fee each time. Also you need to send in a new registration card and get a new Social Security Number. In order to upgrade, you have to submit the original first page of your previous year's form.

Like Microsoft. when you file a late or

amended tax return the IRS will reject it on the grounds that the prior year is no longer supported.

The IRS telephone help will remain similar to Microsoft's, staffed by ill-trained, high-turnover personnel who sometimes give a correct answer, but the IRS will have to discontinue using a toll-free phone number.

After struggling with reams of dense documentation of complex options and rules, you discover that you will need publication 3297, with a ten-word-long title, in order to answer (you hope) a single obscure question. The IRS, like Microsoft, will charge a minimum of \$40 for that publication.

The IRS, like Microsoft, will continue to issue immense volumes of bug fixes, interpretations, and clarifications. However the tax-rule updates should be neither easily searchable nor well-indexed.

Instead of three-ring binders containing complete sets of tax code bugs and interpretations, IRS rulings will be promulgated in a haphazard fashion by individual taxpayers via BBS, Usenet, and Compuserve. A for-profit publishing subsidiary would also be nice.

The new all-powerful (and eccentric) Commissioner of Internal Revenue will jet around the country giving speeches and granting numerous interviews, but only to sycophantic reporters. Changes to the tax code will be at the whim of the Commissioner and largely kept secret until they are published.

—Michael Glass/Reva Freedman