

Making Music CDs from LPs and Other Analog Devices

by Ruth Lewart

Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey

Cass' uncle was a classical composer of note. In 1974 he gave us an auto-graphed LP album featuring many of his compositions. One of my goals in purchasing a CD-ReWriter last year was to convert some irreplaceable LPs and 45 RPM records into a more convenient, more durable medium. I read many articles on the Internet about copying already digitized music files to CD, and copying one CD to another, but found few that even talked about — never mind telling you how to do it the more complex conversion from an *analog* (continuous in time) source (radio, cassette tape, and LP) to the *digital* language of the PC.

When the widow of said uncle bemoaned the fact that she didn't have a CD version of the album, I decided it was time to bite the bullet. I knew that *Easy CD Creator 4 Deluxe* was capable of the conversion from an analog source to digital CD, but you rarely heard of anyone who has actually *tried* it. I'd done some test recordings with that version, but was discouraged when the hisses, clicks, and pops on my test transferred perfectly to CD, in spite of the filters that were supposed to suppress them. Staples had a good deal recently, so I splurged on the upgrade to *Easy CD Creator 5 Platinum (EZ for short)*, which had all the modules I needed to do the job. The upgrade was worth it because now I had a real manual with sixteen chapters, a useful glossary, and an index. But only three-plus pages were devoted to using *Spin Doctor*, the module for recording from an analog source!

Preparations

I'd already acquired a room-full of audio cables at a flea market so that we could connect the turntable (or radio or cassette deck) via the stereo system in the living room to the line in (usually blue) plug of the computer's sound card — the computer sat in another room. I didn't relish the prospect of moving either the stereo or the computer system, so connected several cables in tandem. For good results, you want (1) an analog source (LP here) attached to a stereo receiver that has an audio output jack; (2) a quality 16-bit stereo sound card; and (3) a computer with 64 MB RAM and plenty of hard disk space to hold those .wav files. You also want to make sure that the line input is enabled during recording. On my audio system, I discovered a gotcha if the microphone/headphone input is enabled, then the line input is not. You also need to set your audio for maximum quality (44 MI-Iz, 16-bit stereo is CD quality), or you'll get the inferior sound quality that's typical of laptop speakers.

Ready, Set, Go

Now came the hard part — determining by trial and error the right volume at which to record. Note that the stereo, sound card and recording software all have volume controls. If you set the volume too low, you'll hear noise when you try later to amplify the sound. If it's high enough that the software bar chart displays in the red area, you'll



experience distortion. So you preview the sound until you're satisfied. Of course, if you want to be certain that your volume setting is optimum over the entire range of the recording, you may have to listen for 45 minutes or longer, and then repeat the monitoring at a different setting. Or, you could use the normalizer to record all tracks at equal volume. Now I know why you see audio engineers sitting at the controls in theaters — they're constantly adjusting amplitude and equalization!

I started recording to my hard drive, rather than directly to the CD, for reasons explained below. I then signaled my accomplice, who was stationed at the turntable, to put the needle down, and we were off. The speakers attached to the sound card allowed me to monitor the recording progress. Next problem — most LPs are scratchy, and while your ear may have tuned out the hisses and pops, your extraction and recording equipment hasn't. So you can use the snap, crackle, and pop inhibitor that is part of the software, or you use a record that doesn't have any defects — fortunately we had an unopened album as well as the one we had played. The only clicks were at the very end, after the record had finished playing, which your audio engineer didn't catch because she was otherwise distracted.

The manual tells you it's a good idea to record to your hard drive first, rather than directly to the CD. The advantages are that you can listen to your preview before burning an unintentional coaster, you can work on the hisses and pops offline, and you can add effects to your heart's content using the *Sound Editor*. Only when you are satisfied do you commit to CD. My CD-ReWriter, as it's last year's model, doesn't do more than 8x (this translates to a write speed of 1200

KB/second), so I used CD-Rs (not CD-RWs) that were certified for at least 8x. You should be able to record a track at a time, with a 2-second (your choice) gap between tracks. But though I had carefully chosen my options, I ended up with only one track per side. The original digital extraction, using *SoundStream*, resulted in .wav files and took about 43 minutes. Recording to CD, which resulted in two audio tracks, took about the same time. I could have converted to mp3 or wma. files if I had wanted compression, but I just wanted to be able to play the CD from any stereo system, even a portable one, without any loss in quality. All that was left was to make a CD label. For this I used my Neato applicator and software and an image I had scanned from the original album for my theme. EZ includes a label creator, but Neato's is more flexible.

I shipped the finished CD off to California. Cass' aunt was excited when the surprise arrived — and immediately asked for 25 additional copies!

Euphoria

I was just astounded by the results — not only did this amateur succeed in getting a high-quality recording, but I was able to use the sound editing software to get rid of the noise introduced by the needle when it landed on the platter at the beginning of the session, and the clicks after the recording had finished. Flushed with this success, I figured out how to add a leader and a trailer, and decided to experiment with fade-in and fade-out. I haven't exercised the graphic equalizer yet — have to leave something for the next time! I couldn't believe that all of this was possible with non-commercial hardware and software, an inexpensive sound card in my computer, flea market cables, and

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Computer Law:



Did He Really Say That?

by Bill Wood

AlamoPC Organization, Inc.

Sometimes I read something that I just don't believe. That happened to me recently when I read an article in the July 1, 2002 issue of *eWeek* magazine. It reported that a member of Congress, Rep. Howard Berman, had delivered a speech in which he said, "Peer-to-peer networks are hotbeds of copyright piracy and that legislation is needed to help artists and companies protect themselves." It went on to report that he intended to introduce legislation that would allow copyright holders to use self-help remedies to protect themselves. Specifically, it mentioned: file blocking, spoofs, decoys and interdiction as possible techniques that would be allowed.

In other words, they would search other people's computers without a search warrant looking for files that allegedly infringe on copyrights despite the fact that some of those activities may be illegal under current federal law. Further, they would be free to take "self-help" action to stop the sharing of copyright protected files without court action or independent review.

A visit to the Congressman's Website carried not only a copy of that speech to the Computer and Communications Industry Association (Berman Announces Legislation to Foil Peer to Peer Piracy but a position paper in which he has these observations:

"One approach for dealing with P2P piracy that has not been adequately explored is whether it could be addressed, at least

partially, through technological self-help measures.

Copyright owners could employ a variety of technological tools to prevent the distribution of copyrighted works over a P2P network. Interdiction, decoy, redirection, file blocking, and spoofing technologies can help prevent unauthorized P2P distribution.

"The day for cleaning up P2P networks through court action may now be past . . . It may be that truly decentralized P2P systems cannot be shut down, either by a court or technologically, unless the client P2P software is removed from each and every file trader's computer.

"Congress should free copyright creators and owners to develop and deploy technological tools for addressing P2P piracy. We could do this by creating a safe harbor from liability for copyright owners that use technological means to prevent the unauthorized distribution of their copyrighted works via P2P networks."

It appears that he did say what *eWeek* had reported and more. He went so far as to say that some federal laws, such as the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, currently make the activities he proposed illegal. His solution? The copyright holders would enjoy an exemption to authorize them to seek out and destroy the offending files trading.

What is P2P or peer to peer? In general terms, a P2P system enables multiple computers to share certain files. The owners of the computers must set up a system to identify which files are available. There is no central repository for the files, and each computer as a peer of every other computer in the system makes some of its files available to other users. As pointed out by the Congressman, P2P systems do allow computer owners to use the Internet to share

music files and other protected content without paying royalties. What he doesn't address are the many valuable uses for P2P networks, and I'm concerned that his approach will generate unintended consequences to those legitimate uses.

He does have at least one valid point. Theft is theft and theft is wrong. I agree that copyright infringement can be theft. However, some uses of copyright protected material without permission from the owner is perfectly legal. Education, research and criticisms are examples of "fair use" exceptions to the general copyright protection.

It is just as true that trespass is trespass. (Yes, I know that trespass is commonly an entry upon another's real property, but there is no legal reason why entry into one's computer without permission wouldn't also be a trespass. The USA Patriot Act was passed by Congress in response to the terrorist attacks on the United States and it actually has a definition of a "Computer Trespasser" that seems to protect any computer used in interstate commerce. What computer hooked to the Internet isn't used in Interstate Commerce?) There is a process under law for dealing with theft. If you think someone has stolen your property you can either report it to police or sue in court. Even the police don't have the right to go into someone's house without permission to search for your property unless they obtain a search warrant.

For the Congressman to make the statement that litigation in the courts is no longer a viable option for copyright owners is too much for me. Even under the recently passed Patriot Act the government must make a showing before a federal judge before it intercepts on-line traffic. Is the Congress-



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man implying that any large copyright holder should have more rights to snoop through your computer than the FBI has hunting for terrorists?

As we all know with technology, mistakes happen. Software has bugs. Hardware fails. Congressman Berman, who incidentally represents the Los Angeles area, did indicate that there should be strong remedies for those who are wrongly damaged, ... such legislation should ensure that a P2P file-trader who has been subjected to technological self-help measures has effective remedies if he believes a copyright owner has acted improperly.

He points out that the copyright owners should not be allowed to damage someone else's computer.

But, with no burden upon the copyright owner to show an impartial judge that the intrusion is necessary, the only recourse would be for the innocent party to sue the

copyright owner. If litigation is too burdensome for the owners, would it be any less burdensome for a truly innocent party seeking redress for the trespass?

Also, would the owners do the deeds themselves or contract it out to investigation companies with no assets to satisfy a judgment? To be truly effective the full resources of the copyright owners must back the remedy for the innocent party.

The technology already exists to do it a different way. *The Washington Post* reported that the motion picture association had contracted with a company to search for illegal copies of motion pictures on the Internet. However the motion picture association program doesn't include the self-help provisions proposed by Rep. Berman. Their efforts rely upon traditional cease and desist letters and contacts with the ISP's that maintain the servers. According to the *Post*, the MPAA sent out more than 50,000 letters last year and expects to send out more this year. So long as they are searching public directories and files and then taking the case through the established channels that provide both sides a fair hearing, I have no problem with it.

But, if Congress approves the Berman initiative, what lawyer would ever advise a client to use P2P systems — even in situations that have nothing to do with copyright material? If another entity has legal sanction to enter, search and take self-help action just because the computers are part of a P2P system then it could never be used for sensitive information. In short, the client would be setting its system up as a target for intrusion by copyright owners searching for an illegal copy of some song.

In a perfect world, everyone would respect everyone else and their property.

When things don't go perfectly, the court system is still a better system for handling allegations of copyright infringement than the proposed self-help system.



The DealsGuy

by Bob Click

Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

Aladdin Update

Aladdin has released some updates and a special offer. They offer user groups a discount as usual. You can check it out on my Web site from my Announcements page [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] or register at [<http://www.aladdinsys.com/support/usergroups/index.html>]

How About Secure E-mail For A Change

I received this offer from Eric Leve at Centuriansoft. I realize that some folks don't care if somebody might read their e-mail, but here is software to encrypt it at a good price, bundled with another great product. I'll post the information received from Centuriansoft on my Web site's announcement page [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] where you can see their argument for encryption, full descriptions of the products in this deal, and their offer. Please read it all carefully.

Briefly, SoftClan "e-cryptor" allows the user to create and send self-decrypting e-mails that do not require the recipient to have any additional software to decode the message. Once received, the recipient needs only to expand or execute the attachment, click on the resulting envelope icon, and finally, input the password to access the enclosed and formerly encoded information.

Also, for a limited time Centuriansoft will include a free copy of "Steganos 3 Security Suite" with your order. Steganos 3 Security Suite is a complete security solution for your PC. Its features include seven great products

and I liked the looks of them all. MSRP for SoftClan “e-cryptor is \$59.95, but DealsGuy readers can get the entire package for just \$39.96, shipping included. \$7.00 shipping for Canadian customers. Call 1-202-293-1634, or e-mail [eve@centuriansoft.com] and mention promotion code 777 to order. Visit their Web site for information on their entire line of products. [http://www.centuriansoft.com] More next month.

That’s it for this month. 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 [Bobclick@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [http://www.dealsguy.com] for past columns. Also, I keep adding interesting articles (taken from user group newsletters) to my “Articles of Interest” page for viewing or downloading.

Is Anything New in Technology?

by K. Joyce McDonald
Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Everything that can be invented has already been invented. –Charles H. Duell, Director, U. S. Patent Office, 1899

I remember reading this prediction in 1989 and being incredulous that someone in Mr. Duell’s position could be so short-sighted. Why is it that today this prediction doesn’t seem quite as ridiculous? Does my attitude simply reflect general economic malaise, or is technological development actually at a standstill?

Where are the “killer apps” that promised to make us richer, happier and more productive? Two years ago, virtually every com-

pany was working with NASA-level secrecy on a piece of hardware or software that would change the world. Today we’re more concerned with staying in the black, keeping auditors under control and preventing terrorists from using our nifty inventions against us.

Still I do miss the rush of excitement that accompanies news of the next must-have gadget or application. Sadly, in the past few months, the closest that I have come to that kind of rush is when I saw the movie *Minority Report*. And even their killer app of fifty years hence ends up flawed by fatal security gaps.

Certainly, not a lot is new, but some recent technological developments are worth mentioning. First, we can turn the tables on terrorists with a technology called data mining.

Credit card companies already use networked computer systems to follow cardholders as they rent cars, place long-distance calls, and use automated teller machines. These systems scan massive amounts of transaction data with data-mining software that flags suspicious users and dispatches real-time alerts to clerks or security guards when a suspected crook surfaces.

The al Qaeda cell that attacked on Sept. 11 threw off a string of red flags that likely would have been detected by a system that combined FBI watch-lists with transaction data-mining. Such a system would allow law-enforcement officials in a variety of locales to share leads and working hypotheses, an invaluable tool in fighting terror.

For the home user, even less is new, and most of it is from Microsoft. Their Tablet PC is only mildly interesting, since it appears to be a rehash of some older ideas with only a slightly newer approach: you can either

write on the screen with a stylus or stand it up on a keyboard to transform it into notebook PC (Didn’t Apple call this a Newton?). It features handwriting recognition that is less than perfect, so don’t expect the machine to translate your scribbles into word-processor ready text. According to Alex Loeb, Microsoft VP in charge of Tablet PC development, many people prefer to keep their notes handwritten rather than converting them to computer text. Microsoft issued the prototype for the Tablet PC two years ago, with the “revolutionary” idea that now business people could take hand-written notes in a meeting. And to think that I begged, pleaded, cajoled a former employer for a laptop to keep notes in meetings since writing my notes longhand was too slow and made me miss too much of the meeting content.

If you want to take handwritten notes in a business meeting and store it on an electronic device why pay \$2000 bucks for this feature? The Palm M105 offers an onscreen handwriting feature and it costs only \$149. If you want to spend a couple hundred more, you can get the Palm M130 and have a crisp color version. Either one saves your scribbles just as they are (great for those who like to sketch).

Microsoft also recently introduced of the TV Photo Viewer. (You’d think that Microsoft could afford to hire someone to come up with jazzier names for its products.) This device allows you to view your digital pictures and slides on your TV set. About the size of a thick paperback book, the viewer accepts standard 1.44 megabyte floppy disks that hold 20 to 40 pictures per disk (it recommends closer to 20, because they don’t have to be quite as compressed and thus produce higher quality graphics). The viewer comes

with a remote that lets you flip through the electronic photo album or slide show yourself, or you can set it to automatically show.

Because it uses standard floppy disks, you have to put your pictures on the disk using your PC (assuming that you have a floppy drive on your computer — not all of us do nowadays). Aside from the fact that I would love to force my guests to view photos of my grandchildren on our TV screen, this product caught my interest because I have boxes and boxes of floppy disks that I have no use for, and I hate to throw anything away. It would be much easier, however, if the TV Photo Viewer accepted CDs so its owner doesn’t have to get up and change disks as often. CDs, because they do not incorporate magnetic media, also have a longer shelf life.

Outside of Microsoft, is anyone creating anything new? Yes, a few are, and we may wish that they weren’t. Some Internet sites have come up with their own “killer app.” It takes over your browser by changing your start page, (the Web page that appears first whenever you launch Internet Explorer.) Certain sites install malicious code on your PC, some of which overrides your own start page selection. In some cases, this can be embarrassing, since this type of technology is often employed by pornographic websites.

If this happens, all is not lost. You can download a free program that is effective in blocking such sabotage. StartPage Guard kills malicious code and allows you to restore your favorite start page. It can also automatically check to make sure your choice isn’t overridden again. You can download StartPage Guard (search for “start page”). It might be prudent to install StartPage Guard before you taste any forbidden Internet fruit.

If you prefer another type of forbidden fruit (and I do admit to a weakness for

Margaritas), one new dot-com may not be the answer to Amazon, but its product is certainly interesting. Check out Boat-Blender. It offers a bottle that fits on the end of your cordless drill allowing you to make the perfect "drilled" Margaritas while you entertain on your boat. I wonder if anyone has invented something that will allow me to make a pina colada while water skiing.

Another frivolous invention has actually been quite useful. You can log onto the Palm website and download a freeware utility for your color PDA called AK Mirror. This program is a first offering from Akeysoft and it does only two things: it turns your screen all black or all white. In all black mode, you can use your PDA as a mirror with good enough clarity to check your teeth for a stray piece of spinach, although it may not be much use when inserting your contact lenses. In all white mode, it becomes a flashlight. A single pull-down menu item allows you to invert the screen from one to the other. I have keyed one of my Palm's buttons to this program and keep the program itself on flashlight mode so that I can access the flashlight with one touch even in total darkness. The flashlight feature won't put EverReady out of business, but it will help find your house keys in a pinch.

While I'm enthralled with most new developments for handheld computers, I still reserve judgment for the Blackberry-style keyboards that appear to be replacing the full-travel keyboards that you could get for the last generation of PDAs. The blackberry type keyboards (those that are only about three inches across by two inches high and sport tiny keys that you operate with your thumbs) are much less expensive than the full-travel ones (\$24 for one that attaches to the Palm M130 compared to \$129 for the full

travel model). However, aside from entering an occasional address or short memo, I don't know how much use they would be for a writer and touch typist like me.

If you are working for a company that is looking for ways to squeeze production out of every salary nickel, you had better hope that your CFO isn't aware that hardware maker Ingersoll-Rand and software maker Kronos have come up with a time clock that recognizes employees by scanning their hands. If you work for the government, it's already too late. You'll have to quit asking your office mate to clock you in when you're caught in traffic or slept too late. (I'm sure that retinal scans will soon follow, and with it, new types of criminal activity. The movie *Minority Report* features an ophthalmologist-cum-backstreet butcher who will swap out your eyeballs for a hefty fee.)

And finally another good idea for the home user. Some printers now work even when not attached to a computer. If you want to print pictures from your digital camera, Hewlett-Packard and Epson make photo-oriented printers that can accept a memory card from a digital camera and make prints from the stored data. In the absence of a PC, you control these printers through a small built-in screen and printer buttons. A few high-end models even have a little color screen that shows you the picture before you print it.

Reprinted from the August 2002 issue of PC Alamode, newsletter of the Alamo PC Organization, Inc. Joyce is a senior technical writer for a San Antonio software company. See her web page at <http://home.satx.rr.com/mcdonaldlotts/>



Quick: Delete the jdbgmgr.exe File!!

by Gabe Kingsley

PIBMUG's San Francisco Special Correspondent

I've received a few of these dumb alerts over the past week. You haven't received one? It's an e-mail hoax pretending to be a virus warning that tells people to delete their Java Debugger Manager file, called `jdbgmgr.exe`.

What really ticks me off is the open list of recipients, often 30 to 50 of them, that become fodder for all sorts of junk through the systems of others.

So I'm on a one-man crusade to get people to use Blind Ccs for all mail, unless there is a compelling reason (such as a work group, etc.) in which they need to know who else received the message. Heck, I even send out tutorials for most e-mail programs to eliminate any excuses they may have.

Here's what I tell people whenever they forward me an ALERT!! ALERT!! About any virus:

Hey, Klez?

The most recent e-mail virus you're asking about is the Klez, and it has powers not seen in earlier types.

Klez can select an e-mail address at random from a CC list in a message on your or someone else's computer and send itself to the recipients of other messages. It's not limited to those addresses in your address book. In addition, it can "spoo" the return address, so that even if you were not the sender of a message infected with the Klez virus, your name and address may appear as the originator.

This is bad stuff and we should expect a raft of "me too" versions to come along!

Another, less harmful but no less irritating offense is the warning running around the world, advising you to delete a specific file from your system because it contains a virus. This is a hoax! The file, `jdbgmgr.exe`, is one that Windows put there and enables certain Java scripting capabilities. You need it!

You may receive either the Klez virus or the relatively innocuous hoax warning described above because your name and address were in someone's CC list. One of the greatest potential dangers is in the e-mails that are forwarded, forwarded and forwarded again by unwitting people. I'm sure you get them every day, and may even pass them along. The result is list after list of available addresses the Klez virus can use to send itself to people you don't know, and for people you don't know to send it to you, possibly giving the impression it came from you.

When you forward a message, COPY ONLY THE TEXT into a new message and send it to your friends. DO NOT just forward the existing message, complete with the previous lists of recipients and their addresses. If you want to forward a message, take care to manually remove the list of previous recipients to preserve their safety. It's really easy.

Learn and Use Blind CC

When sending messages to a group of people, unless it is REQUIRED that each one see the names of all others who received the message, PLEASE USE A BLIND RECIPIENT list. I am not aware of an e-mail program that does not allow you to send messages to a list of "blind" recipients, in which each person who receives the messages sees only their own address, and not the entire list of recipients.

If you have AOL, it is the easiest thing to do: Simply bracket all recipients in a pair of parentheses (address1, address2) each separated by a comma.

If you use Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express, there is a special field for "Bcc" (Blind copies) just below the "To" and "Cc" rows. If you do not see it when you open the program, click on View and select "Bcc Field." Eudora and Netscape Navigator also have blind recipient capabilities.

Yahoo! And Hotmail users can find the "Bcc" field for entering addresses in the online address header. The Juno mail software works very just like AOL, in that you can enclose multiple addresses in parentheses to make them blind, and as with AOL, they must be separated by a comma. By doing this each recipient will see only their own address, and not anyone else's, just as with this message.

So far, because Mac's represent such a small percentage of the computers in use, the people who create the worms and viruses do not make them work with Mac computers. However, anyone using a Mac who does not hide the recipients of their e-mails makes their recipients vulnerable to the possibility of being hit with a virus from someone else on their CC list!

Anyone who wants to protect their privacy and safety will appreciate your doing this. Few things about e-mail bother me more than when something I sent gets forwarded to a large list of people I don't know, and because my address is now in their message base, I am then vulnerable to receiving a virus or one of those hoax warnings from them ... or anyone to whom they forward that message.

Please try to use blind recipient lists. It will make us all safer from viruses, worms

and *hoaxes.♣ Copyright©2002 by Gabe Kingsley. Reproduced with permission. Article reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group. Gabe Kingsley is a San Francisco Bay Area based consultant and can be reached by e-mail: words4use@yahoo.com only if you promise to blind copy him.

Media Notes

by Bill Pettit

Southwest Virginia Computer Group

Could Hollywood hack your PC?

Congress is about to consider an entertainment industry proposal that would authorize copyright holders to disable PCs used for illicit file trading.

A draft bill published in July marks the boldest political effort to date by record labels and movie studios to disrupt peer-to-peer networks that they view as an increasingly dire threat to their bottom line. Sponsored by Reps. Howard Berman, D-Calif., and Howard Coble, R-N.C., the measure would permit copyright holders to perform nearly unchecked electronic hacking if they have a "reasonable basis" to believe that piracy is taking place. Berman and Coble plan to introduce the 10-page bill this week.

The legislation would immunize groups such as the Motion Picture Association of America and the Recording Industry Association of America from all state and federal laws if they disable, block or otherwise impair a "publicly accessible peer-to-peer network."

Anyone whose computer was damaged in the process must receive the permission of the U.S. attorney general before filing a lawsuit, and a suit could be filed only if the actual monetary loss was more than \$250. According to the draft, the attorney general must be given complete details about the "specific technologies the copyright holder

intends to use to impair" the normal operation of the peer-to-peer network. Those details would remain secret and would not be divulged to the public.

The draft bill doesn't specify what techniques, such as viruses, worms, denial-of-service attacks, or domain name hijacking, would be permissible. It does say that a copyright-hacker should not delete files, but it limits the right of anyone subject to an intrusion to sue if files are accidentally erased.

Because Congress only has about five work weeks left before it is scheduled to adjourn for the year, the outlook for the draft bill is uncertain.

But because its sponsors include top Republican and Democratic committee chairmen, it could receive a warm welcome in the House of Representatives at a hearing tentatively scheduled for this fall. Coble is the chairman of the House subcommittee on intellectual property, and Berman is the top Democrat on the panel. Berman wrote in an opinion article last month that "currently, copyright owners are unable to use some useful technological tools to deal with P2P piracy because they face potential, if unintended, liability under a variety of state and federal laws."

"It's a good bill," Gene Smith, a spokeswoman for Berman, said recently. "It's always hard to defend theft and piracy — this bill just puts into the hands of the copyright owners technologies that are already being used by the pirates." Smith said the purpose of the draft bill was to "fight fire with fire, fight technology with technology." Jessica Litman, a professor at Wayne State University who specializes in copyright law, said the draft bill improperly encourages "vigilante justice."

"I think it's wildly overreaching," Litman said. "Copyright owners are in essence asking Congress to say that peer-to-peer file trading is such a scourge, is so bad, that stopping it is more important than enforcing any other laws that federal or state governments may have passed on computer security, privacy, fraud and so forth." Litman said that even if a copyright holder accidentally deleted a home video titled "Snow White," the owner of that PC could be out of luck. "Unless I can show economic harm, I can't even be compensated," Litman said. "Even if I want to be compensated, I have to jump through procedural hoops."

The film and music industries already are developing tools to use against rogue file swapping, though they've remained mum on the details. The RIAA says its members have the right to use any "lawful and appropriate self-help measure." Fritz Attaway, the MPAA's senior vice president for government relations, endorsed Berman's approach on Monday, stressing that law-abiding Internet users should not be concerned.

"No one in the motion picture industry has any interest in invading your computer or doing anything malicious with your files," Attaway said. "The idea is to make unauthorized file sharing sufficiently inconvenient or at least unsuccessful." The MPAA and RIAA did not respond to requests for comment on Tuesday. The Electronic Frontier Foundation condemned the draft bill as a sop to Hollywood and the recording industry.

Klez: The Virus That Won't Die
Already the most prolific virus ever, Klez continues to wreak havoc.

The Klez worm is approaching its seventh month of wriggling across the Web, making it one of the most persistent viruses ever. And experts warn that it may be a harbinger

of new viruses that use a combination of pernicious approaches to go from PC to PC.

Antivirus software makers Symantec and McAfee both report more than 2000 new infections daily, with no sign of letup at press time. The British security firm MessageLabs estimates that 1 in every 300 e-mail messages holds a variation of the Klez virus, and says that Klez has already surpassed last summer's SirCam as the most prolific virus ever. And some newer Klez variants aren't merely nuisances — they can carry other viruses in them that corrupt your data.

How It Works

Klez is an example of a blended threat: software that distributes itself like a virus but sometimes behaves like a worm and at other times like a Trojan horse. Klez usually arrives in the in-boxes of unsuspecting victims as a file attachment. It uses various subject lines, including "Klez removal tool." (For the real tool, visit [.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,22260,00.asp\) Some variants also draw subject lines from random words in files on a victim's hard drive. When the victim double-clicks the attachment, or even just previews the message, the fun begins for Klez. It pilfers addresses from the victim's e-mail address books, and also searches the hard drive for addresses from the Web browser cache or temporary files.](http://www.pcworld</p></div><div data-bbox=)

What makes Klez particularly insidious is that it draws both a new sender and a new recipient from the infected party's sources. This creates at least three victims: the person who first got the worm, the one who is sent the worm, and the one whose address was taken from the original victim and is used as the new. Because the infected sender's address is not on the new e-mail, the worm is difficult to track. And blocking the return address is ineffective, because that person didn't send the worm. Worse, the innocent sender may well be someone you know, making you more likely to open the message, click on the attachment, and perpetuate the virus. "These types of social-engineering tricks are extremely effective," says virus researcher Sarah Gordon. People don't want to ignore a friend or colleague, she says. "They feel compelled to look at an attachment — even though they've heard the warning."

In the months

since Klez was first identified, antivirus vendors have discovered seven versions of the virus. These strains share many behavioral traits but act slightly differently from one another. For example, some later versions can attack other systems over networks by copying infected files to file servers and shared hard drives. One of the newest variants, W32.Klez.H@mm, contains another worm called Elkern that can damage an operating system beyond repair. In some instances, users must reformat the entire hard drive and reinstall Windows to purge the virus from a PC. (Note: I've had to repair 3 different systems this summer that were affected by Elkern.)

Can You Fight Back?

With these types of blended threats, it's not enough just to update your antivirus software's data definitions regularly; you need comprehensive security protection, including both privacy and intrusion protection, according to Vincent Weafer, senior director of Symantec Security Response. Users who also make it a habit to install new security patches are better equipped to defend their PCs against the kinds of worms that attack well-known Windows weaknesses. But even if you take all appropriate measures, others who have your e-mail address in their books may not. You won't get the worm, but you will still get neutralized and irritating notes in your in-box. There's little you can do to prevent such e-mail from reaching you; however, your ISP may be able to help. Some ISPs use so-called antivirus appliances that are capable of filtering millions of messages and stopping infected ones from getting to your in-box. But ultimately, each of us who uses a PC is responsible, in a small way, for preserving our neighbors' security — by keeping our own PC clean.

Safety Tips

Regularly update your antivirus software. Install the latest IE and Outlook/Outlook Express security patches. (Check frequently at Windows Update www.microsoft.com/update.) Look for messages with attachments that range in size between 110KB and 150KB. Watch for odd subject lines that are atypical of those you normally receive. Use a product such as SpamKiller to screen your mail and make deleting suspicious notes easier.

From the Sept. 2002 issue of The Umbrella Online.

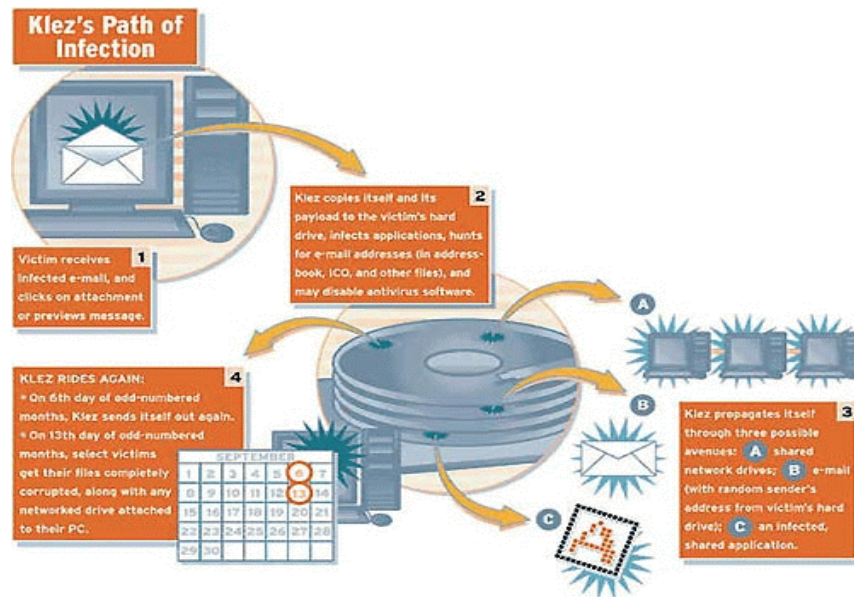
Shareware & Freeware

by Tim Hoke

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

For those of you who like to watch movies (and who doesn't?) the wonderful world of computing has just made it easier to do so. No longer do you have to go to the video store or even leave your computer station for that matter! Now, in the comfort of your computer environment you can be a couch potato while sitting in front of your computer monitor. That's right, you can watch movies from your computer. What's that you said? Something about this being old news? Been doing that for a long time via your DVD drive? I'm not talking about DVD drives and disks. These movies come right over the Internet into your computer with the click of a mouse button. Perhaps you've already been watching movie clips; now you can watch an entire movie! You can stream movies from a Web site or download them to your hard drive.

Either way, you'll need some special viewing software. Would you pay \$100 for software to watch movies on your computer? How about \$50? OK, then, would you pay \$25 for the sheer convenience of sitting back



and not lifting a finger to escape into your favorite film? Well, then, all you tightwads, how about getting the viewing software for free? There are several viewers you can download and use at absolutely no charge. That's right, you heard it here!

By far the most popular software package that plays movies on the computer is DivX Video Bundle 5.0.2. Formerly known as Divx Player and DivX Codec, this major update to the popular video software introduces a new generation of DivX technology, and contains all the software you need to create and watch videos in the popular DivX video format.

DivX 5.0 includes many new features, such as enhanced video quality, more effective compression capabilities, and full support for the MPEG-4 Advanced Simple Profile decoding method. Version 5.0 is also optimized for AMD Athlon and Athlon XP processors and supports the new MPEG-4 based DivX file format. DivX Video Bundle also includes the new DivX Player 2.0 alpha, which supports the MPEG-4 format and offers a skinnable interface system. Version 5.0.2 is a bug fix release that fixes issues discovered in DivX 5.0.1. If you'd like an advanced version of the same then also try for free DivX Pro. It is the most advanced version of DivX software available and is designed for higher-end users. DivX Pro includes advanced video features that produce the best quality video and smaller file sizes. This version of DivX Pro is completely free, but it includes ad-support software from GAIN. If you don't want the irritation of the ads, then fork over \$30. Download from <http://www.divx.com/>

Another piece of software that will enable you to watch movies via your computer is Quick-VCD Player Version 3.0. It is an easy



Computer
RENAISSANCE

has a weekly listener call-in computer talk show featuring news, product reviews, helpful tips, and special guests. It's broad-cast live on Monday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30 with a taped replay on Saturday mornings from 8 to 9. It's simulcast live on the web at <http://www.wysl1040.com>

media player, especially for playing Video CDs. The Quick-VCD Player requires Windows Media Player 6 or above already installed in the Windows. Auto detects the media CD, and displays the available video files to play in the 'PlayList'. Clicking on any number in the playlist will load and plays the corresponding media file. Tracker bar in all modes (Full Screen, Default .etc). Context menu support for advanced streaming settings, available in the Windows Media Player.

Feature List: Short cut keys for approx. all the functions available in the menus. Updates to this version include: unlimited CD files/tracks list, Loop + CD Continuous play feature added, MPG/MPEG file support on files/track list buttons.

To run Quick-VCD Player Version 3.0 you will need Windows Media Player 7.1, which consists of seven features in a single application: a CD player, an audio and video player, a media jukebox, a media guide, an Internet radio tuner, a portable device that you can transfer music files, to an audio CD burner.

These software programs are combined

into one easy-to-use application designed to make playing digital media a mainstream experience. An audio CD creator and a unified player are also included with the program. This program also allows you to play streaming and downloadable digital audio, video, and other Internet content; play back CD and digital recordings; use the jukebox functionality to play or copy an entire CD to your PC in just a few minutes with one click; and much more. Windows Media Player 7.0 incorporated new built-in support for custom CD creation. It also included new skins, new visualizations, and a new Digital DJ skin that allows Media Player to create playlists. Version 7.1 adds WMA8 (Windows Media Audio 8) encoding, Windows Media Audio and Video 8 decoding, new smart transcode support for high-quality transfer to portable devices, and other enhancements and bug fixes. Download from <http://www.zdnet.com/>

A third software option for watching movies from your computer is I-Video CD Player 1.0. I-Video CD Player supports VideoCD, MPEG, AVI, DAT, and MOV file formats. You can view x1, x2, and full-screen size with I-Video CD Player. I-Video CD Player can be used free, unless it's for commercial use, which is strictly prohibited. Distribution via CD-ROM or DVD is prohibited regardless of personal or commercial use; however, if you would like to find out about doing this, you can contact I-ON. Download from <http://www.i-on.net/>

From the July 2002 issue of PC Alamode, newsletter of the Alamo PC Organization, Inc. of San Antonio TX.

Archive Your Windows Updates

from the Macon Users Group (serving S.W. North Carolina and N.E. Georgia)

If after downloading and installing Windows updates through the default live Windows update process it becomes necessary to use a restore disk or format your hard drive and reinstall Windows-you will lose all the Windows updates that you had installed online and then have to download them all over again. If you have a dial-up connection, this can be a formidable task.

To download the updates, install them manually, and save them for future installations-use the following link instead: <http://v4.windowsupdate.microsoft.com/en/default.asp?corporate=true>

You must be logged in as administrator if you use Windows 2000 or XP. From here, you can specify a download directory on your hard drive. Once downloaded, you can burn them to a CD and save them for future use.

An XP Aggravation

Ann Harney in *Umbrella Online* Stop Windows XP from asking if you want to send a report to Microsoft whenever a program crashes.

Whenever a program crashes, whether it's a Microsoft application, a component of Windows, or a third-party application, a window appears, prompting you to send a "report" to Microsoft. If you actually believe that Microsoft will use the data you send them to fix bugs in Windows, I have some beach-front property in Nevada to sell you... Here's how to disable this feature, either completely or selectively:

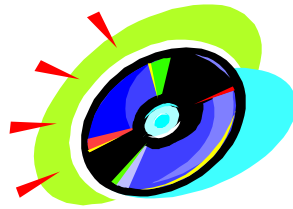
Open System in the Control Panel (or right-click on the My Computer icon and select Properties.

Choose the Advanced tab, and click Error Reporting. You can disable error reporting entirely here, or enable it selectively for certain programs. Click Ok when you're done. Chances are slim to none that I wish to bother MS with my computer problems!

Uses for old CDs?

by Gordon Woolf

What do you do with that pile of now-useless CDs? One-off transfers of large files that will never be needed again, last year's editions of anti-virus programs and free trials of ISPs that merged or went belly-up.



There are also the many "frisbees" — the output of CD writers when you forget to disable the screen saver or defragmenter or there was a hesitation in the power supply.

Increasingly too there will be the backup CDs made with low-grade dyes that fail after a year or less.

Recyclers don't want any of these plastic discs so they end in the wheelie bin on their way to landfills. But why? There are uses for some of them at least, as I found when I asked some net-friends (people I've never met face-to-face, but who are everyday contacts over the Internet).

A common suggestion is to use them as coasters, but they have a problem in that role — the liquid stays on the surface and still drips from the glass or stubby.

Carole Majors in the USA had an answer for that: "I found a lovely recipe for crocheting CD covers that make them into real absorbable coasters. I think it turned up one day while I was 'googling' for some resource

on CD-R uses... <<http://www.crochetmemories.com/archive/misc4.html>>

Marc Zeedar (who wrote a very different kind of word processor, Z-Write, that is currently only for the Mac but which he's promised to transport to Windows): "I've heard they make beautiful mobiles — the lovely rainbow colors from the CDs look pretty spinning around."

Former *Adobe* magazine editor Wendy Katz in Seattle tells: "My husband had an old microwave oven that he was intent on destroying, and he used to put the trashed CDs in it and fire it up. Made a heckuva sound and light show, with an olfactory track to boot. One new microwave and two impressionable kids later, he's kicked the habit." That's one suggestion we don't recommend.

Sue Mitchell in Fairbanks, Alaska, looking forward to a summer which we would regard as being too cold for winter, but who, unbelievably, has an ISP with the name "mosquinet," wrote: "I've seen people selling clocks made from CDs with the hands inserted through the hole in the center. Either with painted faces or just plain as they were manufactured."

To that, and closer to home, Loraine Chapman, who seemingly commutes between publication production work in Brisbane and Thailand, added: "You have given me an idea Sue. I am going to use one of my 'dead' CDs as a backing for a cross stitch clock — been wondering what to use for a 'circle'! Perfect!!"

Others suggested some commercial sites on the web where I found a desk organizer. The blurb states: "Made with three CDs, this desktop object d'art has a place for your business cards (or sheets of notepaper), a handy clip to hold urgent notices, and a

spring funnel for your favorite pen. And, it brightens up your desk with color and bits of fancy."

These seem highly priced at \$30 in US currency, but they seem to be works of art: "Myra's famous abstract designs are output on a digital press, then laminated on to a used, discarded CD. Add some clever construction and glass beads... and voila! All Dis-Organizers have a cork, felt or foam bottom so as not to mar your desk or slip. From friendly ceramic animals and miniatures to floral landscapes and witty mechanical puns... Recycle with style!"

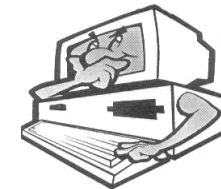
There's more information and pictures at <<http://www.nanosite.com/confab/disorganizer.htm>>

The same artist has also recreated from two reject CDs a handbag based on those beaded bags of the early 20th century. Myra described them as a "homage to the past, using discards of the present..." She's selling them for up to US\$120!

If anyone has better ideas, let me know, either through PC-Update or direct to Gordon@worsleypress.com

Incidentally, the site with the crochet-CD coasters also has a pattern for covers for usable CDs. Little woolly jackets for CDs seem a step up on the so-called jewel case.

Gordon Woolf has written a number of books which include Publication Production using Page-Maker, and How to Start and Produce a Magazine. Contact details: info@worsleypress.com or <http://www.worsleypress.com> Copyright: Gordon Woolf 2002.



What's Your E-mail License Number?

Bass explores ways to send better e-mail, not waste your recipient's time, and make sure your mail's read
by Steve Bass

Pasadena IBM Users Group

Washington is considering legislation that will force you to get a license before you can send e-mail. No, don't worry, you'll still be able to receive e-mail without any restrictions.

Sure I'm kidding. But it's no joke: People send out lots of email, with much of it needlessly long, valueless, bandwidth-hogging, inaccurate, and, of course, dumb. (Did I miss anything? Right-e-mails full of fwd.: Fwd.: Fwd.: and >>.)

Over the years, I've collected e-mail tips: ways to help you create e-mail that not only doesn't annoy others, but actually makes your e-mail worth reading.

Think in Paragraphs: You'd be surprised how many e-mails have one, long paragraph. Oddly enough, you may be using paragraphs but your e-mail program may be missing the hard carriage returns. Suggestion: send yourself, or a buddy, an e-mail and see how it looks. If necessary, add two "returns" between paragraphs when creating the e-mail.

Write Short: Keep your sentences short and limit yourself to three short paragraphs. Go beyond the Bass Intel. limit of, say, four paragraphs, there's a good chance it won't be read.

No Subject? Adios: Here's my steadfast rule: If I don't know you very well and your message has a blank subject line, it goes into

the trash. The reason is there's a strong possibility a virus or worm is attached.

Use Smart Subjects: Say the right thing in the subject line and your recipient gets fair warning what to expect in the message.

For instance, even before I started using Yahoo groups, I started my message subject with "PIBMUG." For one thing, it helps AOL and Hotmail users, the people who get tons of spam, sort out real messages. (Others thought PIBMUG messages were spam, but that's another story.)

More important, it makes applying rules or filters to e-mail easy. For example, after a Home Office column hits the newsstand, I sometimes receive 100 messages a day. That's in addition to the usual stuff from PR flacks and PIBMUG correspondence. So I've encouraged everyone who sends me jokes to start the subject line with "jokes" enabling me to separate them from business messages.

"Fwd. Fwd. Fwd.": Of course if you get lots of email, your threshold for junk isn't very high and subjects can give strong clues for what to delete right off the bat. For instance, if I see more than two "Fwd.: Fwd.:" in the subject, it's immediately sent to the trash. Adios.

That's Not Funny: Make sure you at least read the joke before sending it. That's a great technique for determining if it's really funny. No, really — people often send me lame jokes that are excruciatingly bad. Keep a mental note of the type of joke you send and match it up with their response (or non-response). You may notice you rarely hear back when you send a text joke but often get an "AOL" from a cartoon.

Want to see if people are reading your mail? Flood them with lame jokes-I mean fifth generation forwards of ribald stories or



Listen at 12:20 pm every Saturday on AM 1180. Call 295-1180 to ask your question.

cartoons that weren't funny when they first ran in *Playboy* 20 years ago. Then slip in a legit e-mail and see if you get a response.

And if you're still going to send jokes, remove the millions of ">>>" brackets. The damn things make everything difficult to read.

No Reply Needed: I send dozens of e-mails each day with an explicit message that the recipient needn't reply. That's only polite because in many times the e-mail's just an FYI. So right above the message, I type, "This is just an FYI so no reply is necessary or expected. -Steve."

Who Are You? Many users haven't changed the "Reply to" name in their e-mail program, and it drives me crazy trying to figure out who's writing. For instance, one person uses a period — that's right, a dot — as his name. So when I look at the e-mail header, I haven't a clue (and still don't) who he is. Another person didn't know what to use so she stuck "Netscape" into the field figuring, well, some-

thing needed to go there. Head for your e-mail program's Options and poke around until you find a spot that asks for a "Reply with" or "Real Name" and put in your name.

Mail List Netiquette

Many of you subscribe to interactive mail lists. I'm on many, and I moderate quite a few, including my broadband and CD-ROM Yahoo groups. When you reply to a message on this sort of list, it's essentially the same as sending e-mail, but with added restrictions.

Here are a few list rules to consider adhering to and maybe applying to your e-mails.

Don't Waste Bandwidth: So many messages, so little time, right? Well, avoid responses that the entire list won't find useful and feel obligated to at least glance at. So don't reply to the entire list with "thanks," "good idea," or "I'll try it!" Instead, reply to the sender. Look carefully and you'll probably see the sender's e-mail address near the top of the message.

Good one, Steve! In case you weren't clear about Wasting Bandwidth, consider this: When replying to messages, do it only when you have something substantive to say. Sorry, "Good one, Steve" does not qualify as substantive.

Snip, Snip: When replying, it takes a few seconds to snip extraneous junk and leave only essential portions of the previous message. No matter what you do, get rid of the tag line-the info about subscribing and unsubscribing — from the previous message.

Keep Snipping: Did I explain that it's best to quote only those brief portions of the previous message, and only items that are necessary to make your point? Good. I'm not kidding.

Avoid HTML: Stick with straight text when replying or sending messages on lists. Not everyone's e-mail program can read all your fancy fonts and formatting.

Keep Files to Yourself: Attachments are usually frowned upon on mail lists to avoid any chance of getting a virus.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check PCW's current edition at www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at www.pcworld.com/bass_letter.

Society News

President's Column

by Ron Matteson

We have given our new location at Bryant & Stratton a test run, and the feedback that I get indicates that the facilities are more than adequate. We are indebted to B&S for letting us use their facilities. Our next Program Meeting there will be on October 8. In addition to our main speaker (to be announced) we will be bringing several boxes of books which have been donated to the RCSi. These books will be free to members desiring them (donation to RCSi is welcome). A list of the books is included in this newsletter.

The usual SIG groups will be meeting- New Users on October 1, and Digital Photography and Scanners on October 3. I will be giving a talk on scanners at the latter meeting: techniques for different types of documents, resolutions required for different scanner applications, etc.

We still have lots of software and hardware we would like to turn into cash. We may do something like we are doing with the books- give it to members, and hope for donations; or maybe raffle off some of the

better items. We'll try to give you some details about the items we have by publishing lists in this newsletter. Our budget is still on shaky grounds, but if we can figure out a way to reduce Monitor costs, we should be able to avoid a dues increase.

Planning Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2002

by Larilyn E. Bauer, Secretary

The Board of the Rochester Computer Society, Inc., met Tuesday, September 17, 2002 at Sally Springgett's home, 335 Wilmot Road, at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were Ron Matteson (President), Bob Avery (Webmaster), Stephen Staub (Treasurer), Charles Grover, Jim McGrath (Software Chair), Sally Springgett (*Monitor* Editor), Warren Ganter, and Larilyn Bauer (Secretary).

Following the President's agenda, we began with old business we began with last week's program meeting, in which Steve reported that Arpad Kovacs (Vice President) answered many of the questions presented in Help's Half Hour. Next program meeting at Bryant & Stratton on 10/8/02, Room change to #127. The folding machine insurance is a mute subject at the present time until other avenues can be looked into. The official change of address for RCSI mail can now be presented to the U.S. Post Office.

Steve Staub reported the financial status: Bank balance \$826.81, with 61 paid-up members. Book sale brought in \$55.00 and we made \$64.06 from the picnic. Not many people attended. Next Market-Pro is Oct. 20, '02. The remaining books for sale will be taken to the next Market-Pro, and Steve and Arpad will be in attendance for our table. Any other volunteers welcomed.

Bob Avery (our new Webmaster) reported he is looking into comparing Dream Weaver

versus Front Page for the website. He needs to update all links to our website to be sure the new address is posted.

Arpad is evaluating some scanners for raffling at future program meetings. December program meeting there will be a discussion about less expensive, high-speed, local ISP providers. Some discussion evolved whether there might be any interest for a SIG for Linux Setup. We are hoping that someone representing a SIG will give a short presentation at our program meeting sharing with other members and guests what they are discussing or working on. Each month, SIG representation will rotate so that all SIG's have the opportunity to share.

From November 30 through December 17, WXXI will be having a telethon. We would like to try to set up dates/times when some of our members can man the phones for this event and we may be able to display one of our banners showing our organization's name. If you can volunteer any time at all, please call Steve Staub to sign up.

Empty deskjet cartridges are being collected by Ron Matteson for a fund-raiser for Open Door Mission. This is one of our Community Service activities.

There will be a meeting to discuss the *Monitor* printing, on Tuesday, Sept. 24, '02 at 7:00 p.m. at Larilyn Bauer's home. If you are interested in attending, please call Larilyn Bauer at 458-1820.

New Users Questions

Sept. 3, 2002

by John McMillan

A Norton's user got a message "Cannot uninstall this file." He tried several times to uninstall and reinstall the anti virus software but the message remained. It was suggested that he use the uninstall program supplied with the soft-

ware. If there was no uninstall program supplied, he should use Add/Remove Programs from the Control Panel. If the message persisted, the file could be removed by hand, but he was advised to leave it there, lest some other program also use the file. Further questioning indicated that he was trying to eliminate E-mail files that might not have been stored on his computer and thus could not be deleted. He stated that the Norton's status bar showed a red X for reading and writing E-mail, so it was thought that he might need to download the latest updates to Outlook Express. Bill Statt mentioned that the Sound Bytes Forum recommends the site <http://housecalls.antivirus.com/> that provides a free anti virus check on line. Joe Pia's article in the Sept. *Monitor* discussed AVG 6.0, another free virus checker.

Another user who composes music was having problems with uneven timing. Files would change speed and when restarted would play at different speeds or with momentary stops. I have had similar problems with video editing. The processor speeds were 400 and 1,000mhz with 196 and 1,280 kb of ram respectively. One machine was running Windows 98 and the other Windows ME. A possible cause might be swap file size that could be adjusted by going to set-tings>controlpanel>system>performance>virtual memory and selecting let me specify my own virtual memory settings. The suggested setting of 3 times the actual memory size should be used for both the minimum and maximum.

A question was raised about modems connecting to an ISP where a choice can be made between phone numbers identified as K56 or V90. K56 and V90 refer to communication standards but transmission speed is

most likely to be affected by the connection that is made. Lucky users may connect at speeds between 48 and 52 K but lower rates are not uncommon.

Bill Statt used his laptop to demonstrate, Catchup, a software package that identifies the software on a machine and reports all programs for which updates are available. Care should be taken since some of the updates are Beta testing versions. Catchup provides an easy method for downloading updates if you desire and lists latest prices if they are not free. Downloads.com, offers software updates; finds security holes and does add aware detecting. It gives a description of the programs functions, plus both a summary and detailed positive and negative user opinions. Tucows and ZDnet were cited as other sources of program updates and downloads.

A user who was trying to resolve a problem with McAfee was asked to submit a Winzip file with a password. He had PKZip, not Winzip and had no experience with password protection. Bill Statt pointed out that McAfee Online users can use a closed chat environment where a tech rep will talk you through a problem. There is also PDF file that provides a users guide with much more information than is available on read me and other files.

Another user who runs the firewall Zone Alarm, mentioned getting repeated interruptions as someone tried to break into his machine and wondered what could be done. Gregg Sayre said he would need to get the perpetrators Internet Service Providers address and report it to the ISP. Zone Alarm is protecting against break ins but does not do much to identify sources. The firewall does not stop E-mail so you should verify that anti virus software checks incoming

mail. Any incoming attachments should be stored on disk and virus checked before opening.

Statt discussed some of the problems users have when trying to clean up the start up menu or prepare for installing software that recommends shutting down all programs except explorer and systray. He mentioned an Internet site <http://www.3feetunder.com/krick/startup/list.html> that identifies many program abbreviations, names and suffixes and provides a brief description of the function and whether it is necessary to have in the start up list. When asked if the list could be printed, window tiling or the use of Alt + Tab were suggested as ways of viewing this list in combination with the start up list.

People who want to clean up the system tray should click start in the lower left corner of their monitor; click on Run; type MSConfig; and click ok; which opens the system configuration utility. Click the start-up tab which will show all of the programs in the start up list. The list from <http://www.3feetunder.com/krick/startup/list.html> will help identify programs that do not need to be in the start up list or systray.

Treasurer's Report

by Steve Staub

Balance as of 08/19/02	\$816.45
Income	
Dues	\$240.00
Book Sales	<u>34.00</u>
Total Income	\$274.00
Expenses	
Picnic Supplies	\$48.03
Lease	86.72
St. Stephens	<u>100.00</u>
Total Expense	\$234.75
Balance as of 09/25/02	\$855.70

The Lighter Side

A few years ago, I was working as a Computer Programmer for a school district in Southern California. When we went out to bid on a new computer system, my boss (whose title was "Director of Information Systems") came to me to ask about a line item in the quote she had received.

Her question? "What is an operating system and why do we need one?"



The Computer Museum in Boston is a very cool place and should not be judged by this anecdote. Their star attraction is a giant plywood model of a computer you can tour. The tour I took in 1995 was led by a young gentleman.

The guide failed to make a stellar impression early in the tour (Did *you* know they're called microchips because they're really, really small?), but I hung on bravely until he explained what a floppy is. He pulled a 3 1/2" disk out of his pocket and said: "A lot of people don't know why they call it a floppy because, you see here" (shakes disk) "it's not floppy. But you see that's just the outside." (Pries case apart, removes interior, shakes it.) "Inside, you see, it's floppy. That's why they call it that. You need floppies because sometimes the computer can have what's called a fall-down. I dunno why they call it a fall-down, but that's why you need the floppies or else you lose the stuff in the computer."

At this point I snuck off to explore on my own but I almost wish I'd stayed. Suppose he finished by showing the giant plywood cup holder!



When my son turned on his new computer for the first time, the following message box appeared: "Press and release the monitor power button if it is not on or blinking already."