

# Who's to Blame?

by Russell James

*Alamo PC Organization, Inc.*

**W**ho should we blame for the many attacks on our computer systems? We have viruses that try to attack us through e-mail, Web pages and through our networks. Some of them will even try to get into our systems through some port on our system that we had no idea was there much less open. There are three main groups that can be considered as we try to stop this nonsense.

There is the end user, Microsoft and the hackers that are all being touted as the culprits in this war of code on the Internet. An argument could be made for any one of these groups and ail should be held responsible to some degree. Let's take a look at each of the groups and you can make up your own mind.

Microsoft and the other software vendor should be expected to put out a product that is secure and able to withstand the blows that the hackers throw at them. The problem with this thought is that it is going to be virtually impossible to produce a software product that is totally free from vulnerabilities. If they could, they would, but we would never have any new products because it would take so long for them to develop and write the code.

Even though the product on the market is not as secure as it can be from the beginning, I think that Microsoft and most of the other vendors are doing the most that can be expected of them. The Windows Update site has gotten to the point that it is easy enough for end users to navigate without too much fear. There are some improvements that could be made and it seems that they are coming online at an admirable pace. It has been a long while since there has been a problem with one of the updates crashing computers instead of helping the situation. You can get to the site free of charge and the activeX component will analyze your software to determine what updates you need. The updates are listed in three separate categories with the Critical Updates and Service Packs being the ones that need to be installed.

The next group that is being blamed is the end users. They play a big part in keeping the viruses out of their own systems by the amount of time that they spend updating their software. With the Windows Update site and the notification programs that are available for download, there is no reason to allow your system to be without one of the security updates that will stop the breaches of your computer programs. There is a program that is available for download from the Windows Update site under the heading of Critical Updates and Service Packs called the Windows Critical Update Notification.

This is one item that should be running on startup on every Windows 98 machine out there. It will connect to the Microsoft Windows Update site whenever you are connected to the Internet and check for Critical Updates. If one is available you will get a notification on your screen telling you about the update. You click on the button and the Windows Update site appears. All you

need to do is agree to the License Agreement and the download and installation will proceed. Windows XP users have this installed as a default with the only difference being that the notification comes in the form of an icon in the taskbar and the update is downloaded before you are notified. You click on the icon and you can start the install right away without going to the update site.

The last group is the hackers and they are the ones that should be held accountable for their misdeeds. The hackers are the ones that are writing the viruses and they are the ones that should be hung from their toenails at first light. They are the kids with too much time on their hands that spend weeks on end writing code that will infiltrate our systems through a vulnerability that has been revealed in a chat room or on the Microsoft Windows update site. Most of the active exploits that are out on the net do not come to full strength until many months after the patch has been released.

There is no way that all the blame can be laid on the end users and Microsoft. We all know that the hackers are the true criminals and the end users and Microsoft are innocent victims. The problem is that you can't leave the keys in the ignition and then get mad when your car gets stolen. Microsoft is doing what it can to combat the situation and you as the end user need to do your part to use the tools that they are giving us to help to alleviate this problem. People who allow their systems to get infected with viruses because of the lack of virus protection or not installing updates as needed need to have their license for the Internet Superhighway suspended until they can bring their software back up to an acceptable level that does not endanger the rest of us.

From the October 2003 issue of *PC Alamo*, the newsletter of the Alamo PC Organization, Inc. of San Antonio, TX.

## From The DealsGuy

by Bob Click

*Greater Orlando Computer Users Group*

**I**'ve been so busy between our two-week cruise and working some interesting trade shows (to pay for the cruise) this month that I hope my readers can live with some bits and pieces held back for future columns. Who's next?

I read that Symantec is buying Power-Quest Corp. for \$150 million and should complete the purchase by the end of the year. I'm not sure if it will affect user groups, but as you know, Symantec dropped user group support a few years ago and PowerQuest cut the financial support they were giving Gene and Linda Barlow last year. It is, however, a fact that PowerQuest is more than pleased with the job that User Group Relations (Gene's Company) still does for them and I doubt they will want to lose that kind of product support. In the meantime, if you are thinking of purchasing a Power-Quest product, I wouldn't wait long to go to [<http://www.ugr.com>] and take advantage of the low UG prices, just in case. Who knows, with such a great track record, perhaps Gene will also be selling Symantec products. Makes

sense to me!

## A Show I Love To Hate

I was working a Direct Marketing Assoc. trade show for a few days and had a chance to browse some of the booths. I doubt I need to explain who participates. While they were very much in a minority, I did come across a booth selling a few million email addresses for marketing. The interesting part was the product's package, which was a can that looked exactly like a can of the famous Spam. I wonder if Hormel knows about this.

There were also CD Duplicators, automated mailing equipment, automatic dialing equipment and other interesting booths. I must say that I really had to bite my tongue when I talked to a few of those booths that make their money inconveniencing us. On the other hand, I found some nice give-a-ways there, such as clocks, calculators, stuffed animals and other great items.

It was interesting talking to a salesman in one booth for a company that has print shops and distribution centers all over the country where they print many of the advertising flyers we all find in our newspapers. He talked about how they transfer all the data by wire and computers handle much of the production.

## Still Good

I'm pretty sure that great Serif offer of free software and mouse for just the cost of shipping is still good. Call 1-800-55-SERIF to order. The various free programs are actually on just one CD ROM. The negative side is that now they often send you special offers for all kinds of products.

## More On Long Distance Deals

I previously wrote about cheap ways for long distance calling. Since then, I read about [<http://www.onesuite.com>] offering 2.9 cents per minute if you use their 800 number. They also have many local access numbers whereby you would get the service for 2.5 cents per minute if there is one in your city. When I looked, there was none in Orlando, but they are in many other cities.

If you have a lot of incoming calls from your own family, such as college students, some providers offer an optional 800 number to call home (I need money Dad). Recommended is Enhanced Communications Group (1-800-254-4060). Check out [<http://www.saveonphone.com>] who made that recommendation.

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 or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [[Bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:Bobclick@mindspring.com)]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns and many interesting articles I have taken from various users group newsletters.



## Making Photos Load Faster

by Susan Ives

*Alamo PC Organization, Inc.*

If you've hung around the Web for a while you probably remember when the height of chic was black text on a gray background. Boring — but it sure did load fast. That was also the days when most people had 28.8 modems, so load time was more of an issue than it is now. But don't discount it. Fewer than 10% of the people viewing your site have high-speed connections, such as DSL or Cable. The rest are still viewing your site at dialup speed.

My design relies heavily on graphics. I like my sites to be inviting. But I am careful, always careful, to make my graphics load as quickly as possible. Size matters

It seems obvious, but just making a graphic smaller will make it load faster. It is possible to manipulate the size of your inline graphic by using HTML code. The digital photos that come from my camera are 2048x1536 pixels. The lowest screen resolution is 640x480 pixels. Let's say I want a photo to take up half this screen, or 320 pixels.

I can force the photo to look smaller on the screen by using these attributes in the HTML code: `<IMG SRC="photo.jpg" width="320" height="240">` But there's a catch. This JPG straight from my camera is 638KB. That's a lot of download time! If I use HTML code to make the photo look smaller, it will still be 638KB. If I use my graphics editing software to make the photo physically smaller, downsize it to 320x240 pixels, I can get the weight down to less than 165K. Using a 56.6 modem, the larger file would take about 100 seconds to appear on the screen, the smaller photo about 25 seconds.

Drag-and-drop programs make it convenient to reside the appearance of a picture while leaving the original size intact and the download time long. It pays to take the time to physically alter the size of your photos.

## Quality matters

Twenty five seconds for one photo is still a pretty long wait time. What else can we do to make the photo smaller? We can decrease the quality. Screen resolution is 72 dpi (dots per inch). If you are used to working in print, you are more likely to think in terms of 300dpi, 600 dpi or even higher. Change your thinking. Anything over 72dpi is wasted pixels when viewed on a monitor. When working with the JPEG format (on-line photos should always be JPEGs) you have a choice of selecting a quality level between 0 and 100, or low, medium, high and maximum. I've found that a low resolution is often good enough, almost indistinguishable from the original. This same 320x240 photo saved at a low resolution is less than 13 KB and will load in about 2 seconds with a 56.6 modem. Saved at a medium resolution still saves you time and space: it's about 21KB and loads in a little over 3 seconds.

Making your images use fewer kilobytes without a noticeable loss of quality is called optimizing your images. Many software programs take the guesswork out of this, including JASC Paintshop Pro and Adobe Photoshop Elements. Both retail for \$99. If your graphics program doesn't do this, one of these programs would be a good investment.

If you would like to test-drive a graphics optimization program, download the 30 day free trial of WebGraphics Optimizer. The standard version costs \$39. A free program is Paint Studio Lite. Thumbnails and galleries:

If you have a large number of photos that you need to display, one way to present them is in a thumbnail gallery. A thumbnail is a small copy of a photo, about 90x120 pixels or smaller. When you click on the thumbnail, it links you to a full-size photo on a new page. Many graphics programs have a gallery-wizard that will do this for you. If yours doesn't, you might want to look into purchasing a program such as Thumbnail (get a free trial or purchase it for \$28.99).

### GIF vs. JPG

There are two common file formats for Web graphics: GIF and JPG.

GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) is a way of compressing graphics to send over telephone wires. It is a "lossless" format, which means it keeps all of the graphics data intact. GIF is limited to 256 colors. It is best used for graphics that have flat areas of color (like line art and text). GIF is used for animations and for transparent backgrounds: graphics where the background color or image shows through.

JPG (Joint Photographic Exchange Group) is a lossy format, which means that some of the file data is discarded in the compression process. JPG should always be used for photographs or other art where there are a lot of color gradations.

Many graphics fall somewhere in between. In these cases it pays to experiment to find the format that gives the best quality for the lowest pixels. Save your original. A final word of advice. When you start messing with graphics — cropping, adjust color, playing with file formats or bit depth — work off of a copy, not the original. Save the original in its native condition. That way, if you make a mistake, need a higher resolution for a print publication or change you mind about the crop, you have a fallback position. Periodically archive your photos on a CD to clear room on your hard drive.

*From the October 2003 issue of PC Alamode, newsletter of the Alamo PC Organization of San Antonio, TX. Susan Ives is a past-president and past-webmaster of Alamo PC.*

## Media Notes

by Bill Pettit

*Southeast Virginia Computer Group*

**M**icrosoft breeds sideways-scrolling mouse — Microsoft unveiled a bevy of wireless keyboards and mice that mark the debut of a sideways-scrolling feature and the company's first leather-clad

mouse.

Three of the new mice have what Microsoft dubs Tilt Wheel Technology, which allows people to move a cursor horizontally through Web sites, spreadsheets and other documents. The company has essentially taken a traditional scroll wheel and enabled it to be tilted to the left or right in order to send the cursor sideways. One of these mice, the Wireless IntelliMouse Explorer, comes in black leather, part of a Microsoft marketing move to let computer users put a fashion spin on PCs and peripherals. As we see with similar trends in the cell phone industry, consumers are looking for uniquely styled products to meet their individual tastes, said Matt Barlow, worldwide director of marketing and business development for Microsoft Hardware.

Although Microsoft is better known for its software, the Redmond, Wash., company is a leader in sales of keyboards and mice. Its chief rival is Swiss-based Logitech International. The three new mice products with Tilt Wheel Technology are the Wireless IntelliMouse Explorer, the IntelliMouse Explorer (with a cord) and the Wireless Optical Mouse. The IntelliMouse Explorer is ergonomically tailored for right-handed people, while the Wireless Optical Mouse is designed to be used with either hand. All the new mice use optical technology, meaning they do not have roller balls in their bases but instead use reflected light to trigger cursor moves. The company said it has upgraded its optical technology to extend the battery life of wireless optical mice. Microsoft also introduced four wireless keyboard-mouse combination packages. One of the products — the Wireless Optical Desktop Elite — features a tilting scroll wheel on the keyboard in addition to one in the mouse. The new wireless devices depend on radio signals at a frequency of 27MHz, the same frequency used by radio-controlled toys. The devices have "smart receivers" to reduce potential signal interference, according to Microsoft. The mice and keyboards will be widely available worldwide in stores and online (<http://shop.microsoft.com/hardware/default.asp>) by the end of September, Microsoft, said. The retail price of the leather Wireless IntelliMouse Explorer will be about \$65, while the Wireless Optical Desktop Elite package will likely retail for \$105, according to Microsoft.



Microsoft's Wireless IntelliMouse Explorer comes in black leather.

Symantec Adds Product Activation

Security software and service company Symantec has added a controversial type of antipiracy technology to the new version of its main virus-zapping program.

Norton Antivirus 20C4, which Symantec announced for release in September, will use product activation, an increasingly common technique to tie a copy of an

application to a particular PC. Symantec plans to add activation to the rest of its consumer software line over the next year. Del Smith, senior product manager for Symantec, said activation is intended to protect consumers from widespread counterfeit copies of Symantec programs. The company estimates at least 3.6 million bogus copies of its programs are sold annually, causing headaches both for Symantec and unsuspecting buyers, who find out too late that the software isn't doing the job. "What consumers don't understand is that while those units may appear to be legitimate, there are a number of risks associated with pirated software ... including the likelihood that it really isn't protecting their PC," Smith said.

Microsoft was the first major software maker to broadly use product activation, introducing it in the Windows XP operating system, amid concerns that the technology would balk at simple changes in a PC's hardware.

Intuit later joined the product activation camp, using a system developed by software maker Macrovision in the last edition of its TurboTax tax preparation software. Widespread complaints about botched installations, PC slowdowns and inadequate disclosure eventually prompted the company to back off on activation.

Adobe Systems and Macromedia also have experimented with activation in recent releases. Smith said Symantec's implementation of product activation is similar to Microsoft's and does not use Macrovision technology. Symantec's system generates a unique alphanumeric code to identify a PC configuration and ties it to the product key for a particular piece of software. It stores license information on the PC's hard drive and allows for up to five activations for the same product key.

"That accounts for users who make frequent upgrades or other changes to their PC," Smith said. "We've designed the solution to be flexible."

Al Gillen, an analyst for research firm IDC, said Symantec's use of product activation is less likely to cause friction with customers, due to the way antivirus software works.

"With antivirus software, you very routinely go back to the vendor for downloads, so you have an ongoing relationship with that vendor," Gillen said. "If you accept that general notion that your system is going to be talking with that company on a pretty regular basis, the activation process is just another part of that."

Smith said more than 250,000 customers completed the product activation process with trial versions of Symantec products this year, with negligible customer complaints.

Here's another interesting question that shows up in my box many times during the year:

Q. My computer is nearly four years old. I've been looking at new computers on the Internet, and I'm confused. What is an 800 MHz frontside bus, for heaven's sake?

A. I like terms that make sense. "Steering wheel," for instance. That's easy to grasp. "Frontside bus" sounds like the Main Street Express. Obviously, its not.

The frontside bus is the circuitry between the microprocessor and the main memory. The faster the frontside bus, the more data is delivered to the microprocessor. Intel and Advanced Micro Devices have worked to increase bus speeds as their chips have grown faster and faster. ("Bus" is believed to derive from the electrical engineering term "bus bar." A bus bar is used to distribute electrical current.)

To further confuse things, the frontside bus doesn't actually run at 800 megahertz. It runs at 200 megahertz. But it has four channels, which deliver the same amount of data as an 800-megahertz bus. The previously fastest bus, 533 MHz, had four channels running at 133 MHz. There are other buses within the computer: PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect), which hooks up the internal components; AGP (Accelerated Graphics Port), a direct connection between the graphics system and the main memory; and backside bus, the connection between the microprocessor and level 2 cache (memory that speeds up the microprocessors work). There are more buses, but you get the idea.

Your question, of course, is, "What does 800 MHz frontside bus mean to me?" If you are a serious gamer, you might need the extra power. The same goes for computer-assisted design, which is very demanding. But most of us do some word processing, lots of surfing, and maybe some casual game playing. We store photos and send e-mail to friends and family. So, for the majority of people, the answer to your question is, "Not much." Hardware long ago outstripped the demands of software.

This is heresy among the geeks, but here's my advice: Don't worry about the frontside bus. Don't worry about memory speeds. Don't worry about whether the hard drive cache is 8 MB or 2 MB. These things probably won't be significant for the average user.

Get an Intel Pentium 4 microprocessor, or the AMD equivalent. For instance, an AMD Athlon XP 2400+ is approximately equivalent to an Intel Pentium 4 2.4 GHz. Buy a minimum of 256 MB of RAM. Better yet, get 512 MB. If you do a lot of video work, spring for a gigantic hard drive.

Otherwise, a 40 GB hard drive should be OK. It's easy to get twisted up in computer numbers and specs. But the average computer user just doesn't need to worry about them.

## Symantec Raises Subscription Rates

Security company ups renewal rates by \$5 across product line.

Symantec quietly increased subscription renewal rates for its entire line of security products in September, citing the rising cost of fighting viruses and other malicious code worldwide. The company is upping subscription renewal rates by \$5 on all of its products. That means users of the company's popular \$50 Norton AntiVirus software will pay \$19.95 for each additional year they download virus definitions.

While previous rate increases have drawn the ire of users, Symantec executives say they are confident customers will understand why they're increasing

prices. The hike comes just days after the company announced it would include piracy-fighting product activation technology in all of its 2004 consumer products.

### Funding the Updates

Symantec has employees on duty around the clock watching for the next virus to appear, and that costs money, says Dei Smith, a product manager for the company. "We have research centers in North America, Asia, Australia, and Europe," he says. "As soon as they see a new threat they begin delivering new protections."

And the volume of threats is ever increasing, he says. For example, in August 2002 Symantec received 90,000 files from Norton AntiVirus owners running the software's Scan and Deliver service, which sends suspected viruses to the company for analysis. Just one year later, in August 2003, the number of suspect files will top 130,000. Symantec's software currently protects users from more than 60,000 known viruses, Smith says.

Detecting new viruses is only the first step. When the company identifies a new virus or worm, staffers quickly begin developing a new definition file so that Norton AntiVirus software can detect the threat. Owners of the software download the new definitions via the subscription service.

The company's other security products, including utilities and firewall products, also require frequent updates, Smith says. Symantec staffers are constantly beefing up their products with everything from new URLs for Internet Security's Parental Control features to new updates for various firewall packages.

Over the years the company has also made significant investments to improve the way it creates these updates and then gets them to customers, he says. Today, most Symantec products automatically download and install these updates behind the scenes, without bothering the customer at all.

"To fund these services, and to allow us to continue to invest, we're raising prices," Smith says. The price increase impacts buyers in all countries except India, Japan, China, Taiwan, and Korea.

### Prices Go Up

All of Symantec's products include an initial subscription. If you buy the product at retail or online, a year's subscription is included. Versions that ship on a new PC or other hardware usually include a three-month subscription.

While each program will continue to operate after the subscription period ends, it won't work as well without the latest updates. "It's important for users to keep up those subscriptions because it protects them against the latest threats," Smith says.

The cost of renewing the subscription for Norton AntiVirus standard moves from \$14.95 to \$19.95. The Pro version includes two licenses, so its renewal fee jumps to \$39.90. Renewal fees for Norton System-Works (regular and Pro) jump from \$14.95 to \$19.95; Internet Security (regular and Pro) fees increase from \$24.95 to \$29.95; and

Norton Personal Firewall goes from \$9.95 to \$14.95.

This is the third subscription price increase in as many years for some Symantec products. In November 2001 the company upped the fee for Norton AntiVirus from \$3.95 to \$9.95. In Sept 2002 it increased the price again, to \$14.95.

Those increases may sound exorbitant, but the threat has also increased exponentially, says Rob Enderle, principal analyst with the Enderle Group. In the end, most people will grumble but pay, because it costs more to move to a competing product, he says. For example, Symantec competitor Network Associates newly released McAfee VirusScan 8.0 sells for \$60. (A company spokesperson notes, however, that there are no immediate plans to raise VirusScan's \$14.85-per-year subscription rates.)

Antivirus software and subscription renewals can be pricey, but most users now understand it can cost even more to go without it, Enderle says. Losing your hard drive to a virus will cost you considerably more than \$20, he adds.

Symantec isn't likely to lose many customers over the price increase, but combined with the decision to include product activation on all of its 2004 products, the company risks aggravating its customers one time too many.

"Now that Microsoft is moving into anti-virus, this process of continuing to aggravate the customer may come back to haunt this company," he says. Microsoft announced in June plans to offer antivirus protection in future products. Most likely this will be included in future versions of Windows, such as Longhorn, due in 2005, he says. Users irritated by Symantec's pricing and product activation decisions may decide Microsoft's protection is good enough.

Symantec executives aren't worried, however. "We believe our pricing is competitive with what others are offering, and we also believe that the technology we provide offers the best protection in the market today," Smith says.

*From the November 2003 issue of The Umbrella Online.*

## Would You like Printer Repair With Your Order?

by Mark Presky

*Los Angeles Computer Society*

**H**unger contributed to the repair of my inkjet printer. Several months ago I was driving along Santa Monica Blvd. in West LA, approaching a set of the Golden Arches, when I realized that it was Filet-OfFish Friday (99 cents), and I was hungry, I have significantly reduced my consumption of fried foods, but the thought of deep fried compressed minced cod (or whatever they use) oozing with a glob of fatty, salty tartar sauce was too much to resist—I must have been *really* hungry.

After receiving my order I sought a clean table upon which to dine. There was one unoccupied small table

well seasoned with various condiments, so I looked further to a larger nearby table occupied by only one gentleman. After asking if I might join him at the table, and introducing myself, I started up a conversation. He was dressed in a jacket and tie, so I asked what he did for a living. When he said that he serviced computer peripherals including printers and fax machines — my ears perked up. I told him that I had been wrestling with a frustrating printer problem for over a year and hated giving up. He inquired further.

### Problem

I told him that my HP 694C would print a page or two and then stop suddenly often mid page, to inform me that the printer carriage was unable to move. Over the months I had discovered that by turning the power off and then using rubbing alcohol (not orally consumable spirits) to clean the stainless steel or chrome shaft upon which the carriage with the ink cartridges traveled, I could get it to print another page or two or three ... if I was lucky. After several months of this I finally replaced the 694C with an even older HP 600 monochrome printer (manufactured in the days before humans were upgraded with retinal cones) of my father's that I kept in the closet for emergencies.

### Solution

The gentlemen said that it sounded like the bearings underneath the carriage were clogged with dried ink. I asked him how ink would even get there. He responded that ink tends to distribute itself everywhere inside most printers. He is no longer amazed at the places he finds it doing damage.

He suggested using a small amount of Windex on tissues to dissolve and tease out the congealed ink from the bearings, and then to lubricate, sparingly, the shaft upon which the carriage moved.

### Fixed

Later, I pulled the inoperable printer from my closet and set it up on the kitchen table. I assembled some discount glass cleaner (sorry, Windex) and several off brand Q-tip type cotton tipped sticks and went to work. Close examination revealed a glob of gelled ink on either side of the carriage adjoining the shaft. I must have gone through about 20 of these cleaner dampened cotton tipped sticks before the amount of dissolved ink coming from the sides of the carriage where it joined the shaft began to subside. It just kept coining and coming. There must have been a cartridge's worth of ink in there (OK, I exaggerate a bit).

I then used the tiniest bit of silicone gel lubricant (an amount the volume of about a quarter of an apple seed) and spread it over the shaft.. Although I spread it so thin that I couldn't see it, I then wiped off most of that with a clean tissue. From my-years of experience maintaining medical equipment I have learned that less is usually better in these situations.

### Conclusion

Now, time for the test. I replaced the older printer on my system with the newer, and hopefully, fixed instru-

ment. After plugging it in and powering it up, I requested the printing of a 6-page document. *It worked!* After all the hours of frustration I had endured with that printer I was not satisfied. I now ordered it to deliver another 6 pages. And another. I was ecstatic.

My day was made. And I owe it all to fast food. It maybe clogged my arteries, but it helped me clean out my printer's clogged carriage bearings. Hey guys and gals, maybe we should be trolling for new members at fast-food outlets, offering to help with computer problems.

*This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member.*

## Help!

by Vie Laurie

*Princeton PC Users Group*

**T**hey may not be as certain as death or taxes but computer problems are something we are all likely to encounter sooner or later. I have previously discussed things that PC users should do to forestall trouble as much as possible in the articles

<http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/Articles/clean.htm>

<http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/Article8/basics.htm>

<http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/Articles/refresh.htm>

<http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/Articles/backup.htm>

If trouble comes anyway there are some troubleshooting suggestions at <http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/Articles/trouble.htm>.

Although following the suggestions in the articles above can help you to prevent or to take care of your problems, there may come a time when you have a situation where you have no idea what to do next. Where do you turn for help? Before you go for assistance from some precocious 12 year old kid that you know, you might consider a little additional research. There is an enormous amount of support on the Internet and in this article I will suggest some places to find information or people that can help.

If you have Windows XP and you haven't already looked in the Help function, try it. It includes an Internet search and can actually be useful. (You can skip it in Windows 98/Me.) Otherwise, try tapping into the Microsoft resources on the Internet. The Microsoft Knowledge Base is an enormous collection, containing much useful information. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to find things, and when you do find it, you have to wade through the Microsoft-speak that is used for writing the articles. Nonetheless, this is the ultimate source for answers about many problems. Go to the link <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;pnj;kbhowto>. Another Microwave site is the Microsoft Windows XP support center at <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;en-us;winxp>.

### Searching

Searching the Microsoft knowledge base is often easier if you use Google. Go to the Google Advanced

Search, enter your search criteria and add "site:microsoft.com" at the end. For example, to search "registry editor" use "registry editor" site:microsoft.com. Another way is go to the "Domain" line and specify "Only return results from the site or domain microsoft.com". Google can also be a great way to find information about computer problems on the Internet in general, but you need to know how to narrow down your search. Otherwise, you will be overwhelmed with the number of links that turn up. Some tips on how to use Google are given by Steve Bass at <http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0.aid,110970,00.asp> I have found the Microsoft Newsgroups to be very useful, and here too, Google is the way to find things. Use the Advanced Groups Search and specify "Return only messages from the newsgroup *microsoft.public.\**" The wildcard asterisk will allow a search of all the Microsoft groups. If you can narrow the search even more, that will simplify the search. For example, for Windows 98 questions try just the groups *microsoft.public.win98.\** For Windows XP questions try *micro soft.public.windowsxp\** If you know how to use a Newsgroup reader, you can submit your question to a particular group and see if one of the many experts who frequent the groups will answer. You can also use the new Microsoft Newsgroups Website at <http://communities.microsoft.com/newsgroups/default.asp>.

Another way to search for answers to your problem is to use the "Windows Tips Search Engine" provided by Brian Livingston at <http://www.briansbuzz.com/>. This facility allows you to simultaneously search some of the best sources on the Web. The listed sources are Annoyances.org, JSI, Inc., Langa List, Lockergnome, PCWorld.com, Tom's Hardware, Windows 2000FAQ, Windows Web Solutions, Win-Informant, WinNetMag, WinSupersite, Woody's Watch, Brian's Buzz, E-Business Secrets, and Window Manager.

### Help forums

There are large numbers of help forums on the Web. These are of varying quality but many have knowledgeable regulars who will try to answer questions that you submit. Most require some sort of registration and sign-in but are generally free. I personally stick with the Microsoft newsgroups but here are a few you might try (in no particular order).

Bud Allen's troubleshooter

<http://www.wintrouble.net/>

Internet-help.net

<http://www.internet-help.net/>

Tech Support Guy

<http://www.helponthe.net/>

From the November 2003 issue of PPCUG News the newsletter of the Princeton PC Users Group.



## The Value of Removable Hard Drives

by Allan Pogensky

Los Vegas PC Users Group

One of the most frequent topics on any newsgroup dealing with operating systems or when computer users get together, is what's the best strategy for backing up one's hard drive. Hardly a day goes by where you don't come across literally dozens, if not scores, of postings on the various newsgroups relating to this subject. The queries (and responses) invariably focus on the problems the user has encountered in using this or that software backup program — either some third-party program or whatever built-in backup program is included with the user's operating system.

In my opinion, the best backup system for the average home user and even small business owner to employ in most cases is having his or her computer equipped with two removable hard drives. There are other advantages in having two removable hard drives on one's computer but the most significant one is providing a near fail-safe backup system. The speed, flexibility and peace of mind you get with this arrangement far outweighs (for most users) the relatively small additional cost of equipping one's computer with this hardware configuration.

Using this setup, backing up your hard drive is simple, straightforward, fast, and most important of all — effective. By easily and relatively quickly making a clone of your hard drive, using a software program like Symantec's Norton Ghost which is specifically designed for this purpose, you get, what seems to me, the ultimate backup solution given the present state of personal computer technology. Unlike backup programs that merely back up your data files — that is, the files you've created in the various programs and applications that you use — by cloning your hard drive you are making a bit for bit copy of the drive, in essence an exact duplicate of that drive. Thus, you are backing up your operating system, your registry, all your programs and applications, your configuration settings, your data files - in short, everything on the hard drive that you have cloned. And you're doing this in one fell swoop. And for added safety you can remove this newly-cloned hard drive from the premises, not to mention making another clone, if desired, for near-absolute security.

So when the day comes — as it surely will — that your hard drive fails because of some mechanical or electrical defect, it's a wonderful feeling to know that you have a perfectly good copy of that failed hard drive that you simply shove in the computer, boot up, and you're off and running. Or if you ever get some miserable computer virus that plays havoc with your system, isn't it nice to know that you have at hand a perfectly good virus-free clone of your hard drive? And then simply clone that "good" previously cloned hard drive to the virus-infected one so that once again you now have

two perfectly good hard drives. And in the case where the hard drive is kaput because of some mechanical/electronic failure, you purchase a new hard drive, pop it in the removable tray, make two simple connections, shove it in the computer and then simply clone your good hard drive to the new one. There's no need to partition and format the new drive; no need to reinstall your operating system on the new drive, no need to reinstall your programs and data files. None of this is necessary. You simply clone the previously-cloned hard drive to the new drive. And the added beauty of this arrangement is that you do all this from the comfort of your computer chair. There's no need to take apart your computer case in order to get into the guts of your computer and make complicated cable connections. Everything is done outside of your computer because each hard drive resides in a removable tray (caddy) that you simply slide into the computer's mobile rack. In my case I use the Lian Li RH-42 all-aluminum mobile racks which are generally available from a number of vendors on the net. I've purchased mine from an online vendor, Directron .com who sells them 2/\$66 (plus shipping). I'm sure mobile racks from other manufacturers will serve the purpose just as well. I'm aware of many users who have been using inexpensive (about \$10 each) plastic mobile racks without any problems whatsoever.

As I've previously indicated, the cloning process itself is easy and fast. Using Symantec's Norton Ghost cloning program as an example, with the two removable hard drives connected to the computer, you simply boot up the computer with the floppy disk that contains the Ghost program and after a few key clicks the cloning process begins. My present computer has an Intel Pentium 42.0 GHz processor and I can clone one hard drive to another at the rate of nearly 1 GB per minute. The cloning process is practically automatic and you need not be in attendance during the actual cloning.

I can virtually guarantee that once you begin working with two removable hard drives, you'll have but one regret and only one regret. And that is you didn't have this arrangement on your previous computer or computers. There is perhaps one negative to this arrangement and that is the additional cost involved in equipping your computer with the two mobile racks to house the hard drives, the second hard drive, and the software cloning program. I would estimate it adds roughly about \$100 to \$200 (as of June, 2003) to the cost of the computer depending upon the size of the second hard drive and the specific make and model of the two mobile racks. Naturally, your computer case should have available two 5 1/4" bays to house the mobile racks in addition to the 5 1/4" bays needed to house your other IDE devices (CD/DVD-ROM, CD-RW, etc.) that need 5 1/4" bays. Mobile racks come in two basic versions, depending upon whether the hard drive to be housed is an IDE/ATA or SCSI device. At this writing I'm not aware of any mobile racks designed to house the recently introduced SATA hard drives, however, I'm certain it won't be too long before they come on the market.

The software program I use for the cloning process is

Symantec's Norton Ghost 2003 which I've recently seen selling on the net for about \$30 for the CD-only version (no retail box), which is really all you need. (There's an older 2002 version of Ghost available which is considerably cheaper than the 2002 version; in my experience the 2002 version works just fine for straight cloning one hard drive to another hard drive regardless of whether the file system is FAT32 or NTFS). The Norton Ghost program is also included in Symantec's Norton System-Works 2003 Professional Edition. There are other disk cloning programs available, e.g., Power-quest's Drive Image and Acronis' True Image among them, both of which seem to get favorable reviews, however, I've had little or no experience with these programs so I cannot speak to them. Another cloning tool is the installation disk that comes packaged with the retail boxed hard drives from several manufacturers, including Maxtor and Western Digital.

When you consider the enormous advantages of having two removable hard drives on your computer, the additional cost in equipping your computer in this fashion pales into insignificance.

*This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member.*

Review

## Total Commander 5.51

by Brent Ozar

*Houston Area League of PC Users, Inc.*

Old-school DOS users like me hate Windows Explorer, and most think there's no alternative for basic file management tasks.

We've been forced to use the same Explorer since Windows 95. It stunk then, and it still stinks today. The bad news is there's no improvement on the horizon. The good news is there's a third-party program called Total Commander that's great for power users like programmers, network administrators, or web developers.

Long-time computer users will recognize the basic user interface of Total Commander: two window panes side by side showing different directories. Several third-party utilities used this look back in the 1980's and 1990's in DOS file management tools, and it has plenty of advantages. It's easy to compare directories, to see which files are different in which directories, and to copy files back and forth. The space bar tags files and directories for copying. Click on a column header like Name, Ext, Size, or Date and Total Commander sorts the files.

The first indication of Total Commander's power and flexibility, though, is what can be shown in those two window panes. When browsing a directory, double-click on a compressed file like a Zip or Rar file. Total Commander goes right into it and shows the contents just like a normal directory, much like Windows XP's Zip file decompression on the fly, only more seamless and transparent to the end user. File copy and move opera-



tions work the same as with a normal file or directory — Total Commander automatically compresses and decompresses files to move them in and out of the Zip file.

Total Commander also integrates an FTP client: hit control-F to connect to an FTP site, and it shows up in Total Commander just like a local drive or a network drive. Copying files between a laptop, a file server, an FTP server, or even between two FTP servers all work identically.

Basic buttons line the bottom of Total Commander's screen, indicating that users can hit F4 to edit a file. While logged into an FTP site, hit F4, and Total Commander automatically downloads the file, opens it in the preferred editor, waits patiently for the user to make changes and save them, and then checks to see if the file has been changed. If it has, Total Commander notifies the user and offers to upload the changed file — perfect for webmasters that need to make quick fixes.<p>

Web authors will also appreciate the directory comparison features: with the local development directory in one window and the live web server in the other window (either via FTP or mapped drives), click Mark, Compare Directories. Total Commander highlights any files in either window that are newer than the opposite directory, that don't exist in the opposite directory, or that have different file sizes. At a glance, it's obvious which files need to be synchronized.

Windows Explorer offers sorely limited file copying and moving functionality: when Explorer encounters a file that already exists, it asks if you want to overwrite that one, overwrite all files, or cancel. How about a little more information? Total Commander shows you the file sizes and dates of each file, and asks if you want to overwrite this one, overwrite all, only overwrite the older files, skip this file, skip all files, append, or rename! Total Commander also offers robust file-renaming tools.

Any long-time computer junkie uses a handful of DOS commands to this day, simply because they get the job done with a minimum of fuss. Total Commander offers a command prompt at the bottom of the window that acts like a constantly open DOS prompt. Type a DOS command, and it's executed in the directory: useful for running programs that require command line parameters.

Like Windows Explorer, Total Commander has different file list styles: brief, full, comments, and a tree view similar to old Norton Commander. Comments refers to the ability to store file descriptions in description or files.bbs. Tree view fans will also appreciate the ability to hit control-enter on any directory (or several directories) and see the number of files and the file size on any directory. (Large network directories can take some time to calculate, though.)

Total Commander isn't just for old-school users, though: some of us have grown accustomed to the dynamic right-click functionality in Windows. Things like Send-To and third-party extensions are available in Total Commander as well: just right-click on a file or directory, and the standard menus appear just as they would in Windows Explorer. (By default, right-click tags and

untags files, but this is one of Total Commander's dozens and dozens of configurable options.)

Total Commander's setup program fits on a floppy, and the full program takes less than 2mb — perfect for hauling around on a USB key drive. No setup is required: it runs out of any directory, so network admins can use it from any machine on the network by running it from a file server. That's a hallmark of a useful network tool.

How much would you pay for a program that does all this? \$59? \$69? Total Commander is just \$35 and a trial version is free at [www.ghisler.com](http://www.ghisler.com).

But wait — there's more! I've barely scratched the surface of its capabilities. It can do parallel port file copying just like it does FTP — the remote file system appears in a window just like a local file system or an FTP session. The toolbar can be configured to do everything from launch Control Panel to filter files by extension or name.

I've used Total Commander for a few years, and the author, Christian Ghisler, still actively develops and improves the program on a regular basis. Ghisler resides in Switzerland, and with the program's global following, it's designed for global use: languages include everything from Afrikaans to Vietnamese. With the quality of this program, it's obvious why people all over the world use it religiously.

*From the November issue of HAL-PC Magazine.*

## Fact or Fiction? Separating the Worm from the Hoax

by Beverly Rosenbaum

*Houston Area League of PC Users, Inc.*

Virus or Worm hoaxes are not just harmless pranks.

Recipients of these annoying warning messages may become alarmed and cause damage to their computers by attempting some action to remove it, and those who forward the messages create an overload for email servers. Or worse — once they learn that there was no real threat, they may get into the habit of ignoring all virus warning messages, which would leave them vulnerable to the next real and truly destructive virus or worm.

There are many antivirus company sites that track virus hoaxes as well as genuine viruses. So the next time you receive an urgent warning message, before you act on it you can check it against the list of known hoaxes to determine if it's a hoax or a real virus or worm.

[www.vmyths.com](http://www.vmyths.com)

[www.sophos.com/virusinfo/hoaxes](http://www.sophos.com/virusinfo/hoaxes)

[vil.nai.com/vil/hoaxes.asp](http://vil.nai.com/vil/hoaxes.asp)

[www.f-secure.com/virus-info/hoax](http://www.f-secure.com/virus-info/hoax)

[www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html](http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html)

[www.datafellows.com/news/hoax.htm](http://www.datafellows.com/news/hoax.htm)

[hoaxbusters.ciac.org/HBHoaxIndex.html](http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/HBHoaxIndex.html)

Don't let your guard down. You should never open

an email attachment unless you expect it — even if it comes from someone you know and trust. Be aware that the .EXE is to look at the icon. The program with the bear icon is the good one and the one with the tools icon (like Symantec's removal tools) is the bad one. The Recory worm W32.Recory@mm is a mass-mailing worm that primarily travels in file sharing programs such as IRC, Kazaa, and Morpheus. The worm is programmed in Visual Basic, spreads through IRC modifying the Mirc scripts, and tries to copy itself to the shared folder of several P2P and messaging programs. The VB run-time libraries must be installed on the computer for it to execute.

The message that comes with it looks a lot like the hoax message but tells you exactly the wrong thing to do, and describes the icons exactly backwards. The email has a randomly chosen subject and attachment, but it is represented as a repair or removal tool with one of several extensions (.exe, .pif, or .com). The worm uses Microsoft Outlook to email itself to all the contacts in the Windows Address Book. It also attempts to spread across a file-sharing network and copies itself to many files in 5 different folders, including \windows, \windows\system32, and \windows\java. NAME: Recory.B ALIAS: Recory

Also Known As: I-Worm.Recory or WORM\_RECORY.A.

Systems Affected: Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Me.

Affected programs include: Kazaa, Kazaa Lite, ICQ, Bearshare, Edonkey2000, Morpheus, Grokster.

Systems Not Affected: Macintosh, OS/2, UNIX, Linux.

*From the November 2003 issue of HAL PC Magazine, newsletter of the Houston Area League of PC Users, Inc.*

## Your Personal Privacy

**W**hat information about you is publicly available on the Web? In the past, only government agencies and businesses were able to access personal information. Today, Internet search engines allow almost anyone to find information about friends, co-workers, job applicants, etc.

Online phone directories enable anyone, anywhere, to find your phone number and street address. More and more government information, such as property ownership, voter registration, and court filings are being made available online. Many newspapers print the full text of stories and classifieds online. School websites publish student information and sometimes photos. Professional and club newsletters may unwittingly reveal things about you that you'd rather the whole world didn't know.

Other sites, such as Classmates.com and Speedy Search offer fee-based access to certain information such as school classmates, criminal records, credit files, and background checks. In most cases, you will have to prove that you have a need to know and are authorized to receive non-public data about other people.

[www.ollasmates.com](http://www.ollasmates.com)

[www.speedysearch.net](http://www.speedysearch.net)

Try this exercise: Look for your name in a search engine. Then try your local newspaper website, your child's school, and your college alumni site. Check what's available about you at genealogical servers, Usenet, Web archives, and in club newsletters. Here are some starting points for research:

General Search Engine: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

Phone & Address Lookup: [www.infospace.com](http://www.infospace.com)

Usenet Search Engine: <http://groups.google.com>

Genealogy: [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

Web Archives: <http://www.archive.org>

You may be surprised at what others, especially if they are motivated and savvy, can learn.

Society News

## New User Notes

by John McMillan

**A**n owner of his and her computers; currently using Microsoft Outlook and Blue Frog on 1 machine with a single account; was not sure if adding a Blue Frog postbox to the other computer and running it without Outlook would put e-mail on the 2nd machine. It was understood that both computers could not receive e-mail at the same time since they share a common phone line. It was felt that this would work but he would need to check with Blue Frog. Bill Statt suggested going to Netscape.com to establish an account on the Internet so both machines could access the mail.

During the discussion it was pointed out that E-mail services often impose restrictions on space commitments so some users copy files to folders on their machines to control history maintenance. Another user, who sometimes had problems getting onto Blue Frog, asked if others had the same problem. A windows 98 user was in the habit of routinely deleting .tmp files asked if .gop .log .bak and .iss files found in the Temp Folder could be deleted without creating problems. Bill said that usually Windows will issue a warning to the effect that this is a system file that should not be deleted when deletion may result in a problem. He also recommended going to Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Disk Cleanup which will remove everything that is legal including temporary Internet files and the recycle bin. As an alternative select the disk in Windows Explorer and click Properties in the file menu then Disk Cleanup.

[Http://www.ace.net.nz/tech/TechFileFormat.html](http://www.ace.net.nz/tech/TechFileFormat.html) provides an extensive (14.5 page) list of file suffixes plus a brief description of their source or meaning. I printed this out and although it is not complete it has been helpful when examining disk contents. File Snoop is another excellent file analysis tool that offers up to four views of each file: Information, Formatted view, Text view, and Hex view. The Information view gives, at minimum, basic file information such as type, size, and attributes. There are also special information sections that vary depending on the type of file. For example information on an image file will include the height, width, and other image details. The Formatted view is available only for certain files, including .rtf, .html, .avi,

and various types of sound, bitmap, and icon, files. This view will play sound files or animations, and display images. The Text view lets you view the file as text, with the option to strip out non-printing characters. With this feature you can, for example, scan all the error messages in an .exe file. The Hex view shows the file in hexadecimal. FileSnoop (available for free download from the net) was written by Bruno Sonnino, and first appeared in *PC Magazine* April 23, 2002 (v21n08). Source code is included."

A user who had Zone alarm installed mentioned that at start up a small window announces that Zone alarm is working and that this delays other programs from opening until the window is closed. He wondered how this could be prevented. Gregg Sayre had the same problem. No one had an answer on how to prevent this.

A member who had printed thumbnails of pictures about a year ago did not recognize any difference in screen quality but found a significant blue cast in this years prints. He was using Adobe Photo Deluxe with an HP930 printer that had not been changed though both cartridges were recently replaced. He printed a test page, but did not realign the print heads. Bill Statt suggested printing a picture, then using the quick fix button to see if there was a change. He went on to say that each of the 3 major printer manufacturers use different approaches: Canon has a user replaceable print head; HP inserts the print heads in each cartridge and uses heat to set the ink; Epsom puts the print head in the body of the machine and uses pressure to move the ink. He pointed out that there are often significant differences between replacement cartridges and inks used for refills.

Bill discussed J V Power Tools a program with a Registry, File, Kept File, Tool, and other tools. Registry Scan would list all of the programs on the registry; Registry Cleaner shows all of the dead ends from previously deleted programs with green dots for those safe to remove and red dots for those necessary for the system to work. Registry Finder; Run Registry Editor and Hardware Configuration capabilities are also included. He used this as a way of finding and deleting all program components in preparation for a clean install. There is a website with tutorials on how to use the different Power Tools.

This sounded very interesting because early in October, after combining several font folders, I could not select fonts or open existing files in Works for Windows (version 2.0A). I had verified that the files were intact by opening them in Notepad and by reading them on a networked computer. Stinger was downloaded and run as were updated Norton Antivirus definitions but to no avail. There was no specific uninstall module nor was Works for Windows listed in Add/Remove programs so I deleted the .exe file and reinstalled it from the original disks.

The problem remained so I turned to Soundbytes. One respondent mentioned downloading Sun Office and converting the files (several years worth). This would undoubtedly modernize some features but the learning curve made it impractical before some early November

deadlines.

Another suggestion was to download Reghealer to fix the registry. This sounded like a better alternative since I already felt there were things left over from the attempted deletion. A Reghealer Scan found almost 400 problems so the results were printed but no corrections were made because the shareware program offered limited use for 30 days before a fee kicked in and there were many unanswered questions after printing the skimpy documentation.

I had always pictured the registry as a sizable single file to be modified only by experts. I was surprised when a search of the C drive files disclosed more than 53 .REG files ranging from 1 to 27 kilobytes in size. Seven backup files created during the Reghealer scan occupied less than 8 kilobytes which caused more concerns for the timid and postponed further action.

Bill gets programs by going to Downloads.com; typing the name of the program in the search box; or he goes to advanced search and selects free which presents a list of programs. Selecting any one of them opens a page with a description of what the of what the program does followed by; a paragraph that tells if there is any connected adware or spyware. Downloads.com also makes available assessments and comments by users. Bill went on to recommend carefully reading the licensing agreement which may require your permission to include adware or spyware. If you have any doubts, run AdAware before and after the program is installed to see if any thing shows up. Spybot catches some things AdAware misses. Both AdAware and Spybot are available from Soundbytes .org by scrolling down to I heard a web page on your show. Clicking that brings up a page listing programs in alphabetical order with direct download links. Stinger, a special purpose antivirus program is also available here.

A user got a message on startup reporting that Windows could not find a file. Gregg Sayre suggested going to startup > run and typing MSCONFIG. In the resulting window there should be a startup tab showing a series of boxes followed by program names. If there was a box with the name of the missing program, the box should be unchecked. Then he should check the apply box and restart the computer. If these actions caused problems, the process could be repeated and the box rechecked.

A user with multiple networked machines uses one primarily for word processing, E-mail and web searching. The others only go to the web for .html help or for downloading software related to functions they perform. Bill and Gregg said that hacker generated viruses are most often spread by unknowing users but it is possible to get viruses from web pages and suggested weekly scans with updated virus definitions even when machines are not used for E-mail.

Someone asked if there was a way to enlarge stubborn shrunken windows where a computer running Windows 98 has windows that do not fill the screen. Monitor settings adjustments changed things but did not expand the picture to the screen size. Gregg thought

the video card might be over driven and suggested right clicking on the desktop and then clicking properties. In the settings tab of the Display Properties window that opens, move the Screen Area slider to the left and choose a lower color quality. If this helps expand the window, move the adjustments even further.

A Word user found files were sporadically saved as read only and wandered what caused this. Gregg mentioned the 4 attributes: Archived, Read Only, System, and Hidden; that can be seen in the properties window or by showing the file in a widened right pane of Explorer. He thought the program had a setting to save files with a password so they were Read Only unless you had the password. Bill thought the files might have been built using a template that had a read only attribute and suggested searching help for references to templates. It was felt this problem might be solved by using Save As to send the file to a disk.

Our next meeting will be December 2nd at the Monroe Developmental Center, 620 Westfall Road. Won't you join us?

### Program Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2003

Present: Bob Avery, Tony Dellelo Arpad Kovacs, Ron Matteson, Dan Rothfuss, Sally Springett, and Steve Staub

The meeting began with a discussion of the last meeting and the consensus was that the program was excellent.

We have programs scheduled through February.

Steve asks all members to *please* let him know your new address when you move. You can send him an e-mail, call him, or mail it to him but please let him know.

### Treasurer's Report

by Steve Staub

Balance 9/16/03 .....	\$421.42
<b>Income</b>	
Dues .....	\$163.00
Expenses	
St. Stephen's .....	\$75.00
Postmaster .....	50.00
Paper .....	<u>49.97</u>
Total .....	\$174.97
Balance 10/21/03 .....	\$409.45

The Lighter Side

## Check Disclaimer for Software

### Purchases

Disclaimer to be used when purchasing software:  
**AGREEMENT AND LIMITED WARRANTY**

This check is fully warranted against physical defects and poor workmanship in its stationery. If the check is physically damaged, return it to me and I will replace or repair it at my discretion. No other warranty of any kind is made, neither express nor implied including, but not limited to, the implied warranties of Merchantability, Suitability for Purpose, and Validity of Currency. Any

and all risk concerning the actual value of this check is assumed by you, the recipient. Even though I or my agents may have assured you of its worth, either verbally or in written communication, we may have had our fingers crossed, so don't come whimpering back to me if it bounces.

The money, if any, represented by this instrument, remains my property. You are licensed to use it, however you are not allowed to copy the original check except for your personal records, nor are you permitted to give the money itself to anyone else. Neither may you allow any other person to use the money. Remember, you may have it in your possession, but it still belongs to me, and I'm going to call on you from time to time just to keep tabs on it.

This agreement supersedes all others between us, including the equally ridiculous one you have undoubtedly pasted on the back of your packaging, or concealed somewhere in the middle of it. The location of your version of this or any other covenant between us is irrelevant to its inapplicability here. Only this one pertains, and I really mean it. In fact, this one supersedes yours even though yours may say that it supersedes mine. Why, even if yours said it would supersede mine even if mine said it would supersede yours even if yours said... Oh well. You get the idea.

You may decline this agreement by returning the uncashed check to me within twenty-four hours. If you attempt to cash it, however, you have implicitly accepted these terms. You may also implicitly accept these terms by:

- 1) Calling my bank to inquire about the status of my account;
  - 2) Thanking me at the conclusion of our business transaction;
  - 3) Going to bed at the end of this or any other day;
- or
- 4) Using any toilet or rest room.

Please be advised that I have adopted a strict rubber-glue policy. Any nasty thing that your lawyers say bounces off of me and sticks back to you. Be further advised that you agree to pay my legal expenses if I decide to sue you for violating this agreement or for any other reason that might strike my fancy. Violations will be punishable by fine, imprisonment, death, any two of the above, or all three.

Thank you and have a nice day!