President’s Message

By Guy Lalouche
President, SCACC

We are in the summer doldrums as far as classes being offered is concerned. Our full class schedule will be in place in September. Our classes have become so popular that we no longer allow non Computer Club members to take the first class before joining SCACC.

With vacation and other activities several monitors forgot to show up for their duty time. I wish to apologize to those of you that were prevented from using the club during these times. We are investigating alternative ways of assuring that the club is open as much as possible, hopefully we will have some solutions soon. In the meantime, I urge our monitors to do all they can to avoid forgetting their scheduled time.

August 5, we will have another general meeting and a presentation by Blue Squirrel software; I hope to see many of you at the meeting.
The contents of this newsletter is intended for use by members of the Sun City Anthem Computer Club and their immediate families. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and may not be construed to represent an official position of the Computer Club, nor of the Sun City Anthem Community Association, Inc.

Where prices and sources of computer related products are shown within this newsletter, they represent the author’s best knowledge of current retail prices and availability. The information is subject to change, and as such, should be used for comparison only.

All corporate names and trademarks used are the property of their respective owners.

Welcome to this issue of the Sun City Anthem Computer Club’s Newsletter. In order for you to be reading this, you have successfully installed Adobe® Acrobat® Reader™ 5.0 or earlier or the new Adobe Reader 6.0 on your computer. Note the subtle name change between 5.0 and 6.0.

Articles are invited

All computer club members may submit original articles relating to PCs and Macs for consideration for publication.

Those of you with a specific area of expertise, are urged to prepare a monthly column that will further the Club’s educational goals. Submissions will be reviewed, and if acceptable may be edited. This editor reserves the right to withhold any material deemed inappropriate for the membership.

All articles must be submitted in a Windows based electronic format on 3.5” floppy disk, 100 or 250 MB ZIP disks, or via e-mail. Acceptable file types are:

1. MS Word (*.doc)
2. MS Publisher (*.pub)
3. MS Note Pad (*.txt)
4. MS Word Pad (*.rtf)
5. E-mail: directly entered into the e-mail message or as attachments.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting material, or revisions to previously submitted work, is the 25th of each month. All magnetic media submissions are to be delivered to:

Charles W. Davis
SCACC Newsletter Editor
1605 Preston Park Drive
Henderson, NV 89052
Phone: 614-3107
E-Mail: editor@myscacc.org

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2450 Hampton Road
Henderson, NV 89052
E-mail: club@scacc.lvcxmail.com
Web site URL: http://www.myscacc.org

By Mary Blaylock
Treasurer, SCACC
Membership 849

Editor’s message
Question: Since I have installed Office 2003, Outlook interrupts my (delicate) train of thought with little popup message giving brief header information regarding a new incoming e-mail message. To keep my sanity a bit longer, can this be turned off?

Answer: It can be turned off by clicking once on the Outlook icon on the right side of the task bar. Then uncheck the Show New Mail Desktop Alert.

Question: With the pending release of a major maintenance update for Internet Explorer, should I still go through the process of installing Mozilla Firefox or one of the other browsers?

Answer: The easiest way is to answer with a question. Should you still put on shoes if you intend to go for a hike in Antarctica? With 95% of the world’s computers using Internet Explorer, the “bad guys” will continue to find vulnerabilities. Why would they work on trying to find flaws in other browsers. Their egos wouldn't be salved, and those paying for the installed malware, wouldn’t get as big a bang for their buck.

I would definitely recommend an alternative.

It may seem a bother now, but it’s nothing compared to the hours lost to “fix” the problem. Not to say what may be lost to those malware programs that steal information that you type into your computer.

Question: Following last month’s article suggesting that an alternative browser be installed, I installed the Mozilla Firefox version. I can’t get it to be my default browser. How can I do this?

Answer: Open Mozilla Firefox and choose Options from the Tools menu. Then click on the Set Default Browser button. If you don’t see this button, click on the General tab at the left of the Options dialog box.

*Options*

- **Show Network Warnings**
- **Show Network Connectivity Changes**
- **Show New Mail Desktop Alert**

*Hide When Minimized*  
*Open Outlook*

Question: I am starting to make flyers for my Club using Microsoft Publisher 2003. I see flyers with text that has a shadow effect. I can’t figure how to do this, can you help?

Answer: Select the font that you wish to have the shadow effect applied, then choose Font from the Format drop down menu. In the dialog box that opens click on Shadow in the Effects panel. Then click on OK.

While the dialog box is open...
Questions and Answers — A Monthly Feature, cont.

(Continued from page 3)

open, you may elect to change the font color if your flyer will be in color. Remember, color copying or printing is expensive. An interesting effect can be made using white text and a light fill color. Don’t make the fill color too dark. It will make it difficult to see the shadow.

Play with the effects to get just the right message across to your reader. Don’t fill your flyer with bunches of cute images. Some “white space” is desirable. As your document becomes more cluttered, its effectiveness will probably degrade.

**Question:** At Thursday’s weekly Question & Answer session an attendee asked about the size of the Mozilla Firefox Browser download. The answer was “about 7 mega-bytes.” How can Firefox be so much smaller than other browsers?

**Answer:** A lot of function is contained in extensions (sometimes called plug-ins) that you may select to add desired functionality afterwards. Their main benefit is that most users don’t require or want the functions, and are not automatically included. The basic version has served me well, and I haven’t felt like something was missing. If you feel that the basic program doesn’t have the function that you would like, see if one of the 201 (at this writing) available extensions would make up for that lack:

http://texturizer.net/firefox/extensions/

**Question:** Can you recommend a reputable computer repair facility near our community.

**Answer:** I can’t due to the fact that I haven’t had to re-sort to a commercial repair establishment since joining the club.

If you tend to believe that your ailing computer may need “professional help,” you may be on your own. If you can still connect to the Internet, send an e-mail message to your Club’s help line at: scacchelp@yahoo.com

You may contact your Club’s President for assistance. http://www.myscacc.org/ClubOfficers.htm

The President will then contact the appropriate volunteer to come to your home, or the volunteer may ask you to bring your computer into the Lab for evaluation.

During calendar year 2003, your Club’s volunteers made over 400 visits to member’s homes to solve problems with their computers; virus & adware removal, replace hardware components, transfer data from one computer to another, set up new computers, set up new printer, etc. In addition, our volunteer members provided two-hour private tutoring to over 50 members in a wide variety of subjects.

**Question:** I also belong to another club here in

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Sun City Anthem and am their corresponding secretary. One of my jobs is to send e-mail messages and newsletters to the three hundred plus members. I find it so time consuming to have multiple distribution lists in Outlook and copy and paste the newsletter to each. I use a maximum of 50 in each distribution list to avoid the rules of my Internet Service Provider. Is there a better way that I’m not aware of?

**Answer:** I’m not certain that it is better, but once set up, I find it easy to send messages to the Emergency Preparedness Committee’s 300 plus volunteers. This solution uses the mail merge feature of Microsoft Word 2002 or 2003 and Outlook.

The mail merge feature will create individual messages.

Unfortunately, Word can only merge from a Contacts list, not your distribution lists. That’s where the initial set up time becomes bothersome. So that you don’t send your message to everyone in your Contacts folder, you must create a separate Contacts folder, which is only slightly different from creating any other folder.

1. If your complete Outlook folder list is not visible, click on the Folder icon at the lower left to display the Contacts folder.

2. Select (highlight) the contacts folder and choose New > Folder from the File dropdown menu.

3. Name the new Contacts folder, click OK.

4. To populate the new folder copy the contacts in your Contacts folder to the new club folder. To copy the contact, right click and hold the pointer on the contact and drag it to the new folder name in the folder list. When you release the mouse button, you will be given the choice to either copy or move.

Once your club’s contact folder is complete you are ready to send your message. The steps are:

1. Open Word and create your message.

2. Choose Letters and Mailings from the Tools dropdown menu, and further choose Mail Merge.

3. When the mail-merge wizard opens, choose E-mail messages. Then click on Next: Starting document.

4. Now you are offered a choice of document set ups. For the Emergency Preparedness Committee, the text of the message arrives from the Committee Chair. I located that document, selected the portion that I wanted, then I copied (Ctrl+C) and pasted (Ctrl+V) the text to the “Current Document.” Click on Next: Select re-
Questions and Answers — A Monthly Feature, cont.

(Continued from page 5)

5. Click on Select from Outlook contacts and then Choose Contacts Folder

6. Click on your club’s contact folder that you created earlier and click on OK.

7. When the list of recipients appears, click on OK again, and click on Next: Write your e-mail message.

8. If your message is complete, click on Next: Preview your e-mail message.

9. This step is not used, if all recipients are to receive the same message. Click on Next: Complete the merge.

10. To send your messages, click on Electronic Mail... and your messages will be sent, one to each recipient!

Some things that you may want to consider before using this method:

1. If you have not used Word’s mail merge facility before, this process will be confusing. However, with practice, you will be able to step through the process readily. Hint. Set up on only two contacts in your list and practice.

2. With 300 recipients, 300 e-mail messages are sent. If you have Norton Anti-virus scanning outgoing messages (you should) it will take a bit of time.

3. If you use a dial up Internet connection, it will take still more additional time.

4. You will have to remember when you receive a change of e-mail address to update both distribution lists (assuming you have the same contact in both lists).

A final comment, this question and answer was published in PC Magazine’s August 17, 2004 issue. After much stumbling around and several trips to the Microsoft Newsgroups, the above procedure was created.

I won’t wait for the question regarding: What Newsgroups? Look here:

Next to spam mail and viruses, one of the most irritating facets of web surfing is the annoying popup ads that so many of us receive. What many may not be aware of is that about 80% of the popups that we get while online, and many that may also appear if we are offline, are generated by spyware that is unknowingly installed on our computers. Spyware are software programs that typically install without our knowledge or informed consent, and may also be a part of a program that we purposely installed. Spyware, as its name connotes, is software that often gathers information on our surfing habits and may send that information to third parties. At its worst, spyware may also be used to gather personal information from our computers, including passwords, user names, and other information, and send it to persons unknown who may illicitly use that information to empty our bank accounts, charge goods in our name, and commit other various forms of identity theft. Spyware can get on our computers by visiting some unethical websites, or by installing some downloaded or commercial software. Several forms of spyware can infect our computers via viruses and Trojans. Among the most notorious sources of spyware are popular file sharing utilities such as Morpheus and KaZaA. Some of the "cookies" or small text files placed on our computers by some websites can also be used to create personal profiles on us, and distribute that information to third parties. It should be noted that some software titles will no longer function if their attached spyware is deleted, as the spyware is intended to provide a continuing revenue stream for the software publisher.

Fortunately, it is generally easy to detect and kill spyware, or otherwise render it inert. It should be understood at this point that as a general rule, even the best antivirus programs, while effective at detecting

“...PestPatrol has an integrated utility that enables all parts of PestPatrol to be updated on a regular basis in order to maximize the detection and removal functions....”

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and preventing virus and Trojan infestations, are generally ineffective at dealing with spyware. Firewalls, if properly installed and configured, can prevent many spyware types from sending information from the computer, but many spyware programs utilize known security weaknesses, and other vulnerabilities in our operating systems. Contemporary thought is that we all need a good anti-spyware program properly installed, configured, and updated, every bit as much as we need updated antivirus software and a firewall on our computers.

One of the top rated anti-spyware programs is the recently updated "Spybot Search and Destroy", version 1.3, available for free (donations encouraged) at http://www.safer-networking.org and other major download sites. Spybot can detect and destroy over 13,000 spyware products, and immunize our computers from future infection by almost 1800 types of spyware. Spybot can also prevent some pesky websites from changing our "home" or browser startup pages, and make it difficult for spyware to write itself into our Windows registry. An integral utility makes it easy for Spybot to check for, and install the periodic updates necessary to detect and kill the latest types of spyware.


A popular commercial program, which is a "Swiss army knife" type of program comprising many different utilities, including an excellent spyware (parasite) detector and killer is the "SpyHunter" included with System Mechanic, version 4. System mechanic is available locally at retail (about $49), and for download at www.iolo.com. A fully functional 30 day free trial version is available for download. As does its free standing competitors, System Mechanic's SpyHunter also checks for updated spyware listings, and installs them seamlessly. SpyHunter has been proven to be an effective spyware detector and killer, and the other utilities included in System mechanic make this a most...
useful program.

While not directly marketed as an anti-spyware product, "STOPzilla" is a very effective spyware remover that specializes in those spyware products that produce about 80% of the annoying popup ads that we may get while surfing the web. A recent update to STOPzilla also includes an integral utility that can detect and kill most other forms of spyware, including tracking cookies. With almost daily automated updates, and excellent 24/7 free tech support, including toll-free numbers, STOPzilla is available for $30 at http://www.stopzilla.com.

One of the most comprehensive spyware detecting and killing programs on the market is PestPatrol ($40), available at http://www.pestpatrol.com. This is an excellent program that can both detect spyware, and block many types of infection. PestPatrol has an integrated utility that enables all parts of PestPatrol to be updated on a regular basis in order to maximize the detection and removal functions. PestPatrol offers a free online scan that will detect, but not eliminate, almost all known forms of spyware.

While there are several other decent anti-spyware programs available, one caveat is appropriate here. There are some unethical purveyors of some anti-spyware programs that use spam emails, popup ads, and deceptive sales practices, including telling you that your computer is infested with spyware, and charging a fee to remove it. Any of the titles referenced above will do a reasonable job of reducing popups, and securing your computer from spyware, provided they are frequently updated and run.

"...Spyware are software programs that typically install without our knowledge or informed consent, and may also be a part of a program that we purposely installed...."
Global Positioning System — Where Exactly Are You?

By Joe Schmitt
Tampa Bay Computer Society, Florida

This is the first of a three article series on the Global Positioning System. The first discusses what the system is and how it works. The two subsequent articles will delve into receivers and uses to civilians.

For centuries, man has relied on the most rudimentary of tools to navigate. Things like a compass or sextant, and later a timepiece, were the best he had. In the past, the most difficult task of a ship’s captain was to maintain the location and heading of a ship pounded by winds and currents. As time went on, those tools were perfected and improved. Though they worked well, they were not perfect. It was a time consuming process to mark position; early airplane pilots often navigated using existing landmarks and roads because the speed of their craft made traditional methods cumbersome.

A system called Loran (Long Range Navigation) was developed in the 1940’s that utilized radio pulses which were projected on board a ship using a cathode ray tube, similar to your computer monitor. Though accurate to a degree, this system was expensive and offered only a limited area of use.

The global positioning system is a revolution in the way we navigate today. The global positioning system is a set of satellites that just like Loran that use radio signals to determine position. Popularly known as GPS, the system uses a "constellation" of 24 satellites in high orbit to determine position in latitude and longitude. In addition to position, the system also can determine altitude and speed.

GPS was first implemented in the early 1970s as a way for the military to improve its ability to navigate and position vehicles. This system eventually evolved to include civilian as well as military uses. In the early days of GPS the signal was intentionally diffused to deteriorate the accuracy of civilian receivers. This use of selective availability as the Department of Defense (DOD) calls it, rendered civilian receivers accurate only within a hundred yards or so. Imagine having the unit telling you make a turn on the next road after you've passed it. In 2000, President Clinton took a serious look at the system and its potential to the civilian population. Selective availability was disabled on May

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2, 2000 making the system accurate to within thirty feet or so.

So how does all this work? Well, as mentioned previously, there are 24 satellites orbiting the earth that broadcast radio signals. To better understand the system, a simple idea of two-dimensional navigation must be explained. Suppose you are in a field with one of those sign posts that point to a bunch of different places with distances. The top arrow of the sign says Montgomery, Alabama - 139 miles. The next arrow down says Savannah, Georgia - 217 miles. The third arrow points to Nashville, Tennes-
see - 231 miles. Now sit down at your favorite map and draw a circle around Montgomery with a radius of 139 miles. Next draw a circle around Savannah and Nashville with the radius the distance on our imaginary sign post. Where those three circles all intersect is roughly Atlanta, Georgia. Easy enough to understand, huh?

GPS works with the same principal. The receiver determines its location by its distance from the satellites. Hold it one minute! But those aren't satellites stationary? Well the satellites move on a predictable path and within a consistent time frame. Inside each GPS receiver, is a programmed almanac of the position of each satellite based on time. Each satellite broadcasts a signal which moves at the speed of light. By measuring how long the signal takes to reach the receiver, distance from the satellite is determined. Using three or more satellites the receiver can then triangulate its position very much the same way we did with our imaginary signpost. These kinds of accurate calculations with radio signals require precise timing, so on each satellite is an atomic clock which is monitored and corrected by ground stations. Using the accuracy of the atomic clock, a code pattern is broadcast from the satellite at a starting point. The receiver knows what time the signal left the satellite based on the portion of the code it is currently receiving. Measuring the time it took for the signal to reach the receiver by comparing the segment of code received with the time in the receiver, the distance to the satellite is determined. The distances from

“...as GPS, the system uses a "constellation" of 24 satellites in high orbit to determine position in latitude and longitude....”

(Continued from page 11)

three or more satellites are compared and the position is formulated. That position is then displayed on your receiver as a set of coordinates, or graphically on an electronic map.

Using this pattern the receiver checks and adjusts its internal quartz clock to match that of the atomic clock. So, in addition to knowing where you are, you also know the precise time. Imagine having an atomic clock in your pocket! The receiver also can determine speed by measuring its change in position over time. This is a three dimensional arrangement and so altitude is also calculated.

This is all great and wonderful, but there are some issues. Gravitational pulls from the sun and moon affect the orbits of the satellites. Changing atmospheric conditions also can affect the signal travels from the satellite to the receiver. To combat this, the DOD has several ground stations that constantly monitor the signals and make adjustments in the satellites as necessary. In addition, there are two geostationary satellites which are in a fixed position in the sky on both sides of the earth. These systems are called WAAS, or Wide Angle Augmentation System. This system’s sole purpose is to correct for the issues that affect the accuracy of the broadcast code.

Now with a simple receiver, John Q Public can use a multibillion dollar DOD system. At this time it is estimated that there are approximately 200 civilian users for each military user of the system!

Next month, I'll discuss the different types of receivers available to you as a consumer and some neat things that can be done with them. In the mean time, check out these interesting sites:

- Official page for GPS management
  http://gps.losangeles.af.mil
- NASA page on GPS
  Gpshome.scc.nasa.gov
- U.S. Navy GPS Timing Operations
- Block II specifications:

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.
By Aubrey Stewart
President of the Tri-City Computer Club, California

SP’S. Internet Service Providers

INTERNET ACCESS. Phone Line / DSL / Cable / Satellite / Wireless

INTERNET SECURITY. Firewalls / Back Door Trojan / Denial of Service Attacks / Personal Data/ Identity Theft

VIRUS’. Anti-Virus Protection/virus Real or Hoax / Free Online Virus Scanners / Update Virus pattern Subscription / Updating via Auto and Manual

COMPUTER CARE. Defragmentation / Hard Disk Drive Scan Disk / Safe Mode

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS:

1. FREE.
* Juno http://www.juno.com/
* NetZero http://www.netzero.net/
* HotMail http://www.hotmail.com/
* Yahoo http://www.yahoo.com/
* ZDNet Mail (Editor note: this web site is not active at this time.
  * E-Mail http://www.mail.com

“...wireless Internet providers all around the U.S. You must be located within their Radio Signal Footprint for service....”

2. PAID.
  * AOL http://www.aol.com/
  * Compuserve http://www.compuserve.com
  * NC Times http://www.nctimes.com
  * NetHere http://www.nethere.com
  * AT&T WorldNet

http://www.attworldnet.com
* NetZero http://www.netzero.net/
* Juno http://www.juno.com/
* Earthlink http://www.earthlink.net
* A-1 Internet Service Provider http://www.a1isp.net/
* TNS (Editor’s note: I could not locate the URL)
* CWNet Hosting, http://www.cwnethosting.com
* SBCGlobal http://www.sbc.com/

INTERNET ACCESS:

PHONE LINE. The theoretical maximum speed is 56,000 bits per second or 56 Kbps.

(small b is for Bits and large B is for Bytes). Eight bits equal 1 Byte and 1 text character equals 1 byte. The practical speed attained is actually around 30 to 44 Kbps with a slow speed of around 20 to 24 Kbps during peak usage times (i.e. when the kids get home from school). A connection

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Icon shows up in your Task Bar area when the computer is online. Placing the cursor over this Icon opens a Box that shows the number of bytes sent and received plus the current speed. Costs can vary widely from $6.95 a month to $40.00+ a month.

**DSL** - Digital Subscriber Line. The uploading speed is usually 128 Kbps; downloading speed is usually 1500 Kbps (1.5 Mbps). Speeds will vary according to peak usage times. A DSL line allows the computer to use the phone line, but does not tie it up while the computer is online. CAUTION - You need to remember that your computer is ALWAYS connected online as soon as it is powered on. That is, of course, as long as the DSL modem is powered on. Turning it OFF will close the online connection. A Firewall is a MUST for DSL access. Typical cost for DSL can be around $50 to $65 a month. Currently SBC Yahoo DSL has a special offer for a one (1) year commitment for $26.95 a month, when you do online signup. Beware - they charge $200.00 if you do an early cancellation. After the first year the monthly charge becomes $49.95.

http://www.sbc.com/

The uploading speed is usually 256 Kbps and downloading speed is usually around 3000 Kbps (3.0 Mbps). Again, speeds will vary according to peak usage times. This service is provided by the local cable TV companies. Special pricing usually applies when you subscribe to more than just the Internet access and typical costs can be around $29.95 a month up to around $45 a month. SAVE yourself rental fees of usually $10.00 a month on the cable modem and purchase one of your own. Check pricing at http://www.pricewatch.com or go to http://www.pricegrabber.com

**SATELLITE**. Dish TV Network, Direct TV. Usually uses phone line access for uploading and satellite downloading. Check your local telephone book for the number of local providers that also do installation and compare prices. Speed of downloading is usually very fast, but phone line uploading is quite slow. Pricing varies widely. This is also an ALWAYS on connection.

**WIRELESS.** There are many wireless Internet providers all around the U.S. You must be located within their Radio Signal Footprint for service. Uploading and downloading speeds at various rates are available with pricing determined by the speed. Usually the maximum will be around 1.5 Mbps. This is also an ALWAYS on connection. Check the local telephone pages for the number of a local provider.

**WORLD WIDE WEB.** The Internet consists of millions of computers interconnected around the world. There are a number of Internet browser's available for viewing the Web. Popular ones include Internet Explorer, Netscape, Opera and...
Mozilla, for use with Windows PC operating systems. The purpose of a browser is to convert the HTML language of Web site programming into the graphical presentation you see on your monitor and interact with. Surfing the Web means you are going from one Web site location to another, or several others. The Homepage is the initial screen page you see at a Web site. Your computer has a History folder where a listing of ALL Web sites you ever visited will be stored (unless you set your History folder to delete the web site information after a certain number of days). There is also a Favorites (or Bookmarks) folder where you can store Web site addresses for future visits; it provides a quick return process. Every computer connected to the Internet has an IP address. Sometimes it will remain the same number and then there are ISPs that issue a different IP address number every time you get on the Internet. This is why a Firewall is an absolute MUST with ALWAYS on access.

**COOKIES** are a tool used by some Web sites to store information on your hard drive without you knowing it. They are used to keep track of the Web pages that you visit on a particular Web site. With this information, the owners of the Web site can then target you for specific forms of marketing.

"...A computer infestation is any unwanted program that is transmitted to a computer without the knowledge of the user or owner, and is designed to do varying degrees of damage to data and software...."

Many people consider them an invasion of their privacy. You have the choice to set your Security Options to accept, disable, or require your approval before a cookie can be stored on your computer. Your Web Browser will usually offer this configuration control. Refusal to accept the cookies will, however, more than likely keep you from being able to view many of the Web site locations.

**UTILITY PROGRAMS.** There are several types of utility programs that are designed to clean out some of the folders in your computer when they become stuffed with various items of information from the Web sites you have visited. A Cookie removal program is a very popular utility program. There also is a folder called Temporary Internet Files on your computer. Many Web sites will put some form of data there as well, again, without your knowledge. Not to worry, there are utility programs that will clean out this area also.

**WEB SITE ADDRESSES.** There are two types of addresses for every Web site. One is called the URL (an acronym for Universal Resource Locator), such as..."
The Internet, cont.

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http://www.sears.com, and the other is the associated IP address (Internet Protocol), such as 255.36.245.15. The address box of a Web browser will find the Web site using either of these addressing formats.

**NETWORK SECURITY.**

Never (repeat) NEVER give out your Social Security Number over the Internet. It is just too risky to do this on a form at a Web site or in an email message you might send. Theft of your identity could very well result from this mistake. It has actually happened to many people. A Firewall program (software) will allow you to completely shut off access into your computer over the Internet. What access do I speak of? Did you know that your computer has exactly 65,535 revolving doorways that are just waiting for someone to slip in without your awareness? This is how a computer Hacker can gain access into your computer and you will usually NEVER know that it is happening. These revolving doorways are referred to as PORTS. Anytime your computer is active on the Internet, it is sitting on the 'net with all of these pathways available to anyone who knows how to utilize the entry method. There are lists available that include all of these Ports and show their common (legal) usage and their abnormal (illegal) usage by Hackers. These "Back Door" entries will allow someone to gain full access to any and ALL data you have stored ANYWHERE on your hard drive. That includes EVERY folder and file you have on the drive. Ever order anything on the Web and type out a credit card number for payment? That is something a Hacker can track down and view whenever they want to. Full REMOTE CONTROL of your computer is even a possibility for the smarter Hackers lurking on the Internet. They can also track your every keystroke, entry of passwords or anything else you type in. You should use extreme care when you put personal data into the PC, and then have that computer connected to the Internet.

Ever hear the old saying "Two Heads are Better Than One"? Well, with today's lowered costs of buying a very capable basic computers, it just might just well be a consideration to have two computers for your home computing experiences. Keep one for personal data and document preparations, etc, that is NEVER used to access the Internet.

**FREE FIREWALL.** Software is available on the Internet: http://www.zonelabs.com Stop the Crackers from invading your computer looking for personal information.

**VIRUSES.** A computer infestation is any unwanted program that is transmitted to a computer without the knowledge of the user or

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The Internet, cont.

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owner, and is designed to do varying degrees of damage to data and software. A virus is a program written to potentially do harm to someone’s computer. They normally do not do physical damage to the computer. Usually the worst scenario is that the Boot Sector of the hard disk will be corrupted by the virus and the computer will be unable to be used at all, until a new hard drive is installed to replace the defective one.

THERE ARE FOUR MAIN FORMS OF INFESTATIONS that exist today: Viruses, Trojan Horses, Worms and Logic Bombs. Viruses are the most common of the four. SO...it is of UTMOST IMPORTANCE that all users of a computer install and maintain anti-virus software. These are designed to discover and remove a virus. There are several forms of viruses: Boot Sector, File, Multipartite, Polymorphic, Encrypting and Stealth. Anti-virus software attempts to detect a known virus by looking for their distinguishing pattern that is called the Virus Signature. Virtually EVERY DAY, more new viruses are uploaded to the Internet. The anti-virus companies find them and dissect them to discover their signature. Then they publish the UPDATE to their PATTERN FILE on their Web site and this is available for the owners of that anti-virus software to download into their anti-virus folder. Then the updated program can be on full alert to detect any of the newest viruses running around the Internet. So, EVERYDAY DO YOUR UPDATE! These anti-virus companies usually include one full year of updates with the initial sale. BE SURE AND DO A RENEWAL OF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION for Updates.

VIRUSES...THE MAIN ROUTE INTO A COMPUTER:

For a virus, it can be with an EMAIL ATTACHMENT. Another method is on a Floppy Disk someone gives you that you then open from the diskette drive onto your Hard Disk. ALWAYS do a virus scan of ALL disks you place into your floppy drive BEFORE installing or opening anything onto the Hard Drive.

Virus Scanning software takes a look at ALL of the email coming into and going out of your computer, to see if it detects a virus. The virus in an email will HIDE INSIDE AN ATTACHMENT. NEVER OPEN AN EMAIL ATTACHMENT...PERIOD! until the anti-virus program has inspected the email, and then it is still NOT a good idea to open any attachments. It could have a BRAND NEW virus attached that has NOT yet been included in the latest updated Pattern File you installed earlier in the day.

People can send out an email with a virus in their attachment and never know they sent it. It is very, very risky to open any email at-

...To find out if A VIRUS NOTICE YOU JUST RECEIVED IS REAL OR A HOAX, there are Web sites you can check to become properly informed....”

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Can you really buy popular “software at rock bottom prices” online?

By Linda Gonse
Editor of Nibbles & Bits, Orange County IBM PC Users’ Group, California

Probably you, and millions of others, have received e-mail offers with subject lines similar to these:

* Unbeatable software deals
* Amazing prices on software
* Take 95% discounts on Adobe, Microsoft, Corel products from Putnam’s Stuff Store
* Receive discount ticket on Corel, Adobe, Microsoft software from Koenig’s Stuff Store
* Get software at rock bottom prices

What's more you may have seriously considered purchasing the programs described in the e-mails at prices that you've only seen in your dreams. Here's an example in one message:

These amazing prices are not legitimate. They represent the work of software pirates who are trolling for customers, or illegal sales. Do not take the offers at face value. Stop and ask yourself how it is possible for programs that sell for hundreds of dollars to be discounted for a fraction of their usual retail cost. Certainly, these products are not even selling at wholesale, much less for these unbelievable prices. And, if the companies did offer programs at these prices, you would be reading about it in your newspaper, or hearing about it on television or radio, or in your user group. A Washington Post article said, "The U.S. software industry loses at least $13 billion a year to piracy, according to the Business Software Alliance (BSA) estimates. The group, which represents some of the world's largest software companies, including Microsoft, Adobe and Autodesk, does not know how much money the industry has lost to online piracy."

Still, user confusion about piracy prevails. Microsoft, attempting to educate software buyers, has posted a document that points out warning signs of counterfeit or illegal software.

**Microsoft's warning signs of counterfeit or illegal software:**

* Prices that are "too good to be true."
* Products that are missing key elements such as user manuals, Certificates of Authenticity, or end-user license agreements. Pirates (Continued on page 19)
Can you really buy popular “software at rock bottom prices” online?, cont.

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often sell only the CD-ROM and jewel case without retail packaging. Look for the Certificate of Authenticity on the retail box.

On all new machines, with the release of Windows 2000, the COA label is found on the tower of the computer. If you acquire a new computer and it doesn't have the COA label on the tower, you should question whether the software loaded on the machine is genuine.

Software or components that appear to be of poor quality including:

**Back-up disks or CD-ROMs with handwritten labels.

**Poor imitations of security features such as edge-to-edge hologram etched into Windows 2000 and Office 2000 (first service release) CDs, or poor imitations of the hologram found on the hub of the Windows 98 CD that shows the word "genuine" when tilted in the light

**Low quality print, letters that aren't evenly spaced, etc.

**Products marked with phrases that do not describe the transaction, including:

"For distribution with a new PC only"

"Special CD for licensed customers only"

"Not for retail or OEM distribution" or "Academic price - not for use in a commercial environment"

Note that counterfeiters often use these types of phrases to fool consumers into believing that they are getting genuine product that was over-stocked or otherwise deserves to be discounted.

Consumers dealing with software vendors over the Internet should also beware of:

**Companies or individuals unwilling to verify their identity or full business name or provide a physical street address and telephone number for follow-up after the transaction has occurred.

**Online distributors unwilling or unable to provide adequate or satisfactory descriptions of their return, service or warranty policies.

**Online distributors that offer unusual inventory explanations (e.g., special deals with the software publisher, liquidated inventories or acquisition through bankruptcy sales).

**Vendors offering software products at prices and in packaging inconsistent with offerings through legitimate retail channels.

**For Microsoft software, software components being sold solely as a CD housed in a jewel case or as a loose or individual end-user license agreement, because these items are not distributed in this form through legitimate channels.

Save your money and your time when you receive "rock bottom" software offers. There are no unbelievable "deals" out there on name-brand software.

Let this be your guiding mantra: If it sounds too good to be true-on this you can rely-just walk away and say no, you can't buy!

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.
So many articles I’ve seen lately have been about robotics---it’s the newest hot topic. Last month's Technology Review and this month’s Wired magazine have articles on robotics. When I see the Roomba vacuuming a house automatically on TV it reminds me of The Jetsons cartoon series where the home of the future is all automated and housework is a thing of the past. Many of the cartoons I remember as a kid were about automated houses that went crazy and started to attack the cat or the dog: its robots would come out and start sweeping or vacuuming at the slightest indication of dirt. As computers become more powerful, who knows what timesaving devices may be invented?

In the Technology Review article, the author makes a prediction that robotics will take off the way computers took off ten years ago. The more powerful computers we have today will be the brains for this new class of servants. These robots may not look like the anthropomorphic types we see in movies and TV. Many may just be simple-looking box-shaped machines (like the Roomba) with one specific job. But some will certainly be more complex with a multitude of functions and a human-like shape.

Honda has recently been advertising a robot that is complex and can do many things.

Robots have been used in manufacturing for quite a while now. One of the reasons we Americans fell behind the Japanese in the auto industry is because they had the largest number of automobile plant robots in the world. Part of the future mechanization of our manufacturing plants will be heavily dependent on robots. The computing power of the latest CPU chips is in the trillions of operations per second. In ten years we will no doubt have plenty of chip-powered intelligence to drive robots to unprecedented capabilities.

Isaac Asimov wrote I, Robot in the 1950s and there is a current film with the same name starring Will Smith. With these stories always comes the fear of artificial intelligence and whether it may someday have the ability to take control from humans.

This is a recurrent theme in everything from 2001: A Space Odyssey with the computer Hal, to the current I, Robot. This fear of our inventions taking over may not be as important as how we feel about the egos of those who use the technology.

I recently read about some robotic legs which could give the wearer the ability to carry a much larger load in battle, similar to a pair of bionic legs from The Six-Million Dollar Man TV show. How long will it be before...

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Computers Expanding the Use of Robots, cont.

(Continued from page 20) robots fight it out as seen in the movie The Terminator? There are probably many battlefield applications for robots and many are probably already in the making.

The real problem is not the artificial intelligence but the human intelligence behind it, directing robots to do good or evil. I hope that like the computer, robots will become powerful tools for the benefit of all mankind.

My first thought after reading many of these articles is that this would be a great time to invest in this fledgling science. In the movie Frequency, Dennis Quaid plays a character that goes back in time to change his past. While he is there he mentions one word to his friend. When he gets back to the present he runs into this friend who remembered the word and is now rich and has the word, Yahoo, on the license plate of his Mercedes. How many of us would like to know what the next big investment is going to be?

Maybe in the future, one of us will be driving that Mercedes around with "robots" written on our license plate!

The Internet, cont.

(Continued from page 17) attachments.

SET A PATTERN for yourself where you do the update check for your anti-virus program FIRST THING EVERY MORNING. Then go ahead and DOWNLOAD your email.

To find out if A VIRUS NOTICE YOU JUST RECEIVED IS REAL OR A HOAX, there are Web sites you can check to become properly informed. Here are just a few:

http://www.hoaxbusters.org
http://www.hoaxinfo.com

http://www.viruslist.com
http://www.vmyths.com

ONLINE FREE VIRUS SCANNERS. There are several anti-virus software companies that provide FREE online virus scanning. Here are just a few:

http://www.housecall.antivirus.com
(Trend Micro)

http://www.ravantivirus.com.scan
(RAV Antivirus)

http://www.grisoft.com
(AVG Antivirus)

http://www.pandasoftware.com/activescan
(Panda Software)

If you have any questions or inquiries, please contact me through my Web site:

http://www.ez4ucomputerclasses.com

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.
The General Membership meeting will be a presentation of Blue Squirrel Software. The presentation will be an overview of some of the 15 innovative software titles of Blue Squirrel.

- **ClickBook** is a powerful easy to use printing utility that lets you print and customize day planner pages, wallet photos, brochures, greeting cards, catalogs, microfiche and more.
- **SpamSleuth** is a spam filter that analyzes and monitors email for spam and virus characteristics.
- **Click2PDF** - Create PDF’s files that can be opened and viewed across a broad range of software and operating systems.
- **WebWhacker** is the first offline browser. You can archive information online or quickly burn Web Sites onto CD-ROMs.
- **WebSeeker**, makes searching the web simpler and with optimum search results.
- **BlueSync** does a full synchronization with a directory on your PC.
- **Snapture** transfers text from your PC to your Palm.

Discard your CDs, DVDs and floppys?

You probably haven’t thought about a potential problem of just throwing your back-up CDs into the trash. What kind of information have you placed on the CDs? It must have been important, or you wouldn’t have taken the time to burn the CD in the first place. Personal or financial data? I’m sure that you don’t throw your credit cards in the trash. Don’t just discard your sensitive CDs, credit cards, floppy disks, etc.

Besides a low tech pair of tin snips to make them useless, you may opt for an electric powered DVD/CD shredder. This will give you tremendous head start in bragging rights with your friends: [http://www.aleratec.com](http://www.aleratec.com)

Editor’s note: The following background information is from the company’s web site: [http://www.bluesquirrel.com/about_us.html](http://www.bluesquirrel.com/about_us.html)

Blue Squirrel has been developing and selling software since 1995. The original product was SQURL (Search and Query URL’s) which has now been succeeded by WebSeeker. In early 1996, Grab-a-Site and the Internet Automation System was released. In March of 1996, Blue Squirrel was acquired by The ForeFront Group, Inc. (NASDAQ: FFGI) and in 1997 became ForeFront's Internet Content Management Division responsible for development of ForeFront's entire line of Internet and Content Management products, including WebSeeker, WebWhacker, and ClickBook. In June of 2000, Blue Squirrel was spun off into an independent company. Blue Squirrel now develops and sells more than 15 innovative software titles over the Internet and through a variety of distributors and resellers around the world.
For those of you that require personal educational assistance, the Club’s program of one-on-one tutoring has been made an ongoing offering to Club members. Our tutors will come to Club members homes for a two hour session. The member donates $20.00 to the Club.

The following subjects have tutors:

**Access:**
Les Lewis, 896-2291
e-mail: les.lewis@myacacc.org

**Basic Internet Access:**
Les Lewis, 896-2291
e-mail: les.lewis@myacacc.org
Carl Minnich, 270-9634,
e-mail: carl.minnich@myscacc.org

**Excel:**
Herb Alloway, 269-0490
e-mail: herb.alloway@myscacc.org
Les Lewis, 896-2291
e-mail: les.lewis@myacacc.org
Cheryl Thode, 617-0907
e-mail: cheryl.thode@myscacc.org

**Adobe Reader installation without download for dial up users**
Chuck Davis, 614-3107
e-mail: chuck.davis@myscacc.org

**Macintosh OS:**
Dick Cancellier, 897-8875,
e-mail: dick.cancellier@myscacc.org
Bob Mitchell, 277-0421
e-mail: bob.mitchell@myscacc.org

**Mouse & Keyboard:**
Chuck Davis, 614-3107 e-mail: chuck.davis@myscacc.org
Les Lewis, 896-2291
e-mail: les.lewis@myacacc.org

**Outlook** — Chuck Davis, 614-3107
e-mail: chuck.davis@myscacc.org

**PowerPoint**
Les Lewis, 896-2291
e-mail: les.lewis@myacacc.org

**Publisher:**
Chuck Davis, 614-3107
e-mail: chuck.davis@myscacc.org

**QuickBooks Pro:**
Chuck Davis, 614-3107
e-mail: chuck.davis@myscacc.org

**Software Installation:**
Bob Brill, 897-9344
e-mail: bob.brill@myscacc.org

**Spreadsheets:**
Bob Brill, 897-9344
e-mail: bob.brill@myscacc.org
Les Lewis, 896-2291
e-mail: les.lewis@myacacc.org

**Word:**
Cheryl Thode, 617-0907,
e-mail: cheryl.thode@myscacc.org
Chuck Davis, 614-3107
e-mail: chuck.davis@myscacc.org
Les Lewis, 896-2291
e-mail: les.lewis@myacacc.org

**WordPerfect** — Bob Brill, 897-9344
e-mail: bob.brill@myscacc.org

John Apple will help members set up their computers, John Apple, 616-3938 — e-mail: john.apple@myscacc.org

Please e-mail or call the instructors for appointments.

As usual, the Club requires all payments in the form of checks. Payable to: SCACC.

Take advantage of these unbelievable services for a minimal investment! Our volunteers wish to help others become more comfortable in their use of their computers.