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CONGRATULATIONS to our AWARD WINNING MBUG-PC VIDEO TEAM!



Read all about our very own Team winning two prizes at the Annual Edgar Kennedy Awards (page 8)!

Your PC Problems Solved by the Experts

OK, now's your big chance to ask the experts and share your secrets about your personal computer problems and solutions — big or small, complicated or basic, technical or spiritual! On Friday April 7, our panel of advisors and professional computer consultants, **Jim Anway**, **Joe Asling**, **Star Reiersen**, **Clive Sanders**, and **Bob Shanteau**, will make themselves available to explore the mysteries, delights and frustrations of: **Adobe Encore**, **Photoshop**, or **Premier**; DSL cable connection and access; e-mail; **eTrust**; **Microsoft Excel**, **PowerPoint**, **Quattro Pro**, **Windows (XP, ME, 2000, 98SE, 98)**, **Word**, or **WordPerfect**); **Fedora**; **HDTV**; **Linux**; **Mozilla**; the Internet (browsing, security, where to get definitions, and answers about hardware or software); building, maintaining and enhancing the performance of your computer; backing up, storing and erasing data; firewalls; viruses and anti-virus programs; spam; recording DVDs; producing and editing movies; using digital cameras; and *so* much more.

Need to find out how to get your program to do something but don't know the commands? Have a question about hardware or software? Got a problem right now that you can't solve because you don't know how to describe it? Want to know more about hooking up your TV, video or digital camera to your computer? This is the workshop for you.

Remember — at MBUG there is no such thing as a stupid question! We all started from scratch and we're all here to help each other learn. This is a nice friendly discussion among friends. And if you just discovered how to fix or do something or you know of a great website that more people ought to visit and you want to share, bring that along too.

Questions? Contact: Jim (831) 625-5618 Anway@comcast.net; Joe 641-9560 jasling@pacbell.net; Star 373-3919 star@computerpowerstar.com, Clive 375-5376 simbacli@pacbell.net; or Bob 394-9420 shanteau@iname.com◆

FRIDAY, April 7, 2006 at 7pm

Pacific Grove Adult Education Center

1025 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove

FREE, educational and always interesting!

Friendly, helpful people and darn good coffee!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THESE GREAT MBUG-PC POSITIONS!

Program Chair

Find and schedule First Friday General Meeting Guest Speakers.

Publicity Chair

Publicize MBUG in local publications and to members on the Listserv.

Workshop /SIG Leaders

Share your knowledge: run workshops or Special Interest Groups monthly/bi-monthly/quarterly

Meeting Reviewers

Attend General Meetings (or any other ongoing workshops) and write 500-word-or-less reviews.

Hospitality

Provide coffee service at First Friday General Meetings
(store equipment and supplies, bring the needful and set up for coffee and goodies).

E-mail or call Vice-President **Don Slaiter** at slaiter@pacbell.net ☎ (831) 655-4443 and 657-4154

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SUBSCRIPTION: See back cover for rates. (Subscription is not tax deductible). **NEWSLETTER AD RATES:** Special rate for local business card ads (approximately 1/10 page) is \$30.00 for 6 issues or \$50.00 for 12 issues. Full and partial page ad rates are available upon request. MBUG will publish at no charge classified ads for individual subscribers who have computer hardware or software for private sale. Advertising information contact: Regina at ReginaDoyle@aol.com.

MBUG-PC benefits: Computer Help, the Newsletter and 15 - 20% Discount on Computer Books at Borders and Waldenbooks with MBUG-PC Membership Card (see Don Slaiter for card).

CAROLYN'S VIEWPOINT

photo: Bill Hyley, MBUG-PC

Carolyn Lake
President



FEEDBACK NEEDED

Your Board of Directors has a number of questions on which we need your input; here is a chance for members to make their interests known.

MBUG has had three successful potluck barbeque picnics in cooperation with Club MAC members: two were held outdoors at Indian Village and one in the patio/auditorium area at Canterbury Woods in Pacific Grove. Last year, we planned another Indian Village event, which was cancelled due to low reservations. We need to know if this is an event of any interest to the membership. Unless we get a strong, positive response, we will cease and desist—and not attempt to hold a picnic this year. The picnics are purely social get-togethers, held on a Saturday, for which a small fee is charged and barbeque and beverages are supplied; members bring themselves, family, friends, and a potluck dish.

At each of its meetings, the Board works on ideas and speakers for general meetings and workshops; our goal, not totally met, is always to have a 3-month calendar mapped out. We think we have had some successful ideas and have had some fine meetings, but not all have attracted the member attendance we would like to see. So of course, we are always asking ourselves, "What do members want?" Please! Speak up! Let us know! Do you know that anyone is welcome to attend our Board meetings and participate in discussion? See the inside back cover for meeting dates and location.

Another major area in which we need your input is in supporting the key volunteer activities that make MBUG work. We have a small Board of eight people; the hats are stacking up on our heads, and we could use assistance with some of the operations. There are several opportunities to volunteer a few hours a month, working along with another Board member as an assistant. Training and direction provided as needed! ♦ lakelyn@ix.netcom.com

Detach and Bring to any MBUG Meeting or Mail to:

MBUG, PO Box 51611, Pacific Grove, CA 93950
Or e-mail comments to: lakelyn@ix.netcom.com

1. MBUG Annual Picnic/Barbeque

- Yes, let's do it
I prefer: outdoors indoors
June July August
 No, not interested

2. Programs and Workshops

The operating system(s) I use most often is/are:

- Windows XP
 Windows 2000 or Windows ME
 Windows 98/98SE
 Unix or Linux
Other: _____

I want to have general speakers or workshops on:

- Computer security and backup
 Hardware maintenance
 How to build a PC
 Word processing with WordPerfect
 Word processing with MS Word
 Spreadsheets: Excel Other: _____
 How to use web mail
 E-mail programs: Outlook Eudora
Other e-mail: _____
 File management, finding folders & files
 Adobe Photoshop/Photoshop Elements
 Other Adobe software: _____
 Making videos and movies
 Wireless technology
Other: _____

3. Volunteer Opportunities

I would like to assist a Board Member; contact me

Name _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

about:

- Workshop planning
 General meeting planning
 Publicity releases
 Writing meeting reviews
 Being a Newsletter contributor
 Hospitality team
Other: _____



THINGS, THINGLETS & THINGASSOS

S. Jack Lewtschuk
MBUG-PC
Columnist



photo: R. Binsacca, MBUG-PC

ALL ABOUT PHARMING

We know about “phishing.” Basically, it’s a way for unscrupulous thieves to steal your identity. They send you an e-mail that includes a link to a bogus site that asks you to type in your personal information. Keeping yourself safe from phishing is simple: never ever click a link in your e-mail that asks for any personal information. If you are a **PayPal** or **eBay** member for example and you get an e-mail that seems to be from them, *don’t* click the link in the e-mail. Take the three extra seconds to open up a new browser window and type in www.paypal.com or www.ebay.com directly into the address bar.

Avoiding the above form of identity theft is easy. However, there’s a new type of attack that’s more complex. A term called “pharming” describes the new way to trick you into providing personal information. Pharming is another name for something that’s been around for a while called “domain spoofing.” Instead of sending an e-mail, “pharmers” attack a fundamental piece of the Internet called “domain name servers” (DNS).

To understand pharming, you need understand a bit about DNS. Basically, the Internet is made up of numbers, not names, to describe the location of Web sites. So a site called www.mywebsite.com might really be 64.85.12.12. Domain name servers sit out there and, by accessing large databases of sites, they translate the text you type into the numbers the Internet needs to take you to the site you requested.

Unfortunately DNS is a weak link to your computer because a number of years ago hackers figured out how to “poison” DNS and change the records of certain sites. The hackers pretend to have authority to change the destination of a Web address. If they do this to an information site, it’s really not a

big deal as far as identity theft is concerned. But if they do it to a banking or other financial site, it becomes a really big deal.

The scary reality of pharming is that even if you were to type in www.mybank.com into your browser’s address bar, you could be taken to a site that *looks* like mybank.com, but really is not. However, by paying close attention you can keep yourself safe. Any reputable banking or e-commerce site has a security certificate (SSL certificate) from an authority such as **Verisign** or **Thawte**. That’s what gives you the little icon that looks like a lock or <https://> in the address bar. A pharmed site won’t have a valid certificate.

So you want to make sure your Web browser checks for a valid SSL certificate every time you go to a banking site. To do this you need to set some options on your computer. In “Internet Explorer,” choose “Tools,” and “Internet Options.” In the “Advanced” tab, look under the “Security” section. Add check marks next to: “Check for publisher’s certificate revocation,” “Check for server certificate revocation,” “Use SSL 3.0,” and “Warn about invalid site certificates.”

Sure, people are working on making DNS more secure, but the criminals are working just as hard on ways to defeat new security. So when you surf, always pay attention. If something looks a little “off” with a site, it may be off, so exercise caution before providing any important information.

INTERNET FINDING FEW NEWCOMERS IN 2006 *Study Finds Substantial Barriers Exist to Luring Late Adopters to the Internet*

(Dateline: Friday, 24 February 2006)

A new study from **Parks Associates** has found few new households willing to subscribe to Internet services, which will limit 2006 growth in overall Internet penetration to one percent, rising from 63 percent to 64 percent by year’s end.

According to **The National Technology Scan** (2005), in a survey of 1,000 US homes, there are currently 39 million homes without Internet access and among these only eight million own a computer — an obvious prerequisite for Internet adoption. Moreover, the majority of these PC households will not subscribe to an Internet service at any cost.

The study found only two million offline homes are planning to get Internet service in 2006. Another 300,000 homes said they might subscribe if offered a cheaper service. At the same time, 14 million US households do not have Internet service at home but access the Web at work or other locations, such as a library or an Internet cafe.

“We are clearly facing a problem of demand, not supply,” said **John Barrett**, director of research at Parks Associates. *“Computers and Internet service have never been cheaper, yet many households still show little enthusiasm for the technology.”*

Reasons given for this lack of interest vary. Among households that will not subscribe to an Internet service at any price, 31 percent said having access at work is sufficient for their Internet needs. Another 18 percent simply claimed, *“I am not interested in anything on the Internet.”* Thirty-nine percent of households cited “other” reasons for their lack of interest. *“We present them with several possible reasons, and their response is typically ‘none of the above,’”* Barrett said. ♦ blacklion@royal.net

DRIVING THE FRONTSIDE BUS

 **Jim
Hinwood**
Columnist



photo: Bill Hyster, MBUG-PC

ATI VS NVIDIA

The **nVIDIA GeForce 2ti** was my first computer graphics card. The gaming fever had captured my son and me — up until that time we had been using a computer with integrated graphics (built into the motherboard). We had been enjoying numerous types of games but started having problems with halting, surging and poor running. I looked into what was wrong and realized we didn’t have enough graphics power to run the latest and best games. So I began to track what was happening in the GPU (Graphics Processing Unit) or “video/graphics card” market.

Having a “dedicated” graphics card is like having another computer inside

your computer dedicated solely to running video/graphics without sapping the rest of your resources. I bought my GeForce 2ti graphics card as nVIDIA was at the top of the performance heap at the time and **ATI** was only competitive in the very low-price market. nVIDIA and ATI are the two major players in the GPU market, with others such as **Intel, 3Dlabs, Matrox** etc., taking smaller shares. **nVidia’s GeForce 2, 3 and 4** series were performance leaders for a time, but in July 2002 ATI came out with the **Radeon 9700** for \$399, claiming it was twice as powerful as any other card. In reality it had closer to a 28 percent power increase, but at almost one-third more than everybody else, it was huge at the time.

This was the start of ATI’s turnaround — the next two years saw a string of failures by nVIDIA and “end zone spikes” by ATI. nVIDIA’s **FX** GPUs were not what they had hoped for due to heat problems — they kept ramping up clock speeds with resultant increases in heat and power requirements. Their graphics cards were so wide that they took up two slots, needed a larger power supply, and required cooling fans which were deafening.

In comparison, ATI’s 9700 and 9800 took one slot, didn’t need a power supply upgrade, and still outperformed nVIDIA. They took a different approach by widening the pathways between the chip and local memory — imagine a water pipe through which you need to get more and more water; if you increase the pressure of the water higher and higher, the pipe will eventually burst. The alternative is to expand the width of the pipe so as to get twice the water with the same amount of pressure. ATI’s solution was

Guest Speaker **Sirie Thongchua, eBay Trained Education Specialist** gave a well-attended talk at the MBUG General Meeting in February on buying and selling on the world’s most popular online auction. If you missed this event, call Sirie for one-on-one eBay coaching at siriet@yahoo.com.



photos: Bill Hyster, MBUG-PC

to “widen the pipe” rather than “increase the pressure.”

In much the same way that **Intel** ran up against heat problems with the **Pentium 4** (see *AMDs Visionary Gamble*, **MBUG-PC Newsletter**, March 2006, page 4), nVIDIA had problems with the **FX 5800**. While nVIDIA looked for solutions to their problems, ATI extended their dominance taking over the mid-range graphic cards too, with their **9600** and **9200**.

For two years ATI retained the performance crown until nVIDIA took it back with the **GeForce 6800**. They also came out with the **6600**, seriously reducing ATI’s hold over mid-price range GPUs (the \$149 to \$249 price range is the most important for manufacturers as this is where most of their money is made). The 6600 began to regain nVIDIA’s market share, and their **6000** and **7000** series kept them on top until recently when ATI came out with the **X1900** series. If all these numbers seem confusing, you’re not alone—every time a simple numbering system comes out they change it to make the new generation sound more innovative and powerful! There are “generations” of graphics cards and each generational series can make or break market share. If they hit a stumbling block they fall behind and when they have a technological breakthrough they leap ahead.

Top video cards are very expensive but are usually followed by “streamlined” versions for the all-important mid-range price market. The top-end cards are for slaving gamers and those who merely want bragging rights. Most people don’t need this kind of performance (or price). Right now the

top card is the **Radeon X1900 XTX** (which sells for \$650), and has put ATI back on top. If you want to go **SLI** (Scalable Link Interface, which links two graphics cards together for double the performance — or 1.8 times according to nVIDIA), you’re looking at an obscene \$1,300 just for the video card alone! This is a rarified market and most of us are content to wait until the price comes down to a reasonable level.

Last month I talked about a historic reversal, with AMD taking a dominant position in the CPU (Central Processing Unit) market. The GPU market is even more volatile — I’ve seen three major reversals besides the usual back and forth with each release of a new generational card. ATI and nVIDIA have been more evenly matched opponents than AMD and Intel. nVIDIA has also had the advantage of making the best motherboard chipsets as well, which may have given them more capital to work with (although I haven’t seen any figures on this).

Having had GPU cards from both companies, the better experience for me has been with nVIDIA. The drivers have been better and I have experienced no problems. With ATI I’ve had “buggy” drivers and consistent problems from the start, beginning with the remote control for my **All-In-Wonder** card. The biggest deal-breaker with ATI for me was their phone support — the only time I called them I was put on hold for half an hour long distance to Canada. When I asked for a toll-free number they said “no” (which I couldn’t believe), and the guy acted like I was a lunatic for asking! I figured that two such tech support phone calls would cost more than the card. When I went online I found chat

rooms with nothing but obscene rants about ATI and their execrable card. I haven’t seen rants like that ever, but I guess frustration and hours on hold to Canada will drive some to madness (I still visit those chat rooms — some very funny stuff in there, and some certifiable people). I’ve decided that next time I will probably buy nVIDIA!

Here’s a list of equivalent cards so you can make comparisons:

Card Generations

■ **ATI** Radeon 7/8/9000 Series, Radeon X Series, Radeon X1000 Series

■ **nVIDIA** GeForce including GeForce2,3, & 4 series, GeForce FX Series, GeForce 6 Series, GeForce 7 Series

Low-End (*fine for multimedia and light 3D*)

■ ATI X300 = nVIDIA 6200
■ ATI X1300 = nVIDIA 7300

Mid-Range (*can play games at medium settings but with low performance*)

■ ATI X600 = nVIDIA 6400
■ ATI X1400 = nVIDIA 7400

Performance (*good for gamers; plays the latest games at high level*)

■ ATI X700 = nVIDIA 6600
■ ATI X1600 = nVIDIA 7600

High-End (*for games at maximum settings with top performance but needs heavy cooling*)

■ ATI X800 = nVIDIA 6800
■ ATI X800XT = nVIDIA 6800 Ultra = nVIDIA 7800
■ ATI X1800PRO = nVIDIA 7800GTX

◆ ehinwood@msn.com

[Next Month: An Intel Update]

VIDEO

PRODUCTION



by **Joseph Asling**
MBUG Video Project
Coordinator

So, You Wanna Make a DVD?

photos: Bill Haylor, MBUG-PC

Until now I have scrupulously avoided any mention of making video DVDs. That's because it is a subject fraught with more confusion than any other aspect of video production. But I'm working on a book review of *Encore, Adobe's DVD authoring program*, so I guess I have to let the cat out of this bag of worms. This month I put on my techie hat (the one with the propeller on top), and discuss what makes DVDs difficult and frustrating.

Bytes and Bits

When abbreviating "Bytes" I use a capital B, and "bits" a small b. One Byte is, of course, 8 bits (although because of overhead, a 100mB file may not be exactly 800 mb). Now, although 1 kilometer is 1,000 meters, 1 kB is not 1,000 Bytes. It is actually $2^{10} = 1024$ Bytes. A single-sided DVD is said to hold 4.7 gB. But if you calculate it exponentially you end up with 4.37 "true" gigaBytes. Few programs or descriptions will tell you which system they are using, so you just have to remember that it's a source of confusion when trying to fit your files on a DVD. Trial and error is the method that works best for me.

The Nature of Video Files

In a computer, we usually work with .AVI files (Apple Quick Time files, with a .mov extension, are similar). Digital videocams compress video and audio data to about 3.5 mB/sec (that's megaBytes) by a process something like .jpg compression. If you capture VHS or 8mm analog video, the computer compresses and digitizes the files during capture. Each frame is compressed independently by removing color and other information which your eye doesn't see anyway (supposedly). Since each frame is independent, computer editing is relatively easy.

DVDs use MPEG-2. Only 2 frames per second are complete frames (called "I" frames). The others ("P" and "B" frames) contain only the changes from prior and subsequent frames. (In case you care, the entire 15-frame set is called a "GOP.") Hence it's more difficult for a computer editing program to cut an MPEG file on a specific frame than an .avi file. DVD MPEG-2 files run at up to 8 mb/sec (that's megabits), about 1/5 as fast as .avi files. I say "up to" because you can choose the rate. The lower the rate, the smaller the file and the more video you can fit on a DVD. The trade-off is loss of quality (more about this in a future article).

DVD Hardware and Software

There are several types of video DVDs. Making commercial DVDs requires expensive equipment. Home DVDs come in two flavors: DVD+R and DVD-R. Most modern DVD burners handle both types, and I recommend having such a burner (i.e., one which burns both type of DVDs). If you don't have one in your PC already, you can buy a no-name for about \$40, or you can buy a **Plextor** (the **Cadillac** of burners) on the Internet for about \$120. The Plextor can handle discs which the "el cheapo" makes into coasters. If you buy an internal burner, make sure whether you need an IDE or a SATA drive. If you don't want to play with screws and cables, buy an external burner (\$140 at **Costco**) and connect it to your USB2 port.

Basic **Windows**, even **XP**, can't play DVDs! You need a software program to do this. This software comes with your DVD burner, or you can buy a fancier player; all of them contain the codec which plays DVD files on your monitor. If you buy a new PC, especially a "media" one, it'll have DVD player software already.

Eventually, you will want to play your DVD on a TV. Here's another "gotcha": some set-top DVD players play DVD+R discs, some play DVD-R, many play both, and a few play neither! The way to find out is – yep, trial and error. There are "religious wars" about whether +R or -R is more compatible, and there is even a faction which says the *brand* of DVD disc is more important than the type.

Overview of Creation of a Video DVD

■ Capture and edit your video

Last fall I wrote an article on video editing (MBUG-PC Newsletter, September 2005), which discusses how to do this. When you are happy with the way your project



plays on your computer, export it to a single .avi file. This is your source material.

■ Open your DVD authoring program and import your edited file

This is where you need to know your software. Programs vary from basic to confusingly complex. Some only accept .mpeg files as input, so you have to transcode first (see below). Others accept .avi files – these have transcoding capacity built in.

Next, you may want to create a menu. Play a commercial video DVD. After the introduction, you come to a main menu. You can choose to play the movie, watch specific chapters, set the audio and the language, view trailers, and often a lot more. Play with selecting the menu options and you will get a feeling for menu systems.

Perhaps you have several short video files on your DVD and you want your viewer to be able to choose which one to watch. You can build a menu with a button for each video. You can also set chapter points – these are just markers in the video. The viewer can push a button on the remote and skip to the next or previous chapter.

■ Transcode your .avi file

This is the process of turning it into an .mpeg-2 file (you determine the size and “bit rate” of the video and audio). If you have a long video (more than about 70 minutes)

you need to transcode at a lower quality to fit the whole thing on a DVD.

■ Burn to DVD

The files on a DVD don't have names recognizable as MPEG files. Put that commercial video DVD in your computer's DVD disc holder. If it tries to play, cancel out of the player. Now examine the files on the DVD with explorer. You will see a folder called “VIDEO_TS” which contains multiple files whose names start with “VTS” and end in “.vob,” “.ifo,” and “.bup”. When you burn a DVD, the software changes your .mpeg files to those files which a set-top DVD player can understand.

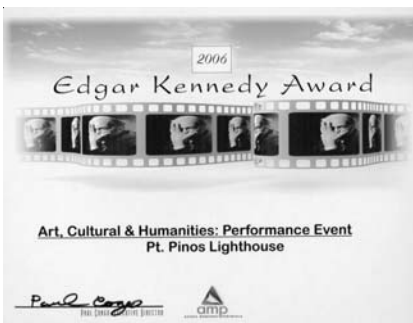
So that's why I have avoided writing about DVDs! Creating them involves multiple steps, multiple programs, and decisions which require technical familiarity with the medium. But there is a simpler way to do it, when you are starting out. The “**Swiss Army Knives**” of DVD creation are **Ahead's Nero 7** and **Roxio's Media Creator 8** (currently in stock at **Costco**).

With either of these programs, which cost about \$70, you can create a DVD from start to finish. They include basic programs for capturing, editing, and authoring; they do transitions, titles, menus, and multiple audio tracks; they then transcode your video and burn it to disc. You won't find sophistication or advanced controls, but they get the job done! ♦ jasling@pacbell.net

MBUG-PC VIDEO TEAM KUDOS!

The Annual **Edgar Kennedy Awards** were held at **Access Monterey Peninsula** (AMP, Cable Channel 24) on March 3. The “*Point Pinos Lighthouse 150th Anniversary*” video won the **Art, Cultural & Humanities: Performance Event** class award. It also won one of the top six awards, as the most “Uniquely Monterey” video by a volunteer producer!

The program was taped, produced and edited by our own **MBUG-PC Video Team: Joseph Asling, Joyce Elisha, Carolyn Lake and David Thorpe.**



The Point Pinos video features historical readings by lighthouse docents and old photographs of the Lighthouse and the Monterey area.

The Edgar Kennedy Awards are named after a Monterey native who was a film actor in the Golden Age of Hollywood, acting in hundreds of films including “Duck Soup” and “San Francisco.” He directed twenty-two films, mostly shorts. He was a master of the comedic reaction known as the “slow burn.” He is honored with a star on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles.

For more information on AMP and the Kennedy Awards, visit www.ampmedia.com ♦ **Joe Asling**

E-mail: Overused, Abused and Invaluable

by G. A. "Andy" Marken,
President, Marken Communications

"I predict that by 2010, 100 percent of network traffic will be packetized. None of it will be voice because we will be too mad at each other from sending flame e-mails."

*Vint Cerf, Executive Vice President of MCI
and one of the founders of the Internet*

It's true. Emotions don't travel well in the written form. A smile, a wink of the eye, a smirk, a furled brow is fine for face-to-face communications, but they are completely missing when you use the killer application of the Internet — e-mail.

Despite the hype and global business promises of the World Wide Web, the most used, most useful and most misused Internet tool is e-mail. E-mail is faster than conventional postal delivery and as dependable. Shortly after you hit the "Send" button your "target audience" usually receives the information.

Postmaster General Martin Runyon recently predicted that the giant quasi-government enterprise lost about \$1.4 billion in 1998, more than \$2.5 billion in 2000 and nearly \$4.5 billion in 2004, due in no small part to the increasing use of Internet e-mail. According to the **USPS** nearly 60 percent of business and personal correspondence already bypasses the postal service over the Internet.

E-mail has taken off so rapidly in business that when an e-mail server, network or Internet provider's connection goes down people wonder how they can get in touch with someone. They also wonder how long before they can get to their incoming mail. Or as one person commented recently, *"If someone I need to get in touch with doesn't have an e-mail address I probably don't need to talk to him."*

But like any valuable business tool people often don't understand how to use it properly or quickly find ways to abuse its use. In fact the **Electronic Messaging Association** estimates that over 184 million users sent over 35.8 trillion e-mail messages last year.

With the increasing use of push technology, the application of spam junk mail and the growing use of single keystroke e-mail mailing lists, each of us have to be concerned that we will dull the value of this important communications tool.

E-Mail Don'ts

Don't use e-mail emotionally. Since e-mail lacks the immediate feedback and verbal nuances of the spoken word don't use it when you are joking or are angry. Rather than a "flamemail" response, talk to the person face to face or at least over the phone.

E-mail should be avoided in a supervisor-subordinate or customer/vendor "issues" discussions. Verbal communications gives the benefit of immediate feedback. Both parties can understand how the message is being received either by the listener's facial expressions or the tone of their voice.

Avoid the automobile cocoon syndrome. Just as some people tend to become more aggressive with their driving because they are anonymous and remote behind the wheel, the same can happen with e-mail. Increasingly there are news items about "interesting" e-mail being received with remarks people would never say in person.

Don't spam. Spamming or sending an announcement in a shotgun manner is not only discourteous to people inside and outside your organization but it is an insult to them. I don't read spammed messages so why should I expect someone else to read mine just because I'm too lazy to individualize the mailing?

Besides, if recent legislative interest is any indication there may be stiff penalties levied for people who insist on "direct mailing" their announcements to the global Internet community.

Use the bulletproof Internet e-mail test. If you aren't willing to have the e-mail printed in tomorrow's paper or you wouldn't make the same comments in public — don't write them. That includes off-color jokes, sexist or racist language or anything that can be construed as contributing to a hostile environment.

E-mail messages are about as private as if they were posted in your favorite restaurant. If you are sending private information and want to protect your message from



accidentally going to the wrong person or being intercepted by someone, you can encrypt your e-mail. Encryption makes the message unreadable until the recipient decrypts it. But use encryption sparingly. Unless you are only working on top-secret projects and programs there's no reason to over-secure everything you send across the Internet.

Think before you use the "Send" button. You've seen TV episodes where people accidentally sent a love letter meant for a particular person to their entire mailing list. There have been news reports of department heads sending staff salary data to everyone on the organization's distribution list. These are disasters. But to a lesser degree each of us has sent an e-mail to someone only to discover immediately after it left that it didn't have the attachments you mentioned. Or the attachments were sent in a form that couldn't be read by the intended recipient. Your only recourse is to apologize and resend the message/ attachments.

Unless the recipient knows what you are sending, don't send it. People hate it when they open a "general delivery" e-mail and the attachment automatically copies to their hard drive. It's a waste of time to leave one storage area to open another, open the file and then determine the information that was sent is a waste of time and should be simply trashed.

Worse yet most are gun-shy about receiving "strange" attachments. The reason? It's an easy way to transmit viruses that can destroy a few files or an entire hard drive of information.

Safe computing practice says that whenever you receive an attachment

with an ".EXE," ".BAT" or ".COM" extension you should run anti-virus software against it before you open the file. It's great in theory and it works — unfortunately few of us practice safe computing.

Since there are so many different e-mail and word processing or presentation packages around it is also difficult to make certain the recipient has the same software (and version) you do so they can open and view the attachment. You're better off simply pasting the message into the body of your e-mail correspondence as "ASCII" text. It won't look as pretty but both parties can be assured the message is received.

Don't send spoof e-mails. Spoofed messages are those that are sent with false header information that disguises the sender. If you're not proud enough of your work or your company perhaps you should find a new career or a new company.

E-Mail Do's

Use e-mail whenever possible. It's significantly less expensive than sending the average business letter. And as we noted before it is faster — almost instantaneous.

Be descriptive in the subject area of your e-mail. Putting something bland or non-descriptive in the subject area makes it very easy for the person to quickly hit the delete button or file it for "later review." Instead, make the subject informative, inviting and sometimes even intriguing.

Many people today receive 100 and more e-mail announcements. They don't have the time or desire to wade through every e-mail to find the one or two bits of information they need. Think

of their e-mail screen as a billboard and you have less than five seconds to capture their attention.

If you're sending an e-mail, format it properly. And even though e-mail is somewhat of a relaxed way to communicate, write using good English. There's no excuse for poor writing.

Thoroughly train your staff in the ins and outs, dos and don'ts, capabilities and faults and the company's general guidelines, policies and procedures before everyone is e-mail enabled. For security and HR purposes, some firms have established a program of monitoring and reviewing e-mail. If your firm has such a policy make certain everyone clearly understands the policy, the reasons for the policy and the ramifications of inappropriate e-mail conduct.

The Web may get all the glory but it's e-mail that gets results when it's used properly. The Internet and e-mail are excellent tools for responding to and working with all of your organization's stakeholders including customers, dealers, employees, investors, security analysts, suppliers and special interest groups. Or as someone recently said, *"The Internet should really be viewed as communications on steroids. It's the ultimate one-on-one communications tool."* ♦

Andy@markencom.com

This article has been reprinted courtesy of the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which MBUG-PC is a member.

The public and MBUG-PC Members enjoy **First Friday General Meetings** on computer-related subjects. Past topics have included: buying and selling on eBay, wireless data, computer security, identity theft, keyboard shortcuts, constructing a website, and making movies, among others. Got a topic to suggest? Contact Carolyn lakelyn@ix.netcom.com.



MBUG-PC Members get 30% O'Reilly Discounts

Our Members get a 30% discount on all O'Reilly "No Starch", "Paraglyph", "PC Publishing", "Pragmatic Bookshelf", "Sitepoint" and "Syngress" publications. Use code "DSUG" when ordering books.

Group purchases with better discounts are also available. O'Reilly catalogues are available at general meetings. Interested? Contact: S. Jack Lewtschuk blacklion@royal.net

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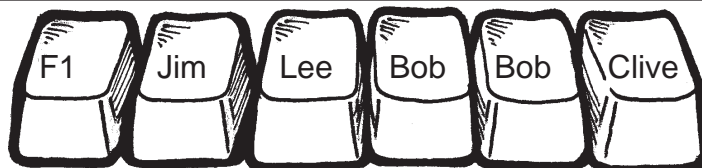
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Computer Help - Just a Click or Call Away with MBUG F1

You know you push the 'F1' button on your computer when you need help. But do you also know that you can call or e-mail **MBUG-PC** "F1 for Help" with your computer questions?



Our expert team of helpful F1 Volunteers

is willing and able to share experience on software and hardware. And if they don't know the answer, they'll direct you to someone who does. To get computer help:

- (1) Contact any of the people listed below; or
- (2) Ask questions during any MBUG-PC meeting break or Q&A session; or
- (3) Leave a message with Vice President **Don Slaiter** (831) 655-4443/657-4154 ; or
- (4) Broadcast a message to all members through the **MBUG-PC Listserv** (mbug@listserv.redshift.com) *in plain text only* (NO html, please)!

Services are free of charge

(with the understanding that MBUG-PC, its Board of Directors, and the F1 Volunteers themselves are in no way responsible or liable for the accuracy or the outcome of any advice or suggestions!)

■ Jim Anway

STRICTLY Wednesdays & Fridays
from 2pm to 5pm at 625-5618

■ Lee Keely

Prefers e-mail at Lee@leekeely.com
or call 626-8033

■ Bob Shanteau

e-mail to shanteau@iname.com
or call Monday - Friday 10am-5pm
394-9420

■ Bob Stephan

e-mail to bob@bobstephan.net
or call only between 9am-5pm
646-1373

■ Clive Sanders

e-mail to simbacli@pacbell.net
or call only between 1pm to 9pm
phone (831) 375-5376 ◆

VOLUNTEER COMPUTER COACHES/TEACHERS NEEDED

Sally Griffin Senior Center in Pacific Grove

is in need of additional "computer coaches" and instructors for their

Technology Access Program for Seniors.

The center provides older adults an opportunity to learn and practice their technical skills in a small lab, working one-on-one and in a small class format.

If you have the time, ability and patience to tutor beginners in a relaxed setting, contact **Kimberle Herring** at the Sally Griffin Senior Center at (831) 375-4454 or e-mail kherring@mowmp.org

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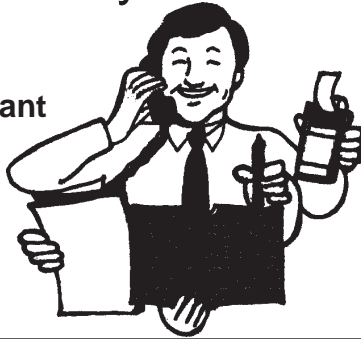
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Carolyn S. Lake

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Join the MBUG listserv and send messages to all other MBUG Members
and have other Members reach you with important information:

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- **You get current MBUG announcements**
- **You get up-to-date virus & scam warnings**
- **You can ask and answer computer-related questions**
- **You can make computer-related announcements**

Register at www.mbug.org or go to <http://listserv.redshift.com/mailman/listinfo/mbug>



**WINDOWS OFFICE XP:
OUTLOOK**



Carolyn Lake
Workshop Leader
Wednesday, April 12
7:00 to 9:00pm
Hilltop Park Center, Monterey

Just learning Microsoft Word? Had it for a while but need a brush-up? Need a few more tips and tricks? Carolyn (computer coach, graphic designer and *very* patient teacher), will gently review this great word-processing program. Questions in advance? E-mail lakelyn@ix.netcom.com or phone (831) 643-2023 ♦

**WHAT TO BACK UP
AND HOW**

Tom Lorentz
Guest Speaker

Wednesday, April 26
7:00 to 9:00pm
Hilltop Park Center, Monterey



Find out if your data is safe, and how to find and backup personal files in a reliable and consistent way. Tom, owner and manager of **Network Solutions**, will offer hardware and software solutions to this ever-growing problem noting the pluses and minuses of each. Questions? E-mail tom@networksolutionsca.com; call (831) 901-9114 ♦

ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR SIG UPDATE



◆ This Special Interest Group (SIG) meets every 3rd Monday of the month at **Carmel Foundation**, Computer Learning Center, on Lincoln between 8th/9th Streets in Carmel. **Space is limited: advance reservations are strongly recommended.**

◆ Fee: **\$3.00** (payable at the meeting). Next meeting: **MONDAY, April 17, 2006**
10:30am -12 noon

◆ Previous knowledge of Illustrator not required.

◆ To be on the SIG mailing list (receive information/announcements),

call **Carolyn Lake** at (831) 643-2023 or e-mail lakelyn@ix.netcom.com.

Coming in MAY

**HOW TO IMPROVE
PC PERFORMANCE**



Star Reiersen
Workshop Leader
Wednesday, May 10
7:00 to 9:00pm
Hilltop Park, Monterey

Learn what steps a professional computer consultant takes to troubleshoot a computer, get it back on track and make it run smoothly. Star has a wealth of experience from her work at **Computer Power** and is willing to reveal a few "trade secrets." Help keep your machine in tip-top shape while saving yourself time and money in the bargain! Questions ? E-mail star@computerpowerstar.com or phone (831) 373-3919 ♦

**RUN YOUR OWN SPECIAL
INTEREST GROUP (SIG)!**

Do you know a computer-related subject that you'd love to teach to others?

Or, would you just like to get together with other users of a particular program or piece of hardware to share ideas and solutions?

Why not start your own SIG?

MBUG has 1st/2nd/4th Mondays available from 10:30 to 12 noon at Carmel Foundation Computer Lab (equipped with nice new PCs).

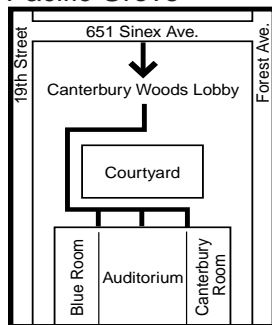
For information on fees, schedules, hardware/software available, etc.,

contact **Carolyn Lake**
lakelyn@ix.netcom.com.

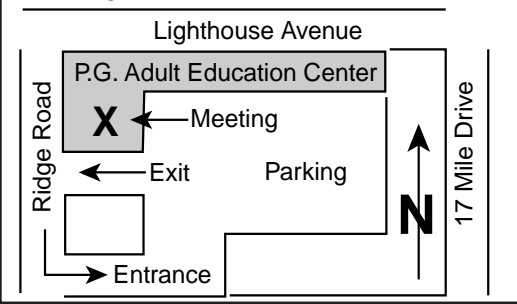
MBUG - PC Calendar of Events - April 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4 <i>DIRECTORS' MEETING</i> Canterbury Woods PG Begins at 7pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i>	5	6	7 <i>"PC Problem Solving"</i> Adult Ed Center PG 7:00 - 9:00pm Panel of Experts	8
9	10	11	12 <i>"MS Word Basics"</i> Hilltop Park Monterey 7:00 - 9:00pm Carolyn Lake	PASSOVER	14	15
16 EASTER	17 <i>"Adobe Illustrator SIG"</i> Carmel Foundation 10:30am to noon Carolyn Lake	18	19	20	21	22
23 30	24	25	26 <i>"What to Back Up and How"</i> Hilltop Park Monterey 7:00 - 9:00pm Tom Lorenz	27	28	29

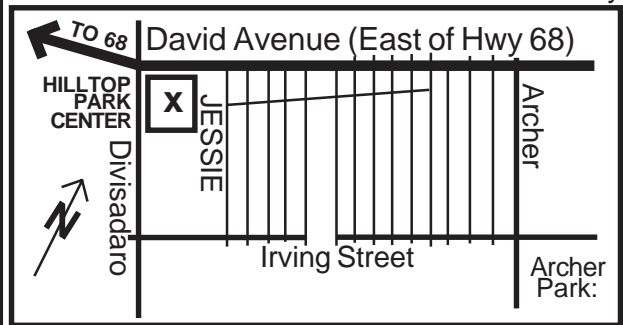
Canterbury Woods
651 Sinex Avenue
Pacific Grove



General Meeting Location
Adult Education Center, PG
1025 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove



Hilltop Park Center
871 Jessie Street
Monterey



Tentative Calendar May 2006 *Please Check the May Newsletter for Final Dates & Times*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 <i>DIRECTORS' MEETING</i> Canterbury Woods PG Begins at 7pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i>	3	4	5 <i>"Topic TBA"</i> Adult Ed Center PG 7:00 to 9:00pm Speaker TBA	6
7	8	9	10 <i>"How to Improve Computer Performance"</i> Hilltop Park Monterey 7:00 - 9:00pm Star Reiersen	11	12	13
14	15 <i>"Adobe Illustrator SIG"</i> Carmel Foundation 10:30am to noon Carolyn Lake	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 <i>"Topic TBA"</i> Hilltop Park Monterey 7:00 - 9:00pm Speaker TBA	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



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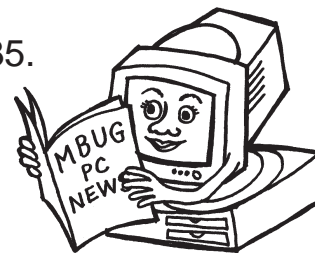
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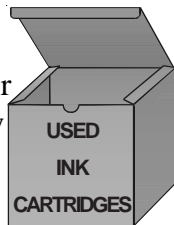
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Simply drop your empties (any brand, any type) into the brown box or give them to any Board member at General Meetings or workshops. ♦



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Vice President,
Assistant
Treasurer and
Membership
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