



mbug-pc newsletter

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On the Cutting Edge: New Hardware Trends

Chris Czomba is back by popular demand. Remember his great presentation on Computer Maintenance in August last year? Though he's very busy, having recently relocated his sales, maintenance, and repair business **Computer Corner** to a new location (535 Foam Street, Suite 102, in Monterey), he's been great about keeping in contact with MBUG. Chris is one of our better power speakers who knows computers, but doesn't talk like a geek. He can pack in a lot of clear, plain-English, useful information, from basic to advanced, into a short period of time.

You may be painfully aware of the fact that computer technology advances (or at least changes), at such a dizzying, confusing pace, that you'd need to devote a few hours a day to keep up with it all. At this General Meeting, Chris will do our homework for us by summarizing the newest trends and technologies in computers, from CPUs, to new types of memory and hard drives, video card technology, and more. This will be of interest to both high-level tecchies (who will want to know what new stuff is out there, where to go for help, how to troubleshoot some of the new gadgets, and other information), as well as be a learning experience for novices (who will want to know what these advances mean to the low-level user).

You're welcome to bring along your general computer hardware and maintenance questions, problems or experiences, because talking to Chris is like having "a friend in the business."

Do you have any questions in advance? E-mail chris@computercorner.us, phone (831) 649-9500 or visit www.computercorner.us ♦

How to go DUMPSTER DIVING FOR LOST DATA



Vinny LaBash of our Sister User Group in Sarasota, advises us how to RECOVER LOST FILES, on page 5.

Illustration: Regina Doyle, MBUG-PC

Friday, June 1st 2007 at 7pm
Pacific Grove Adult Education Center
1025 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove
As always, it's FREE and
open to the General Public.
Intelligent people, great coffee, food for thought!

Volunteers Needed for Great MBUG Positions !

Association of Personal Computer User Groups Representative

Lee Keeley is "retiring" as APCUG Rep—details on page 12!

Meeting Reviewers and Columnists

Attend General Meetings or any other ongoing workshops and write 500-word-or-less reviews. Or become a regular or occasional columnist on any computer-related subject (hardware or software review, favorite website, etc.)

Workshop /SIG Leaders

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

E-mail or call 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).

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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 Tom Streeter for card).

THINGS, THINGLETS & THINGASSOS

S. Jack Lewtschuk
MBUG-PC
Columnist

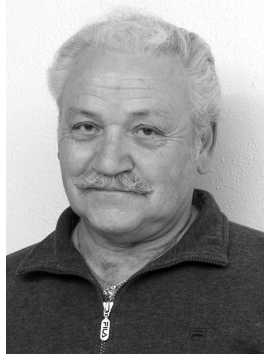


photo: R. Binsacca, MBUG-PC

What's Running in the Background?

Do you have too many programs running in the background, slowing down your computer by overloading its resources? You may wish to try this: right click an empty space on your Taskbar (the "bar" usually found at the very bottom of your computer screen, which has the "Start" button, clock, and other icons in it). Select "Task Manager." This will show you all the programs that you are running, but do you know what they are?

To find out, download a free program called **Quick Access** from **Process Library** at www.processlibrary.com/quickaccess/. This will place a blue dot in front of each running program listed in your Task Manager.

Open your Task Manager again. Click on the blue dot and you will get some information which may help you to make a decision to "Keep" or "Delete" the programs.

"My Sources Are Unreliable, But Their Information is Fascinating"*

If you click on **Google** and search for "urban legends," you'll find about 9,000,000 websites. If you search for "hoax", you'll find about 28,000,000 websites. Search for "scams," and you'll find about 58,000,000 websites.

Yet we, the intelligent users of the Internet, fall for the most outrageous stories and forward them to all our friends and relatives as gospel truth, such as: "TOP LEADING LADY IMPREGNATED BY ALIEN!"

Perhaps this is why tabloid publishers are millionaires, and our society isn't getting any smarter!

Before you pass on your "factual news," try checking it at www.snopes.com/snopes.asp, a website that bills itself as an "urban legend reference page."

You can look up possible hoaxes by category (e.g., history, crime, food, old wives tales, Titanic, and even Hurricane Katrina, among others). Snopes rates stories by category of: True, False, Multiple Truth Values, Undetermined and Unclassifiable Veracity. It's quite a fascinating site and worth checking to see how many "true" stories you have been told (or have passed on yourself).

For example, how do you think this "genuine photograph" of the "world's largest cat" rates?



(Yes, it's a definite hoax.)

OK, I'm off my soapbox now.

Title quotation by Ashleigh Ellwood Brilliant, English-born author and cartoonist, best known for **Pot-Shots, a single-panel comic of illustrated one-liners, which began syndication in the United States in 1975.*



Is it Work or Is It Pleasure?

In 2006, the average person spent 30.5 hours per month using a home computer; in 2004, the average person spent only 25.5 hours at a PC each month.

If this continues, one full workweek per month at the keyboard will be the norm.

Dual Core

Beginning in 2005 we started hearing about “dual core chips.” When ordering my new computer I decided to check this: what is it?

A single chip is one that contains two distinct CPUs (Central Processing Units) that process simultaneously. “Dual core chips” were inserted in **Pentium D** and

CHANGES TO MBUG-PC WEBSITE TO PROTECT AGAINST SPAM

If you look closely, you will soon notice that all of the e-mail addresses of our MBUG Officers and Volunteers look a little different at www.mbug.org.

To make it a little more difficult for spammers (people who send unsolicited e-mail) to electronically “harvest” our addresses, we asked our estimable **Webmaster Ed West**, to change how e-mail addresses are listed.

For example, what used to be “*name@domain.com*,” will be listed as “*nameatdomain.com*,” or something very similar. So instead of being listed as blacklion@royal.net, you may see me listed as blacklionatroyal.net. This way, the spammers’ electronic harvesters do not recognize addresses as being valid. We, on the other hand, will know to substitute the “at” with “@” when we send to the listed address.

If you own a website, or belong to another non-profit group or club that does, you might also consider doing the same.

Our war on spam continues. Are you doing your part? ♦
S. Jack Lewtschuk
blacklion@royal.net

Pentium Processor Extreme Edition 840 from Intel and the **Opteron 800** and **Athlon 64 X2** from AMD.

Because the continual increase in single core clock speeds were using more and more power and generating excessive heat, dual cores were developed to expand performance without more heat. Dual core systems may use the same or a little bit more energy, but achieve an approximate 80 percent increase in processing power over single core CPU chips.

Dual-core chips are not just for advanced applications; rather, everyday tasks can take advantage of two simultaneous processing streams. For example, routine downloads of e-mail and software updates that increasingly take place in the background no longer slow down the foreground application. Virus scans and backup programs can be initiated without interfering with the primary task.

Now that I have a “dual core computer,” I am waiting for a “dual core brain.” My brain is “excessively hot”!

NOVICE CORNER

How to Increase the Font Size on a Web Page

You can increase the size of the text in a website page in **Internet Explorer (IE)** by opening “View”, selecting “Text Size,” and choosing the size you need.

Better yet, add a “Size” button to your IE toolbar so that you can resize the text on a web page with just a couple of clicks.

To add a “Size” button, open IE’s “View” menu, select “Toolbars,” and click “Customize.” When the “Customize” dialog box opens, select “Size” from the “Available Toolbar Buttons” list, click “Add,” then click “Close.” You should now see a “Size” button on your main IE toolbar.

Now, whenever you open a web page with small text, all you have to do is click the “Size” button and select the best text size from its drop-down menu. Although there are some websites designed to prevent visitors from changing the size of their fonts, this tip still works for many of them. Keep in mind that some text items are really graphics. Graphics cannot be “resized” in this manner. ♦
blacklion@royal.net

RECOVERING FILES

From A Hard Drive

by Vinny La Bash,
Sarasota PCUG, Florida

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG Member Groups

Have You Deleted a File That You Need and You Don't Know How To Get It Back?

The first step is to make absolutely sure that it has been deleted. Open your Windows "Recycle Bin" and double-check. Is it in there? If so, simply right-click on the file and choose "Restore."

Another Reason to Backup Frequently

If you have emptied the "Recycle Bin" the next step is to restore the file from your latest backup. You do back up your data regularly, don't you?

Unfortunately, there is no native "Undelete" command in Windows XP. This is a mystery because Microsoft had a nifty undelete feature in Windows 3.1 which somehow disappeared in Windows 95 and subsequent versions of the operating system. This is abysmal for Windows users, but profitable for third-party software developers.

Good News: Your File May Still Be in Your System
It's important to understand that when a file is deleted it is not actually removed from your system. Windows deletes only the first letter of the file's name and replaces it with a marked for deletion

character. This makes the file "invisible" to Windows, and if Windows needs the space for something else, it has no qualms about overwriting your valuable data.

What this means is that if you accidentally delete a file, you have a limited amount of time to recover it before Windows stores something else over the same space. It may not

happen right away, but it will happen eventually.

Since there is no way within XP to recover a lost file, you have to turn to a third party

solution. The good news is that there are several excellent programs that will do the job easily. The even better news is that these programs are free. Isn't that nice?

Use Google or your favorite search engine to find **FreeUndelete**, **PC Inspector File Recovery**, or **Undelete Plus**. All of them work well, though you may find one easier to use than another. That's a matter of personal preference.

Bad News: Your File May Still Be in Your System

You need to be cautious about this: if you download the utility directly to your hard drive, you run the risk of storing the undelete program over the very data you are trying to recover. If you have a second hard drive, you can download to that, or better yet, download directly to a thumb drive. That avoids all danger of losing important data, and it has

the additional advantage of immediate portability.

The programs all work similarly. Direct any of the programs to a specific disk and you will get a list of all deleted recoverable files on the drive. You may also get a description alerting you that the file(s) may be wholly or partially recoverable. That's good to know.

Direct any recovered files to an external hard drive if you have one. **Don't save anything to your hard drive until you have recovered everything you need.** Use Windows Explorer to manage the recovered files. Group them into categories to sort or group the files so you can easily determine if they are program files, data files or something else. Some files may have data missing if Windows overwrote some of the sectors where it was stored.

If after all this you haven't been successful, your best alternative is to consider a data recovery service. These can be a devastating drain on your wallet, so don't use these services to recover saved game files.

Do some comparison shopping as rates can vary considerably. Good luck, and watch those sticky fingers when they hover near the delete key! ♦

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Illustration: R. Doyle, MBUG-PC

photo: Bill Hyler, MBUG-PC



Carolyn Lake
Vice President/
Programs & Publicity Team
Chairman

Update on

Lending Library Titles

The latest addition from **Peachpit Press** to the **MBUG Members Lending Library** is a well-organized reference work, the **Windows Vista Visual QuickStart Guide**. Not recommended for beginners, but those comfortable with **Windows XP** will find this book very useable. Separate chapters deal with The Desktop, Personalizing Your Work Environment, Organizing Files and Folders, Installing and Running Programs, Security and Privacy, and other key topics.

The basic information is presented in step-by-step points, with supplemental tips and sidebars that can be ignored until the reader is ready for more detail. Whether already using Vista or thinking about upgrading, PC users will find this a handy guide—check out the MBUG copy and browse through!

Current Library Titles

- **Working Smart in Adobe Photoshop CS2**
- **Adobe Photoshop Elements 5.0: Classroom in a Book**
(this book includes a CD, which must be used on a PC with the

Adobe Photoshop application already installed)

- **Photoshop Elements 5: Visual QuickStart Guide**
- **Microsoft Windows Vista: Visual QuickStart Guide**
- **Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2003 for Windows: Visual QuickStart Guide**

Circulation Policy

To check out

items: Books/CD's may be checked out at MBUG meetings by contacting me at

least one day in advance by e-mail or phone call with the requested title and providing your name, address, phone, and e-mail information. Membership will be verified and you will be asked to sign a checkout card when receiving the item.



Circulation: Items may be checked out initially for one month. If there are no other pending requests, the loan may be

renewed for one additional month by e-mail or phone call to me.

Book return: Items may be returned to me, or **Don Slaiter**, or other Board member at any MBUG meeting; please observe due dates in consideration of other borrowers.

Responsibility: The borrower is responsible for maintaining books and other items in good condition. A replacement charge may be made for lost, damaged, or long overdue items.

Free and discounted books: Remember, if you find you really like a book on loan to you, you may request a copy for review and retain the review copy free of charge when a review is submitted to Peachpit Press within 90 days. See page 16 for more information on reviewing Peachpit books.

For loan, renewal, or book review requests, contact me at 643-2023 or send me an e-mail. ♦

lakelyn@ix.netcom.com



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The Peachpit User Group Partner Program gives hefty discounts on books ordered online! Click the Bookstore link at www.peachpit.com, to view books on graphics applications, business productivity, operating systems, digital lifestyle, and more. Discount at point of purchase using group discount coupon code UE-23AA-PEUF (case sensitive).

BOOK REVIEW

photo: Bill Hylar, MBUG-PC



**Regina
Doyle**
MBUG-PC
Newsletter
Editor

**The Adobe Illustrator CS2
WOW! Book:
Tips, Tricks, and Techniques
from 100 Top Illustrators**
by Sharon Steuer
First Edition 2006
ISBN 0-321-32046-8
Adobe Press/Peachpit Press
437 pages, \$54.00
(available at a 30% discount
from **Peachpit Press** to
MBUG Members: see facing
page for details)

I've been a draw-by-hand illustrator from childhood through my career in health education materials production, but am just now completing my first basic course in **Adobe Illustrator CS2** at **Monterey Peninsula College** (MPC). It's been a great kick-start to what I hope will be a wonderful new tool in my job as designer/writer/art director (as well as in my "job" occasionally drawing cartoons for MBUG).

The Adobe Illustrator CS2 WOW! Book has been a great resource through my first foray into computer illustration. AI CS2 is a fantastic, powerful, sometimes complicated program, with so many creative aspects jam-packed into it, that the "Help" menu and puny user guide that come with it can't possibly explain it all, or even provide the

basics, in a user-friendly way. Hence, there is an entire industry to explain, guide, and show how to get the best out of AI.

I'm the kind of person who needs to sign up for a course, pay some money, and/or make a commitment, to really force myself to learn something new—I just don't seem to be able to set aside time to learn on my own. And although **Ms Darien Payne**, our instructor at MPC, uses another good Peachpit Press book as our classroom text (*Illustrator CS2 Visual Quickstart Guide for Windows and Macintosh*, **Elaine Weinmann** and **Peter Lourekas**, 2006), she recommended the "Wow" book for its basic exercises and as a good reference for advanced users. So, knowing I could get a free copy if I reviewed it, I asked Peachpit for a copy. (For details on how MBUG Members can get review copies of other titles, see page 16).

Tips, Tricks, Techniques and More

First of all, as it says on the cover, the "Wow" book contains tips, tricks, and techniques from 100 top Adobe Illustrator artists. But most compellingly for me, it has beautiful examples of a wide variety of artwork printed in full color both in the book and on the CD which comes with it. The CD has a dimensional advantage by providing access to the "layers" within each illustration, so you can see how the artist created, or "built" the illustration. When some illustrations from the "Wow" Book were shown to us in class (as examples of different techniques we were learning such as using brushes, managing layers, using 3D effects,

etc.), some students were intimidated and said: "You're scaring us! Show us examples of what we can do!" Others, myself included, thought: "Wow! I want to be able to do that!" The quality, variety, and level of artwork grabbed our interest and made us want to learn more.



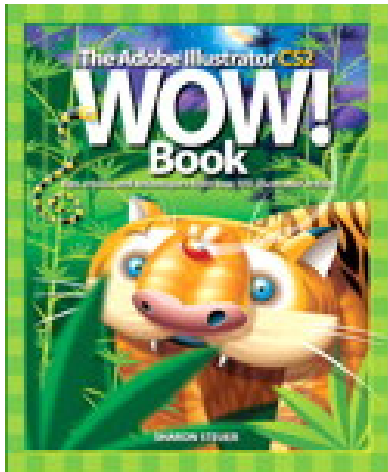
illustration: R. Doyle, MBUG-PC

*Above is a detail from an illustration I created for my **Monterey Peninsula College Illustrator CS2** class, after learning the basics of using the pen tool, applying color and pattern fill "swatches," using 3D effects, and so much more. I was inspired by an experienced instructor who uses **Illustrator CS2 Visual Quickstart Guide** as a basic text, but who highly recommended **Adobe Illustrator CS2 WOW! Book** as a source of advanced tips and tricks and creative ideas.*



In my estimation, the failing of our MPC text, “Visual Quickstart,” is that the artwork is a bit dull and uninspiring (who wants to learn to do bad, or mediocre work?), especially when compared to the “Wow” book. Also, “Visual Quickstart” is not as logical in its teaching progression as I think the “Wow” book is—even our instructor was jumping from section to section, when using “Quickstart.”

Don’t get me wrong, I think “Quickstart” is an invaluable book (my copy is well-marked and dog-eared, and I will not be selling it back to the College bookstore). It’s just that “Wow” really completes it.



For Masters, and Novices Too

The “Wow” book also says it is the definitive book on *mastering* Illustrator, which may give you the impression that it is only for the advanced user. However, it has a surprising amount of really good Illustrator *basics* wedged into 400-plus pages. It has an overall summary of what Illustrator is, system requirements, setting up your page, and how to use each tool, along with great exercises for beginners. The “Wow” exercise we used in class was the “*Zen of Illustrator*,” encompassing ways to practice



VACILLATING between VAUNTING and VITUPERATING VISTA?

I doubt that I’m the only one who has found workarounds to some of **Microsoft Vista’s** more frustrating aspects (like the lack of connection speed information on the Taskbar). Perhaps there aren’t yet enough of us Vista-users to call for a SIG (Special Interest Group workshop), but I’d be interested in eventually having a local forum to address such issues.

DO YOU USE VISTA?

Are you contending with adjustment issues? Have you got some pet annoyances or praises? Have you discovered your own way to work around roadblocks? Do you miss some of the ways earlier programs operated?

If so, I would be interested in hearing from you.

If there are enough of us, maybe we can hold an MBUG meeting on the topic someday? ♦

Contact: **Star Reiersen** star@computerpowerstar.com
Computer Power, 1173 Ninth St, Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 373-3919

mastering the **Bezier Tool** (which you really, really need to know to be able to draw with this program), as well as what they call the “finger dance”—learning to save time by using the shortcut power keys instead of just using the mouse and the endless list of drop-down menus to select, move, copy, and otherwise manipulate objects around a page.

The “Wow” book goes on to explain the basics of drawing and coloring, using brushes and symbols, managing and using layers and appearances, working with type, making compound paths and shapes, and finally, using **Live Trace** (which turns raster images into editable vector paths) and **Live Paint** (which allows you to paint those vector

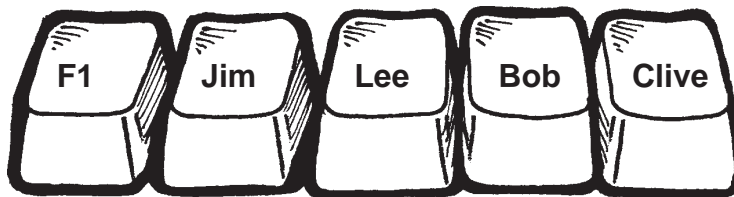
graphics as if you are painting them by hand).

And then, hoo boy, the “Wow” book just rockets off up into the steep learning curve of using blends, gradients, transparency, masks, 3D effects, mesh, and beyond, which I admit, I am not anywhere near understanding or managing, much less mastering! But along the way, there are those great illustrations to lead you on and make you want to learn, practice, and become an Illustrator (with a capital “I”).

In conclusion, if I had paid the \$54.99 cover price for “The Adobe Illustrator CS2 WOW! Book,” it would have been well worth the money! ♦ ReginaDoyle@aol.com

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 F1 Volunteers will share their experience on software and hardware. 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 **Don Slaiter** (831) 655-4443/657-4154 a message; or
- (4) Broadcast a message to all members through the **MBUG-PC Listserv** mbug@listserv.redshift.com **in plain text only** (NO html, please)!

■ 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 Stephan

e-mail to stephan.bob@gmail.com
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 ♦

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!)

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

Andrea Furst at the Sally Griffin Senior

Center at (831) 375-4454 or e-mail

kherring@mowmp.org

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<http://www.pgusd.org>



**Association of
Personal Computer
User Groups (APCUG)
Representative Needed**



"It's been fun!"

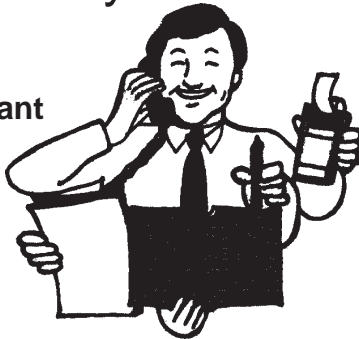
Lee Keeley has been our APCUG Representative for over 13 years. It's time for another member to take over! Make of it what you wish (APCUG bylaws best describe the goals and the job). The Annual Conference associated with the **Consumer Electronics Show** in Las Vegas is a highlight, but lots of other important functions too! Interested? More about APCUG at www.apcug.org. Or contact Lee@leekeely.com (831) 626-8033.

MBUG-PC SUPPORTERS

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Retired IBMer
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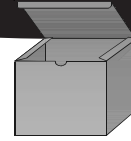
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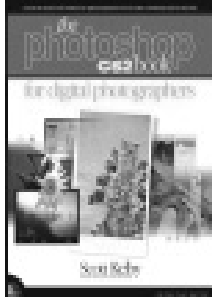
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Go Green, Give to Charity, Support Local Industry

Recycling empty computer ink cartridges through MBUG helps prevent non-degradable plastic and metal waste from polluting our landfills. At the same time we make money for our educational programs by selling them to a local (Monterey) ink-refill company. We make it easy for you, too: just drop your empties (any brand, any type) into the brown box or give them to any Board Member at General Meetings or workshops. ♦ ellias@msn.com



UPDATE: MBUG-PC Members now get 35% off all



O'Reilly Books and PDFs!

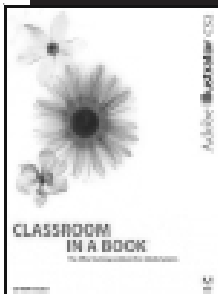
Our Members can now get a 35% discount on all books from O'Reilly as well as their "No Starch", "Paraglyph", "PC Publishing", "Pragmatic Bookshelf", "Sitepoint" and "Syngress" publications. Use the same code "DSUG" when ordering books online or by phone at 1-800-998-9938. We still get free ground shipping on orders of \$29.95 or more (in the US). Go to www.oreilly.com/store/ and see what's new!

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Want to know more?

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A TIP FROM JACK: Before subscribing or renewing through the above, check if the publisher has a current special price (which happens periodically). ♦ blacklion@royal.net



SECURE YOUR *Flash Drive Cap*

by Fran Damratowski,
Refurbishing SIG Leader,
Chesapeake PCUG,
Maryland

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Have you ever misplaced your flash drive cap? No need to ever do that again. Secure it with a button. You will need:

- ⊗ a **shirt button**
- ⊗ some **heavy thread** such as carpet thread
- ⊗ double-sided self-sticking adhesive **mounting foam**
- ⊗ **double-sided sticky tape**
- ⊗ some **colorless nail polish**

Directions for Making a Flash Drive Cap Saver

1. Run the thread diagonally through two of the buttonholes and secure with a square knot.
2. Place the knot on the top of the button not on the flat bottom of the button.
3. Cut the thread long enough to secure it with enough play to remove the cap.
4. Cut a small piece of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam about the size of the button.
5. Remove the backing from one side of the double-sided self-sticking



[Editor's Note: I just couldn't resist reprinting this article. It is SO great to find an annoyance of the Computer Age finding its solution in a sewing box from the Post-WW II Age. We want Fran in our Vista Annoyances SIG!]

adhesive mounting foam and place a small piece of the double-sided sticky tape on the sticky side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam.

(The double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam does not hold well without the sticky tape. The tape alone does not hold well either).

6. Securely attach the flat side of the button to the sticky tape.
7. Trim the excess tape and foam using an **X-acto Knife**.
8. Remove the backing from the other side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam and place another piece of double sided sticky tape on the foam.
9. Securely attach the button foam and tape to the flash drive cap.
10. Secure the other end of the thread to the flash drive or lanyard.
11. Leave enough play to easily remove the cap, but not get tangled.

12. Use the colorless nail polish to secure the knots so they don't become undone.

13. After the nail polish dries, trim the thread.

Alternately, Buy and Modify a Lens Cap Keeper

You could go to your local photo store and buy a two-dollar, button-size, lens cap-keeper (or cap retainer) and modify it as needed. Most of them appear to come with elastic bands that are placed around the lens barrel as opposed to a leash that can be attached to another part of the camera. ♦

www.chesapeakepcusersgroup.org
or refurbishing@chesapeakepcusersgroup.org

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raffle items wanted

••••• **Cleaning House? Reorganizing? Getting A New PC?** MBUG needs **new or gently used, working** computer software, hardware, supplies, and peripherals, for fund-raising raffles (and cash donations too). Call to determine if your items can be put to use. Contact **Don Slaiter** slaiter@pacbell.net

SOFTWARE REVIEW

Ambient Design ArtRage2

by Rob Rice,
Computer Specialist,
Anchorage, Alaska
(Member of the Computer Club
of Oklahoma City)

*Obtained from APCUG with the
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Renew the Artist in You

Spring is a season of light, color and renewal; it is a season that can bring out the artist in all of us. When I look at a product like **ArtRage2**, by **Ambient Design**, I can feel some of that same renewal that spring offers right there on my computer screen. A clean, well-behaved and very intuitive product, the free version of ArtRage2 is about as difficult as finger painting.



Coded in the low-stress environment of a New Zealand forest, just outside

of Auckland, ArtRage is a nice blend of a simple user interface with the power to create high quality work. I say that ArtRage is about as difficult as finger painting and I mean that, but do not think that it shares finger painting's limitations. One look at some of those samples on this page (From the Ambient Design website) should be obvious.

Since its initial release by former **MetaCreations Corporation** employees **Andy Bearsley** and **Matt Fox-Wilson** in 2004 as a free product, ArtRage has been steadily polished and improved. Available in English, French and German versions, for both **Windows** and **MacOSX**, a new edition for the **UltraMobile PC** is also available.

A recipient of many awards, ArtRage comes with a good user's manual and several helpful tutorials are available on the Ambient Design website, such as "How to Paint a Macaw," (right).



Ease of Installation and Use

Installing and opening ArtRage offers no surprises, such as ads, spyware, or pressure to buy the full version. You are greeted with a clean interface. On the lower left is your "Tool Picker" which contains: "Oil Brush," Pencil," "Palette Knife," "Eye Dropper," "Felt Pen," "Chalk," "Crayon," and "Eraser" tools.

More tools are added in the full version such as: "Airbrush," "Paint Tube," "Glitter," and "Paint Roller." On the lower right is the "Color

Picker." At top is a menu containing such familiar options as "File," "Edit," "Tools," and "Help."

Various other menus are located at the sides which allow for brush pressure and tilt angle. A couple of my favorites are the "Tracing Image" and "References" features. With "Tracing Image," the original is projected on to your "canvas" so that you can use it as a guide while you "sketch" and "paint."

Other features from the Ambient Design website include:

- **Layers** Paint on transparent layers to build up more complex images without the paint "blending" with your underlying work. The texture of the underlying "paint" will still show through, as if it were dry on your "canvas." ArtRage also provides full support for all 23 **Photoshop** "layer blend" modes.

- **PSD Support** Import and export PSD files, with their layers intact.

- **Custom Colors** Load and save custom color sets and "color pickers" to fine tune your color work.

- **Crop & Resize** Crop and resize your "paintings" during work.

- **Simple, Intuitive Interface** The ArtRage interface is easy to understand and doesn't get in the way of your work. In fact, it even gets out of the way while you're "painting."

- **Customizable Canvases** Change the grain, color, and even metallic nature of your “canvas” at any time during your work.
- **“Canvas” Positioning** “Move,” “Scale,” and “Rotate” the “canvas” to your preferred angle.
- **Tablet Support:** ArtRage uses your tablet’s pressure and tilt support, where available.
- **Tool Cursors:** Every tool has a cursor that tells you exactly how big the tool head is to make it easier to see what’s going to be applied.
- **Multi-Monitor Support:** ArtRage supports multi-monitor systems.

It appears that every effort has been made to make the painting and drawing as realistically as possible - even down to providing a “water glass” to clean your brush in! “Paints” blend predictably or not at all, your choice. Textures, blending and smudging all appear extremely accurate.

As I mentioned earlier, there is a full version of ArtRage, which sells for \$19.95. It unlocks several features such as the “Metallic Paint” option; with this feature enabled you can paint with gold and silver oil paints, sparkling glitter, silver leaf sprays and more. Tools can be switched to “Metallic” mode for a range of effects.

Discount for User Group Members

Ambient is offering MBUG and other APCUG User Group Members a 15 percent discount (\$19.95 MSRP) on ArtRage for Windows or Mac OSX, until July 20, 2007. Go to http://store.kagi.com/cgi-bin/store.cgi?storeID=6FCJJ_LIVE&&. Enter discount code **0B6D7A19D** in the “Coupon/Promotional Code” entry box.

System Requirements

Windows Windows XP, 2k, or Tablet PC; 800 MHz processor or faster and 256 megabytes of RAM

Macintosh Macintosh OS X 10.3.9 or later. G4 processor or faster and 256 megabytes of RAM. ArtRage for OS X is a universal binary.

Source

Ambient Design: www.ambientdesign.com

ArtRage 2 at Ambient Design:

www.ambientdesign.com/artrage.html

COMING in JULY

PREVENTATIVE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

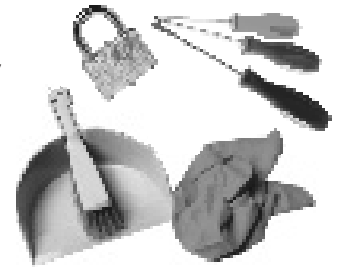
Star Reierson

Workshop Leader

Friday, July 6

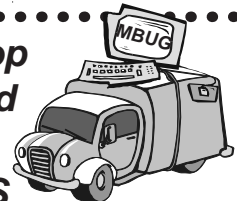
7:00 to 9:00pm

**Adult Education Center,
Pacific Grove**



Star will show us how to speed up our computers through preventative maintenance: keep virus and anti-spyware programs current (she’ll compare **Norton** vs **McAfee** vs **AVG**, and **Spybot** vs **AdAware** vs **Spy Sweeper** vs **Windows Defender**), edit your MSCONFIG Startup group, and set **Windows** to optimize performance over appearance—time to tame your sneaky resource hogs! Questions? Contact star@computerpowerstar.com ◆

**REMEMBER: Our Workshop
Meeting Location Changed
from Hilltop Park
to CANTERBURY WOODS**



on Sinex Avenue, in Pacific Grove (map page 15).

**First Friday General Meetings are still at the
Pacific Grove Adult Education Center**

while other workshops will be at CBW.

(From time to time, we *may* still use the Hilltop Park location, but we will give you clear notice in advance if this happens!)

ArtRage 2 Quick Start Guide:

www2.ambientdesign.com/files/quickstart.zip

Checking with the forums to see what users were saying about the product, a common topic was how, after using the free version of ArtRage, they bought the full version and never looked back. After playing with the free edition, I can see why. ArtRage2, is a terrific program and worth the money. ArtRage is rare combination of a program that can do high quality work and yet make the computer fun again! ◆

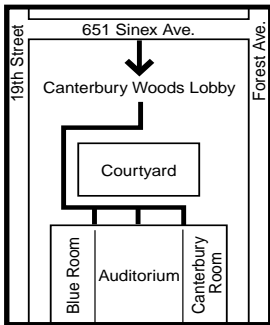
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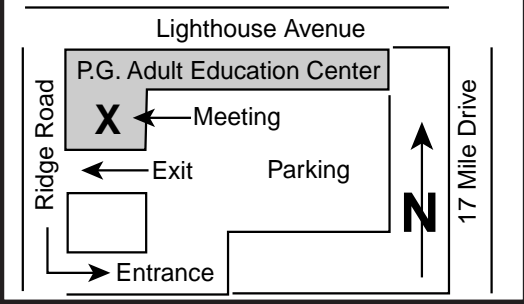
MBUG-PC Calendar of Events - JUNE 2007

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|--|--|----------|---|----------|
| | | MAY 29 <i>DIRECTORS' MEETING</i> Canterbury Woods PG Begins at 7pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i> | | | 1 <i>"On the Cutting Edge: New Hardware Trends"</i> Adult Ed Center PG 7:00 to 9:00pm Chris Czomba | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 <i>"Topic and Speaker To Be Announced"</i> Canterbury Woods 7:00 - 9:00pm | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 <i>"Topic and Speaker To Be Announced"</i> Canterbury Woods 7:00 - 9:00pm | 28 | 29 | 30 |

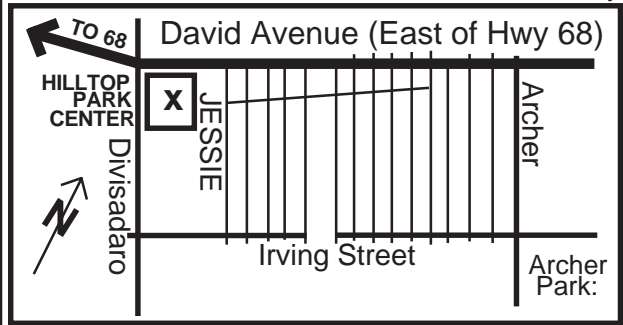
Canterbury Woods
 651 Sinex Avenue
 Pacific Grove



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



Hilltop Park Center
 871 Jessie Street
 Monterey



Tentative Calendar July 2007 Please Check the July Newsletter for Final Dates & Times

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|---|--|----------|---|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 <i>DIRECTORS' MEETING</i> Canterbury Woods PG Begins at 7pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i> | 4 7:00 - 9:00pm | 5 | 6 <i>"Preventative System Maintenance"</i> Adult Ed Center PG 7:00 to 9:00pm Star Relerson | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 <i>"Topic and Speaker To Be Announced"</i> Canterbury Woods 7:00 - 9:00pm | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 <i>"Topic and Speaker To Be Announced"</i> Canterbury Woods 7:00 - 9:00pm | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 <i>DIRECTORS' MEETING</i> Canterbury Woods PG Begins at 7pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i> | | | | |



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Vol 26, No 6, June 2007

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Tom Streeter
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WELCOME BACK, AND THANKS FOR RENEWING!

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| Robert Cortes | 1005 | George Szemes | 1052 |
| Peggy Drury | 1289 | Cath TandlerValencia | 1268 |
| Mary Frost | 1100 | Polly Thomas | 1153 |
| Beverly Lewis | 1205 | Art BellI | 252 |
| Randall Morris | 1082 | Bob Runkel | 1990 |

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

| name | member number |
|---------------------------|---------------|
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| Ann & George Wilson | 1304 |

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See Regina's Book Review as an example on page 7, and find more examples at www.peachpit.com/usergroups.

Then contact **Carolyn Lake** to have your book choice sent to you. (831) 643-2023 or lakelyn@ix.netcom.com