The Outer Edge

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Attendance at the November General Meeting
133 MEMBERS & 13 GUESTS
WE ALSO WELCOME

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To Contact CIPCUG

The Outer Edge...........(805) 485-7121
General Information.. . . . . . (805) 983-4741
Mailing Address...P.O.Box 5025, Oxnard, CA 93031-5025

ROOT DIRECTORY

COMMAND.COM
By George A. Lakes, President

First off, an important correction of last month's Command Com. Our plans for the January meeting have been superseded by an outstanding program of Intuit's Turbotax. Nita Lang, our vice president in charge of procuring programs for our monthly meetings has taken her job very seriously. In spite of the January meeting being close to the end of the holiday season, she was able to land this program just at the right time for people preparing their taxes who wish to get them in early. We currently are planning to have the Garage Sale in July of 2000 instead. It is a possibility we may have the garage sale before our July meeting in the event of a short notice "no show vendor." As remote as this possibility is, it has happened in the past. There is nothing like having a good backup! Please check "Programs" on our Web site for information about future programs and presenters. Also check the SIGs. You might find one you can't live without!

Hopefully, we will be able to participate in Market Trends Survey User Group Web Study. I brought it up at our November meeting. Our club is one of the clubs chosen to respond to a survey on the Web. Each user's group will select 80 members, at random, from their roster of current members and send them an e-mail message, including a password, asking them to complete the survey, which will take between 20 and 25 minutes. If 40 questionnaires are completed within two weeks of receiving the e-mail, Market Trends will pay the club $250 in addition to $50 to cover any expenses the club may incur. They assure us that all information, including the e-mail addresses of our members, will be kept in the strictest of confidence, not divulged to anyone, including the sponsor of the study.

Executive Committee Meeting Notes

November 1999.....By Bob Fischer

The meeting was held at the Lakes' residence (thank you so much for the hospitality, George and Arline). Those present were George and Arline Lakes, Toby Scott, Helen Long, Robert Provart, John Godwin, Ralph Duchacek, Jerry Crocker, Bob Fischer, Craig Ladd and Laura Pacheco.

Nita Lang is sure doing a great job in lining up programs for the general meetings.

Ralph Duchacek has everything under control as the SIG coordinator. The SIG scheduled for Dec. 27 has been canceled because of the holidays.

Toby is still working on Hang 2000. Laura gave a marketing report. ROM-ZIP is getting the advertising contract that she put together. GST in Camarillo is very interested in advertising in the TOE.

Mike Strecker is doing an excellent job on the Beginning SIGS at the monthly meeting.

We received an e-mail from Barbara Cott concerning the newsletter from the Simi Valley User Group. The question is whether we should check with them about creating a link to their site and newsletter. The committee said yes.

Treasurer's report October 1999

By Art Lewis

Income Oct. 1-31, 1999

New members	$ 70.00
Renewals	$300.00
Total income	$370.00

Expenses

Coffee-Donuts	$ 20.00
Publication	-$137.80
Storage	$ 57.00
TOE	$463.38
Total expenses	$402.58
Total income/expense	-$ 32.58

Unrestricted funds	$3,028.89
Restricted funds (ISP)	$1,305.50
Bank Balance 10-31	$4,334.39

Q&A: From Note Tab Pro to Scandisk

Reported by Bob Fischer

ANNOUNCEMENT: On Note Tab Pro, Toby Scott told several people he would have copies here burned into floppies and we would have them for-sale, but other obligations came up. Monday was my mother-in -law's birthday. Happy Belated Birthday, Dear Mother-in-law, from CIPCUG members. Toby has a registered version that he can provide via e-mail. It takes two floppies. Then you can go to the Note Tab Pro Web site and update it to version 4.6, which will give you the latest dictionary as well as the latest program. For any of you interested, give the treasurer $15 and your e-mail address, and Toby will e-mail you the registered copy. If you want to try it out, you can go to <www.notetab.com> and download a trial version, which is good for 30 days. You can buy it from the Web for $19.95 or from the club for $15 (we're a site-licensed reseller.

There are SIGs three or four times a year where you can learn about the wonderful things you can do with Note Tab Pro. For those who don't know, it is a replacement for Note Pad. However it is more Industrial strength.

QUESTION: I have CompuServe and have been having problems printing e-mail.

ANSWER: You can upgrade your e-mail client to one that can read HTML. You can tell people sending you the stuff you can't read HTML and ask if they could send plain text. Cut and paste, when you're reading it in CompuServe (go CTRL+A, CTRL+C and open a new e-mail address or a new document in Note Tab Pro, go CTRL+V to paste the contents, HTML code and all, and then go up to MODIFY (remove HTML code). Then print it out from Note Tab Pro.

QUESTION: When I downloaded your newsletter, and in the display of my mailbox on the right hand margin, it cut off two or three letters.

ANSWER: You may have a very low screen resolution. You might have very large fonts selected. Take them into Note Tab Pro and tell it to join lines.

QUESTION: Do you know anything about Linux?

ANSWER: It will be subject of a program in May. We also we have a SIG that runs the week following this meeting which is officially called the OS-2 Corner but which covers many alternate systems, and it spends a fair amount of time with Linux as well as OS-2 and some other operating systems.

QUESTION: I have been running Internet Explorer 5 on the Internet, and after I have been downloading pictures for awhile, the right click on the mouse stops working and the bar that has files and the sorts disappears.

ANSWER: You might need more RAM.

As of Saturday, Nov. 13, we have a list of 68 volunteers. We have sent e-mails about this to club members who did not attend the November meeting. If we gather more volunteers, we will contact Market Trends by Nov. 17. Those of you who have volunteered, please check your e-mail frequently so that you will be able to respond to the survey within the two-week time period. Thanks to all of you who are planning to participate.

Laura Pacheco, with the help of Craig Ladd, will be assisting as standbys for the Equipment Hauling Committee, which includes Barry Creasap, chairman, Dick Otterson and Arthur Jensen (also the club librarian).

It has been drawn to my attention that we are not reconvening in the allotted time after our break in order to give the presenter the full hour. Please cooperate so it won't be necessary for me to bellow like a bull to get everyone back in their seats and in a quiet mode, ready for the presentation. Thank you! //

QUESTION: What is HTML code?

ANSWER: HyperText Markup Language, which is the code that is used to create Web Pages. It allows you to include display formatting with the text.

QUESTION: After I use Scandisk, a message on the screen says "error" user.data

ANSWER: When Scandisk reports a problem with user.dat you have a more serious problem than you think you do because user.dat is your registry. That is the central database that holds all the settings for your Windows setup. If that comes up, you might as well reinstall Windows from scratch at the very minimum. First of all, if you can boot to Windows, try to make a backup of your registry. Boot to DOS and copy the system.dat and user.dat to a floppy disc. If you are going to copy them back in order to replace them, you have to use the Attribute command to remove the Read Only attribute so you can delete the old one. Whatever you do, be careful.

QUESTION: I have a request for a debate, ideally in the TOE. For the last couple of years motherboards have been manufactured (the cheap ones) for integrated uses, i.e., the video and the sound are often built into the motherboard so you don't have to buy extra cards. Traditionally, the user community, the hotshots, say don't mess with it, it's crummy, they're bad etc. It has been two years, and we are about at the stage where they should be more reliable and work well. I would like to see a debate.

(What do you technical types think? Have you had any experience with such boards? We'll be happy to publish any answers we get. - Editor)

Letters

Whole number discrepancies

There has been a continual lack of attention paid to incrementing the whole number that is to be assigned to each issue of The Outer Edge. This occurred in all of Volume 12 and in all but one issue of Volume 13 to date. They were properly changed with each issue while I was editor and while Stan Ranson was the editor. We both were responsible for preparation of the final copy before taking it to the printer. Since July 1998, when the newsletter became a publication done by committee, the assignment of proper whole numbers has also been consistent -consistently ignored. The wrong numbers are shown below.

Volume/Issue No.		Whole Number used		Correct Number	
Vol. 11, No. 12	June 1998	132		132	
Vol. 12, No. 1	July 1998	132		133	
Vol. 12, No. 2	Aug. 1998	132		134	
Vol. 12, No. 3	Sept. 1998	132		135	
Vol. 12, No. 4	Oct. 1998	132		136	
Vol. 12, No. 5	Nov. 1998	132		137	
Vol. 12, No. 6	Dec. 1998	132		138	
Vol. 12, No. 7	Jan. 1999	132		139	
Vol. 12, No. 8	Feb. 1999	132		140	
Vol. 12, No. 9	March 1999	132		141	
Vol. 12, No. 10	April 1999	132		142	
Vol. 12, No. 11	May 1999	132		143	
Vol. 12, No. 12	June 1999	132		144	
Vol. 13, No. 1	July 1999	132		145	
Vol. 13, No. 2	Aug. 1999	132		146	

Discrepancy brought to Editor's attention at August meeting. Publisher advised.

Vol. 13, No. 3	Sept. 1999	147		147	Whole Number fixed
Vol. 13, No. 4	Oct. 1999	147	!	148	Back to old ways again
Vol. 13, No. 5	Nov. 1999	147	!!!	149	And again not fixed

Discrepancy again noted and this document prepared, 28 October 1999.

The publisher is able to change the month, year and volume/issue number with each issue. Incrementing the whole number should be accomplished at the same time. It's in the same part of the front page as the month, year and volume/issue number; it's very hard to miss. Why can't this be accomplished on a regular basis?

Elimination of this error will be appreciated.

Thank you.
R. de Violini
Editor, *The Outer Edge*, 1987-1995
Editor, *The Computealist,* 1992-date
Accredited Literature Judge, American Philatelic Society

Of course, Bob is right. Many readers may not notice whole numbers, but they're useful for people who keep complete sets of publications, especially if there's a break in the publication schedule or if the number of issues per volume changes for some reason. . We're publishing this letter as a reminder to ourselves to keep the numbers up to date and for readers who may want to pencil the correct numbers in on their issues.

Quicken 2000 coming in December

Some say, "It's like Quicken, but better!" Others say, "It's like the Internet, but more useful!" What is it? It's the brand new Quicken 2000, and it will be the subject of our program on Saturday, Dec. 4, at Freedom Center at the Camarillo Airport, 515 Eubanks (at Pleasant Valley Road), Camarillo. The meetings are from 9:30 a.m. to noon, with the Internet and Beginner's SIGS starting at 8:45 a.m..

Intuit (the maker of Quicken) has done a terrific job of enhancing Quicken. Here are a few things that are new for 2000:

Improved One-Step Update: Now includes bill payment and intrabank transfers in the same click of a button.

Insider Trading Alerts: In addition to investments, quotes, asset classes, and news, you can download insider-trading alerts right into Quicken.

Six Life Events Planners: Prepare for your life events with inter-related financial planners. Find out if you can send your kids to college AND still retire when you want to.

Home and Car Comparables: Automatically track the value of your home and car. Get up-to-date comparables for important elements of your net worth.

Account Overview: See an overview for each account, all on one page.

Streamlined User Interface: Makes it easier to find features you're looking for.

Matt McCann will show off Quicken Deluxe 2000, Quicken Home and Business 2000, and Quicken Financial Suite 2000. McCann has an offbeat, fun and wacky presentation style, and, as an added bonus, he will bring along special user group pricing of the software, for that day only.

Here are other coming programs:

Jan. 8: Intuit—Turbo Tax. This fantastic program will interview you, complete the tax forms and print them out ready to be mailed. Need the highest quality audit protection service for your return? Check out America's pioneer and largest Prepaid Audit Defense provider, Tax Resources Inc. Because you're a TurboTax/MacInTax customer, TRI is ready to stand behind you and your return for as little as $25. TurboTax features up-to-date tax information for individuals and small-business owners. tax calendar, U.S. averages, the latest in tax law changes, and more.

Feb. 5: Broderbund - Genealogy. With this easy-to-use genealogy software you can search and organize your family history with ease. Whether you are an ardent family historian or an occasional genealogy hobbyist, Broderbund has a comprehensive, easy-to-use software line to assist you. Family Tree Maker 7.0 Deluxe comes in a 20-CD or 12-CD set of research discs. This program will be demon-strated by our own Lois de Violini, member of the Past President's Club of CIPCUG.

March 4: Aladdin Systems. Aladdin DragStrip 3.7 for Windows. Work faster, increase your productivity, and get organized. DragStrip for Windows is the ultimate tool for keeping your important items right at hand and making your desktop clutter-free. With a simple drag and drop interface, you can create convenient strips containing your most frequently used information, including files, folders, applications, URLs, pictures, movies, sound and text clip-pings and keep them just a click away. DragStrip puts everything you need within easy reach, saving you time and eliminating desktop clutter.

April 1: CommUnique Software. CommUnique Software USA is a worldwide developer, publisher and distributor of cutting-edge graphics tools. CommUnique was created to meet the needs of consumers who find themselves with a regular need for the benefits of high quality, competitively priced graphics applications. CommUnique has the distinct advantage, as a distributor, of having affiliate offices in Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and the United States. As a cooperative organiza-tion, CommUnique represents a marketing opportunity for over 80 percent of the world's computing industry. Blade-Pro is the Photoshop filter that combines textures with bevels and mirror-like reflections. It can quickly create tarnish, iridescence, and glassiness for appealingly "touchable" 3D looks. One hundred presets give you eye-catching text, Web buttons, and more. It offers custom textures, zoomable previews, new light sources, muta-tions, and more. It works with Photoshop and several similar paint programs.

May 6: Linux—Linux came about because of the cooperation of thousands of developers working in concert to make what its supporters consider to be the world's most advanced, best operating system on the planet. VA Linux Systems has been proud to be there to support the community from the beginning. VA Linux Systems' ma-chines have been used to create and forward the operating systems from the kernel to the desktop. Along those lines, we have extended a hand of friendship and cooperation to dozens of programming groups, providing needed hard-ware, bandwidth and hosting for a variety of efforts. Linux will be demonstrated by Charles Hibbits of Technicolor Video Services of Camarillo.

June 3: Higher Ground Software—Higher Ground Software makes software that can protect your data quickly, effectively, and easily and perform tasks such as crash recovery, hardware drive upgrades, and all without having to call a technician or get a PHD in computing. Be it power surge, bad software install, virus damage or whatever; Hard Drive Mechanic is the only program available that will work after a catastrophe has hit. //

OS/2 Corner

By Steve Carter, SIG Leader

December marks the sixth year for the existence of the OS/2 Corner. As it expands into Linux and other operating systems, there needs to be a name change. The December meeting will be discussing what changes to make for Y2K. One suggestion has been the "OS Corner" where all operating systems are presented and discussed. New SIG leaders might even take on several meetings each month where (bite my tongue!) even Windows 2000 is presented. Interested CIPCUGers are welcome to come and participate. Now is the time to talk about your needs, not after the decisions have been made. And don't forget to volunteer to help.

The OS/2 Corner meets from 9:30 a.m. until noon at the California Federal Bank, 430 Arneill Road, Camarillo. In addition to the discussion on a name change and on future directions, the OS/2 Corner will have general discussions on both OS/2 and Linux. For directions, go to <www.vcnet.com\os2-corner/>.

Junk Spy for E-mail

A free pre-release version of "Junk Spy" <www.sundialsystems.com/junkspy/> is ready for download from Sundial Systems.

Junk Spy installs between your e-mail program and your mail server, where it watches for, and filters out, junk mail. "This is a hands-off answer to everyone's junk mail problem," adds Rollin White, Junk Spy's Development Manager. "Here at Sundial we constantly analyze new junk mail and we also continuously update a database of known spammer sites. We do all of the logic enhancements and database updates so Junk Spy is always current."

"Junk Spy's logic engine lets us do much more than an end-user can with filters, since a mail program's filters can't access a database of clues or do extensive logic," says Randell Flint. "And because Junk Spy does all the checking based on Sundial's constant flow of database updates and detection clues, there's no need for a user to create filters and then keep them updated."

Norman Anti Virus

To download a demo, go to <www.norman.com/local/evals/evalnvc.htm>. Norman is getting a reputation of doing a great job answering questions on the OS/2 Newsgroup - Utilities.

ProNews/2 News Reader

The OS/2 SIG of the Philadelphia Area Computer Society <www.phillyos2.org> provides this report on a new newsreader written for OS/2. Pronews/2 is a top-rated OS/2 News client with many features that are lacking in other OS/2 newsreaders. Many users regard this unique newsreader as the best available, bar none.

Key features include a process manager that gives the user complete control over queued tasks (such as downloading articles), true message threading and fully customizable toolbars. It also includes an advanced filtering and thread-watching mechanism that can work on a group-by-group or global basis.

The user interface is based on the familiar and intuitive notebook format, with tabs for quickly accessing subscribed groups, new groups, all groups, queued processes and connections.

The most recent version, PN2_15B1.ZIP, can be downloaded from Hobbes, OS/2 Supersite, BMT Micro and other OS/2 Web sites. OS/2 e-Zine! Published a very favorable review of ProNews/2 last year. You can read it at <www.os2ezine.com/v3n01/pn2.htm>. //
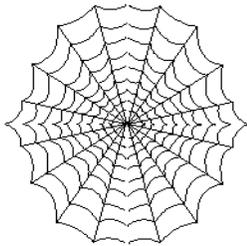

LETTERS

Not enough information

On page 18 (and all subsequent issues) please change my e-mail address to dd-dave@compuserve.com.

Your Editor's Column on page 19 talked about problems with Netscape Communicator. What version of Communicator do you have? I run 4.61 (4.7 is now available) and have very few problems. Is your modem a 56K V.90? Windows 95, 95a, 95b, 95c, Windows 98 or Windows 98 SE? Pentium @ ___ MHz, Celeron or Pentium II, III or ? (maybe a Mac? <g>). What I'm getting at is that when you say you have a problem with software—in this case, a very popular browser - you, as the CIPCUG editor, have to present more facts, so that the membership understands what your circumstances are when you have a problem.

And thanks for all the good work you do as the T.O.E. editor.

David Minkin

David makes an excellent point, and the problem was that my comments obviously weren't as clear to readers as I thought they were when I wrote them. The problem I referred to involved downloading the 4.7 update of Netscape through Norton Web Services. The download took more than an hour, and when it was completed, Web Services said the file was not the size it expected. The problem, as far as I know, was not in the browser, but, more likely, gremlins in the phone wires. Netscape is my default browser, despite Windows' attempts to make me use Internet Explorer, and I've been quite happy with it. //

CIPCUG'S
Web
Page
News

By Helen Long

After reminding everyone to check the Web site out around the 20th of each month for information on the folding party, it didn't make it for the November meeting. Alas, my computer "did some time" sitting on the shelf at All City Computers right about that time.

I had a problem with Word Perfect so I uninstalled the program and when I tried to re-install it, I got caught in a loop of some kind pertaining to updating the Windows Messaging Center. The installation would start, give me the Messaging Center update, tell me that it had updated it, and then go back into the install process and again, give me the error message about the Windows Messaging Center. I pouted and sulked for quite some time, but nothing would budge that installation, so I took my computer in to All City in Ventura. They found the problem and ended up doing some house cleaning in my Registry. They managed to get Word Perfect going for me once more so now I am a happy camper. I pat my monitor every day and tell my computer how wonderful it is!

I can highly recommend the services of All City Computers for repairs when you reach that brick wall where you take four steps backwards for every step you try to go forward with your own trouble shooting. They are, after all, the pros, and before you really do any serious damage, check them out!

Again, I would like to remind all interested volunteers to check the Web site out for information on the folding committee meeting around the 20th of each month. When John Weigle picks up the TOE from the printer, he calls Arline to make arrangements for notifying the committee about the "party"! Arline goes out of her way to fix "goodies" for the hard-working committee. If we have no hiccups, we can do the work in about two hours, usually (but not always), 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Always check out the front page for important news flashes or appeals for help. It's a lot of fun. If you haven't done it before, you should roll up your sleeves and join us.

The SIG schedules are posted for November and December. Remember, if you are not online, please don't hesitate to call me (Helen at 642-6521) to find out the schedule or subject of the classes. Unfortunately we were not able to include the OS/2 group under our umbrella, but never fear == it still meets the second Saturday of each month from 9:30 a.m. to noon at the California Federal Bank, 430 Arneill Road, Camarillo. Check the SIG date out for directions, if you are unfamiliar with the area, or to find out what is on the agenda.

If any of our club members have been holding back about joining the club's ISP service, I think I can say unequivocally that everything seems to be working fine. I don't think I have had a bounced message for several months now. Terry Lee has been waving his magic wand over CIPCUG and has hounded the gremlins from their system. Our connections have been flawless and the efforts of everyone at Cybernet are appreciated. If you are not online, give a call to the Tech Support person in your area (check the back pages of this newsletter for the list) or check the Tech Support online. Remember, the fee to club members is only $15 per month plus a $15 set-up fee. Your club benefits monthly from your sign-up.

Another reminder to those taking advantage of CIPCUG Online Service who may have been on some other planet for the past two or three months; don't forget to change your POP3 account to USER@mail.cbpol.net and the SMTP should read mail.cbpol.net. (USER = user ID name) Your return address can be USER@cipcug.org.

I have updated all the photo pages and have included a new page called Behind The Scenes. It shows some of our volunteers with their sleeves rolled up and busy at work. This club depends on the many people who volunteer for various and sundry jobs such as "table sitting" at the Computer Shows, Folding Committee Meeting, publishing the newsletter, etc. I think it is nice to be reminded of all the jobs that the many volunteers perform freely and willingly so that the club may prosper. Join us, won't you? //

Microsoft's Great Gift Ideas

By John Weigle

Despite some confusion and mix-ups, our November program was on Microsoft - but not Office 2000. Instead, David Jaffe, technology specialist manager, discussed several products the company is pushing for the holidays. They were Microsoft Works Suite 2000, Flight Simulator 2000, Home Publishing Suite 2000, Pandora's Box, Encarta Reference Suite 2000 and hardware stocking stuffers. He also spent a few minutes on Windows 2000 and Y2K issues.

Here's a rundown of the products:

WORKS SUITE: Works has long been a good program for users who don't need the full power of Office or another full-scale suite. Earlier versions had a word processor, database, spreadsheet and communications programs. The newest version substitutes the full Word 2000 for the word processor, giving the user a powerful tool for the most common computer project. The suite includes the spreadsheet, database, calendar, Home Publishing, Encarta Standard version, Money, and Trips and Streets, a mapping program.

"It's really easy to use," Jaffe said, and the bundled software would cost about $300 if bought separately. The suite retails for about $100.

The suite has a number of templates and wizards that let you create everything from a grocery list to such difficult-to-write letters as apologies and condolences. "The point behind Works Suite here is to make everyday tasks very simple," Jaffe said.

The opening screen lets you pick from three tabs: Tasks (some 350 are listed, he said), Programs and History (documents you created).

Works lets its users send e-mail and includes Vcard so users with compatible software can quickly add information to calendars. The e-mail program has many of the capabilities of Outlook, Jaffe said.

The best part of Works, Jaffe said, is its integration with Word and the Word templates.

FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2000: The 17-year-old product is consistently on top of the sales list for games, Jaffe said, even though it's designed to be a flight simulator, not a game. It's so good, in fact, that it can be used for pilot training, according to a short video he showed. It comes in more than one version, Flight Simulator and Flight Simulator Professional Edition. The textures change with the seasons, and it comes with six major cities and 21,000 airports. The Professional Edition has even more cities and aircraft, including the British Airways Concorde and the Boeing 777-300. Simulator has new 3D scenery, and you can customize the weather to actual current conditions by getting weather reports off the Internet and plugging them in. It also features a Global Positioning System navigation system.

HOME PUBLISHING SUITE: This program lets you create personalized greeting cards (printed and e-mail), improve photos and create photocentric projects. It includes Picture It 2000 (editing single and multiple photos), Greetings and Home Publishing. Templates of many types of cards allow you to add animation and sounds for the e-mail cards.

Picture It works with digital images, scanned photos and images from the Internet. Jaffe showed, for instance, how to insert a picture of a child who was home sick the day the class picture was taken into the picture or remove the family member you don't like from a photo. The suite also allows the control of contrast, removing of scratches, and removing of red eye.

PANDORA'S BOX: The game program is good for fans of Tetris, Jaffe said. It's a puzzle-solving, family friendly game that learns as you play, so the better you get, the harder it gets.

Microsoft is offering a combination deal on Pandora's Box and Home Publishing Suite through its Mindshare Web site <www.microsoft.com/mindshare>. Pandora's Box is free with the purchase of the Home Publishing Suite for $35.

ENCARTA REFERENCE SUITE: The program is good for elementary through college students, Jaffe said. "It's very, very comprehensive as far as a reference suite is concerned," he added. It includes Encarta (an encyclopedia), a world atlas and a dictionary and is available on CD-ROM or DVD. One of its chief features is the ability to prepare timelines on the subject you're interested in, he said. Using it is as simple as typing in a question and letting Encarta search all its parts for information. It also allows you to search within articles, a feature that wasn't available in previous versions, he said, and has a point-counterpoint feature that provides opposing views on controversial topics. In the atlas, you can rotate the globe and show or find latitude and longitude for any location.

STOCKING STUFFERS: Hardware items suggested for smaller gifts included the IntelliMouse Explorer, the IntelliMouse with IntelliEye, Natural Keyboard Pro, Natural Keyboard Elite and the Internet Keyboard. Any version of Office 2000 lets you use IntelliMouse Explorer or a keyboard.

As for Windows 2000, Jaffe said, "It's really not designed to be a home user" application. It's designed for large corporations, he said. Home users should stick with Windows 98 SE, he said.

Y2K issues are discussed at the Microsoft Web site <www.microsoft.com/y2k>. People who don't have access to the Web may obtain a Y2K CD by calling 888 MSFT

'Bubbleboy' alert

(This article is reprinted from Toby Scott's CIPCUG E-Letter of Nov. 10, 1999. Although many members subscribe, many members do not, and the information is important enough that we all should be aware of it. - Editor)

Since so much of the news regarding the new e-mail virus is horribly misinformed, I thought a small ray of sanity might be in order.

By now, most of you will have heard about the "Bubbleboy" or "Seinfeld" virus (Bubbleboy was an episode on Seinfeld). It is the first e-mail virus (technically, it's a "worm") that can infect your computer even if you don't invoke it. This is theoretically a huge advancement in the threat e-mail viruses can cause.

However, Bubbleboy is not much of a threat and there are more than adequate safeguards. So, don't panic. But do be careful.

First, Bubbleboy is only a threat to Outlook and Outlook Express (the e-mail program that comes bundled with Microsoft's Internet Explorer). If you are using Netscape, Eudora, AOL or any other mail program, you are NOT at risk.

Second, Bubbleboy is not a threat if you use Outlook Express and have installed the patch Microsoft issued in August.

Thirdly, the reports you may have heard on TV and the radio don't make it clear that Bubbleboy is not the threat. It is a demonstration of how a real threat COULD be sent to you. It is a potent demonstration. It is not a potent threat. Someone could take Bubbleboy, use the technique he uses to infect your computer and do something far, far worse. That's the only real threat Bubbleboy poses.

Fourth, if you click on an e-mail message in Outlook Express and get a black screen with white letters saying, "The Bubbleboy incident, pictures and sounds," don't panic. You do have Bubbleboy at this point, but he isn't too serious. When you reboot your computer, he will rename the registered user to Bubbleboy, the organization to "Vandelay Industries" and send himself to everyone in your address book, but other than that, he is done.

To get rid of Bubbleboy, delete the UPDATE. HTA file (probably in the C:\WINDOWS\StartMenu \Programs\StartUp directory). That's it. If you have already rebooted your computer before you delete the file, then send an apology to everyone in your address book with instructions for them on how to get rid of it.

Whether you have Bubbleboy or not, make sure you have the latest patch from Microsoft. That will prevent him from infecting you. You'll find it at <www.microsoft.com/security/Bulletins/ms99-032.asp>

You Don't Know Jack -

the irreverent collection

Review:By Dick Chaiclin

Do you really want to know JACK? Once you think you have gotten to know him, he will surprise you. If you do not like being harassed, made fun of, called names, or getting "screwed," this Sierra game is definitely not for you. It is a young adult's (that other generation) party game that asks trivia questions. Join the fun, but be ready to be lampooned by the ongoing irreverent commentary.

The game can have one to three players. It is played tournament style, with seven or 21 questions. The questions vary from the mundane to the intellectual and often a combination of both. Each question is worth money, but as you are given clues, time ticks down and the value of the question drops. The player with the most money at the end wins.

The games have such names as DisorDat, Jack Attack and my favorite, Gibberish, where you must translate a gibberish sentence to a meaningful one. Some of the fun with Jack comes by not answering the question just to hear the comments your computer host gives. If you're in for laughs, do not type your name when asked for it at the start.

JACK has been around several years and as with any trivia, it must keep up with our ever-evolving pop-culture. The Collection is a box with four CD jewel cases inside. As you might guess, Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3 and the two-CD Volume 4. The big box cover explains all this. However this particular box is not to be found in our local stores. The whole collection might be a little too much JACK. One or two CD sets should be sufficient. They run $9.99 - $14.99 at different stores. I've seen doubles (Sam's) for $13.99.

The vital statistics: Windows 3.x on a 486 will run the early JACK, a Pentium is recommended. The RIDE (volume 4) runs with Windows 95/98, needs 16 MB of RAM; at least a 4x speed CD-ROM. The usual sound and graphics stuff: 640x480, 265-color video and a16 bit multimedia sound card. //

Membership report

By John Godwin, Membership chairman

Please welcome the following new members:
- Catherine Lloyd
- Arline Grether
- Andrew Toth

October 1999 renewals due:

You will receive TOE through December 1999.

Member #	Last Name	First Name
034	Campbell	Gordon
900	Fischer	Bob
813	Langstaff	Clint
377	Miller	Mike
513	Speeds	John

November 1999 renewals due:

You will receive TOE through January 2000.

Member #	Last Name	First Name
930	Bryant	Terry
266	Buckley	Roy C.
381	Denes, Jr.	Alexander
738	Dutro	Georgia
789	Knauer	Wolfgang
820	Laningham	Lynn
384	Smith	Monty
45	Tiffany	Dora

December 1999 renewals due:

You will receive TOE through February 2000.

Member #	Last Name	First Name
829	Bates	Don
748	Burckhard	Jake
283	Carwin	Paul L.
908	Cronin	Richard
647	Harte	Maureen
394	Hickman	Richard
644	Hochberger	Lyle
390	Kelly	Bob
830	Kiceniuk	Taras
643	Kinoshita	George
749	Landreth	Bill
49	Lewis	Art
750	Markussen	Arne
825	Pinkerton	Ron
171	Ranson	Stan
785	Reynolds	Ann
827	Rosenbloom	Richard
828	Rosenbloom	Jean
832	Stock	Kenneth
645	Wallace	Sandra
125	Zakas	Len
650	Zakas	Trish

Total Membership: 357

Attendance at the November 1999 General Meeting:
- 133 Members*
- 13 Visitors
- 3 New Members

*This is a recount of the sign-in sheets after the meeting / /

SIG schedule

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are sponsored by CIPCUG and led by volunteers from the membership. There is no charge for members to attend the SIGs, just a willingness to learn and share. Signing up for the class is no longer necessary. The classroom is large enough to accommodate our club's needs.

SIG's are held at the Gateway Computer store, 1700 Ventura Blvd., Oxnard (in the Oxnard Auto Center, behind the Red Lobster and Fresh Choice Restaurants), from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. We must vacate the premises promptly by 8:30 p.m., so do your conversations in the parking lot after class.

If no moderator is listed for a SIG, it is not officially scheduled. Check the Web site before you attend to make sure there will be a moderator.

The December schedule:

Monday, Dec. 6: Publisher, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Moderator: Rabia Yeaman. Rabia will show us how to create Web pages with Publisher.

Saturday, December 11: OS/2, 9 a.m.-noon, at California Federal Bank, 430 Arneil Road, Camarillo. Moderator: Steve Carter. Check OS/2 Corner on the Web page for advance information.

Monday, Dec. 13, Windows 98, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Moderator: Jerry McLoud. Tips and tricks for WIN 98. Bring all your questions!

Monday, December 27: Happy Holidays. SIG canceled. //

Review: Printkey brings key back to life

By Jim Thornton <jthorn@gte.net>

Suppose that you want a paper copy of what is currently being displayed on your screen. The logical action would be to depress your PrintScrn key and your printer would immediately provide a copy.

No, it doesn't work this way! Microsoft changed the friendliness of your old DOS-controlled print screen feature when Windows was introduced several years ago. Now when you depress your PrintScrn key, the image is sent to your Clipboard. Then you need to open another program, i.e., Microsoft Paint, Word, or WordPad (NotePad doesn't work), Paint Shop Pro, etc., and paste the Clipboard image into the selected program's open document. The easiest way to send an image from the Clipboard is to make sure your cursor is on a blank part of the newly opened blank document and depress together the Ctrl+V keys. Or a right-button mouse click will bring up a small menu where one of the choices will be paste. Select paste and now the image of your screen is in the document. Next select Print from the File list on the Toolbar and the image will begin printing. This is a lot of work.

What about Alt+PrintScrn? What does that do? Basically the same thing except that only the active or open window on top will be sent to your Clipboard. This has all of the same problems. There must be an easier way.

PrintKey is a free shareware program that basically restores the Print Screen functions, but there are many new enhancements to this Swiss-developed program. The program is intended to load when you turn on your PC and places an icon on your System Tray.

A double left click on the icon brings up a program window with numerous choices and sub-menus on the Toolbar. The choices include the print the picture; copy picture to the Clipboard or paste the picture fro.m the Clipboard; edit, load, or save the picture; define hot keys; play a sound when a picture is taken; automatically copy the picture from the Clipboard; take a picture of the entire desktop, only the active window, or a defined area; etc.

From the tab areas, you can swap, invert, or substitute the colors, control the brightness, contrast, saturation, individual primary colors, plus many more options. You can also center, stretch, convert to monochrome, and print the image in landscape or portrait modes. Or these options may be bypassed and the program configured to immediately print the image whenever you click on the PrintKey icon. At the top of the printed image will be the date and time if you have previously selected this option. You can even pre-select your favorite graphic type viewer (BMP, EMF, GIF, JPG, or WMF) as the default viewer.

The free 576K executable version 4.01 is downloadable from <www.geocitiescom/~gigaman>. There are two for-a-fee versions of PrintKey2000 (light 453K and full 558K), with your choice of English (version 5.10) or German (version 5.03) languages. The minimum system requirements are Windows 95/98/NT4.0, an Intel Pentium 60MHz, and 12M of RAM.

Review: **McAfee 2000** Toolbox
seems OK, but how do I know?

By Laura Pacheco< L4Enigma@Compuserve.com>

First, I have to warn you, I have purchased just about all the "for dummies" and "for idiots" books I need. I am not a novice to computers, yet I am not what you would call an experienced PC user. Soooooo ... bear with me.

The first time I tried to install this program I had a problem with the update. It asks you if you want to update the program from the Web before you start any "tests." At the time, I was having problems with my MS Office installation and figured it had something to do with that. So I didn't continue but uninstalled the program instead.

The second time I tried it happened again. The upgrade could not be completed as before, saying something about not taking the "patch," whatever that meant. (Remember, I warned you.) So, I just skipped the update and proceeded to take the "tests."

What is it they say about never "assuming" anything? Well, I know now not to "assume" that my almost two-year-old HP Intel Processor was YK2 compliant. I really chose this program to update my McAfee virus detector, not knowing that it was more for the Y2K problem and would end up using the entire program and all it's tools.

Setup was an easy step-by-step installation with the manual to explain each step. The first order of business after the installation was the rescue tool. This is used to restart your PC if you encounter a problem that prevents you from starting from the system's hard drive. That was easy enough. The program also mentions a Disk Minder in DOS. I purposely skipped this procedure until I was a bit more secure with working from my DOS. Disk Minder in DOS lets you repair disks and helps with missing drives, trouble or errors accessing drives.

The Toolbox consists of 2000 Toolbox, Discover, Mcafee Imagae, Registry Backup and Restore, Win Gauge Lite, and Instant Update.

First one I checked out was Instant Update. This took me around 2 ½ hours to do. Don't ask me why. It says it upgrades the McAfee program, but I noticed that I was getting an upgrade for Internet Explorer (I had IE4 only), MS Office upgrades and who knows what else? Very strange, if you ask me, but I am not complaining. I needed my Internet Explorer updated anyway not to mention MS Office.

Did you know that there are four dates that have to pass the Y2K test? The obvious 01/01/2000 date, 02/29/2000, 03/01/2000 and 01/01/2001 have to be compliant. Leap year is divisible by 4 except years ending in 00; therefore, if not Y2K compliant, it would not recognize 2000 as a leap year. I read where some reports have been made of computers failing to accurately consider this possible problem. This program recognizes and corrects this problem. It makes sure the transition to 03/01 is also assured along with the following year's clock not picking it up as a leap year. This makes me feel a whole lot better.

The 2000 Toolbox checks the hardware and software for Y2K compliance, database and spreadsheet analyzer, your RTC, BIOS, DOS and window clocks. (I sound like I know what these are.) They have a resident program (Y2Kfixer.com) that can fix any problems of compliance. Oh, and mustn't forget the virus scanner, which is updated with Year 2000-specific viruses.

I started with the 2000 Toolbox and went through that test. Surprisingly, it found 12 problems, most of which were in my MS Office 97. All I had to do was click "next," and it fixed them for me. Apparently, if I wanted to I could just check one box at a time starting with the Application Compliance box, but, since I did not realize this and seldom read my manual, I had all the boxes checked. This included Database and Spreadsheet Analyzer, Hardware Checker and Viruses. That explains why it took a little more time than I expected it to. OK, so next time I will check with the manual. So far, it was going along pretty good and for that I was deeply grateful.

Right about now my Wingauge (which sits on my taskbar and sends me warnings by popping up on my desktop.) is telling me that "Drive C:\ is 6% fragmented, which may result in decreased performance." I click "OK" and continue. Actually, my drive is 1% fragmented and I see no problem with it. (It also popped up later that night and told me I was using too much "physical memory." That would explain why I received that blue screen and maybe why I was booted from the Web site that I was on.) Nice to have the warning, but after I do get it, what should I do? How can I correct it? I did end up using help; hope I didn't mess up and did it right this time. My friends know me as the CrashQueen. Not a hard title to hold on to, if you ask me.

Next, I opened Discover to see what that had in store for me. Apparently, what it is is a "benchmark" test to see if or how your PC's performance measures up against a comparable computer. So when I begin this test, it

comes up with a warning, "because of new features in Windows 95, this program may not run correctly." Telling me, of course, I might need an updated version but saying I could try to run this program if I wanted to take the chance. Yeah, right, I'm about as brave as the next guy, but not when it comes to my computer. So I took its advice and checked the "Help" section on that box. It told me that this program "may not function properly on your computer because it is using large disk support (FAT32).

Then, it gave me several choices on how I can obtain an upgrade that is compatible with FAT32 drives. Being the impatient type, I chose the Web site. However, it isn't too long before I find out I need a password and maybe even an ID name in order to get this upgrade version. So I register online and submit it. Just to make sure, I send an e-mail to the support center for same information. This feature will have to wait until I receive a reply.

An interesting thing happened after I typed out my information before submitting that never did before: A box popped up and asked if I would like to activate "AutoComplete" which is a function that eliminates repetition of information I submit on the Web. I like this feature. When I upgraded to IE5, I must have inherited this "suggestion" feature. This might not seem like a lot to the experienced users, but to me, it's a big deal. Then again, I am easily entertained.

The next feature and apparently the last one left was the McAfee Image. It "....saves an image copy of critical disk information in a special file, and restores that image later if your system becomes damaged." Apparently, and don't ask me how or why, I did this already with the 2000 Toolbox. It seems everything was done at once.

So, what do I think? That's a good question. How do I know this program works? How do I know what program works and which one don't? Each program says it's better and more thorough than the next. I guess we will find out in January. This program was somewhat easy to operate once/if you get by the "upgrades." After reading Gracia Marks' report on its sister software in the November issue and later talking to her, I learned she didn't have any problem with the 2000 Toolbox.

I do have one last comment to make. I would love to have a book "for dummies/idiots" on ERROR MESSAGES. How in the world are we "novices" going to find out what they are talking about, how to "fix" it, and where to look for these answers? Everytime my computer pops up with an error message - even

when I am booted from IE or get a blue screen, I just want to scream. What is a FAT32 .... or a "Patch"?????? I have searched my books, my "help" section, the "find" section and even the "search" section of the Web and nowhere does it tell me anything!! I would have to get a very technical book, which I cannot understand, and try to understand. I guess I am just going to stand up at the next meeting - no matter how dumb I may sound—and ask Toby Scott!!!! He doesn't care if I ask what I call "dumb questions"!!! Besides, he probably wouldn't mind the "break."

If you have any questions on this product, e-mail me. What the heck, e-mail me if you think you have a dumb question; maybe two heads are better than one.

(Editor's note: The FAT is the file allocation table, which, in very general terms, is an index to the drive so your operating system and other programs can find your files. The FAT 32 uses 32-bit clusters rather than the 16-bit clusters used in earlier systems and allows the use of larger hard drives and a more efficient use of space. A patch to a program is much like a patch to a piece of cloth. It's a fix or repair that solves some bugs but isn't enough of a change to require a new version number. Interestingly, Webster's New World Dictionary of Computer Terms say that early error messages were not clear but that today's should give more helpful information about how to fix the problem. Most of them still don't, however, especially if they're serious enough to crash the computer.)

Internet connection sharing

By Jim Thornton <jthorn@gte.net>

One of the newer features of Windows 98 Second Edition (SE) is the ability for two computers to share and use the same Internet connection without interfering with each other. Previously one of the computer users had to wait to pick up and send their individual e-mail messages or to "surf" the net until the other user was off the Internet. But now both users can be on the Internet at the same time independent of each other, without the need to have a second telephone line installed or buying additional modems.

The installation is fairly straightforward—install Windows 98SE on your main computer (hereafter referred to as the server), install a Network Interface Card (NIC) into each of your two computers, connect the two computers together by plugging a special telephone-like line cord into each NIC, activate the Internet Connection Sharing (ICS) feature on the server, and the ICS setup wizard will assist you in selecting the options Finally, reboot. Now the two computers can independently access the Internet. On the System Tray of the server, you will notice a new computer-shaped icon. Right-clicking this icon displays a menu with the options of providing the Status (how many computers are using the Internet connection), Options identifying the server's NIC card(s) by name and model number, and the ability to stop or disable the Internet-sharing feature. My wife, Dianna, and I have been using ICS for several months, and she is now enjoying the downloading and page flipping high speeds of our cable modem.

A few items of interest:

1. The server must remain powered on for the other computer, identified as the client, to access the shared modem.

2. Should the server be rebooted, the Internet connection to the client is temporary lost while the server is actually booting up.

3. The achieved modem speed is shared between the two computers. For example, if the total speed were 1,500Kbps, then each computer would be "surfing" at 750Kbps. The speed, however, is actually much more fluid and based on instant need or demand. For example, if the server user were just reading a stationary Web page the client user would be reaching the maximum speeds available.

4. ICS is fully operational with cable modems, ISDN, ADSL, and telephone modems (dial-up networking).

5. To add more than two computers, a special device called a hub should be used and each computer would be connected to it instead of to another computer. The hub is more economical than adding NICs to each computer as computers have very limited number of slots available. A four-computer network without a hub would need 12 NICs while the same network with a hub would need only four.

6. The maximum distance between computers is most reasonable. It can extend clear across the house. Ours is over 50 feet long and is hidden in the attic between two different rooms. Cords of 100 feet in length are readily available.

7. Cost is about $75 for a two-computer system ($25 per NIC and $25 for the long line cord). The Windows 98SE software was included when I purchased my new computer from All-City. In fact, they configured my new computer to be a server for my wife's two-year old computer running the original version of Windows 98.

8. One handy hint: Use the same manufacturer and model number NIC for ICS networking but use a different manufacturer for the cable modem, etc. By using different manufacturers' NICs, the installation and trouble-shooting is greatly simplified. We used Intel PRO/100+ NICs for the ICS and 3COM EtherLink XL 10/100 for the cable modem. Note: Some manufacturers will call their NICs network adapters—Intel does for one.

If you are interested in the step-by-step setup and the installation your own ICS system, there is lots of detail and helpful information on the net—microsoft.com, infinisource.com, intel.com, timhiggins.com, etc. //

Odds and ends

By Jim Thornton <jthorn@gte.net>

PAINT SHOP PRO PATCH AVAILABLE: Jasc Co. has released a new patch (version 5.03) for its popular graphics program Paint Shop Pro versions 5.0 and 5.01. This free 4.2M patch is available from <www.jasc.com/patches.html>. The improvements include removing the right-click browse feature, manually uninstalling Paint Shop Pro, resolving Colorado scanner incompatibility, changing icons, etc. Also, Paint Shop Pro version 6 is now available for $99 if you download the software or $109 if you want the program to be delivered by FedEx or UPS.

CUTBACK IN PC RADIO PROGRAMMING: Ventura radio station KVTA (1520 AM) has reduced the "Dr. Computer" Saturday morning program from two hours to one. This change was to add another local well-known radio personality, Pat Willis, and his popular radio program "Swap Meet," formerly on Ventura radio station KVEN (1450 AM) as "Garage Sale." If you would like to have the Dr. Computer program restored to its full two hours, write to the Station Manager of KVTA, at 2284 Victoria Ave., Ventura, CA 93004. They could very easily move Pat's program to one hour earlier.

RESTORATION OF PC RADIO PROGRAM: Los Angeles radio station KLSX (97.1 FM) has restored the three-hour "Komputer Klinic" with Kim Komando Saturday morning program back to 7 a.m. from 10 a.m. so that it can be heard live. As you can see, radio station programming managers do read their listeners' letters.

MORE WINDOWS SHORTCUT KEYS: Here are more Windows 95 and 98 shortcut keys. The previous listings appeared in the August 1999 issue of the TOE. These shortcut keys are very generic and will work in almost every Windows program.

Cut (Ctrl+X): Used to cut (remove) selected text, graphics, files, or folders from the displayed program for relocation in another document, file, program, etc. The selected (cut) items will be temporarily stored on your Clipboard. The Clipboard is a non-permanent storage location (in your RAM) whose contents can be very easily over-written (destroyed). This is most likely to happen if you use the cut command again without first using "pasting." The "cut" item or will be lost if you turn your PC off or reboot.

Copy (Ctrl+C): Used to copy selected text. This

Oxnard Adult School computer classes

Margaret Wright <Wardmarg@aol.com> announced the following information about Oxnard Adult School computer classes at the November meeting.

Oxnard Adult School classes are offered at 280 Skyway at the Camarillo Airport about every six weeks. The next classes start Jan. 3, 2000.

Classes cover Beginning Computing, Microsoft Word, The Internet, Excel, Adobe Print Shop and more

Morning, afternoon and evening classes are held during the week from 9 a.m. to noon; from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and from 6 to 9 p.m.

The cost is $35 per 6-week session or $25 for seniors. Books are extra.

For more information, call 385-2578 and ask about computer classes.

The computers are new and well kept, the teachers are motivated and the classes are step by step.

She added, "Personally have taken just about all they have to offer and found it quite helpful." //

command is identical to the cut command (Ctrl+X) except the selected item is not removed from your document.

Paste (Ctrl+V): Used to paste (insert) the previously cut or copied text from the Clipboard to the new document. Any items left in the Clipboard can be used and reused time-after-time until the item is written over or lost.

Undo (Ctrl+Z): Used to stop (halt) and undo (replace or put back) the last action that you did. These actions include copy, delete, and move. //

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down

By Earl Patin

What kind of service did you have from producers of computer hardware and/or software? Let everyone know by having your experience(s) published. Just send an e-mail message to Earl at patin@elpasonet.net, and your message to club members will be published. Remember, unless you specifically request it, your name will not be published and your anonymity will be preserved.

This month has been rather sparse as to input and the following is presented:

THUMBS UP

My vote for best all-round Tech Support I've received over the past 3-1/2 years goes to Earthlink Network, my ISP. I fool with my system a lot more than most, I suspect, trying out different peripherals and upgrading as I research article ideas. So-o-o, I get myself into more trouble than most.

Whenever I have a modem or Internet-related problem (frequently this past year), I turn to Earthlink. It has a toll-free number, and wait time normally runs no more than 6 to 8 minutes. The original techie contact usually can solve the problem, and guides you through whatever steps are needed to correct it. On several occasions, I have been turned over to a supervisor, who provided the answer.

I have also used Earthlink's online support, sending in questions by e-mail. That service has been helpful, too. On one occasion, when I couldn't get access to the Earthlink server from one of my computers after installing a new modem, we worried the thing back and forth for several days like a hound dog with a bone. Turned out that the new modem was defective, but I was impressed by the way they kept in touch and answered all my questions promptly.

Earl: Now there is an ISP that deserves recognition. How's yours?

(This article was reprinted from the November, 1999 issue of Throughput, the Journal of the South-West International Personal Computer Club, courtesy of the Association of PC User Groups. Copyright 1999 by the SouthWest International Personal Computer Club (SWIPCC). All rights reserved.

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Auction Scams

Federal Trade Commission issues warning

From Seniors Search (www.seniorssearch.com/ scams.htm>

If you're looking for a hot collectible or simply a good deal, online auctions may appeal to you. But before you place a cyber-bid, consider how online auction houses work. Like a traditional "live" auction, the highest bidder "wins." That's where the similarity ends. Because an online auction house doesn't have the merchandise, the highest bidder deals directly with the seller to complete the sale.

If you're the highest bidder, the seller typically will contact you by e-mail to arrange for payment and delivery. Most sellers accept credit cards or use a third-party escrow agent to collect your payment, the product you're buying, and process delivery of each. Be cautious, however, if the seller asks you to pay by certified check or money order.

Some online sellers have put items up for auction, taken the highest bidder's money, and never delivered the merchandise. What's more, consumers who paid by certified check or money order had little recourse when it came to getting their money back.

Follow these tips before you bid in an online auction:

Try to pay by credit card. If you don't get the merchandise, you can challenge the charges with your credit card issuer.

Ask about using an escrow agent, or paying by COD. Be aware that most escrow services charge a fee.

Verify the seller's identity. If you can't, consider this a red flag and avoid doing business with the seller. Some sellers may use a forged e-mail header, making it impossible to contact them if you need to.

Ask how you'll get follow up service, if you need it. Many sellers don't have the expertise or facilities to provide service for the goods they sell. Is this important to you?

Avoid impulse bids and purchases. Online auctions may be enticing, but are you really getting the best price?

Ask about return policies. Returning merchandise to an online seller may be difficult.

You can file a complaint with the FTC by contacting the Consumer Response Center by phone: toll-free (877) FTC-HELP (382-4357); TDD: (202) 326-2502; by mail: Consumer Response Center, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20580.

The FTC publishes free brochures on many consumer issues. For a complete list of publications write for Best Sellers, Consumer Response Center, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20580; or call toll-free (877) FTC-HELP 382-4357), TDD (202) 326-2502. //

What If Dr. Seuss Wrote Technical Manuals?

Found on the Net and submitted by Shay Collier ladyshay@gtemail.net

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port,
    And the bus is interrupted as a very last resort,
And the address of the memory makes your floppy disk abort
    Then the socket packet pocket has an error to report!

If your cursor finds a menu item followed by a dash
    And the double-clicking icons put your window in the trash
And your data is corrupted 'cause the index doesn't hash
    Then your situation's hopeless and your system's gonna crash!

If the label on your cable on the gable at your house
    Says the network is connected to the button on your mouse
But your packets want to tunnel to another protocol
That's repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall...
...And your screen is all distorted by the side effects of gauss
    So your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse
Then you may as well reboot the thing and go out with a bang
'Cause as sure as I'm a poet, know the sucker's gonna hang!

When the copy of your floppy's getting sloppy on the disk
    And the microcode instructions cause unnecessary RISC
Then you have to flash your memory and you'll want to RAM your ROM
So quickly turn computer off; be sure to tell your mom!
                    //

F1—Your Help Key
(Revised November 15,, 1999)

COMMUNICATIONS/INTERNET
   (See Cybernet Professionals Online Service
   Support for the technical support group for our
   Internet Service Provider agreement)

GENERAL INTERNET
World Wide Web..	DM, TS
Compuserve....	DM
Note Tab Pro...	TS
Procomm Plus....	DM, WB

DATABASES
Access	GM
dBASE...	GM

DOS...   RP

EDUCATIONAL / CHILDREN...TZ

E-MAIL
Lotus:CCMail...	DM

FINANCIAL
Quicken....	JD

GENEALOGY...   TL

HARDWARE, UPGRADING...JM, JD, RP

NETWORKS...   TS

OS/2...   LZ

SPREADSHEETS
Lotus 1-2-3...	GM
Microsoft Excel....	DM
Quattro Pro...	DM

WORD PROCESSING
Microsoft Word....	BW, DM, MR
WordPerfect....	DM, GM, JD
WordStar...	TS

UTILITY PROGRAMS
Norton Utilities...	DM, JD
PCAnywhere...	DM
PC Tools...	WB
XTree Gold...	DM

WINDOWS
Windows 3.1...	DM, JM
Windows 95...	DM, JM
Windows NT...	TS

CYBERNET PROFESSIONALS ONLINE SER-VICE
   (For general Internet and Communications
-    programs, see Communications/Internet)
Jerry Crocker,   486-0308,
   NormsPlumb@aol.com, 6-10 p.m.
Roland Fleig,   983-8707,
   schwable@cipcug.org, mornings
James "Al" Gonzalez,   659-3573,
   jgonzalez@cantd.ang.af.mil, Mon 9-6 p.m.
Bob Kumler,   482-4087,
   borbj@juno.com, afternoons
George & Arline Lakes,   983-2969,
   thelakes@cipcug.org, 2-10 p.m.
David D. Minkin,   484-2974,
   dddave@compuserve.com, 5-12 p.m.,
   weekends
Harold Simon,   658-8939,
   halsimon@bigfoot.com, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.
Claude Whelchel, 482-4017,
   claude@cipcug.org 8-12 a.m.

Initials	Name	(805)
BW	Bart Wood	482-4993 (e)
DM	David Minkin	484-2974 (e);
	(d: voice mail)	339-1729
GM	Gracia Marks	484-7572 (e)
JD	John Daily	650-0029 (b)
JM	Jerry McCloud	(818) 889-6176 (e)
LZ	Len Zakas	388-8452 (b)
MR	Marvin Reeber	984-1974 (b)
RP	Robert Provart	498-8477 (b)
TL	Terry Lee	981-1224 (d)
TS	Toby Scott	289-3960 (d)
TZ	Trish Zakas	388-8452 (b)
WB	Dr. William Burger	653-6889 (e)

Phone: (d) = days; (e) = evenings; (b) = both

Editor's corner

MENTION TOE: One of our ad sales people - and I apologize because I don't remember if it was Gracia or Laura - made an excellent point at the last meeting that I've touched on in this column before. It bears repeating for those of you who weren't at the meeting.

Over the years, we've lost some advertisers in The Outer Edge because, they said, the ads weren't doing them any good. That is, no one was responding. This could mean one of two things: The ads really didn't draw anyone into the store or they did draw people in, but the people didn't say so.

Advertisers and publishers know there are only a few ways to be positive how well an ad draws. One is to have a coupon and watch how many are redeemed (that's why you see so many coupons in daily newspapers). Another, good mainly for mail-order companies, is to have responses to ads in different publications sent to a department that is different for every publication (we might be Dept. TOE, for instance, although it's usually not that obvious). If a seller doesn't use some such technique, the only way he or she knows why you came to the business is if you say so.

"I saw your ad in The Outer Edge" is an excellent approach, even if you don't buy anything on that visit. The sales person might not know what The Outer Edge is, but if the name comes up often enough, the comments will get back to the person responsible for buying ads.

BOOKS AT DISCOUNT PRICES: It pains me to list both these in the same paragraph, because one might well be a contributor to the other, but if you're looking for bargain books on computers or anything else, there are a couple of good places to visit right now.

One is the longtime Ventura Book Store on Main Street in downtown Ventura. The store, which specialized in hard-to-find books and special orders can't beat the discount competition from Barnes & Noble and is closing its doors. But, until it does, everything in the store is being sold at 40 percent off, and there are some great bargains on everything from fiction to local history to computers.

If you're looking for books that are only a few years old, many of which were once on best-seller lists, try the big Books On Sale in the Home Depot/Office Depot shopping center in Oxnard near the Auto Center. It has a large collection of computer books at big discounts. One of the clerks told me they expected to be open through sometime in January (it's the same company that has the book store in the Camarillo Outlet Center).

BOOK MARKS: After last month's column, one reader suggested that I simply refer everyone to the Access magazine in the Sunday Ventura County Star. That works for members in the western end of the county, but my understanding is that the magazine doesn't appear in the east county Star because the Daily News out of the San Fernando Valley has a lock on it for that area. The magazine's Web version can be reached through <www.staronline.com>, however, so take a look if you're trying to find new spots to Web surf.

Meanwhile, if you have a favorite spot or two, send some information to me at <jweigle@vcnet.com> so we can share the information with other members.

-- John Weigle, Editor

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