Orange Bytes

Award Winning News Magazine of the North Orange County Computer Club *

A New SIG This Month

The Home Automation SIG will meet in Science 109 at 9:30 AM. Dan Cregg, head engineer at Smarthome, will be showing members how to use technology to improve your home.

Main Meeting

The presentation this month will be either Keith Renty of IOGear, or a presentation on Adobe Acrobat 8 final notice will be by email

Mega Book Sale - Page 16

NOCCC Meetings - December 3rd

NOCCC Thirty years and counting

8:30 a.m:

Visual Programming ....*Wilkinson 221*
Visual Basic and Visual Basic Script
Visual C++ and Visual J++ for Beginners

9:00 a.m:

Autocad.. *Science 203*
Linux for Desktop Users .... *Wilkinson 117*

9:30 a.m:

Computer Aided Investing.......................*Science 111*
Member Investment Strategies, Techniques and Software

Computer Essentials .... *Science 109*
Computer basics for new and inexperienced users

Digital Photography .... *Irvine Hall*
We will try to fix your bad photos

Home Automation SIG .... *Science 306*
Using technology to automate your home.

10:00 a.m:

Linux for Server Adminstrators .... *Wilkinson 117*

11:15 a.m:

Amibroker SIG ....*Science 111*
Beginners, existing users, learn how to use and apply Ami-Broker for investing and trading, share ideas and software.

Computer Security .... *Science 203*
Linux Programming Concepts .... *Wilkinson 117*
PC Q & A - Jim Sanders .... *Irvine Hall*
Most Q's A'd, some problems solved, assorted demos done

Understanding Operating Systems .... *Science 306*
Get Help with DOS, Windows 3.1, Windows 9x, OS/2, etc.

12:00 Noon   *PIG SIG.*   *Argyros Hall Cafeteria*
A lunch get together and talk.

1:00 p.m: *Main Meeting, Irvine Hall*
To be announced

2:30 p.m:

Hardware Essentials .... *Science 109*
Best picks for the holidays

OS/2 News and Installation .... *Science 203*

NOCCC web site:
http://www.noccc.org

Meeting Dates
Dec 3, Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 4, Apr 1, May 6

Table of Contents

Borrow a computer book from our library, see page 19

Celebrating 30 years of
"Friends Helping Friends"

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
for the following positions:
Help Line • *Maintains the volunteer list, and the software and hardware subjects for which they are willing to answer questions.*

Circulation — *Oversees the mailing and distribution.*

Commercial Swap Meets • *Distributes* Orange Bytes *and NOCCC material at swap meets.*

Commercial Advertising • *Obtains ads from both national and local vendors for the* Bytes*; the success of this helps our club finances.*

President's Message

By Elise Edgell, December 2006

The holiday season is really here. Help us celebrate by coming to the NOCCC Holiday Party on December 9th. It should be lots of fun and it is easy on the budget. Just bring a dish to share. Please RSVP to President@noccc.org for directions and include what dish you will be bringing.

We have a new SIG!!! It is Home Automation. Have you been wishing that you could use some of the new technology to make your life easier but have been unsure where to start? The SIG leader is Dan Cregg, a fairly new member of NOCCC. He is really knows the subject and is able to explain it. Be sure to come to the first meeting of the Home Automation SIG. You might even get some ideas about possible Christmas gifts for the people on your gift list who "have everything."

I am sad to say that we no longer have a Mac SIG. The attendance fell off to the point where it was not worth having the SIG. We are exploring the possibility of rearranging some of the SIG meeting times so stay tuned to be sure that your favorite SIGs are still meeting at the same time and place. If you have any comments about preferences on SIG meeting times please send your comments to Herb Wong at vicepresident@noccc.org with a copy to me at president@noccc.org. We (same as above) are also interested in hearing from you if you have gone to a SIG meeting and the room was dark (no one was there). It is difficult to determine when a SIG is no longer being held because there are so many activities that occur at the same time. It is discouraging to you, as a member, or to a guest, to show up for a non-extistant SIG. By letting me know when this happens it also lets me know that people are still interested in that SIG. I realize that sometimes the SIG leader has an emergency and is unable to get someone to cover the SIG. But, this should not happen 2 months in a row. Remember, this is YOUR club. Please take an active part in keeping in running.

If you have not been receiving your printed copy of the Orange Bytes or have not been receiving the monthly email message with the user name and password to have access to the current Orange Bytes on line, please contact our Treasurer and Data Base Keeper at treasurer@noccc.org. He will check out your problem and fix things. It is important to us to have current information on you. It is easy to change email addresses and forget to let us know. If you don't get the current information of our club you will be missing out on things that you would really enjoy or find useful.

I hope that you are all thinking about what office or job that you are qualified to do for NOCCC. I would like to see a real election this next time. It is very important that there are members who are willing to run for office since some of the current officers and board members are not going to be running for office next year. I have been President for two terms. It is time for someone else to take that position,.

Our Orange Bytes Editor, Jim Sanders, will also be stepping down in June. Are you interested in being the editor of the Orange

Membership Benefits

As a valued member, we bring you a section of discounts and offers as part of the entire "Benefit of Belonging." (Caveat - we are unable to endorse these companies, but make these offers available as a service to our members).

Orange Bytes on PDF earlier in the month!

Members ONLY: Watch your e-mail every month for the Password to get the award winning Orange Bytes much earlier in the month via PDF file on the http://www.noccc.org website. Make certain you let us know any e-mail changes (membership@noccc.org) so you can get the jump on all the great Reviews and Articles!

User Group Offers

AskSam – SurfSaver 6, normally $29.95, you can get it for $19.95. AskSam 6 Standard + SurfSaver 6 is a flexible and powerful way to organize information and create searchable databases from Web pages, Email, PDF files, texts, and Word documents. Normally $149.95 but you can get it for $69.95 or the Pro version for $99.95. You can also download 30 day trial versions. http://www.asksam.com/usergroupspecial/

Blue Squirrel - www.bluesquirrel.com/usergroup/ 50% off all products - call 800.403.0925 to order and mention user group special pricing. - till end of 2006

Corel - at the Feb 5, 06 presentation, Corel gave us the following link for special pricing to user group members. http://www.corel.com/specialusergroups

WordPerfect Office X3 for $159, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X3 for $179, Corel Painter for $229, Paint Shop Pro Photo XI for $59, and Snap Fire Plus for $29.

Laplink – www.laplink.com - Laplink Everywhere 4 is a great remote computer control and access program. An annual 3 PC license normally sells for $129.95. Use coupon code LLE4THRTY at checkout and get it for $30. Their PCmover program, for moving all of your applications, settings, and data files from your old PC to your new PC while keeping all the new software intact, is normally $39.95. Use coupon code PCMVRTEN and get it for $10.

O'Reilly Books

Get 35% off all books and PDFs from O'Reilly, No Starch, Paraglyph, PC Publishing, Pragmatic Bookshelf, SitePoint, or Syngress books you purchase directly from O'Reilly. Just use code DSUG when ordering online (http://www.oreilly.com/store/) or by phone (800-998-9938). Free ground shipping on orders $29.95 or more in the US. If, for any reason, you're not completely satisfied with your purchase, return it to O'Reilly and get your money back. A return shipping label is included with every direct purchase, and directions are posted online in case you've misplaced it: http://www.oreilly.com/oreilly/cs/guarantee.

Peachpit Press Books Discount - of 30% can be obtained by joining the Peachpit Club. Go to http://www.peachpit.com to sign up as a member. User group members should note that once you've become a Peachpit Club member, you may use your user group coupon code ON TOP of the permanent savings you earn as a member of the club. Just make sure you've logged into the site before you make a purchase to ensure this permanent discount will be in effect, and then enter coupon code UE-23AA-PEUF (case-sensitive) at checkout! This coupon code is an exclusive offer that may not be used in conjunction with any other coupon codes. The offer applies to all titles at peachpit.com including New Riders, Macromedia Press, Adobe Press, and Peachpit Press.

Prentice Hall, Addison-Wesley, IBM Press, Sams Publishing, and Informit.com Get 35% off list price by purchasing directly from

NOCCC

The board meeting minutes didn't arrive before the press deadline, so I will use some of this space for a couple of reminders.

Book Sale. With Christmas just around the corner, this is a great opportunity to give a computer geek friend the gift of valuable knowledge, according to the MSRP :-), at a bargain price. See page 16.

NOCCC Holiday Party on December 9th. It should be lots of fun and it is easy on the budget. Just bring a dish to share. Please RSVP to President@noccc.org for directions and include what dish you will be bringing.

Home Automation SIG, This new SIG is being led by Dan Cregg, Chief Technology Officer of Smarthome Inc. With his extensive background Dan will be able to cover a wide range projects that you can do to improve your home and life. Go to www.smarthome.com to see a wide range of things that might interest you.

DECEMBER 3RD MEETING PREVIEW

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY SIG - 9:30 am - Larry Klees - At the next meeting Larry will announce what he is going cover at the meeting:

COMPUTER ESSENTIALS SIG - 9:30 am - Elise Edgell, your club President, will be leading the SIG that is dedicated to helping new and inexperienced users conquer their computer challenges.

COMPUTER AIDED INVESTING SIG: 9:30 am – We'll look at what happened in the Market, how the Market is reacting to the election, identify what to expect for the Christmas Rally and beyond. The technical material will use various tools and websites to compare trading of ETFs, Closed End funds, and Managed Funds from Rydex, ProFunds, etc. to look for strengths and weaknesses in each strategy and what models work with them.

AMIBROKER SIG: 11:15 am – This will be a hands-on session to walk through some of the downloaded programs and explain the code, make corrections if needed for your data configuration, and make improvements. We will cover the RUTVOL sig-

nal program , how the signal is captured using the AddToComposite function, and how to use the signal in a trading system. (This is the basic signal used in Tango5.) Time permitting we will discuss program flow, using one AFL program for multiple functions, and various debugging methods.

MAIN MEETING 1:00 pm, Irvine Hall - The presentation this month will be either Keith Renty of IOGear with a presentation of the IOGear line of products, or a presentation on Adobe Acrobat 8. The choice will be determined by scheduling problems. Final notice will be by email, which is another good reason to make sure the club has your current email address.

THE CLUB RAFFLE items this month are: a Radient Frame, Sonic - My DVD Studio program, Books - C++ Common Knowledge, Effective C++ 3rd Edition. Hedge your bet, wear your current membership badge and get a free ticket for the member only raffle.

THE MEMBER-ONLY PRIZES (requires wearing badge to get a free ticket) will be: Printshop 10 program, Book - Symantec Guide to Internet Security & ??? ■

Consignment Table

1. The consignment table is for members only. Only current members can place items for sale, but non-members are welcome to purchase items from the table. This is a great place to get some money for your surplus computer items, and help your Club at the same time.

2. The consignment table operates on a 90/10% basis — with the owner getting 90%, and the Club treasury 10%.
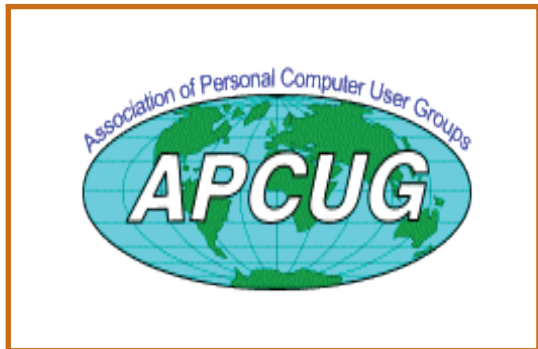
3. Fill out a tag on each item! It must contain: Seller's Name, NOCCC Membership Number, Item name, a short description and selling price.

4. Also, fill out the USER LIST with Name, Address, Phone Number. and a complete list of items and their selling prices.

5. All items and/or money may be picked up by the owner at any time, but MUST be picked up no later than 2 PM on day of sale. Because of the new disposal laws, if you have a display or computer that doesn't sell, you must pick it up. The club has no storage room available, and can not legally put it in the trash.

6. Any items and/or money not picked up by 2 PM, will become the property of NOCCC and will he subject to disposal at the Club's discretion. As it is now illegal to put monitors or computers in the regular trash, you must agree to pick these items up if they don't sell.

7. NOCCC is NOT RESPONSIBLE in any way for items bought and/or sold at the Consignment Table. Each item is placed and sold on an AS-IS BASIS. ∎

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Ted's Stuff

By Ted Littman, NOCCC Reviews Editor and Board Member

This is the 6th issue of my column for the Bytes. In it, I share with my fellow NOCCC members links to interesting and useful web sites as well tips and ideas on computing that I come across. If you would like to include your gems or make comments, please email them to me at tedsstuff@adelphia.net for publication in this column, with appropriate attribution of course.

Computer Talk

Windows Live OneCare

Microsoft has been promoting a new online subscription-based PC "safety scanner" called Windows Live OneCare that is designed to ensure the health of your Windows-based computer. It will check for and remove viruses & spyware, get rid of junk on your drives, and improve PC's performance (through defragmentation, deleting temp files & invalid Registry keys, etc.). You can download a **free** manual program or a free 90-day trial at http://safety.live.com/site/en-US/default.htm. The latter is automatic (running in the background) and self-updating. Vista users currently have a beta utility available. Go to http://safety.live.com/site/en-US/default.htm?s_cid=sah.

I tried the manual program and had it run overnight, since my computer has a lot of hard-disk space and a zillion files. The next morning, there was a report that it could not find any viruses or spyware (no surprise, since Norton's One Button Checkup had run earlier) and Defrag wasn't necessary (I use Diskeeper 2007 Pro). However, OneCare found 482 bad Registry entries and 2.8 GB of Temp files (which was surprising). After letting the utility create a Restore Point, I had OneCare remove the bad items. It couldn't remove 14 "bad" Registry items and about 700 MB of Temp/other files (probably because these, for some reason, were restricted). All-in-all, it wasn't a bad job. There is another site, PC Pitstop, where you can get a free scan to identify many problems that plague computer performance (http://www.pcpitstop.com/store/optimize.asp?AdID=244291).

Discount Coupons

Hundreds of well-known online stores like Barnes and Noble, eBay, Best Buy, Staples, and Amazon.com have a place within their shopping cart for a "coupon code" that gives a percent or dollar amount off your purchase. You can find most of these coupons in an up-to-date list at http://currentcodes.com/.

Criminals Increasingly Blend IT Threats

I commend to your reading an article at http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,1895,1985999,00.asp?kc=EWEWEMNL071006EPW1A that contends that malware writers, hackers and other cyber-criminals are combining multiple forms of IT threats in an attempt to amplify their efforts. The article states "that criminals are converging their attacks across multiple communications channels, such as e-mail, instant messaging networks and Web sites, and are also pulling together information-gathering techniques, including spyware, spam and phishing schemes, as they seek new ways to menace businesses and consumers." It also cites as an example, a threat aimed directly at users of eBay's PayPal online payment site and provides a link to more information on this. (I have received numerous phishing e-mails telling me to call a phony customer service call center and provide personal credit card information.) The article references a Microsoft article on malicious software removal at http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/default.mspx.

Buying Stuff On-line

If you pay for on-line purchases with a credit card, this brief article on using a third-party payment service may be useful: http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/privacy/onlinepayments.mspx.

Free Software

If the word "free" turns you on, check out this popular web site for the best free security and antispyware programs: http://www.download.com/Best-free-security-and-spyware-software/1200-2023_4-5163183.html?tag=nl.e415. Also check out pcworld.com/55539.

Internet Explorer 7

According to most reviews that I've seen, this free new Microsoft upgrade (http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/downloads/default.mspx?mg_id=10017) is a big step forward from version 6 with lots of security enhancements and many of the features that have made Firefox so popular. So if you are a Windows XP user and are still using IE 6 (or earlier), you really should do the upgrade. I did and I like it too. PC Magazine reviewed the updated browser at http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,2041269,00.asp.

Mozilla Firefox 2.0

On the other hand, you may want to take advantage of the Firefox upgrade, while not as drastic a change from its prior version, is still preferred by lots of folks and has more desired features than IE. According to eWeek, it has "the greatest out-of-the-box usability of any Web browser that we have tested." Check out this review which has a link for the free download of Firefox: http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/downloads/default.mspx.

Windows XP Features and Technologies

Although the era of Vista is starting, many of us will probably be using Windows XP for some time to come. In that vein, if you want to take better advantage of the capabilities built into the XP operating system, check out this Microsoft web site with links to articles on Digital Photography, Games, Making Movies, Music & Video, TV & Multimedia, and more: http://www.

microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/default.mspx. Here's a tip on opening multiple programs listed in the Start menu simultaneously: Hold the **Shift** key down and left-click each program icon.

Organizing Your Windows Start Menu

Dan Butler has written a useful article on this issue with lots of graphics to show you how to improve your Start Menu (http://www.tnpcnewsletter.com/dan/menus/). I bet most of us never make any changes to the one Microsoft provides.

Intel Core 2 Duo vs. AMD X2 AM2

If you are thinking about buying a new high-end computer, you may want to take a look at this article comparing the two CPUs: http://www.channelinsider. com/article/Intel+Core+2+Duo+Vs+AMD+X2+AM2Top+ to+Bottom/188341_1.aspx?kc=CITCIEMLP091406LABR.

Microsoft Office XP Tips and Tricks

If you are interested in finding out what other Office users are doing, check out this web site: http://www.microsoft. com/Office/previous/xp/tips/office.asp. For some useful tips on using Excel, check out http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/ excel/HA010874771033.aspx. If you use Word, take a look at http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word/HA010963811033. aspx. And, for Outlook users, see http://office.microsoft. com/en-us/outlook/HA010970221033.aspx. Another good source for Office tips is at http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/ help/HA011872211033.aspx, the Crabby Office Lady. And finally, there is 12 Tips for Creating Better Documents at http:// www.microsoft.com/atwork/getworkdone/documents.mspx.

HP Online Classes

HP offers a number of free online classes that may be useful for you (http://h30240.www3.hp.com:80/?mcID=email). Currently included are Digital Photography, Everyday Printing, Everyday Computing, and Digital Entertainment.

Consumer Reports Annual Electronics Issue

The November issue, available at your local library, news stands, and by subscription, has a large section devoted to computers, digital cameras, home theaters, cell phones, and more with ratings and recommendations. The December issue will be the annual Buying Guide. Be aware, the Christmas season, is well along with a big push by Wal-Mart and with great buys on computers and other electronic equipment.

Taking Better Photos

HP has some useful information on taking better photos as well as editing and printing them at http:// www.hp.com/united-states/consumer/digital_pho tography/take_better_photos/tips/family-portraits. html?jumpid=ex_R602_info/hho-ng-1164-familyPhoto.

53 Hardware Secrets

The December 2006 issue of PC World (p. 96) has dozens of upgrade tips, useful tricks, and thrifty add-ons for your PC, printer, camera, phone, media player, etc. Take a look as it might save you some money on replacing your equipment. The same issue (p. 90) has a review on color laser printers with prices as low as $400. The Dell 3110 cn as rated a "Best Buy" at $500.

Transferring Photos from VHS Tape to Digital DVD

This is an article by Steve Bass (http://tech.msn.com/ howto/article.aspx?cp-documentid=955056) that may be of interest to some of you folks who want to preserve your photo archives.

Fixing Problems in Symantec Software

If you are using Norton Internet Security or Norton SystemWorks and the programs crash or won't work, Symantec has an **AutoFix Tool** that you can download at https://www. secure.symantec.com/techsupp/asa/index.jsp. If that doesn't work, there is a **Norton Removal Tool** that you can download (http://service1.symantec.com:80/Support/sharedtech.nsf/ docid/2006031710323113?) and it will uninstall all Norton 2007/2006/2005/2004/2003 products from your computer. Then you can reinstall the programs. This tool worked fine when I recently tried to remove NIS 2007 and NSW 2007 from my PC after a crash made them inoperable and they couldn't be removed using the regular procedures and even manually removing all program files and Registry entries.

That's it for now. Happy computing and wishing you all a great holiday season. See you next month. ∎

Icon Change

By Jim Sanders, NOCCC

F r o m   T o

If you are like me, I got really tired of seeing the chess pieces every time I booted up my WinXP system. I tried a couple of the other stock icon images that Microsoft provides and still wasn't happy. I have known for a long time that they could be changed and personalized, it just seemed like one those "Oh what does it really matter!" type of things. Then a friend of mine asked me if it was possible to change the icons for his kids on the family computer and use their own pictures for their icons. I had forgotten how easy it is to do that. It is so easy almost anyone should be able to do it. The original chess piece was a 48x48 pixel shot. I took a family photo and cropped out a head shot that I then stored in My Pictures as a jpeg file.

Icon Change

It turned out to be a 500x500 pixels photo and worked just fine. WinXP adjusts the photo so that it fits in the icon frame.

Just follow these easy steps and you too can personalize your sign-on screen. You need to be logged in as administrator to have the privileges needed to change the icons.

Click on Start, then Control Panel, then User Accounts which brings up the User Accounts window. That window tells you to pick an account to change. Click on the account you want to change. The User Accounts screen then asks, "What do you want to change about your account?" At this point you want to click on "Change my Picture." The User Accounts window changes again and displays the stock icons below the instruction to "Pick a new picture for your account." Immediately below the icons is a magnifying glass next to the hot link text "Browse for more pictures." Place the mouse cursor over that text and it will be underlined. Click on the underlined text and it will cause a new window to be opened labeled, surprise, "Open." If the "Look in:" window doesn't default to the My Pictures folder, click on the down arrow at the right hand end of the window and navigate to the My Pictures folder or the one that your picture is in. Locate the picture you want to use, click on that file to highlight it, then click on open. The icon will be changed to that photo. Close the windows and you are done. Repeat for each user you want to change. ∎

The New, the Best, and the Worst

Collected by Pim Borman, Website Editor, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

http://swipcug.apcug.org/,
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Spintronics

No one, fifty years ago, could have foreseen or even imagined how the advent of evermore powerful computers would revolutionize science, technology, commerce, and communications. Vastly improved algorithms and architectural structures have been important, but the crucial factor has been the ability to cram ever smaller and more complex circuits on a semiconductor chip. That ability is now approaching a limit posed by atomic size and increasing influence of quantum effects. We may have to learn how to do more with what we already have if we want to further improve computers so that they'll be able to predict the weather or model the Big Bang, to mention just a few challenges.

From an electro-mechanical standpoint every digital computer, no matter how primitive or advanced, consists of on-off electrical switches connected in a circuit. In semi-conductor-based systems the binary 0's and 1's are represented by electrons that carry a negative charge, and missing electrons, called "holes," with positive charge. That is simple and straightforward enough. But wait, there is more...

There can be no electricity without magnetism. They are like heads and tails, yin and yang, up and down. Electrons, the elemental carriers of electricity, also are elementary magnets. You can, very much simplified, think of them as spinning spheres of electricity, tiny electromagnets in other words. Depending on the direction of spin, the magnetism points up or down. Technology making use of the magnetic properties of electrons is often referred to as "spintronics." So far, computers ignore the magnetic state of the electrons, but what if we learned to use it for additional information storage?

About 50 years ago scientists learned how to manipulate and record the magnetic properties of electrons and certain atomic nuclei to examine the composition of substances, using a technique called nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR). Eventually that technique was extended to examine the characteristics of human tissue. The name was changed to Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to avoid the term "nuclear" with its negative connotations, although it has nothing to do with damaging radiation or nuclear energy in this case.

More recently, in the late 90's, scientists at IBM learned how to use spintronics to make very small, highly sensitive read-heads for use with computer hard drives. The sensors consist of a microscopic sliver of semiconductor sandwiched between two thin magnetic layers. The top layer is a permanent, "hard" magnet, but the bottom layer is a soft magnet that changes magnetic orientation easily as it passes over the magnetic regions on the disk. If both magnets in the head are oriented in the same direction, electrons align magnetically in the same direction and move easily through the semiconductor. If the magnetic layers point in opposite directions, the electron spin is reversed as it moves through the semiconductor, affecting its mobility and therefore the amount of current. Clever, isn't it? Practically all newer hard drives use that technology now.

If computers could be designed to use both the electrical charge and the magnetic state of electrons, each unit of information could have four different quaternary values (0,1,2,and 3) instead of the two binary values (0 and 1) currently used, resulting in greatly increased performance. But the semiconductors must be magnetic to recognize the magnetic 'up' or 'down' state of electrons. Magnetic semiconductors are few and far between, and so far none remain magnetic at room temperature.

If the material problems can be solved, we may be looking at future computers that are not only more powerful, but also easier to use. Because magnetic semiconductors retain their logic states without power, systems could be instant-on and use less power. Also, principal functions of a computer, such as logic operations, communication

between circuits, and data storage, could be integrated in a single material, resulting in smaller and faster computers with high data-storage capacities and fast performance.

Making spintronic computers possible depends on chemists formulating magnetic semiconductors able to support the technology. Much progress is being made, but it will take a while longer. Not surprisingly, this article was based on an article in Chemical and Engineering News, Aug. 28, 2006.

Cookies With Gas?

Would you believe Internet via the gas meter? A San Diego-area start-up company, Nethercomm, claims to have developed technology to send broadband and TV services through the underground natural gas pipes. A converter box attached to your gas meter receives the signals and sends them to your computer or TV set. The headline of the article in USA Today (9/11/06) says it all: "Gasline broadband a pipe dream?" (Thanks, Duane Morrow).

A Linux Epiphany

I wasn't going to mention Linux this month, but... James Derk, our local computer guru known for his syndicated weekly computer columns for Scripps-Howard News Service, has been pooh-poohing desktop Linux for years. Guess what. His column in the Evansville Press and Courier of September 18, 2006 is headed "It may be time to give Linux another try." He specifically mentions the Ubuntu Linux distribution which, he writes, is "...painfully easy to get up and running ... without spending a dime." Derk keeps his columns at www.cyberdads.com/blog.html You can also find them on the Scripps Howard Web site at www.shns.com/ under Columns...Business, Finance, and Technology...Compute.

Reap What You Sow!

I've been getting bored with being a one-man Linux SIG in the SW Indiana PC Users Group. I suggested to our new Region 6 Advisor of the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG), Jerry Gillette, that APCUG might be able to sponsor a way to exchange news and information between Linux aficionados scattered amongst its member Groups. He passed the word, and the suggestion was accepted with enthusiasm. APCUG now carries a new Conference (section) on its Web Board, APCUG. linux. Of course, the Conference requires a moderator, and who do you think got "volunteered?" Right, "c'est moi" said the fool. Oh well, one must reap what one sows. Access the AP-CUG Web Board at webboard.apcug.org and leave a message!

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

Free Up Megabytes of Disk Space

By Vinny La Bash, a member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida

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http://www.spcug.org

Pull Quote – these folders could be the culprits that are chewing up valuable storage area.

Look in your Windows folder and count how many folders you have that start with "$NtUninstall". They are all related to various patches, updates and service packs for XP. Those $NtUninstall folders are created when you install a Microsoft Service Pack, a hot fix, or certain security updates. Some of these folders could date back almost to the day you first installed your computer.

Their names are in blue, and they are all marked as hidden and read only. If you don't see them in the Windows folder, open the Tools menu, and select Folder Options from the drop down menu. After the Folder Options dialog box appears, activate the View tab, then left-click the Show hidden files and folders radio button. Click OK to close the dialog box and the hidden folders should appear. If nothing happens close down Windows Explorer and restart it. You don't need to restart your computer; simply open Windows Explorer again.

Why should you do this? If you're getting low on disk space and the usual remedies haven't freed up enough space, these folders could be the culprits that are chewing up valuable storage area. If you have had Windows installed for more than a year and you are conscientious about keeping your system up-to-date, these useless folders are probably tying up gigabytes of data. Enough of them can have the unfortunate side effect of noticeably slowing down virus and spyware scans. It also takes longer to defrag your disk drive. An accumulation of unnecessary or extraneous data on your system will eventually affect system performance and in extreme cases cause drive errors.

The files within the $NtUninstall folder provide instructions on how your computer uninstalls a Windows update. Each folder has a specific name ending in the name of a particular Windows modification. If you were to go to add/remove programs and select a Windows update to uninstall, the information on how to run this process would come from the corresponding $Ntuninstall folder.

You can safely delete all these folders if you have no plans to uninstall any of the related patches. As updates and patches accumulate, these types of fold-

Ulead's DVD MovieFactory 4 Software

By Elise M. Edgell, NOCCC

I have stacks of VHS and 8mm cassettes that are probably reaching the end of their life. I would love to transfer these to digital format before it is too late. In an ideal world, I would capture the video from each tape and edit it into a movie that would be fun to watch. But, in the real world, this will never happen because of the amount of time involved. So, when an ad caught my eye for a program claiming to be able to transfer video from an analog source directly to a DVD I thought that I had found a solution. I could transfer my old analog tapes to digital format and then, at a later date, if warranted, I could edit the video. If I never got around to doing the edit, at least the data would be in digital format.

The program which I am referring to is Ulead's DVD MovieFactory 4. It is a relatively inexpensive program which lists for $49.99 and has a street price from $35.00 up. (Ulead has a come out with DVD MovieFactory® 5 and a new program DVD MovieFactory® 5 Plus.) It will run on computers starting with an Intel Pentium III 800 MHz or Athlon 800 MHz and for operating systems from Windows 98SE through Windows XP. The minimum memory requirements are modest (250 MB) with 500 MB recommended. My computer with an AMD Athlon XD 2600, 1.9 GHz with 512 MB RAM easily met the requirements. I also have an AGP nVidia GeForce Video Card with 128 MB memory which met video card recommendations. (When editing video "shared video memory" is not recommended because this type of computing is very memory intensive. Many laptop computers use shared video memory and low-end desktops also do this because it is less expensive.) The other required devices are a DVD burner and, to capture analog video, video capture card. The box listed the names of DVD burners which seem to include the major companies plus it says "and more." I have a LiteON DVD burner which works with the program. I was not concerned with the compatibility with DVD camcorders because I do not own one.

The key element to accomplish what I wanted to do was an analog video capture device which is compatible with the program. This was listed as an optional requirement and the box says PCI, TV tuner, USB capture devices compliant with WDM standards and PC cameras." WDM stands for Windows Driver Model, a standard which has been around since Windows 95/

This review is long overdue because I could not get it to capture analog video and I spent a lot of time attempting to track down the problems. I have a problem with this program. Straight-to-Disc is touted as an easy way to save your VHS tapes straight to DVD. This is not a high-end video editing program. It is targeted at users without an extensive video editing background. My guess is that it is will appeal to users without an in-depth knowledge of video capture devices. I have an analog capture device, an ADS Instant DVD USB2.0. It came bundled with Ulead's DVD MovieFactory 2.0 SE. I assumed that it would also work with Ulead's DVD MovieFactory 4.0. Unfortunately, that was an erroneous assumption. After much searching on the Ulead Web site, I finally located an answer to the question about whether the ADS would work with DVD Movie Factory 4.0. The terse answer supplied was "No…"

I would strongly recommend that before you purchase a video editing program, you make sure that it will work with the equipment that you have on your computer. If you are intending to purchase any equipment, be sure that it will work with the program that you want to use. Do not assume that if it works with a light version of a program that is bundled with the equipment that it will work with the full version of the program or with a later version of the same program. Ulead seems to be particularly bad in this regard.

Even though DVD MF4 will not accomplish my primary reason for obtaining the program, I decided to see what else it would do. The version that I am reviewing does not have the ability to make an audio or data CD. It does have the ability to make video disks in several different formats including DVDs and VCDs. It also has the capability of making slideshows. You can even mix video and a slideshows on the same disk.

I have had some experience with putting together slideshows. I found DVD MF4 did not give me as much control over the way each photo is displayed as the program which I have been using.

The program has some video editing capabilities. It is easy to cut out the goofs in the videos such as the video of the pavement because I forgot to turn off the camcorder. There are templates for creating menus on the DVD. I have found that it is a good idea to break a long video up into chapters. Then, if you want to show someone a particular portion of the video, it is easy to go to that chapter without having to sit through unwanted video.

I have made some VCDs and SVCDs. This is an economical way to get my video into a digital format that can be played on a standard DVD player. Because a CD has so much less storage than a DVD I can only get about 20 to 30 minutes of video on a CD. This is really enough time to get your edited material into a movie format. Also, if you are planning to show others the video, 20 to 30 minutes is probably about the most amount of time that it reasonable to expect someone to watch your video of you trip, baby, pet, etc.

Because this is no longer the current version of DVD MF,

I am not going to go into detail about what it can or cannot do. I have not checked the new version of DVD MovieFactory or DVD MovieFactory Plus. To get more information about them go to www.ulead.com. Regardless, if I want to edit my home movies, I would rather spend my time learning how to use a higher-end video editing program. The original capture program which came with my ADS Instant DVD USB 2.0 works well for transferring analog video directly to a DVD or to a hard disk and is very easy to use.

I cannot stress strongly enough that before you decide to convert your analog videos to digital, you must learn something about the terminology. The concepts of what is involved in the transfer are also important. The quality of your capture may be determined by the speed of your computer and your hard disk. There are different types of analog capture devices available. If you do not understand the terms and the concepts involved in this process it is easy to make some mistakes in what you purchase.

What I do recommend you do is to do your homework before you make a purchase. You can download DVD MovieFactory 5 for a free 30-day trial. Once you have the combination that will work for transferring those analog tapes, be sure to do it while it is still possible to make the transfer. ∎

Linux Starter Kit

By Bill Allen, NOCCC

Interested in exploring Linux, but don't want to get bogged down, lost, or cause problems with your Windows operating system by installing a new operating system? The answer is at hand – complete step-by-step guidance using the SAMS (Pearson Education Publishing) Linux Starter Kit.

The Linux Starter Kit includes both the SuSE Linux 10.1 operating system on a DVD plus a 124 page book covering what you need to know to install and use SuSE and included applications like OpenOffice. The SuSE installation includes a complete reference manual in PDF format which is also downloaded. The Kit permits installing SuSE while retaining Windows on either a separate or the same hard drive provided at least 500 MBytes are available (2.5 G Bytes is recommended).

While the Linux expert can download multiple versions of Linux such as SuSE, Debian, and Fedora, to compile and install, we Linux tyros appreciate a ready-to-go version on one DVD, which the Kit includes. Just put the DVD in its drive and reboot your PC. Then follow the step-by-step on-screen guidance. The first chapter in the book covers the installation of SuSE 10.1, one of the most popular versions of Linux. While most users will see a succession of graphic windows during the installation if your PC has limited RAM or hard drive space you may find the DVD defaulting to a text mode for the installation. That mode is also covered in the book.

The second chapter describes the two most popular Linux desktops: KDE and Gnome. For a Windows user, the KDE desk-top layout will not be a surprise. It shows application icons plus a taskbar at the bottom of the desktop much as Windows does. The taskbar can be relocated on the desktop if that is your preference.

The book assumes the user has a nodding acquaintance with Linux since a number of concepts and labels will be a bit cryptic to the uninitiated. For that reason it is recommended the new user read through chapter one before commencing the installation. That will ensure a smooth and quick installation of SuSE.

One of the programs installed will be Konqueror, a combination file manager and web browser, a tool commonly used in Linux files housekeeping. One feature that Windows does not have is the means to mark any file with "permissions," that is who can read, write, or execute the file. That together with selectable Linux-run-levels and the super user password keeps the uninitiated and uninvited out of the files they should not need access to.

Unique to SuSE is YaST (Yet another Setup Tool). It is provided to allow the user to load and install software beyond that included in the original Linux installation. It is also used to get Linux connected to the system hardware, although a modicum of Linux knowledge is needed to get those connections made. My experience was the SuSE installation connected to my laser printer with no input from me. YaST also facilitates network hookups for both servers and client computers. YaST likewise allows setting security components such as firewalls. An additional miscellaneous category in YaST provides a number of other control features such as a system log for use in trouble shooting installation problems.

Unique to Linux is the File System Hierarchy Standard which all Linux installations use. The required directories titles are: the root directory (accessible only by super user (administrator) password; the bin directory, which holds executable files; boot directory holding those files required to initiate the SuSE system at startup; dev directory which holds device definitions needed for user access; the etc directory for system and service configuration files; home directory for multiple user's subdirectories; lib directory for libraries used by the bin executables; media directory for CDROMs, DVDs, and floppies interfaces; the mnt directory for access to external file systems or devices mount points; opt directory for any optional application software; and finally, the proc directory holding temporary process information which exists only when the computer is running. Chapter five concludes by discussing in detail how to manipulate

Pig SIG Open To ALL

Meet us in the Cafeteria in Argyros Hall around 11:30 am (until about 1pm). If you're hungry, there is a buffet lunch and snack bars open.

There are several sets of tables where NOCCC people gather, eat and chat. Just look for the badges, grab a chair, and join in! This is an informal group, so many different subjects are discussed. It's a great opportunity to mix, mingle and network. See ya there! ∎

Linux Starter Kit

files in the File System Hierarchy Standard using Konqueror.

The final chapter discusses a number of alternatives for finding help in installing and using SuSE. My limited experience with SuSE so far indicates the help features of the system are not as comprehensive as a new user might like. It remains to be determined if more information is out there in SuSE land that I have not yet uncovered.

This evaluation of the Linux Starter Kit was made with a 2.5 GHz CPU, a forty MByte hard disk, a laser printer, and broadband web access. I am pleased with the Kit and suggest it for anyone who would like to give Linux a try without a great investment in time or money. I will be using SuSE for the indefinite future as my Linux selection. The Kit lists for $40 at the Sams web site (http://www.samspublishing.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0672328879&rl=1), but is discounted and has free shipping. It also is available at Amazon.com at about $28. While SuSE 10.0 can be downloaded free the book can be a life saver especially for a new user's first exposure to what is becoming an operating system very competitive with Windows.

Photoshop Finishing Touches

By Bill Trammell, NOCCC

This book is not for "Photoshop" beginners, but it is a treasure house of chapters on Key Concepts, Frames and Borders, Color and Artistic Effects, and Presentation techniques. The author, Dave Cross, is Senior Development, Education and Curriculum, for the National Association of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP). His introduction likens using this book to cooking and invites the reader to try his recipes then add their own variations. The table of contents gives visual illustrations for the information included in each of the book's four chapters.

Chapter One, Key Concepts:
Thirteen techniques, Key Concepts, Layer Masks, Quick Mask, Define Brush, Define Pattern, Strokes, Free Transform, Filters, Blend Modes, Illustrator to Photoshop, Adjustment Layers, Blending Options, Layer Strokes and Threshold, are provided and a tear out summary is included. While I've used "Photoshop" for several years, I've never been comfortable with many of these concepts. Now, I'm beginning to use them with confidence.

Chapter Two, Frames and Borders:
Twenty-eight techniques for making frames and borders are presented along with variations on each. I won't list them all, but one I particularly liked was named Gallery Print, by Scott Kilby. This technique includes placing the photo on a page, outlining it with a shaded border, and adding a title outside the border to produce the look of a print purchased from a gallery.

Chapter Three, Color and Artistic Effects:
Twenty-six techniques and variations on these techniques are provided. I would never have imagined most of these techniques and have only tried a few, but the ones I have tried include Making Colors Pop Out, Burned-In Edges, and Soft Focus.

Chapter Four, Presenting Your Work:
Five techniques including Photoshop Slideshows, PDF Presentations, Smart Picture Presentations, Web Photo Galleries, and InDesign Contact Sheet are provided. These techniques, which range from creating a simple slide show to customized websites, are intended to let the user really show off the results of using "Photoshop."

Peachpit published "Photoshop Finishing Touches" by Dave Cross, first edition 2006. See (http://www.peachpit.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0321441664&rl=1). It retails for $39.99. A 30% discount can be obtained by joining the Peachpit club at http://www.peachpit.com and signing up as a member (see "Orange Bytes Membership Benefits" for details). ■

System Mechanic v 6.0a

By Steve Carmeli, NOCCC

Iolo visited NOCCC several months back and demonstrated System Mechanic. I was tempted to buy it but had been getting progressively more and more tired of all the problems PCs have with spyware, keyloggers and other forms of malware; the need for defragmentation, registry maintenance, etc., and just wanted to avoid the whole issue. So even though they were offering it for only $25 to NOCCC members, I let it pass.

Recently, I saw it at Best Buy for $39.95 and decided to buy it. System Mechanic is intended to compete with Norton SystemWorks. In fact, it has a plethora of tools NSW doesn't even touch. What does System Mechanic contain? Well, when you start the program you'll see that it is arranged into three groups. The first group is a column of buttons: Home, Optimize, Clean, Repair, Protect, Maintain, and Options. Each button brings up a panel with further applets which I'll discuss below. The second section is the main section. It is a bit graphical, intended to convey some intelligence and does so by analyzing your system for the following issues: clutter, speed, safety, fitness, update and active care. These all seem to be something approaching wizards. They seem pretty smart in that each applet tells you the status of your PC after it's done analyzing a certain aspect of system performance. There are two speedometer-like gauges at the top indicating overall health and overall security. Now, the first column of buttons is:

1. Home: takes you to the panel described above.
2. Optimize. This screen has the following applications:

a. Increase Internet speed, with three applets

b. Speed Up Hard Drives, with three applets

c. Memory Mechanic to defragment RAM

d. Popup Blocker

e. Manage Windows Startup, with two options for managing processes that load at boot time

f. System Customizer for Windows appearance, security, performance, and more

g. Manage Running Programs, a process manager

3. Clean has the following features:

a. Junk File Removal Tool

b. Uninstall Software

c. Internet Cleanup and Privacy Tool

d. Duplicate File Inspector

4. Repair has the following applets

a. Repair and Clean the Registry with three registry management applets

b. Fix Drive and System Problems with three applets

c. Find and Remove Spyware

d. Fix broken shortcuts

5. Protect

a. Fix Security Vulnerabilities

b. Automatic System Protection

c. Permanently Delete Files, an applet and a wizard

d. Track Windows Changes

Maintain and Options are maintenance applets.

The final column comprises five buttons that will take you to five wizards, called Power Tools, which will perform intelligent system maintenance tasks. These Power Tools are called:

1. PC TotalCareT

2. PC Cleanup

3. PC Accelerator

4. PC Security Optimizer

5. PC Repair

As you can see, you can get a lot of bang for your buck here. Well, having worked with it for about a week, all I can say is caveat emptor. Before I discuss the problems I had, let me qualify myself. (1) The program didn't come with a written manual. Fair warning #2: I didn't test the program in a systematic fashion and that may have been unwise. I should have tried one applet at a time and then tested my system to see if everything was working because one of these applets caused me problems, but I don't know which one. Fair warning #3: I am using Microsoft Office 2007 Beta. Beta software is provided "As-Is" and known to be potentially unstable. But I'd had no problems with Word prior to working with System Mechanic.

So what happened? All of a sudden, when I load Word, its installer loads and eventually asks me for the program disk! Next problem: I use Panda Security Suite for my Firewall and anti- spyware. All of a sudden, the program is telling me that the script blocking level is set too low. I checked and the setting is high. So I reinstalled the program but that hasn't fixed the problem. Finally, I purchased a program called Registry Mechanic about a week prior to purchasing System Mechanic. When I used the two registry cleaners, they're quite different.

So what happened? Well, since I purchased Registry Mechanic first, I naturally ran it first. I ran System Mechanic later to see if it could find any new problems. When I was disappointed in System Mechanic, I re- ran Registry Mechanic. To my surprise, Registry Mechanic found around 120 problems! These two programs don't think alike at all. Moreover, the user-interface is more detailed in Registry Mechanic, though they both take the same path of cleaning the registry, optimizing and compacting it.

To summarize, I would stay away from System Mechanic right now. I've used more features than I've written about, but I'm consistently unimpressed with the program. The goal and design of the program was lofty, but the execution leaves a lot to be desired. Almost all applets have an identical interface which is rather uninformative. I'll probably work with System Mechanic a bit more, but I may just return it if I can, or simply remove it from my PC. I don't fully trust it right now.

System Mechanic is from Iolo Technologies (http://www.iolo.com/sm/ads/landing/index. cfm?pid=445F2C56-41B2- 449B-8E15-F880DD92137D) and the vendor has it on sale for $40. Amazon.com also has it for $40 with free shipping and there is a $20 rebate. It is $40 at Best Buy, but available at all the major home electronics and office supply stores.

Review Editor's note: According to the Iolo web site, System Mechanic has received numerous awards including "Editors Pick" from PC World, "Editors' Choice" from c|net, and "5 Stars" from PC Computing. You can read more about the software at the aforementioned web site.

Editor's note: While it is true that a printed manual is not included with the program (a common practice these days), on the CD that my copy of System Mechanic came on, there is only one subdirectory and it is labeled Documentation. In that directory is a 340K Byte help file. Clicking on the compiled HTML help file brings up the System Mechanic Help Window that, in sequence, tells a user about various aspects of the program. The sixth item in that sequence is "Before You Use System Mechanic" which displays the following message.

"Caution! Before you manipulate any important data, it is strongly advised to make a current backup (my highlight. Before installing any program, a full image backup is a smart move.). System Mechanic interacts with intricate parts of your PC and can encounter unexpected configurations, incompatibilities, or a pre-existing system corruption. iolo technologies has extensively researched and tested System Mechanic compatibility and safety; however there might be instances where its tools could fail or lead to a loss or corruption of data. This behavior has never been encountered in our testing, but we cannot guarantee that it will never happen."

Anyone that heeds the above advice can recover from any subsequent software problems, **regardless of the cause.** Of those that don't heed the advice, most will be lucky, but the rest will rue the choice. Apparently, Mr. Carmeli falls into the latter category. ∎
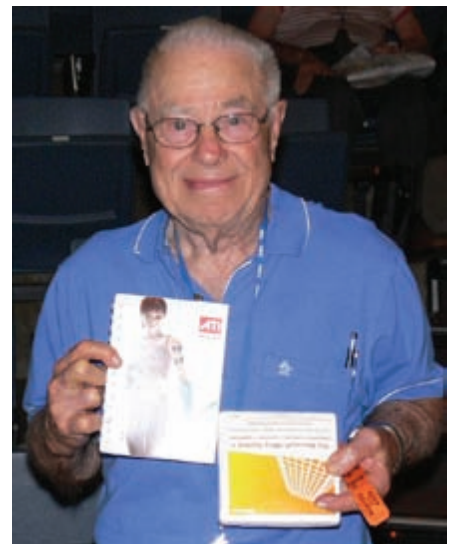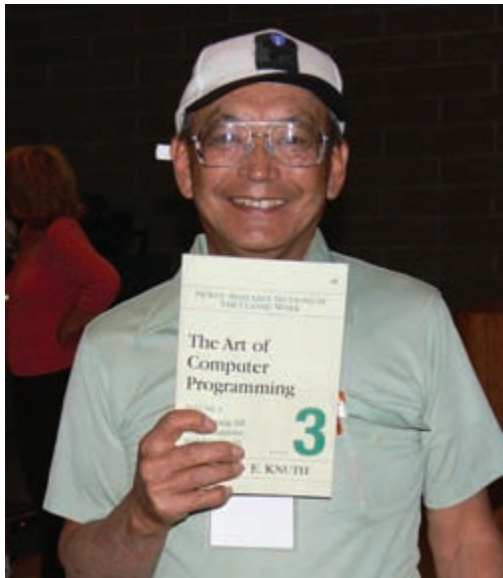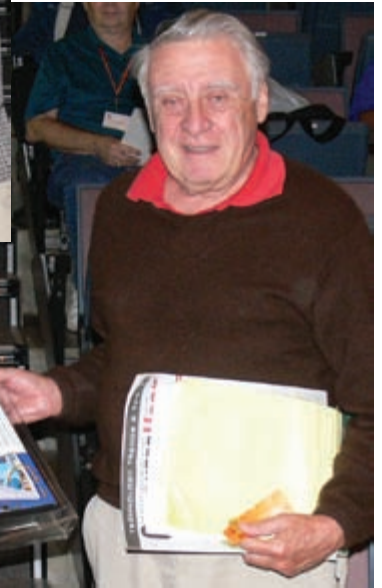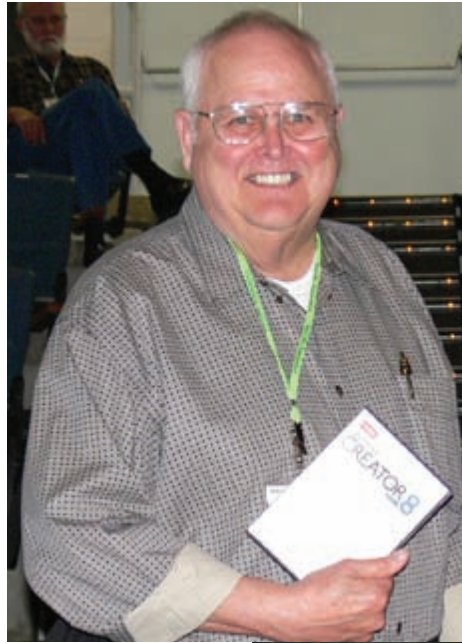
November Meeting Photos

Shin Ito of Radiant Frames, displayed his product and explained how it is used.

Photograpy by Jim Sanders

The winners

On Left
Dan Cregg explains some of the
things he plans to do in the new
Home Automation SIG. First
meeting will be in Science 306
at 9:30AM. Check it out!

The prizes

Dec. Mega Book Sale

The following books will be on sale for $5 or less at the Dec. meeting on the Reviews Table:

Windows XP for Starters: The Missing Manual – This new book by David Pogue from O'Reilly provides everything you need to know to set up Windows XP, whatever your knowledge level. The step-by-step tutorials save you time and frustration, and prevent you from making common mistakes. MSRP=$20. **Sale $2.**

QuickBooks 2005 – The Missing Manual – This thorough guide by Bonnie Biafore, examines the many features of the popular QuickBooks accounting software. Through dozens of insightful tips and tricks and a friendly writing style, it enables financial managers to quickly understand how to use the program's tools to implement and maintain critical accounting processes. Ideal for QuickBooks users of all levels. Published by O'Reilly. MSRP=$30. **Sale $4.**

Data Binding with Windows Forms 2.0 – A book by Brian Noyes on programming smart client data applications with .Net. Published by Addison-Wesley, MSRP=$50. **Sale $3.**

Murach's ASP.NET 2.0 Upgrader's Guide VB Edition – Mike Murach has published this VB edition of of their ASP. NET book for experienced developers. MSRP=$39.50. **Sale $5.**

Murach's ASP.NET 2.0 Upgrader's Guide C# Edition – Mike Murach has published this C# edition of of their ASP. NET book for experienced developers. MSRP=$39.50. **Sale $5.**

iPod & iTunes Garage – Author Kirk McElhearn shows you how to get more music and way more magic from your iPod & iTunes. From Prentice Hall PTR. MSRP=$25. **Sale $2.**

Implementing CIFS, the Common Internet File System – An authoritative guide to the inner workings of Microsoft's Internet/intranet file sharing system from Prentice Hall authored by Christopher Hertel. MSRP=$45. **Sale $3.**

Classic Shell Scripting – The key to unlocking the real potential of Unix. A How To book by Arnold Robbins & Nelson Beebe from O'Reilly. MSRP=$35. **Sale $2.**

Linux Debugging and Performance Tuning Tips & Techniques – This is the definitive Guide to Linux software debugging & performance optimization at both the kernel and application levels. Author Steve Best systematically introduces open source tools & best-practice techniques for delivering bug-free, well-tuned code. Published by Pren Hall PTR, the MSRP=$50. **Sale $4.**

J2EE Security for Servlets, EJBs, and Web Services – This book by Pankaj Kumar from Prentice Hall is the definitive guide to securing server-side Java and covers every significant J2SE and J2EE security mechanism. MSRP=$50. **Sale $4.**

Linux Phrasebook: Essential Codes & Commands – This new pocketbook from Sams Publishing is authored by Scott Granneman and contains the codes you need to quickly & effectively work in a Linux OS

and development environment. MSRP=$15. **Sale $2.**

The Official Samba-3 How To and Reference Guide, 2nd Ed. – This book is part of Bruce Perens' "Open Source" series. Authored by John Terpstra & Jelmer Vernooij, this is the practical, authoritative, step-by-step guide to cutting IT costs with Samba-3. From Prentice Hall. MSRP=$55. **Sale $3.**

The Design & Implementation of the FreeBSD Operating System – This hard-cover book by Kirk McKusick & George Neville-Neil from Addison-Wesley is the most comprehensive and authoritative technical information on the internal structure of this open source operating system. MSRP=$60. **Sale $3.**

Core Web Application Development with PHP and MySQL – This book from Prentice Hall PTR by Marc Wandschneider has everything developers need to know to build robust web database applications from upfront design and planning through testing & deployment. Three start-to-finish application case studies with code are provided on CD-Rom. MSRP=$50. **Sale $3.**

PHP 5 Power Programming – In this book from Prentice Hall, PHP 5's co-creator and two leading PHP developers show you how to make the most of its industrial-strength enhancements. MSRP=$40. **Sale $3.**

Apache Derby – Off to the Races – This book tells you how to master Apache Derby, the only open source, pure Java, fully transactional, small-footprint RDBMS. Authored by Paul Zikopoulos, Dan Scott, & George Baklarz, the hardcover book is published by IBM Press/Pearson plc and has an MSRP=$40. **Sale $3.**

Web Design Garage – This book has everything you need to help design your web site. From author Marc Campbell and publisher Pren Hall PTR. MSRP=$30. **Sale $3.**

The Official Sambra-3 How to & Reference Guide, 1st Ed. – This book is part of the Bruce Perens' Open Source series. Authored by Terpstra & Vernooij, it is a practical, authoritative, step-by-step guide to cutting IT costs with Sambra-3. From Prentice Hall PTR. MSRP=$50. **Sale $3.**

Next Generation Application Integration – From simple information to Web services, this book by David Linthicum from Addison-Wesley is an indispensable resource for those responsible for managing or implementing application-integration middleware. MSRP=$40. **Sale $3.**

Open Source Network Administration – Author James Kretchmar from MIT presents an extraordinary collection of open source tools for streamlining and improving virtually every facet of network administration. Publisher is Prentice Hall. MSRP=$45. **Sale $3.**

Succeeding with Open Source – This book, authored by Bernard Golden and published by Addison-Wesley, is the first how-to book on the subject based on a product's characteristics such as quality, support, & longevity. MSRP=$40. **Sale $3.**

PHP-Nuke Garage – This book shows you how to master the most powerful open source Web content system ever created, then use it to build whatever your heart desires, hands-on, step-by-step. Authored by Don Jones, from publisher Pren Hall PTR. MSRP=$25. **Sale $2.**

Open Source Licensing – Software Freedom & Intellectual Property Law – This is a complete guide to the law of open source for developers, managers,

& lawyers; authored by attorney Lawrence Rosen, the book is published by Prentice Hall. MSRP=$40. **Sale $3.**

Biometrics for Network Security – Authored by expert Paul Reid, this book covers options ranging from fingerprint identification to voice verification to hand, face, & eye scanning from a practitioner's viewpoint. From Prentice Hall. MSRP=$45. **Sale $3.**

Know Your Enemy - Learning About Security Threats, 2nd Ed. – Max Kilger & Rob Lee provide an unrivaled "intelligence report" on those who use the Internet for destructive purposes plus an in-depth guide to honeynets—high-interaction honeypots designed to capture extensive information on exactly how your enemies operate so you can protect your systems from them. Book + CD from Addison-Wesley. MSRP=$50. **Sale $3.**

Essential Check Point FireWall-1 NG – An installation, configuration, and troubleshooting Guide authored by Dameon Welch-Abernathy (aka "PhoneBoy") from Addison-Wesley/Pearson Education. MSRP=$55. **Sale $3.**

Real 802.11 Security, Wi-Fi Protected Access & 802.11i – An Addison-Wesley book by Jon Edney & William Arbaugh provides what you need to know on wireless LAN security. MSRP=$45. **Sale $3.**

.Net Security & Cryptography – A book from Addison-Wesley by Peter Thorsteinson & G. Ganesh provides practical & comprehensive coverage on implementing cryptography and security in the Microsoft .Net platform. MSRP=$50. **Sale $3.**

The Effective Incident Response Team – An Addison-Wesley book by Julie Lucas & Brian Moeller. A complete guide for network administrators & managers on dealing with computer attacks by intruders, worms, & viruses. MSRP=$40. **Sale $2.**

Outsource: Competing in the Global Productivity Race – This hardcover book by Edward Yourdon presents a balanced view of why outsourcing is occurring, how it is likely to impact people's lives, and how best to prepare career-wise for the new realities it introduces. From Prentice Hall. MSRP=$28. **Sale 2.**

Internetworking with TCP/IP, Vol. I, 3rd Edition – This 1995 book by Douglas Comer from Prentice Hall covers the principles, protocols, & architecture and is a classic introductory text of TCP/IP.

Internetworking with TCP/IP – Douglas Comer's 1988 book from Pren Hall covers the principles, protocols, & architecture of this technology and the Internet in general terms. **Sale $3.**

Internetworking with TCP/IP, Vol. II, 2nd Edition – This 1994 book by Douglas Comer & David Stevens from Prentice Hall covers the design, implementation, & internals of the structure of TCP/IP software in an operating system. **Sale $3.**

Learning PERL – A 1993 O'Reilly book on this language for UNIX. MSRP=$25. **Sale $1.**

An Introduction to Database Systems, Vol. I, 5th Edition – This 1991 book by C.J. Date from Addison-Wesley takes you from basic concepts through design and directions and contains numerous working examples. MSRP=$54. **Sale $1.**

An Introduction to Database Systems, Vol. II – This 1983 book by C.J. Date from Addison-Wesley effectively ties together eight loosely related topics in database technology. **Sale $1.**

A Guide to the SQL Standard, 3rd Edition – Another C.J. Date book from Addison-Wesley on the common language of database management. MSRP=$35. **Sale $1.**

More Programming Pearls, Confessions of a Coder – A witty and lively collection of essays from Addison-Wesley demonstrating the many varied aspects of programming, showing how programming can be both fun & elegant science. **Sale $1.**

Advanced Programming in the UNIX Environment – A 1996 book by W. Richard Stevens from Addison-Wesley, this 740-page tutorial is on the system call interface and the most important functions found in the ANSI C library. MSRP=$55. **Sale $2.**

The XML Handbook – Written in 1998 and published by Prentice Hall PTR, this 600-page book is an excellent starting point where you can learn and experiment with XML. MSRP=$45. **Sale $1.**

DocBook Publishing – This 2001 book shows you how to use DocBook's markup language to produce professional documents that can be easily distributed in a variety of media. MSRP=$40. **Sale $2.**

Active Template Library: A developer's Guide – This 1998 book by Tom Armstrong from M & T Books, clearly spells out how C++ templates work within the COM architecture and how template-based reuse works. MSRP=$40. **Sale $1.**

Professional Active Server Pages 2.0 – This book is for anyone responsible for planning, building, or maintaining a web site. **Sale $1.**

C, A Reference Manual, 2nd Edition – This book from Pren Hall has a complete description of the full C language and over 180 standard run-time library functions. **Sale 2.**

Expert C Programming Deep C Secrets – This 1994 book by Peter van der Linden is from Pren Hall & reveals the coding techniques used by the best C programmers. MSRP=$35. **Sale $1.**

C# Essentials – This 2001 O'Reilly book contains everything the intermediate-to-advanced programmer needs to know to begin using C# and the .NET Framework SDK. MSRP=$20.

A Programmer's Introduction to C# - This 2000 book from Eric Gunnerson, a member of Microsoft's C# design team, teaches you to program with C# and to author .NET components. MSRP=$35. **Sale $1.**

Introduction to Assembly Language Programming – This 1998 undergraduate text by Sivarama Dandamudi covers the 8086 family of processors up to and including the Pentium. **Sale $1.**

Introduction to C++ - A Microsoft short guide to programming in C++. **Sale $1.**

Microsoft Visual Basic C++ User's Guide, Vol. I, Version 4 – The first of six volumes from Microsoft Press, this 1995, 700-page book provides a complete guide to use with integrated development environment and command-line tools. MSRP=$30. **Sale $1.**

Inside Visual C++, 4th Edition – This 1997 book by David Kruglinski from Microsoft Press is the standard reference for programming with Microsoft Visual C++ Version 5.0. MSRP=$50. **Sale $1.**

Programming with Qt – An O'Reilly book about writing GUI applications that run on Linux & several Windows platforms. MSRP=$33. **Sale $1.**

The Elements of Programming Style – **Sale $1.**

Visual C++ Tutorial - **Sale $1.** ∎

PRODUCTS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

A number of products have been obtained from vendors for review by qualified NOCCC members. If you are interested in doing a review (which will be published in Orange Bytes), please call or send an e-mail to me and provide your membership number, phone number, and e-mail address; or pick up the product at the next NOCCC meeting.

Remember, YOU GET TO KEEP THE SOFTWARE OR BOOK! **Currently available are the following products:**

Boxed Programs and CDs

Internet Security Suite 2006 – McAfee's defense against Viruses, Spyware, Worms, Phishing, ID Theft, & Pop-ups. MSRP=$70.

V2i Protector 2.0 – From PowerQuest/Symantec, this program provides desktop backup & disaster recovery by capturing and protecting real-time working states of systems & data partitions. MSRP=$39.

Backup MyPC 2006 Deluxe – This is Sonic's latest version of its software backup program with new features to protect your system. MSRP=$50.

ConceptDraw 5.5, Pro Edition – This Windows business & technical diagramming software from Russia "with love," is intended for professional flowcharting, diagramming and illustrating.

Its flexible, handy tools help quickly document a variety of complex structures, systems, and processes. Its charts can be shared as a large array of graphic files and CAD documents, presentations, and web pages. It is a Windows and Macintosh cross platform. All documents and libraries are 100% compatible. Produced by Computer Systems Odessa, the MSRP=$299.

ConceptDraw Project 2, Desktop Edition – This software also is from Computer Systems Odessa and is a unique project planning tool designed for efficient planning and tracking of multiple projects. Any business activity requires planning of several simultaneous projects with different dependencies and limited resources to be used. With You can easily share resources between projects, establish links between them and organize them in a single workspace to successfully plan projects of any size and complexity. MSRP=$249.

Concept Draw Mindmap 4 Pro - This software also is from Computer Systems Odessa and allows you to capture and present ideas as mind maps - concise radiant diagrams. Mind maps speed up understanding, decision making and learning up to 90%. Also, use it to illustrate your MS PowerPoint presentations, generate project plans, draw pro-quality flowcharts and many more. MSRP=$199.

BOOKS

The following new Prentice-Hall/A-W/Sams books have recently been received:

The Official Ubuntu Book – Ubuntu, a free operating system, is "Linux for human beings." This 400-page book from Pren-Hall shows you how to seamlessly install and customize it for home or small business use. It covers every standard desktop application from word processing, spreadsheets, Web browsing, e-mail, music, video etc. to software development. The accompanying DVD has a version of Ubuntu that can be run from the DVD as well as the complete set of supporting packages. MSRP=$35.

Ubuntu Unleased – This 880-page book for the intermediate-advanced user is from Sams Publishing and presents comprehensive coverage of the popular Ubuntu Linux distribution, a user-friendly, easy-to-use operating system. The DVD has the full Ubuntu 6.06 LTS distribution for Intel x86 computers, the complete OpenOffice.org office suite, plus hundreds of additional programs and utilities. MSRP=$50.

Moving to Ubuntu Linux – A 460-page book by well-known Linux author, Marcel Gagne, from Addison-Wesley, teaches you how to do virtually anything with Ununtu. The DVD includes the up-to-date, bootable Ubuntu Live-DVD without touching your current Windows system plus thousands of additional programs. MSRP=$35.

Understanding AJAX – If you are already an experienced Web developer, this book by Joshua Eichorn, senior architect for Uversa, will show you exactly how to create rich, useable, Internet applications using AJAX. MSRP=$40.

SELinux by Example – This book is the first complete, hands-on guide to using SELinux in production environments. It illuminates every facet of working with this operating system from its architecture and security model to its policy language. MSRP=$45.

AJAX – Creating Web Pages with Asynchronous JavaScript and XML – One of the Bruce Perens' Open source Series, this book will help you build AJAX Web applications from the ground up, one step at a time. And, you can do it using standards and open source software. MSRP=$45.

The TAO of Network Security – Beyond Intrusion Detection – This book by former AF Security Officer, Richard Bejtlich, will arm you with the knowledge you need to defend your network from attackers. MSRP=$50.

Software Security – This book/CD, authored by Gary McGraw, a leading authority in the field, teaches you how to put software security into practice. MSRP=$50.

How to Break Web Software – This

BOOKS AVAILABLE IN THE LIBRARY

NOCCC has a special benefit program for members – the **Club Library**. Members may check out books at the Reviews & Library Desk at the monthly meeting for a period of one or two months for a nominal fee of $2 for one month or $3 for two months. A security deposit (equal to the list price of the book) must be posted. When the book is returned is good condition, the deposit is refunded. **No review is required**.

The full list of available books is as follows:

Windows XP Hacks, 1ˢᵗ Edition – 100 smart, time-saving and useful tips and tricks for virtually every feature in Windows XP Home & Pro editions. From O'Reilly. MSRP=$25.

Hardware Hacking Projects for Geeks – This O'Reilly book is authored by Scott Fullam who has been "hacking" hardware since he was ten years old. It contains 15 amazing projects that range from the truly useful to the legendary and wacky. MSRP=$30.

Building the Perfect PC – This book by Robert Bruce & Barbara Thompson delivers end-to-end instructions, simple enough for even the most inexperienced computerist, for creating your ideal machine. Five different classes of machines are covered with full descriptions of all items and options. From O'Reilly. MSRP=$30.

Upgrading Your PC, 2ⁿᵈ Ed. – New Riders book + DVD authored by Mark Soper. A good reference if you are planning to enhance your PC. MSRP=$25.

Absolute Beginner's Guide to Creating Web Pages, 2ⁿᵈ Ed. – This book authored by Todd Stauffer from Que Publishing teaches you how to design & build your own Web sites by showing you the fundamentals first and then building on that foundation with a hands-on tutorial approach. MSRP=$19.

The Art of UNIX Programming – Authored by Eric Raymond from Addison-Wesley, this book bring together philosophy, design patterns, tools, culture, and traditions for this best & most innovative software. MSRP=$40.

Advanced UNIX Programming, 2ⁿᵈ Ed. – The classic guide to UNIX programming is authored by Marc Rochkind & published by Addison-Wesley. MSRP=$45.

Linux Programming by Example – This book teaches Linux programming by showing & explaining well-written programs drawing from both V7 UNIX and GNU source codes. Authored by Arnold Robbins (who wrote UNIX in a Nutshell), the book is from Prentice Hall. MSRP=$40.

Moving to Linux, 2ⁿᵈ Edition Draft – $20

UNIX Shells by Example, 4ᵗʰ Ed. – Author Ellie Quigley has thoroughly updated her classic book and delivers the information today's shell programmers need most – including comprehensive coverage of Linux shell programming with bash! The accompanying CD has a comprehensive shell programming code library with all source code & data files necessary for this book's hundreds of example programs. From Prentice Hall. MSRP=$50.

Understanding the Linux Virtual Memory Manager – This book/CD, authored by Mel Gorman, presents both theoretical foundations & a line-by-line commentary in unprecedented detail. It covers everything from physical memory description to out-of-memory management. Published by Prentice Hall, MSRP=$60.

Interprocess Communications in Linux – The definitive guide to Linux processes and IPF for programmers and system administrators by John S. Gray from Prentice Hall. MSRP=$50.

Managing Linux Systems with Webmin – System Administration & Module Development by Jamie Cameron from Prentice Hall. MSRP=$45.

Building Applications with the Linux Standard Base – An initiative of the Free Standing Group, the LSB is a set of standards designed to increase compatibility among Linux distributions and enable applications to run on any LSB-compliant system. This book (plus CD) shows developers how to create, test, and certify software for LSB-2 compliance. MSRP=$45.

Implementing CIFS - The Symantec Guide to Home Internet Security – Published by Addison-Wesley. MSRP=$20.

WI-FOO The Secrets of Wireless Hacking – This hands-on, practical guide covers everything you need to attack or protect any wireless network. Authored by Andrew Vladimirov, Konstantin Gavrilenko, & Adrei Mikhailovsky, the book is published by Addison-Wesley. MSRP=$35.

Project 2003 Personal Trainer – You can become the Project Superhero in your office with this easy-to-foll0w training manual with an interactive simulation CD. Published by O'Reilly. MSRP=$30.

Will Wheaton: Just a Geek – Will Wheaton, a regular on the Star Trek series, tell all in this book from O'Reilly. MSRP=$25. ∎

Preparing a Review Article for the Orange Bytes

by Ted Littman, NOCCC Reviews Editor

The article at the following link provides suggestions for preparing a review article for the Orange Bytes and for submittal. Please read both. http://www.noccc.org/bytes/info/index.html **Important!** Please follow the below link to the NOCCC website and read the article on submittal. http://www.noccc.org/bytes/info/index.html ∎

Main Meeting Report

By Eric Saca, NOCCC

We got two presentations in one at the November meeting. First, Shin Ito from Lite Wave introduced us to their popular new product: Radiant Frames, great for displaying your printed photos and excellent gift items for the holidays. Second, Jim Sanders introduced the Microsoft Digital Image Suite 2006 -- perfect for preparing and printing photos for use in Radiant Frames.

President Elise Edgell ran the meeting. She first announced the NOCCC annual Holiday Party, coming up in December at her house. It was a potluck. She was providing a turkey -- and Herb Wong volunteered again to do his expert carving. All members were invited and just needed to RSVP to her at president@noccc.org.

She also reminded everyone that annual elections were coming up in June 2007. It's important to prepare for this ahead of time. She called for volunteers to dedicate time to help the club. Without help, the club would simply stop functioning. She mentioned critical areas where help was needed. Jim Sanders spent over 40 hours a month on the Orange Bytes and could definitely use help. Herb Wong needed help maintaining the website. Help would also be appreciated setting up and taking down meetings. Aside from these, the club can't function without officers. She asked for anyone who can volunteer time to e-mail her at president@noccc.org.

Jim Sanders mentioned he would be retiring from doing the Bytes at the end of his current term in June.

When Shin Ito took the floor, there were already photographs being beautifully displayed on the table in Radiant Frames. His company, Lite Wave from Santa Fe Springs, started out almost seven years ago selling small, convenient fluorescent lights. Fairly recently, they developed Radiant Frames -- basically just picture frames with small fluorescent lights behind them. They came in light brown and mahogany (black) colors.

He ran through a brief slide presentation that started with ads for two of their other products -- the fluorescent lights and decorative LED lights. Then, a very simple four-step process was shown for setting up Radiant Frames -- 1) Shoot the picture, 2) Print it, 3) Put it in the Radiant Frame, 4) Plug it in.

Shin mentioned that the frames were made of solid oak. They were very durable and to date, no one had ever returned the product.

Radiant Frames took a very low wattage of electricity -- one to two cents a day. Shin had the current display items on battery power, but he recommended against that. It was like keeping a flashlight on batteries for an extended time. The batteries wouldn't last long. He mentioned that some customers plugged Radiant frames into electronic timers (not included), making them go on and off at specified times.

He said they worked well as night lights. Some customers told him they couldn't sleep without the Radiant Frames on. The frames do a great job displaying pictures taken on vacations -- and displaying grandkids. They make excellent gift items for the holidays and beyond.

Shin displayed some positive reviews of Radiant Frames from magazines like PC Magazine and USA Today.

Members asked several questions, as follows:

* In what sizes do Radiant Frames come? Only one right now -- large enough for a standard 4x6 image. Lite Wave was working to develop frames based on LED technology. These would allow more flexibility in size. Hopefully, some offerings would be available next year.

* How could you avoid the standard fading of printouts? Higher quality ink could be used. Also, if printouts faded, you'd still have a softcopy of the image. You could simply reprint it. The images displayed at the meeting had been printed two years ago. (There was no sign of fading.)

*How much for Radiant Frames? $19.99 each online. This included the frame, the fluorescent back panel, a 3-pack of special paper, and the AC adapter. The site was www.radiantframes.com. For meeting attendees, Shin was offering an extra 3-pack of paper with each unit sold.

*What printers are recommended? Inkjet only, laser cannot be used. Most inkjet printers work fine. Some photo-quality didn't work as well, due to the extra ink they produce. That makes it hard for the light to penetrate the image. Some older all-in-one printers were also not very good.

* You can only use the special paper that comes with the product? No, but it provides the best quality output. What's recommended is translucent paper -- not transparent. Transparent paper will allow the light to shine through the image. However, when the light is not on, the picture will seem to disappear. By contrast, with white translucent paper, the photo will have a white background during daylight when the fluorescent light is turned off. Regular photos will also display, but not as brightly as printouts on translucent paper. The concept behind Radiant Frames was similar to that for the lighting of x-rays. In fact, customers have been known to light ultrasound images with Radiant Frames.

*What size paper should be used? 6x8, i.e., A5.

* How much for more of the special paper? $7.99 for a ten-pack on the website.

* Are Radiant Frames sold anywhere in retail shops? Yes, but only in a few gift and novelty shops. The website is probably the easiest way to buy them. You can also purchase locally at Lite Wave in Santa Fe Springs.

Next, Jim began his presentation on Microsoft Digital Image Suite 2006. He noted that you could try it free for 60 days. It could be downloaded and he

easily found the exact web page by googling "digital image suite download".

Jim mainly let the product speak for itself -- by running four instructional videos included with it.

"Exploring Digital Image Suite 2006" provided a brief introduction to using the product. It showed how to manipulate pictures and objects, use tools, stack objects, and zoom.

"Basic Photo Touchup" showed how to use the AutoFix and Exposure/Lighting tools to brighten photos that were too dark. It also showed the Color AutoFix tool for photos with unnatural colors, the straightening of crooked photos, the AutoCrop tool, Crop To Fit, and the shrinking of a photo for display on a PDA.

"Advanced Photo Editing" showed some really nice editing tricks. With the Edge Finder, it showed how to outline a person in a photo, cut her out as an object, and paste her into another photo. It brightened the result with the Exposure/Lighting tool. It showed the ease with which unflattering lines could be erased under her eyes. It resized her in comparison to the background she was pasted in. With the Magic Selection Wand, it selected the gray sky in the background and changed it to a deep beautiful blue. With the Erase tool, it removed some tourists shown in the background. The result was a flattering picture of a woman against a beautiful tropical background. Text was added. Finally, the tutorial showed how the photo could be shrunk and inserted in an e-mail for easy delivery.

"Organizing Your Pictures and Videos" showed how to import pictures and videos from a camera. These went into a nice photo browser feature. The Label Painter could put labels on objects in the browser. The tutorial showed how to apply and erase these labels. Pictures in the directory could be flagged for later printing. They could also be given ratings from 1 to 5 stars. All pictures with certain ratings could be printed or displayed in slideshows.

After the instructional videos, Jim commented that he felt the Digital Image Suite was nice in that it contained a large number of high-end photo editing features accessible by easy point-and-

click menus. Layered (or "stacked") editing was a pretty advanced tool.

He then demonstrated the power of the Exposure AutoFix and Contrast AutoFix tools. He took a photo that was so dark, nothing in it could be recognized. After being processed by the AutoFix tools, it brightened up considerably and looked like a normal picture of a couple with their child, taken in normal daylight.

A member in the audience gave Jim a thumb drive with some photos. He opened one displaying a pride of lions. He processed it a little, zooming in on specific lions and cropping out the rest. Then he printed the result on Radiant Frames paper. He took that and put it in a Radiant Frame on the table. He plugged that in, turned it on, and it displayed the lions beautifully.

A member asked if you could only print on one side of the Radiant Frames paper. Jim said yes, only on the matte finish side, not the slick side. He also recommended never touching the matte finish side.

Someone else asked the price of Digital Imaging Suite 2006. Jim said he saw it at Circuit City for $79.00.

Next Meeting --Will be either Kieth Renty of IOGear or a presentation on Adobe Acrobat 8 . ■

Computer Aided Investing SIG

By Bob Krishfield, NOCCC

Market Review:

This past month to everyone's surprise, the Dow reached all-time highs, passing the 12,000 level for the first time ever. October is generally a down month, but not this year. All major indices were up, even though last month it was unclear the up-trend could continue. The strength has been in the large cap stocks. Normally, we would hope to see the technical sector providing the leadership, but earnings reports have

depressed a few key stocks to make the SOX index stop rising and now trend sideways. The rest of the technical picture is very good for the short term with indicators giving bullish signs for the trend to continue. Now as we enter November, institutions are rebalancing portfolios and we see a dip in the trend. One newsletter was skeptical about the rally since the July lows and attributed most of the gains to short covering. The big gains were made in only 9 days – and those days were short covering days as the big guys were covering their assets.

Another prevalent opinion is that the market has been propped-up by pre-election activities which has influenced oil prices, interest rates, the strength of the dollar, and no new terrorist events in the mid-East. Boy, if we could keep those activities around for a while longer, the market could do no wrong. After the election, it is feared that these props will be removed and the market cave-in. Other opinions are optimistic because we usually see a bullish market for a few days before and after the mid-term election and then the Seasonal calendar effect where November and December are up-months, and so on.

Will all these factors over-ride what we see in the charts? There is enough mixed opinion to shake the faith of a good technical analyst. Of course if we have used our computer tools as a guide, we have made a barrel of money in the past few months, and it should be OK to cash-in or take some profits. Many local investors have reduced their positions because the downside risk has grown large and the likelihood of large gains in the near term has grown small. Our straw vote on the Dow for next month was evenly split, up, down, and sideways. Time for caution.

Presentation:

Trading in Today's Markets – The subject of trading models was reviewed as a lead-in to what makes up a model, how we test it, and how we use it. In attempts to answer the question "Do the old models still work?" we looked

CAI SIG

at a paper that studied 65 models developed around 1996-1999 and the results of re-testing them some 4 years after they were developed, i.e. in the period of 1999-2003. The results were very disappointing, with average gains dropping from 26% to 2% and drawdowns increasing from –8% to –20%. The conclusions from this paper were that the old models did not work well in the current markets. So, could they be fixed by optimization? That would update the parameters testing in current periods, and then following up with an out-of-sample test. This was an opportunity to use the IO program with AmiBroker to run an array of optimizations and walk forward tests. I used some popular and successful models from a few years back - Ruttr and Fubar5x. Over the period of several weeks, I ran over 1600 optimizations and backtests, changing configurations and time periods. This resulted in a lot of data and a lot of variation in performance. I'm still trying to find some general patterns. Using the best runs for a given period, the highest average returns were 25%, which occurred during the period 1995-2004. For 1995-2006, the average returns dropped to 21%. Out-of-sample tests for one-year intervals were only around 4% compared to the 24-27% during the in-sample optimizations. The one-year tests only had one trade, and there was some truncation in the results. A different test procedure is needed to start/stop the period when the model buys and sells so the performance for a complete trade is recorded. What I've learned is that the models are still good, but less effective than when originally developed and testing is helpful to rule out candidates that are worthless. It also means that if the performance is poor, optimization may improve results, but cannot overcome the lack of a good model. It also appears that models like Fubar5x that were highly tuned for past years, will not match that performance with re-optimization. ∎

AmiBroker SIG

By Bob Krishfield, NOCCC

This meeting spent time looking at the various parts of Automated Analysis – which introduced the topics of Scanning, Exploring, Backtesting and Optimization, and we only touched on the first two. Using the functions in the AA window requires and AFL program which you select and load from its appropriate directory. This can be done from the AA window, or from the tree of files in the Charts window, and with the right mouse button, select the file and choose Analysis. Scanning is used to process an AFL file for alerts or signal buy/sell dates, or to create composites. The composite is a very important feature in AmiBroker used for creating averages of multiple securities, saving a signal file for use in later tests, plots and explorations. The Add to Composite function creates an artificial ticker (Group 253), which can be used just as any other ticker. A sample program was demonstrated that computed the average of all the stocks in a given sector. Many variations of this program are useful to create composites of watchlists so the composite performance of a portfolio or basket of stocks can be treated as a single plot.

We covered the explore function by demonstrating a few exploration AFL programs that were used to screen and rank stocks and save the results in a watchlist. By using a watchlist, multiple screens could be run and results combined by saving them in the same watchlist. The explore function generates a spreadsheet-like report that can be used as part of debugging various programs, by reporting the results of intermediate calculations and then commenting-out those addcolumn statements when not needed. It takes a bit of practice to learn how the flow of the explore programs work so programming logic benefits from the automated looping as Amibroker evaluates multiple

tickers and the range of dates specified.

To help in learning how AmiBroker works, a collection of 48 programs was posted and made available to the members using AFL-Tidbits, so they can download the indicators, signals, ranking programs, etc. Members who have not signed up for AFL-Tidbits should contact me if they are interested. Other programs will be made available in the future as we cover those topics and have mastered some of the basics. It's planned to takes a few of these programs and go over them in detail at the meetings. While the chairs are not the best for handling a laptop, it is highly recommended that you bring a laptop to checkout the material presented at the meetings. If that's not possible, try to work with another member and observe what he does (and maybe offer help if appropriate). ∎

Security Sig

By Dave Keays, NOCCC Nov 2006

Well, it's official now. Mal-ware is the most secure thing on many computers and Internet sites today.

I was reading a list of big security mistakes when a very sophisticated web robot started going around. One that combats any attempt to compromise it in a very sophisticated manner.

The three lists cover places that private information has been lost because the data wasn't encrypted, sites that can be used for Cross-Site-Scripting, and banks that don't encrypt logins. Two of them are attempts to shame those sites enough that they do something.

The bot, "Spamthru", is a very complicated money making spambot that promotes a stock pump-and-dump scheme. This trojan was found by the famous malware researcher Joe Stewart of LURHQ (now owned by SECUREWORKS). It is based on spyware dating back to March but a new version was found in October.

It is much more complex than

previous spam-bots like Sober, Bobax, or Bagle. It's complexity rivals some commercial software. I guess you could call spam a business endeavor which would give the writers motivation to produce a quality product.

While there have been programs that automate sending spam before, spamthru uses some techniques that sets it apart from it's predecessors. Some of the techniques listed have been used before, but a couple are brand new ideas.

What it does:
– opens a back door for communications to the bot network
– protects from denial of service by using P2P and a server network
– avoids detection of static text by encrypting the spam
– avoids detection of static code by regularly downloading program updates
– avoids detection of static images by randomly altering GIF files
– avoids detection of static hash values by adding random phrases
– avoids AV updates with HOST file entries * avoids AV scans by installing it's own AV in a rootkit fashion.
– defeats partial fixes by using multiple registry keys
– keeps others off their network with a call/response authentication
– guarantees efficiency by removing other malware

How to protect yourself from it:
– WATCH FOR BACKDOORS by checking open ports with FPORT, TCPVIEW, or NETSTAT
– VERIFY THE REGISTRY RUN KEYS with AUTORUN, MSCONFIG, or CCLEANER
– VERIFY THE HOST FILE
– LOCK THE HOST FILE by denying write permissions or use Spybot Search & destroy
– UPDATE YOUR AV only when the above steps are taken
– USE AN IDS on an enterprise network
– WATCH AV REPORTS for an untimely shutdown
The tool X-CLEANER removes SPAMTHRU on a desktop and both

RTGuardian and G.E.M. handle enterprise networks.

I don't know whether I should be more fastinated or scared. MISC URLS
XSS hall of shame; www.nist.org/nist_plugins/content/content.php?content.61
banks that use insecure logins; www.securewebbank.com/loginssluse.html
Non-Encryption hall of shame; www.nist.org/nist_plugins/content/content.php?content.54
AUTORUNS and TCPVIEW; sysinternals.com
CCLEANER; ccleaner.com
WINPATROL; winpatrol.com
SPYBOTS&D; www.safer-networking.org/en/download/
X-CLEANER; www.xblock.com
RTGuardian and GEM; facetime.com

My discussion of SPAMTHRU is just an over-view based on analyses performed by others.
www.secureworks.com/analysis/spamthru/
www.spywareguide.com/spydet_3023_spamthru.html
www.darkreading.com/document.asp?doc_id=107951
www.eweek.com/article2/0,1895,2034680,00.asp
You can find a copy of this report at WWW.OCSECSIG.BLOGSPOT.COM ∎

PC Q&A SIG

By Jim Sanders, NOCCC

At the December meeting I will be touching on more Windows Vista news. The release date is getting near, and the PR blitz is about to hit. I bought the new Paint Shop Pro XI and will highlight the new features. ∎

book is a definitive guide to security testing any Web-based software and is authored by Mike Andrews & James Whittacker. The companion CD contains full source code for one testing tool you can modify & extend, free Web security testing tools, and more. MSRP=$35.

Preventing Web Attacks with Apache – This book by Ryan Barnett is the only end-to-end guide to securing Apache Web servers and web applications. MSRP=$50.

IPsec Virtual Private Network Fundamentals – An Introduction to VPNs – This book by James Carmouche, provides you with a basic understanding of how IPsec VPNs operate and also prevents an explanation of the different components of Cisco IPsec implementation. MSRP=$55.

ATL Internals, 2nd Ed. Working with ATL8 – Four leading Windows programming experts systematically reveal ATLs inner workings. MSRP=$60.

Security in Computing, 4th Ed. – Authored by Charles & Shari Pfleeger, this hardback book goes beyond technology, covering management issues in protecting infrastructure and information. This new edition covers a chapter on the economics of cybersecurity while another new chapter addresses privacy issues.

Additional books available for review:

Photoshop Masking & Compositing – Masking and compositing are two of the most fascinating aspects of creative imagemaking and are essential to master if you're trying to create truly inspiring images. Katrin Eismann zeros in on the fine points of this craft in this book published by New Riders. MSRP=$55.

Word Hacks – This new book from O'Reilly, authored by Andrew Savikas, offers tips and tools for customizing, programming, and automating Microsoft Word. This book explicitly covers only Word 2000, 2002, and 2003 al-

SIG List

Those who have listed an e-mail address would prefer to be contacted by e-mail rather than by phone, whenever possible

SIG	Bldg	Room	Time	Leader	E-mail	Phone
AmiBroker	Science	111	11:15	Bob Krishfield	bobkrish@socal.rr.com	714-532-3096
Autocad	Wilkinson	111	9:00	Joe Mizer	joem@pvateplaamerica.com	909-688-9848
Computer Aided Investing	Science	111	9:30	Bob Krishfield	bobkrish@socal.rr.com	714-532-3096
Computer Security	Science	203	11:15	Dave Keays	rdksoft@sbcglobal.net	714-821-4792
Digital Photography	Irvine Hall	—	9:30	Larry Klees	lklees@dslextreme.com	714-879-6405
Genealogy	Science	111	2:30	John Johnson	jrosjohnson@juno.com	714-991-3314
Computer Essentials	Science	109	9:30	Elise Edgell	EliseEdgell@aol.com	714-544-3589
Hardware Essentials	Science	109	2:30	Herbert Wong	ocug@singularitytechnology.com	714-968-7264
Home Automation	Science	109	2:30	Dan Cregg	dan.cregg@smarthome.com	714-
Linux for Desktop Users	Wilkinson	117	9:00	Bob C. Ray	bobcray@pacbell.net	714-634-7520
Linux for Server Administrat	Wilkinson	117	10:00	Bob C. Ray	bobcray@pacbell.net	714-634-7520
Linux Programming Concepts	Wilkinson	117	11:15	Bob C. Ray	bobcray@pacbell.net	714-634-7520
PC Q&A	Irvine Hall	—	11:15	Jim Sanders	jsanders@ligasmicro.com	714-544-3589
Understanding OS's	Science	306	11:15	Charlie Moore	mooreca@adelphia.net	714-529-9071
Visual Programming I - IV	Wilkinson	221	8:30	Anson Chapman	aeccrcss@hotmail.com	909-860-9515
Please report SIG changes to		Herbert Wong, Jr.			ocug@singularitytechnology.com	714-968-7264

Membership Benefits
FROM PAGE 3

Disk Space
FROM PAGE 9

the publisher sites: www.awprofessional.com, www.prenhallprofessional.com, www.samspublishing.com and www.informit.com/shortcuts. Select your books and enter COUPON CODE: "USER-GROUP" (must be all caps) at Checkout Step #3 (Payment Method).

RoboForm is a Password Manager and web form filler for storing your online passwords and automates entering passwords. You can download a complimentary version at www.roboform.com/corts. If you want to upgrade to the PRO version before September 30, 2005 use the coupon code CORTS and get 10% off.

Smart Computing - www.smartcomputing.com For each paid membership (subscription to either Smart Computing or Computer Power User) via personalized membership forms or by telephone, our group will receive one credit. When the group has accumulated 5 credits (subscriptions), Smart Computing will donate one subscription to the group (great to use as a raffle prize or a "thank you" to a member, etc.). Call customer service at 1-800-733-3809 and tell them you are with the North Orange County Computer Club. If you go to their website to subscribe, click on User Groups and there is a drop down menu with our group's name on it.

Techsmith www.techsmith.com/store/order/bundle.asp using promotion code PRESBN05 you can get SnagIt (screen capture program) and Camtasia Studio (quickly record, edit and publish multimedia demos and presentations) Bundle for $269, a $50 savings. ∎

ers will continue to grow and take more disk space.

One solution is to delete only those folders older than three months. Chances are, if you haven't uninstalled a Windows update after three months, you won't ever do it.

Alternatively, once you've made a backup or disk image of any "$NTUninstall" files, you can delete the files from the hard drive immediately, because you can always restore them from backups, if you need them.
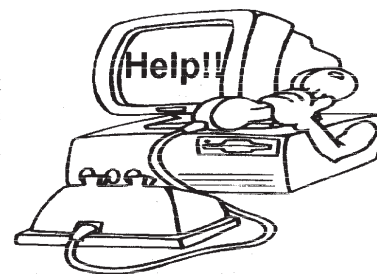
One thing Microsoft should have done is tuck these folders away in a sub-folder someplace so you don't have to scroll through them every time you want to locate something in the Windows folder. I've seen machines with over one hundred of these folders. Then again, you could always mark them as hidden.

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

NOCCC Help Line

The Help Line is in the true spirit of NOCCC, which is to help others to learn more about computers. The following is a list of Help Line Volunteers. The list is organized by the topic that each volunteer is willing to help you with. Please help us to keep this list current. Call or e-mail editor@noccc.org with additions, deletions, or corrections.

AI
Amiga
Apple
Apple II
Apple/Educator
C/C++
Computer Boards
Corel Draw
Excel(IBM)
Computer Aid. Invest.   The names and contact info of the helpline members is
MacIntosh   published in the printed version of the Orange Bytes
Memory/Interrupts   which is mailed to members.
Modem Hardware
Modem Software
Neural Networks
OS/2
PC, Beginners
PC Hardware
Quicken 6.0
Quickbooks 5.0
Quicken 2000,2001
Quickbooks
Quicken Home &
Business 2000, 2001
Powerpoint
Realtime Control
Robotics
Tcl/Tk
Unix
Windows 9X
Windows 9X
Windows 2000
Word
Word
WordPerfect

New volunteers for the Help Line would be appreciated! If you have an area of expertise to share, let us know.

though many of the "Hacks" will work with older versions. MSRP=$25.

The Internet: The Missing Manual – David Pogue's new book from O'Reilly tells you all you need to know to effectively & efficiently use the Internet. MSRP=$25.

BlackBerry Hacks - The versatile and flexible BlackBerry handheld computing device allows you to stay in touch and in-the-know--no matter where you are or where you go. For both corporate and consumer users, *BlackBerry Hacks* delivers tips, tools, and innovative ways to most effectively use the all-in-one phone, inbox, organizer, and browser for phone calls, instant messaging, email, organizing, web browsing, receiving RSS feeds, and much more. From O'Reilly, MSRP=$25.

UNIX to Linux Porting – This new book is a definitive guide to porting applications from today's most widely used UNIX platforms to Linux. Published bt Prentice Hall, it has an MSRP=$65.

User Mode Linux – This new addition to the Bruce Peren's Open Source Series, this book by Jeff Dike shows you how to create virtual Linux machines within a Linux computer and use them to safely test and debug applications, network services, and kernels. Published by Prentice Hall, the MSRP=$55.

Guide to Linux – This new book by Peter van der Linden from Prentice Hall takes the mystery out of learning Linux. It comes with the Linspire 5.0 CD. MSRP=$40.

Linux Pocket Guide – This book by Daniel Barrett covers the most useful and important parts of day-to-day Linux in a concise & friendly style for beginners as well as experience users. From O'Reilly. MSRP=$10.

Linux Desktop Garage – This book/CD by Susan Matteson from Prentice Hall PTR is full of tools and info to do practically everything with Linux. MSRP=$30.

Self-Service Linux – This new book from Prentice Hall PTR is authored by Mark Wilding & Dan Behman and offers a definitive overview of practical hints and tips for Linux users. MSRP=$40.

A Practical Guide to Red Hat Linux, 3rd Edition – This new book from Prentice Hall was written by Mark Sobell and includes the full Fedora Core on the accompanying DVD. Completely revised, it will meet all your Fedora Core & Red Hat Enterprise Linux needs. MSRP=$50.

Red Hat Fedora 5 Unleashed – This new book from Sams Publishing was written by Paul Hudson & Andrew Hudson & presents comprehensive coverage of Fedora 5, the open-community version of Red Hat Linux – the most comprehensive Linux distribution.The accompanying DVD includes the full Fedora Core 5 binary distribution & the complete OpenOffice.org office suite. MSRP=$50.

Ted Littman, NOCCC Reviews Editor **(714) 779-1936**
reviews@noccc.org. ∎

Bytes? If you are interested, now is the time to let Jim know of your interest. He is willing to show the new editor what he does and how he does it. If no one is interested, then I guess there will no longer be an Orange Bytes. I really don't want see this happen.

Our Reviews Editor and Lending Library Manager, Ted Litman, is putting some great books up for sale this month. Be sure to check it out.

If you are interested in digital photograpy and feel that you would like some more information Sony is holding a Digital Days Workshop in Los Angeles on February 3rd and 4th. For more information please go to http://digitaldaysphoto.com and get all the details and costs. ∎

NOCCC Membership Fee Schedule

In an effort to increase club membership and provide additional resources, attract young people involved or having an interest in computing, to attract local computer-related businesses to place ads in the Orange Bytes with or without becoming NOCCC members, the schedule has been revised. And, we are offering members the opportunity to help our club financially by making donations that should be income-tax deductible since we are chartered as a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization. Membership level will be designated on the Membership Badge and Donators will be acknowledged in an issue of the Bytes. ∎

	Fee	($)
Membership Level	**1 Year**	**3 Years**
Individual Member	**$35**	**90**
Each Additional Family Member	15	45
College Student	20	
High School Student	15	
Business Member + Ad (Business Card)	180	
Business Member + Ad (1/4 Page)	465	
Business Member + Ad (1/2 Page)	800	
Business Member + Ad (Full Page)	1,475	
Membership Donations ($)		
Contributing Member	75	
Supporting Member	100	
Advocate Member	250	
Patron Member	**500**	

Membership Renewal

When you turn in your Membership Renewal check, PLEASE fill out a Membership Renewal Application.

Memberships may also be re-newed on our Website:

http://www.noccc.org

Are You an NOCCC Member?

Consider all that you get with membership and Join Now

- **Meetings**. Keep up with what's going on in the computer world. Hear outstanding industry representatives make presentations of the latest and greatest in computer products.
- **Special Interest Groups**. Our 20 SIGs cover a broad spectrum of user interest; they invite you, whether you rank as beginner or seasoned computerist, to the lectures and demonstrations they sponsor, and to share computer knowledge.
- **Get help with your current computer problems**. In the Random Access portions of the Irvine Hall meetings, you ask your question of the entire assemblage, and more than likely someone will have the answer.
- **The NOCCC HelpLine**. Some 20 NOCCC volunteers, experts in their fields, are ready to assist with your problems, and are as close as your telephone.
- **The *Orange Bytes* Newsmagazine**. Our Award Winning newsmagazine mailed monthly to your address reports on current activities and gives you articles and reviews geared toward your needs.
- **Raffles**. We have distributed thousands of dollars worth of hardware and software raffle prizes at our General meetings.
- **Product Review.** Write a review for this newsletter and keep the software, hardware, book or CD. Members reviews are published in this newletter.
- **Consignment Table**. We have a thriving consignment table on our regular meeting day in which we assist members to sell or buy all kinds of computer items.
- **Volunteer Work**. You are given opportunities to help our activities with interesting assignments. *An all-volunteer organization*, you can join with other members in a variety of activities, write articles for our newsletter, conduct a seminar, run a SIG, man the help desk, show new members around, help the membership commitee, and more.
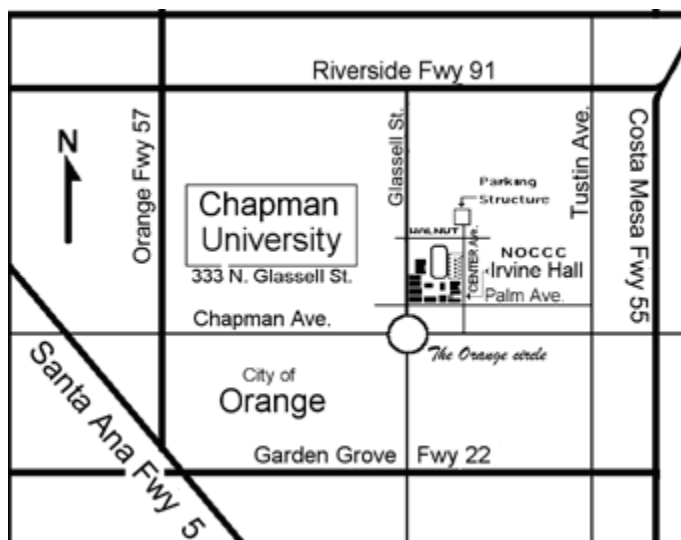
Parking Information — Chapman University's main parking lot (P6) is on the north side of the campus (enter from Glassell & University Dr.) and lot P3 (N Center St. & E Sycamore Ave) is free of charge for NOCCC's meetings on Sunday. Please feel free to park in the parking lots.

Parking is also free on the **campus-side** of the surface streets. The city of Orange's parking laws prohibit parking in front of residential housing which is across the street from Chapman University. **Expensive parking tickets will be issued to violators.**

The NOCCC Information Desk, Membership Desk, Reviews Desk, Consignment Table, and most of the meeting rooms are in Irvine/Hashinger Hall and the Science Center on the east side of the campus (near Center Street).

Become an NOCCC member by signing up at the Membership Desk on our general meeting day, usually the first Sunday of the month. Or simply fill out the form on the reverse side of this page and send it in!

For current meeting information, please call
(714) 998-8080 for a recorded message.

North Orange County Computer Club
PO Box 3616
Orange CA 92857

Address Service Requested

Members:
Your expiration month and year appear on
your mailing label. Please renew promptly,
using the application inside.

Dated Material - **Please deliver by December 3rd**