



Orange Bytes

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

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APRIL 2007

Online Security

Dovell Bonnett, the author of “Online Identity Theft Protection For Dummies” will be speaking about online security. Mr. Bonnett’s solutions reduce security risks for individual users, small businesses and large corporations. He will be our speaker at the Main Meeting.

April meeting details on page 4

NOCCC Meetings - April 1st

NOCCC - Thirty one years and counting

9:00 a.m:

Autocad *Science 203*

Computer Aided Investing.....*Wilkinson 221*

Member Investment Strategies, Techniques and Software

Home Automation SIG *Irvine Hall*

Using technology to automate your home.

Linux for Desktop Users *Wilkinson 117*

Visual Programming *Science 111*

Visual Basic and Visual Basic Script

Visual C++ and Visual J++ for Beginners

10:30 a.m:

Amibroker SIG *Wilkinson 221*

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

Computer Essentials *Science 306*

Digital Photography *Irvine Hall*

Linux for Advanced Users *Wilkinson 117*

Computer Security *Science 203*

Understanding Operating Systems *Science 111*

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.

12:30 p.m:

Hardware Essentials *Science 109*

Digital Camera Technology Buying Guide

OS/2 News and Installation *Science 203*

PC Q & A - Jim Sanders *Irvine Hall*

Most Q's A'd, some problems solved, assorted demos done

2:00 p.m: Main Meeting, Irvine Hall

Online Security..... speaker Dovell Bonnet

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

Meeting Dates

Apr 1, May 6

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Borrow a computer book from our library, see page 19



Celebrating 31 years of
“Friends Helping Friends”



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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

for the following positions:

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 April 2007

By Elise Edgell

Come celebrate another year for NOCCC. Have a free slice of cake and meet some old friends and make some new friends. Last year I did not have the opportunity to spend much time at the 30th anniversary celebration. I would love a chance to see all the people that I did not get a chance to say hello to last year. We should really take pride that our NOCCC is still going strong.

Bring your camera to the meeting. Take some digital photos of people or whatever. If you have some that you are proud of, email them to Jim Sanders for possible inclusion in the next copy of the Orange Bytes.

We have a very topical speaker this month, Dovell Bonnett, who is the author of "Online Identity Theft Protection For Dummies® - Power LogOn Edition." Even better, all NOCCC members attending the presentation will receive a FREE copy of the on-line book. It is very important that you learn how to protect your passwords so that your identity cannot be stolen. Even if you think that this is not a concern for you because you do not keep important information on your computer or that your computer is in your home and nobody else has access to it you are probably wrong. This is a subject that affects all computer users. Dovell has a good solution for protecting passwords.

Many thanks to the members who helped with both the opening and closing of last month's meeting. Please plan on volunteering some time each month to ease the burden on the "official" (Eric Saca) opener and closer. He has been doing a really outstanding job but without the help of other members he will burn out, and we really do not want that to happen.

Just a reminder, elections are coming up. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer still need candidates. If you have some background in doing either job and have the time to attend ONE board meeting a month, please contact Ted Littman. If you have the time and interest but are unsure if you have the necessary background you can contact Ted Littman and discuss it with him. Or contact me at President@noccc.org. If you know of another club member who you feel would be willing and able to do either job, again contact Ted Littman.

Remember, this club is run by volunteers. The more volunteers, the less time each volunteer needs to spend on club matters. If we run out of volunteers, there will be no more club even if there are still people willing to pay their yearly dues. I want to attend the 40th Anniversary Party for NOCCC.

See you at the April meeting. ■

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/>

Corel - Use 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

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

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March Board Meeting Minutes

The monthly Board of Directors meeting was held on Monday, March 5, 2007 at Elise Edgell's home.



The meeting was called to order at 7:34 P.M. by club president, Elise Edgell. In attendance were: Jim Sanders Elise Edgell, Herb Wong, Jr, Ted Littman, Doug Steiner, Dallas Hazleton, Gerry Resch, Mary Cornett, and later Bill Thornton.

Officers Reports:

Secretary's report – (Mary Cornett) - Minutes from the February 5, 2007 board meeting noted corrections of: Treasurer's Report: (Raffle) was \$39.00 & Reviews: (Library) was \$2.00, after which the minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report – (Doug Steiner) – Consignment \$14.50, Raffle \$57.00, Library \$2.00 and Coffee/Other \$18.35 = Total \$91.85. Dues = \$39.00.

Current Membership: (by Doug Steiner) Regular 253, Family 8, Student 2, Newsletter 9 = Total 271.

Next Main Meeting – April 1, 2007, Next Board Meeting – April 2, 2007, at 17782 Rainier Dr., Santa Ana, CA.

Report on General Meeting – (Elise Edgell) Attendance of March, Main Meeting was 52 persons.

Committee Reports:

Publications – (Jim Sanders) Orange Bytes-Jim will speak with UPS regarding delivery.

Programs – (Elise Edgell & Jim Sanders)

April 1: Possibly Rente -- (Join us to celebrate NOCCC

31st Anniversary, Founded in April 1976.)

May 6: Open

June 3: Open

Reviews - (Ted Littman) 1 Software Program, 2 books out; returned 2 Software Programs and 1 Book. Library fee of \$2.00.

Public Relations – Else O, on vacation, please check the "Business Section" Orange County Register.

Else indicated articles are published as space allows.

University Liaison – (Elise Edgell) – The Lease Contract 07/08 will arrive in approximately 2 weeks.

Internet Committee: (Herb Wong) Took care of some minor maintenance utility problems.

Raffle: (Gerry Resch) Ted Littman will contribute the following from products sent to NOCCC: Logitech keyboard; McAfee security software; ConceptDraw V Professional Edition software; Concept Draw's Project 2 software; book- O'Reilly's Windows Vista For Starters The Missing Manual. For the members only raffle: ConceptDraw's MindMap 4 software and O'Reilly's Excel 2007 For Starters book.

SIG'S – (Herb Wong, Jr.) – Surveying results, it was difficult to draw conclusions because of the way questions were answered.

Consignment Table – (Richard Miller-absent).

Opening & Closing: Jim Sanders did opening of Main Meeting, he and other helpers did closing.

Old Business:

continued on page 24

APRIL 1ST MEETING PREVIEW

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY SIG - 10:30 am - Larry Klees - has a pot luck SIG scheduled for this month's meeting.

COMPUTER ESSENTIALS SIG - 10:30 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: 9:00 am We will discuss various investing topics, focusing on technical analysis and how various computer tools and internet sites may be useful in making and managing your investments. The focus for the next few months will be reviewing methods for making the final selection decisions on stocks/etfs before making a trade and some of the things we should consider doing as part of this process.

AMIBROKER SIG: 10:30 am The next few meetings will be hands-on sessions to learn and practice AFL coding – so bring your computers and prepare to be put to work. Our plan is to spend several sessions as a workshop, learning important parts of AFL and coding them. Part of each meeting will be discussing features of AmiBroker and answering questions about capa-

bilities and programs.

MAIN MEETING 2:00 pm, Irvine Hall - Dovell Bonnett has been creating security solutions for computer users for over 20 years. In order to provide these solutions to consumers as directly, and quickly, as possible, he founded Access Smart. This passion, as he puts it, to "empower people to manage digital information in the digital age" also led him to write the popular *Online Identity Theft Protection For Dummies® – Power LogOn Edition*.

THE CLUB RAFFLE items this month are: Logitech keyboard; McAfee security software; ConceptDraw V Professional Edition software; Concept Draw's Project 2 software; book- O'Reilly's Windows Vista For Starters The Missing Manual. 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: ConceptDraw's MindMap 4 software and O'Reilly's Excel 2007 For Starters book & ??? ■

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%.

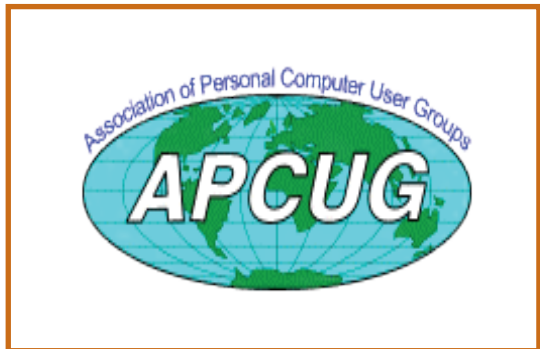
3. Fill out a tag on each item! It must contain: Seller's Name, NOCCC Membership Number, Item name, a short description and selling price.

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. ■



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Open

Consignment Table

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University Liaison

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Ted's Stuff

By Ted Littman, NOCCC Reviews Editor and Board Member

This is the 4th 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.



Belarc Advisor 7.2k

This free software will analyze your system and give you lots of information on your hardware, software, security, etc. It works with all versions of Windows including Vista. Download it at <http://snipurl.com/1dc0n>.

35 Things Every PC User Should Know

This very useful article by Chris Null is in the March 2007 issue of PC World and can be viewed at <http://snipurl.com/1cuia>.

Common PC Problems Solved

There is a useful article in the 10-23-06 issue of PC World (<http://snipurl.com/1cugx>), on frequently asked questions about troubleshooting, data security, and Registry fixes.

Turn Off Unnecessary Windows XP Services

“Turning off unnecessary services in Windows XP can greatly reduce your exploit risk, while improving system performance.” This quote is from an interesting article (<http://snipurl.com/myqy>) that can help you remove unnecessary services that impact performance. The article provides a guide on how to do this and what to turn off.

Control Your Automatically Launch Programs

Programs that automatically start up with Windows can be annoying, especially when they hog system memory and bog down your system. Startup Control Panel is a free program from PC World's Mike Lin that lets you take control of this process. It is easier to use than Window's msconfig.exe applet. You can download it at <http://snipurl.com/1cuhk>.

Safer File Downloads

Microsoft suggests that you save files or programs from the Internet before you “run” them. That way, your antivirus program can scan them first to make sure that the files won't damage your system – sage advice! For more information, go to <http://snipurl.com/1cuhn>.

How to Buy a Digital Camera

If the March NOCCC Main Meeting presentation by the guys from Sammy's Camera whet your appetite, there is a good complementary article at <http://snipurl.com/1cuhr> with lots of useful links to help you make a decision on what to buy.

Windows Tips for Everyone

In another PC World article, author Preston Gralla offers lots of useful information on Windows Vista and XP as well. Read it at <http://www.pcworld.com/article/id,129257/article.html>.

Microsoft's Office 2007 Backward Compatibility

According to a 1/24/07 newsletter from Steve Bass, Microsoft offers a free compatibility pack for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint that let's you open, edit, and save Office 2007 files in Office 2000, XP, and 2003. You can download it at: <http://snipurl.com/136yq>.

Microsoft Vista

If you are using the latest operating system, be sure to visit the Windows Vista Web site (<http://microsoft.com/windows>) as well as the Windows Community site, now featured under Help and Support at <http://snipurl.com/1cuhu>. At the first site, you will find help on every conceivable Windows Vista topic. At the second site, you can connect with other Vista users in the Windows Vista Community. You also can find information on the latest products, get free downloads, shop for new Vista-compatible items (with discounts from partnering business such as Best Buy, Dell, and more).

Windows Vista Product Guide

The comprehensive guide for the various versions of Vista can be downloaded at <http://snipurl.com/1cuhx>.

Vista's User Account Control (UAC)

As part of its improved security system, Microsoft added a feature that enables you to log in as a regular user without administrator privileges, but quickly elevates your privileges when a program needs greater access. According to the Windows Secrets e-mail newsletter of 3-8-07 (<http://WindowsSecrets.com/comp/070308>), it is a good thing even though you may get frequent prompts asking if you approve when a new program tries to open or download from the Internet. While I agree with their assessment that disabling this feature is not wise, it sure can be a pain.

Recover Deleted Files

If you inadvertently deleted an important file, you may or may not be able to recover it, depending on how soon you discover it. Read all about it from Bob Rankin (author of the Tourbus e-mail newsletter) at <http://snipurl.com/1cuhz>. Bob also has links to software that go beyond the capabilities built into the various versions of Windows.

Back Up Your Essential PC Drivers

There are several free software programs that will make copies of your hardware drivers, so that in the event you need to replace a corrupted file, you can easily do so. One such program is Driver Collector. It finds and collects the installed driver files for the hardware you select on your PC. After it collects the files, the program copies to your hard drive, in a specific folder that you designate. Download it at www.majorgeeks.com/Driver_Collector_d3982.html. Two other free programs are at www.321download.com/LastFreeware/files/wdb.zip and



www.innovative-sol.com/drivermax/.

Make a Recovery Partition

In a 9-13-06 PC Magazine article (www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,2014359,00.asp), Rick Broida discusses an approach to more easily recovering your stuff in the event of a major disaster by using Partition Magic or Norton Ghost to create a compressed image on a backup partition. This sounds like a good idea since you can recover your programs as well as data files and operating system.

2007 Antivirus Programs

If you need to replace your old antivirus software on get a program for your new computer, check out <http://snipurl.com/1cui4> for a comparison of the latest versions of nine “to buy” programs. In another useful review from PC Magazine on 3-5-07 (www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,2100528,00.asp), a well-regarded antivirus testing laboratory has released its latest quarterly results, and placed Microsoft’s Live OneCare antivirus solution squarely at the bottom of the list!

Free Games

When you have nothing better to do, do you play Solitaire? You can download a top-rated collection of solitaire games that work with Vista and prior versions of Windows at <http://snipurl.com/1a7bh>.

That’s it for now. Happy computing to you all and I hope that you will check my column in next month’s issue of the Bytes. ■

Pandora – a Free Music Resource

Written by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS www.compukiss.com; sandy@compukiss.com

The Internet is filled with free resources, but some are better than others. Here is one of the best free music resources on the Web.

Pandora is one of my favorite music websites. Just surf over to www.pandora.com and type in a song or an artist that you like. Pandora analyses your choice and creates a music station with similar-sounding music. It will then play comparable songs that it thinks you will like. You can add more music and/or artists to the station to refine your choices. You can also tell Pandora whether or not you like the song that is playing. It uses your likes and dislikes to refine the songs it chooses. You can create up to 100 different stations with different types of music.

Pandora was created by the Music Genome Project, a group of musicians and music-loving technologists who have broken music into hundreds of music attributes or “genes” such as melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, orchestration, arrangement, lyrics, and harmony. They then use high-tech methodology to analyze the musical qualities of each song and rendition.

The results are uncanny. I created several music stations with different

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NOCCC June Elections

Editors note:

The elections are getting close and we still have no one volunteering for Secretary or Treasurer or Editor. I am retiring as editor in June as I need to spend more time trying to make a living. I thought I might get enough referrals for my consulting services to get by, but that hasn’t worked. I am willing to help someone else take over as Editor, but they need to set up soon if you want to have a July issue of the Bytes. The club cannot function without a Treasurer.

Current Candidates for the 2007-2008 NOCCC Officers/Board of Directors Members election

Your nominating committee has put together the following list of candidates so far. There are a number of key positions for which there are no nominees or only single candidates. I urge you to contact me if you are interested in **servicing your computer club** as an officer or if you can recommend someone. Elections are only a few months off and we will have a serious problem if we can’t put together a full list of candidates. Notably, the club needs someone to take the lead in publishing the Orange Bytes.

President

Herb Wong – current Vice President

Vice President

Jim Sanders – current Bytes Editor & Publications Chairman

Secretary - Open

Treasurer - Open

Directors (8)

Dave Keays – current Director

Ted Littman – current Director

Richard Miller – current Director

Joe Mizer – SIG Leader

Else Olovsson – current Director

Gerry Resch – current Director

Bill Thornton – current Director

Dallas Hazleton – current Director

Past President

Elise Edgell – current President

Editor - Open

Webmaster

Herb Wong – current Webmaster

Ted Littman, Nominating Committee Chairman

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THINGS, THINGLETS & THINGASSOS

Written by *S. Jack Lewtschuk, Monterey Bay Users' Group-PC Columnist* www.mbug.org/; blacklion@royal.net

WORDS OF WISDOM

If builders built houses the way programmers build computer programs, the first woodpecker to come along would destroy civilization!

KEEPING TRACK OF MULTIPLE PASSWORDS

Passwords are a part of our everyday life: we use them for e-mail, online banking, stock trading, shopping, blogging, etc. For good security, you should have a different password for each website you enter. But how can you remember so many passwords? A password manager is a great way to consolidate all your passwords without compromising security. Generally, a password manager is a program that stores all of your passwords for you. All of your passwords are kept secure with—you guessed it—a password.

The key advantage to using a password manager is that you only have to remember one password. That's not too bad. Then you can retain unique passwords for each of your various accounts without taxing your memory.

There are several pay programs that work this way. Before buying one, try KeePass (<http://keepass.sourceforge.net/>), a simple, free password manager. It can help you organize your passwords and also enter them into log-in forms.

How does KeePass work? After you download and install it, there are several easy steps to setting it up. The first time you open it, you have to create the file that will store your passwords. Click the "New" button at the top left of the window which will prompt you for a "Master Key." Make it one that you can easily remember, but which someone else can't easily guess (e.g., your birth date, your spouse/child's/pet's name), because it's the password you'll use from now on to unlock all your other passwords.

KeePass includes categories for online functions such as e-mail, home banking and others. To put a password into KeePass, select a category and then click the "Add Entry" button. You'll be able to enter a title for the password, which will help you easily identify where the password is used.

Let's take Hotmail as an example—an effective title for a Hotmail password could be simply "Hotmail." You could also enter the web address where the password is required. KeePass automatically fills the password box with a random password. Chances are that it's stronger than the password you already use for Hotmail, but to make it work, you have to log into your account and change it to match KeePass.

If you want to keep things simple, erase the pre-filled box and put in the password that you already use and click "OK." Do the same steps for all of your everyday passwords and take a load off your memory. You can drag and drop passwords directly from KeePass. Click the password you need from KeePass and move it to the blank form on a Web page. The password will appear in the blank.

KeePass keeps your entire password file encrypted. The only way to open or read it is with your master password, so don't lose it!

In addition to Windows, "switch-hitters" can download versions of KeePass for Macintosh, PocketPC, Palm and Linux. You can also take KeePass with you on a thumb drive by copying two files onto your thumb drive. One is the KeePass program (KeePass.exe), and the other is the file containing your passwords (the default is called Database.kdb).

BACKING UP OUTLOOK CONTACTS

Outlook stores all data in a single file called a ".PST file". This file contains your contacts, e-mail, calendar items and tasks. It's easy to back up your entire Outlook .PST file—just locate it and copy it as you would any other file. Backing up individual folders within Outlook is also easy, so you can export your entire "Contacts" list. Simply highlight "Contacts" in your Outlook folders list. Then click "File," and "Import and Export" to open the "Import and Export Wizard." Select "Export to a file" and click "Next," to choose from a list of options (I recommend Microsoft Excel as the best one to choose in order to export all your contacts into a nicely ordered spreadsheet). After making your selection, click "Next." You'll be given the option again to select the folder you want to export. Highlight it, click "Next," and specify the name and location where you would like to save your file (use the "Browse" button if needed), click "Next" and then click "Finish."

You can use the same procedure with other items in the Outlook folder list. This is handy if you only want to export certain parts of your Outlook data file. You can use the files with other programs such as a "Database." You can also use it to share information with other people. Say you want to share your contacts with friends or coworkers: just export them, and others can import your list into their Outlook program.

To import a file, click "File," and "Import and Export." Select "Import from another program or file," click "Next," and select the type of file from which you're importing. In this case, select "Microsoft Excel" and click "Next." Click "Browse" to locate the file you wish to import, and then select your import options. You may want to allow duplicates, or you may wish to replace duplicates with imported items. You can also specify that duplicates not be imported. Click "Next," select the destination folder, click "Next" again, and finally, click "Finish."

NOVICE CORNER

Starting Your Computer in "Safe Mode" - At some point in time you may need to start your computer in "safe mode." You should print these instructions before continuing as they will not be available after you shut your computer down in step two. Click "Start," click "Shut Down," and then in the drop-down list click "Shut down." In the shut down window dialog box, click "Restart," and then click "OK." When you see the message "Please select the operating system to start" or "Windows" appears on the screen, press the "F8" key several times. Use your arrow keys to highlight the appropriate "safe mode" option, and then press "ENTER." If you have a dual-boot or multiple-boot system, choose the installation that you need to access using the arrow keys, and then press "ENTER."

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Pandora

from page 7

genres that I like and in almost every case I was presented with similar music that I found very pleasing. You can experiment with different combinations. For instance, putting James Taylor and Willie Nelson together gave me an interesting, but likable mix of music.

Pandora is pretty smart. Typing in The Christmas Song and choosing Diana Krall as the artist gave me a whole station of mellow Christmas music which is just what I was looking for. Typing in The Nylons and Take 6 gave me a nice selection of accapella and harmonistic music.

Pandora also lets you bookmark songs or artists so you can remember what you liked. You can look up more information about artists and songs right on the site. Two clicks will lead you to iTunes or Amazon where you can purchase the music. You can also share your music by emailing your stations to friends.

Pandora is ad-supported so you will see ads for everything from gym shoes to cell service. I found the ads to be unobtrusive, but if you want to get rid of them, you can pay to eliminate them. For \$36, you get 12 months of unlimited use with services exactly the same as the free version, but without the ads.

Since the ads don't bother me, I'll continue to use the free version of Pandora. It's an entertaining website that provides much listening pleasure to keep me company when I am working on the computer.

If you are into music, you may also want to check out two other music resources. MusicIP Mixer and Goombah. Like Pandora, both of these sites provide intriguing music adventures.

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New Helpline

Ted Littman has verified all of the participants and added some new entries, check it out, you may find some help you need. See page 25. ■

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Microsoft Vista Ultimate and Acer Ferrari 1004 First Look

Review by Ted Littman, NOCCC

The new Vista operating system has been a long time in coming. As part of the lengthy beta test program (that I participated in), Microsoft even involved 50 families from around the world who gave daily feedback using a Microsoft-provided computer (according to a 1-30-07 article in the Los Angeles Times). And, its introduction to home and small business users has been promoted by a major marketing campaign that includes both Vista and the new Office 2007 suite. As part of this effort, Microsoft provided quite a few fully loaded review laptops (with Vista Ultimate and Office 2007 pre-installed) to bloggers and some user group activists (of whom I was one). You can find numerous blogger and blog reader commentaries and reviews on the Internet (on the promotional effort, software, & hardware) as well as the usual assortment of articles from regular reviewers covering a wide spectrum of views as befits a major software release. My review, obviously, doesn't cover all of Vista's features and leaves a discussion of Office 2007 to a subsequent review. I do plan to write more on Vista as I gain additional experience in its use. Hopefully, I have provided enough useful information here to aid your near-term buying decision.

Hardware

The machine that I received (courtesy of Windows Vista and AMD according to Microsoft) is an Acer Ferrari 1004 WTMi ultra-portable laptop with a high-tech carbon-fiber casing, a 12.1-inch WXGA screen (1280x800 max. resolution), an AMD Turion 64x2 Mobile Technology TL-56 dual processor, an ATI Radeon Xpress 1150 chipset, 1.8 GB of DDR2 SDRAM, a 160 GB Hitachi SATA hard drive, 5-in-1 card reader, an external IEEE 1394 8x CD-ROM drive, an integrated rotate-able Acer OrbiCam camera, Realtek high-definition



built-in stereo speakers, 802.11n WLAN Bluetooth, Bluetooth VoIP phone, gigabit Ethernet port, V.92 modem, a compact keyboard with a built-in Touchpad plus an Acer optical mouse, and both 6-cell (5200 mAh) and 3-cell (2000 mAh) Li-Ion battery packs, the former one good for only about 4 hours of operation before recharging and the latter less than 2 hour, depending on settings. The laptop weighs a mere 3.85 lbs. with the larger battery pack. Finally, the

laptop and external drive come with nice carrying cases. Wow! Of note, PC Magazine (10-31-06 issue) rated the Ferrari a 3.5 (on a scale of 1-5) and CNET rated it a 6.1 (out of 10). Good, but obviously not the best.

Surprisingly, the graphics card has a "Windows Experience" score of only 2.8 whereas 3.0 is supposed to be the minimum to achieve the full effect of Vista's new graphical "Aero" look and capabilities. However, I have not been able to detect any degradation of appearance or video or other capabilities in my usage so far. The Windows Experience Index, new to Vista, rates five components (Processor, RAM, Graphics, Games, & Primary Hard Drive) with scores from 1 to 5.9. The overall score is the lowest of the five.

In my view, the Acer laptop is good-looking and stylish as befitting the Ferrari hot-car namesake, but expensive at about \$2300 list. There is a 1-year manufacturer's warranty. Although small in size, I found the keyboard easy to use even though I've only used full-size ones before. The touchpad is "interesting" but I prefer using the faster optical mouse for most inputs. Performing tasks with the AMD processor was much faster than I expected (at least compared to my Dell 8400 desktop). The external optical drive works fine, but is a bit of a nuisance if space is limited. And, you still have to carry it around when traveling unless you're not using CDs/DVDs at that time. The larger Ferrari 5000 model has a built-in drive which I think is more practical, at least it would be for me. There is a 61-page printed User's Guide which covers the essentials, but it is all too brief if this is your first laptop. If you have a hardware problem, don't count on much help from Acer Tech Support. I tried several (free) telephone calls when I got the laptop in late December and was informed via a recording that they were swamped and there would be at least an hour wait. I also sent an e-mail request for help and it took 5 days to get a reply! Maybe response time is better now?

Operating System

The review system includes the 64-bit top-of-the-line Vista Ultimate. Other available Vista operating systems are Home Basic, Home Premium, Business, and Enterprise for both 32-bit and 64-bit computers. (There also is a Vista Starter operating system for inexpensive PCs used in emerging-market countries.) Home Basic is the most limited in capabilities and doesn't have the aero look. The Microsoft table below lists the key features of four versions. A more detailed comparison of all versions can be found in the electronic Product Guide starting on p. 18 (see Vista Help below).

Comparing Offerings

Which Windows Vista Edition is Right for You?	Home Basic	Home Premium	Business	Ultimate
Most secure Windows ever with Windows Defender and Windows Firewall	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quickly find what you need with Instant Search and Windows Internet Explorer 7	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elegant Windows Aero desktop experience with Windows Flip 3D navigation		✓	✓	✓
Best choice for laptops with enhanced Windows Mobility Center and Tablet PC support		✓	✓	✓
Collaborate and share documents with Windows Meeting Space		✓	✓	✓
Experience photos and entertainment in your living room with Windows Media Center		✓	✓	✓
Enjoy Windows Media Center on TVs throughout your home with Xbox 360 and other devices		✓	✓	✓
Help protect against hardware failure with advanced business backup features		✓	✓	✓
Business Networking and Remote Desktop for easier connectivity		✓	✓	✓
Better protect your data against loss or theft with Windows BitLocker Drive Encryption		✓	✓	✓

Requirements for All Vistas except Basic

Microsoft recommends these component capabilities for the operating system:

- 1 GHz 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor and 1 GB system memory.
- 40 GB hard drive with at least 15 GB free space.
- Support for Direct X9 on graphics card (WDDM driver, 128 MB or more of graphics RAM, Pixel Shader 2.0, and 32 bits per pixel).
- DVD-ROM drive (internal or external).
- Audio output and Internet access.

Installation

I cannot speak to the installation of Vista Ultimate since it came pre-installed (by Microsoft) on the Acer Ferrari laptop. But, from what I've read in books and on the Internet, most people are unlikely to experience serious problems whether doing a clean installation on a new machine (or a partition separate from your existing operating system), or upgrade by having Vista replace Windows XP or an older OS. **This assumes, of course, that your computer has the capability to run OK with Vista.** If you want to check before buying Vista, you can download a free Microsoft tool from: www.windowsvista.com/upgradeadvisor (also see). When I participated in the beta test program, I installed without problems three beta versions on new partitions that I created on my main desktop PC (a two-year-old Dell 8400, 3.2 GHz Pentium 4, 1 GB RAM, two large hard drives, and the Windows XP HE OS).

One of the biggest problems that I encountered with Vista's beta versions was incompatibility with many of my existing programs. But, with Vista Ultimate on the Acer laptop, surprisingly, most of the programs that I added worked well. Since, Microsoft pre-installed the Office 2007 suite, I did not try my older versions of Office. However, here's a sampling of what works: Adobe Acrobat Pro v.7, Adobe Reader 8, ScanSoft PDF Pro 4, Quicken Premiere 2007, TurboTax Deluxe 2006, Print-

shop Deluxe v.22, RoboForm, SnagIt, Belarc Advisor, LapLink Gold 12, and Microsoft Streets & Trips 2007 (without GPS Navigator which doesn't have a driver yet for a Vista 64-bit OS). I also tried Partition Magic 8, but it is incompatible with Vista as were several old knowledge reference programs. Microsoft has a Windows Marketplace web site with links to 1000s of software and hardware products that are said to work with Vista (www.windowsmarketplace.com/PWT.mc_id=0806252).

Running the Laptop with Vista

Since I don't have a wireless setup with my PCs, I used a cable connection from the Acer to my router and was able to interconnect the two desktops and laptop by setting up a home network. (I use Time-Warner Cable to connect all three machines to the Internet via the router.) Everything has worked fine so far with the initial exception of Internet Explorer 7. It was unable to access any web sites until I discovered that there were two entries in the Start/All Programs list, one for the 64-bit version of IE 7 and the other for the 32-bit one. And, the default setting was incorrectly set for 32-bits. After making the switch, IE 7 opened fine! Before I discovered the real problem, I went off on a wild goose chase to no avail where I tried such options as resetting IE 7 to its original (when installed) setting and turning off IE add-ons, Protected Mode, and other security settings. Incidentally, the new Protected Mode feature is intended to protect your computer from those hackers intent on delivering malware or damaging files via your browser. (As I understand it, PM prevents execution of code without your approval.)

I also exercised the 5-in-1 built-in reader card using a memory card from my digital camera to transfer photos to the laptop's hard drive via Windows Photo Gallery. No sweat. I tried three methods to transfer files to the laptop. First, I used a San Disk USB memory stick that I plugged into one of the three built-in USB ports after copying files to it from a desktop. Then, I tried using the Acer external optical drive with data copied to a CD. Finally, I used my network to directly copy files from a desktop to the laptop. All methods worked without a hitch.

Microsoft has a new version (2007) of its free Virtual PC software (<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/virtualpc/default.aspx>) that I downloaded and installed. (A Virtual PC allows you to simultaneously run multiple operating systems on a single machine.) Then I added Windows XP Pro as the operating system. One of its great features is that you can install and run programs that you use which are incompatible with Vista as well as access the Internet, and retrieve your mail. I previously tried this on my desktop and it works well, acting as if it were a separate partition, but without having to shut down Vista and reboot.

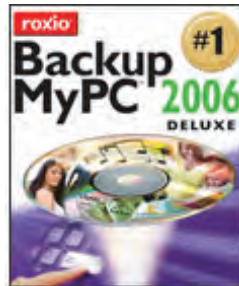
I tried some of the media features of Vista and was pleased with the results. I set *Windows Media Player 11* as the default audio program and played a number of my albums using both the built-in Acer stereo speakers and a stereo headset connected to the audio output jack. I also ripped several CD music albums to the hard drive using WMP. There is a lot more capability for me to explore in the future. The new *Photo Gallery* allows you

Continued on page 16

Roxio-Sonic Backup MyPC Deluxe v. 6

Review by William Allen, NOCCC

There are two kinds of PC users: those who backup their work regularly and those who will wish they had. Think of all the ways you can lose all that precious data on your hard drive - power failure, hard disk failure, inadvertent reformatting, virus attacks, magnetic fields, etc. All magnetic data media including hard disks, floppies, and CDs will not retain data indefinitely. Regular backups are the only way to avoid losing that piece of work you invariably need just at the very time you lose it. Either we backup our work regularly or we eventually lose it. So what is the easiest most unobtrusive way to get backing up done on a regular basis?



The Roxio-Sonic Backup MyPC Deluxe v6.0 program can ensure that easy regular backup for you. The program comes with many features that make life simpler for us PC users. For example, the program allows one to schedule regular background backups while you are working. It also does full, incremental, or differential backups. It can then compare what's been backed up with the original files that were backed up to ensure saved data integrity. Its catalog feature allows locating and restoring various versions of the same data set, if needed. The backed up files can be compressed and/or password-protected if necessary. And, the backed up files can be sent to a multitude of media - CD, DVD, Dual layer DVD, tape, network server, or external HD. Perhaps most important, by storing both data and operating system, a quick disaster recovery capability for your PC is possible.

I found a couple of Backup MyPC features that are especially helpful. For example, if you are a busy compute user who wants to spend minimum time learning to use new software such as this backup program, then you will like the seven wizards provided for doing not only backups, but also creating disk labels, erasing disks, finalizing a disk to prevent additional data being added, as well as initiating the various methods of backing up data, photos, music, etc.

My first backup of 100 Mb using Backup MyPC took just six minutes. Comparison of the files backed up to the original hard disk files took only seconds. The procedure was easy. First, open MyPC Deluxe and click on Backup. Select Backup again over either Restore or Compare. Next, select the files to be backed up. Then give your backup file a name, preferably using the suggested MM/DD/YY BACKUP format. Decide if you must back up all the selected files or want just incremen-

tal or differential backups of the files. Then hit Start. That's it - quick and easy.

Version 6 of the Roxio-Sonic Deluxe Backup MyPC Suite has a new user interface that integrates a number of functions other than just backing up files such as making exact copies of disks, burning hard drive images onto disks, etc. One interesting capability is Archiving using Backup MyPC where a user can check types of files to be archived, as opposed to checking all specific files for backup.

Roxio Sonic Backup MyPC has been designed especially as an easy-to-use program. For the casual PC users, that is important because they are most likely not to make a concerted effort to back up their work until it is too late to rescue that all important document! Such problems can be precluded with scheduled backups using Backup MyPC. The program is available at www.roxio.com/enu/store/backup.html for \$49.99. Amazon presently has it for as low as \$42.49. This review was made with Windows XP PC having a 2.5GHz CPU, 120 GB HD, flat panel monitor, broadband cable Internet, two CD/DVD drives, and laser and inkjet printers.

(Reviews Editor's note: the current version is called Backup MyPC 2006.) ■

Wil Wheaton JUST A GEEK

Review by Cathy Shimozone, NOCCC

This is the story of the voyage from Star Trek, the Next Generation into manhood. With the help of character-like "Prove-to-Everyone-that-Quitting-Star-Trek-Wasn't-a-Mistake" and his Wesley Crusher action figure, he goes 'where this boy has not gone before' into adulthood.

Wil and his best friend, Darin, go to Hooters for lunch to prove to themselves they 'still have it'. When a young waitress asked him "didn't you used to be an actor?" "Prove-to-Everyone-that-Quitting-Star-Trek-Wasn't-a-Mistake" was born. He accompanied Wil to many, many auditions that resulted in VERY few roles.

Wil started a blog website (wilwheaton.net) and excerpts from it are interspersed throughout the book. There is also another website worth checking out: <http://www.itconversations.com/shows/detail220.html>. Here, you can hear Wil present the show he does at Star Trek conventions. It is definitely worth your time.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

Windows Vista – The Missing Manual

Review by, *Ted Littman, NOCCC*

Now that Microsoft has finally released all five (or is it 10?) of its versions of the Vista operating system, the book publishers have rushed to get their entries to market as well. This one, from O'Reilly, is part of *The Missing Manual* series and was written by well-known author and technology columnist, David Pogue. It is big (over 825 pages) and covers most everything you need to know whether you are a novice or “budding power user.” The author does a commendable job of highlighting information aimed at newbies (Up to Speed Sidebars) and advanced users (Power Users' Clinic Boxes). He also indicates what features can be found in which version of Vista.

Pogue's style of writing makes for easy reading and understanding with enough humor to keep you interested. The book is well-illustrated, but unfortunately, there are no color graphics, even for the “Aero look” which loses much when viewed in black-and-white. And you can read it “cover-to-cover” or just look at the chapters of interest, except perhaps for the introductory material.

The book is divided into seven parts with several chapters each. It starts with the Vista Desktop (everything that you see on the screen), then covers software use, doing the Internet, multimedia stuff, hardware questions, backing up files and trouble-shooting (do they go together?), and finally, running Vista in a network (a particularly important area for many of us today).

Unfortunately, there isn't too much information on problems and fixes (maybe that warrants a special book?). For that you have to rely mostly on the various community web sites where people post questions and hopefully get useful answers or talk to a guru from your computer club. Of course, you could try Microsoft Tech Support (which costs), but you are most likely to wind up dealing with someone overseas and a difficult-to-understand accent. As an example, I had a problem with getting Internet Explorer 7 to work and the book wasn't much help although one Web site did have a related question. That is, until I discovered with the help of [my guru](#) that my pre-installed Vista Ultimate put both 32-bit and 64-bit versions on my laptop and set the 32-bit one as default. Unfortunately, the machine is a 64-bit system! Go figure. Yes, the book mentions both versions, but didn't say anything on what is installed by default.

Now although it is true that Vista doesn't come with a printed manual “in the box,” it does have a big electronic *Product Guide* as well as a much-improved (vs. Windows XP) built-in/online Help system with illustrations and useful links that is easy to query. (The 315-page Product Guide exists in print form, but



I don't know if Microsoft offers it for sale – I did get a copy as part of the Vista promo campaign.) So, on the question of whether to buy a book, it really gets down to the question of whether (1) you're a do-it-yourselfer and like to learn as you tinker, (2) you don't mind reading electronic manuals, or (3) you're an old-fashioned print-book person (like me) who favors that method of learning and inquiring.

My Bottom Line

I like the book as I have Pogue's previous offerings. It was useful not only for navigating Vista's capabilities, but also as a desktop reference in doing a review of Vista Ultimate. Too bad it wasn't available when I participated in the beta test program! The book could benefit readers more, in my view, if it paid greater attention to the myriad of problems that computerists encounter with a new operating system; hopefully, when the first revision is published?

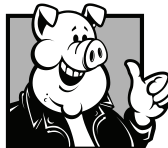
The price is reasonable at \$35 list less a 35% computer-club-member discount and free shipping. So, if you prefer print books over the electronic kind as I do, you probably will enjoy Pogue's latest offering and find it useful in getting up-to-speed quickly and then as a handy reference. Corrections and updates, if any, can be found at www.missingmanuals.com. More information on this book can be found at the O'Reilly web site: .

Finally, it should be noted that a slimmed-down version, *Windows Vista for Starters – The Missing Manual*, also is available from Pogue-O'Reilly. At \$20 a pop (less 35%) and 400 pages, it should appeal to new computerists (at least new to Vista) who don't want “the whole nine yards” that is provided in the regular Missing Manual. ■

A Review Reminder

We have quite a few very good books available for review.

When you agree to read one of these books, and write a review that meets our published guidelines, you get to keep the book and get your work published in the Orange Bytes. Some of these books carry a pretty hefty price tag, which makes it a pretty good deal. ■



Pig SIG Open To ALL

Meet us in the Cafeteria in Argyros Hall around noon (until about 12:30pm). 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! ■

March Meeting Photos



Pasquale Ferazzoli

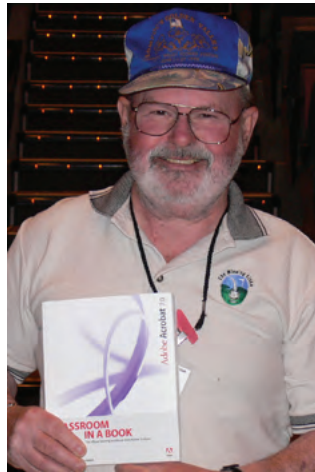
The crew from Sam's Camera in Santa Ana provided a great afternoon of digital camera help and education. We thank them for an informative and entertaining afternoon.



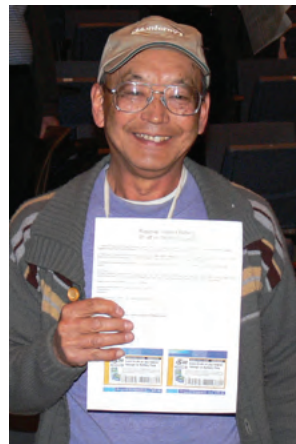
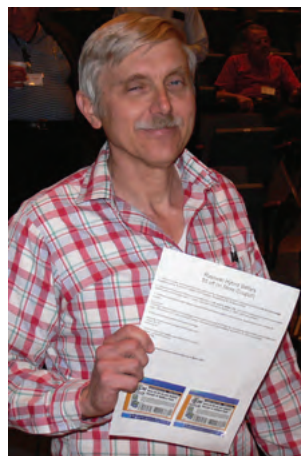
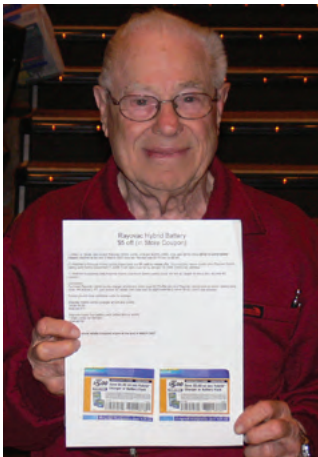
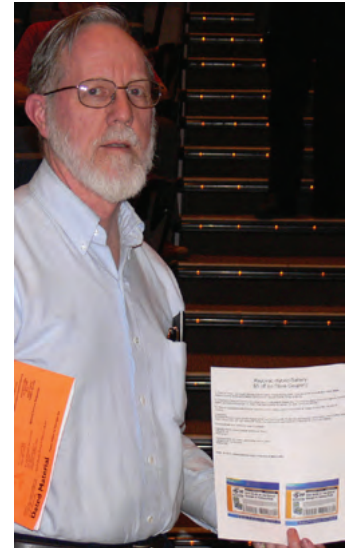
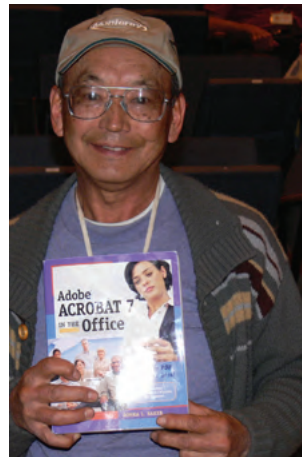
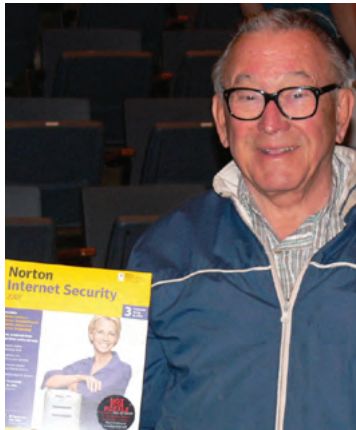
Bob Welsh (below) Robert Morrissey (above)



Photography by Jim Sanders



Samy's donated two \$25 gift cards to the raffle



to organize your digital collection by keywords, tags, the date the pictures or video were taken, ratings, and other metadata which makes it significantly more useful.

A new feature, *Shadow Copy*, archives previous versions of your data files for easy recovery in the event that a file is accidentally changed, corrupted, or lost. The copies are automatically saved as part of a restore point in System Properties if *System Protection* is turned on. This is likely to prove a great asset. Another useful addition is the *Snipping Tool*, a big improvement over the *PrtScn* key in allowing you to copy all or part of a screen (free-form, rectangular, or window) and paste it elsewhere in HTML, PRN, GIF, or JPEG format. But, Microsoft has a long way to go before it matches the capabilities of SnagIt!

The Aero Look

The aero look is said to be “modern” – whatever that means. I did find the default’s ethereal 3-D look with its translucent glass-like appearance and glass-like menu bars to be pleasing as are the other available desktop wallpapers; but, I don’t personally find such features very significant in making a purchasing decision on a new operating system. Appearance per se is less important than usability and function. (I certainly have no issue with the XP desktop look.) That said, the redesigned *Start Menu* with its *Search Box* and the *Flip 3-D* and *Flip* ways of displaying and quickly accessing open programs on the *Desktop* along with the *Taskbar*’s scalable “*live icons*” that are actually miniature pages (instead of generic icons) is pretty cool and more useful too (see samples from Wikipedia below). Screen readability, especially with LCD displays, is better with Microsoft’s new *Clear Type* typefaces, first introduced in XP as an option, but on by default in Vista.

Vista windows and title bars have wider borders, making it easier to grab them for resizing or moving. The *Desktop* also sports a *Sidebar* pane located on the right side of the display. It is customizable and contains “*Gadgets*” (mini-applications) such as news and business data, traffic and weather information, Internet radio streams, calendars & clocks, calculators, games, and whatever. It is useful to a degree and cute, unless you add too much clutter to the desktop. You also can download more from the Internet, if you like that sort of thing. But, the more gadgets you have running, the less memory that is available for other activities.

Vista Help

Although Microsoft doesn’t include a printed guide in the Vista box, it does provide a well-illustrated 331-page on-line Product Guide (<http://snipurl.com/r3cs>) offering a comprehensive overview of the features and functions of Vista with information on its various editions and a comparison with Windows XP. (Microsoft has a print version that I received as part of their promotional/review program, but I don’t know if it can be purchased.)



Within Vista there is an easier-to-use and more helpful (compared to XP) electronic Help guide that is nicely written, organized, and illustrated, covering everything from learning about the computer to basics of Vista and troubleshooting problems. It even has links that allow you to post a question or search for answers to queries in appropriate Windows Internet communities. In addition, there is a master web site for help articles, FAQs, blogs, webcasts, and instructions with links to other useful sites that can be helpful. If you bought Vista separately from your PC, Microsoft offers 2 free calls post-installation issues. Then, there is a charge of \$35 “per incident.” Hopefully, if you need to call, a Microsoft technician who speaks English clearly will answer rather than an overseas helper with a difficult-to-understand accent.

Vista Security

The software includes Defender (spyware & malware protection) and Windows Firewall, but you will need a 3rd party anti-virus program. There are a number of decent free ones that can be downloaded as well as the usual assortment of programs and suites that you can purchase. The Internet Explorer 7 and Windows Mail utilities include anti-phishing protection. Vista Ultimate also includes *BitLocker Drive Encryption* to protect your data on a partition or whole drive from being accessed by others. While it is nice that Vista emphasizes security more so than in previous operating systems, Microsoft’s software inclusions are not necessarily the most robust available. But, so far, they seem to be doing a respectable job in guarding the Acer laptop. Of course using a router with a built-in firewall when connected to the Internet adds another layer of protection to my system.

Some Noteworthy Comments from the Gurus

I have looked at a number of books on Vista and the most ringing praise came from Curt Simmons (*How to Do Everything with Windows Vista*, published by McGraw-Hill/Osborne) who wrote: “In my opinion, Windows Vista is the best operating system Microsoft has produced to date, no matter which version you choose to use.” No, he did not say best since the invention of sliced bread!

According to some early testing (PC Magazine 1-30-07 and

PC World Feb. 2007), Vista was generally slower than XP on the same machines, but better at multi-tasking on dual-core PCs. Applications ran slower on 64-bit Vista, but adding RAM helps as does using a fast graphics card with lots of dedicated memory. Gaming and photoprocessor software programs were particularly sensitive in this regard. Some reports noted that the expectations for Vista (most notably graphics and enhanced memory) won't be realized until manufacturers provide drivers optimized to run in Vista on machines having more than 1 MB RAM (but preferably 2 - 4 MB) plus faster graphics cards.

CNET editors rated Vista Ultimate 7.8 (out of 10), but their average user rating (from 185 users) was only 5.6. Although the editors were left with a "Is that all?" feeling (Hey, Microsoft didn't leap-frog the Mac OS X 10.4!), they commented that Windows Vista SP 1, due out sometime before the end of the year, promises to fix what's known to be wrong and should offer a few reasons to switch!

Pricing

The MSRP Full Version/Upgrade prices for the various editions are: Ultimate=\$399/259, Business=\$299/200, Home Premium=\$239/159 and Home Basic=\$199/100. Discounts are widely available on-line and in stores. For example, Costco is selling Vista Business for \$272/182, a modest discount. You may see prices much lower, but watch out for support-less OEM DVDs.

The Bottom Line – Should You Buy Vista.....Now?

If you are considering upgrading an existing desktop or laptop that meets Vista's requirements, the answer is—**maybe**. While Vista (especially the Home Premium and Ultimate versions) has a lot to offer compared to prior Windows operating systems, it takes a fairly robust computer with lots of resources (such as hard drive space, RAM, fast video card) to allow you to take full advantage of its capabilities. Sure, it has a nice new "Aero" graphical look, better built-in security protection, improved stability, many "user-friendly" features, better organizing and search engines, a built-in Media Center with interconnectability to all the digital entertainment components in your home wherever they are, etc., etc; **but**, you will have to learn how to use all the modified and new stuff. And that takes time and maybe an additional investment in Vista training or books. Furthermore, and perhaps of more significance, software and hardware manufacturers have a ways to go before appropriate Vista drivers are available for all of their products and of greater importance, their products are designed to take full advantage of Vista's advanced capabilities. Some of your existing programs that run fine in Windows XP may not do so in Vista even with its *Compatibility Wizard*, and vendors may opt to focus on updates and new versions rather than providing current users with new drivers. Also, as of this writing, advanced components to work with *ReadyDrive* (such as "hybrid" hard drives with flash memory) are not on the market. And few *ReadyBoost*-capable GB-size flash drives are available to supplement system RAM and speed system operations. I did get a 2 GB SanDisk Cruzer

Micro in a Microsoft Vista Launch Kit that is ReadyBoost optimized and really works as advertised. (It can be bought on eBay for \$49 + shipping or Best Buy for \$75. It was not available when I visited a local Best Buy store.)

On the other hand (Isn't there always one?), if you bought a new system since Vista's release at the end of January 2007 or are planning to buy one, it most likely has a pre-installed Vista operating system. If you are new to the *wonderful world of computing*, it shouldn't make any difference to learn Vista vs. XP and you can limit purchases of new software to those that are Vista-compatible. If you are a "pre-owned-computer" person, and want to make a change, hopefully, the time and effort spent to develop the necessary expertise for happy computing will be worth the rewards seemingly offered by Microsoft's new and "greatest operating system" now and particularly down the road - with all of its forward-looking features and potential for helping you manage home entertainment as well as many of the tasks in your life. As the *Big Prognosticator*, Bill Gates, is purported to have said: "This is only the beginning!" ■

JUST A GEEK

FROM PAGE 12

When Wil left Star Trek he became a has-been-trying-to-be-a-famous-working-actor. With

"Prove-to-Everyone-That-Quitting-Star-Trek-Wasn't-A-Mistake" sitting like a chip on his shoulder he went to every audition but was told he was too good, too young, or too old. Worse yet, he was married had two boys and was behind on his bills. He was willing to take almost any acting job to pay his overdue bills.

He gave up a vacation with his family for some auditions. That was his wake up call. He took a look at his life, killed "Prove-to-Everyone-that-Quitting-Star-Trek-Wasn't-a-Mistake," and went back to his first love - writing. He took excerpts from his blog website and wrote his first book "Dancing Barefoot." His book was a great success and he now has several audio books and other writings to his credit.

He has virtually given up acting and is very happily raising his family and writing (his creditors are more than pleased) and has finally reached manhood!

I found this book totally delightful and was very moved by Wil's total honesty in what must have been an extremely difficult life. This book is a must-read.

This book retails for \$24.99, but buy it from O'Reilly (<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/jag/index.html>). Remember, they give a very nice discount to User Group members (see Membership Benefits column on p. 3. By the way they also carry "Dancing Barefoot." ■



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

Roxio's Easy Media Creator 9 Suite – Keeps you up to speed with all of your digital media needs, whether you're mixing music, capturing or editing video, organizing or fixing photos, burning or copying CDs or DVDs, or backing up irreplaceable files. From Sonic Solutions. MSRP=\$100.

ScanSoft PDF Converter 4 Pro – Everything you need to create, convert, & edit PDF files – New from Nuance at much less than Adobe Acrobat. MSRP=\$99.

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

Books

Windows Vista for Starters: The Missing Manual – This new book by David Pogue from O'Reilly is a great way for beginners to learn the basics of Microsoft's new operating system. MSRP=\$20.

Windows Vista in a Nutshell – Well-known author Preston Gralla wrote this new 700-plus-page desktop quick-reference book covering every important setting and feature in Vista. MSRP=\$35.

Access 2007 for Starters: The Missing Manual – Matthew MacDonald's new book from O'Reilly is for the beginner using Microsoft's latest database. MSRP=\$20.

Access 2007: The Missing Manual – Matthew MacDonald also wrote this new 730-page book that offers complete coverage of the latest version of Microsoft's database. Also from O'Reilly. MSRP=\$35.

Excel 2007: The Missing Manual – This new 830-page book also is by Matthew MacDonald from O'Reilly Publishing and covers the highly-rated spreadsheet part of the Microsoft Office 2007 suite. MSRP=\$40.

Word 2007 for Starters: The Missing Manual – A new, fast-paced and easy to read book by Chris Grover from O'Reilly helps you to learn the latest word processor from Microsoft. MSRP=\$20.

Word Hacks – This book from O'Reilly, authored by Andrew Savikas, offers tips and tools for customizing, programming, and automating Microsoft Word. This book explicitly covers Word 2000, 2002, and 2003 although many of the "Hacks" will work with older versions. MSRP=\$25.

PowerPoint 2007 for Starters:

The Missing Manual – A good book for beginners by E.A. Vander Veer from O'Reilly with step-by-step instruction and lots of illustrations to help learn the use of this new presentations software from Microsoft. MSRP=\$20

PowerPoint 2007: The Missing Manual – This new book also by E.A. Vander Veer in the O'Reilly "Missing Manual" series offers complete coverage of PowerPoint's new look and dramatically new way of doing things in preparing presentations. MSRP=\$30.

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

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

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.**

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.

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.

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

The 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.

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

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

Moving to Linux, 2nd Edition Draft – \$20
UNIX Shells by Example, 4th Ed. – Author Ellie Quigley has thoroughly updated her classic book and delivers the information today's shell programmers need most – including comprehensive coverage of Linux

shell programming with bash! The accompanying CD has a comprehensive shell programming code library with all source code & data files necessary for this book's hundreds of example programs. From Prentice Hall. MSRP=\$50.

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

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

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

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

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, & Andrei 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 Lintchicum from Addison-Wesley is an indispensable resource for those responsible for managing or implementing application-integration middleware. MSRP=\$40.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

■

Main Meeting Report



By Herb Wong, NOCCC

The Digital Camera Day ended with a presentation by three of Samy's Cameras staff. Bob Welsh, Pasquale Ferazzoli, and Robert Morrissey discussed professional (i.e. - commercial) still photography, consumer oriented cameras, and upscale digital video cameras, respectively. It was preceded by a special one day digital camera help SIG presided over by the above named gentlemen. A number of club members were able to get answers to some of those perplexing questions that the manuals do a great job of obfuscating.

Professional Cameras

The greatest improvement to professional photography is the workflow improvement. Film photography required shooting the photograph, development of the film, proof-sheets, test printing, re-shooting, etc. Digital photography now allows real-time viewing of photographs on monitors and allows instantaneous changes or decision making at photo shoots.

A state of the art digital back (in place of film backs) has thirty nine megapixels for an image, allowing 8"x10" film equivalent resolution (no interpolation). Such a device for a Hasselblad CF-39 can cost \$32,000. The PhaseBack will allow time exposures of up to one-hour. Such a system is capable of program exposure, shutter priority, aperture priority, auto-focus, etc. The Hasselblad H2D-39 camera with the CF-39 digital back runs around \$42,000. With the 80GB tethered hard disk option, you can take over 1500 photos in the loss-less compressed mode at a little over 50MB per shot.

Consumer Oriented Cameras

The age of digital photography is here. Some film manufacturers will no longer develop new film technology. Pro-Am DSLR (digital single lens reflex) cameras have now reached a 16 mega pixels maximum.

Cameras are designed for all kinds of users. Active lifestyle cameras include a waterproof camera good to a water depth of 32 feet; some designed to survive a 5-foot drop.

Some compact cameras are multi-functional. They are capable of capturing still photographs and fair resolution video. These cameras are a compromise and you expect good results from both formats. For best results, buy a camera designed for still photography and a second one for video.

Cameras use image stabilizers to help reduce some types of "apparent movement". Optical image stabilization physically moves part of the lens (or, alternatively, the optical sensor) to counteract the physical motion of the camera. An alternative technique is to use digital image stabilization that attempts to combat camera motion by electronic manipulation of the captured image. Image stabilization is usually turned off when using a tripod.

Image stabilization can be built into the lens or into the camera body. For example, the Sony Alpha 100 has image stabilization built into the camera body so that any attached lens will benefit from the technology.

A fixed focal length lens requires the camera to move closer to the subject to increase the relative size of the subject in the final image; and to move away from the subject to decrease the relative size of the subject in the final image. A zoom lens will provide a limited range of adjustable focal lengths to change the magnification.

Optical zoom means that the lens physically moves the elements of the lens to change the focal length. Digital zoom electronically interpolates the optical image to change the magnification. A significant amount of interpolation will drastically degrade an image.

Optical zoom is the only type to consider when selecting a camera. Besides, magnification by digital interpolation is easily performed with any computer-based image editing software and even by some printers through camera direct printing.

The new Olympus SP-550 UZ was presented as the world's most powerful ultra zoom. The 7.1 megapixel SP-550 UZ's new 18x wide-angle super-telephoto zoom lens gets you closer to your subject than any other compact digital camera on the market. Dual Image Stabilization eliminates blur. And with high-speed sequential shooting and new Pre-Capture technology, will capture anything that moves.

With all other factors being equal, the size of the camera's optical sensor affects image quality. Larger sensors can capture more light that allows low light abilities to improve. Low light sensitivity is equalizing among lower end cameras. Pro cameras are best at lower ISO ratings because studios have sufficient modeling lights.

Still camera images can be saved in different formats. A RAW image is simply the unprocessed data that the camera's sensors detect. A computer based image editing software is required to convert a proprietary (ex. - Nikon, Canon, etc.) from RAW format to something more suitable for distribution (ex. - .JPG, TIFF, .PSD, etc.). More common is various qualities of .JPG/.JPEG formats that use image compression to reduce the size of the file at the cost of reduced image quality and data loss.

Improved technology now allows some photographers to use the superfine quality setting (usually high quality .JPG format) instead of .TIFF format.

TIFF is more suitable for editing but requires much more file space than .JPG (and sometimes more than RAW). "A photographer we know..." uses the superfine mode to produce 20x30" prints from wedding photos instead of using RAW.

Video Cameras

Samy's Camera uses an acronym to compare video cameras. CNSB stands

for Codec, Number of sensors, Size of the sensor, and Bit rate.

The C in CNSB stands for Codec (Compression/Decompression). [I don't believe my notes missed any discussion of Codecs per se, so...] Samy's Camera divides video into two types. The first type is SD (standard definition) that derives from NTSC television. Resolution is 720 left to right by 480 vertical interlaced fields. The second type is HD (high definition). Different manufacturers use their own resolutions (ex. - Sony and Canon use 1440 x 1080). Obviously, this is different from standard 1080i/p (1920 x 1080 or 16x9). HD images capture 4.5 times greater information than SD images.

N in CNSB stands for Number of sensors. A camera using a single sensor must extract RGB from each pixel. Green is accentuated in consumer level cameras. Superior cameras use three sensors to capture RGB. Three sensor cameras cost \$1000 to \$9000.



Above is the new Canon XHA1 3 CCD HD camcorder. A great piece for a mere \$3500.

S in CNSB stands for Size of the sensor. A larger sensor collects more light and is not starved for light. There are four types of sensor sizes: single 1/6", single 1/3", three 1/3", and 2/3" commercial.

B in CNSB stands for Bit rate. A 1/6" single sensor camera uses 8.2 megabits per second. A 1/3" single sensor camera uses 8.2 megabits per second (typically a direct to hard drive camera). Robert said the highest quality pro cameras use MiniDVD tapes (a from 1987 technology) because they have 25 megabits per second data transfer capability which is better than the hard disk cameras offer.

This sounded a little odd as for instance, Hitachi's Travelstar 5K120 hard disk drives, operating at a mere 5400 RPM, are specified as having a media transfer rate max. of 510 Mbits/sec. Even subtracting a lot for overhead, that seems like it should be way better than tape. Highest camera quality is 1.485 Gigabits per second with a larger color space.

Sony's top of line (circa 2003), SD (720x480) video, DCR-VX2100 (\$3000 list) is still sought by wedding photographers because it is a low light champion at 1 lux. HDTV cameras are not as good in low light because of the density of the sensors.

HD resolution varies by manufacturer JVC and Panasonic favor 1280 x 720p (progressive scan). Sony and Canon use a higher resolution, but it is interlaced.

8mm and Hi8 tapes use 400 vertical lines of resolution. Not all 8mm tapes use compatible lubrication. Sony 8mm tapes use a wet lubricant. Panasonic 8mm tapes use a dry lubricant. Robert emphasized this advice, DO NOT MIX LUBRICANTS. That means you should pick one BRAND of tape and stay with it! If you don't heed this advice, a messy sludge will result that degrades the quality of your video. You can fix this problem by using a \$25 head cleaner, but using it has a downside. The abrasive nature of the head cleaner will shorten the head life. If you stick with one brand of tape, cleaning is not normally needed.

HD video cameras record video with software programs that use two types of compression. Intraframe compression compares areas within same frame to compress common areas.

Interframe compression compares one frame to the next (and that one to the next and that one to the next...) and produces a delta (changed data) of the two, thus eliminating large areas of duplication. One example given was a fixed camera position recording a car crossing in front of the camera with mountains in the background. It takes 16 frames to record the scene, but the software only records one image of the background and 16 small images of the car its different locations.

We thank Samy's Camera for a very helpful, educational, and entertaining day. Be sure to look for the Samy's Camera ads in the register for some pretty good deals. Alternately, go to their website; <http://www.samys.com> and wish you had a fatter wallet. ■

Computer Aided Investing SIG



By Bob Krishfield, NOCCC

Markets: There was a lot to talk about this meeting after a melt down of the markets. There were various signals, but since the up-trend was so strong, many ignored the subtle hints that a major reversal was about to happen. And it was that. All the major indexes dropped below their 50 day MA and looked like they would stay there for a while. We listened to the review of the markets by "Brian Shannon at Alphatrends.blogspot.com who provides a daily audio and visual technical market review. His point was that it is too uncertain to stay in the market for now. A quick look at the Tango5 system showed a sell status - which means don't buy, and hold onto your positions until they hit a stop or RSIStoch level below 30.

The Economic Confidence Model of Martin Armstrong made itself popular this week, since it predicted 2/27/2007 as a catastrophic day in the financial markets. This model developed in the 90's uses an 8.6 year cycle between major market events. It was successful in predicting the 1980 inflation in the late '70s and the crash of 1998 on July 20th, and other key economic and market benchmarks into the 90's and 2000. The next major financial event is forecast for late in 2008. (2008.225). Our straw vote on the markets was bearish. No one expected the markets to rise by next month's meeting.

Investment Topics: Hulbert's Newsletter Reviews. We took a look at the data

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Meeting Reports

CAI SIG from p21

summarized from Hulbert's Newsletter that reviews several hundred newsletters on stocks and mutual funds. It was interesting to see that only a few newsletters had a track record for 10 to 15 years of risk adjusted performance that was better than the overall market (as measured by the Wilshire 5000). These 15-20 newsletter portfolios consistently provided returns between 15 to 25 percent annually. While the positions in these top twenty might leapfrog each other from time to time, it appeared to be a safe bet that they had a scheme that worked and if you had the discipline to follow it, you could do well.

TechSignal.com is the Foundation for the Study of Cycles website and is now offering software that may be purchased for determining market cycles for trading.

Gorilla Trades was reviewed as a method of stock picking. This is a subscription service that provides daily emails of hot stocks to consider trading – if you follow their rules when the stock hits its trigger price or confirmation volume. There is little information about how Gorilla picks the stocks and what their fundamentals are. The stock picks are intended to be hot ones that will rise over the next couple of weeks. Users are given the rules to follow and if the trigger isn't met in 5 days, drop it. For stocks purchased, you track them as they home in on a target price, or get stopped out at a stop loss (provided). If they hit the target, you are supposed to sell 50 – 75% of your position, cashing in before the stock turns around. Most of the profits were shown as 7 – 10% for the stocks that made it to the targets. Statistics were not available for the number sold at the stops. The conclusion was that the system could be helpful and profitable, but it wasn't a system that you could take casually – it took a lot of work every day to monitor all open positions and manage your stops. Portfolios would grow to 50-60 stocks if you held onto partial positions after selling at the first target. It might complement the approach used by Vector Vest for picking stocks, and Vvest might be useful in making more assessment about the stock picks using their RST system. ■

AmiBroker SIG

By Bob Krishfield, NOCCC

We reviewed some highlights of the AmiBroker Houston Conference and the new book being offered by H. Bundy at QuantitativeTradingSystems.com. There is a lot of information about the book at the website, including sample chapters that contain AFL code. The book is not intended as an AFL course, but is geared to design and validation of trading systems using AFL/AmiBroker. From the presentation at the conference, H. Bundy has a lot to offer AB users in terms of his ideas and codes. Some of his code is already available on the above website.

We spent the meeting going over 4 programs – how they worked, how they were coded and how to use them for technical analysis. These programs were uploaded to AFL-Tidbits for users to pick apart and/or put to use. The first program was one to generate the RutVol signal and was an advanced study of how signals were combined to produce an important signal – the same signal used in Tango5. The second program added to the first, a component for portfolio trading using the RutVol signal. This program used a scoring routine to pick funds, etc. using a Bollinger Bands Scoring formula. It produced pretty good results, with a CAR of 26%, MDD of -11% for the 2002 – 2007 period. The last two programs implemented retrieval of fundamental data for Quotes Plus users. The fundamentals2 program is more of a tutorial program that is useful to determine how dependable the various data fields are maintained before you implement screens using them, and the other program is more advanced, implementing a CANSLIM screen that saves the result into a new watchlist - so be careful to set the watchlist in the Param field before running it.

We discussed how the SIG should be run and most felt that they would prefer it to focus on learning AFL and coding, rather than reviewing existing programs, etc. This means users would bring

in their laptops to work the example exercises, and lessons would be made available on-line before the meeting, for users to download, study, and prepare questions. So this will be the plan for the next few months. We will use the AFL-Tidbits Board for the lesson plans and Q&A. More information will be published as the lessons are prepared and uploaded. ■

Hardware SIG Report

By Herbert Wong, Jr., SIG Leader

April's topic will be a Digital Camera Technology Buying Guide. We'll discuss the criteria that you need to consider before buying a digital camera. Features are important, but you'll have to put all the pieces together before you know which camera will be suitable for your application.

The smallest cameras are highly portable. The surprisingly high count of megapixels in the sensor would have cost thousands of dollars just a few years ago. There are large LCD screens on the back. Why buy anything else?

Bigger is better at least when considering higher quality and performance.

Ultra small cameras are only superior when it comes to portability and small size.

Larger full featured cameras look just like the professional SLRs (single lens reflex) cameras that the pros use. So why don't the pros use them?

Speed and flexibility are limited. An electronic viewfinder doesn't tell the full story. Does it accurately represent the final image? Is it cropped? How much is the lag time for the display? How many times per second is the image updated?

The cameras used by the pros are bigger, heavier, and much more costly. The advantages are numerous including performance, adaptability, quality, versatility, and, most of all, the wow factor. Of course, all of these may be as useful as your Corvette's advantages for getting to work in downtown.

We'll talk more about this and much

more. Bring your digital camera and we can compare what features everyone likes and dislikes. ■

Computer Security

By Dave Keays, NOCCC

This month we covered vitalization/sandboxing and the storm trojan horse. We also answered questions about using multiple AntiViruses and password strength.

VM AND SANDBOXING

Just a couple of months ago we covered segmentation (DEP) and now we are covering vitalization which is another big trend in the security world right now.

Using a virtual machine (VM) simply means you have a place set aside where you can safely play around and make mistakes in. The idea is similar to the sandbox many of us used as a kid. Using a VM is sometimes called "sandboxing."

I mentioned that there seemed to be two kinds on the market today. Some will drop your rights so you can't change anything and others will restrict access to that thing so you can't change it.

To me the ones that drop your rights are similar to what you can do with scripts that already exist. Look at Aaron Margosis's BLOG and his program "drop my rights."

The programs that we talked about in detail were: sandboxie, VMWARE player, VIRTUALPC, drop my rights, safezilla

I also mentioned: Bufferzone, QEMU, safelaunch, Greenborder, DefenseWall.

Personally I use Sandboxie and VMWARE. Both of them are free.

I think VMWARE is trying to do something like Adobe did with PDF files. Adobe created a "player" to read a PDF and they have it away for free but you have to buy another product to create one. VMWARE is doing something similar with VMs. It was about a

year ago that VMWARE released their player. I went to their web site to see what I could play on it. There was only one VM or appliance. It opens FireFox in a Ubuntu (Linux) Operating System. People could then surf the web without messing up anything outside the sandbox. I put a copy of this appliance on the guest account on my desktop computer.

Now there are several hundred appliances from setting-up lesson plans, demonstrations, and kiosks, to firewalls, Internet servers and Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS).

When I want to look at a program and see what it does, I use Sandboxie. It places any files/resources you change into a separate area so your data and the OS is safe. But on my guest account (renamed actually), I have allowed a link to the VMWARE browser appliance.

There is a new Trojan Horse on the scene, "storm trojan horse." Actually it showed up in January but now there is another version. It changes any postings at BLOGS or web-based newsgroups. It adds a link with the caption "look at this funny video". Then anybody tries to click that link they will be infected with several pieces of spyware and keyloggers.

The best way to tell if you are infected is to look at any postings you make and make sure everything happened as you expected.

One audience member wanted to know how to create a strong password and the rest of the group chimed in. We went over the basics of creating a mangled pass phrase and using a password safe.

Then someone asked about using more than one AV. We went over why there was a big debate about this. Some say that redundancy is good and you should have as many as possible. Others (myself included) say that something as low-level as an AV or a firewall will interfere with each other when they are used at the same time. ■

PRODUCTS FOR REVIEW

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

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

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 us-

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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	Wilkinson	221	10:30	Bob Krishfield	bobkrish@socal.rr.com	714-532-3096
Autocad	Science	203	9:00	Joe Mizer	joescrouge@earthlink.net	909-688-9848
Computer Aided Investing	Wilkinson	221	9:00	Bob Krishfield	bobkrish@socal.rr.com	714-532-3096
Computer Security	Science	203	10:30	Dave Keays	davekeays@yahoo.com	714-821-4792
Digital Photography	Irvine Hall	—	10:30	Larry Klees	lklees@dslextreme.com	714-879-6405
Computer Essentials	Science	306	10:30	Elise Edgell	EliseEdgell@aol.com	714-544-3589
Hardware Essentials	Science	109	12:30	Herbert Wong	ocug@singularitytechnology.com	714-968-7264
Home Automation	Irvine Hall	---	9:00	Dan Cregg	dan.cregg@smarthome.com	714-
Linux for Desktop Users	Wilkinson	117	9:00	Bob Ray	bobcray@pacbell.net	714-634-7520
Linux for Advanced Users	Wilkinson	117	10:30	Bob Ray	bobcray@pacbell.net	714-634-7520
PC Q&A	Irvine Hall	—	12:30	Jim Sanders	jsanders@ligasmicro.com	714-544-3589
Understanding OS's	Science	111	10:30	Charlie Moore	mooreca@adelphia.net	714-529-9071
Visual Programming I - IV	Science	111	9:00	Anson Chapman	aecrcrss@hotmail.com	909-860-9515
Please report SIG changes to	Herbert Wong, Jr..... ocug@singularitytechnology.com					714-968-7264

Membership Benefits

FROM PAGE 3

codes. The offer applies to all titles at peachpit.com including New Riders, Macromedia Press, Adobe Press, and Peachpit Press.

Prentice Hall, Addison-Wesley, IBM Press, Sams Publishing, and Informit.com Get 35% off list price by purchasing directly from the publisher sites: www.awprofessional.com, www.prenhallprofessional.com, www.samspublishing.com and www.informit.com/shortcuts. Select your books and enter COUPON CODE: "USERGROUP" (must be all caps) at Checkout Step #3 (Payment Method).

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. ■

Board Minutes

FROM PAGE 4

Digital Projector: Jim Sanders has purchased our new video projector for the club.

SIG Rearrangement: We are receiving positive comments.

Computer Store: Gerry Resch discussed the possibility of club's participation in selling recycled computers and peripherals.

New Business:

This April we will celebrate the 31th Anniversary of our North Orange County Computer Club, (NOCCC).

Election: 2007-2008 NOCCC Officers/Board Members choosing to run were in the March Bytes issue.

We still need to have volunteers to run for the offices of: Secretary and Treasurer. There are is need a for volunteers, various committees and project participants.

Members wishing to run please contact, Ted Littman at: tedlit@adelphia.net, or call: 714/770-1936.

MOTION (by Jim Sanders): "To look into storage unit prices." It was approved and seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.
Submitted by: Mary Cornett ■

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.



Adobe Acrobat
Apple II
Artificial Intelligence
AutoCAD
C/C++
CPU Aided Investing
Computer Boards
Computer Security
Corel Draw
Corel Draw
Desktop Publishing
Digital Photography
Excel
Genealogy
GPS Navigation
Linux
Lotus 1-2-3
MacIntosh
Memory/Interrupts
Microsoft Office
Modem Hware, Sware
Networking
Neural Networks
OS/2
PC Hardware
PCs for Beginners
Pinnacle Studio
Photoediting
Photoediting & shop
Photoshop
Powerpoint 2003
Programming
Quickbooks - all ver.
Qbooks 5 & Quicken
Tcl/Tk & Unix
Vista
Windows 9X & XP
Wireless
Word 2003
WordPerfect

Names and phone numbers of Help Line volunteers are 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

ers. 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.

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. 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.

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.

PDF References 1.6, 5th Edition – The official Adobe guide to the Portable Document Format, an essential resource for all developers writing programs that read or generate PDF files. From Peachpit Press. MSRP=\$55.

Practical PHP and MySQL – Author Jono Bacon teaches you the core skills to build virtually any Web application using free and open source applications in this book + CD. MSRP=\$40.

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	

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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.

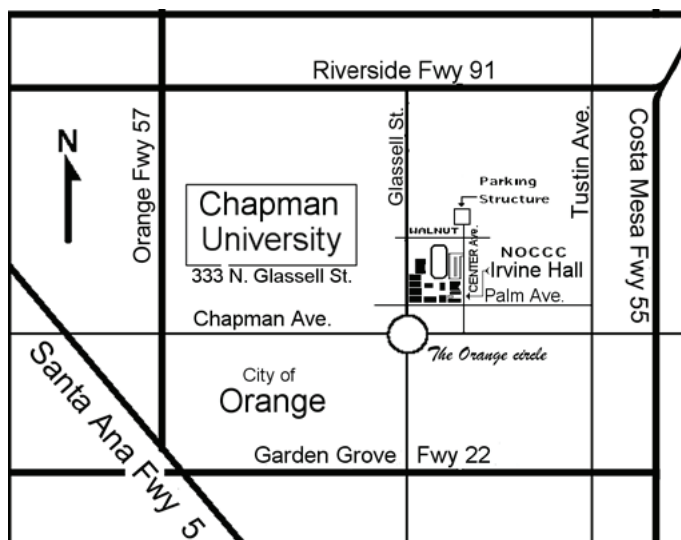
Parking Information — Chapman University's main parking

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.

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