



OnCUE

The Official Journal of the Computer Users of Erie

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June 2005

From the Hot Seat

June is going to be busy month for US! The capital US is US the group, YOU. We have a big event and hopefully things will go smooth. Invite your friends, neighbors and co-workers to Smart Computing demo at our June 16th meeting.



We just finished our board meeting and I have to check out the phone lines so that we have a hookup in the "new school section" the place where we meet at Holy Rosary.

We also have to put up our announcement on the out door sign in front of the Old School so at least cross-town traffic will know of our existence.

Remember July is the picnic out at Glenwood Zoo picnic pavilion. Date and time to be announced.

Lost a Good Friend

As you well know Andy Yeargain passed away a few weeks ago with his battle with cancer.

You may have recognized him from his picture when we passed his card around to be signed.

Andy was a quiet and unassuming fellow but had a quick wit and was very observant. His southern drawl was always there even though he'd been up north for over 20 years.

Andy really enjoyed coming to our meetings. He even started coming out to the Mac SIG even though he did not own a Mac; it did spark his interest. He helped out Bob Huber and me reset up the computer lab. Moving those tables were awkward; I don't think Bob realized how sick he was.

When Andy was in better health he was one of the few CUE members I could call on short notice about going to Monroeville, Ashtabula, or Hamburg to a computer show. And when I say short notice it would be a thursday evening.

Andy and his wife and their extended family help out in the parish at Holy Rosary.

He will be sadly missed by friends and family.

So long good friend.

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This Month's Meeting

The June General meeting will feature our presentation hosted by Smart Computing. This should be of interest to all our members, so why not make plans to attend? And bring a friend...visitors are always welcome!!

Visit the CUE Website: www.cuerie.com

Computer Users of Erie

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Special Interest Groups

<u>Beginner's</u> Tom Kuklinski 897-1375 topkat@spymac.com	3rd Tuesday of the month 3699 Dogleg Trail 7 pm
<u>Genealogy</u> Dave Howell 866-7308 dhowell63@neo.rr.com	1st Tuesday of the month 3904 Myrtle 7 pm
<u>Macintosh SIG</u> Lou Cioccio 868-1320 lcioccio@mac.com	2nd Saturday of the month 1012 E. 28th (park behind school) 9 am
<u>Advanced Windows</u> Terry Lukas 835-4270 Terry_Lukas@hotmail.com	2nd Wednesday of the month 1406 Sumner Dr. 7 pm
<u>Digital Photo SIG</u> <i>Looking for a coordinator</i>	1st Wednesday of the month 1012 E. 28th St. 7 pm (Holy Rosary)
<u>Programming</u> Brian Little 814-337-6724 blittle@zoominternet.net	<i>No regularly scheduled meetings</i>
<u>DOS</u> Don Grim 461-8289 grimcyber@yahoo.com	<i>No regularly scheduled meetings</i>
<u>TI SIG</u> <i>Looking for a coordinator</i>	<i>No regularly scheduled meetings</i>
<u>Internet/Telecommunications</u> <i>Looking for a coordinator</i>	<i>No regularly scheduled meetings</i>
<u>LINUX</u> <i>Looking for a coordinator</i>	<i>No regularly scheduled meetings</i>



OnCUE

Editor

Mark Mattson bookworm8@verizon.net

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Dave Howell	Tom Kuklinski	Hillert Vitt
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Dave & Cathy Szymanski		

OnCUE is published monthly by the Computer Users of Erie (CUE), an independent, non-profit computer user group, dedicated to the education and support of our members. The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors or the editor, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of CUE.

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Newsletter Exchange: CUE welcomes newsletters from other user groups. If you would like to exchange newsletters, either by US Mail or via electronic (Internet) delivery, please send your newsletter to the address listed below. We will add your name to our mailing list and send you our newsletter in return.

Address Changes: Any recipient of OnCUE is urged to submit a change of address notification to the Editor, either via US Mail to the address shown below, or (preferably) via email, so we may keep our records accurate.

Submissions: Submissions are always welcome from our members or outside sources. Submissions may be articles, images, cartoons, etc. For first-time authors, please request a copy of our **Submissions Guidelines** from the Editor, prior to submitting any items. This will help to eliminate publication delays.

Correspondence: General correspondence to CUE may be sent via US Mail to:

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For fastest results, direct your email correspondence directly to the desired individual. (If no personal email address is found, direct your message to the CUE email address, and it will be forwarded. Please indicate the desired recipient).



Computers can sometimes be a cruel game of hide and seek. *Smart Computing* knows how you feel so ready or not here we come! This June, Jen Clausen from *Smart Computing* is on her way to visit your user group to guide you through *Smart Computing* and put an end to the nerve racking games of computer hide and seek.

What can I expect from a *Smart Computing* Presentation?

You should and can expect is the very best *Smart Computing* has to offer through a personal visit.

- *Smart Computing* will walk you through the helpful and timely information you can find each month in the magazine.
- We will also give a live demonstration of SmartComputing.com to show how you can put these powerful tools to work for you!

In addition, everyone can expect to receive a goodie bag complete with *Smart Computing*, a guide to SmartComputing.com, *Smart Computing* pens & mouse pads, and more! Great door prizes to be given away at the meeting as well.

What is *Smart Computing*?

Smart Computing is a publication written in plain English. It is a magazine that provides a long list of services no other publication provides, including subscriber only web access, tech support, low advertisements and many more.

What information can I find in *Smart Computing*?

Everything, but the kitchen sink! Every month the magazine is packed with information relevant to your computer needs. *Smart Computing* is an all-star publication so each month you'll find:

- Cover Story Topics
- PC Operating Instructions
- General Computing
- Plugged In
- PC Project
- Tech Support
- SmartComputing.com
- Tidbits
- Quick Studies

What can I find at SmartComputing.com?

SmartComputing.com offers access to all 4 Sandhills Publishing magazines, a Q&A board, My Personal Library, hardware reviews, daily tips, a computer dictionary and encyclopedia and much more. To learn more about *Smart Computing* online visit <www.smartcomputing.com>.

What is the *Smart Computing* User Group Program?

The program is a way to benefit the user group with more exposure and special offers. Our buy 5 get 1 free program is one benefit we offer to user groups. For every subscription purchased by a member or someone referring to the group, the account of the user group is credited. Once five credits are accumulated the group receives a free one-year subscription to give away as they choose.

COMPUTER USERS OF ERIE General Meeting Minutes

May 31, 2005

NO MINUTES THIS MONTH....we are in need of a Secretary to record them, and prepare them for publication.



How about considering volunteering for this important position?



COMPUTER USERS OF ERIE FINANCIAL REPORT

May 31, 2005

Balances for April 2005

CUE checking account:	\$ 1501.59
Projector Fund:	\$ 503.50
Petty Cash:	\$ 14.62

Deposit made for May 2005 Meeting:

Renewals:	\$ 25.00
50-50:	\$ 14.50

Total deposit: \$ 39.50

Expenses for May 2005:

Newsletter:	\$ 27.98
Flyer	\$ 7.42
Pizza at May meeting	\$ 6.75

Total expenses: \$ 42.15

From petty cash: \$ 0.00

New Balances for June 2005:

CUE checking account:	\$ 1498.94
Projector Fund:	\$ 518.00
Petty Cash:	\$ 14.62

During the month of May we had 1 membership renewal: Hadley Jones. Welcome back, welcome aboard and thank you so much for your support.

Due for Renewal??

Please be sure to check the mailing label on the outside of this issue, or your monthly download notice email, for your renewal date. It is printed to the right of your name.

Prompt payment of your renewal will ensure uninterrupted benefits of your CUE membership!

SIG News

New SIG Formed

As announced on the CUE website, and established by the wishes of you, our members, as expressed in the Member Survey from this spring, CUE is now proud to announce the existence of our new Digital Photo SIG.

The first meeting is being held as this is written, on June 1, 2005. The initial meeting place is going to be Holy Rosary School (our monthly meeting location), until such time that a coordinator is selected, or a member of the group volunteers an alternate meeting location.

The SIG will meet, as mentioned above, at Holy Rosary on the FIRST WEDNESDAY of each month at 7 pm, until an alternate location can be selected.

The focus of this SIG will be on the use of your digital camera, the various imaging software solutions available, how to print your photos for maximum effect, and any other related topics dealing with Digital imaging. The field is wide-open as far as topics go, so be prepared for many interesting sessions.

As this is a brand-new group, there will probably be a couple meetings to get things organized and set up to the way they will work best. Therefore, there will most likely be open forum topics for the next several meetings.

Come and check it out.. you may learn more than you thought you would !!



Want **YOUR**
Business card here??

Please mail inquiries concerning advertising rates to CUE, PO Box 8941, Erie, PA 16505-0941 Attn: Advertising.

OR

Email bookworm@erie.net for current rates.

Genealogy SIG

Dave distributed some handouts and made announcements about upcoming events. He also updated information on the progress being made on publishing Ron Sibley's "World War II Memoirs." Ron, a former member of the SIG, died in a highway accident before he could get the book published.

There being no questions, problems or observations about Legacy 5.0, we went on to discuss Ancestry.com. The Group's subscription to Ancestry.com will be due for renewal this summer. The current subscription was divided 5 ways for the five people who opted to keep the costs of extensive research down. Anyone interested in renewing their subscription or join the "Group" is to let Dave know.

We then reviewed some of the genealogy websites recently discovered by some of us in attendance. Dave distributed a list of those new websites, most of which will be published in the CUE Newsletter. During the discussion, Bill showed us the Google Maps website as a means of pinning down the addresses of living family members. Of particular interest was the website www.zabasearch.com. Typing in the name of an individual can lead to their whereabouts, if alive, and provide information on how to reach them to verify their existence and/or to learn more about them genealogically.

Dave tried it with the name of his long lost best man in New Jersey. Sure enough, three entries appeared having slightly different addresses but the same phone number. You can bet, he will try to contact him! This site also allows a "background check" on the individual but usually the information is limited and may cost up to \$35.

Norma showed us two interesting books. The first, "Land and Property Research in the United States." Among other information, it showed us how to read a deed that may be helpful in researching family histories and biographies. The other book, "Handybook for Genealogists, 9th edition," has great promise for those who need to know how early colonial counties were subdivided up to the present and where the vital records are stored in each county. This book, published by Everton, is now in its 11th edition.

As a highlight of the evening, Norma presented Bill Ellis with a black sweatshirt with, "ELLIS Island" colorfully printed on the front! Seems Norma couldn't resist picking it up at a "second hand shop." Nice going Norma - you made his day!

Bill suggested a topic for a future SIG meeting - "exploring the resource feature of Legacy 5.0 for recording the source of each piece of information appearing in your family history."

The next meeting will take place at Dave's house, 7 PM, Tuesday, June 7th.

Say It Again, Sam

by Don Grim, Computer Users of Erie

If you have the Windows XP operating system, there is a voice inside your computer, called "Microsoft Sam", ready to read for you! The MS Sam voice is in a program called Narrator. I found it to be an impressive text to speech conversion utility.

It can be helpful if you have poor vision, if you are illiterate, if you are learning to read, or you're just ready for the computer to read at times! For parents that don't want to repeat a children's story, they can have MS Sam help out. And it can be set up with headphones so that everyone doesn't have to hear it. I found it to be useful in the evening, when my eyes are tired, to have Sam read to me with my eyes closed. I also found it handy for me to read, with eyes open, while listening to Sam since, occasionally, I'll misread a word and hear Sam say it differently, which catches my mistake.

You can start Narrator (Sam) by pressing just two keys together:

Windows Key & U Key

That pops up a window called Utility Manager. Click at the Narrator line near the top to highlight it and click the Start button in the window to have it run. It may already be running the first time (it was for me). However, after that, I found it handy to uncheck the "Start Automatically" box for sometimes I go to the Utility Manager for the other programs, not just for Narrator.

Before I explain more about Narrator, I'll explain a little about the other two neat programs at the Utility Manager window. Click at the Magnifier line near the top of the window to highlight it and click the Start button in the window to have it run. Click ok twice then you can minimize the magnifier window. From there, no matter where you go (programs, internet, etc.), a magnifying screen is at the top of your monitor magnifying whatever your mouse pointer is near. That is helpful to see some detail you may be missing. As an example, I found a green light on the picture of the computer on the "My Computer" icon that is not noticeable at its normal size.

Another program at the Utility Manager window is activated by clicking at the "On-Screen Keyboard" line near the top of the window. Highlight it and click the Start button in the window to have it run. An On-Screen Keyboard window will pop up. You can click at any of the keys there to use keyboard functions without using the actual keyboard. That would especially be helpful if your keyboard is not working or if you run out of desk space for your keyboard. If you should ever need to go the other direction, use your keyboard as a mouse (when the mouse fails), use the MouseKeys program with the key combination of Left-Shift & Left-Alt & Num Lock.

Going back to the Narrator program (MS Sam), once you are at the Utility Manager (Windows Key & U Key), activate the Narrator by clicking on the line for it near the top of the window. Highlight it and click the Start button in the window to have it run. From there, Sam follows you as you use the computer. Sam reads whatever it can from wherever you are including menus, buttons, text, and the internet.

If you want Sam to read text from a file, open a file with text and Sam starts reading away. There is a limit where Sam will stop reading, which was the 58th line on my text file. Perhaps it is limited by computer memory. However, at that point, I can press the down arrow for Sam to continue reading the text file. I can have Sam stop reading by pressing the Ctrl key (controlling him!). If I prefer to have Sam start somewhere besides the top of the document, I can click at that line and press the down arrow. If I want Sam to repeat from the beginning, I press the key combo of Ctrl & Left-Shift & Enter (or Ctrl & Left-Shift & Spacebar to repeat menu items as well as the text).

If you look at the minimized window after Sam is activated, you'll find some nice settings at the voice button. You can adjust the pitch and volume of the voice. You can also adjust the speed of the voice. The default speed of 5 is comfortable for me. I suppose I could gradually increase the speed setting to practice speed-reading!

Sam has some limitations. At this point, the text reading needs to be in programs like NotePad and WordPad. It will not work yet in MS Word. However, you can save a Word file to plain text (*.txt) or rich text format (*.rtf) and then open it in NotePad or WordPad from there (right-click the

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file then use the "Open With" option). Some books on CD (like the No Compromise book about Keith Green) already come in rich text format. Narrator is not intended for long-term use for those with special disabilities. Microsoft recommends that a program with more advanced features should be used for that situation.

Microsoft has other voices (Mary & Mike). However, they were not on my Windows installation CD. You can download them from the internet. Since it was a sizable 68 MB file, I didn't download it and just listened to a sample mp3 audio file of it. I'll stick with Sam for now!

As I close my eyes while Sam reads, I find the pronunciations very understandable. Even numbers, including large numbers, are pronounced correctly (whether commas are included in large numbers or not). That can be used as a numbers tutor for young students. Sam recognizes punctuation and reacts well to commas, periods, question marks, and exclamation marks. To me, it is almost like a person is in my computer ready to read upon request! Way to go Sam!

Right away, to me, Sam sounded very much like the voice of Dr. SBaitso! That is a program that was provided with early versions of the SoundBlaster sound card. You basically typed "your problems" to "Dr. SBaitso" and he replied with answers by voice. That program is listed as abandonware on a current search on the internet. I recently downloaded it (only 200 KB in size) and it nostalgically runs fine! I read on the internet that people think Sam was copied from the Amiga computers and I also read that Dr. SBaitso was on the Amiga as well! Perhaps Dr. SBaitso's first name is Sam!

There was a song called Sam by Olivia Newton John with words that are almost calling for "MS Sam" when you hear lyrics like: "Oh Sam, Sam, you know where I am, Come around and talk awhile"! Give Narrator a try! It's free with Windows XP. You might find yourself saying "Say It Again Sam" too!

For the latest CUE news visit our website at
www.cuerie.com

OR

Join the CUE email list. To do so, send an email to
cuelist@szy.com, and place
SUBSCRIBE as the subject.

Anonymous Q & A

by Mark Mattson, Computer Users of Erie

We had one question get dropped in the box for our Anonymous Q&A at last night's meeting. Unfortunately, it got covered by a few of the meeting survey forms, and was not discovered until after the meeting. Next month, will bring the box in sooner, to avoid this.

To avoid any delays in getting the answer to the member who submitted it, I will post it here, and also in the next newsletter (along with any replies received prior to publication).

The question submitted is:

"How can I adjust the viewing screen size to meet the edges? My monitor has about an inch horizontal black margin across the top and bottom.

System is a Dell computer, approx. 6-7 years old, running Windows 98. The monitor is an LCD monitor".

My response to this question would be:

1. Check the settings in Windows itself, as far as the display resolution. Right-click an empty area of the desktop (NOT on any icons), and choose Properties. This will show the Display properties box. Click on the settings tab, and see what the resolution slider is set to. Most LCD monitors run best at 1024x768. If your resolution is not set to this, try changing it to that setting, and see how it looks then.

If this has no effect, look in your OSD menu (On-Screen Display) on the LCD monitor, and find the Auto-Adjust option. Let it auto-adjust to your Windows-set resolution. Also, check to see if you may have a horizontal and vertical size adjustment in your monitor. Mine does not, but that doesn't mean other manufacturers don't provide them.

One other item to check, while you are in the Windows Display settings box. Click the Advanced button, under the resolution slider. Check on the tabs you find there. Look for an option to run your display in Widescreen mode. Some video games offer this option as part of the game setup. There MAY be such an option in the display driver settings provided by the video card manufacturer. If you find such an option, and it is enabled, turn it off and see what happens. This is a long-shot option, as I have not seen any video card drivers offer this (But, as they are all different, there MAY be such an option available).

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If none of this helps, my inclination would be that there is a limitation on the video card in your system. 7 years old is an awfully old system, by today's standards, and there may be some inherent design limitation of the video card that causes this problem.

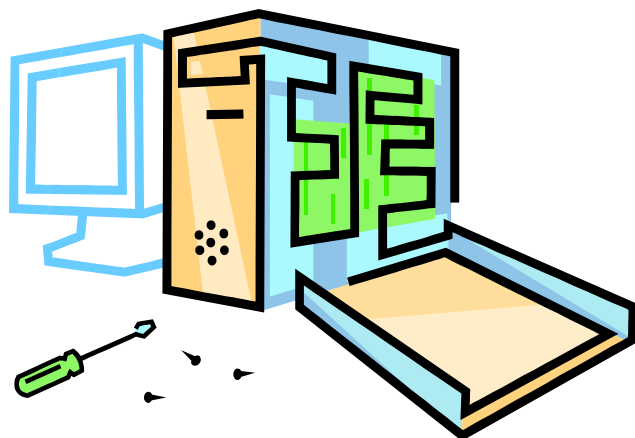
I am running a relatively elderly (now) ATI Radeon 7000 VE video card on my one system, at 1024x768 resolution under Windows 2000. I adjusted the resolution to all the ones my monitor would support, and could not duplicate the problem...my display automatically adjusted to full-screen each time.

Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on how you look at it), I no longer run any Windows version older than 2000, so I don't have a 98 system here to test this on. But, from what I have seen with other systems, I don't believe it is an issue with your LCD monitor, but with Windows or (most likely) your video card.

Hope this helps. If not, perhaps someone else has a different idea that might work. Keep an eye here for further replies.

As noted above, this question was dropped in the box at the May meeting for this purpose. Unfortunately, some of the meeting feedback slips had been dropped on top of it, and it was missed. This will be corrected at the next meeting.

To date, there have been no replies left on CUEList regarding this topic.. If anyone else has any further hints or suggestions to pass along, please post them on the list for further discussion, and so they may reach the member who posed the question in the first place.



Genealogy Seminar

by Dave Howell, Computer Users of Erie

While down in St. Augustine, Florida, earlier this year, I connected with the local computer and genealogy groups.

In doing so, I attended an all-day genealogy seminar with speakers on various topics. One of them claims that "hands-on" research by personally visiting graveyards, libraries, court houses for direct "first hand" information are in jeopardy. The reason for this are the "pajama genealogists among us" - people using the internet exclusively for their research. In other words, genealogy using the old time consuming, but thorough tools is slowly dying.

The internet is a valuable tool, but it is not the "toolkit!" In genealogy, all our potential "victims" are already dead! Sooner or later, you've got to get out there to where the original sources and documents are recorded and retrieve them in their natural state, if possible.

Among the major points brought out in this seminar were:

*Check out first the local libraries, genealogy and history societies, township/municipal offices, and county offices (court houses) in that order. I was a bit surprised that the court house was last.

*Books are still an excellent source of family history - don't underestimate them! Many volumes are available through the Interlibrary Loan system at your local public library.

*Don't visit a library genealogical research center unless you plan to spend enough time to do it right.

*Always take a copy (not the original) of your family tree with you whenever you plan to do research. That way, you'll be able to recognize your ancestors if you stumble across them by accident even while you're looking for

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Membership News

Current active CUE members: 45

Renewal received: Hadley Jones

Renewals Due: Peter Weidner Kathleen Bolla Brian Little

New Members: None last month

Remember, a CUE Membership makes a nice present!!

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someone else.

*When visiting a well-known history or genealogy library in a large city, always let them know in advance that you are coming. Plan for extra time for security checks and always carry a picture ID with you.

*Try to make copies of what you find, or at least copy down exactly where you found it (and the date) so that you can go back to it at a later date.

*Bring pencils, and sharpener, and paper.

*Bring change for copies and the parking meter.

*When doing research, check all sections of the card catalogs (or the Internet) such as under the family name, family collections, family location - counties, municipals, etc. If you don't find what you want in the current card catalogs, ask to see the "old" card catalogs - sometimes they're called "family card catalogs."

*If looking for records in certain county, parish, or district entities, be aware that over time those entities may have been subdivided, combined or had their names changed. This occurred quite often back in the 1700's to early 1900's as the country went through expansion pains.

*Don't forget to check "biographical" sections of the library and genealogical collections. Such "biographical information and sketches" can often lead to new information and sources. Find out where your ancestor's biographies are located and/or published in "American Biographical Archives." It has more than 1,000,000 biographical sketches on 280,000 people. Also, check out "Biography and Genealogy Master Index" (BGMI) available at Ancestry.com. It indexes 3,200,000 biographical sketches.

*There is a wealth of biographical information out there in neat packages - if you know where to look. Your families don't have to be "rich and famous" to have biographies about them. An ancestor may be included in some related family biography. It has been estimated that 8,000,000 individual Americans prior to 1930 had articles about their lives in biographical compilations, called "mug books," such as the often reprinted volumes by the Goodspeed Company. Often such an article about an individual will contain information also of value to cousins and descendants of collateral lines of brothers and sisters. Sometimes the footnotes in a scholarly biography of a prominent, even though distant relative, will lead to genealogical sources on ancestors you share with that person.

*Using Amazon.com and google.com have been known to

be helpful in finding family stories and records and, believe it or not, e-bay can be used for family history publications and items of interest to genealogist that are up for auction.

*Ancestry.com also includes the "Periodical Resource Index" (PERSI) and the American Genealogical-Biographical Index" (AGBI).

*Genealogy.com offers to libraries access to 25,000 local and family histories (7.2 million pages).

*We mustn't forget sources of other biographical indexes: individual state archives and libraries. States such as Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Missouri, New Jersey, South Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin, just to name a few, maintain biographical material for individuals and families in their respective states. They may also reference indexes on local histories and genealogies for that state.

*National sources of biographical information would naturally include the Library of Congress Catalog. Using the card catalog of the Library of Congress online (<http://catalog.loc.gov>) or through "On-line Catalog Library Corporation" (OCLC) can uncover the most obscure biographies (books on individuals). The Library of Congress has over 40,000 family histories.

*For local histories and biographical sketches that have no indexes, the Local History and Genealogy Room of the Library of Congress has a card catalog prepared many years ago. Be aware, however, that it can be very exasperating when working online with the National Archive sites. They are not very "user friendly." Be very specific with what you want.

*When making queries online, ask to have them look under various titles, topics, subjects that may lead to the information you desire. Also, ask to see if they can send you copies of a document they find.

*Other "national sources" other those already mentioned above may include www.newspaperarchive.com with it's 20,000,000 plus pages of newspapers. The Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana (www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy), has an extensive genealogical collection.

*For those "pajama genealogists" among us, many websites were mentioned, some are free (0\$), some involve fees (\$\$) or, their costs were unknown (?\$).

www.Familysearch.org 0\$

www.Findagrave.com 0\$

www.Rootsweb.com 0\$ but not all services are free

www.Genforum.com ?\$ (Query service)

www.GenWeb.com 0\$

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Programmers don't die, they just GOSUB without RETURN.

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- www.Ancestry.com \$\$
- www.Question.com \$\$
- www.HeritageQuest.com \$\$
- www.HeritageWeb.com ?\$ (Proquest) Census records, revolutionary war pensions, 25,000 family histories.
- www.ngsgenealogy.org ?\$ (National Genealogical Society)
- www.afrigenas.com ?\$
- www.vitalrec.com ?\$
- www.census-online.org 0\$
- www.us-census.org 0\$
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- www.itd.nps.gov/cwss 0\$ Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System
- www.usigs.org/library/military/links 0\$ U.S. Internet Genealogical Society Military Collection.
- www.cyndislist.com 0\$ (Portal site - leads to "how to" and other sites)
- www.usgenweb.org 0\$
- www.worldgenweb.org 0\$
- www.genealogyhomepage.com 0\$
- www.genealogyportal.com 0\$
- www.nara.gov 0\$ National Archives and Records Administration. (Can be used to find pension files for vets.)
- www.apgen.org \$\$ Association of Professional Genealogists. Need help? These people charge fees ranging from \$30 to \$60 per hour. Your local Genealogy Society can usually provide assistance at less cost.

If you are going to migrate to the Windows XP platform from an earlier version, be sure to check the compatibility lists for all your hardware. If its NOT on there, chances are you may have some strange problems somewhere down the road.

As noted elsewhere in these pages, the Digital Photo SIG is now up and running. If you have any hints and tips you'd like to share with the group, please submit them for publication. Also, remember, I can often get review copies of software pertaining to this topic. If someone wants to try a product and write a review for it, let me know, and I will see if it is available.

Starting with the July 2005 issue, there will be a change in the printing of the issues. We have received an offer from a company in Florida that publishes newsletters for other APCUG member groups, and they would like to also print ours,. Even though out-of-state, the total cost of printing and returning the issues to us each month will come to about a \$10 per month savings over what we are currently paying.

The Board discussed this at our May meeting, and the decision was made to take advantage of this offer. I will try it for several months to see how it works out.


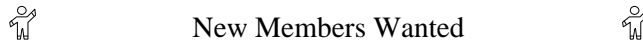
In connection with this, the deadline for article submissions must be changed. All articles now must be submitted NO LATER THAN the Saturday following the day of the General Meeting (a week earlier than the current deadline). This is to allow enough lead time to prep the issue, get ti to the printer, and for return shipping.

Editor's notebook

Hopefully this issue will be up to par with the others I have done. But if there are any design flaws or other oddities that have crept in this month that I do not catch, they SHOULD be resolved by the release of the next issue.

I am working with a slight hindrance this time around. The computer I normally use to do my graphics and DTP work was upgraded with a new motherboard, CPU and memory in March, and has been acting cranky since then. After going through all the normal diagnostic procedures, the underlying cause SEEMS to be an older model video card, which is not listed on the Windows XP Hardware Compatibility List (although several others in the same family were).

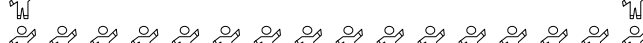
To make a long story short, I have received an upgraded video card today, and will be installing it as soon as I get this issue put to bed, and ready to print. Moral of the story:

 New Members Wanted 

Existing CUE members, for each new PAID member you get to join CUE, you will receive \$5 off your renewal for the following year.

Thus, if you get 5 new members to join, your renewal for the next year is FREE!!

Start saving today...get your friends to join CUE!!



In Search of “VCR for Radio”

by Frank Bollinger, ORCOPUG

I recently began recording radio programs on my computer. Here's how it happened.



Background

This story began more than 40 years ago when I became addicted to talk radio. Over the ensuing years, I've enjoyed many hours of entertaining and informative programs. Topic oriented shows about personal finance, law, cars, and (of course) computers filled the weekends. Hog heaven until the radio stations rearranged their schedules. When the dust settled, three of my favorites were on simultaneously. On top of that, I'm also a baseball fan, so Dodger and Angel games sometimes presented five alternatives at the same time. Bummer. Why couldn't there be a VCR for radio?

First Solution

I heard about a special radio and tape recorder from C Crane & Co. The tape recorder runs at 1/4 speed, so you can get a 3-4 hour program on one side of an audio cassette. Two problems are that the recorder is a bit bulky to lug around and the tapes won't play in typical tape players. So, I also acquired a portable player capable of recognizing the slow speed.

Now I could listen to one program and record another. But, there are three programs. One night, I heard about something called Radio YourWay. This is a radio with a built-in timer that saves programs on a memory card. It also has built-in memory. Radio YourWay turns out to be one of those neat ideas that works, but is so aggravating to use that you wonder if it is worth it. For example, programming it is clumsier than any VCR you can imagine (I've had many, and mastered them all fairly easily). A couple other quirks added to my frustration. Fast forwarding is exceedingly slow. It takes several minutes to get to the second or third hour of a 3-hour program. Even worse, if you pause playback more than a couple minutes, it resets to the beginning and you have to wait even longer to get to your new starting point.

It was quite a shock to discover how much harder it is to “time shift” radio than TV. But, even with these challenges, at least I could now record two and listen to the third live. Not perfect, but manageable, until the timer broke on the C Crane recorder. Now, I had to choose which program to miss. Not acceptable after being used to hearing all three.

The next solution

My next idea was to find a device like Radio YourWay, but easier to use. An Internet search led to something called “Replay Radio.” Since I have Tivo for recording TV, and Replay TV is a competing product, this name was quite intriguing. It turned out to be PC software that claims to work like “Tivo for Internet Radio.” I love my Tivo so I explored further, discovering that it could record programs and had an impressive list (several hundred) of radio shows to choose from. The only apparent drawback was that it recorded MP3 files. Remember, I'm a talk show junkie, not a music aficionado. So, selecting this approach would mean I'd need something to play back the recordings or be chained to my computer. (At this point, I wasn't sure, but it sounded like I'd need an MP3 player).

Alas, Replay Radio has a serious flaw -- it can only record one program at a time (As noted above, I want to do three). An exchange of emails confirmed this shortcoming and led me to another program, called WM Recorder. Fortunately, its on-line documentation explicitly stated it can do up to eight concurrent recordings. One potential glitch -- it doesn't create MP3 files. The same documentation did recommend a program to convert the recordings.

So, I downloaded the software and ordered an Apple iPod (MP3 player) from Amazon.com. Since I don't like using earphones, I also ordered a speaker apparatus that the iPod can plug into for playback.

Mission accomplished, right? Not quite. I successfully recorded several radio programs. All played well on my PC. The next step was to convert them to MP3 files. Guess what? The “recommended” conversion program didn't recognize the .asf files created by the recording software. Being the audio “expert” I am, my first question was “What the @\$% is an asf file?” Back to the Internet, where I researched audio file formats and found alternative software. Two allowed trial downloads that were able to handle the asf files. Curiously, after another email exchange, I found out that I could simply change the asf file extensions to wma and the recommended program would make the conversions. Apparently, asf and wma are two different Microsoft audio formats. Still, it's easier to use a conversion program, since it can batch many at once.

With that problem solved, I'm now able to record several programs on a predetermined schedule. I can use the iPod with earphones when out walking and with my speaker apparatus around my home. I've even used the speaker gadget in my car.

This trip was a roller coaster containing numerous ups and downs with continuing challenges. For example, I found out where one of the originating radio stations is located when Bob Brinker's Money Talk turned out to be a

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Kansas City Chief's football game. Sometimes the recordings don't work, and one of the programs I want doesn't have an Internet broadcast.

Despite all that, it was a grand adventure, I had a lot of fun doing it, and am enjoying listening to programs I was missing before. The time from the cassette recorder failure to having all the components assembled and functioning successfully was about two weeks. Oh, yes. What about music? Can't say. I may be the only person who bought an MP3 player NOT to play music.

Here's the final hardware and software configuration:

1. WM Recorder (Records the programs) (\$29.95 from www.wmrecorder.com)
2. WM VCR (Schedules the recordings) (\$9.95 from www.wmrecorder.com)
3. River Past Audio Converter (Converts the asf files to MP3) (\$29.95 from www.riverpast.com)
4. Apple iPod (MP3 Player) (Approximately \$230 and up, depending on source and model)
5. Altec Lansing InMotion Portable Audio (Speaker gadget for the iPod) (Approximately \$110, from various sources)

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

Picture and Video Files: Size Matters

by Timothy Everingham, TUGNET

You may have gotten a bunch of spam that try to sell you something because they are telling you that size matters. However even though they may be trying to con you, in regards to the size of picture, graphics, and video files size does matter. Some of it is because it is related to image size. However, when you try to compress files there reaches a point where you start to lose something.

First you have to understand that if it is either an image or video file each little pixel or time interval is represented by bits of data. You may have heard 8, 16, 24, 32 bit color. The number of bits represents the color of each pixel. On an 800x600 image you have 480,000 pixels (800 multiplied by 600). Then you multiply the color bit depth to get the size of the image representation (800 x 600 x 24 bit equals 11,520,000 bits). Divide by 8 and you get the number of bytes (11,520,000 bits divided by 8 equals 1,440,000 bytes). It get worse with video because you have to multiply by the frames per second and by the number of seconds in the video (at a standard 30 frames per second it would be 41 Megabytes per second or 2.4 Gigabytes per minute). Now if you have a lot of large image or video files you are

trying to transfer through a dial up connection to the Internet you have problems. If that is the case, you just figure you will save and send things using a smaller image size and blow up when it will be used. The problem is that when you go to a smaller image size you loose detail in the process. Then when you try to blow it up again it just gets blocky. The same thing goes for video files, the smaller the file size the less detail and nuances are in the file. This really shows up when you take a small image and then try to project it using a good LCD projector. So if you want to project it, show it on a large monitor, or print it out large you need to keep the image size up. This is one reason there is so much hype on the amount of megapixels a digital camera has.

So how then do we get the small file size of images we do. We use compression algorithms, also known as codecs (compressor/decompressor). There are lossless and lossy compression algorithms. But how can there be lossless compression? It is because nature is filled with patterns and uniform things, which is what we take images of. So if we record info about the pattern instead of each pixel of it a lot of file space is saved. An example would be if a person in your image is wearing a blue sweater. Instead of recording every pixel individually you record this area of the image, where the sweater is, in blue. The Tiff image format (.tif) uses only lossless compression techniques, so it is a good format for achieving purposes or something you may wish to edit later. But then there is lossy compression. You lose some of your detail, but a lot less than if you just shrank the image. One of the regularly used lossy compression techniques is color palette reduction. With 24 bit color you have 16 million colors available. However, there are far less than many colors in an image. It takes less space to analyze which colors are in an image, and create a custom color table that will represent all the color in the image in less than 24 bits, write the color representation of the pixels with the custom table code, and then include a copy of the table in the file. This can be used as a lossless technique, but usually this is taken one step farther. In the analysis of the image it is detected how often each color is used and

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OnCUE Classifieds

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(Continued from page 12)

ranked. As the compression rate increases then the number of colors that are less used are converted to colors that are close to it but are widely used in the image. This compresses the size of the color table, which decreases the bits per pixel representation of a color used and the blending to nearby colors increases the space that areas of the image that can be described as having one color (this is a situation of compression techniques complementing each other). Some formats start out using only lossless compression techniques but as the level of compression increases they start to use lossy compression. Some common formats that use a combination of lossless and lossy compression are GIF (.gif) and JPEG (.jpg). Remember once you lose image data using a lossy technique you will not have it anymore unless you still have the original or a lossless copy. The compression methods discussed so far are referred to as spatial compression because they reduce the file size by compacting the description of the visual area (space) of an image.

Video is made up of sequential images played over time. This means we can not only use spatial compression; but also use temporal compression, which compresses the file using analysis of the difference and similarities of the frames in an image. This usually exhibits itself by the first frame in a video sequence being compressed just like a still image using spatial compression, but in the following frames only the changes from the previous frame is recorded. Periodically or when there are major changes between frames, a new initial frame, also called a keyframe, is produced followed by more just recording of differences between frames. These temporal compressions can be lossy or lossless. As with still images you should achieve them using only lossless compression. However, using only lossless compression may be impractical because of the limitation of your computers or hard drives' speed or hard drive space, but keep lossy compression at a minimum.

If you are creating a video DVD for achieving that uses the MPEG-2 format that uses both lossy and lossless compression techniques, it is better to achieve the file using the DV codec it was originally imported in from your video camera and writing that file to a data DVD or CD. Be aware that some compression techniques and settings are

better for some types of video than others. If you just have a talking head in your video with a static background you can compress it greatly without degrading the image much, But if there is a lot of fast action or panning of the camera, the amount of compression you can successfully have you have to be more picky on what codec you should use.

File size matters because it limits what you can use the file for. If you just want a small file you can send to a friend's dial up connection or have friends using a dial up connection view via a website a small file is good. However in printing large photos, showing on a large computer display or having it projected on a screen small files are not good. Use only lossless compression techniques on things you want to achieve or edit later because it keeps your options open. Keep your archival file large and make smaller copies of it for other purposes.

It is fortunate that hard drive and DVD and CD blank prices have come down a lot so doing this does not cost a fortune, but not planning ahead on image size and which compression techniques can cost you not being able to fully use your precious digital photos and videos.

Timothy Everingham is Vice Chair of the Los Angeles Chapter of ACM SIGGRAPH, the largest chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery's (ACM) Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques and one of Southern California's significant professional organizations within the entertainment and media industries. He is also part-time press in the areas of high technology, computers, video, audio, and entertainment/media and has had articles published throughout the United States and Canada plus Australia, England, & Japan. Further information can be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~teveringham>

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Ed. Note: In conjunction with the start of the CUE Digital Photo SIG, I have included this article here for those interested. I have another article for next month, which is somewhat lengthy, also connected with Digital Photos and how to print them effectively.

If enough interest is shown, I will attempt to insert a monthly article on digital photography, as I can find them. Let me know what your opinion is on this.

Upcoming MarketPro Shows

NONE SCHEDULED

Admission to these shows is \$7.00

*Be sure to check on the MarketPro Website for the current coupon. They may or may not accept this one at the show. The website is at:
www.marketproshows.com*


Calendar of Events

Note: Unforeseen circumstances may change a scheduled event. For up-to-the-minute news, please check the CUE List for details.

▶ June 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New DIGITAL PHOTO SIG	2	3	4
5	6	7 Genealogy SIG	8 Advanced Windows SIG	9	10	11 Macintosh SIG CUE Class
12	13	14	15	16 CUE General Meeting	17	18 Newsletter Item Deadline
19	20	21 Beginner's SIG	22	23 CUE Board Meeting	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

▶ July 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 	5 Genealogy SIG	6 New DIGITAL PHOTO SIG	7	8	9 Macintosh SIG CUE Class
10	11	12	13 Advanced Windows SIG	14	15	16
17	18	19 Beginner's SIG	20	21 CUE General Meeting	22	23 Newsletter Item Deadline
24	25	26	27	28 CUE Board Meeting	29	30
31						

Computer Users of Erie Membership Application

Please Print

Application Type: New Renewal Info Change

Today's Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP+4: _____

Home Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email address: _____ Referring member: _____

It is CUE's policy to keep your information confidential. However, for contact regarding SIGs, meetings and a possible Help Directory, may we release the following to other members:

Home Phone: Yes No and/or Email Address: Yes No

Would you prefer to receive the monthly newsletter via US Mail, instead of the usual method of downloading a PDF from the website? ***If you answer YES, there will be a \$5 dues surcharge to help cover postage costs.***

Yes No

X	Computer Interest	Skill Level		
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	Office Applications			
	Digital Imaging			
	Graphics			
	Internet			
	Operating Systems			
	Macintosh			
	Programming			

X	Computer Interest	Skill Level		
		Low	Med	High
	Advanced Technology			
	Hardware			
	Networking			
	Financial			
	Genealogy			
	Beginner's Group			
	Other:			

X	Volunteer Interests
	Greet Guests and Members
	Newsletter Reporter
	Software / Book Review
	Photographer
	CUE Demonstrations

X	Volunteer Interests
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	Present Programs
	Publicity Activities
	Solicit Advertising
	HELPLINE Resource

X	Computer Platform(s)
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	Windows 2000 / XP
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	Other:

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Student members MUST present proof of student status	

<i>Mail completed application and check to:</i>	
Computer Users of Erie Membership PO Box 8941 Erie, PA 16505-0941	



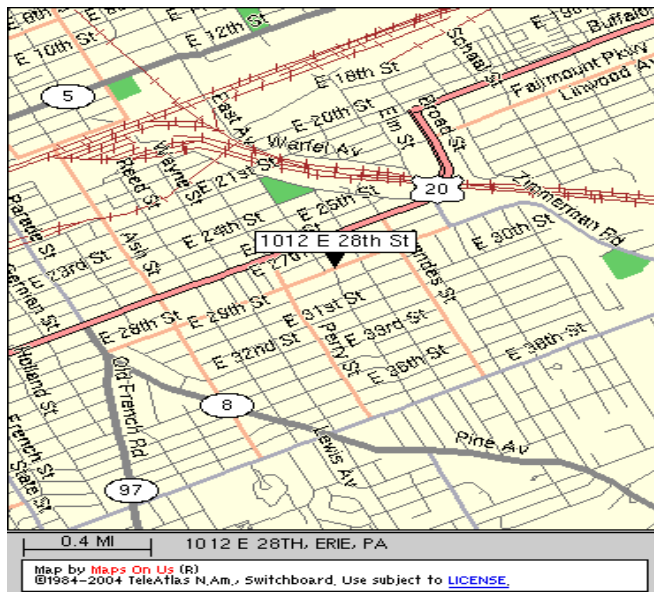
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*The next regular CUE Meeting will be on Thursday **June 16, 2005** at Holy Rosary School. Doors open at 6:30, and the meeting starts at 7.*

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Computer Users of Erie is an organization founded as a friendly and informal group for the purpose of helping each other to better understand the ever changing world of computers and computing.

Membership in CUE costs \$25.00 per year. Your membership includes our monthly newsletter via our web site, the ability to take part in all club activities and SIGs, benefit from club discounts and take part in any other special club activities or offers that come along. Most of all, you'll have fun learning from a great group of people!

To join CUE or to renew your membership, please fill out the application/renewal form found on page 11 of this newsletter, and either mail it (along with your dues) to the address shown at the bottom of the form, or bring it to one of our monthly meetings.