

Horizons



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Next Meeting

June 19, 2008

Auction and Swap

Have some older software or hardware laying around you don't want or need any longer?

Looking for a certain item that may be hard to find in the stores now?

Why not try out the June CUE meeting, where we will have one of our Auction and Swap nights.

Gather up your extra goodies, and bring them with you to the meeting. Put them up for auction, or use them as trade goods to obtain something you may want or need.



7 p.m., Holy Rosary School

Computer Users of Erie

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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).

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June 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Genealogy (DH)	4 Digital Photo (HR)	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Mac (HR)
15	16	17 BUG (TK)	18	19 CUE General Meeting (HR)	20 Newsletter Deadline	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

July 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Genealogy (DH)	2 Digital Photo (HR)	3	4 	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Mac (HR)
13	14	15 BUG (TK)	16	17	18 Newsletter Deadline	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Meeting Location Finder

DH Dave Howell • 3904 Myrtle • 866-7308 • dhowell63@neo.rr.com
 HR Holy Rosary • 1012 E. 28th (park behind school) • Contact Lou Cioccio • 868-1320 • lcioccio@mac.com
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All meetings begin at 7 pm, except for Mac SIG, which is 9 AM (UNLESS otherwise noted by SIG leader).
PLEASE RSVP for all SIG meetings, to allow for planning changes or meeting postponements.

Secretary's Report

MAY 15, 2008
Thursday
Holy Rosary
6:15 PM

Olen Seidler
Lee Williams
Tom Kuklinski
Hadley Jones
Sam Fletcher
Don Grim
Scarlett Skarupski

Olen: Opened meeting.

Tom: Finance report May 1, 2007 to June 1, 2008.

Forty (40) members, 2 renewals due.

Purchase of Cable for CUE for set up and viewing purposes, \$26.00. Carried and Approved.

CUE phone number 814 - 746 -4784

This is through SKYPE at a cost of \$65.00 per year. Played message that is recorded.

Agreed that this will be placed in Newsletter, Business Cards, Calendar of Events, etc.

Discussion on cost of Dues, Publishing Newsletter, Mailing, Stamps, Placing in Libraries.etc.

Membership fee is at \$20.00 for one year. Mailing Newsletters to members cost \$30.00.

Agreed upon due to rising costs of postage and printing.

Meeting Adjourned
7:00 PM
Respectfully submitted,
Scarlett Skarupski

MAY 15, 2008
Thursday 7:10 PM
Holy Rosary School

Members in Attendance 14

Olen Seidler: Reports and Readings:

Scarlett: Reading of April Meeting:
Approved / Passed
Harold Kelley / Hadley Jones

Tom: Financial Report - May 1, 2007 to June 1, 2008
Forty (40) members, 2 renewals.

All bills and expenses paid, gain of \$360.31
Approved / Carried
Hadley Jones / Harold Kelley

CUE Phone number - 814 - 746-4784

This is through SKYPE Services at a cost of \$65.00 per year.

Played message that will be left for incoming calls. Date, Place, Address, Time.

Can be used for Conference calls. Can be used Nationally and Internationally.

SKYPE is a British System.

Olen: Remember to RSVP SIG hosts if attending meetings.

Mark is still looking for suggestions for Newsletter.

Dave: April Genealogy SIG
Looking for a publisher for WW II abstracts, photo's, stories, travels.

How to Start Genealogy - Booklet

Scarlett will send Dave a few names of Publishers.

Budget expense for a SIG be covered by CUE ?

Tom: Submit the expense, board will make decision.

Lou: April MAC, DIGITAL, PHOTO SHOP SIG
Wireless. Internet Card

Scarlett: Updated advertisement for Senior News, will add Phone number to it.

Calendar updates with phone number.
Now we can proceed with business cards.

CUE Newsletter:
Will have to change mailing dues to \$30.00

Regular to stay at \$20.00. Student to stay at \$15.00 (with identification)

Business card in Newsletter (both sides) "Place your Business Card here."

Founded 1982. Possibly move Expanding your Computing Experience

a little to the left and adding Founded 1982.

50-50 \$16.00 Drawn, Won, Donated by Sam Fletcher.

Bob Huber: Northeast is having a "Get Rid of Old Monitors, etc." this coming weekend.

Olen: June Meeting will be Auction and Swap.

Tom is going to follow with a demonstration of Lenox, Linspire, Hit and Run, Linux Mint.

Pizza and coffee on the back tables.

Meeting Adjourned
8:10 PM
Harold Kelley / Don Grim

Respectfully Submitted,
Scarlett Skarupski

Spam Control

By Don Grim, Computer Users of Erie

Spam can be overwhelming. The frustration reminds me of a cartoon where there is a gun aimed at a dog's head with the inscription "Stop the Spam or we'll shoot the dog". We have been using a free Spam filter, called SpamBayes, where I work that is recommended by Kim Komando (www.komando.com). It works well for us especially since 100% of messages in the junk folder are Spam. There is a small Junk Suspects folder where you can decide whether to keep, on not to keep middle-ground messages. There are convenient buttons to delete Spam or recover messages to the Inbox. Those buttons also train it to perform even better in the future.

Installation is fairly easy. You start by leaving all good messages in the Inbox and all bad messages a Junk folder (have some bad messages so it can train well at the start). Then, download the installation file, at <http://spambayes.sourceforge.net/>, double-

click the downloaded file, and follow the instructions. I chose it as an Outlook Addin but you could install it as a stand-alone program. When I opened Outlook, I checked a box to confirm the files were already sorted for good and bad messages, clicked Next, I browsed to the folders for good and bad messages, clicked Next, and waited for it to finish training. It is all set up at that point and your Spam is in control!

The "Bayes" in SpamBayes stands for Bayes Law, which is part of conditional probability studies. Spam seems to have met its match with this program. I'll stop commenting now and finish with quotes from reviews below.

"SpamBayes is far superior here, never mistaking a real e-mail for spam after the initial training period."

"With SpamBayes you only have to look at the 'unsure' mail, which is only a

very small percentage of all mail. In fact, I have configured my mail client to automatically delete spam, but not do anything special with the unsure mail."

"I can be confident I will never miss a normal mail."

"SpamBayes is currently the best solution to the spam problem. In fact, after I started using it I hardly notice there is a spam problem at all. The developers of SpamBayes really have created a very powerful weapon in the War on spam, and turned the tide from losing to winning; if every e-mail user started using this product I believe spammers would soon find themselves looking for real jobs!"

<http://home.dataparty.no/kristian/reviews/bayesian/>

Editor's Notebook

NEWS FLASH

CUE HAS A PHONE NUMBER!!!

Yes, it's true...after many years without one, CUE now has a phone number to be used for informational messages to our members, as well as a place for potential members to call and leave a message, or find out about current CUE happenings.

Available for use now, it will be checked and maintained on a constant basis. For further details, please contact Tom Kuklinski.

The official CUE phone number is 814-746-4784. All official CUE publications, as well as the website, will be

changing to reflect this number in the near future.

Summertime is here again. As a reminder, the July meeting will be replaced once again by our annual CUE picnic. Details are yet to be set on the date and location, so stay tuned here, as well as the website AND the CUE phone line, for further details as they become available.

The CUE website is undergoing a complete redesign, due to changes of the way APCUG hosts sites on their server. As such, I am looking for suggestions or requests for new or changed features to be implemented in the redesign.

If there is something you would like to see included in the new CUE website, please email me your ideas at

cuerie1@verizon.net. Please put WEBSITE in the subject line, so I may identify these messages easily.

As always, I am looking for new articles for the newsletter. I have no backlog any longer, and am looking to increase the amount of LOCALLY WRITTEN items for content.

If you have an idea for a story you'd like to see, or have written one, please submit it to the newsletter for publication. If you feel that it needs some polishing before publication, that is no problem...I will be more than happy to work with you to spiff up your writing.

Any articles pertaining to computer related issues are always accepted. If you would like to do a book or software review, please contact me for further details.

The Art of Keeping Cool Part 1: Computer Fans

By Jerry Goldstein, Vice President & Newsletter Editor, The PC Users Group of Connecticut
www.tpcug-ct.org/ attygoldstein@tiac.net

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With the cold weather you may not be thinking of the need to cool down. No matter how cold it gets outside your personal computer still needs to be cooled. Computers generate a great deal of heat and need a means of dissipating it. Heat reduces the life of your computer parts. Block your computer vents and your motherboard will fry leaving you with lots of nothing. Inadequately cooled computers suffer crashes and freeze-ups as the parts overheat.

You can check your computer's temperature during startup by going to Setup when your computer starts. Unless you do it through a reboot after you have been on the computer for a while you will not get a true reading. There is software available to monitor your CPU's temperature. Constant temperature monitoring is probably not needed unless you are overclocking (running your CPU faster than it is set for at the factory) your computer or packed in way too much gear.

To combat the heat computer users have a wide selection of choices, some that work better than others. This article will introduce you to a variety of means of keeping your computer cool.

As computers get faster and smaller the parts are getting hotter and hotter. The smaller the computer case gets the less space that heat has to go. For a while computer cases were getting bigger. About eight years ago I had a nice full size tower that had plenty of room for lots of gear and open space for the heat to dissipate. I still had extra fans running on that computer but the computer ran cool to start with because it had space for the heat to go.

In the last few years the over-the-counter computer started to be made with smaller cases which meant parts are being crammed closer together. That also meant there was less room for the excess heat to move away from the equipment. Adding fans are becoming

more of a necessity as more is crammed into less space.

The standard computer comes with at least four small fans built onto the case walls and the CPU. These fans are self-contained units that either blow cold air into the computer or hot air out. You will find these fans spread throughout your computer with their location depending on the manufacturer's design. There is also a fan made to blow cool air directly onto an add-on video card, a notorious heat monger for gamers. The fan uses one or two expansion slots and sits over the video card forcing cool air onto the card. When adding fans think about placing some fans to bring in the cool air while having other fans suck out the heat. Good airflow will keep things cool and lengthen the life of your computer.

For gamers, who always want the latest and greatest equipment, (meaning heat generating stuff), there's nothing like a huge fan built right into the top of the computer. These fans are larger than standard computer fans, usually as large as the case is wide. They sit on the top of the computer sucking the heat up and out as it rises through the computer. Way cool.

Of course a fan cooled computer will do you no good if you pack your computer into too tight a space or a closed environment. Be sure to keep a few inches for air to circulate in and out of the computer fan vents and don't put your computer in a closed cabinet. There is a reason computer desks come with an open back cabinet to put your desktop into. Air circulation is also the reason why internal computer cables are no longer flat. They found the flat cables blocked air flow. The round sata cables now in use cut back on air flow restriction. Sata cables are also made thinner to further increase airflow. Check how your cables run and maybe move them to the side to increase airflow. Air circulation equals good. Closed-in, tightly packed computer equals bad.

One drawback to fans is that they run

off your computer's power supply. The more fans you put in your computer the shorter the life of your power supply. Power supplies are a lot cheaper to replace than a motherboard, CPU, hard drive, or video card. In fact, you should always invest in a couple more good fans to aid in cooling your computer. The manufacturers are looking to save costs so they are never generous enough with those fans. You'll always save money in the long run with longer lasting parts kept cool by those extra fans. That is if you remember to install them. Those extra fans won't help while they sit on the shelf waiting to be put in.

Fans also have a bigger drawback: noise. When you start up your computer that noise you hear is the fans starting up and running. The more fans you use the more noise you get. Its worth spending a bit more to get a better quality quieter fan. Check the computer magazines or on-line for reviews. Using one large fan that moves more air than two small ones will also save you noise. The law of diminishing return comes into play with fans. At some point adding another fan will not help anymore as the enclosed space can only move so much air.

The lower you keep your computer parts temperature the longer they will last. Taking the time to strategically place computer fans will save you time and money shopping to replace those overheated blown parts. Keep cool year round.

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The Big DTV Transition

By Sister Dorothy Robinson, OSB, OMUG Newsletter Editor, The Olympia Microcomputer User Group, Washington
<http://www.oly mug.org> newsletter@oly mug.org

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

Computer users often speculate about how digital technology will affect us and our world. We are now entering the final stage of a rather large digital transition, that of digital television signals. Didn't know this transition was going on? You're not alone.

On February 16, The Olympian ran an Associated Press article on the digital television transition that is happening in the United States. The article said that in about a year, on February 17, 2009, all analog TV broadcasts will end in this country. If a TV does not have a digital tuner, or is not connected to cable or satellite or other paid services, it will need a digital converter box to receive and display digital signals. About 13 million households would be affected—those with older TVs (no digital tuner) or receiving signals only over the air as in the past. This is because analog tuners can't decode and display digital signals.

Options, said The Olympian, for continuing to receive TV signals after February 17, 2009 are to buy a digital converter box (\$40-50, according to this AP article), a new TV with a digital tuner, or get connected to a paid service. The federal government is offering \$40 coupons, up to two per household, good on the purchase of a converter box. You can now call 1-888-388-2009 or apply online at <http://www.dtv2009.gov>. There is also an option online to print out an application and mail it in. You may want to apply early.

<http://www.9wsyr.com> says "You will still need an over-the-air antenna in addition to the converter box to receive a digital signal on your analog television set. Your current antenna should work the same as before. Many major chains have been certified to sell the converter boxes, including Best Buy; Circuit City; Kmart; Sam's Club; Wal-Mart; Sears, Radio Shack and Target."

Best Buy, according to centre-daily.com, "will stock an Insignia-branded analog-to-digital converter box

exclusively, retailing at \$59.99."

PRNewswire.com states "Converter boxes at \$49.97 are on shelves now at Wal-Mart already."

According to radioshack.com, you can find a Zenith converter in stores for \$59.99. It is looking like the difference between the price of the converter box and the coupon will be \$10 and up.

The Olympian article said the reasons for the changeover are to allow for auctioning off excess airwaves (digital broadcasting is much more efficient so there will be an excess), for new wireless services, and "possibly" providing emergency air networks for disasters. Digital signals can also provide better picture definition—but that depends on whether high definition programs are being broadcast and on whether a TV is set up to receive high definition programs. Digital signals can support high-definition (HDTV) broadcasts—but is *not the same as* HDTV.

From How Stuff Works, <http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/hdtv1.htm>, comes this information: "Some people believe that the United States is switching to HDTV—that all they'll need for HDTV is a new TV and that they'll automatically have HDTV when analog service ends. Unfortunately, none of this is true." If you want more information on how HDTV works, check this site at the link above.

The government website at <http://www.dtv.2009.gov> has this to say about the reasons for the changeover: "Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders." It says nothing about auctioning off air wave spectrum or the intricacies of HDTV.

The Benton Foundation page at <http://www.benton.org/index.php?q=node/1257> has information on the background and time-line for DTV transition. It states:

"Digital television (DTV) is a new,

more efficient technology for transmitting and receiving broadcast television signals. But DTV signals are not compatible with today's analog TV sets in most American homes. Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the amount of spectrum given to television station owners was doubled. The policy rationale for this was to enable the stations to transition US consumers to digital TV without interruption of analog broadcasts. But after ten years of digital TV broadcasts, only a small number of US households have made the switch to DTV, delaying the return of valuable spectrum that could be used by emergency officials and auctioned to offset federal deficit spending."

Included in benton.org's time-line called "Getting to February 2009: Implementing the Digital TV Transition," is this step:

"January 28, 2008 The FCC must conduct the auction of the licenses for recovered analog spectrum, commencing the bidding no later than this date, and is to deposit the proceeds of the auction in the US Treasury no later than June 30, 2008."

In other words, this is happening right now, if things are proceeding on schedule.

CNN.com's take on this topic in January of 2006: (http://money.cnn.com/2006/01/04/technology/pluggedin_digitaltv/index.htm):

"Once TV stations switch to digital transmission, they will return to the government a big chunk of the radio spectrum they currently use to transmit their analog channels. Some of that spectrum will go to first responders—police, fire and public safety officials—so they can better communicate with one another. Breakdowns in emergency communication slowed the response to the September 11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina. New spectrum should help.

The rest of the spectrum will be auctioned off to the highest bidders—

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

probably tech companies. The sale of this valuable, scarce real estate is expected to bring in about \$10 billion, maybe more. That will help reduce the federal budget deficit.”

CNN also talked about the new technology and services that will likely be developed using this increased air availability, for example, cheap wireless broadband access virtually everywhere. Referring to an historical parallel, it states:

“Scheduled for 2008, the auction will be the biggest spectrum sale since a 1994-95 spectrum auction. That sale helped boost the mobile phone industry, boosting the number of cell phone subscribers in the U.S. from 24 million to 200 million. It also helped drive down the cost of wireless minutes from an average of 47 cents a minute to 9 cents a minute, according to analysis from financial services firm Stifel Nicolaus.”

Whether we like it or not, the DTV revolution is on its way. The best we can do is prepare ourselves. For many

of us, the \$10 or \$20 needed to buy a converter box is not a problem. Unfortunately, some people on fixed or low incomes will find it very difficult to get ready for the change. For them, the TV screen may go dark at midnight on February 17, 2009.

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Shortcuts

By Mike Moore, Editor, Bowling Green Area Microcomputer User Group, Kentucky www.bgamug.org ml.moore@insightbb.com

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

Why do some icons on your desktop have a little white arrow embedded in the picture? These are shortcuts (sometimes called links). They are small files that represent and “point to” the real thing. When you double-left-click on a shortcut icon, Windows reads the location of the file to open from within the shortcut file, then opens the target file. Shortcuts are, in the lingo of computer programmers, symbolic links to actual files. They don’t contain any of the file’s information—they just point to it. In real terms: if Peoria, Illinois was a file, then its shortcut would be the map telling you how to get there.

Why do we use shortcuts? Why not just put the real, actual file on your desktop? There are several reasons. First, since a shortcut does not contain any of the target file’s information, it can be deleted without damaging the file it points to. Therefore, placing shortcuts on the desktop (or in any direc-

tory) is safer. Accidental deletion of these links will not affect anything other than you may lose track of where your file was!

The other reason is that you can have many shortcuts and place them anywhere you might need quick access to your file. For example, when we give away computers, we organize the software links in various folders on the desktop. There’s a folder for Educational software and Game software links, and for the software that is both Educational and Fun, we put links to the same program in both the Educational and Game folders. You can rename shortcuts to anything you want, and it won’t affect the real name of the file they point to.

Shortcuts are also portable! If I know for sure that a program will be in a certain place on nearly every PC, I can e-mail a link to someone and tell them to place it on their desktop. Double-clicking on it should open that file on my recipient’s PC! E-mailing a link is much more of a sure bet than e-

mailing an executable file—because most e-mail servers just won’t allow executables (files ending in .EXE) to be sent!

How does one create a link? The best way is to find the file you want the link to refer to, then do a single right-click on it. This brings up a context menu where you can create the shortcut. Once the shortcut is created you can move it to any directory or to the desktop.

For creating desktop links, Windows provides a shortcut wizard that allows you to create a shortcut for any file type including a web page or another folder. From anywhere on the desktop, right click and select ‘New’ and then ‘Shortcut’ to activate this wizard.

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**Remember to check the CUE Website at www.cuerie.com
for a listing of Review Software.**

Contact the Editor to request a software title to review; test it, write a review for the newsletter, and it’s yours to keep...for FREE!!!

Reviving the Dead and then Transplanting

By Don Grim, Computer Users of Erie

My computer had an old 20 gigabyte hard drive that was running slower in writing CD's and taking longer during shutdown of the computer, even after running the error checking and defrag programs in Windows. I suspected the hard drive might be on its last legs. I was not too concerned since I usually backup important files as a routine, even when computers are new.

I had read that you can clone (transplant) an old hard drive over to a new hard drive but, one day, it seemed too late. I turned on the computer with a boot error message. It seemed the hard drive was dead. Since it would not boot to the hard drive, I booted it to a bootable floppy since my Windows XP CD didn't seem to be bootable. I could not view the hard drive folder nor would any utilities recognize it.

This was when I declared the hard drive "almost dead". As a last ditch effort, kind of grasping at straws so I could claim I tried everything, I remembered a tip to open the computer to assure all cables were attached tightly. I opened up the computer, touched metal to be static free, cleaned out some dust, and tightened all cables, even though they are felt snug already.

I turned the computer back on, not really expecting much, I looked for a boot error message and it booted up normally again! I saw it as a temporary victory and decided to pursue a new hard drive for a more lasting solution. I stopped at a popular computer store (Best Buy) and could not find any internal drives except specialized drives for notebook computers. Perhaps that means that many consumers just buy another computer if their hard drive fails, or they don't install their own hard drives.

I turned to mail-order (tigerdirect.com) and bought an 80 gigabyte Western Digital Caviar hard drive with a 3 year warranty for \$45 plus \$3 postage. It arrived in just a few days and I saved it for a Saturday project. Meanwhile my old hard drive continued to spin and work though I assumed it only had limited fumes left in it. I searched for information online and decided on two battle plans. If the old hard drive was dead on Saturday, I would install the new hard drive and then install all the many programs, like Windows XP, MS Office, printer settings, CD settings, DVD set-

tings, and various software. If the old drive was still alive, I would try a new project of cloning (transplanting) the old drive contents to the new drive. Cloning is necessary for you can not simply copy files from one drive to the other drive since it will not bring over everything, like hidden and system files.

Saturday came and the old drive was still spinning alive so it was time for a transplant! My main reference was from a web site at www.pcstats.com/articleview.cfm?articleid=418&page=1. I started by attaching the new hard drive to the slave socket and also connecting it to an available power plug in the computer. I also set the jumper on the new drive to the one labeled as slave. I turned on the computer and pressed the Delete button to go to the CMOS screen to assure the new second hard drive was listed there.

Once the computer booted up, I checked the Device Manager (right-click My Computer, click Properties, click Hardware) which showed the new hard drive. There was one problem. The new drive did not show at My Computer. It had no drive letter. I examined another online site at www.blistermania.com/knowledge/second_hdd.htm. It explained that a second hard drive needs to be initialized. Perhaps some new drives are initialized but this new drive needed initialized. To initialize, I right-clicked My Computer, chose Manage, expanded the storage section, chose Disk Management, and it had me initialize from there, where I chose a basic disk with maximum storage. I rebooted the computer and found the new hard drive in My Computer as drive F (D & E were already taken as the DVD & CD drives). When I double-clicked drive F, it told me the new hard drive needed formatted yet. I clicked Yes and it formatted the new 80 gigabyte hard drive in 26 minutes.

Now it was time for my first transplantation! I used a commercial program called Norton Ghost for cloning. Though there are free cloning programs out there, Norton Ghost has a nice feature where it allows for a default partition as the size of the new larger drive rather than a partition size of the old drive. I started the Norton Ghost program and went to the Ghost Advanced section. I chose the Clone option. I chose the old 20 gigabyte hard drive as the

source drive and the new 80 gigabyte hard drive as the destination drive. I don't have multiple partitions so it automatically chose the one partition on each drive. Once I clicked the Run Now button, the cloning magic happened! It booted to a "Ghost DOS" environment (yes DOS still helps at times!) and proceeded to copy a mirror image from the old drive to the new drive. I didn't know if this would take long so I had previously stripped down the files on the old drive to about 7.4 gigabytes of storage. The cloning process only took 14 minutes.

The computer booted back to Windows XP and there were the same files on the old drive (C:) and the new drive (F:), including the elusive system files. Now, it was time to turn off life support and open up the patient (I mean turn off the computer and open up the case). I took out the old hard drive and stored it away in case I would want it for something else someday (like an emergency hard drive). I could use the old hard drive as a second drive on the computer but I decided to give it a well earned rest. I attached the new hard drive to the master socket and set the jumper on the new drive to the one labeled master (per online instructions). I found that the computer did not recognize the hard drive in the CMOS setting so I opened up the computer and set the jumper to the one labeled CS (cable select). The CMOS recognized the drive then and the new drive was recognized as the C: drive at My Computer.

Now I have a computer that looks the same as before, including the desktop background cat picture (sort of cloning a cat there)! I saved a lot of time for I did not have to reinstall Windows, the virus program, or anything. I have a newer, safer, faster, and larger hard drive. It was definitely easier to replace a hard drive before the old one fails!

R.I.P., Outlook Express

By Mark Mattson, Computer Users of Erie

Microsoft recently made the announcement that seems to be the death knell for a long-time friend, Outlook Express.

For many years, I've been using this program for all of my email activities: sending and receiving from my primary ISP, monitoring the CUE email box, and also (more recently) using it to centralize the sending and receiving of my Yahoo and Hotmail messages.

For the large part, none of this will change. The only change that will impact my use of Outlook Express is the changes being made by Microsoft to the Hotmail service.

Hotmail has evolved over the years into what is now known as Windows Live Hotmail. Same concept, but slightly different ways of doing things. One of the most important things that has changed is the protocol used to access Hotmail with an external email client, such as OE.

The OLD way of ding things was with a protocol known as DAV, or WebDAV. This is an older, less secure method of access, and Microsoft made it known recently that as of June 30, 2008, it was turning off WebDAV access to Hotmail servers.

OK, you say...no big deal. Right?

Wrong. Outlook Express does NOT support the new protocols needed to access Hotmail once WebDAV is turned off. To do so, you will need to use the new Windows Live Mail application, available for free from Microsoft's Download Center. It has all the needed protocols to access the new service as you did the old, obsolete one, outside of your browser.

So what's the big deal? Just download and install the new software and keep going!

That is all fine and well, AS LONG AS you are running Windows XP SP2, or Windows Vista. These are the ONLY versions of Windows that the new software will run under.

Therein lies the BIG problem.

The machine I am running to communicate on the net, and do my other online tasks, is a Windows 2000-based system. Old as far as an OS goes, yes..but it gets the job done VERY well, and is like an old, comfortable pair of slippers. I've got the system all tuned up and purring smoothly, and haven't had any major issues with it for years.

I DO have a second computer, sitting right next to the 2000 box, running XP with all the bells and whistles and updates added to it. It, too, is running fine, and giving me no problems. However, I use this machine for my photo editing, video editing, and other processor-intensive applications, and want to reserve it from the online tasks the other machine handles so well.

I COULD upgrade the Win2k box to XP; the hardware is all compatible with the XP environment, so that wouldn't be a problem. VISTA would be a long shot on either box.... The MS Upgrade Advisor reports that the 2k box won't touch it, and the current XP machine is BARELY able to run it, without major hardware upgrades.

So I have a choice of a few ways to go right now:

1. Buy a second copy of XP for the Windows 2k box, and upgrade the OS.
2. Upgrade the XP box to handle Vista, buy a version of it for that machine, and migrate XP to the older box (A shaky area of the EULA for Windows)
3. Search for an alternative solution to Outlook Express.

The quickest and easiest (as well as free) way to go for the time being is the third option, finding a replacement for Outlook Express. And if you are also one that has older hardware that runs Windows ME, 98, or even 95, this is THE only thing you can do to avoid buying an entire new system (unless, of

course, you've been searching for some excuse to plunk down the cash and finally do a full upgrade).

Yes, I COULD have simply quit using Hotmail altogether, but, as the large majority of emails from online companies and organizations I deal with arrive via my Hotmail account, it would not be practical to switch them all over. It was a nightmare when my ISP changed years ago, and I don't want to think about doing it again...at least not for the foreseeable future.

I have been using Firefox as my primary web browser for about 4 years now. It is very stable, fast, and gives you features not available in Internet Explorer. The maker, Mozilla, ALSO has an email client named Thunderbird. I've known about this for a while now as well, but, since OE was giving me what I needed and no problems, I stuck with it. However, with the clock ticking for OE now, it was time to take another look at it.

Thunderbird is currently at release v2.0.0.14. It provides all the functionality that Outlook Express does for email. Many of the same features are there, but simply presented in a slightly different manner.

One major missing piece, however, is the built-in ability to handle web-based mail, such as Hotmail, Yahoo mail, Gmail, etc.

Like Firefox, Thunderbird allows the use of plug-ins to expand its functionality. It just so happens that one of the plug-in developers has come up with plug-ins to handle web-based email services.

Exploring further, I found out that the newest version of the Hotmail plug-in WILL handle the new Windows Live Hotmail protocols and format.

Smiles all around at finding this out.

(Continued on page 11)

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(As a side benefit of this, I ALSO found out that the Yahoo plug-in will also handle their new protocol and format, making the eventual migration to the new Yahoo mail service painless as well).

Setting all this up is fairly quick and painless, once you find the proper reference materials to guide you. I had a fair idea of what needed to be done just by looking at things, but to make sure, I consulted the Thunderbird user forums online.

To start, download Thunderbird and install it on your machine. I took all default installation options, and had no issues to work through doing this. Once the installation is complete, it will ask you if you want to import your Address-book, email, and other settings. As I was migrating OUT of Outlook Express, I allowed the installer to import everything. Again, no problems showed up here.

Once this was complete, I fired up Thunderbird to take a look at what had happened. All my mail folders and messages had been imported successfully, and were in the same spots as they were in OE. The only things that did NOT import were my Hotmail folders (the ones actually located on the server), as Thunderbirds does not natively support web-based email services. So, it was time to go to the references and follow their instructions to enable these functions.

The first place to go is to this page:

<http://forums.mozillazine.org/viewtopic.php?t=653245&sid=bfa9a5a59119e2fadec60317873becf5>

The second post down (from the member Steviex) gives you the basics on how to set up the web-based email plug-ins. If you follow his directions carefully, you SHOULD be up and running in no time...a matter of minutes.

If you want a few more tips on the setup of the plug-ins, there is a reference to this page in Steviex's post:

<http://forums.mozillazine.org/viewtopic.php?p=2743650#2743650>

The place to look on THIS page is the SEVENTH post from the top, the one from user alanrf dated Feb 11th 2007 at 2:07 am. There are a few more hints in there on settings and how to configure the plug-ins.

This post ALSO gives you the web address on where to find the plug-ins you need. It is:

<http://webmail.mozdev.org/installation.html>

On this page, you will find the plug-ins to install into Thunderbird. The first one, Web-Mail, is REQUIRED, to enable web-based mail functionality. The others are geared towards specific email services, and you can install whatever ones you wish.

Your default Thunderbird folders list will show you with just Local folders, the ones you import from OE. When you set up web-based email accounts, however, you will see an additional grouping of folders, one group for EACH account you set up. For example, I now have a group of folders for Hotmail, and a group for Yahoo mail, as well as my local mail folders (for my primary ISP mail). Each new group has its own Inbox, but if you prefer, you can set the preferences for each group to use the

global Inbox for all incoming mail. Or, if you do as I have, you can keep the incoming mail in their own Inbox, and move the messages later to one of your Local folders for archiving purposes.

One issue I don't like is the way that Thunderbird pulls in mail. If you click on the Get Mail button, it will ONLY get the mail from the account you are currently in, i.e., Local account (my Primary ISP), or Hotmail, or Yahoo... whichever one is 'active' (highlighted). To have it get all messages in ALL accounts with one click, you need to click on the down-arrowhead next to the Get Mail button, and click on the Get All New Mail line to do this. I'm not sure of the functionality of the button can be changed; I am looking into this.

So, one problem solved...that of retaining my ability to use my email software to read and send web-based email messages.

The only other thing that bothers me about all this is that I have to give up my email backup application: Express Assist v9. Not only does it backup all my email, it also backs up IE and Firefox bookmarks, My Documents, My Music, and a host of other things. So far, I've not been able to find one like it that handles Thunderbird.

Perhaps with a little more searching, I can find one like it...

Membership News

Current Membership: 40

New Members: None last month

Renewals Received: Vivian DeWitt

Renewals Due: Nick Woznicki Deborah Cole Kathleen Bolla Lee Williams
Eran Swartwelder Harold Kelley Carl Zawistosky

Remember, a CUE Membership makes a nice present!!

A "STRESS-FREE" PC

By Jim McKnight, Director, Los Angeles Computer Society www.lacspc.org jim.mcknight@lacspc.org com

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

As you know, there is no such thing as a totally "Stress-Free" PC, but there are many things you can do to reduce the stress and worry of owning one.

As we use our PC's, many of us worry about losing our data files, losing our email, losing our Music, our iTunes, our connectivity to the Internet, losing power in the middle of a critical activity, losing our ability to boot the PC, losing control of our PC to hackers, Spy-ware, etc. Wow, we worry a lot! It's a wonder we dare use our PC's at all.

To help solve and minimize these worries, here is a collection of ideas to help protect your computing environment. These steps are not really that difficult or expensive. In fact, many are free. There is lots of help available to you from User Groups, Friends, Internet Googling, PC Magazines, etc. to implement these suggestions. Details for implementing many of these suggestions are in the various self-help documents on my website at: www.jrmcknight.net.

Will it take a lot of time and energy to implement these ideas? Yes, at first, but once you have these processes in place, the regular time spent is minimal. Will I see a payback? You will only see a tangible payback for your time and energy if you experience some kind of catastrophic situation. Just like house insurance; if everything keeps running smoothly you will never know if it was worth it. You do get the warm fuzzy feeling of being protected, and you will sleep better at night.

Here are the three main areas of action. First: Protect your PC from bad things happening. Second: Prepare your environment so you can recover if bad things do happen. Third: Practice Secure Behaviors.

PROTECT YOUR PC FROM BAD THINGS HAPPENING:

1. Buy yourself Hardware Router (*Even if you only have one PC*)

a. The Router acts as a hardware Firewall.

b. Put it between your PC and your Modem.

c. Be sure to change the Admin Log-in password from the default to something

private.

d. Either disable the Wireless feature and hardwire your connection, or lock-down the Wireless using WPA Encryption and a password.

2. Make sure the Windows Firewall is active.

3. Make sure Windows "Automatic Updates" feature is active and all your critical/important Windows updates are installed.

4. Install and activate an Anti-virus Program. Set it up to scan incoming e-mails.

5. Install and activate Windows Defender and other free Anti-Spyware programs. Defender will continually scan your PC for harmful activities (Note: Vista comes with Defender built-in).

6. Firefox (free) browser is generally safer than Internet Explorer.

7. Install McAfee Site Advisor (free) on each of your Internet Browsers. It helps identify risky sites. (*Note: It is not related to McAfee's Anti-virus or security suite.*)

8. Buy yourself a Battery Backup Power Unit (unless you use a Laptop), so if you lose power at a critical time, you can gently close the PC down.

9. E-mail:

a. The best single thing you can do to secure your e-mail is to pick a good password. Do not use a single word, but a short phrase, and include some numbers. ie: "happy2cu4now" or "my5kidsrgr8". I avoid passwords that include I, l, 1, 0, o, or O. Too easy to confuse my memory. I prefer to stick with all lower case for ease of entry, but if you like finger exercise, you can include UPPER CASE and special characters to make it even more secure. Be creative: "C@@LDUDE" could work and easy to remember.

b. Set up your email program to block images, unless OK'd by you.

c. Using "Plain Text" e-mail is safer than using "HTML" e-mail, but not as pretty.

d. Note: Your anti-virus program can scan incoming e-mails, but does not fully protect you.

e. Thunderbird is a more secure e-mail client than Outlook, Outlook express, or Windows Mail.

PREPARE YOUR ENVIRONMENT (so you can recover if bad things do happen.)

1. RESTORE/INSTALL DVD/CD's:

Make sure you have your "Windows In-

stall" or "System Restore" DVD/CD's on hand (or kept safe off-site). You need these in case of a catastrophic failure. If you do not have them, many manufacturers have instructions on how to burn your own Restore DVD/CD. Do it!

2. BACKUP PLANS: Put multiple Backup processes in place that include:

a. DATA BACKUPS: Plan regular backups of all your personal data to CD/DVD's (and kept safe off-site).

b. IMAGE BACKUPS: Plan regular "Image" back-ups of the entire hard-drive, preferably to an external Hard drive. *This is a full image of your main Hard-drive that can be used to completely restore the PC back to normal.*

c. TESTING: Test your back-up process to make sure it can restore the system. This is less risky if you do it when you first buy a PC, because you have your system restore DVD's (hopefully) to put things back as they were when you bought it.

d. ONLINE BACKUPS: If you like, sign up for an on-line automatic backup service like Carbonite, Jungledisk, or Mozy.

e. RESTORE BOOT DISK: Create a Boot-Disk (using your Backup Program), so if you need to restore from a backed-up image, you are ready to go. This disk should be tested for "bootability" and then kept off-site.

f. FLASH DRIVES: **Warning:** Do not trust Flash Drives as your only means of data backup. They are prone to unexpected catastrophic failures. Having 2 or 3 duplicate Flash Drives would possibly be a reasonable alternative to DVD/CD's for your personal Data.

3. HARD COPY BU: Write down or print out all your critical info, passwords, access info, log-in ID's, etc. and save off-site. Print out a hard copy of all your e-mail contacts and save off-site.

4. PASSWORD FILE: If you keep a list of Passwords on your computer, make sure the file is hidden and/or protected by encryption. Name your password file something that only has meaning to you. Do not name your file; "passwords.doc". Duhh. Use something off-beat, like Recipes.doc or Flowers.doc. Also, there are "Locker" Programs that are free or cheap that will hide, encrypt, and password protect your personal data files.

PRACTICE SECURE BEHAVIORS

(Continued on page 13)

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E-MAIL:

1. Never open e-mail attachments from strangers.
2. Never click a button or link in an email. If desired, copy & paste the link into your browser and make sure it is going where you think it is going.
3. Be cautious about opening attachments & links from friends and family. Especially if it is something that was forwarded from someone else.

ANTI-VIRUS ~ ANTI-SPYWARE SCANS

1. Run a full Anti-virus Scan at least once a month.
2. For each of your Anti-spyware Programs, run updates and a full scan weekly or at least monthly.

SECUNIA SCANS

Once or twice a month, run a Secunia "Software Inspector" scan to make sure your most common programs are up to date against vulnerabilities. This runs from their website. You do not have to download any programs.

BACKUP, BACKUP, BACKUP

1. Do your planned backups regularly. At least once a month, backup all your personal data files, emails, pictures, etc. to CD/DVD's, and put them somewhere off-site. (A safe-deposit box or a friend or relative's house).
2. At least monthly, backup an image of your main Hard Drive to an external or second Hard drive.
3. If possible, physically take the external hard-drive containing your backed up image off-site so you can recover easily in case of fire, flood, theft, etc. (A safe-deposit box is good). *There are now many small cheap external Hard drives that will easily fit in a Safe-Deposit box. Buy two and alternate them.*
4. Periodically printout a hardcopy of your passwords and contacts. Save off-site.
5. Keep your external Hard-drive powered off when not in use.

HARD-DRIVE SURFACE ANALYSIS SCANS

Run a maintenance scan quarterly or semi-annually on all your hard drives using a utility like "Spin-Rite". This helps assure you against a surprise hard drive failure.

REFERENCES & RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS:

MOZILLA Products:

- Firefox Browser - Free:
www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/
- Thunderbird E-mail Client - Free:
www.mozilla.com/en-US/thunderbird/
See Thunderbird Step-By-Step setup at:
www.jrmcknight.net/

ANTI-VIRUS ~ ANTI-SPYWARE Products

- McAfee Site Advisor - Free:
www.siteadvisor.com/
- AVG Free Anti-virus - Free: <http://free.grisoft.com/doc/downloads-products/us/frt/0?prd=aff>
- Defender - Free: www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software/default.aspx#
- AVG Anti-spyware - Free: <http://free.grisoft.com/doc/downloads-products/us/frt/0?prd=asf>
- Ad-AWARE 2007 - Free:
www.lavasoftusa.com/products/ad_aware_free.php
- SpyBot Search & Destroy - Free:
www.safer-networking.org/en/spybotsd/index.html

SOFTWARE SCANS & BACKUP:

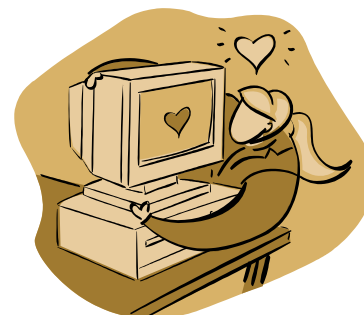
- Secunia Software Inspector - Free:
www.secunia.com/software_inspector/
Requires the latest version of Java to run:
www.java.com/en/download/index.jsp
- Spin-Rite Program: www.grc.com/sr/spinrite.htm
The SpinRite Storage Utility Program is not free, but is money well spent.
- Acronis True Image Backup Utility
www.ugr.com/
This program is available at a discount at the above listed site and includes a free Tutorial CD.
- Automatic Online Data Backup sites:
www.carbonite.com/ &
www.jungledisk.com/ Carbonite is currently \$50.00 per year for unlimited storage. Jungledisk is variable priced on usage but cheap.

BATTERY BACKUP POWER UNITS (also called a UPS: Uninterruptible Power Supply):

- When buying a UPS, I suggest you add up all the power ratings on all the PC equipment you plan to connect to the unit, then pick a unit about 1.5 times that amount. ie: If your usage is 300 Watts, buy at least a 450 Watt UPS (equal to about a 700 VA unit).
- The VA rating (Volt-Amps) vs Watts rating is confusing. With PC equipment, 1 Watt is about 1.6 VA. I go by Watts. If the tag on your PC says 2.0A and 120V, then calculate 2.0 Amps x 120 Volts or 240 watts for that device. (VA would be about 400)
- A UPS that is rated too small will fault when first powering on all your equipment at once. The first 30 seconds or so is when the highest power usage occurs.
 - The most reliable brands seem to be APC and BELKIN. Triplet is OK.

***Always check for the latest version of this document at: www.jrmcknight.net*

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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

Please indicate how you wish to receive your monthly newsletter issue. **Please note that if you choose US Mail delivery, there will be a \$10 surcharge added to your dues to help offset the rising postage costs to mail your newsletter.**

E-Mail US Mail Pickup at meeting

X	Computer Interest	Skill Level		
		Low	Med	High
	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
	SIG Leader
	Present Programs
	Publicity Activities
	Solicit Advertising
	HELPLINE Resource

X	Computer Platform(s)
	Windows 9x/ME
	Windows 2000 / XP
	Macintosh
	Linux
	Other:

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 Newsletter by US Mail: \$30.00 / year
 Student membership: \$15.00 / year

*Student members **MUST** present proof of student status*

Mail completed application and check to:

Computer Users of Erie
 Membership
 PO Box 8941
 Erie, PA 16505-0941

Directions to Holy Rosary School

CUE Members and Visitors

Arriving at the school, turn into the drive between the Church and the School building.

Proceed through the chain poles at the rear of the drive into the main parking lot.

Turn RIGHT in the lot, and proceed to the far end of the parking lot.

Park anywhere near the ramp and steps. Enter through that doorway, the meeting room is to your LEFT.

****If the chain is up at the rear of the drive, go around the corner and into the lot from 27th Street****

Finding Holy Rosary

From the West

Take 26th St. (Rt. 20) to the intersection of Parade Street. Turn right, go to the next light. Make a hard left turn onto 28th St. Follow to the school, which will be on your left.

From the South

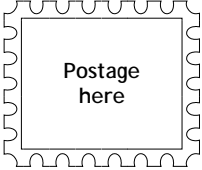
From Rt. 19 (Peach St.), Rt. 97 or Rt. 8, follow that street to 38th Street. Head east on 38th street. Turn LEFT onto East Ave. from East 38th street (first traffic light east of the intersection of Rt 8 (Pine Ave.) and East 38th St. The school will be immediately in front of you when you reach the T-intersection of East Ave. and 28th St.

From the East

Follow Rt. 20 WEST to Broad Street. Follow Broad street until you see Wal-Mart and McDonalds on your left. Turn LEFT onto Burton Ave. When you reach the end of the street, turn RIGHT onto 28th St. School will be on your right in approximately 3 blocks.



Horizons
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