

## what's new

### Lach MacDonald

The May 7 meeting drew 60 attendees for two sessions. A fast-paced Q & A session with Alan Raul and Bob Ward concluded with the topic-of-the-moment, the ILOVEYOU and associated viruses. Advice: don't open suspicious E-mail or attachments, and be wary even of E-mail forwarded from your E-mail friends. Alan demonstrated how a simple virus can change your registry, take over your address book and forward itself to your address list.

You can open .txt files with Notepad and examine them. You should not, however, open files .txt.dbf. Viruscan doesn't work on text files, by the way. And, did you know that when you delete E-mail, the attachments are still sitting on your hard disk, ready to be opened by the unwary. That includes me. There was some esoteric talk about Outlook and Outlook Express, but since I don't use them, I wasn't quite able to follow the discussion.

The main presenter was Ralph Perez of Charter Pipeline, but for some reason I wrote down Earl, so I thought I'd check his name in the previous "Hard Copy" but could not locate my issue, so I went to the website: www.thegrid.net/slobytes. There I found several options embedded in an introductory paragraph and I clicked on Newsletters. There's a concise history of the publication followed by a grid for every past issue. I clicked on May, but when I tried to open a text version, using WordPad, I got reams of code garbage. Of course, then the file came up garbage every time because I had neglected to toggle off the box that

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## beware of links

### Within E-mail Messages from an Unknown Source!

**Irene M. Kraus,**  
Editor: Computer Erie Bay Users Group (CEBUG)

Recently, a local user received an unsolicited e-mail message that contained a link to a website. The message was written in a manner that appealed directly to the user's interests, and he didn't think twice about following up on it. What happened next was a real-life example of what could happen to any user who access a site containing damaging elements. Here's what he said in his own words:

"I clicked on a link in an e-mail ... (that) looked legitimate so I thought I would take a look. ... When I got to the website, it was a rather normal looking. Had a black background and the word "ENTER" written in blue in the center

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## CLUB CALENDAR

### JUNE 4th

1 pm

It's the  
**Alan & Bob**  
Q&A show. Back by  
Popular Demand.

2:30 pm

**Pete Gannon**  
owner/operator of  
Computer Stuff in SLO  
will address the current  
Intel-AMD chip war, its  
history, direction, and  
fallout.

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## how secure is your computer?

By Harold Johnston

Like many Internet users, I have been online for some time and oblivious to the lack of security on the Internet. Then the story on a Netscape bug was published, and I was astonished that someone could read any file on my computer while I was online. As soon as Netscape released a fix, I down-loaded their new version. Then, feeling a bit safer, I put Internet security on the back burner and continued crawling around the net.

Then, a few months ago, I decided to get a DSL connection and network the kids' computer to mine so they could get online, too. I figured I better get a firewall or something, but didn't look too far into it because I hadn't actually tied their computer in yet.

The other day I was reading a magazine and it referred me to [www.grc.com](http://www.grc.com). I knew my computer was not very secure, but Gibson Research Corp.'s web site really opened my eyes. When I clicked on their Shields Up banner, I was shown this: "Greetings Harold!" "Without your knowledge or explicit permission, the Windows networking technology which connects your computer to the Internet may be offering some or all of your computer's data to the entire world at this very moment! This is how I know your name."

GRC was able to read my Windows Registration file to get my name! Then I clicked on their Test My Shields icon and got even more information. "Shields UP! is checking YOUR computer's Internet connection security . . . currently located at IP:" Shields Up told me that my NetBIOS was open to anyone on the Internet able to determine my IP. And that once found, they could read, copy, delete, upload any file to my hard drive, upload a virus or another malicious program, and I wouldn't even know about it.

The next was a test of the various ports. The computer has some 65,535 ports that can be scanned and used. Here is what it said as it began the test: "Port Probe attempts to establish standard TCP/IP (Internet) connections on a handful of standard, well-known, and often vulnerable Internet service ports on YOUR computer. Since this is being done from our server, successful connections demonstrate which of your ports are "open" and actively soliciting connections from passing Internet port scanners."

Here again I was open to the world. Further reading lead me to a quick and easy solution. Because I am not sharing resources over the Internet, I needed to disable MS Client. Besides, it's not needed for an Internet connection to work.

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## what's new

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says: always use this program to open this file. Went back to the previous page that offered download of a free copy of Acrobat Reader. My version on my desktop computer is 4.0, but I didn't have Acrobat on my notebook, so I decided to download the more recent version to my notebook. It is over 5MB, and the download was at under 3K, so a half hour later I had Acrobat installed, went back to SLObytes website and presto was looking at the newsletter. The irony of this long story is that using Charter Pipeline I should have accomplished these protracted steps in moments.

I live in the country, have no satellite and no cable, and our phone lines are so wretched that the phone company has what amounts to a full-time crew at the junction box down on Corbett Canyon. Any day now they will replace the tin cans and the strings.

Ralph explained that Charter Pipeline, a division of Charter Communications, uses digital cable and will be offering satellite service. Speed is the main selling point of digital cable, but convenience factors abound. The fiber-Optic transmission to your 64K cable modem (rented for \$15/month from Charter) will take 2 minutes to transmit a MPEG compared to 16 minutes on your phone modem. The standard cable provides 6mb transmission, but enhancements are available. Your monthly service rate, in addition to the cost of rental or purchase of the cable modem, is \$35.

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## people helping people

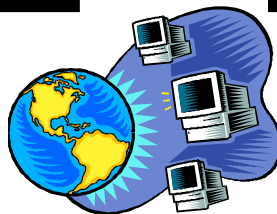
NAME	PROGRAM(S)	PHONE NO.	HOURS TO CALL
Bill Roch	Ami Pro	466-8440	anytime
Don Morgan	Word 6.0, Equation 3.1	543-6241	anytime
Dan Logan	Internet, MS Publisher	927-0515	M-Sat 8-6, Sun 12-6
Bob Hunt	Win '95, '98 Win3.11	461-1444	days
Bob Ward	Netscape, Win '95, '98, 3.11	528-0121	evenings

We could use some more volunteers here. If interested, contact Bob Ward!

## the surf board

by dorothea kirk

ibm/pcug redding, kirk@snowcrest.net



## security

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The subject this month is "projects". As I surfed the Web looking for likely sites I became more and more fascinated. There is a gold mine of information, instructions, and pictures of projects. My focus was on projects that gave plans or instructions so you could make it yourself. This took a bit more combing the sites carefully because most of the pages turned out to be selling kits rather than actual plans and/or instructions for a do-it-yourself project. The ones I did find were interesting and exciting to a do-it-yourselfer such as myself. From the sites I found I could make a simple radio, make my own household products, make candles, put photos on fabric, and a lot more. Hopefully you will find the projects as intriguing as I did. If you have time to follow all of the links in a site you may find even more projects.

### ROOM BY ROOM

<http://www.roombyroom.com/> -

Click on "Tool Box Project Worksheet". Projects for every room in the house for everyone in the house - simple to advanced.

### BEADWORK

<http://beadwork.about.com/hobbies/beadwork/mbody.htm> -

Several attractive pieces of jewelry made from beads - instructions and pictures.

### CANDLE AND SOAP MAKING

<http://www.candleandsoap.about.com/hobbies/candleandsoap/> - All kinds of candles you can make, simple to elaborate. Good instructions and pictures.

### HOW TO BUILD YOUR OWN GEODESIC DOME

<http://www.desertdomes.com/dome.html> - It sure looks easy and inexpensive. Make it of PVC or bamboo. Drape it with hand painted sheets.

### U-BUILD.COM

<http://ubuild.com/comingprojects.htm> -

A number of general directions for home and yard projects.

### THE REMODELING GAL

[http://www.theremodelinggala.com/do\\_it\\_yourself\\_projects.htm](http://www.theremodelinggala.com/do_it_yourself_projects.htm) - The site includes a number of useful home projects such as a fan trellis, a Boston rocker, an end table, and installing a skylight.

### GRANDPAS'S WORKSHOP

<http://www.linkny.com/~dmoses/> - This site is trying to sell name puzzles, but there is enough here to get ideas for your own name puzzle.

### DOITYOURSELF WOODWORKING

PROJECTS <http://doityourself.com/wood> - How to build tables, bookcases, cabinets, small wood projects, and various how-to guides. Also information on building and remodeling, repairing, decorating, and the outdoors.

### CREATIVE WOODCRAFT PLANS

<http://www.scrollsaw.com/woodlink.htm>

- If you just want plans and patterns to order, this is the place to go.

### HOMETIME'S PROJECTS

<http://www.hometime.com/projects/projects.htm> - Here is a goldmine of how to do it instructions concerning home construction, remodeling and repair projects. You can also buy plans.

### CRAFT PROJECTS AND IDEAS

[http://www.masterstech-home.com/The\\_Sewing\\_Room/Crafts/CraftProjects.html](http://www.masterstech-home.com/The_Sewing_Room/Crafts/CraftProjects.html) - This web site has collections of do-it-yourself simple projects - Crochet basket, leaf-painted place mats and napkins, magazine rack, rose-stenciled flowerpot and more.

### PAPER PROJECTS

<http://www.ptialaska.net/~bundyd/paper.html> - This site has all sorts of things to print, fold, color, cut and paste including popup cards, houses, origami, masks, paper dolls and more. There are also recipes for papier mache, play dough, putty, paint, and goo. Things here for parents and children. Really take time to explore the site.

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Here is how you go about it:

- 1) Open your Control Panel
- 2) Open your Network Icon
- 3) Highlight MS CLIENT
- 4) Click the [Remove] button
- 5) Shut down and restart your computer

When I did this and then logged back on to GRC, it didn't know my name, and was not able to access anything on my computer. And all of my ports were reported as closed. Coolness! After reading more, I learned that this was good enough if you didn't have a DSL or Cable Modem connection to the internet and weren't online all the time. Since I have DSL, I needed a firewall. GRC has reviews and links to a couple firewalls including a new free one, AlarmZone. Just my price for now. After installing AlarmZone, I hit GRC's site and the tests indicated that instead of my computer revealing the existence of my ports and that they are closed, it doesn't even respond and is basically invisible to Internet port scanners. Really Cool!

Steve Gibson's web site is a valuable resource for anyone who wants to tighten the security of their Windows PC. The whole time I was on this site, I was given more and more information. There is so much information there, you may spend hours reading and learning.

Harold Johnston  
haroldjon@rcsis.com

*[Harold Johnston is a former GT Net-work Sysop near Sacramento. His BBS was named HAL 1000. For those unfamiliar with Gibson Research Corp., they are the company who gave us SpinRite some years ago, one of the better utilities for use on DOS systems. -Ed.]*

## what's new

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The competition for Charter Pipeline is in DSL, which combines installation costs, phone company service and your ISP charges, usually with a contract for a year's minimum. Charter technicians install the dedicated cable outlet, connect your modem, set it up and configure your software. The cable does not tie up your phone line, so you can talk while computing on-line. If you have more than one computer at your location, you can use an Ethernet hub to take advantage of the digital cable at all computers. There is no dialing, no waiting at peak periods.

If you were at the meeting and noticed that Bob Grover's name came up for the first prize, but that Bob, who is usually on hand for the full meeting, had left early. It is because he has been a Charter Pipeline beta tester and is fully-informed, and quite happy with the service.

Thank, Ralph, for your presentation. (Ralph earlier gave a program on internet security aspects, by the way.) You can get information toll-free from Charter Pipeline at (888) 852-2235. Charter Communications is located at 270 Bridge Street, San Luis Obispo CA 93401.

Thanks also to Nancy Vrooman for cookies, veggies and other goodies. Winners in the drawing were Ray Miklas (a very nice fabric laptop carrying case donated by Kathy and George Campbell), Guy Kuncir (Quarterdeck's TuneUP CD), and Glen Geissinger (Partition Magic 3.0). Remember to check out [www.thegridnet/slobytes/](http://www.thegridnet/slobytes/) and take the time to download the current Acrobat Reader.

Having trouble finding a driver for your computer hardware?...Try Drivers HeadQuarters website <http://www.drivershq.com>

## windows 98 update

Front Range PC User's Group  
k-Byte, March-April, 2000

As any Windows user knows, Microsoft is forever releasing downloads for Windows 98—bug fixes, patches, add-ons, and so on. There are so many that it can be impossible to keep track of what you do and don't have. Fortunately, there's Windows Update to help you make sense of it all. (Actually, you have no choice—Windows Update is the only way to download updates to Windows 98.) This "online extension of Windows 98" will check your system and let you know what you need to install.

Select Start, Windows Update, and complete the steps necessary to go online, if you aren't already. Alternatively, point your Web browser at

<http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com>

Click the Product Updates link, and after a few minutes, you'll see a list of all components not yet installed on your system. (To view installed items as well, click the Show Installed Updates button.)

Look through the list—particularly the Critical updates, which appear first. Select those you'd like to install, click the blue download arrow at the top or bottom of the screen, then click the Start Download button.

## gas or hot air?

Priceline.com has, for months, been signing people up for a free gas card, touting the slogan, "Name your own gas price". Save up to 20 cents a gallon. This card would allow you to "negotiate" a price for up to \$50 worth of gasoline per month. The only problem is that the major oil companies who either own the stations or supply the fuel to them aren't going along with the idea. They say there are better ways to build customer support. What they are really saying is, "if you want gasoline, we, the companies will set the price." I'd call it a monopoly.

## crafts

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### CRAFT TIPS AND PROJECTS

<http://pw1.netcom.com/~cracker4/page2.html> - Thirty-six craft projects mainly for adding scents in a decorative way. Looks as if it would be great for gifts. One interesting project is to transfer photos to fabric.

### ELECTRONIC PROJECTS AND TUTORIALS

<http://www.integritynet.com.au/~purdic> - The basic tutorials begin with radio terminology, basic electronic units, radio basics, then continues with beginners to advanced projects. Even the beginner projects are Greek to my ignorant self, but it could be just what you have in mind.

### THE FREE CRAFTS PROJECTS

**DEPOT** <http://www.angelfire.com/on2/freecraftprojects/> - Over 1000 free craft projects in lots of areas: needlework, country related items, rug designs, brooms, holiday crafts, clowns, jewelry, lamp shades, and much, much more. All links are ranked by user friendly, pictures, and number of projects. It may take some looking to find what you want.

### KID'S SCIENCE PROJECTS

<http://www.halcyon.com/sciclub/kidproj1.html> - Did you miss out as a kid on all those keen experiments and science fairs? Now is your chance to catch up with projects from simple to advanced.

### ENERGY AND SCIENCE PROJECTS

<http://www.energy.ca.gov/education/projects/projects.html/projects.html> - These projects are designed for students, but anyone might enjoy doing them, either alone or with a child.

What can you do with a lemon besides making lemonade? Make your own mini-lightening charge. Make a steam-powered "Rocket Boat". These are just a few of the titillating projects.

### FORMULAS, POTIONS, LOTIONS...

<http://www.makestuff.com/formulas.html> - This is a fabulous site. It gives instructions for making all kinds of personal products, injury remedies, household products, plastic formulas, metal polishing products, and more. BE CAREFUL. Chemicals can be dangerous!

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## beware

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of the screen. Naturally I clicked on ENTER. In 5 seconds or less, 40 or more MSIE explorer windows were opened. Before I could react a rather nasty Java alert messaged popped up. What it said I cannot repeat here, but suffice it to say it indicated that my hard drive was doomed."

The first actions the user took, to attempt to shut down MSIE by activating the Close Program dialog box (CTRL+ALT+DEL), were unsuccessful. Within that, there were many entries for MSIE which he could not terminate as fast as they were being generated. Eventually, his system froze with the blue screened "Invalid Page Fault". When he did reboot, it wouldn't come up even in Safe Mode. In DOS, he could see the Windows directory, but for some reason could not access it. Fearing that some portion of his OS (Win98) had been irreparably damaged, he did an unconditional format (FORMAT C: /U) and reinstall of it.

This user reports that he had his security setting on Medium, as many of us do, and also uses Guard Dog as well. In this case, I doubt that anything could have sorted out legitimate actions from those that were damaging. It's also hard to say if it was bad ActiveX or Java that did the damage. Further, he can't even report back to anyone what the URL for the site was as he lost all of that information in the reformat of his hard drive. (Clever foresight on the part of whoever designed the site!) In hindsight, he realizes he should have just turned his computer off as soon as all of those browser windows started appearing. Without knowing just what damage was caused, it's hard to say if he could have done it fast enough to prevent it. It is clear the site was created only to create mischief! I did not write this article with the intent to spread fear or alarm. Such sites are, I'm sure not very common. It is presented solely in the hope of

preventing anyone else from falling prey to a similar attack. Please use caution when connecting to a website suggested by an unknown source!

### About the Author...

*Ms. Kraus has some 17 years of computer experience, including 13 years as a computer user group officer. Her computer related interests include writing, graphics & page design, and on-line messaging. She is the owner of Design COMP, and works as an Internet Marketing Consultant based in Erie County. E-mail: [ikraus@accsandusky.com](mailto:ikraus@accsandusky.com) <<mailto:ikraus@accsandusky.com>> This article is copyright by Irene M. Kraus, and was first printed in The CEBUG Swatter, November, 1998. Author may be contacted via CEBUG, PO Box 1461, Sandusky, OH 44870-1461; or at e-mail address listed above.*

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## surfing the net on any evening...

with apologies to Robert Frost

### by John Buck

(S)tanford (P)alo (A)lto (U)sers (G)roup  
May, 2000

Whose site this is I do not know.  
It's on another server, though;  
Its owner can see I've stopped here  
To view the work of his ego.  
My little mouse must think it queer  
That some connections are not clear  
Between some servers on the web  
On every evening of the year.  
I give its button just a click  
To reach a website mighty quick.  
The only other sound's a beep  
To question if I meant that click.  
The links are lovely, dark, and deep,  
But I have files I must keep,  
And mail to read before I sleep,  
And mail to read before I sleep.

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## tips

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set to route the sound directly to the speakers. There is an easy way to fix the problem. Double-click on the speaker in the Taskbar. Once the window is open, check to see if the recording and microphone volume controls are there. If not, go to Options and open up Properties to check the microphone and recording monitors. Close that window and mute the recording and microphone volume controls. This should fix the problem. To make sure your computer is still recording from the mic, open up Sound Recorder and do a test record. If no sound was detected, go back to volume control and remove mute from the microphone and recording volume controls and bring the volume for them way down.

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## new to cdrw's by bob ward

Having owned a cdrw for more than a year now, here's a little advice that might save you a pile of unusable disks.

Pay particular attention to the directions when installing the CDRW. If it connects to your IDE port, you may need to make it "master" or "slave". The directions will tell you. Have plenty of free hard disk space. Defrag before using it the first time, then periodically if you burn CD's often. Why? Because a CDRW must have a continuous flow of data. This process can be corrupted if your hard disk is highly fragmented or there is not enough cache space to buffer the data between your CDR and CDRW.

If you purchase CDRW disks, realize they are unformatted. Formatting takes 60 to 90 minutes each and will give you about 560 MEG's free space. A formatted CDRW acts just like a hard disk. I archive files through DOS and copy them directly to the CDRW.

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## cdrw's

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I've heard both sides of the coin when they talk about which CDR's to purchase. Silver for music, gold for data... Personally I haven't found a problem and disregard matching "colors" to media type.

My CDRW is an older HP brand, 4X read, 2X write. Although most of the CDRW's out there now write faster than 2X, I have found through practical experience that the slower you burn a CD the more chance you have at success. For this reason I burn most of my CD's at 1X, especially music CD's.

Note one big difference between making music CD's and data, or program CD's. I make all my music CD's at 1X but do not run my blank CDR's through the testing phase. The reason is if there is a slight anomaly in the CD, chances are you won't hear it on the music CD or it will only be a slight hiccup. I don't need perfection here, and most of my music CD's are converted MP3 files. If it is a data CD though, that glitch would most likely crash the installation of the program you copied to that CD. Therefore, I always test my blank CDR's when copying a data CD. It takes twice as long, but in most instances there can be NO ERRORS, or the copied data CD will not work properly when you use it.

I use CDRW's for archiving information like income tax records, club records, etc. Note, a CDRW can not be read by a regular CDR player on your computer. I create subdirectories on my CDRW's the same way I would on my hard disk. Therefore it becomes little more than a removable 500 MEG hard disk. Listen to these numbers folks! We talk about 500 MEG's like it was nothing. My first 20 MEG hard disk cost \$495! If anyone had told me 15 years ago that you could buy a platter for a buck that would hold 500 megabytes of information, I would have called them crazy! We have come so far in such a short period of time. Ain't technology wonderful!

## Is that boot floppy going to do any good?

by Sherry L. Nisly

Elkhart PCUG, Elkhart, Indiana  
March 2000

Needing to reinstall Windows? Better make sure you have a bootable floppy before you begin with CD-Rom support. What's that you ask? CD-Rom support? Windows 95 takes care of that, doesn't it? Sorry, Windows 95 does NOT put any there. You need to put it there manually. I believe all versions of Windows 98 create a proper boot disk, but I'd check mine out personally ahead of time! Just boot from the floppy, and make sure you can see all your hard drives and your cd-rom (put a cd in and verify it) from the DOS prompt.

If you have drivers with your cd-rom, check the readme file and see if they tell you how to do this for their specific drive and drivers. If you know your specific brand and model of cd-rom, check out their home/support pages and look for help. If you are still nowhere, here are some generic helps which are better than none. First check out this site, it's pretty good instructions, and the info for the autoexec.bat and config.sys are good.

<http://www.skwc.com/Prepare/startdisk.html>

MTMCDAL.SYS is one of three most used generic cd-rom drivers. The other's are OAKTECH.SYS & UniIDE.SYS

Here is the Oakcdrom.sys

<http://www.driverguide.com/uploads/uploads1/1095.html>

Here is the UniIDE.sys

<http://www.windrivers.com/tech/tips/feb98/>

If these drivers don't work, or if you need more help, go to this site, and read his info, and maybe download his files. They contain several alternative cd-rom drivers including the mtmcdai.sys. <http://www.bootdisk.com/bootdir.htm>

Here is another set of examples. Create these with notepad and save to your floppy, after system formatting it or using the Win9x backup disk utility.

**filename: autoexec.bat:**

```
@echo off
prompt $P$G
a:\mscdex.exe /D:mscd000
```

**filename: config.sys:**

```
device=a:\oakcdrom.sys /D:mscd000
```

Next, these pages show you fdisk, partitioning, and formatting.

<http://goforit.unk.edu/hf100/hf100m3.htm>

<http://www.up-link.net/~jim-d/hardwarehelp/hardwarehelp-htm/harddrive.htm>

On the second page, it tells you to system format the c: drive, don't bother doing that, as Win9x will take care of that. Just format it and each additional partition in turn. Then insert your boot disk and reinstall Windows! If you've never done this before, you are going to probably be nervous. Don't be! You are not going to permanently damage your hard disk by formatting or partitioning it. You may have to do it again, you may have to ask for help, but you won't kill it beyond repair. Just remember to back up your data, if you can, beforehand and go to it!

## handy, hidden window 98 utilities

by Greg Lenihan,

Bits of Bytes, May 2000

Newsletter of Pikes Peak Computer Application Society

Just before the new year, when W2K concerns were still being hyped, I decided to make the switch from Win95 to Win98 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Windows 95 still did everything I needed, but I kept reading and hearing about new utilities that were built into the new operating system that looked like good troubleshooting aids. And being the nice guy that I am, I thought I'd share some of the ones I found. Note that each has a command that can be typed into the Start!Run box.

### System Information

**Command:** msinfo32.exe

You can get there the long way by going to Start/Programs/Accessories/System Tools/System Information. What you get is information about the hardware and resources used, software components installed as part of Windows, and software currently loaded and running (called the Software Environment). To view any of these areas, click on a plus sign next to the heading shown in outline form. If you look under the Tools menu, you can launch other Win98 utilities, such as the System Configuration Utility, System File Checker, Registry Checker, and Dr. Watson. Want to know how long your system has been running since turned on? Look for the Uptime value in the right panel.

### System Configuration Utility

**Command:** msconfig.exe

This is a handy utility used to modify many of the setting for Win98. Individual lines can be turned on or off in your config.sys, autoexec.bat, system.ini, or win.ini files. You can use it to turn off the annoying Scandisk function if you are forced to shut off your system, and can turn off any program starting at boot up. The command msconfig.exe is found in the c:\Windows\system directory where

you can create an icon for it on your desktop. It's a very handy tool for troubleshooting startup problems.

### System File Checker

**Command:** sfc.exe

The System File Checker verifies the integrity of your system files in Win98. Running this file will determine if any of your system files have been replaced or corrupted. It will then prompt you to replace them from your install CD. A nice feature of the utility is by running it after installing new applications, you can find out what system files that application has installed or changed.

### Version Conflict Manager

**Command:** vcmui.exe

This utility enables you to revert to newer versions of certain files that are replaced when you install or reinstall Win98. An install of Win98 will overwrite DLLs and other files even if they were newer than those installed by Windows. This utility will let you restore those newer files. Launching the Version Conflict Manager will display a list of possibly troublesome files that you may then fix with the click of a button.

### Dr. Watson

**Command:** drwatson.exe

This tool can provide clues to software-related problems. Typing drwatson into the Run command box won't launch to a main screen or dialog box like the other utilities. Instead an icon will appear in your system tray. Right-clicking on it will display the user interface. To be effective in troubleshooting, Dr. Watson should be running in the background when you are testing problems. That way you can look at log files generated and maybe get some meaningful error messages about what occurred to your system. This may mean loading it at startup so it can try to interpret why a problem or a crash occurred.

### Hardware Diagnostics Tool

**Command:** hwinfo.exe /ui

The Hardware Diagnostic Tool provides the same information as the

Microsoft System Information Tool, except it is color coded to display problem areas and potential problems. Bright red displays problems and blue is for potential problems. Open the Run box in the start menu and type it in with the /ui switch. It will not run without the switch.

### Automatic Skip Driver Agent

**Command:** asd.exe

When a software driver prevents the system from booting properly, this tool can help determine which driver is having problems, and how to fix it. Make sure two consecutive restarts were attempted whereby the same driver doesn't load. After typing in the command, a listing of all drivers not loaded should appear along with advice on what to do.

### Link Check Wizard

**Command:** chklnks.exe

This wizard is found on the Windows98 install CD in the directory \Tools\Reskit\Desktop. It scans all of the shortcut files on your system, and checks to see if the link points to an existing application or document. If the associated application or document is not found, it lists that file as a dead link, giving you the option to remove it. Copy Chklnks.exe to your Windows directory and create an icon on your desktop to use it.

### IP Configuration Tool

**Command:** winipcfg.exe

This tool provides the current information about your IP address assigned when you connect to your ISP. It includes your subnet mask and the gateway your ISP is using. This information can be helpful in connecting your system to other computers on the Internet. IP Config is found in your c:\Windows directory.

**If you have any computer items to sell or trade, members can list them in the newsletter for free.**



## crafts

continued from page 4

### SOCK MONKEY

<http://www.home.inreach.com/marthac/craft1.html> - Toddlers love sock monkeys. Make one for a child you know.

### WOODTURNING UNLIMITED

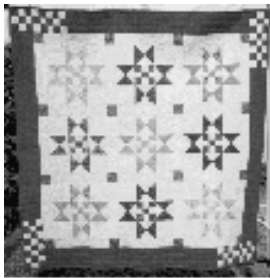
<http://www.shopsmith.com/cshowgrp-6000.htm> - How about wood turning articles, projects and tips. Contains directions for making chess pieces, a Concord table, Christmas tree ornaments, and more.

### THE STEVENSON PROJECTS

<http://www.stevproj.com/> - If you are interested in building a small boat this is the place to begin. See photos of what others have built. Share in discussions. Get building tips and information. Download scale model plans. Look at a project cam and more.

### QUILTING

<http://quilting.about.com/hobbies/quilting/msubbegin.html> - This site is for beginning quilters - easy blocks, tips, advice, piecing, and more.



## window's tips

The following tips are provided by CNET Help.com

### Eliminate Screen Flickers

Sometimes a flicker on your screen can be associated with the refresh rate set for your monitor. To adjust your monitor for an optimal refresh rate, go to the Control Panel and double-click on the Display icon. From the display window, click on the Settings tab. Click on the button labeled Advanced Properties. Then click on the Adapter tab to see the refresh rate. Set the refresh rate to Optimal and that should reduce the frequency of yourscreen's flickering.

## MP3newswire

Just what's up with the MP3 universe these days? Are they still legal? Will you be sued for posting an MP3 to the Web? Has the technology brought the recording industry to its knees yet, as its hyperventilated lobbyists insist it will do?

The Web site MP3newswire.net (<http://www.mp3newswire.net>) can help you keep up with the political and legal mess dredged up by MP3 technology. For instance, they report that House Republicans are getting into the act. The House Small Business Committee plans hearings on MP3 issues on May 24, 2000. As some point out, MP3 technology is a boon for small record companies because it lets them promote their products more cheaply, thus "leveling the playing field."

Competition is supposed to be good, remember? Sounds like the big companies and artists driving the anti-MP3 crusade are afraid of the competition, or they're too tired and out of touch to compete.

- Dennis Ryan

Taken from EMazing MP3  
Tip of the Day May, 16, 2000  
[www.emazing.com](http://www.emazing.com)

## Get Your Desktop to Refresh and Load Faster

When your desktop displays many icons in full color, it often takes longer to refresh and reload. To turn up the speed, click on the Display icon in the Control Panel. Click on the Effects tab and look for the box that says "Show icons using all possible colors." If you uncheck the box, you can often speed up the computer.

### Diagnose System Problems

If you're getting a lot of system errors, sometimes the Windows program Dr. Watson can figure out what ails your computer. It will diagnose problems, intercept errors from your software, and prescribe a course of action. Keep in mind that Dr. Watson does not load by default. To run Dr. Watson, you must go to your Windows System folder and open the Dr. Watson (drwatson.exe) program. It's a good idea to have Dr. Watson load on start-up; to do this, drag the program or a shortcut to your Startup folder.

### Tweak Your Graphic Settings to Prevent Freezes

When a system freezes frequently, the possible reasons for the problem are infinite. Often, it's a problem with the graphics card. A temporary fix is to disable hardware acceleration for the graphics. This slows down the computer, but it can save your sanity until you get it fixed. To disable the acceleration, right-click on My Computer and then click on Properties. Once the window opens, click on the Performance tab. Then click on the Graphics button to change the acceleration. You can set it to "None" for more severe problems. Restart your computer to see if this fixes the problem.

### Eliminate Microphone Feedback

If you're hearing a lot of microphone feedback, your microphone is probably

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## club information

**HARD COPY** is a monthly publication of SLO BYTES PC User's Group located in San Luis Obispo, California. Information in this Newsletter is derived from both our own membership and other PC User Group Newsletters. The purpose of this publication is to inform our members of meetings and provide information related to the use of IBM PC's and compatible computers.

**Membership:** Dues are \$25 per year. Full membership entitles you to our monthly newsletter, software drawings at the end of the meetings and voting privileges.

**Article Submission:** Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month. Articles should be provided in ASCII format without any type of formatting from your wordprocessor including tabs, indents, extra spaces, or highlighting. We prefer articles on disk but will accept hardcopies if necessary.

**Disclaimer:** Neither SLO BYTES PC User's Group, its officers, editors, or contributors to this newsletter assume liability for damages arising out of this publication of any article, including but not limited to the listing of programming code, batch files and other helpful hints.

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Direct all correspondence and newsletter submissions to:

**BOB WARD, SECRETARY**  
2100 Andre Ave.,  
Los Osos, CA. 93402  
(805) 756-2164



## meeting times

GENERAL MEETINGS are held the 1st Sunday of each month. Our meeting location is the San Luis Obispo I.O.O.F. Hall on Dana Street.

The general meeting starts promptly at 2:30 p.m.

Special Interest Groups (SIGS) meet at 1:00 p.m.–2:15 p.m.

## slobytes website

[WWW.THEGRID.NET/SLOBYTES/](http://WWW.THEGRID.NET/SLOBYTES/)

## slobytes officers

R. Miklas (Pres) [rmiklas@bigfoot.com](mailto:rmiklas@bigfoot.com)  
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M. Baxendale (Tres) [marvin@surfari.net](mailto:marvin@surfari.net)  
B. Ward, editor

### for sale

Do YOU have some computer-related item you would like listed in this space? Contact Bob Ward, Editor at 756-2164.

## treasurer's report



february 15, 2000

### OPERATING FUND

Beginning Balance	\$2,025.50
Income	
Membership Dues	225.00
Refreshments	27.05
Expenses	
Room Rent	75.00
NL Xerox	43.44
Refreshments	15.72
New Balance	<u>\$2,143.39</u>

### EQUIPMENT FUND

Beginning Balance	\$53.06
New Balance	<u>\$53.06</u>



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Next Meeting  
Sunday  
June 4th  
1:00pm  
Early SIG's  
2:30pm  
Intel vs AMD



SLO Bytes PC User's Group  
c/o Marvin Baxendale  
543 Gularde Road  
Arroyo Grande, CA. 93420