

SLO Bytes HardCopy

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For (.pdf) version, see: <http://www.slobytes.org/newsletter/nl104.pdf>

President's Message

Bill Avery is taking some time off from his monthly *SLO Bytes Meeting Review* column so I'll attempt to fill the gap. Thank you Bill for all the hard work!

The meeting started as usual with Alan Raul's general interest program in the main hall and Bill Avery's windows SIG in the dining room. Our usual swap meet and munchies session was then followed by three concurrent "half hour" SIG's. In the Ladies' Lounge Alan Raul and Ben Hansen expounded on the various aspects of the Linux O/S using their respective lap tops. Bill Avery held forth on the Eudora e-mail client in the dining room. And in the main hall, Dave McLaughlin demonstrated his expertise in Adobe Photoshop Album 2. I believe that we all were impressed with what is possible when it comes to organizing and displaying digital picture files, using that fine program.

I walked around to each SIG's session and it looked to me that all the folks were having a good and informative time. Let us know if you would like to have another, similar meeting, covering various other aspects of computing.

The Christmas give-away raffle went very well this year (as it does each year). I believe that (with a few exceptions) most folks received a decent gift, an item which will be put to a good use.

At our 4 Jan 2004 meeting:

At 1 PM Alan will moderate a computer question/answer session.

At 2:30 PM, our featured speaker will be Rich Blumenthal of Voice Factor, a Florida-based value added re-seller representing Dragon Naturally Speaking Preferred Version 7 speech-recognition software.

The Dragon NaturallySpeaking 7 family of products provide a fast, easy and accurate way to turn speech into text. Dragon is compatible with virtually all Windows programs. Users can dictate into virtually any windows-based application at speeds up to 160 words per minute while maintaining high levels of accuracy. Version 7, introduced in March of this year, requires five minutes of training, and offers accuracies in the high 90% range. In addition to creating text through dictation, the software supports macros that can be used to quickly pull up boilerplate text and graphics. Dragon can be used to prepare e-mail, spreadsheets and graphs on Excel, navigating the Internet hands free, and much more. NaturallySpeaking is further described at <http://www.voicefactor.com/features.html> and <http://www.scansoft.com/naturallyspeaking/>.

Rich has been the president of the Saddleback Valley IBM PC User Group in Mission Viejo for five years. In his capacity as the local Voice Factor representative in Southern California, Rich will be offering the product for sale at a substantial user group discount. He will also provide upgrade discounts to qualifying owners of earlier versions who bring in the CD of their product.

Our speaker for the 1 February SLO Bytes meeting will be announced at a later date. Please check our website <http://www.slobytes.org> for the info. It will be posted there when a program is set up.

Check out the **money saving offer that KCBXnet** (aka Slonet) is extending to all current and future members of SLO Bytes: <http://www.slobytes.org>

BTW, KCBXnet has added an accelerated dial-up access for their subscribers. Basically, it permits faster page loading while surfing on the Web. Check it out at: <http://kcbx.net/index.php>

Continue to bring any **used ink-jet printer or toner cartridges** to our meeting and take advantage of the four **learning CDs**: "Learn Windows XP, Excel, Word & Power Point" available for our members to check out (at Marvin's table)

--Ray Miklas

Guest Columnists

More free or inexpensive software and utilities by Ira Wilsker.

[See last paragraph for more on the author. Your Editor found this article by clicking on "PCLIFELINE" on the home page of the Long Island PCUG.]

Last week I discussed several free, excellent programs and utilities available for download or online use. Several of you have e-mailed me asking for more computing "freebies."

Many of us "upload" (send programs and files to a server), and "download" (receive files from a server). The "file transfer utility" (FTP) integral with Internet Explorer and Netscape are rather weak, and are not full-featured. The FTP software built into the popular Opera browser is superior to that in Netscape and Internet Explorer, but still not very powerful. What many of us need is an excellent quality "free for personal use" FTP utility, and there are several available. According to TUCOWS and most other download services, the single most popular download utility is **WS_FTP LE**. Available for download at <http://www.ipswitch.com/downloads/> WS_FTP LE, the LE "Limited Edition" (also referred to as "Lite Edition") is a fairly full-featured product more than capable of handling routine file transfer tasks for non-commercial home users, government employees (federal, state, local, and military), and educational use. For those not qualified for the free version, there is a commercial version available, WS_FTP PRO. While the professional version has more bells and whistles, and can encrypt and decrypt files on the fly, the free LE version is more than capable for those eligible to use it. Both versions are intuitive, requiring little familiarization or training, and include a library of download sites available as software resources.

Many home and small business users need a word processor, spreadsheet and comprehensive office suite, but cannot afford the pricey market leader, Microsoft Office (MS Word, Excel, etc.). There was a need for an office suite offering the capability to read and write Office files, but without the high price of the Microsoft Office products. A freeware option, **EasyOffice** is available for download at <http://www.e-press.com/> and most other major download sites. A huge download, about 76 megs in size, might be too large to download on many dial-up connections, but offers little problem when downloaded on a broadband connection. In addition to a Microsoft-compatible word processor and spreadsheet, EasyOffice also includes a sophisticated presentation program (a competitor to Microsoft's PowerPoint), clipart, a personal contact manager, and a ZIP utility to compress and expand compressed files. For those needing a nominally priced enhanced version that includes the ability to write and save files in the popular and universal PDF format, edit images, utilizes voice recognition, FAX documents, as well as other enhancements, a premium version is

available. **Single copies of the premium version are only \$39**, or about 1/10 the price of its major competitor. Organizations requiring multiple copies of the premium version of EasyOffice can get a **site license for as little as \$10 a copy**, a tiny percentage of the price of Microsoft's product. In order to improve the appeal of the Premium version, dictionaries are included in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, and Swedish, as well as legal and medical dictionaries. EasyOffice will run on almost any Windows machine from 95B to XP. Despite its very low cost, published reviews praise EasyOffice, and strongly recommend it for most users.

For those interested in office suites, another popular free program, **OpenOffice** is available for free download from <http://www.openoffice.org/> While not quite as popular as EasyOffice, and lacking many of its "bells and whistles," this free program is available for Windows, Mac, and Linux platforms, as well as in many languages. According to the openoffice.org Web site, about 75,000 copies of Open Office are downloaded each week.

Many readers like doing their own drafting and drawing, but find the market leading commercial software, such as AutoCAD, prohibitively expensive. For these individuals a free competitor is available, **freeCAD**, found at <http://www.askoh.com/>. With versions available for Windows, Mac, Linux and UNIX, anyone interested in learning or using CAD may find this free software useful. This is not a crippled and weak program. It is a full-featured program capable of drawing and analyzing 3-D motion, geometry, mechanisms, linkages and other physical properties. This 4.6-megabyte program may be of interest to you. Several of the popular software sites rank freeCAD as the most popular CAD program available for free download.

Many people receive files compressed in one of the popular compression formats, such as ZIP, RAR, or CAB, or other popular formats. Many people also need to compress files, making them smaller and easier to send as e-mail attachments, or uploading to servers. Unless the user has a compression utility installed, these files cannot be expanded or compressed. While there are popular commercial utilities, such as the extremely popular **\$29 WinZip**, available at <http://www.winzip.com/>, there are also several free competitors available which somewhat match WinZip's legendary power, features, and ease of use. Some of these top-rated and free compression utilities are **ZipGenius** (from Italy, <http://www.zipgenius.it/>), **BigSpeed Zipper** (<http://bigspeed.net/>), **CoffeeCup Free Zip Wizard** (<http://www.coffeecup.com/>) and many others. Most of the large download resources have entire directories of compression utilities, many of which are free. There is absolutely no reason not to have at least one quality compression utility installed.

There are a lot of high quality and free or low cost software programs available. Watch this column for more.

Listen to my weekly radio shows on NEWSTALK AM560 KLVI (Texas) or at <http://klvi.com/main.html>; "The Computer Information Hour" Tuesdays 6-7pm CST and "My Computer Show" Saturdays, now 1-4pm CST. Visit <http://www.mycomputershow.com/>

Ira Wilsker is the Director of the Management Development Program at Lamar Institute of Technology, in Beaumont, TX. He also hosts a twice weekly radio talk show on computer topics on KLVI, and writes a weekly technology column for the Examiner newspaper. Ira is also a police officer who specializes on cybercrime, and has lectured internationally in computer crime and security. Ira is a graduate of the Jefferson County (TX) Sheriff's Academy, and has an MBA from the University of Maryland.

Monthly Questions And Answers For Windows XP by Todd Ros
Houston Area League of PC Users

Since I installed Windows XP, I seem to be getting windows from the Internet that are opening with advertising on them. Does Windows XP have something in it to stop these advertising windows?

No. These pop up windows with advertising on them are simply called "Pop Up Windows". There currently is no true "Pop Up Window" stopper in Windows XP. There will probably be a "Pop Up Window" stopper along with an Antivirus program built into the next version of Windows called Longhorn. Until the next version is released, there are other options.

The current Microsoft IE Browser does not have a "Pop Up Window" stopper. The free Netscape 7.1+ Browser has a pop-up windows stopper built into it as well as a spam filter. If you want to use the Microsoft IE Browser, you can install the add-on Google (<http://www.google.com/>) toolbar that includes a "Pop Up Windows" stopper program for free.

Finally, you can download or purchase a "Pop Up Window" stopper program as an add-on to the IE Browser. There are many types of these programs; one of my favorites is "Smart Pop Up killer", <http://download.com.com/3000-2144-10222419.html?tag=lst-0-7> because it is free. Thanks for the question. PopUp Windows can be a real PAIN!

My son came over and installed some software (I don't know what) on my PC and now it seems slower. Two of the software programs load when I start my PC. One has a picture of a K and the other has a picture of a Bear. Could this be slowing up my PC?

Yes! It probably is spyware. Spyware is software that tracks your Internet patterns and reports it back to a third party. Let me suggest that you go to the 'Net (maybe <http://www.google.com/>) and type in "teddy bear icon". I believe that you will find the information that you are looking for. As for spyware, download an anti-spyware program as discussed in the previous question. Spybot is a good one that is free. Ad-aware is also free and is good.

I was wondering if you could tell me how to remove a new copy of Windows XP off a new computer that I just built after the activation time has expired. I installed Windows XP on another computer and the product key has been used too many times. I want to take Windows XP off and install Windows 2000. Do I need to buy a new hard drive? Please let me know. Thanks.

No new hard drive! I assume that Windows XP is the only Operating System that has been installed on the PC. If Windows 2000 was on it before installing Windows XP, then just uninstall Windows XP from "Add or Remove Programs" in the "Control Panel" ("Start", "Control Panel").

A retail copy of Windows 2000 or Windows XP is only licensed to be installed on one PC. Installing a licensed copy on more than one PC usually carries a \$10,000 fine and possible jail time.

When you put the Windows 2000 CD in your PC and boot off of it, you get prompted to repair, reinstall or format & install. The wording might be slightly different. Choose the format and install. This will erase the copy of Windows XP.

You can also manually erase the HD and then do a reinstall by using the FDISK & FORMAT utility on the CD or on a DOS disk. You can also create a boot disk with these utilities for free from <http://www.bootdisk.com/>. You do not need to buy a new HD. You will, however, lose all of your data on the hard drive. Good luck and don't forget to have fun.

Editor's note:

If you have any comments, suggestions, wants, don't wants, beefs and/or ????, please e-mail me at junate@charter.net.

Treasurer's Report

Income

Membership Dues	\$200.00
Refreshments	\$30.29

Expenses

Rent	\$75.00
Drawing Prizes	\$431.82
Refreshments	\$22.50
APCUG Membership Dues	\$50.00
Secretary of State filing fee	\$20.00

Checking Account Balance	\$3,068.01
Savings Account Balance	\$797.79

November 15, 2003 - December 15, 2003

Club Information and Meeting Times

SLO Bytes, a PC Users Group dedicated to educate its members in the use of personal computers, digital devices and software, meets on the first Sunday of each month at the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Hall at 520 Dana Street, San Luis Obispo. All meetings are open to the public at no cost. Special interest groups meet from 1 to 2:00 PM and guest speaker presentations begin at 2:30 PM. Contact Guy Kuncir (489-1395, gkuncir@charter.net) or visit www.slobytes.org for additional information about SLO Bytes and the scheduled presentation.

HardCopy is a monthly publication of SLO Bytes PC Users' 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 PCs and various Operating Systems.

Membership: Dues are \$25 per year. Full membership entitles you to our monthly newsletter via e-mail, technical assistance, raffle gift drawing at the end of the meetings, a voice in the affairs of the club, and comradeships.

Article Submission: Deadline for submission of articles is the 20th of each month. Articles should be E-mailed to the editor at junate@charter.net.

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listing of programming code, batch files and other helpful hints. Articles from this newsletter may be reprinted by other user groups if credit is given to both the author and newsletter from which it was taken. Reproduction of articles with a specific Copyright notice is prohibited without prior permission from the original author.

Outside Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

HTML/Internet SIG normally meets at 6:30 PM on the Monday following our Sunday General Meeting at Ralph Sutter's home in Arroyo Grande. Call Ralph at (805) 489-8678 for directions

Linux SIG normally meets on Thursday at 6:30 PM (following our Sunday's General Meeting) at KCBX.net [a.k.a. SLONET] Training Center, 4100 Vachell Lane, SLO.

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Bill Palmerston (Set-up/Clean-up)

SLO Bytes Website www.slobytes.org