

SLO Bytes HardCopy

A publication of the San Luis Obispo PC Users Group

Vol. 22 No. 4

April 2006

Alan's March 5th, 2006 General Windows SIG by Alan Raul

Data Recovery by Drive Savers

<http://www.drivesavers.com/>

800-440-1904

DriveSavers has specialized in recovering lost data since 1985. All hard disc drive manufacturers authorize and recommend DriveSavers to open drives without voiding their warranty. DriveSavers uses a "class 100 cleanroom" which maintains less than one hundred particles larger than 0.5 microns in each cubic foot of air space!

If you use code #**DS16518** and mention my name, Alan Raul, you will receive the following benefits:

- 10% discount on their services
- No up-front charges to you
- No charge for return shipping, if data is not recoverable
- No "attempt fee" if data is not recoverable (regularly \$200.00)

Solid State Hard Disk Drive

<http://www.ddrdrive.com/>

Sony VRD-MC1 and **Sony VRD-VC20** are multi-function DVD recorders that can be used stand-alone or with a computer. With these devices you can easily transfer your old VHS tapes to DVD's.

<http://www.sonyburners.com/dvdirect/>

Media Player Classic 6.4.8.8

http://www.free-codecs.com/download/Media_Player_Classic.htm

Windows requires a codec (compressor-decompressor) to play video files from a DVD. This media player includes the required codec.

Steganos LockNote - will change the way you work with confidential notes. Application and document in one: the mechanism to encrypt and decrypt a note is part of it. Secure, simple, independent. No installation required.

<http://locknote.steganos.com/>

March 5th, 2006 Main Meeting Review by Bill Avery

We enjoyed the visit to our Main Meeting of **Pat Keith, and his brother Kenny Keith, from Computer Works, 207 W. Main St., Santa Maria, CA.** They were here previously in October, 2004, which is reviewed in HardCopy on-line at: <http://www.slobytes.org/newsletter/nl1104.pdf> .

Their presentation was a friendly review of their latest Windows PC Utility CD ROM, which they gave out for no charge to all who attended. We even had to make a few copies for the unlucky members, like me, who were last in line! Anyway, I noted that some programs were new, such as Crazy Browser and PC Opus, while others were the latest updates for our favorite programs, such as Adobe Reader 6.0, Opera and Mozilla Firefox, Diskkeeper 8.0, Winzip, Open Office, and Microsoft XP-SP2, for starters.

Pat commented on each program, and gave us plenty of stories and tips from his many years of PC troubleshooting experiences. We talked about security issues, such as he mentions in the "Read Me First" file on the CD. There he notes the importance of weekly updates to Windows, and current virus definitions for your anti-virus programs. They recommend AVG, which is free and also one of our club's favorite programs. Pat says: "EVERYBODY Download & UPDATE Your Virus Definitions / Patterns every day!!!"

The problem with being on the Internet is that there are no rules to protect us from all the intruders who can try to harm our computers, and/or offend us, as we try to use this amazing tool. The ComputerWorks CD contains current versions of their favorite anti Spyware programs: AdAware, Spybot, and Spysweeper. They like to run all 3 at once to cover different types of problem areas. "Spyware is one of the primary causes for slow and poor system performance," Pat wrote in his "Read Me First" article.

Firewall protection is available in XP, or through application programs such as ZoneAlarm, to keep out hackers and viruses such as "Lovesan and MSBlast, which used the RPC (Remote Procedure Call) in windows to automatically start a 60 sec. countdown to shutdown your computer. RPC is a tool to allow Technicians to control your computer remotely without you having to bring in your system for minor problems." RPC is an example of a good tool which can help, as well as, harm you if used wrongly. Older computers, such as those on a dial-up connection, can still benefit from a firewall as a basic Internet defense tool.

If you like to make your computer behave just right, then TweakUI will help do that, and it is on the CD also, so you do not have to download it from Microsoft. This is the main advantage of the Keith's Utility disk, as a quick resource for installing programs you may have delayed trying for lack of resources to download them. Their free disk is available at their ComputerWorks store in Santa Maria, and they encouraged us to call them for good deals and technical support. They can be reached by phone at (805) 347-1076, or by fax, (805) 347-0018, or by email, boolseye@gte.net.

Peter Stonehewer's Featured Speaker Programming Schedule

The featured speaker at the April 2nd SLO Bytes meeting will be **Ron Kindig** a retired Media Specialist for Los Angeles City Schools. Ron currently volunteers as a Docent for San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden where he creates photos, signs and plant information for the enjoyment and guidance of the visitors. Ron also gives informative tours of the Garden to the public.

Using a database is probably the most under-used and misunderstood application in all the office-type suites, and as such is ignored by most home computer users. This presentation will enlighten and encourage us to start using this wonderful tool to organize our hobbies, pastimes and everyday life. Ron's demonstration will utilize FileMaker Pro, a cross-platform application for Macs and PCs.

Ron will demonstrate the flexibility of using a single database for a variety of purposes; showing us the stages he went through learning how to organize plant information, including digital photos, prepare Garden signs, plant information sheets, and illustrated plant booklets for the public. Ron will be describing the digital cameras, lenses and techniques he used to obtain beautiful pictures of plants and flowers. Currently Ron Kindig has used this database for over twenty purposes. Handouts will be available for all attendees. Plan now to attend this meeting, it has something for everyone.

Two SIGs will be offered prior to the main presentation

From 1:00 to 2:15 P.M. Alan Raul will moderate his Q & A session and appraise recent software, websites and hardware he's found this month while browsing cyber-space.

Additionally, **Bill Avery** will conduct a second special interest group in the same time slot, answering questions and giving tips on Windows operating systems.

Joining us at our May 7th Meeting will be our popular Trainer, Lauri Sowa of Wise Owl Opportunities. Lauri and her husband Rick offer a full range of computer and accounting services throughout the Central Coast.

Lauri will speak on using the full power of a **Windows Excel** spreadsheet to get the most out of your address list. Apart from a review of the basics, Lauri will talk about sorting by various fields, such as zip codes or street address, and using filters and pivot tables to find what city members live in. She will also talk about printing selected labels and a host of other tips and tricks not only for a membership/address list, but any spreadsheet project.

As always, Lauri encourages you to write her at lauri@wiseowlops.com with any questions prior to class and she will ensure they're included in her presentation.

Digital Photography SIG Review by Kaye Raul

The Digital Photography SIG met March 20 at the home of Don Jones with thirteen attending. Kaye Raul showed several pictures she had enhanced using PhotoShop Elements 4 clone stamp, magnetic lasso and layer tools.

Don demonstrated tools for fixing "less than great" photos by lightening shadows and bringing out skin tones. The "multiply blending" mode brought out lost highlights of an older faded photo while "screen" mode works for "too dark" photos. "Multiply" is especially good in cases of "flat lighting". These modes are usually, if not always, better than darken and lighten choices next to them in the selection dialog box. He then walked us through 'photo merge' using scenic photos using a set of photos where automatic mode scrambled the order and gave a poor result.

Ralph Sutter shared a great site with practical and concise tips – "One Minute Tip – Podcasted Technology Tips For Busy People"
<http://www.Oneminutetip.com/>

Our next meeting will be April 17. A demonstration of the Wacom Tablet used with PhotoShop, PhotoShop Elements and numerous other application programs is scheduled. The presenter is a graphics artist who uses the Tablet in her work.

Editor's note: Don Jones elaborates on Wacom Tablet:

"A Wacom is a USB-connected tablet used with two special mouse-like tools. The first looks and feels like an ordinary mouse with a couple enhancements. The second is a pen-shaped mouse device that fits the hand like a pen, brush or pencil and has a button programmable for two functions, one most likely "double-click". The pen gives much better control for delicate operations like difficult selections, and it is pressure sensitive. If you exert heavier pressure, the line gets heavier and wider, and the opposite end is an instant eraser. Most graphics artists use this device routinely. They range in price from around \$100 to more than \$1000, and bluetooth versions are available. Driver software is included for most major photo editors including PhotoShop Elements that will be used in the demonstration."

President's Message

At our 2 April, 2006 meeting:

At 1 PM, Alan will be moderating the Question and Answer session.

At 2:30 PM, Our speaker **Ron Kindig** will give his presentation.

Go to <http://www.slobytes.org/newsletter/push/0406/index.html> to see the 16 great **PUSH** and **PUSH Industry Articles for April 2006**. They came to me from **Judy Taylour of APCUG**, Editorial PUSH Committee Chair. Our Webmaster, Ralph Sutter uploaded these articles to our website.

Take advantage of the four **learning CD's** "Learn Windows XP, Excel, Word & Power Point" available for our members to check out (at the Treasurer's table)

We also have **Adobe PhotoShop 7, learning CD's** to check out (at the Treasurer's table). These 5 CD's cover, in depth, the various program features in lesson format.

Continue to bring any **used ink-jet printer or toner cartridges** to our meeting. We collect them (at the Treasurer's table) and turn them over to "Make A-Wish Foundation" who generate much needed funds for their organization by refurbishing and selling them.

--Ray Miklas

Treasurer's Report

Feb 24, 2006 Mar 24, 2006

Income

New members	\$25.00
Renewing members	175.00
Refreshments	44.21

Expenses

Hall rent	75.00
Yr rental/sound system	120.00
Insurance Premium	191.00

Bank accounts @ 2/28/06

Saving Acct Balance	3,201.19
Checking Acct Balance	2,762.65
Interest - year to date	9.41

New members one: Nancy Winkenbach

Renewing members: seven

Robert Mires, Treasurer

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 Peter Stonehewer (929-1012, stonepet@kcbx.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 (rmiklas@bigfoot.com).

Disclaimer: Neither SLO Bytes PC Users' 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. 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's General Meeting) at Ralph Sutter's home in Arroyo Grande. Call Ralph at 489-8678 for directions.

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

Photography SIG normally meets at 7 PM on a third Monday of each month at Don Jones's home in Pismo Beach. Call Don at 773-5526 for directions.

SLO Bytes Officers/Volunteers

Ray Miklas (President, HardCopy Editor) rmiklas@bigfoot.com

Peter Stonehewer (V.P./Programs/Publicity/Refreshments) stonepet@slonet.org

Robert Mires (Treasurer/Membership/Publishing) rmires@sbcglobal.net

Ralph Sutter (Secretary/Webmaster/HTML-Internet SIG) rsutter@cuesta.edu
Bill Avery (Contributing Columnist/Win95/98/XP SIG) wavery@slonet.org
Alan Raul (General SIG/Linux SIG)
Don Jones (Photography SIG)
Lou Pera (Contributing Columnist/Photo SIG)
Nancy Vrooman (Refreshments)
Ken Stilts (Set-up/Clean-up)
Cliff Buttschardt (Set-up/Clean-up)
John Enos (Set-up/Clean-up)
Bill Palmerston (Set-up/Clean-up)

SLO Bytes Website <http://www.slobytes.org>