

HARDCOPY

WWW.SLOBYTES.ORG

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Early SIG

by Alan Raul

Our first SIG went on a Internet surfing expedition and found a some new sites.

Google, probably the best search engine on the Internet has launched a new (still in beta) search engine for images. Just type in a few words and it will scan its indexed database of 150 million images from all over the web. It's really rather good, it's fast and accurate. For parents there's even a mature content filter. Some of our test search entries included, Amazon parrots, Linus Torvalds (the creator of Linux), Bill Gates, Alan Raul, Bob Ward and Ray Miklas. Not surprising enough our club members did not yield any relative results. Also shown was how to enter stock symbols and phone numbers into Google to yield results.

Other web sites that we came upon can be found at <http://www.thegrid.net/slobytes/alanhot.htm>

Guy Kuncir asked about the new image manipulation program called Adobe Photoshop Elements. Compared to the \$609.00 full Adobe Photoshop 6.01 version this stripped down version is priced at \$99.95. <http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopel/main.html>
Also mentioned was Jasc Paint Shop Pro 7.2, a comparable product in both price and features. <http://www.jasc.com>

Cranking out a newsletter in 10 easy steps

by Bob Ward, SLO Bytes PCUG

So, how does one write about themselves? Last month, your's truly was the guest speaker. I took an hour or so to show how the newsletter is put together from beginning to end. So if you remember anything about the demonstration, you'll notice I'm on step one right now, assembling everything together. Putting a newsletter together is like finishing a jigsaw puzzle. Until you have all the parts, you can't start assembling everything. Then comes the fun of making sure all the columns are filled, the white space is balanced, and it looks as professional as an amateur can do it. We take care

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CLUB CALENDAR

August 5th

1 pm

Early SIG's.

Main hall, Alan Raul
Internet sites and Windows
Dining ares, Jim Kiraly
Windows Q&A

2:30 pm

Dr. Joe Grimes will provide an overview of Computer Education at Cal Poly and Cal Poly's relationship with industry in the "Learning by Doing" model.

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E-Bay? I Love It!

by **Becky White**

Pasadena IBM Users Group

From the Special 2001 issue of the I/O Port Newsletter

I have been using ebay to sell our antiques for about a month now. And I LOVE IT!

With ebay, you are using them as a vehicle to sell or buy stuff, but the deals are worked out between the seller and the buyer directly. Ebay charges a very moderate listing fee for each item listed and a moderate percentage of the item sold, ONLY IF IT SELLS. If an item does not sell, you are only responsible for the listing fee, which is from \$0.25 to \$2.00, based on your starting value or your reserve price.

Did Your Item Sell Quickly?

Ebay asks you to set a specified period of time for each item listed.

The choices are 3 days, 5 days, or 7 days. You may be able to ask for a few more days, but most people go with the 3, 5, or 7-day scenario. So, if you get any bids, items will sell as quickly as you choose.

Did it Sell for the Amount Asked?

When listing an item, you (the seller) defines the opening bid required, so that no one can bid below your requested opening price. In addition, there is an option to set a "reserve" price for each item, which sets a minimum bid that you are willing to accept. Unless an item is especially valuable, most people do not use the reserve option. For some reason, it turns people off!?

Do You Get Paid Right Away?

Since ebay is only a conduit, the money

changes hands directly between the seller and the buyer: When an auction closes, the buyer and seller have three days to Email each other: Email addresses are supplied by ebay. The seller tells the buyer how much shipping and insurance will be and what the total due is. In most transactions, the buyer pays shipping and insurance up front.

When the seller receives the check, then the item can be shipped, however, most sellers wait 10 days or so until the checks clear the bank. A seller can request specific types of payments, like only money orders (safe to ship next day) or visa or checks or COD or whatever works for the seller. The seller then packs and ships the item.

Any Hassles...Or was it Fun?

I have had a blast selling and buying stuff this way! I have made many Email friends and even have an Email pal in England, because of some of the deals I have made. Many of the people are incredibly friendly and personable! All, so far, have been good about paying on time and pretty good about communicating through Email. A few times, I have had dealings with people who are not accustomed to using Email and they "forget" to check their mail. When they realize that they need to read their mail, then the money comes quickly.

Over all, I have LOVED every part of my ebay experience with the possible exception of having to pack the darn stuff and take it to the post office! Stan helps out in that area a lot. Becky White is known as "whitebear" on ebay.

Accessing your email anywhere there's Internet access

By **Art Skopec**,
Contributing Editor

Computer News and Information for Long Islanders
www.pcll.com

Suppose like me, you are in a profession where you are at client sites more than you are at your own desk. Like most businesses today email is its' life blood. What do you do to keep current with your email throughout the day?

HIGH END / HIGH TECH SOLUTION

If money is no object, and you don't mind adding another gadget to your ensemble, you might consider some sort of wireless solution. These include a Laptop with a wireless modem, a PDA with wireless communications like the Palm VIIx or a dedicated email "pager" like the device to name just a few. Aside from having to carry them around, they have a couple other downsides, cost being number one, and coverage area being the other. Even when you are in an area with coverage signal strengths can be weakened or blocked by environmental factors. I recently purchased a Palm VIIx and had it connected to PalmNet. During the two (2) days I had it I wasn't able to reliably send and receive messages or browse the web. When I did have a connection it was well below recommended strength levels, and it was VERY SLOW.

In my humble opinion...not the way to go!

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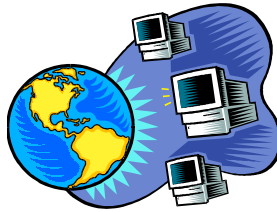
* * * people helping people * * *

NAME	PROGRAM(S)	PHONE NO.	HOURS TO CALL
Bill Roch	Ami Pro	466-8440	anytime
Dan Logan	Internet, MS Publisher	927-0515	M-Sat 8-6, Sun 12-6
Jim Kiraly	Win 98, Office 97, Quicken, Map Programs	556-0301(pismo)	anytime
Bob Ward	Win 98, DOS, Internet, Eudora	528-0121	evenings
Ray Miklas	Any PC hardware or software questions	541-5633	anytime

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

The Surf Board

by Dorothy Kirk
ibm/pcug, redding, ca.
kirk@snowcrest.net



The SURFBOARD

This month contains a personal selection of miscellaneous sites that I have come across. I think that they are interesting or worthwhile for one reason or another; I hope you will enjoy them, too. There must be thousands and thousands of personal home page sites on the Web. Why people want to tell the world about their job, home, and family is a mystery, but I am glad they do. Some of the sites below are of that ilk. There are also sites from clubs or organizations, sites with interesting or useful links, sites that are humorous, and sites that are semi-commercial. You'll never know what you are missing until you try them all.

ARNOLD'S HOME PAGE <http://www.geocities.com/aoboza/ventures.html> - The personal page of a coherent, organized and truly outstanding young man. It is not a hero story, but a human one. By the time you are through reading about him you feel that you know him.

MAIN STREET-BLUE RIDGE <http://www.mainstreet-blueridge.com/> - Blue Ridge, Georgia is proud of its town and surrounding territory. After reading about it you may want to visit there. See the gallery of photos.

SYP SQUADRON <http://www.syp-squadron.com/main.htm> - As far as I can figure out this is a very exclusive club that uses an online game called Fighter Ace for assessing candidates for membership, increasing rating in the group, and for tournaments. The code of conduct is very strict and specific; the process of being admitted to membership is impressive.

COUCHIE.COM <http://www.couchie.com/> - "Couchie.com is a newsletter dedicated to Science Fiction, Computers, and other stuff you can do from a couch. Think of Couchie.com as a weekly diversion from the hectic, structured, wired life you may already be living. We discuss computer software and hardware, give tips for Windows users and general e-mail etiquette. We track down those buried gems of sites and files that may make your digital experience easier or at least more fun. We look at the worlds of science fiction through movies, television, the printed word, and of course, on the net."

OUT OF THE GATE <http://www.members.tripod.com/~ramblincowboy/index.html> - Bud calls himself a cowboy and writes poems. There is a short autobiography and links to his poems classified as romantic and cowboy. The poems are worth reading.

BINLINER'S HOME PAGE <http://www.angelfire.com/journal/binliner/index.html> - He is a somewhat philosopher, poet, movie producer, and photographer. Enjoy his works.

TIMBER CARVER <http://timbercarver.homestead.com/index.html> - See photos of carvings of canes, sticks, gun stocks, and other wood carvings.

JOHNPC's HOME PAGE <http://embark.to/johnpc> - Click on SAGATUG to see what another user group does at their meeting. It reminds me of the early days of the IBMPUG.

AL LOWE'S HUMOR PAGE <http://www.allowe.com/default.htm> - From the creator of Leisure Suit Larry a page dedicated to laughs.

MY-CAMBRIDGE <http://www.my-cambridge.co.uk/market.htm> - Excellent description plus photos of Cambridge, UK. Don't miss this site if you plan a visit to England.

THE SHADOW ZONE <http://pages.zdnet.com/nursefella/theshadowzone/> - Remember the old The Shadow Knows radio series? At this site you can listen to some of these shows.

SEARCH THE ANSWER <http://www.searchtheanswer.com/> - This is the search site to end all search sites. Take a look.

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Silicon 2.0 Express

Silicon 2.0 Express is a free weekly e-mail newsletter covering high-tech news and employment topics in Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties. Silicon 2.0 Express is brought to you by Silicon 2.0 (www.silicontwo.com/). Each week we will be bringing you tri-county career news useful to both employers and employees. Our goal is to give you the big picture on the tri-county high-tech employment environment.

If you have any news, questions or comments, e-mail careernews@silicontwo.com.

The print publication Silicon 2.0 covers Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties' technology and the people who use and create it. Published monthly, it is available free at many sites in all three counties, or it can be delivered to your office by subscription. To subscribe, or to find a complete listing of our distribution sites, visit our web site at www.silicontwo.com. The editor encourages you to send your comments, press releases and other items of interest to editor@silicontwo.com.

-Dan Logan, Express Editor

Access Email

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MIDDLE OF THE ROAD SOLUTION

This assumes you have a Laptop, Hand Computer or Palm of some sort already and a modem. You still have to carry it around with you but as long as you have your own dial-up account you can plug in and get your mail where ever you can find an analog phone....or digital phone with a converter. This is a little better than the first option but you still have to lug additional equipment around with you.

SIMPLE LOW END SOLUTION

These solutions are all Website based, that permit you to access your email as long as you can use a computer with Internet connectivity and an up to date browser.

All of these solutions require NOTHING be installed on the system you access them with! Just input the URL and

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Cranking out...

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of some of the leftover blank space with "fillers"; those little graphics, little jokes, or one liners that help fill up space. Articles that are not generated by our own members are found in a multitude of places on the internet. One of the best sites, is APCUG, the Association of PC User Groups. They list all their member homepages, most of which contain links to their newsletters. Before the advent of the internet and such services, we depended on the exchange of newsletters through the mail and a lot of retyping. At one time we were exchanging 35 or more newsletters with other User Groups. We became a source of articles for them and they for us. Now it's all done electronically which makes life much easier.

When I first started the newsletter, we used the old cut and paste routine. I printed everything out on a dot matrix printer, in justified columns, and in condensed mode. I would put the blank master pages on a light table, line up the columns the best I could, tape them down and Xerox them. In those days one would have to put tape around all the edges to hide the small black line that was cast by the copier if it wasn't laid real flat. Ah, the good old days!

So now we have all our articles, submissions from members, financial reports, etc. Then it's a matter of using PageMaker, flowing information into preset columns, extending columns to other pages until I run out of material for a particular file... I then go back and make sure the "continued to" is pointing to the correct page so it doesn't become a treasure hunt for readers. I'll also compensate for photographs of guest speakers that must be added later. After I've added 3 or 4 articles, I need to look at each page, note the number of blank columns and then fit the remaining information in that space.

After an initial print out and reading to

check for errors, final adjustments are made, the "contents" box is filled out on the front page and it's ready for one final check. The final copy is printed as a postscript file rather than printed out. Postscript is a printer page description language written by Adobe, which first appeared in 1985 and was first in-stalled in Apple Laser Writers. It was created by Adobe as a printer language that was independent of specific computer platforms, thus being able to be used by many different printers and computer systems. The file created is actually an English language document, although none of it makes much sense to an individual. A printer with the postscript language installed knows exactly what to do with the information though. Laser Printers with the Postscript language were more expensive in days past anyway. Adobe charged a licensing fee of \$1,000 per machine for installation of the Post-script Language. I still occasionally use my NEC Silentwriter 95 for printing postscript documents.

So why the big deal about printing to a Postscript file? Adobe extended the capabilities of the Postscript printer language many years ago by introducing Adobe Acrobat Reader. Another program which is not part of the free reader package is called Adobe Acrobat Distiller. This nifty program takes any postscript file and converts it into a PDF file which can be read by any computer containing the reader in such a way as to maintain all the characteristics of the original document, including graphics, text styles, layout, etc. So it doesn't matter if our newsletter was originally created on a PC or a MAC or a Linux machine. The resulting "distilled" document is crossplatform compatible with all computers containing the Adobe reader. If you look at breakthroughs that have occurred in the computer industry over the past 15 years, this is one of the most important... a means of sharing documents between computers with different operating systems.

Whew, so we have converted our document to a PDF file. Where does it go from here? Using a small program called CuteFTP, I upload the PDF file to our website and change a document or two so when you click on the "newsletter month", it loads the proper file into your computer. One also has to be aware when creating the newsletter to keep the graphics at a moderate to low resolution, otherwise the resulting PDF file would be very large and a long time in loading when using a 56K modem. After the site has been modified, I email our treasurer, Marvin Baxendale who downloads the file to his computer, prints it out and submits it for printing at Office Max in Arroyo Grande. Marvin also sends an updated membership list to Nate Wallenstein in Morro Bay who besides picking up the newsletters, fold, labels, and stamps them and puts them in the mail. The whole process involves several individuals from the very beginning to the end of the process. And, here we go again, it's another month and time for another newsletter. I still have some of the original paste-up newsletters in a file. I'll bring some to the next meeting for those of you who want to see a bit of SLO Bytes history.

Random Access by Bruce Preston June 2001

Danbury Area Computer Society, Inc

Q. I have a printer that prints three pages for every page that I request from Quicken. I get the page that I want plus two blank pages. I am using Windows 98 and an OkiData printer. I also get the words "Hidden Fram" on the "blank" page.

A. It sounds like the printer settings within Quicken have been changed—that the page margins have changed or the paper type has changed. For example, if Quicken 'thinks' that you have a different page width it would send additional data to the printer,

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Random Access

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which then prints it out as panels. The words "Hidden Frame" are being printed by the application—check your printer dialog box, options button, for 'print hidden frames' and clear it. Lastly, you might have to call Intuit.

Q. I use AOL Instant Messenger—I can hear others, but they can't hear me. My microphone works for other applications, but it doesn't send to others.

A. In the Multimedia icon of Control Panel, make sure that you have the correct microphone selected, and then within AOL IM, make sure that the sound source matches the active one in Multimedia.

Q. I'm using Windows 98SE with Windows 97 First Aid—and get an indication that I don't have enough GDI, system resources are less than 20% and User Resources are less than 20%. I have 128MB of RAM.

A. The main problem is that First Aid is a great consumer of resources, as is Norton System Doctor. You really should use these tools only as diagnostic tools rather than system monitors. "Resources" are not the same as RAM—instead, resources are a fixed number of table entries (which happen to be in RAM) that keep track of objects in your system. In this context, an object is anything that is clickable, addressable, or measurable. For example, every distinct thing on your screen—an icon, a button, a scroller bar (actually, a scroller is five objects) etc. consumes a resource. A normal, sizeable window with nothing in it, probably contains 30 or so clickable objects. Add to that all of the little icons in the system tray, fast launch, task bar, etc., and you can see that you are consuming resources at a great rate. When Windows 95 came out, it needed some 'tuning' and had a few problems—so the after-market applications such as First Aid and System Doctor were published by third-party vendors. Most of the problems got fixed in 98 and 98SE—turn off First Aid and System Doctor.

Q. I am using Concentric to get to the Internet. I get constant drop outs when I am online. I am wondering if it is a problem with Concentric?

A. Some ISPs have a maximum call duration and/or an inactivity timer which can cause you to be disconnected. Since in follow-up you indicated that the disconnects are random—sometimes only minutes after the call is placed, we will rule that out. It could just be a poor quality telephone line. You can check the quality of the telephone line by using a line test utility provided by U.S. Robotics—it is a toll call. Find the complete details on the bottom of this page on the USR website - www.usrobotics.com/support/s_modem/s_modem_docs/14115.htm —it will explain. You will need the HyperTerminal application which is in Windows. If you don't have Hyperterminal in START/ACCESSORIES/HyperTerminal, (or START/ACCESSORIES/COMMUNICATIONS/HyperTerminal, then you may have to install it. Go to Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs, Windows tab and put an 'X' next to HyperTerminal. Follow up discussion revealed a similar problem with an AT&T user who lives in Bethel—which is notorious for having poor quality phone lines. SNET only guarantees 28.8 service on residential phone lines—if the phone test doesn't show that you are getting this level, call repair. By the way, in the 15 years that I have been in my location, SNET has had to come to my site about four times to replace some sort of fuse or cartridge in the junction box on the outside of my house, near the power meter. They get corroded and cause crackling in the line. Other suggestions: #1 - A line filter from Radio Shack might reduce some of the noise without reducing your bandwidth; #2 - Reduce the 'maximum connection' speed on the modem. (This will help if the line quality varies during the duration of the call—but getting a noisy line fixed would be better.)

Q. I have a Windows 2000 system with 4GB C drive—I have been adding software to my system, but putting things on other drives than C—yet I am still running out of space on C. I have 1GB of RAM.

A. Your swap file is on C unless you put it somewhere else—move it to another drive, if you have 1GB of RAM, your swap file is probably consuming 2GB of the drive. Right click My Computer—select Properties, then Advanced, then Performance Options—and you can control your swap file. You might want to consider getting a larger drive—someone in the audience reported that he got a new Maxtor 40GB hard drive for \$98 last week.

Q. I also am using OS/2 on the drive—it has a limitation of 4GB—it can't 'see' anything beyond that.

A. Generally, I don't like using multiple OS's on the same drive—even if you do have a reliable boot manager. I would suggest that you look into using removable drive rack and tray sets for your primary drive—it lets you switch hard drives mechanically—put your OS on the removable drive—then put your data on a large, second drive, and use a drive format that is recognizable by the various OS's.

Q. I have 128MB of RAM on my machine—Windows 98, AMD K7-500. Will adding RAM make the machine run faster?

A. For general purpose usage (word processing, web browsing, etc.) 64 to 128MB is the 'sweet spot' as far as cost/performance is concerned with Windows 95/98. However, if you are into graphics manipulation, or voice recognition, then you definitely want to increase memory as these applications consume memory at a higher rate.

Bruce Preston is president of West Mountain Systems, a consultancy in Ridgefield, CT, specializing in database applications.

surfboard

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GIDUSKO WORLD <http://home.cfl.rr.com/gidusko/> - A charming and surprising site that's lots of fun – with music, too.

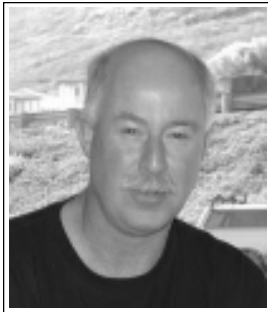
GABRIEL'S HOMEPAGE <http://www.geocities.com/gssq/> - If you like quotes (mostly inconsequential) and trivia, this is the page for you.

THE COMPUTER FIXER <http://mycomputerfixer.com/> - This computer repair site has over 7000 links – computer repair help, web design, tips and more.

AL JERIG'S PERSONAL PORTAL <http://ajerig.tripod.com/index.htm> – Some thoughts and pages of personal preferences and vacations, stuff to sell, and free software that does something.

Officer Highlight Alan Raul, SIG Leader

My parents were living in Guadalupe, in a house they had just built, when I was born. They then built another house just outside the city limits of Santa Maria where I was raised and went to school.



I took a part-time job in a local camera shop that turned into a full time job that lasted for 5 years. I then went on to work in another local camera shop for 22 years where I then retired to take a mid-life break in 1994 for a total time of 27 years. That shop turned out to be the largest photo entities (camera shops, processing labs and later 1-hour labs) between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Too make a very long story short; I did every possible job for this company at one time or another connected with processing labs and camera shops. I was in management for the majority of my 22 years overseeing more than 40 people. If a position needed to be filled and there was no one available, I would take up the slack. This not only made my job very, very interesting, it allowed me to make better decisions as I got to see the business from a different perspective.

Concurrently I was a volunteer fireman for the City of Grover Beach, while living in that city. I was later a paid call

fireman for the City of Pismo Beach, while living in that city, retiring at the rank of Captain in 1993 for a total service time of 13 years. I was trained to fight structure, brush and vehicle fires, auto extrication and any other emergency situation that arose. I also was an Emergency Medical Technician and defibrillator certified responding to medical calls, which accounted for the majority of the fire

department calls. Part of my medical training meant spending time in an ambulance and emergency room on a regular basis to maintain my certification. I am a certified scuba diver and also trained in handling hazardous materials. As a fire department engineer I had to obtain a commercial drivers license for driving fire engines. Because of the ocean and cliffs in Shell Beach I was afforded the opportunity to be further trained in water rescue and cliff rescue.

My main hobbies are kayaking and computing. I have been kayaking since 1982, before it became the yuppie sport of the nineties. The nearest kayaking shop was in Sausalito where I would drive up for the day just to get information on this up and coming sport. Because of my kayaking and diving knowledge I was once contracted out to the State Department of Fish and Game to teach kayaking with two other instructors to

Access Email

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Art is a Network Consultant in Phoenix, AZ, specializing in Microsoft Windows based solutions for the desktop and server environments.

Art can be contacted at askopec@home.com <mailto:askopec@home.com>.

nine State employees in Monterey. I have extensively kayaked the Big Sur and Mendocino coastline in addition to quite a few of the islands off Santa Barbara coast. I live in Shell Beach, which has one of the most pristine coastlines in Central California.

I started playing with computers in 1995 and went on the Internet later that year. I am self-taught in computing. People always ask how I get all my information. The answer is simple; I spend countless hours reading on the Internet and especially reading newsgroups. There is a wealth of information on newsgroups. My ISP, SLONET, currently has access to almost 100,000 newsgroups alone! I also have access to private Microsoft newsgroups in addition to the regular public Microsoft news server.

Hopefully I have given you a high-level overview of my life. Further detailed information may be obtained if you can find me in one of my many hangouts, whether it's a coffee shop, a hot tub, the salt brine (ocean) or on the Internet, all of which I enjoy to the fullest!

For Sale

SRX Digital Voice/Data Communications System, complete with 35 phones, modem, power supply etc. Original cost about \$4K. Make offer.

Earl Gustafson
efgustafson@att.net

Access Email

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you're ready to get or for that matter send email. For all of these services it's a good idea to know your email address, password for the account, and finally the name of your POP3 server. I'm aware that almost everyone knows their user name but the password and POP3 Server may have been entered once at setup time and forgotten. Make up a little cheat sheet with this information, and keep it in your wallet for emergencies. In most cases these services will access your account with just your email address and password but there are times when you have to go into greater depth and input the POP3 server. Once you've done this, it always connects. MAIL2WEB (WWW.MAIL2WEB.COM <<http://www.mail2web.com/>>) FREE SERVICE

If all you want to do is send and receive email from a POP account with no bells and whistles MAIL2WEB is your answer. At the entry screen input your email address and password, and within a minute or so (depending on Internet traffic) you'll have a copy of the mail currently residing in your account on your mail server. You can now read, reply, author new messages and one added perk delete an email completely from the server so you won't have to deal with it again when you get back to the office.

WEBBOX (WWW.WEBBOX.COM <<http://www.webbox.com/>>) \$10 Annual Fee

WEBBOX has more features than MAIL2WEB. You get 20MB of storage, can send and receive email, store and organize your messages, build a contact list and bookmark list, and have a web accessible calendar at your finger tips. All of this for less than a dollar a month. You can create and apply filters, create a signature file and do just about everything you do at your desktop system. WHAT A DEAL! Unlike many FREE services with similar functions, there are no banners or other annoyingly intrusive advertisements.

This is a KILLER APP which is powerful

though simple to use, and economical. FREE POP MAIL SERVICES

These are usually made available by major Internet portals like Excite, Yahoo (WWW.YAHOO.COM), MSN (WWW.MSN.COM), etc. They provide a wide range of features (more than you might ever want or use) designed to keep you on their site and exposed to the barrage of advertisements. The core of these services are equivalent to WEBBOX and don't require anything to be installed on the system to access them. In many cases however, there are installable components like MSN Messenger and Yahoo pager. These instant access applications can be very useful but when you are opportunistically getting on the net from a borrowed system, not too practical. To get around this, AOL (WWW.AOL.COM) and their Instant messenger have a version called AIM Express which is an entirely web based version of Instant Messenger. It runs a little slower than the installed version but it's an acceptable compromise. These portals usually require you to sign up for yet another email account (like you need or want it). I didn't want one but you have no choice in the matter. I never use the email accounts these services provide but without fail, I receive a dozen or so emails a day, mostly spam, and most of the content is suspect. I used to use the portal based email systems when I was out of the office until they became so jammed that you couldn't even log in. If you did get in, they were worse than a snail. The heavy subscription to these services have made them unreliable tools for the serious professional.

With the Internet being ubiquitous, where ever you are you can usually find an Internet connected system more easily than you can find a pay phone. With the expenditure of little (WEBBOX) or no money (MAIL2WEB), you can access your POP mail anywhere.

There is no need to purchase new gadgets at high ticket prices and questionable reliability to stay in touch with your business.

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Price Comparison Engines

by Dale Oliver, President,
NWA-PCUG Newsletter Article
February 2001

Most of us are price conscious to some extent. It's nice to know what a "fair" price is for an item we are interested in purchasing, especially when we are considering purchasing relatively expensive items like computers and electronics. URLs for several of the better price comparison engines I have found are listed below. Each of the price comparison engines has its own unique features and benefits, but all are essentially designed to help you find the best prices on the specific item(s) you are looking for.

User-friendly features you can expect to find when using price comparison engines include side-by-side comparison of products, buyer's guides, ratings for the vendors/stores listed, product availability from the vendors/stores listed, ability to search for a specific product by using keywords, nicely categorized product listings, special bargains, etc. You will likely be astounded at the wide variety of prices for any item you search for. Check out the sites listed below. Happy hunting!

<http://computers.cnet.com/>
<http://www.mysimon.com/>
<http://www.streetprices.com/>

You might also want to check these out, supplied by John Clark:

<http://www.bizrate.com/>
<http://www.salehound.com/>
<http://www.pricescan.com/>
<http://www.e-town.com/>
<http://www.techshopper.com/>
<http://www.pricewatch.com/>



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, full use of the public domain software library software drawing at the end of the meetings.

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.

Reprinting of this Newsletter: 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.

Advertising: Commercial advertisers, request ad packet from Bob Ward. Members may advertise personal computer equipment or software for free. Submit your ad to Bob Ward.

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/

slobytes officers

R. Miklas (Pres) rmiklas@bigfoot.com
G. Kuncir (V.P.) gkuncir@bigfoot.com
B. Ward (Sec.) bward@thegrid.net
M. Baxendale (Tres) marvin@surfari.net
Bob Ward (Editor) slobytes@surfari.net

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



June 15, 2001

OPERATING FUND

Beginning Balance	\$2,517.91
Income	
Membership Dues	100.00
Refreshments	21.30
Dividends	11.52
Expenses	
Room Rent	75.00
NL Xerox	56.45
Postage	102.00
Refreshments	15.74

New Balance \$2,401.54

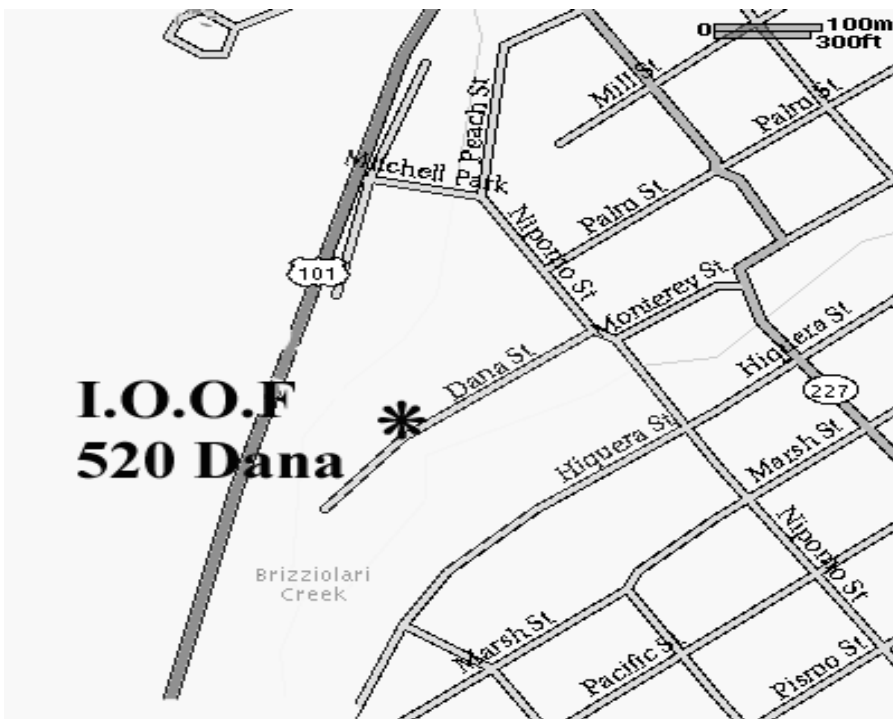
SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Beginning Balance	\$152.10
Dividend	1.03
New Balance	<u>\$153.13</u>

Future Site for Surfari.net
Monthly Ad

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SURFARI.NET AD INSERT

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



Next Meeting
Sunday
August 5th

1:00pm
Early SIGS
2:30pm

Dr. Joe Grimes
Computer Education at
Cal Poly