Hardcopy

A PUBLICATION OF THE SAN LUIS OBISPO PCUG

SLO BYTES

Comments

By Nancy Watts, Editor

IN THE MORASS...

Pride goes before a fall: I thought I could type quickly after downloading, opening attachments, and unzipping—all for the first time. Bob warned me that it takes more than one day. I should have listened.

Going to the Armand Hammer, Getty museums, Rent, a loud play for the young, and dinner with opera was scheduled long before Christmas for the middle of January. Of course I had to go.

Bob also said that Teri does the formatting, collating and makes the newsletter presentable to the public and SLO Bytes members. Well, here I am, compulsively typing with paragraph symbols.

I want to thank Kathy Yakal who talked to me a lot on Monday—when I could not get the letter to Teri and Bob on the 19th of January. The 20th Ray Miklas helped me all morning on The Grid—password was not accepted, (again). Ray and Bill Avery decided to have me call Bob—as I was going to type up the newsletter in Word and get 200 copies (my expense) to Nate Wallenstein for bulkmailing.

Today, still Tuesday just 12 days before our February 1st meeting and Bob says, "Just get it on a disk and I'll pick it up in two hours."

Of course, we of San Luis Obispo Bytes (automatic spell-out now not helpful for ____Bytes, oh well!) thank all who submitted articles. I hope that I received all of them, and that you see your writing efforts. If not, there is always next month!

Ed Sauer had a letter to me that went unanswered—as I was in software-morass when I received his E-mail. Too many things going on and not enough time...Next month Ed, I promise!

Jennifer, like a second daughter to me, and I are going to Columbia University, the New College in New York (where

Prospecting the Newsletters

By Lach MacDonald

TWO MONTHS ELAPSED since Bob Ward quite rightly tossed some of his many chores into the air in hopes that enough SLOBYTES members would reach out to keep the User Group functioning. Nancy Watts agreed to temporarily edit Hard Copy. Others agreed to seek facilities more suitable than Cal Poly, and we have a meeting place announced elsewhere in this issue.

Two members who happen to have scanners agreed to scan some articles from back issues of newsletters received from other User Groups on an exchange basis: Eddie Sauer (efsauer@juno.com) and I (Lachlanmac@juno.com) divvied up a sack of some 80 newsletters and started looking for topics of interest to other SLOBYTES members.

If you have a scanner, you capture the article, convert it with an OCR (Optical Character Recognition) program, edit it in MS Word, save it as .TXT instead of .DOC, and then incorporate it in an E-mail message or send it as an attach-

Club Calendar

February 1st
Dean Grey, representative from Best 1 Internet Provider located in Nipomo will be our guest speaker.

March 1st
OPEN

April 5th
Gene Barlow, representative from PowerQuest will return. Come look at the latest version of PartitionMagic and their new products, Drive Image and DriveCopy. Last year they had excellent discounts for our user group on all their products.

In this issue...

Some of the stuff I've seen over the last year, and why I don't floss regularly

By Kathy Yakal

IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN READING MY COLUMN LATELY, I'd guess that's because I haven't been writing it. I'm not sure why that happened. Maybe it's like flossing. You know how you floss religiously for a few days after you've seen the dentist, and then you miss a day? And then you figure that since you missed a day and your teeth haven't fallen out, it wouldn't hurt to miss another day? And pretty soon, it's time for your next dentist appointment, and you have to lie about how often you've been flossing. No? You mean you floss your teeth every day? So it's just me? Oh, well. It was a pretty bad analogy, anyway. I didn't write a column just because I didn't write a column. But I'll try to start up again.

Since it's been so long, maybe I'll just write a little this month about some of the cool things I've seen in the last year.

INVESTMENT-RELATED WEB SITES

There are lots and lots of these. To find sites that would be of most interest to you, you might start at http://www.investorama.com. This site is a good resource, and contains many, many links to other investment-related Web sites. Daily Stocks (http://www.dailystocks.com) is another link-centric site. BigCharts (http://www.bigcharts.com) is just what it sounds like: a site that lets you build a wide variety of charts based on data and parameters you select. These sites don't require a subscription fee.

The Motley Fool (http://www.fool.com) continues to provide information and educational tools to individual investors, and offers forums for sharing ideas with other investors. Longtime data provider DBC recently joined forces with CBS, the result being a great site (http://cbs.marketwatch.com) for breaking news on the stock market. And if all you want to do is chat, head on over to Silicon Investor (http://www.techstocks.com), a meeting ground for active and wanna-be investors.

MULTI-FUNCTION PRINTERS

Great tools, these - if you don't need industrial-strength office machines. There are many available, from familiar names like Hewlett-Packard, Brother, and Xerox, ranging from a few hundred dollars to more than ten thousand. Machines targeted at the small office/home office (SOHO) market, though, average around $600.

The base components in these systems are a printer (usually ink-jet in this price range), scanner, copier, and fax machine. At the low-end of the price range, resolution is lower (300 dpi), while some machines that cost between $500-1,000 now boast 600 dpi. Color is available, too, on many units.

One nice advantage: These machines have small "footprints" (the amount of physical space they take up on your desk). So they take up much less room than the individual components would, were they not built into one machine. On the other hand, they may work more slowly than their individual counterparts, and the quality may not be as good. Depends on which models you're comparing.

But if you need at least three of these machines at home or in a small office, and don't plan to work them 12 hours a day, these are definitely worth a look. I can't recommend one in particular at this point, but you can check the Web sites of the manufacturers, look at a magazine like Computer Shopper, or cruise the aisles of the office supply stores in Santa Maria.

GREETING CARD SOFTWARE

I don't know about you, but I get pretty cranky when I buy individual greeting cards at a store. I mean, some of the are really funny, but for $2? I spend less on actual presents sometimes.

If you haven't checked out greeting card software since the early days of Print Shop, you'll be pleasantly surprised to see how this class of software has progressed. These programs have boilerplate designs for numerous holidays, and they let you pull more stuff from their Web sites. Some let you start from scratch, or at least let you alter existing designs. They toss in dozens of verses for you to choose from, and let you personalize the designs in other ways. Other extras include address books with reminders and e-mail delivery of cards.

Greeting Workshop Deluxe, from Microsoft and Hallmark Greetings, is the deepest, most impressive of these that I've seen. You can even e-mail multimedia greetings. I can also highly recommend American Greetings CreataCard Gold.

So there you have it: more hardware and software and Web sites for you to consider. If you have any suggestions for this corner of the newsletter, I'm all ears. Kyakal@ix.netcom.com.

NEWSLETTER

ment. In this case, this article is being written in MS Word and will be sent to editor, Nancy Watts. You (all other SLOBYTES members) are also encouraged to write articles, reviews, reports, jokes about Cal Poly as a landlord ("There was room at the Inn, but it was $100 an hour."), or announcements, etc.

Before I ramble further, the point of this article is that all User Groups appear to have similar life cycles, and the turning point for SLOBYTES offers us opportunities to rise to the next level. As I read the various newsletters, I found some were writing their histories. All started with a few people, meeting in an office, computer center or private home. Usually they focused on a particular type of hardware: Altos, TRS-80, Atari, Apple. As they grew, they drew in people of diverse interests. They held a general meeting monthly, but began to offer Special Interest Groups (SIGs), Service Conferences with panels and moderators, short courses, a bulletin board service, a library resource, swap meets, and now web pages. Newsletters ranged from a couple sheets to full-fledged magazines with 60 pages and a three buck cover price.

Certain concerns emerge again and again. First of all, meeting facilities and related issues such as cost, access, parking and storage of equipment between meetings. Next, volunteer participation. Officers, program chairs, newsletter editors, librarian, system operators (SYSOPs), etc. Nearly every organization is crying out for members to step forward and take their share of responsibility. Some with long histories of service to the User Group suffer burnout as they take on more and more out of a sense of dedication. Sound familiar? A few organizations draw on a large metropolitan base. Elections are highly structured, with printed ballots and contests for such prestigious slots as newsletter editor. The most successful User Groups utilize telephone and E-mail extensively to provide specialized support. They carry directories of members willing to give advice on topics such as APL Language, Desktop Publishing, Hypertext

Markup Language (HTML), Paradox, SCSI, Unix, and WWW, to cite a few. The Capital PC User Group of Rockville, MD offers about 100 member information exchanges on their bulletin board. Newsletter content consists of organizational information such as directories and schedules, reports of presentations that are predominantly by industry reps, brief tips, buyers guides, reviews of software programs and products and of books, and articles that range from forecasts to history to prostate treatments (yes, older men seem to have the majority vote in the User Groups). Applications and membership fees seem relatively standard around $25. Most applications survey the new member to find out areas of interest, and significantly, expertise they might be able to contribute to the group.

I feel that any SLOBYTES member who had an opportunity to study these newsletters would come away with a renewed appreciation of the role user groups have had in the computerization of America. Equipment failures? Software glitches? Inadequate Help screens? Cryptic manuals? Unresponsive manufacturers? Tech lines on hold interminably? Moronic sales reps? Clerks from the shoe department? We've all experienced these annoyances. Isn't it terrific to be able to call a colleague from SLOBYTES and get some advice?

Personally, a decade ago I was struggling with my Altos CP/M machine and had enrolled in a DOS night course at Arroyo Grande High School, to learn about the IBM PC. There was George Henderson and Norma. George, bless his soul, was an apostle of DOS and also a booster of Computer Rooters and SLOBYTES. He invited me into both and my association with these groups has been very worthwhile. What an experience to see and hear George Campbell fielding questions from all levels of knowledge and experience, with characteristic humor and unassuming candor. I'm sure a similar experience is shared by most SLOBYTES.

Now we are using E-mail more, or as much as the telephone, the FAX and the answering machine. Some of our needs for the assembly-style meeting are being met other ways. This process is certain to be reflected in the User Groups across the country. Now is the time to give SLOBYTES the benefit of your best thinking, to be innovative and creative, to ask how the benefits of our exchange and contact can be improved and expanded to more people who are just now getting their first computer.

If you would like to sample the User Group newsletters, get in touch with me. If you have suggestions for SLOBYTES, please let Bob Ward or George Campbell hear from you, or write a letter or article for the next issue of Hard Copy.

A New Home for SLO Bytes
By Bill McNamara

NO LONGER HOMELESS, SLO Bytes that is. We have a new home at the I.O.O.F. Hall on Dana Street in San Luis Obispo. Along with a 300 person meeting hall capacity, there are three SIG meeting rooms, a kitchen and an entry hall included at a price similar to what we were previously paying at "that other place". ;-((

We will be able to use the kitchen for preparation of those cookies and coffee supplied by Kathy and Norma. One of the rules of our new home is NO EATING OR DRINKING IN THE MAIN AUDIOTORIUM. Also for your convenience, there is an on-site parking lot.

The Meeting time is still 1 pm to 4:30 pm the first Sunday of every month. SIG's will be shortened by 15 minutes and the general meeting will start promptly at 2:30pm. as we must totally vacate the property by 4:30pm; that is, unless you are into dancing (the next group to use the hall). The address is 520 Dana Street which is one block off of Higuera Street on Nipomo (heading towards highway 101). A map is provided on the back of this newsletter or may be found on our web page at www.thegrid.net/slobytes/

I want to thank everyone for their input and help in finding alternative sites for the selection process in relocating the monthly meeting. Now that this job is done, we can look forward to new challenges as they present themselves.
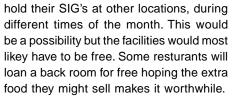
Some Parting Comments...

By Bob Ward

NO BOB, DON'T FRET, YES IT WILL GET DONE. No, I think, it must be done this way. Wow, I've tried that before and it doesn't work, and so it goes. I've felt like a new father helping my child take their first step. And yes, I need to realize, that child will walk without my guidence quite well, unimpeeded and probably better than if I gave them a 10 point course on the finer aspects of walking.

There have been some interesting things going on behind the scenes, but the finished product is what counts and that's what SLO Bytes has promised to deliver. Yes we do have a new meeting place, thanks to Bill and others who took their time to scan every possible meeting location in SLO. Actually, we could profit from this experience by producing a book and selling it to other organizations looking for meeting facilities. I wonder if anyone checked with the Chamber of Commerce to look for meeting places. Oops, too late, but an interesting query anyway.

Everyone who cautiously, yet resolvingly raised their hands to volunteer at our December meeting are becoming involved in that organization machine called SLO Bytes. I think my main emphasis here is that coordination and communication are the two key factors in a smooth running club. People must talk, email, phone or otherwise communicate with all those involved in their particular niche in SLO Bytes. It's easy when run by one or two individuals, but the more involved the more one must be aware of how they fit in the bigger picture. I would suggest a meeting once a month of at least the key people in the club, officers, both elected and those who volunteered as committee heads or SIG leaders so the oarsmen are all rowing in the same direction. I take some of this knowledge from Teri Sorgatz (our newsletter artist), who was 1996 and 1997 President of the Redding PCUG, which is similar in size and scope to our group. Their

planning meetings are a must, and even then, sometimes problems develop. Without them, the club would be impossible.

Moving right along, let me mention a couple other things that have passed by me this last two months. Paul King is in the process of building us a cabinet to house much or all of our equipment (including Kathy's and Norma's coffee pot) that can be located inside the I.O.O.F. hall. Most of the materials will be leftovers from Paul's new house which will keep the expense down. He hasn't promised us Oak front doors, inlaid with teak and marble sides and sink spouts for push handles, but the rendition produced by his computer looked great. Until this is built (real soon now) we won't consider setting up the library which I am still in charge of (Now why did I do that?) along with Bob Williams. This first meeting, we'll just "scope" out the place figuring out where best to set up things in March. We do get a break in that my good friend, Brian Kay, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, and his worshipers have the hall just before us and will leave the chairs up for our meeting. If you want to make a day of it at the I.O.O.F Hall you could start with church and end with dancing. We will have to take them down starting no later than 4:15 as a dance group meets there at 4:30. So we will need some able bodied volunteers at the end of the meeting to help with the chairs.

We still must decide on how to handle our SIG's. Both Bob and I would like to continue our Windows SIG's, the problem being the lack of transparency projectors. They are needed for the LCD pannels, such as they are, in order to project any kind of image on a screen. A new 9' X 9' screen is being place in the main hall, but we still must decide what to do with our SIG's. This doesn't mean we can't have other types of SIG's, perhaps with a dry-erase board for writing things down, but things will be different. Many other clubs

hold their SIG's at other locations, during different times of the month. This would be a possibility but the facilities would most likey have to be free. Some resturants will loan a back room for free hoping the extra food they might sell makes it worthwhile.

These are a few things we still must look at and will continue to follow in the future.

The internet homepage is pretty much up to date. A couple little fixes here and there and it will be 100% accurate. Here is another means of checking out what is happening during the month. Try www.thegrid.net/slobytes.

It's been fun, it's been interesting, but it will be nice to sit in the audience and look toward the projection screen for a change. See you February 1st at the I.O.O.F. hall.

COMMENTS
Continued from page 1

else would it be) and a school in Amherst. So... I will be gone until February 10th when I will start the newsletter over again, this time with a little more knowledge, a little more foresight and a lot less apprehension as to what I should expect.

My email address has change as I've changed internet providers. Thanks to Bob and Ray for getting that set up and running.

Hope all of you who thought I was knowledgeable are now feeling much higher self-esteem.

New Members

WELCOME to Larry Collins who joined our club in December. Here this brave soul joined right in the middle of our transition, gave us his $25 at the beginning of the meeting and didn't even ask for it by the end of the meeting after Bob doled out his responsibilities to the rest of the club members. Thanks for the vote of confidence Larry, we hope to live up to your expectations.

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 and any discounts given to our members by computer companies..

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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Advertising: Commercial advertisers, request ad packet from Nancy Watts. Members may advertise personal computer equipment or software for free.

Direct all correspondence and newsletter submissions to:

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Meeting Times

GENERAL MEETINGS are held the 1st Sunday of each month unless otherwise noted in the newsletter calendar. Meeting location is the San Luis Obispo I.O.O.F. Hall on Dana Street. The general meeting starts promptly at 2:30pm.

Special Interest Groups (SIGS) meet at 1:00pm - 2:15pm

Member

Slo Bytes Officers...

Pres.	**Geo. Campbell**
V.P.	**Gus Thomasson**
Treas.	**Bill McNamara**
Sec.	**Bill Avery**
	Jerry Mintz
Editors	**NancyWatts**
	Teri A. Sorgatz

Treasurer's Report

Beg. Chk. Bal.	+	1680.75
Expenses:		
BBS Phone (October)	-	10.70
Long Distance (October)	-	26.91
BBS Phone (November)	-	10.70
Long Distance (November)	-	36.65
Christmas Gifts	-	177.39
APCUG Dues	-	50.00
Newsletter (11/97)	-	129.77
Total Expenses	**-**	**442.12**
Deposit 12/08/97	+	277.25
Total Deposits	**+**	**277.25**
New Balance	**+**	**1515.88**

**PROJECTOR FUND
GOAL: $4,000**

Balance	+	1643.22

Bulletin Board

The BBS is temporarily off line until it finds a new home.

WebSite

www.thegrid.net/slobytes/

Floppy Disks 4-Sale at the Meeting

DSDD 360K Formatted Floppy Disks with labels, tabs, & sleeves .... .55 Each

DSDD 360K Formatted Label Over Floppy Disks .... .45 Each

Generic High Density Formatted Floppy Disks (5.25" X 1.2 Mb) .... .70 Each

Generic 3.5" X 720K Formatted Floppy Disks .... .70 Each

Generic 3.5" X 1.44 Mb Formatted Floppy Disks .... .70 Each

New Library Disks .... 1.00 Each

All Disks fully guaranteed against defects.