

SLO Bytes HardCopy

A publication of the San Luis Obispo PC Users Group
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Alan's January 1st, 2006 General Windows SIG by Alan Raul

We started off the meeting looking at the current Doppler radar images of the rain storm. More weather links can be found at:

<http://www.slonet.org/~araul/weather2.htm>

We revisited running applications from the ever-increasing USB flash drives.

The Portable Freeware Collection

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

Portable Apps

<http://portableapps.com/>

Portable Firefox 1.5

http://portableapps.com/apps/internet/browsers/portable_firefox

U3

By turning a USB flash drive into a USB smart drive, U3 lets you carry programs and personal preferences, launch software, and access all of your own data on any Windows XP or Windows 2000 PC from a device the size of a pack of gum. Now you can move between multiple locations with ease. We call it smart drive computing. You'll call it convenient.

<http://www.u3.com/>

January 1st, 2006 Main Meeting Review by Don Jones

Preserving and Restoring Your old Audio and Pictures

This presentation was intended to show attendees how to get started transferring their old vinyl records and audio tapes to computer data so they can again be enjoyed. It concluded with a short section covering how to use PhotoShop Elements 4 to restore very old and "bad" pictures. Miscellaneous examples using PS Elements were used throughout the presentation in the form of visual aids used.

To get started on your transfer project, it is important to know how to connect the equipment. Labeled photos showed the types of cabling and connections normally encountered, usually RCA jacks and Stereo or Mono mini-phone plugs. The ideal connectors are Line-Out on the sound player connected to Line-In on the computer. In older equipment the outputs might be labeled Record-Out, Tape-Out, etc. These are also suitable signals with similar voltage levels. Jacks that should not be used are Microphone-In on the computer and speaker outputs on older sound sources. Many manufacturers warn against use of the Microphone-In with other sources as it may be specifically designed for low voltage microphones and damaged by larger signals. An example warning was shown from a very new motherboard user's manual. To avoid this danger an external sound card, perhaps connected by USB, can be used; especially for laptops. A Creative SBLive USB sound card was used in the live demo using a very early CD Player with Line-Out as the source. This small USB box comes with good sound recording and editing software and the signal to noise may be better than integrated sound. The Creative software was used in the live demo, but others such as in Nero or Easy CD Creator Suites are also excellent. All work similarly, so you can easily learn another, once you have used one of them.

To start, turn on the recording and play the audio source and adjust gain until the sound bars are well into the green region and not too high as shown by red bars on the right or top. Then stop the source and recording and discard the recorded file. Restart the recording first so nothing is lost, then play the record and stop recording only after all you want to record is finished.

Basics of editing were demonstrated by removing the dead space before and after the short one minute live recording, adjusting volume in weak sections (often found in amateur audio tapes), and removing unwanted noise.

Some old family pictures that we would like to preserve, are in bad shape. An example picture from around 1910 that

was scanned prior to the meeting was used for the demonstration. In some cases, this one in particular, the simple fixes in many programs and the PS Elements Quick Edit don't do the desired job. A method to use the Standard Edit mode of PS Elements was shown to get back amazing details using only a few mouse clicks

Peter Stonehewer's Featured Speaker Programming Schedule by Peter Stonehewer

At our February 5th meeting, our featured speaker will be **David B. Whittle**, author of "*Cyberspace: The Human Dimension*" and named by Working Woman Magazine as "one of America's most original technological thinkers." Dave's been a leader in the PC revolution since 1979, and an opinion-leader in the PC industry since his days as OS/2 Evangelist at IBM in the early '90s. Most recently, he's been writing for *Smart Computing*. Now he's bringing to you his favorite discoveries from recent trade shows in order to show new products that open up new horizons of possibility or solve problems you might be facing.

Would you like a brief look at the latest gadgets, goodies, software, and services available for the digital home? Would you like to have software that takes your digital photos and video footage and almost magically transforms it into a movie on DVD or CD that is a surprising delight to watch? Do you want to easily but dramatically show all of the digital photos in any given folder while the song of your choice plays in the background? Ever wish you could rise above ordinary flat snapshots of those special places you visit and have an immersive, 3-dimensional picture of the place so you can revisit the scene looking in any direction? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you won't want to miss Dave Whittle's presentation at this month's meeting!

The featured speakers at the March 5th SLO Bytes meeting will be **Pat and Kenny Keith**, owners and operators of **Computer-Works** located at 207 W. Main Street, Santa Maria (boolseye@comcast.net, 805-347-1076). Computer-Works is a PC service and repair company.

The Keith's presentation will be focused on the software contained within the Computer-Works Essential Utility CD, showing the audience the best way to keep their computers safe from spyware, viruses and hackers. These disks contain many useful utilities, including anti-virus and anti-spyware programs, a file management utility, an Office suite and many other useful programs with general applicability. The Computer-Works CD has been compiled over the last two years and reflects the latest versions of the applications. These CDs will be provided to all attendees free of charge, on-hand supplies permitting. The extremely popular CDs are also offered at their store at no charge and have been mentioned in the weekly Santa Maria Times Column that Pat writes.

Digital Photography SIG Review by Lou Pera

The digital photography group met on January 10th. Twelve members attended the meeting. The first item of business was to agree on a new meeting date. It was decided that the third Monday of the month would be the most acceptable to the majority of us. Consequently, our next meeting will be on February 20th at 7 PM.

Lou Pera demonstrated his procedure in creating slide shows using Pinnacle Studio 9. Among the interesting capabilities of the program are effects such as 'panning and zooming' and the use of 'transitions' between clips. These effects add up to creating an interesting slide show presentation using the "Ken Burns" effect. You may remember Ken Burns from his TV productions about the Civil War and "The History of Jazz", wherein he used mostly still shots to tell the whole story. The program also permits the addition of video clips, titles, sound effects, music and narration to your production.

Don Jones demonstrated more of the intricacies of PhotoShop Elements 4 to produce clever greeting cards. In answer to questions, he revisited the clone tool and showed selections in Elements 4. In addition, he recapped the use of his external audio card and its accompanying audio editing software which he had presented at the January SLO Bytes meeting.

A good time was had by all and the coffee was delicious!
--Lou Pera

President's Message

At our 5 February, 2006 meeting:

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

At 2:30 PM, Our speaker **David Whittle** will give his presentation.

Go to <http://slobytes.org/newsletter/push/0206/index.html> to see the 9 great PUSH **Articles for February 2006.** They came to me from **Judy Tylour of APCUG**, Editorial PUSH Committee Chair. Our Webmaster, Ralph Sutter uploaded these articles to our website.

Here is a great utility: **emailStripper** is a **free** program for cleaning the ">" and other formatting characters out of your emails. It will restore "forwarded" or "replied" emails back to their original state so they're easier to read. Available for free at <http://www.papercut.biz/emailStripper.htm>

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

Dec 24, 2005 – Jan 24, 2006

Income

New members	\$150.00
Renewing members	200.00
Refreshments	36.92

Expenses

Hall rent	75.00
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Bank accounts @ 11/30/05

Saving Acct Balance	3,196.03
Checking Acct Balance	2,285.93
Interest- year to date	51.82

New members: six

Edward Walter, Glenn Zaretske, Marti Reed, Frank Drake, Oscar Grassle, and Melissa Mooney

Renewing members: eight

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

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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>