

# RAM PAGES

**THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FRESNO PC USERS GROUP**

Volume 24 Issue 3

May 2005

**General Meeting,  
May 2nd  
@ 7:30 p.m.**



A representative from  
Epson will be showing  
us the many products of  
Epson












- **Printers**
- **Scanners**
  - **Home Entertainment projectors**
- **And More.....**



**Fund Raiser Drawing  
Computer Only**

**Drawing will be held at  
May's Meeting.**

**Winner need not be present to win!**

-  *Tower Case with clear window on side with Blue Light.*
-  *Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 3.06 GHz and Intel® Desktop Board D850EMVRL*
-  *512 mb of Rambus Memory*
-  *Nvidia 128 mb Video card*
-  *56K Modem*
-  *CD ROM Drive / burner*
-  *60 Gig Hard Drive*
-  *Operating System: Windws XP Pro*
-  *Microsoft Office XP*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MICROSOFT IS COMING! .....	3	THE NEW, THE BEST, AND THE WORST .....	9
FPCUG LIBRARY CD OF THE MONTH .....	4	TECH NEWS .....	11
DIGITAL CAMERA SCENE MODES - WHAT ARE ALL THOSE SYMBOLS FOR? .....	6	BRINGING HOME BABY — GETTING STARTED WITH A NEW PC .....	13
HOW TO REPORT TECH PROBLEMS TO GET ANSWERS .....	7	SANITY SAVERS .....	16

## RAM Pages Newsletter Staff

For information, compliments, and complaints concerning the **RAM Pages**, please see Web .....

[www.fresnocomputerusers.org](http://www.fresnocomputerusers.org)

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**RAM Pages** is the monthly newsletter of the Fresno PC Users Group, a nonprofit corporation chartered by the State of California. Each FPCUG member receives a subscription as a benefit of membership. A membership application and renewal form is printed on the last inside page.

**Subscription Problems?** Please inform the membership director Krikor Geyoghlian at 434.0941, if you miss your issue or have any changes or corrections in your address AND/OR email..

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**Vendor Notice.** Only review products that have been obtained by the product review coordinator and **received through the FPCUG address** shall be considered the responsibility of the FPCUG, unless otherwise indicated by the Board of Directors and with the full knowledge of the review coordinator.

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This publication was prepared on an "MSI-MS-StarForce GeForce4 MX 440 with NVIDIA graphics card and Windows XP installed. Office XP, PageMaker 7, Photoshop CS, and Photoshop Elements 3. It was set up for distribution with Adobe Acrobat 7.

## Directors to Meet



The Board Meeting of the FPCUG will usually be held on the **2<sup>nd</sup>** Monday of every month at 7:00 PM. Board meetings are open to any FPCUG member.

(see calendar on back page for specific date)

This month's will be at  
Hope Lutheran Community Center  
Fresno, CA 93727

## Active SIGs

If you are a PC Users Group Member, join a Special Interest Group — a great way to share information with others having similar interests. Special Interest Groups are subgroups within the Fresno PC Users Group that meet on their own schedules to discuss specific topics. Bring items to share, programs, hints, and blank disks. **E-mail SIG Leaders ahead to verify meeting times and locations.** (some SIGs listed may be forming or temporarily dormant).

*For more information about SIGs, special request for a SIG, or starting up your own, contact SIG Coordinator Rob Rhodes email at [rhodes2@comcast.net](mailto:rhodes2@comcast.net)*

SIG	Leader/Host	E-mail	Meets
Digital	Nancy Mason		1 <sup>ST</sup> Saturday of the month at
PhotoSIG	Jo Townley		10:30 AM at <b>CompUSA</b> on
	Laura Barnard	<a href="mailto:lgrbarnard@yahoo.com">lgrbarnard@yahoo.com</a>	N. Blackstone

CompUSA is located in the RiverPark Shopping Center, just north of Herndon and Hwy 41 at 7502 N. Blackstone.

**CURRENTLY NOVICE AND WINDOWS 3.1, 95,98, & 2000 SIGs ON HIATUS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

## ADVERTISING IN THE *RAM PAGES*

**Commercial Ads** must be supplied camera ready by the first of the month.

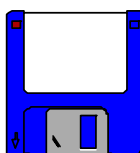
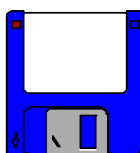
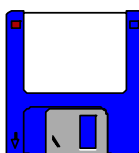
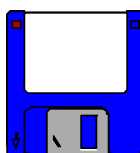
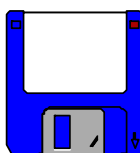
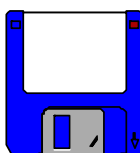
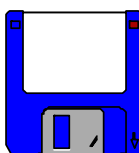
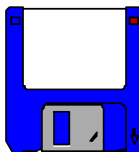
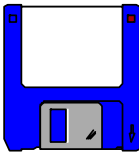
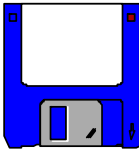
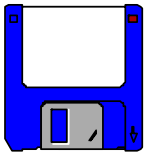
**Member Ads** are free to members of the Fresno PC Users Group. They may submit noncommercial classified ads for computer related items at no charge. Ads should not exceed 75 words in length.

Further information is available on our Web site: [www.fresnocomputerusers.org](http://www.fresnocomputerusers.org)



**Microsoft will present a special meeting on Wednesday June 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. This is our general meeting for July.**

*Bring all your Friends*



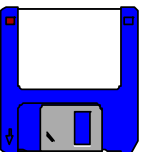
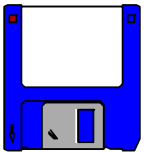
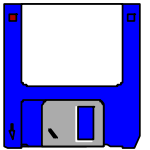
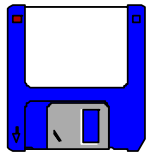
*Please Welcome*

*Our New Member:*

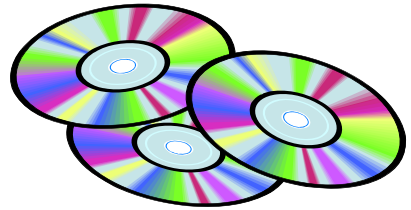
1. Bill Gilber
2. Bill Leidenroth

*Thank you for renewing  
your membership:*

1. Susy Ball
2. Stanley Barnes
3. Frank Bowen
4. Alan Burnham
5. Frank Fagan
6. Ben Fulk
7. Krikor Geyoghlian
8. Frank Unruh



# FPCUG Library CD of the Month



## File descriptions for May 2005

By Dean Mason and Monica Braun, Librarians of the FPCUG

### The Usual files each month

**AVG** ..... free anti-virus

**Ad-Aware** ..... Removes spyware

**EMS Freesurfer** . At last - a free popup stopper that really works. Free Surfer mk II and its intelligent fs-20 engine does not in any way interfere with opening new windows ('Natural' mode). For internet heavy users there are still the old 'one browser mode' (Strict mode), where you control all the opening popups by pressing Ctrl or Shift.

**Smart Pop Up Blocker** ..... This is a better pop up blocker than free surfer

**Spybot** ..... Spybot - Search & Destroy can detect and remove spyware of different kinds from your computer.

### This months files

**ATI Catalyst Drivers for Windows XP 5.1 ....** This unified driver has been further enhanced to provide the highest level of power, performance, and reliability.

**Bellum's Revenge 2.02** ..... Bellum's Revenge is a worms styled game using army men. It is a turn based artillery battle against the enemies forces. Select your angle of projectory and power for your selected weapon and attack. Eliminate all the enemy forces to win. Central Brain Identifier is designed to provide detailed recognition and obtaining the most complete extended information for all AMD processors.

**DotnetSwitch** ..... a little utility program used to switch between different network configurations in a simple click. It can set settings like IP Address, Netmask, Gateway, Proxies for every network adapter.

**Editor's Note:** *Should work under but not tested on Win 9x/ME*

**GIMP** ..... an acronym for GNU Image Manipulation Program. It is a freely distributed program for such tasks as photo retouching, image composition and image authoring.

**Incredimail** ..... Liven up your email! Incredimail is a full-featured, robust E-mail client which lets you express your mood with cool animations, 3d effects, whimsical sounds, and more

**WindowsAntiSpyware** ..... (Beta) It is a security technology that helps protect Windows users from spyware and other potentially unwanted software. Known spyware on your PC can be detected and removed. This helps reduce negative effects caused by spyware including slow PC performance, annoying pop-up ads, unwanted changes to Internet settings, and unauthorized use of your private information. Continuous protection improves Internet browsing safety by guarding over 50 ways spyware can enter your PC.

**Multicade 4000 ...** A 13 in 1 Game Program - Games by EuroPress and Wols Inc.

**OOLog** ..... The Overlooked Objects Log is very similar to The Ultimate Messier Object Log, except it deals with the 45 objects in Brent Watson's excellent book, "Finder Charts of Overlooked Objects."

**SPAMfighter Standard 3.2.3** . If you are looking for a tool to remove spam from your inbox, look no further. Spamfighter is the tool you are looking for. Simple, reliable, and efficient. Spamfighter is using the power of more than 450.000 people that instantly



report if they receive a spam mail.

**Starter 5.6.1.39** ... Highly configurable and easy to use utility for managing your windows startup. One can choose which programs are allowed to run when Windows is starting up (Decent Startup Manager).

**Throttle Watch 2.0** Throttle Watch™ is a utility for detecting and reporting the CPU throttling activity in Pentium 4, Xeon, and Pentium M processors.

**Windows Media Player 10** .... designed to make it easy for you to discover, download, organize, and play your digital media—from music to video, pictures, and recorded TV.

**World Wind** ..... lets you zoom from satellite altitude into any place on Earth. Leveraging Landsat satellite imagery and Shuttle Radar Topography Mission data, World Wind lets you experience Earth terrain in visually rich 3D, just as if you were really there.

**Yahoo Messenger** Instant messaging allows you to quickly exchange messages with your online friends. Unlike e-mail, instant messages appear as soon they're sent. By downloading the Yahoo! Messenger application to your computer, you can send instant messages.

**YahooPOPs!** ..... an open-source initiative to provide free POP3 access to your Yahoo! Mail account. This application emulates a POP3 server and enables popular email clients like Outlook, Netscape, Eudora, Mozilla, Calypso, etc., to download email from Yahoo! accounts.

Each CD of the month contains approximately 20 programs and cost \$5.<sup>00</sup> to members. Additional programs may be added to the disk after printing of this newsletter. The shareware and freeware programs are distributed to customers free of charge. The \$5.<sup>00</sup> fee to members covers the cost of making the CD and any profit goes to the treasury of the FPCUG. The non-member price will remain \$10.<sup>00</sup>. If after reading the descriptions above, you would like an in-depth description of the software on the CD of the month or you wish to make a special request, contact one of the co-librarians via e-mail. The software librarians may be reached at [fpcug\\_librarian@fresnocomputerusers.org](mailto:fpcug_librarian@fresnocomputerusers.org)

You can also reach them through the the Web site of the Fresno PC Users Group at: <http://www.fresnocomputerusers.org>.

Contact Dean or Monica if you wish to purchase a CD at the General Meeting and would like to reserve your copy of the CD.

**ANY READER OF THIS NEWSLETTER IS WELCOME TO ORDER A CD.**

Quantities are available to other PC Users Groups. Interested groups should contact Dean or Monica through the addresses listed.

*The librarian sometimes adds extra software on the CD between the time this notice is published and the time of purchase at the General Meeting.*



**COMPUSA**

Thank you  
for hosting our  
**SIGs!**



**apcug** Member of  
The Association of  
Personal Computer User Groups

To find out more information about APCUG.

**See:** <http://www.apcug.net>

Don Cummins (APCUG rep)

[cumminsag@yahoo.com](mailto:cumminsag@yahoo.com)

# Digital Camera Scene Modes - What are all those symbols for?

By Larry Horn, Editor & Review Coordinator, [pcugsj@comcast.net](mailto:pcugsj@comcast.net),  
PC Users Group of New Jersey,  
[www.pcugsj.org](http://www.pcugsj.org)



You went out and purchased a digital camera for Christmas and now you have to learn how to use it. The instruction book mentions “Scene Modes” and you see a lot of funny icons on one of the dial of your camera so what are they and what do they do? The picture on the right is from an Olympus D8060 digital camera, so yours will probably look somewhat different but they are generally similar.

The first thing to remember is this a still a camera and you get a picture by having the right amount of light hit the film or light sensor in a digital camera. You do this by adjusting the size of the lens opening (Aperture), or the length of time the shutter is open (Shutter Speed ). How you adjust the two of these in tandem will create a different picture. Without going into a long photography course, I will briefly explain what each of these does.

The Aperture controls how much light is hitting the sensor at any instant and the depth of focus. If I want everything in the picture to be in focus, both near and far objects, I will choose a small aperture. If I want selective focus, for example taking a portrait with a blurred background, you adjust the camera the other way.

The Shutter Speed controls how long the shutter is open so the light can get to the sensor. For a sporting event where you want to stop the action, you would use a short shutter speed but if you want to burl the movement to imply motion, you would use a longer shutter speed. You would also use a very long shutter speed for night shots with motion you want to capture like fireworks.

How does this relate to Scene modes? In its Default setting, the camera guesses at the best exposure, adjusting the Aperture and Shutter Speed without really knowing what you are taking a picture of. It goes for an average setting. By selecting a “scene” on your camera, you are telling the camera what you are taking a picture of so it can make a better choice of how to set the camera. It generally gives more accurate and pleasing results than the default Auto mode.

What are some of the more common Scene Modes? I have listed them below and apologize for not drawing the actual icons but my art work is not that good.

- P Program or Auto:** This is the default where the camera makes all of the settings based upon an average.
- A Aperture Preference:** Here you set the aperture according to the effect you want and the camera sets the appropriate shutter speed.
- S Shutter Preference:** You set the shutter speed - fast for sports or slow for a motion- blur effect and the camera sets the appropriate aperture.
- M Manual:** With this setting you select everything with no help from the camera. Reserve this for experienced users who want to get creative.
- **My Mode:** This is an Olympus term which lets you set everything manually and then save those settings. This is useful if you are frequently taking pictures in a set location and lighting setup. An example would be if you frequently sell items on eBay and want to include pictures so you set up “stage” where you take your pictures and want to easily remember the correct settings.
- **Movie:** Many digital still cameras can now take short movies limited in length by the size of the memory card. They are low resolution and generally limited to only 1 or 2 minutes or less.



- **Night:** This sets a slow shutter speed to capture the available light and may also allow for the use of flash for a subject close to the camera.
- **Landscape:** This setting is self-explanatory.
- **Action/Sports:** This is really a shutter priority mode setting a high shutter speed to freeze the action.
- **Portrait:** Used for taking pictures of people with the background blurred.
- **Play:** This is usually a triangle similar to the play button on a CD player. It is used to view the pictures you have taken on the LCD screen.
- **Macro:** You would use this setting to take close-up pictures.

Some cameras, like my Nikon CoolPic 4100, do not have all of these icons on the main dial but rather have a setting that says SCENE which brings up a menu on the LCD screen where you can set them. The Nikon even has scene modes for Party/Indoor, Beach/Snow, Sunset, Museum, Fireworks and others. The Nikon also has an additional feature they call Assist Modes. These modes actually place lines over the image in the LCD screen to assist you in positioning the subject in a more pleasing way and/or line things up for panoramas or architecture. You might even find a Burst or Multi-Shot mode for firing off a set number of pictures in rapid succession. I used this to get some great action shots at a bull riding competition last year.

I suggest that you pick up a good book on basic photography when you get your camera. Even with the camera's help, good pictures require the picture taker to understand the basic principals of photography and graphic composition. We have reviewed several in the Cache. Digital or Film, it is still photography. Additional suggestions:

Check camera and printer manufacturers' web sites. They frequently have lessons and tips.

- Kodak is an example. Go to: <http://www.kodak.com> then click on the Taking Great Pictures box on the top of the page.
- Olympus also has lessons which are more geared toward their cameras for examples but they are still informative. [http://olympusdigitalschool.com/photo\\_lessons/index.html](http://olympusdigitalschool.com/photo_lessons/index.html)
- I like a monthly magazine called PC Photo <http://www.pcphotomag.com>
- PC World Magazine <http://pcworld.com> has newsletters that are very informative. <http://www.pcworld.com/resource/newsletters> One of the newsletters by Dave Johnson was the inspiration for this article.

I hope I have given you some enlightenment as to what Scene Modes are and what they do. I encourage everyone to read their camera's manual to see what is available. Then use the Scene Modes because by telling the camera what you are doing, the camera will use that information and do it for you. You don't have to know the details of how to adjust the settings. The end result is more successful pictures that you will be proud of.

*This article has been reprinted in its full content from the APCUG April 2005 PUSH articles.*



# How to Report Tech Problems to Get Answers

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor and Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Website, [ggoldberg@apcug.net](mailto:ggoldberg@apcug.net)

Using computers and technology means having questions and problems. But you can't get answers and solutions without asking the \*right\* questions. A little preparation can be a big help in solving annoyances, mysteries, and disasters.

## How to Report Tech Problems to Get Answers

The more we use computers and technology, the more questions we have and problems we need

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How to Report Tech Problems continued on Page 8

## How to Report Tech Problems continued from page 7

solved. But it's hard to get answers and solutions without asking the \*right\* questions and describing the problem at hand. We're specific when visiting the doctor or auto mechanic: we describe what's wrong and when it began. We may even imitate the noise our car makes for the mechanic.

But when faced with computer oddities and malfunctions we sometimes revert to unhelpful generalities such as "My email is broken" or "My printer stopped working" or "I get an error when I start Word". Problem reports such as these don't allow diagnosing a problem; at best, they elicit a response like "Tell me more".

It saves time to collect as much information as possible before asking for help. As a bonus, gathering problem details and considering relevant factors can often allow solving problems oneself!

Just as a doctor or mechanic needs details, someone analyzing a computer problem must know the environment in which it occurred. So describe your computer (hardware/software/networking/application/etc.) to provide context. Mention your operating system (Windows 98/ME/XP, Mac OS, Linux, etc.), what version of what application failed (Internet Explorer 6.0, MS Word XP, etc.), what Internet connection is used (dial or cable/DSL), and any other details that may help.

Don't omit details — it's better to have too much information than to miss a crucial factor. Sometimes it's worth capturing screen images showing a problem; tools for doing this will be described in a future article.

Other important steps in describing symptoms and getting help are:

Distinguish facts from guesses and interpretations.

If an error message was issued, write it down, word-for-word. Then check it for accuracy. (Often searching Google for the error message text or a distinctive chunk — entered in quotation marks — will yield information on a problem.)

Note what you did just before the problem occurred and whether anything else odd happened since you last rebooted and before the problem at hand.

Mention whether the problem happened before, and if so how you resolved it.

List whatever (hardware, software, settings, network, \*anything\*) changed recently.

Explain if you attempted to solve the problem and what resulted. (Remember that rebooting often cures problems, though without explaining them.)

Note where you've already looked for information (product manual or Help, company Web site or FAQ, etc.).

Reread your query imagining you know nothing about the problem except what's in the query. Add what's missing that someone else needs to know in order to help.

To help friends or service personnel respond to your question — and to let the question be filed and found — use a meaningful Subject line, not Help!, Urgent, or Question. Describe the context (e.g., Windows XP) and the problem (e.g., Windows Update never finds new patches).

To help your helper help you — Be clear about your overall goal, don't focus on an intermediate step you think is necessary — you may distract someone into addressing how you're trying to do something rather than what you actually want to do.

Ask for help in the right/best place. AARP's Computers and Technology Web board <http://community.aarp.org/rp-computers/start> hosts many people with deep and diverse experience who are most generous with their time offering help and advice. And the Internet hosts thousands of mailing lists and newsgroups specializing in every imaginable topic. Searching for find the best place to pose a question will get you better

and more complete answers and avoid your seeming like a novice for posting out-of-place queries.

As you work with an individual or a group, collaborate — don't try to overpower them. Be respectful, not belligerent; don't make them feel stupid even if you feel they are. They may have missed a detail, you may not have conveyed the whole story.

If you're working with someone at a company help desk, don't try to "pull rank" based on age or experience or professional credentials. Mention past interactions with the company, emphasizing positive outcomes.

Finally, a longish document from Eric Raymond — an influential leader of the "open source" (shared software development) movement — at <http://www.catb.org/~esr/faqs/smart-questions.html> provides useful tips, though it's a little too harsh in places for my taste.

But his comments on how to ask questions and where to seek help are interesting and helpful.



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*This article has been reprinted in its full content from the APCUG April 2005 PUSH articles.*



# The New, the Best, and the Worst

Collected by Pim Borman, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc., IN,

<http://swipcug.apcug.org/>

## Alternatives Revisited

Last September I wrote here about alternatives to Microsoft programs. I specifically recommended the free (Mozilla) Firefox as an alternative to Internet Explorer, and OpenOffice.org as a free replacement for MS Office. I also recommended the Linux-based Linspire operating system and programs library to replace MS Windows and virtually eliminate risks from MS-targeted viruses and worms. Linspire includes OpenOffice and Firefox as well as dozens of excellent multimedia, photo editing, productivity and entertainment programs. Hundreds of more specialized programs are available by subscription to its extensive library. Linspire is the most user-friendly of the many Linux distributions available and requires absolutely no knowledge of Linux on the part of the user.

The column was reprinted in several other PCUG newsletters and finally caught the eye of Microsoft. I received a letter from Aaron Coldiron, manager of Mindshare, the MS connection with the User Group community. The letter is too long to reprint here, but is available on our Web site at <http://swipcug.apcug.org/special/MSalts.htm>. Following are some quotes from the letter and my comments.

Coldiron wrote: *"I'm concerned that some user groups are pushing members to adopt software that they ultimately won't be happy with."* Pushing? Heaven forbid! Suggesting maybe.

**Quote:** *"First, Windows XP Service Pack 2 is available on CD for free, and has been since August. The CD order form may be found here [http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/updates/sp2/cdorder/en\\_us/default.msp](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/updates/sp2/cdorder/en_us/default.msp)."* Microsoft's issuance of XP-SP2 to correct weaknesses in Windows XP was not unlike a car company issuing a recall – for free – for a potentially dangerous brake design. Later in 2004 we received a supply of the CDs from the Mindshare program that we distributed to our members who asked for them.

**Quote:** *"Also, you may not know that Microsoft provides free technical support for Service Pack 2 should a user have any problems installing."* That is good to know.

**Quote:** *"Finally, you mention various incompatibilities with SP2. This isn't actually quite true. As you may know, Microsoft eliminated certain ways programs may access various resources throughout the operating system; we did this to tighten security and close loopholes that aren't officially supported programming functions. As a result, some programs which aren't designed to run under the tighter security protocols of SP2 may not function correctly (or at all) until the program is updated to a more recent version. There is a list of about 35 known incompatibilities on Microsoft's help site here <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?kbid=884130&product=windowsxpsp2>."* It is a point well taken, although it doesn't help if your peripheral or program suddenly doesn't work any longer.

Mr. Coldiron appended a copy of a letter he wrote earlier in response to a review of OpenOffice. In it he writes: *"For instance, we created the Works Suite of applications for consumers who don't need to do spreadsheet functions and can use the free Outlook*

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The New, The Best, and The Worst continued on Page 10

## The New, The Best, and The Worst continued from Page 9

*Express. Works 2005 can be bought for as little as \$69 major internet shopping sites.*” Well, yes, but OpenOffice is free, and in addition to its MS Word-compatible word processor it includes an Excel-compatible spreadsheet, a PowerPoint-compatible presentation manager, and simple database and drawing features. And as far as compatibility is concerned, I notice that Word 2002 needs a conversion utility to display older versions of Word, including some available in Works.

Also: *“Microsoft Office is the gold standard in interoperability. I’m sure you could think of a long list of features you love given a few minutes. Here’s a few of the one’s I like. As I type this I’m using Word as my email editor, allowing me to use advanced word processing functions if I want. Icons appear next to names in the “to” bar telling me if they are on or offline and allowing me to instant message them. I use OneNote which allows me to drop in meeting dates and times directly into my note files. I can also send my scribbles from OneNote as the text of an email – in my own handwriting if I want. I can copy and paste PowerPoint Slides whole into other applications like email. For that matter, I can drop Excel spreadsheets into PowerPoint and even link them so that the PPT file updates automatically if I change the spreadsheet in Excel.”* Impressive, but few of us need that sort of software acrobatics.

Furthermore: *“Several studies have shown that Microsoft Office has a lower total cost of ownership than its free or open source competitors. It has a higher up front cost, but the additional productivity and lower support cost more than offset the higher up front cost.”* Maybe for a corporate office, but not for individuals.

Finally: *“I really hope that consumers choose the suite that best fits their needs, whether it is MS Office 2003, Works 2005, or one of our competitors’ products. I just wanted to point out that it isn’t just a case of the price out of the box. There are a lot more factors to consider.”* I agree.

## **The Bottom Line**

Few will argue that Microsoft Windows with its built-in Internet features is the Cadillac of operating systems. Not everyone needs or can afford a Cadillac and a less expensive brand may be preferable, maybe even a foreign make. The customer has the choice, based on his pocketbook and his needs. When shopping for a computer from a major manufacturer, other than Apple, it is impossible to avoid having to pay for the installation of the Microsoft Windows operating system and usually at least one of its software suites. Last September I wrote that Dell would start selling computers, in Europe only, without an operating system, leaving it to the buyer to add his own. It never happened. According to rumor, Microsoft threatened Dell that it would no longer make Windows available at an especially low, OEM price. That may, or may not, be true.

Currently only a few minor, obscure computer manufacturers, often outside the US, sell systems with one of the Linux distributions pre-installed, or nothing at all. You can order one on the Wal-Mart web site and find others through links on the Linspire or Xandros Web sites. Of course, you can also go to a local computer builder, or build your own.

It may take a long time to break the Microsoft monopoly in the US, where the Microsoft Windows and Office programs are deeply entrenched and anti-trust laws seem to be a quaint footnote to history. But overseas, and especially in rapidly developing countries such as China, there is greater open-mindedness toward new ideas, and Linux is making rapid inroads. It also helps that the open source nature of Linux allows foreign governments to make sure the software doesn’t contain backdoors for access by spy organizations.

I own three Wi-Fi connected computers. The newest, a 3.1GHz Dell Inspiron laptop uses Windows XP PRO. I update the operating system, MS Office, spyware, virus, and firewall programs with great regularity. I use it mostly for photo editing and financial programs, as well as to maintain the SWIPCUG Web site, because I am familiar with the programs. My older desktop, a 600 MHz Dell Dimension runs Windows ME but is mostly used to evaluate various Linux distributions on a dual boot basis.



The computer I use most is an old 600 MHz Celeron Inspiron laptop running Linspire 4.5 – Linux laptop edition. It sits on a small roll-around desk stand next to the La-Z-Boy in my den. It connects wirelessly with the router on the other end of the house. At any time I can check e-mail, get the latest news from all over the world, look up crossword puzzle clues with Google, maintain my checkbook file, and play FreeCell or BreakOut. All of that without fear of being attacked by worms and viruses. Seeing is believing – I add a photo taken by my wife Pat.

This article represents only the opinions of the author and not necessarily those of the Southwestern Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.



*This article has been reprinted in its full content from the APCUG April 2005 PUSH articles.*



# Tech News

By Sue Crane, Editor, Big Bear Computer Club, CA,

[www.bigbearcc.org](http://www.bigbearcc.org)

## Molecular Computer Would Be Faster, Smaller & Cheaper

Researchers from Hewlett-Packard have created devices called crossbar latches that can be used to perform calculations in microprocessors, the same function silicon transistors now have. Crossbar latches—which consist of a grid of microscopic wires linked by molecules at their intersections—are far smaller and, potentially, far cheaper to make because they are produced using processes more like inkjet printing than the etching processes required for today’s chips. HP has already shown how crossbar latches can be used in memory. “This is the final piece of the puzzle for building a molecular computer,” said Phil Kuekes, senior computer architect and primary inventor at HP’s Quantum Science Research (QSR) unit.

## New Laser Chip

Intel has created a chip containing eight continuous Raman lasers by using fairly standard silicon processes rather than the somewhat expensive materials and processes required for making lasers today. The lasers emit a continuous stream of light that can then be modulated, or chopped up, into a stream of impulses that can represent data. Cheap optical parts could not only lead to faster computers but also to less expensive and more accurate medical equipment.

## Faster Hard Drives

Dataslide proposes to abandon hard drive rotation in favor of vibration. A new prototype drive has a rectangular plate coated with magnetic storage material. A second plate hovers above with an array of lithographed heads on its surface. The lower plate vibrates from side to side at 600 times per second, a process that delivers data 10 times faster than a 15,000 rpm rotating disk drive. Dataslide envisions tweaking the product to increase the vibration to 100,000 a second — equivalent to a disk rotating at 12 million rpm.

## Your Cell Phone Could Infect your Car!

A report by IBM Security Intelligence Services predicts that viruses spreading to mobile phones, PDAs and wireless networks could infect the embedded computers that increasingly are used to run basic automobile functions. The average new car runs 20 computer processors and about 60 megabytes of software code, raising more opportunities for malfunctions.

## New Technology Could Bring Sight to the Blind

A small camera mounted on spectacles and connected to the optical nerve could restore the sight of thousands of people suffering from deterioration of the retina, European scientists said

**The New, Best and Worst cont. from Page 12**

Monday. The technology could also help people with the retinal disease macular degeneration, which can lead to loss of fine-detail sight and which is one of the leading causes of visual impairment in the United States. A camera mounted on glasses sends images to an electronic device implanted behind the eye and stimulates the optic nerve, which passes the information to the brain.

## **Edible origami by Canon?**

The Canon i560 inkjet printer doesn't just print menus Moto restaurant in Chicago; it prints menus you can eat. Homaru Cantu, the executive chef, prints menus and many other items onto edible starch-based paper. Instead of using the typical CMYK inks—cyan, magenta, yellow, and black—Cantu has filled the cartridges with edible solutions. Think SSSB: sweet, sour, bitter, and salty. Cantu uses combinations of these four liquids on the edible paper to create dishes unlikely to be found anywhere else, such as “baked map of Alaska” and a type of maki sushi that he wraps in flavored paper bearing images of sushi, instead of seaweed.

## **Antispam Tools Initiate New HIV Vaccines**

At the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Boston, workers for Microsoft Research said they have been using database and antispam software to identify previously unseen patterns in genetic mutations of HIV. The researchers said their work illustrates how medical experts can use machine-learning, data-mining and other software methods to sort through millions of strains of HIV and improve vaccines. By seeking out genetic patterns that could be used to train a person's immune system to fight the virus, they are already making headway, the researchers said. The group reported that the first of its proposed vaccine designs is already undergoing laboratory testing.

## **Databases Charged as Lax With Personal Information**

After the huge security breach by ChoicePoint, releasing personal information of 145,000 individuals earlier this month, Senators Charles Schumer and Patrick Leahy have requested hearings, declaing. “It's time to turn some sunshine on these developments so the public can understand how and why their personal information is being used,” A Schumer spokesman claimed that a researcher at a major corporation not involved in investigations was able to get the complete social security numbers from Westlaw's information database using the “People-Find” feature. Other companies have recently acknowledged that they may have inadvertently left consumer information unprotected. The payroll records of at least a dozen companies were exposed to the Internet by a flaw in the online W-2 service of PayMaxx. A flaw in the PayMaxx Web site exposed the financial information of customers' workers, the payroll-services firm acknowledges. In addition, cell-phone service provider T-Mobile has dealt with ongoing security problems that have led to the publication of celebrity Paris Hilton's personal information and the phone numbers of many Hollywood stars.

## **Microsoft Authentication Changes Again**

Customers who find themselves reinstalling Windows XP should be ready for a headache: Microsoft will no longer support activation over the Internet for PCs with Windows pre-installed. Intended to curb stealing and selling of Certificates of Authenticity, the new security measure will initially be limited to the Windows XP software preinstalled on systems shipped by the top 20 PC sellers.

## **Battlestar Galactica Available for FREE Download!**

In an unprecedented move, The SciFi channel has made Episode '33' (Season 1 Episode 1) of Battlestar Galactica (season 1 hasn't even concluded) available for free, uncut and commercial free, online at SciFi.com. Also available are deleted scenes from the series.

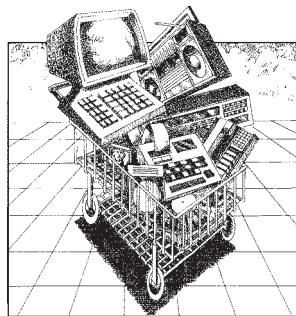
*This article has been reprinted in its full content from the APCUG April 2005 PUSH articles.*



# Bringing Home Baby — Getting Started with a New PC

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor and Columnist,  
AARP Computers and Technology Website,

[ggoldberg@apcug.net](mailto:ggoldberg@apcug.net)



Most purchases provide instant gratification — you buy, you bring home (or have delivered), you enjoy. Groceries, clothes, toaster, furniture, etc., don't involve study, burdensome chores, or required add-ons for safe usage. While it's worth reading a new car's owners manual, and installing home electronics sometimes requires assembly and cabling, no other burden matches that of a personal computer.

Wait, you might say: Plug it in, turn it on — simple. But reality isn't so simple. There's a lot to do before a PC can safely be used on the Internet, and still more is required to ensure long-term problem-free operation. This article outlines what to do; more info is available on this site and by Googling for specific terms used.

No matter where you buy your PC — brand-name Web site, electronics store, custom builder — get all CDs, manuals, registration cards, and warranty material for hardware/software that's installed. You may need this material to purchase discounted upgrade versions or to apply fixes.

Similarly, warranty material facilitates getting hardware/software support if you can't get satisfaction from your system's vendor. You may pay a little extra for software installation CDs or an image restore CD (which restores your hard drive's delivery-date contents); this is a worthwhile expense.

Assemble and turn on the system, but don't go online. Make sure the system boots properly and that all components operate. There's often a short "no questions asked" period during which dead or defective systems can be returned or exchanged easily. You may have trouble later getting problems resolved, and the vendor may insist on repairing the system instead of replacing it.

Note terms of rebates your purchase includes and submit them promptly. Many vendors won't pay rebate claims submitted even one day late.

Record hardware model and serial numbers for your PC and components. My PC builder provided all boxes and packing material, since it often contains useful information. Submit product registration material; though it may generate junk mail, it lets vendors notify you of problems or new updates/versions available.

At this point you may feel the need to get organized. Good idea! Just as you've likely organized files for auto repairs, health records, and such, your PC deserves a filing system. You can pick the structure — file cabinet folders, PC-specific storage containers, whatever — filing everything makes things much pleasanter later.

Part of my system — optional but valuable — is recording changes I make to my PC, software I install, upgrades I download, problems I have, configuration settings, and communications with vendors. So I can later refer to the log and be sure what happened. Some people print screen shots — image captures — of important configuration settings, for reference in case they must be recreated.

Plan how to separate data from software, to simplify backing up and restoring what's most valuable and hardest to recreate. This can be as simple as establishing a directory or folder in which you store all applications' data, or it may involve dividing your hard drive into data and software partitions. If you're replacing a PC, copy data you're

migrating onto the hard drive and ensure that it's complete and readable. Don't discard the old PC until you're sure you copied everything you need. Plan and implement a backup scheme and test it occasionally by restoring files.

A standard PC likely included a "software bundle". If you're lucky, this includes applications

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Bringing Home Baby continued on page 14

### Bringing home Baby continued from page 13

you want. In most cases, bundles are apps you'll never use. To remove clutter, consider deleting what you're sure you won't need, using application-specific uninstall tools or Windows' built-in Add/Remove Software tool.

If hard drive partitions have meaningless labels (e.g., "IBM Preload") you can set them to useful values ("Dad's PC", "C:", etc.). Run scandisk and disk defragmentation tools to ensure you're getting a clean start.

If you're working on a Windows XP system, install Service Pack 2 before going online. You can order this on CD from Microsoft or borrow a copy. This large set of fixes will protect you against many — but not all! — online risks by (among other things) upgrading and enabling Microsoft's software firewall.

If you're on a broadband (cable or DSL) connection, install a router between your ISP connection and your PC and configure it to be secure.

Now install/update/run anti-virus and anti-spyware software.

Run Windows Update (click Start, then All Programs) to download and install recent fixes. This may require repetitions and reboots until no additional fixes are available. Run this periodically — at least monthly.

You can ensure that device drivers (software links for hardware components) are current by visiting Web sites for your PC manufacturer and hardware components.

Install your applications one at a time with a "cooling off" period in between. This ensures that each works properly and helps identify problems. A good rule when working on PCs is to change one thing at a time, else you can't pinpoint what effects changes cause. After each installation, run any "check for updates" functions.

Consider downloading a Web browser to use instead of the built-in but insecure Internet Explorer. Many alternatives such as Mozilla Firefox improve security and provide better browsing functions. If you use IE, set options to be more secure than default values.

I'm not sure whether it's good or bad news that Windows is infinitely customizable. As you use different Windows functions and applications, browse their Options/Tools/Settings/Customization menus. You'll likely find simple changes that accommodate your preferences.

Finally — and in spite of warnings about risks — don't be afraid: enjoy your PC and the Internet it brings to you. But be careful and sensible. Don't open unexpected attachments; don't answer e-mailed requests for personal information; be cautious about installing software from unknown vendors.

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FPCUG SUPPORTING BUSINESS



Photo of Photo SIG Field Trip to Cat Haven, April 2, 2005. Taken by Ivan Raicevich

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*Please note the types of membership available:*

- Individual ..... \$30.00
- Additional Adult (same household) ..... \$22.50
- Junior (Under 18) ..... \$15.00
- Supporting Business ..... \$120.00

Benefits include the general meeting—usually on the first Monday of each month — Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that meet on schedules of their own, this newsletter, special offers and discounts, the Software Library available at the General Meetings, and more.

Info is available on-line at:

<http://www.fresnocomputerusers.org> or at the General Meeting.

# Web Sites

<http://www.aeb.org/recipes/index.html> ... Need a recipe for all those hard-boiled eggs? How about couscous egg salad? From low-carb and diet-conscious recipes to indulgent desserts, they're all good. Don't worry if you're an inexperienced cook. You'll find preparation tips, view them online or download them for later.

<http://www.rjlsoftware.com/software/entertainment> ... RJL Software features a treasure trove of free software and includes programs that mess with the screen and mouse. April Fool's Day is past, but these programs are designed to irritate friends and coworkers. Just install one on a computer and watch the fun begin! It's up to you how far you want to take the joke!

<http://www.smseverywhere.com/send.htm> ..... Text messages are a great way to keep in touch. They're also cheaper than making a call from your cell. SMS Everywhere takes text messaging up a notch. You can send messages to cell phones directly from the Web for free. You simply type in the number, your message and click send. The messages are anonymous. There's even a cheat sheet to help you learn quick abbreviations. Best of all, it's easier than using the little buttons on your cell phone! One drawback, though, you may need to know the recipient's cellular provider.

<http://www.jimbogames.com/> ..... This Web site might not have anything on Sony's new PlayStation. But, the games it features won't cost you a dime! You'll find Atari classics like Pac Man and Frogger. Or, if you prefer space games, there's Space Invaders and Asteroids. There's even a virtual version called Simon. If those aren't your style, there are also some fighting games and sports games. You can play tennis, golf, or even surf. You'll need the free Flash Player to access the games.

## Sanity Savers

Sanity Savers are members who have volunteered to help other members with their computing problems. SIG leaders also are a valuable information resource.

Do not expect long term counseling, house calls, or to get pirated copies of software recommended to you. Also do not expect any of the volunteers to help you if you are not the legitimate owner of a software package.

If you have any experience in an area of computing, feel free to add your name to the Sanity Savers' list. You do not need to be an expert to be listed as a Sanity Saver — patience and willingness to help count for a lot.

<b>DOS</b> .....	Dean Mason & Krikor Geyoghlian
<b>DeskTop Publishing, Graphics, Adobe Acrobat</b> .....	Susy Ball
<b>Excel</b> .....	Krikor Geyoghlian
<b>General Computing</b> .....	Bill Myers
<b>Internet Help</b> .....	Dean Mason
<b>Audio Help</b> .....	Robert Caraway
<b>Linux</b> .....	Ben Lutes
<b>Lotus 1-2-3</b> .....	Krikor Geyoghlian
<b>Medical</b> .....	Cecil Bullard
<b>MS Word</b> .....	Krikor Geyoghlian
<b>Office 97/2000/XP</b> .....	Krikor Geyoghlian & Laura Barnard
<b>Windows 3.x</b> .....	Krikor Geyoghlian
<b>Windows 95/98/XP</b> .....	Dean Mason & Krikor Geyoghlian

### Contact Info

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Regles Bellamy.	<a href="mailto:gjbella@hotmail.com">gjbella@hotmail.com</a>	Wilda Moller ....	<a href="mailto:wmoller@comcast.net">wmoller@comcast.net</a>
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Cecil Bullard .....	221.1491 .... <b>NA</b>	Chris Myers .....	<a href="mailto:chris@theadrive.com">chris@theadrive.com</a>
Robert Caraway	<a href="http://www.866djtunes.com">www.866djtunes.com</a>	Don Townley .....	<a href="mailto:donnjo@juno.com">donnjo@juno.com</a>
Don Cummins ..	<a href="mailto:cumminsag@yahoo.com">cumminsag@yahoo.com</a>	Jo Townley .....	<a href="mailto:donnjo@juno.com">donnjo@juno.com</a>
Ben Fulk .....	<a href="mailto:benfulk@theadrive.com">benfulk@theadrive.com</a>	David Van Dyne	<a href="mailto:dvdtoxic@sbcglobal.net">dvdtoxic@sbcglobal.net</a>
Krikor Geyoghlian .....	<a href="mailto:krikorg@sbcglobal.net">krikorg@sbcglobal.net</a>	<b>NA</b> =	info not available at current time



The Fresno PC Users Group (FPCUG) is a non-profit organization run by and for users of IBM compatible computers. The only membership eligibility requirement is an interest in computers.

Information and messages ----- [www.fresnocomputerusers.org](http://www.fresnocomputerusers.org)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President ----- Laura Barnard
- First Vice-President ----- Dean Mason
- Second Vice-President ----- Stan Barnes
- Secretary ----- Jo Townley
- Treasurer ----- Wilda Moller
- Director-At-Large
  - Regles Bellamy ----- Monica Braun
  - Bill Myers ----- Don Cummins

### COORDINATORS

- APCUG Representative ----- Don Cummins
- Co-Membership ----- Krikor Geyoghlian & Ben Fulk
- Co-Librarians ----- Dean Mason & Monica Braun
- Program Coordinator/Vendor Liaison ----- Don Cummins
- Publicity Chairperson ----- Krikor Geyoghlian
- Co-Publications ----- Susy Ball & Nancy Mason
- Review Coordinator ----- Don Cummins
- SIG Coordinator ----- Rob Rhodes
- WebMaster ----- Chris Myers
- Welcoming Committee Coordinator ----- Don Townley

### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP LEADERS

- Novice SIG ----- Bill Myers
- Troubleshooting Windows 3.1/95/98 SIG ----- Bill Myers
- Digital Photo SIG ----- Laura Barnard, Jo Townley & Nancy Mason

## Supporting Business Members

These area businesses support the Fresno PC Users Group through their business membership. We encourage you to patronize them and mention reading about them here.

#### Computer Age Consulting

Clovis ..... 323-2000

<http://dougbetts.com/>

#### The A Drive

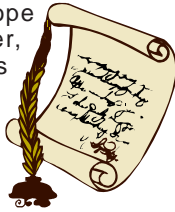
Fresno ..... 222-5842

[www.theadrive.com](http://www.theadrive.com)



# Fresno PC Users Group General Meetings

Meetings are held at the Hope Lutheran Community Center, 364 E. Barstow. The meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. and are open to the public (dates listed in text below). Guests are welcome. Members and guests are eligible to win prizes at the end of the meetings.



**Have a donation for the "Silent Auction"?**  
**Contact any Board of Director member with your donation.**

If you have suggestions for program topics or would like to submit a donation toward the silent auction, please contact the Program Coordinator Don Cummins voicemail at 496.3974 or send e-mail to: [cumminsag@yahoo.com](mailto:cumminsag@yahoo.com)

May 2, 2005

June 6, 2005

June 29, 2005

August 1, 2005

September 12, 2005

October 3, 2005

**May**  
Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Last Quarter	2 General Meeting (FPCUG)	3	4	5	6	7 Digital Photo SIG (FPCUG)
8 Mother's Day New Moon	9 Board Meeting (FPCUG)	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 First Quarter	17	18	19	20	21 Annual Prayer Day
22	23 Full Moon	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 New Moon Day (Chorus)	31	<small>           1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12            13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31         </small>		<small>           1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12            13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31         </small>	

**June**  
Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<small>           1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12            13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31         </small>	<small>           1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12            13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31         </small>	<small>           1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12            13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31         </small>	1	2	3	4 Digital Photo SIG (FPCUG)
5	6 General Meeting @ FPCUG New Moon	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 Board Meeting (FPCUG)	14 Flag Day	15 First Quarter	16	17	18
19 Father's Day	20	21 Summer Solstice	22 Full Moon	23	24	25
26	27	28 Last Quarter	29	30		

# Calendar for the Fresno PC Users Group

**May 2005**

*Month in Review*

**May**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | <b>RAM Pages</b><br>Deadline   |
| 2 | <b>7:30 PM</b> General Meeting:<br>Epson Printer,<br>Scanner, Paper and<br>Ink Demo.<br><b>Presenter:</b> Epson<br>Corp. |
| 7 | <b>10:30 AM</b> Digital Photography  |
| 9 | <b>7:00 PM</b> Board of Directors<br>Meeting   |

**June 2005**

*Month in Review*

**June**

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | <b>RAM Pages</b><br>Deadline  |
| 4  | <b>10:30 AM</b> Digital Photography   |
| 6  | <b>7:30 PM</b> General Meeting: Home<br>Inventory (for insur-<br>ance records) Demo.<br><b>Presenter:</b> ? |
| 13 | <b>7:00 PM</b> Board of Directors<br>Meeting  |
| 29 | <b>7:30 PM</b> July's General<br>Meeting Microsoft  |

