



# The DataBus

Volume 30 Issue 9

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

February 2006

Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) Member

**Location Changed  
for January...  
Parking Permits  
Available...  
See page 4**

## January 31 General Meeting Topic **VoIP—an Overview** **Todd Collins — Guest Speaker**

### Interested in reducing your phone bills?

We invite you to come to the General Meeting of the Dayton Microcomputer Association on Tuesday January 31 in Room 116 of Health Sciences Building at Wright State University at 7:30pm. Visitors are always welcome. (Parking Passes can be purchased at the meeting... see page 4.)

If you've never heard of VoIP, get ready to change the way you think about long-distance phone calls. VoIP, or Voice over Internet Protocol, is a method for taking analog audio signals, like the kind you hear when you talk on the phone, and turning them into digital data that can be transmitted over the Internet.

How is this useful? VoIP can turn a standard Internet connection into a way to place free phone calls. The practical upshot of this is that by using some of the free VoIP software that is available to make Internet phone calls, you are bypassing the phone company (and its charges) entirely.

VoIP is a revolutionary technology that has the potential to completely rework the world's phone systems. VoIP providers like Vonage have already been around for a little while and are growing steadily. Major carriers like AT&T are already set-

ting up VoIP calling plans in several markets around the United States, and the FCC is looking seriously at the potential ramifications of VoIP service.

Above all else, VoIP is basically a clever "reinvention of the wheel." In this article, we'll explore the principles behind VoIP, its applications and the potential of this emerging technology, which will more than likely one day replace the traditional phone system entirely.



**This person is using VoIP to talk to a friend in another state.**

### Calling

The interesting thing about VoIP is that there is not just one way to place a call. There are three different "flavors" of VoIP service in common use today:

**ATA** - The simplest and most common way is through the use of a device called an ATA (analog telephone adaptor). The ATA allows you to connect a standard phone to your computer or your Internet connection for use with VoIP. The ATA is an analog-to-digital converter. It takes the analog signal from your traditional phone and converts it into digital data for transmission over the Internet. Providers like Vonage and AT&T CallVantage are bundling ATAs free with their service. You simply crack the ATA out of the box, plug the cable from your phone that would normally go in the wall socket into the ATA, and you're ready to make VoIP calls. Some ATAs may ship with additional software that is loaded onto the host computer to configure it; but in any case, it is a very straightforward setup.

**IP Phones** - These specialized phones look just like normal phones with a handset, cradle and buttons. But instead of having the standard RJ-11 phone connectors, IP phones have an RJ-45 Ethernet connector. IP phones connect directly to your router and have all the hardware and software necessary right onboard to handle the IP call. Soon, Wi-Fi IP phones will be available, allowing subscribing callers to make VoIP calls from any Wi-Fi hot spot.

*(Continued on page 10)*

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# DMA® MEETINGS

The meetings start at 7:30 p.m. Guests are always welcome. Visit us on the web at [www.dma.org](http://www.dma.org) or email to [info@dma.org](mailto:info@dma.org) for information or directions.

Our monthly General Meeting consists of a brief opening, SIG and committee reports, announcements, and a 60-90 minute program by a guest speaker, followed by door prizes for members. After the meeting the group adjourns to a local eating establishment to socialize.

Due to construction difficulties our meeting will be held on the campus of Wright State University (see map next page.) For last minute announcements always check [www.dma.org](http://www.dma.org)

# DMA® CONTACT INFORMATION

## GENERAL

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A=Trustee 3 yrs from 9/03 B=Trustee 3 yrs from 9/05 C=Trustee 3 yrs from 9/04

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Computerfest®	Open	

**ATTENTION MEMBERS**  
**The Location has been**  
**changed for the**  
**General Meetings**  
**SEE NEXT PAGE**  
**for instructions**

Drawn by Dave Lundy Revised Dec. 4, 1996

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The **DataBus** is published monthly by the Dayton Microcomputer Association, Inc. (DMA®).

**The deadline for submitting material is the first Monday of the month of publication.**

Submit files to the editors ([Editor@dma.org](mailto:Editor@dma.org)) by "attaching" them to email in one of the following formats: (in order of preference) MS Word, Wordperfect, or .TXT (with line breaks). The editors reserve the right to edit for clarity, length & style, and to hold or reject any portions of submitted copy.

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**Best User Group Coverage**

- Large Newsletters,

'98 & '99



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## DMA® SIGs

DMA® sponsors numerous Special Interest Groups (SIGs) catering to the individual interests of its members.

Want to start a new SIG? Contact a DMA® Officer or Trustee!

**Amateur Radio SIG** meets the 1st Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at 119 Valley St. Contact George Ewing, (937) 667-3259 [ewing@dma.org](mailto:ewing@dma.org)

**Apple-Dayton SIG** meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Huber Heights Athletic Foundation, 5367 Fishburg Rd, Huber Heights. Contact David Thomas, (937) 233-2001 [dbthomas@mac.com](mailto:dbthomas@mac.com) or see [www.dma.org/appledaytonsig](http://www.dma.org/appledaytonsig)

**Classic Computer SIG** meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month, 3:00 p.m. at the Sugar Grove Church, 7875 Kessler Frederick Rd, Tipp City, 45371. Contact Gary Ganger, (937) 849-1483 [ganger@dma](mailto:ganger@dma)

**Computers, the Market and Money SIG** is currently in hiatus and looking for a new SIG Leader. For information contact Gary Turner [turnerg@dma.org](mailto:turnerg@dma.org)

**Digital Photography SIG** meets 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at Wright State University. Contact Nancy Christolear, (937) 439-1735 [njc@dma.org](mailto:njc@dma.org) or see [www.dma.org/photosig](http://www.dma.org/photosig)

**Gaming SIG** meets monthly at the DMA Lan-party held at 119 Valley St. Contact David Neely [nherzhul@hotmail.com](mailto:nherzhul@hotmail.com) or Frank McClain [sonicboom86@aol.com](mailto:sonicboom86@aol.com) for more information.

**Genealogy/Family History SIG** meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at 119 Valley St. Contact Darlene Sye via email at [genelady@gemair.com](mailto:genelady@gemair.com)

**Hands-On-SIG** meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tues. and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at 119 Valley St. Contact George Ewing, (937) 667-3259 [ewing@dma.org](mailto:ewing@dma.org)

**Software Development SIG** meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday each month at 6:30 p.m. at 119 Valley St. SIG leader: Keith Wire (419) 634-3650 [kwire@eim-inc.com](mailto:kwire@eim-inc.com) Program Coordinator: Mark Erbaugh (740) 845-1877 [mark@microenh.com](mailto:mark@microenh.com) More information: Dale Childs (937) 276-3786 [dalechilds@earthlink.net](mailto:dalechilds@earthlink.net)

**Linux SIG** meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in Wright State's Russ Engineering Center. Contact Tony Snyder, (937) 275-7913 [www.dma.org/linuxsig](http://www.dma.org/linuxsig)

**Perl Mongers** meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday each month at 7:00 p.m. at 119 Valley St. Contact Paul Alhquist [pea@ahlquist.org](mailto:pea@ahlquist.org) or see <http://dayton.pm.org>

**Pizza SIG** - The unofficial snack or meal of the computer enthusiast is enjoyed following each DMA® General Mtg. at **CiCi's Pizza**, 2750 N. Fairfield Rd. Beaver Creek (next to OfficeMax, behind Chili's at southeast corner of the intersection of North Fairfield & New Germany-Trebein Roads). Open to all, it is the "Pizza SIG". Come join us!



More SIG information is available online at [www.dma.org/sigs.shtml](http://www.dma.org/sigs.shtml).

# ATTENTION...New Location in January

**DMA will be meeting in Room 116 of the Health Sciences Building on the campus of Wright State**

If coming via I-675, get off at the Fairfield Rd Exit, and turn LEFT off the exit ramp if coming up from the south (e.g., from Kettering or Centerville), turn RIGHT off the ramp if coming from the north (e.g., Springfield -- ). Fairfield Rd dead-ends into the WSU campus, but to avoid the Nutter Center (called the "Nut House" locally), turn left and go to the main entrance. WSU is on the #13 and #1 bus lines, with service to 9:45 PM. As WSU will not be in session, we don't anticipate any problems, but please check [www.dma.org](http://www.dma.org) for last minute announcements. To see more maps of the campus go to: [www.wright.edu/aboutwsu/maps/](http://www.wright.edu/aboutwsu/maps/)

## Main Campus Area

Visitors to main campus may park in visitor lots 2, 6, or 16 (shaded grey) for an hourly fee. **Parking areas shaded green are permit-only lots.** For more parking information, visit the web site: [www.wright.edu/admin/parking/](http://www.wright.edu/admin/parking/)

## SEE "PARKING RESTRICTIONS" BELOW

For an "active" version of the map below visit [www.wright.edu/aboutwsu/maps/map\\_bw1.html](http://www.wright.edu/aboutwsu/maps/map_bw1.html)

- CA Creative Arts Center
- DL Paul Laurence Dunbar Library
- FH Fawcett Hall
- FW Fred White Health Cntr
- HS** Health Sciences Bldg
- MH Millett Hall
- MS Medical Sciences
- OH Oelman Hall
- SU Student Union
- RC Russ Engineering Center

### Parking Restrictions

When school is not in session, parking regulations are lightly (or not) enforced. In general, you can park with relatively little risk where you wish except for zones designated as follows:

"No Parking" (duh!),

"Handicapped Parking" (unless you have a Handicapped license plate or sticker on your vehicle),

"University Vehicles Only," or

"Reserved." (Reserved parking spaces have a brown sign in front of them designating them as such.)



## Parking Permits

WSU has agreed to issue temporary parking permits for the DMA Meetings. These permits cost two dollars each and are good for the entire Winter Quarter [if you purchased a permit in the Fall... you'll need to spend \$2 for another temporary permit.] In other words, two bucks gets you a parking pass for all meetings in January, February and March. The alternative is to take a chance and park illegally.

To obtain the parking permit: ...For the January meeting, write "DMA" prominently on an ordinary 8½ X 11" sheet of paper. Stick it in your windshield wiper.

When you get to the meeting, fill out an application at the desk in the front of room 116 Health Sciences Building when you pick up your raffle ticket. Pay your \$2 at that time. We'll have hang tags for you.

You cannot get the permit if you are a WSU

student, faculty, or staff member! You should have your own parking pass. All applications will be checked against the WSU student and employee data base.

Not going to a meeting? Lend your tag to someone who is.

Although parking regulations are not enforced as stringently after 5:00 p.m., there is some enforcement. Two dollars is cheap insurance.

# The Desk of the President

Happy New Year!

Hope all of you that came to the Holiday dinner enjoyed the event. Thanks go out to Jim Ullom for arranging the dinner this year. If you were unable to attend it was an evening of good food and fellowship. We had a special raffle to raise funds to go towards the purchase of a new projector. We raised about \$300.00, so I am sure you will be seeing more raffles in the future. Thanks to Bob Kwater for arranging for those special raffle prizes and Door prizes.

I know many of you have received new computers and computer items this holiday. Please consider OTAP as you decide what to do with your older computer items. OTAP is now accepting computers of 300MHz or more and other items that are supportable by those computers. This is a good way clear space for the new things and help out OTAP, DMA, and the environment all at the same time.

If you are interested in volunteering DMA has an opening on the Board of Trustees just waiting for you! Talk to a Trustee if you are interested. OTAP is looking for someone to help with record keeping activities. We would like to thank Gladys Campion for taking on the role of OTAP Director... she has been doing the duties for several months and has now accepted the title. Please see Gladys if you would like to volunteer to help.

Gaston Brown is leading LANFEST. Details on the next LANFEST will be announced at SIG meetings through the month and in the upcoming Databus newsletters. Thanks Gaston!

Congratulations to all the volunteers of the month in 2005 and to Gladys Campion for being named Volunteer of the Year.

Congratulations to former DMA President... Lisa Singh... The winner of the special raffle

for a laptop that was 'donated' by OTAP.

In an effort to continue having good presentations at the General Meetings... we will be experimenting "moving" the meeting dates to accommodate the representatives of various companies... Please keep watch in the Databus and on the web site for updates/changes. Some of these meetings will be "Special event" meetings in addition to our regular ones.

There will not be regular General Meeting in February.. Instead there will be a special Meeting on Monday March 6 with the folks from smart computing Magazine as our guests. Look for more details next month in the Databus.

Now a note to those of you who know a long time member, Bill Jacob. Bill had a stroke in early December and is working through rehab at Miami Valley Hospital.

Peace - gt

## DMA Celebrates the Season



Gladys Campion receives Volunteer of the Year award from DMA President Gary Turner



The setting was warm and friendly...



Gary and Bob do their usual Santa bit... with a twist

The twist was a special raffle to help raise funds for a new SIG projector.. Raffle raises nearly \$300



More photos on page 8 or visit

[www.dma.org/gallery/view\\_album.php?set\\_albumName=2005\\_Holiday\\_Dinner](http://www.dma.org/gallery/view_album.php?set_albumName=2005_Holiday_Dinner)

# Club Purpose and Membership

The Dayton Microcomputer Assn., Inc. (DMA®) is an Ohio non-profit organization dedicated to the education of, and providing information to, microcomputer users and the general public. DMA® members use and own a wide variety of computers and possess various levels of computer experience.

Annual dues are \$25 for regular members, which includes a subscription to *The DataBus* newsletter, and \$12.50 for associate members living at the same address. Associate memberships must run concurrently with a regular membership. A membership application is located on page 23, or can also be downloaded from our web site at [www.dma.org/dma-app.shtml](http://www.dma.org/dma-app.shtml)

## OTAP Bridging the GAP

Ohio Technology Access Project is a rather long name for a very worthy cause. OTAP is part of DMA's effort to "bridge the digital divide". We are one of only a few Microsoft Authorized Refurbishers in Ohio. The Ohio Technology Access Project is a 501c(3) non-profit organization. This all volunteer group of devoted people generously give of their talents & skills.

**Bridging** – Our mission is to place computers and internet access into the hands of those with the most need and the least opportunity. We place computer systems with schools, churches, charities, individuals, and families. Most of our clients are disabled or financially disadvantaged. Each one tells us how a computer system would improve their education, their opportunities, even their quality of life.

**Refurbishing** – Many of the computer systems we work with are donated by individuals. Some are from organizations or companies. They come in all speeds, shapes, and sizes. The equipment is evaluated and tested for functionality. Repairs and modifications are made if necessary so that the

system matches our standards.

**Recycling** – We are able to reclaim and reuse many of the computer parts. Hardware that is below speed or not repairable is disassembled and the pieces are sorted and recycled. We work hard to avoid adding any materials to local landfills.

**Donating** – For individual donors, OTAP offers a second life for that slightly outdated system that is taking up valuable space on your desk or dining room table. We handle each system with care and find it a good home. For corporations, we ease the upgrade process, help avoid landfill costs, and provide a great opportunity to contribute to the community.

**Training** – The best kept secret of OTAP is the training. For those who are computer-phobic, we provide easy procedures and plenty of assistance while you learn to take apart and rebuild computers. Students working towards certification can get that valuable hands-on experience. Volunteering at OTAP is always an opportunity to stay current, upgrade your skills, or debate some obscure compatibility issue.

OTAP is open on Saturdays from 10:00 until 2:00. Any DMA member is welcome to stop by and have a look at the process. You can reach us by phone at (937) 222-2755 or on the web at [www.otap.org](http://www.otap.org).



**Users helping Users  
Volunteer  
Be Part of the Solution**

### DMA has need for eBay Coordinator

Occasionally there are donations given to OTAP that do not meet the needs of our clients.. But they still have plenty of life. Sometimes it's a scanner... a printer... or a bit of history like the machine pictured here.

We know that somewhere out there a person may be looking for a particular item... DMA and OTAP would like to

offer these items to a worthy home via eBay... But we need someone to take this opportunity and run with it...

So if you have experience sell on eBay.. Or have the desire help develop a DMA presence on the auction site... contact the OTAP Management Team at (937) 222-2755 or via email [otap@otap.org](mailto:otap@otap.org)

By way can you name the machine shown here?



Hint: named after company founder's daughter.

# Genealogy SIG sets Calendar

**Genealogy/Family History SIG** usually meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at 119 Valley St. Contact Darlene Syc via email at [genelady@gemair.com](mailto:genelady@gemair.com)

January 26 Scanfest (bring your photos and documents)

February 23 Dayton Library — Shawna Woodard guest speaker

March 23 Native American Heritage

April 22 Field Trip to Fort Wayne

May 15 (Monday) Family Heritage Center —Fairborn

**Digital Photography SIG** meets 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at Wright State University. Contact Nancy Christolear, (937) 439-1735 njc @ dma.org or see [www.dma.org/photosig](http://www.dma.org/photosig)

Almost 20 people braved the bitter cold to attend the December Digital Photography SIG meeting. For the past several months, we've posted a photo in our gallery and challenged people to see what they can do to improve it. A few people tackled this month's challenge with widely varying results, which you can see at [www.snipurl.com/kggc](http://www.snipurl.com/kggc).

For the main presentation, Nancy Christolear demonstrated digiKam <[www.digikam.org](http://www.digikam.org)>, a free open-source photo management application for Linux. It has many of the same capabilities as Picasa and Corel Photo Album 6 that Dave demonstrated last month, plus a few neat tricks of its own — many of them via optional plugins.

She showed a technique for bringing out details in the shadows of a picture using the brightness adjustment curve and shaping it similar to the one shown here. In addition, Ken Greene showed a couple photo restorations he had done. On one, he had removed many bad creases or scratches, and the other he had nicely colorized. Leo and Mary Ann Parts showed some of their Christmas

pictures.

Dean Miller suggested browsing pictures of accidents at <[www.micom.net/oops](http://www.micom.net/oops)>. Most, but not all, are aeronautical. Some are pretty hilarious! Dean also showed some fall pictures from his recent trip to West Virginia. Jim Sherer showed some very nice pictures of snow and cats he had taken at Carriage Hill Farm, and one of them was published. Way to go, Jim! Nancy recommended the "Digital Photography Bible, Second Edition" by Ken Milburn & Ron Rockwell. Dave Lundy reminded us of the Oct. 6 Corel presentation DVDs he had made. Gary Turner mentioned the DMA Holiday Dinner next week and had tickets for sale. GT also passed out PC Club flyers for those who missed the main DMA meeting Tuesday. Finally, Dean won the door prize — a copy of NTI CD & DVD Maker 7

## Last Month's "History" Question



The 'sewing machine' was the very first Compaq computer. When this machine came out, there were no clones. An IBM compatible had the three magic letters on the case. Period. Part of the reason was that IBM had published the source code for their BIOS so that they could claim that anyone who brought out their own BIOS had infringed on IBM's copyrights and would have to stop.

Since IBM's Acorn (the code name for the PC) team had sourced off-the-shelf parts for the PC to keep costs down and time-to-production to a minimum, theoretically anybody else could duplicate IBM's hardware and bring out their own pc. Except for the BIOS problem, without which you could not be guaranteed 100% compatibility.

Just try to tell a hacker that he can't possibly do something. IBM should have know better. The guys from Phoenix used two sets of programmers -- one who had access to IBM's source code and another who could be proven in court to be source code virgins. The first group made a list of every-

thing the BIOS did for a specific set of inputs, but carefully avoided any mention of the original code.

The second group then took all those notes and wrote their own BIOS that performed exactly the same as IBM's, but completely from scratch without any possible contamination from IBM. They then offered their BIOS up for sale, and Compaq was the first company to bring out a 100% compatible IBM clone. The 'luggable', as it was sometimes called, was the first IBM clone that could run 100% of the software that you could run on an IBM-branded pc. It was the beginning of the end of IBM's hardware monopoly and the start of a multi-billion dollar industry.

**Introduced:** November 1982

**Released:** March 1983

**Price:** US\$3590 (two floppy system)

**How many?** 53,000 in 1983, the first year

**Weight:** 28 pounds.

**CPU:** Intel 8088, 4.77MHz

**RAM:** 128K, 640K max

**Display:** 9" monochrome monitor built-in

80 X 25 text

Color graphic card

**Storage:** Two 320K 5-1/4" disk drives

**Ports:** 2 parallel, 1 serial

**OS:** MS-DOS

## OTAP Surplus

The Ohio Technology Access Project has surplus computer parts and would like to delay them from entry into our landfills. If you have a need for these items, please give them a good home:

### \$1 Store

- 10 Megabit NICs (TP +/- 10base2)
- IDE hard drives < 1.2 Gigabyte
- Phone modems unknown DCE speed
- CD-ROM read only drives < 12x speed
- 40 pin IDE cables (40 conductor)
- Power cables
- 14 inch monitors
- PS2 & AT keyboards
- PS/2 mice

### \$2 Store

- 100 Megabit NICs
- IDE drives 1.2 to 2 Gigabyte
- 56k/v90/v92 phone modems w/out drivers
- CD-ROM read only drives 12x - 24x

### \$5 Store

- IDE drives 2 to 3 Gigabyte.

### Printers and Scanners Also Available

Store hours:

Wednesday & Saturday, 9 AM - 3 PM

# DMA Celebrates the Season



There was good food.. And plenty of it...



Awards were also given to Gaston Brown and Susan Kendall as Volunteers of the Month



This group could only mean trouble (DMA Board of Trustees)



Music was provided by Dave Lundy



Darlene Sye waiting for her name to be drawn.....

New members mingled with old...



# 10 Years Later MP3s Hotter than Ever

By Dan Woodard, DMA member

Happy 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, MP3! It was just over 10 years ago, on September 9, 1995 that the very first real time software MP3 player, Winplay 3, was released. To celebrate, I decided to finally take the plunge and purchase my first portable MP3 player, an RCA Lyra, model RD1071A. At just \$20, I couldn't resist. It was advertised as refurbished, but it also came with a full 6 month warranty.

The Lyra RD1071A operates off of a single AAA battery. It is just over 3/4" thick, slightly over 2" wide, and just under 2" tall. Even with battery installed, it weighs just over 1 ounce. The SD/MMC slot dominates the left side of the unit, which also has a tiny lock/unlock switch that puzzled me at first. Since it was next to the MMC slot, I thought that perhaps it kept the card from coming out and getting lost. Instead, it turns out that by putting it in the locked position, your Lyra won't accidentally come on when the buttons on the front are pushed, such as in luggage on an airplane.

On the front of the unit, from left to right we have the stop/off button, last/rewind button, next/fast forward, and play/on button. I really liked being able to fast forward and rewind through individual tracks, and didn't expect that feature in a budget player. The LCD display has two lines for track and album information, and also shows the battery level at a glance. The back of the unit has the USB hookup, which is covered with a rubber flap.

The unit came with some newfangled headphones that needed to ride on the back of your ears, sort of like a "clip-on". I didn't care much for them. It also had the required USB cable, and came with Musicmatch Jukebox 9 software and drivers for the unit.

The Musicmatch Jukebox software was a breeze to use. After I connected to the Internet, I simply inserted each CD, and the system entered all the song informa-

tion for me. I was a bit surprised to find that the digital ripping speed was only about 7x on my older CD-ROM drive, and 30x on my newer DVD burner.

This model can only deal with 200 or fewer song files on the internal memory or any SD card. This means that even if you use CD quality, you won't have much use for cards larger than about 512 MB, unless you join together song files to trick the machine. (2 audio files put together looks like 1 longer music file to the machine) Now 200 songs is usually about 10 hours of music, so this isn't as bad as it sounds. You can get around this by using multiple MMC cards to store your songs. I really also wish the unit had been large enough to use a AA battery. (~24 hours instead of 8-10 hours of playback) One of the worst drawbacks didn't have anything to do with the machine, it was just the fact that customer service for RCA is not a toll free phone number.

On the positive side, it does have excellent sound quality. Volume goes up enough even to satisfy those who are hard of hearing. I also really liked the MP3 Pro support, which let me get CD quality sound at 64 kilobits (8 kilobytes) per second. I was able to get FM radio quality at 32 kilobits. To put this in perspective, uncompressed sound on a retail music CD is recorded at 1,400 kilobits per second. (175 kilobytes) This means that the MP3 Pro format gives CD quality music by

compressing the files to about 4.5% of their former size. You can really pack quite a few songs onto a CD or DVD going this route.

Summary: A great low end player, still good for the money, despite its limitations.

Rating: 8 out of 10

Requirements: ~ 400 MHZ CPU, Windows '98, USB port

Reviewed: Athlon XP 2800+, 512 MB RAM, 128 MB video, Win XP

Best Price: \$24 at geeks.com

Detailed Specifications: [www.rca.com](http://www.rca.com)

Lots of consumer feedback at [groups.yahoo.com/group/rca-lyra-mp3/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rca-lyra-mp3/) (5,000+ members)



**DLF → 6**  
DAYTON LANFEST

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

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Location - Montgomery County Fairgrounds

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DLF6 - You have to be a Fool not to be there!!!

Thank you for your attention.

Gaston Brown

Chairman DLF 6

[gastonb@totalfiregroup.com](mailto:gastonb@totalfiregroup.com)

## VoIP (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

**Computer-to-computer** - This is certainly the easiest way to use VoIP. You don't even have to pay for long-distance calls. There are several companies offering free or very low-cost software that you can use for this type of VoIP. All you need is the software, a microphone, speakers, a sound card and an Internet connection, preferably a fast one like you would get through a cable or DSL modem. Except for your normal monthly ISP fee, there is usually no charge for computer-to-computer calls, no matter the distance.

### Try it Yourself

If you're interested in trying VoIP, then you should check out some of the free VoIP software available on the Net. You should be able to download and set it up in about three to five minutes. Get a friend to download the software, too, and you can start tinkering with VoIP to get a feel for how it works. One place to look is [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com).

But chances are good you are already making VoIP calls any time you place a long-distance call. Phone companies use VoIP to streamline their networks. By routing thousands of phone calls through a circuit switch and into an IP gateway, they can seriously reduce the bandwidth they're using for the long haul. Once the call is received by a gateway on the other side of the call, it is decompressed, reassembled and routed to a local circuit switch.

Although it will take some time, you can be sure that eventually all of the current circuit-switched networks will be replaced with packet-switching technology (more on packet switching and circuit switching later). IP telephony just makes sense, in terms of both economics and infrastructure requirements. More and more businesses are installing VoIP systems, and the technology will continue to grow in popularity as it makes its way into our homes.

### VoIP Features

The Forrester Research Group predicts that nearly 5 million U.S. households will have

VoIP phone service by the end of 2006. Perhaps the biggest draws to VoIP for the home users that are making the switch are price and flexibility.

### Flexibility

With VoIP, you can make a call from anywhere you have broadband connectivity. Since the IP phones or ATAs broadcast their info over the Internet, they can be administered by the provider anywhere there is a connection. So business travelers can take their phones or ATAs with them on trips and always have access to their home phone. Another alternative is the softphone. A softphone is client software that loads the VoIP service onto your desktop or laptop. The Vonage softphone has an interface on your screen that looks like a traditional telephone. As long as you have a headset/microphone, you can place calls from your laptop anywhere in the broadband-connected world.

### Price

Most VoIP companies are offering minute-rate plans structured like cell phone bills for as little as \$30 per month. On the higher end, some offer unlimited plans for \$79. With the elimination of unregulated charges and the suite of free features that are included with these plans, it can be quite a savings.

Most VoIP companies provide the features that normal phone companies charge extra for when they are added to your service plan. VoIP includes:

- Caller ID
- Call waiting
- Call transfer
- Repeat dial
- Return call
- Three-way calling

There are also advanced call-filtering options available from some carriers. These features use caller ID information to allow you make a choice about how calls from a particular number are handled. You can:

- Forward the call to a particular number

Send the call directly to voicemail

Give the caller a busy signal

Play a "not-in-service" message

Send the caller to a funny rejection hotline

With many VoIP services, you can also check voicemail via the Web or attach messages to an e-mail that is sent to your computer or handheld. Not all VoIP services offer all of the features above. Prices and services vary, so if you're interested, it's best to do a little shopping.

For more information on Voice Over IP try going to these web sites...

### Howstuffworks "How VoIP Works"

Voice over Internet Protocol lets you make free long-distance phone calls using your computer. It's essentially a phone network that uses the Internet ...

[computer.howstuffworks.com/ip-telephony.htm](http://computer.howstuffworks.com/ip-telephony.htm)

**Skype** - The whole world can talk for free. Peer to peer voice service. Users may call landlines and cellphones for a fee; users may call each other for free.

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

**Packet8...** is a VOIP Service Provider and offers Internet Phone Service for residential and business consumers who have broadband access.

[www.packet8.net/](http://www.packet8.net/)

**Vonage** - The Broadband Phone Company

Use your high-speed Internet connection to make all of your phone calls with Vonage digital phone service.

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

### Voice over IP Calculator

Free VoIP resources, including online bandwidth calculators, white papers, books, a directory and a forum.

[www.voip-calculator.com/](http://www.voip-calculator.com/)

# Tech News

By Sue Crane, Editor

Big Bear Computer Club [sue.crane@charter.net](mailto:sue.crane@charter.net)

(About 1,111 words)

The New, the Best, and the Worst

November 2005

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

[swipcug@sigecom.net](mailto:swipcug@sigecom.net)

Vista...

"A distant view or prospect, especially one seen through an opening, as between rows of buildings or trees." (*Dictionary.com*)

It is also the name of the long-awaited next version of Microsoft Windows, not available until at least the second half of 2006 but already widely previewed and discussed in the PC magazines. What do we glimpse in the distance? Should we fight or switch?

The most significant improvement in Vista might well be security, stated to be a primary goal. Only time will tell – we'll still be facing continuing patches, updates and periodic Service Packs, I expect.

New Internet Explorer 7 will be a major make-over, mostly to catch up with features long since available in Opera and Firefox. It will also be available to current Windows XP users. Windows Media Player gets a boost, but will also be available in Windows XP.

Vista will appear in 32 and 64-bit versions, to accommodate the new 64-bit CPUs now available from AMD and Intel. Visually, the windows will sport new folder icons that show thumbnails of their contents, although I wonder how they handle folders with dozens of subfolders and files. If your graphics card can handle it, the icons will also be semi-transparent, wow!

Originally, Vista was supposed to support a new file system, WINFS. I understand that this file system does away with branching directory trees to store files. Instead, files all get dumped in large containers, maybe such as the current "My Documents" areas. Instead of assigning unique file names you label the files with any number of suitable tags, similar to the labels currently used in Picasa2 (see the minutes in this issue to read about Larry Goss's presentation in October). The contents of the files are also indexed on the go to facilitate a search for keywords such as already provided by Google Desktop Search and Yahoo Desktop Search. Vista is expected to include a similar search function even before WINFS eventually is implemented. But WINFS will not initially be part of Vista.

As *PC Magazine* puts it "... it increasingly appears that Vista's differentiating features, aside from the sleek new shell interface, will be the ones that are less visible to typical users: have hardened security, better diag-

(Continued on page 12)

## Why not a magazine subscription!

It is a great way to show them you know their personality, their likes and dislikes. Plus, they will be reminded of your thoughtfulness every time a magazine arrives in the mail over the next

Reader's Digest - \$10 for 12 issues

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Popular Science - \$8 for 12 issues

Good Housekeeping - \$11 for 12 issues

Fantasy & Science Fiction - \$19 for 11 issues

Field & Stream - \$8 for 12 issues

PC Gamer - \$9 for 12 issues

Rolling Stone - \$7 for 26 issues

US News & World Report - \$10 for 52 issues

Superman (comic) - \$15 for 12 issues

Mad Magazine - \$14 for 12 issues

Sporting News - \$9 for 60 issues

year. Here are some of the hundreds of titles we carry at Magazine Monger (magmonger), and examples of recent prices:

Be sure to email us for our latest price list at [bestbuymag@yahoo.com](mailto:bestbuymag@yahoo.com). You can even use your credit card to buy subscriptions online through Paypal! For each subscription sold before the end of the year, we will be donating \$1 to the Pacific Garden Mission. Also, anyone who buys a subscription before the end of the year will be entered into a drawing for an RCA Lyra MP3 Player, winner to be selected randomly on Jan 1, 2006. Don't miss out... enter today... Save today...

Looking for a great gift idea...?  
**MAGAZINE MONGER**



## Tech News (cont.)

(Continued from page 11)  
nostics, and improved manageability in enterprise environments.”

Vista will require an up-to-date computer system, with plenty of processor speed, memory, and graphics capability. Manufacturers of scanners and printers will surely provide the necessary drivers for newer equipment, but older peripherals may no longer work. Will it be worth the additional cost and aggravation to upgrade?

Dedicated gamers will love it – they need all the speed they can get, at any cost. Also, if you work with demanding graphics programs, large databases or similar CPU-intensive programs you’ll probably want Vista for better support of multi-core, 64-bit CPUs. Media enthusiasts will love the new features, but why use them on a general-purpose computer?

For the rest of us, we’re probably better off waiting until we need to buy a new computer that is almost certain to include Vista, whether we like it or not. At least we’ll get it at a discount. I estimate that MS Windows, Office and Media Player contain at least 50% bells and whistles that are of no interest to 75% of its users.

Last year Microsoft announced a crippled version of Windows, called Windows XP Starter Edition, being made available at low cost in certain developing countries. According to CNet News.com ( [www.snurl.com/winstart](http://www.snurl.com/winstart) ) the local versions of the program were made available in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Russia. Cost in Thailand was reported to be \$36, not including MS Works. Its intended use is in local schools for the obvious reason: catch ‘m young. Read on...

...Or Else?

“The MIT Media Lab has launched a new research initiative to develop a \$100 laptop—a technology that could revolutionize how we educate the world’s children. To achieve this

goal, a new, non-profit association, One Laptop per Child (OLPC), has been created.”

“The machines, which will run a version of the Linux operating system, will also include other applications, some developed by MIT researchers, as well as country-specific software. ‘Software has gotten too fat and unreliable, so we started with Linux.’”  
(<http://snipurl.com/mitlap>)

These two quotes from recent MIT press releases point at new directions in the Computer Revolution. First of all, there is the realization that computers are here to stay as a basic necessity in a civilized society. To the three **R**s of basic education we need to add a fourth **R** Requirement, computer lite**R**acy. The cost of general purpose computers has to come down further to make them available to every school child, even in this country, let alone in the developing nations. That clearly includes the need to eliminate the high cost of the MS Windows operating system and commercial productivity programs written for MS Windows. Essentially free Linux is the obvious alternative.

Here is another quote, from desktop.linux.com ( [www.snipurl.com/INaccess](http://www.snipurl.com/INaccess) ): “A number of Indiana high school students returning for the fall semester will find brand-new Linux desktops in their classrooms. Under the Indiana Access Program, which uses desktop Linux systems and standard hardware configurations to keep costs low, Wintergreen Systems Inc. and Linspire Inc. are providing computers for classrooms. The arrangement could result in as many as 300,000 Linux machines being deployed during coming years, the companies said in a statement.” And Indiana is arguably not a third-world nation.

When a new generation of students gets weaned on Linux, they are likely to continue using that operating system in the future, creating the critical mass that it takes to become generally accepted as an alternate desktop tool. Some of the students will inevitably be interested in hacking the system, resulting in new and improved programs, as well as

some new Linux viruses, I fear. Their efforts will be facilitated by the availability of all the underlying code, in contrast with MS Windows programs that jealously hide the source code.

Besides the effort to introduce Linux in school computers, several large cities as well as developing nations, notably China, have made it a priority to deploy Linux-based desktop computers. In the near future most of the growth of Linux will probably take place in developing areas of the world. Acceptance in the USA and other Western countries will be slowed by the difficulty or reluctance to transfer databases from MS Windows-based programs to comparable Linux programs. It may take another generation, but after maturing overseas Linux is likely to return in force to the Western world.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

### WMF Vulnerability Update Released

Microsoft released on Jan. 5 an emergency patch, named MS06-001, which corrects Windows' so-called WMF (Windows metafile) vulnerability. A WMF exploit can silently infect a PC when it merely displays an image in any browser, instant messaging, P2P, e-mail, or in a directory listing in Windows Explorer; when desktop-search applications index an infected image file; and in other ways.

Microsoft had planned to wait until its regular Patch on thee regular date of thee second Tuesday to release the fix for the WMF, but in response to pressure from customers, they released it early (last Thursday). You can find more info about it here:

<http://www.wxpnews.com/rd/rd.cfm?id=060110SE-WMF>

**SAVE \$\$\$**

# The Deals Guy

by Bob "The Cheapskate" Click,  
Greater Orlando Computer User Group

I can't emphasize enough the value of users group help and here is an example: Recently, while preparing to drive over to our beach condo for a couple of days, I wanted to copy a floppy disk containing some important files not backed up. When I attempted to copy it, the process stopped in the middle telling me my second disk was corrupted. I tried to stop the process so I could use another disk, but couldn't get the procedure to go away. Even when I killed Windows Explorer, then restarted it, and was ready with a new disk, it tried unsuccessfully to resume the process. Finally, I decided to reboot the computer in an effort to clear it, and when it tried to restart, all I got was the opening Intel screen and nothing more. After forcing the machine to shut down, and a brief pause, I tried to start the computer again and it would not go past the startup Intel screen.

Horror set in and I wondered what I might have done to screw it up, and what to do next. I was lost! All of a sudden I remembered something I had read only a couple days before in a users group newsletter while browsing a write-up about their Q & A session. A member reported that they could not get their computer to boot and finally removed a USB Flash Drive they had been using before they shut it off. It booted up just fine with the flash drive removed. Since I was using a USB Flash Drive while trying a new backup program, I removed it, tried to boot again, and was very relieved when the computer booted normally. I am running Windows XP Professional.

I can't remember which newsletter I read that in, but my thanks to the user group community and the newsletters I receive from them. I read them from cover to

cover, especially about their Q & A sessions and sometimes find good information that I think my readers might use. It was interesting that when I tried rebooting again with a 256 Meg USB Flash Drive plugged in; it booted just fine, but would not boot with the one gig USB drive plugged in. I would never have thought to remove that flash drive so I hope my experience was useful to my readers.

## \*Problems in Dell Land

I read in Ed Foster's Gripe Line about a company that had bought almost 200 Dell Optiplex GX270 PCs, and when a known defect arose concerning a capacitor on the motherboard that tended to swell and cause problems, it should have been covered by their support contract, but Dell didn't live up to their agreement. They started to replace them, but after more problem boards were found, they stopped and instead eventually wanted the company to trade them in. For financial reasons the customer didn't want to do that and any negotiations finally stopped. It was known that some larger companies with the same problem had gotten it resolved, but nobody knows why. Up until now, I had thought Dell had a good name in the industry and I don't know the outcome. Ed Foster's Gripe Line URL is [\[www.gripe2ed.com\]](http://www.gripe2ed.com), but I couldn't find this story posted at this writing, maybe because I read it in an August issue. You need to set up a password to access the Gripe Line Web site. For other information about the problem, check [\[www.dslreports.com/forum/remark.13709831\]](http://www.dslreports.com/forum/remark.13709831).

For the folks who ask me about the trade shows, we recently worked the National

Safety Council Show [\[http://www.safety2005.org\]](http://www.safety2005.org) that was very interesting. It used about 500,000 square feet of exhibit space and had over 20,000 attendees from around the globe. You wouldn't think so, but I saw some cutting-edge technology featured there. Like many trade shows here, they had an evening party for attendees at Universal Studios.

We also worked the interesting Bank Administration Industry show. [\[http://www.bai.org\]](http://www.bai.org) You would have easily recognized many names exhibiting there, which included well known ATM machines, security names and software companies like Microsoft, Adobe, Oracle USA and many others well known to users group people. The exhibit area was about 400,000 sq. ft. of area. Free food for the attendees too. Attendance was about 12,000. Central Florida is a hotbed of trade show activity, but we only work a few of them.

## \*Still Good

Don't forget the deal is still good for the WebBuild Express software for creating your Web site. To download it at [\[http://store.esellerate.net/nfti/store\]](http://store.esellerate.net/nfti/store), use the coupon code CPN8348901136, when it calls for it, to receive your 25% discount. I have a trial version but I have not tried it out yet. Between health problems and laziness, I don't have much for you this month, but I hope you took advantage of the APCUG announcements for deals.

## \*The Lost Can Often Be Found

*(Continued on page 14)*

## The Deals Guy (cont.)

*(Continued from page 13)*

Have you ever deleted a file and later found you should not have done that? No problem, just go to the Recycle Bin and get it back. Come to find out though, it has been dumped by the Recycle Bin. Now you have another problem; but not if you have PC Inspector, which can do unbelievable things when it comes to recovering deleted files from your hard drive. Your hard drive has to be working properly for it to work.

Best of all, PC Inspector is Freeware and it can be downloaded at

[\[www.pcinspector.de/file\\_recovery/uK/welcome.htm\]](http://www.pcinspector.de/file_recovery/uK/welcome.htm). If you have used Secure Clean or Wipe Drive, forget about it. I found this information in a UG newsletter, but have not tried it personally.

### \*An Announcement For NeoDownloader (Edited to shorten)

We offer a special. User group people get a 25% discount on the new version of NeoDownloader by email request..

September 27, 2005

Neowise Software, the leading developer of task automation tools, announces the newest major version of their NeoDownloader. This powerful multi-threaded tool for automatic downloading of pictures, audio and video files now features the unique Web Spider technology that guarantees a fast and steady download for both high and low bandwidth. With its improved interface, new image viewer and media player, NeoDownloader expands the horizons of your web experience by improving your Internet browsing habits.

Each download job you trust to

NeoDownloader starts with a profile where you can set file types, size limits, resolution, and scanning depth. The program scans the site of your interest and picks out only the files that match your profile. The download is fully automated but you can control it through the download progress window and fine-tune its performance. The download can run simultaneously with scanning, or after full scanning of the site is completed. Downloaded files become instantly available in the image preview zone of the program window.

The new version includes a collection of project templates and sample projects to get started fast. The built-in image viewer and media player provide instant access to downloaded files. A Drop basket and a set of hotkeys help you to launch a project from any application. The download library replicates source sites and organizes files in an easy-to-use way. The password list secures automatic login to password-protected web-sites.

NeoDownloader v2.0 Features at the Glance

- \* Downloads pictures, audio and video that match user preferences
- \* Filters for file type, size, resolution and URL keywords
- \* Settings for the scanning depth for internal and external links
- \* Up to 10 simultaneous connections
- \* Support for password protected sites
- \* New project profile settings
- \* Drop basket facility to download from other applications
- \* Built-in image viewer featuring slideshow and wallpaper setting support
- \* Built-in media player

NeoDownloader runs under Windows 98, NT 4.0, Me, 2000, XP platforms and costs \$39.95 (USD) for a single-user license. Free lifetime technical support and minor upgrades are extended to all registered users. A fully functional evaluation version is available as a free download at

[\[www.neowise.com/ftp/NeoDownloaderSetup.exe\]](http://www.neowise.com/ftp/NeoDownloaderSetup.exe).

Company Website

[\[http://www.neowise.com\]](http://www.neowise.com).

Product page link:

[www.neowise.com/neodownloader/](http://www.neowise.com/neodownloader/)

Email: [\[alexey@neowise.com\]](mailto:alexey@neowise.com).

Best regards,

Alexey Surkis

CEO of Neowise Software

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. Be sure to check the new announcement pages on my Web site. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [\[bobclick@mindspring.com\]](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com). Visit my Web site at [\[http://www.dealsguy.com\]](http://www.dealsguy.com).

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# Role Playing Games Revised

By Dan Woodard, DMA member

For the past few years, there has been what you might call a “dearth” of classic computer role playing games. Oh, to be sure, there have been a few releases that harken back to old style role playing, but they have been few and far between. Most of the so called role playing games in recent history have actually been real time strategy games with role playing elements. That’s like asking some friends over to a barbecue, but when they show up, you have barbecue flavored potato chips, and everything is vegetarian. Thankfully, there are still a few titles out there to satisfy the role playing carnivore in many of us, such as Spiderweb software’s Geneforge 3.

This is the third entry in the series, but don’t let that scare you away. I hadn’t played either of the first two, but was able to pick up the plot quickly. In the world of Geneforge, there are those known as Shapers: sorcerers who specialize in summoning creatures into being to do their bidding. Due to their power, the Shapers have ultimate control over the general populace, and their decisions are not to be questioned. The plot in this game centers around a group

of Rebels who decide to question the authority of the Shapers, their ability to create and abruptly end life at a whim. The game starts with an attack on your school, where you are an apprentice Shaper. Your goal is to find out who orchestrated the attack, then decide whether you will defend the authoritarian Shaper way, or else help the Rebels.

Let’s get my complaints about the game out of the way. I really missed the humorous artwork by Phil Foglio that has graced the manual of several of Spiderweb Software’s RPG’s in the past. I also felt that the game could really have benefited from a medieval instrumental soundtrack. Another problem I ran into was in trying to split up a stack of items in inventory. If you carry too much, your character becomes encumbered, so I wanted to place some of the items in storage until I needed them. As far as I could tell, this can’t be done. Also, in prior Spiderweb Software games, you could increase your bartering skill. For some reason, you can’t seem to do this in Geneforge 3, and so you are stuck getting a small percentage of all items’ true worth. And while I won’t give away details, I also found the ending of the

game somewhat ambiguous, with no real resolution.

Now on to the things I liked. You can purchase the game with a real 50 page manual. The first level of the game is also an excellent tutorial, helping you pick up game basics quickly. Your characters also rest when entering a friendly town, eliminating the need to camp to refresh hit points and other stats. There are numerous non player characters (NPC’s) that you can recruit into your team, though they do take a portion of the experience points you earn, as do your creations. After the install, the CD doesn’t have to be in the drive to play, which frees it up so that you can play your favorite music CD instead. Probably the best aspect of this game is that it has a moral dilemma. That is to say, you are presented with choices, but the choices are not clear cut. There is no obviously evil side - both factions believe they are in the right, and no matter which choice you make, it will lead to pain and death for many in the course of the story.

**Summary:** The multitude of choices available for your character whenever you level up is a bona fide smorgasbord for the RPG fan. The focus on summoning creatures to do your bidding also adds some flavor to the game, and helps set it apart from the “me too” feeling that so many other games have engendered.

Rating: 8.5 out of 10

Requirements: Win ‘98+ or Mac 8.1+, 40 MB free on HDD, 800 x 600 16 bit color

Reviewed: Sempron 3000, 256 MB RAM, 64 MB video, Win XP

Best Price: \$25 or \$32 with hint book at [www.spidweb.com/geneforge3/index.html](http://www.spidweb.com/geneforge3/index.html)

Walkthrough: [www.gamefaqs.com/computer/doswin/game/928999.html](http://www.gamefaqs.com/computer/doswin/game/928999.html)



# Unemployed or Under-employed?

By Gladys Campion

## Consider joining Day-VEST!

Several DMA members have turned to Day-VEST to jump-start their job-hunting efforts. Day-VEST is Dayton's only volunteer employment service, a non-profit organization run by and for unemployed professionals.

Origins of the group date back to 1969, when the aerospace industry suffered unusually high unemployment. In 1970, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) began an "Employment Workshop" program, teaching job-search techniques. Later that same year, the AIAA entered into a contract with the US Department of Labor to establish voluntary self-help groups to be affiliated with state employment services. These groups formed the "VEST" program (Volunteer Engineers, Scientists, and Technicians). The first, Sea-VEST, was established in Seattle, Washington, in 1971. By the end of the year, the program spread to 43 cities. Day-VEST was one of the last chapters to join the effort in 1973 and is, as far as we know, the only group still active.

Day-VEST members are unemployed managerial, technical, and professional people. They volunteer their time to help one another find suitable employment. Members must have at least a two-year college degree or equivalent professional experience to join. Day-VEST does not charge members or employers for its services, however members are asked to make a weekly donation of \$2.00 to help defray the cost of office supplies and other operating expenses. Each week members donate a minimum of four (4) hours of their time to Day-VEST.

To employers, Day-VEST offers direct access to a pool of talented local professionals and free posting for current job openings. Day-VEST often receives job notices before they are listed elsewhere. To members, Day-VEST provides contact with a large group of local employers and seminars to sharpen their job-seeking skills. They also provide access to desktop computers and high-speed Internet, essential tools for today's job search. The most valuable benefits may be the least tangible. Day-VEST offers the opportunity to network with other unemployed professionals who will readily share their job-

search strategies and experiences, inside information on local businesses, and personal contacts with potential employers.

How does it all work? Employers are contacted periodically seeking job openings. The contact may be by phone or by email. The monthly "Mini-Res", emailed to employers, provides a brief description of the skills and work experience of all current members. Employers can request a complete resume of any members they may be interested in. If an employer has a job opening, they can submit it by phone, fax, mail, or email. A detailed description of the required education and experience is recorded. The opening is posted for review by all Day-VEST members and, if a close match is found, the employer is forwarded the appropriate resumes.

Day-VEST is located in the Job Center  
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# Find a Job in 10 Steps

by James C. Gonyea

It's no secret that you must master certain skills to accomplish anything in life. Here are 10 steps that, if followed in the proper order, can help lead to your next job. As the Chinese proverb says, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

## 1. Understand the Reality of Job Hunting.

The right frame of mind is as important for landing a job as how you search. Here are some thoughts that will help adjust your job-hunting attitudes:

- Job hunting is all about promoting yourself and your talent.
- Know how your talent can benefit employers.
- Finding a job is a job -- it takes time.
- Follow a plan, but be flexible.

## Don't quit until you succeed.

### 2. Assess Yourself.

Identify and write down your interests, skills, values, needs and work habits. If you know your personality, you can more easily determine the right work and employer for you.

### 3. Determine Your Objectives.

What type of position do you want? What job activities would you enjoy? What kind of employer is right for you? Do you have geographical preferences? Know what you want before you look; it will help you zero in on the best targets more quickly.

### 4. Create a Career Portfolio.

Prepare and gather documents such as:

- Sample cover letters, letters of inquiry or application, and follow-up, acceptance and rejection letters.
- Your resume.
- Letters of recommendation.

- School or college transcripts, certifications, diplomas and degrees.

- Awards and citations.

### Business cards.

### 5. Organize a Support Group.

Pull together three to six people who will help you complete job-hunting tasks. Call upon friends, relatives and colleagues. Give each individual an assignment, such as researching companies or job leads. Remember, a team can do far more work than an individual. Reward each member.

### 6. Target Employers.

Research potential employers and identify those you think might be a good fit. Find employers who have a need for your talent, and then get the names of individuals at each company who are responsible for the positions you want.

### 7. Apply.

Prepare all necessary cover letters, resumes and supporting documentation to apply for employment at each target employer. Make sure documents look professional and then mail, fax or email them to the person with the power to hire you. Clearly illustrate how you can be of value to each employer. Repeat this step until you land the job you want.

### 8. Interview.

Research the company before the interview -- know what the company is about and how you can contribute to its goals. Dress appropriately. Know what salary and benefits you want, but be willing to negotiate. Follow up each interview with a thank-you letter stressing how you can benefit each employer. Repeat this step until you land the job you want.

### 9. Accept or Reject the Job Offer.

Mail a well-crafted letter to each employer upon notice of an offer or rejection too. If responding to an offer, state your appreciation, repeat the offer terms and indicate when you will start

your new job. You should respond to rejection letters to. Again, state your appreciation and how you can be of value should a relevant position open up.

### 10. Evaluate the Process.

If you don't land your target job, ask yourself these questions:

- Have I done everything necessary?
- How well did I accomplish each step?

Where can I improve?

If you are still at a loss, seek professional assistance. A trained career counselor can often identify the cause of your problem and get you back on the road to success.

## How to use Networking in job searching

Networking for jobs means using any current contacts to increase your chances of getting that perfect job. By networking you will be able to tap into the hidden job market. Networking gives you the opportunity to be successful in your job searching.

Start with your friends, relatives and work contacts. Make a list of people and let them know that you are looking for employment opportunities. Friends and relatives are easy to tackle work contacts are a little bit harder. There is a proper way to handle these type of contacts.

It is always best to approach them in writing, send a well constructed letter together with your résumé. In the letter introduce yourself (if you are not known personally) specify the reason why you are approaching them, use sentences like "we have used your products", "reputation for maintaining the highest quality standards" or even "your level of professionalism".

Let them know that you would like to be notified should any employment opportunities arise in the near future. Also ensure that you ask them to maintain confidentiality, this is very important if you don't want your current employer to find out that you are job searching.

# Configuring a Basic User's PC

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor, Region 2; Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Website

Don't be alarmed by the high-falutin word "configuring". It just means deciding what components -- otherwise called "parts" -- will perform various PC functions. It's like old-days car buying: reviewing a dealer checklist to pick dozens of individual features, from radio to power steering to disc brakes and more. The good news is that almost any current PC with a printer and Internet connectivity will handle mainstream requirements. That means that a generic Windows PC is usually adequate -- but you should upgrade if you'll do anything challenging or exotic.

Just as when buying a car, the first step in buying a computer is deciding what you'll do with it: e-mail, Web searching/viewing, or word processing? Financial work with Quicken? Digital photography? Simple games? Ultra-demanding tasks like high-end games and digital video editing?

Just as when making any major purchase, a small investment in learning pays off for years. Before buying a PC, learn the basics: -- take a class, buy a book, attend local computer user group meetings, consult Web sites, read technology magazines at the library.

As you look at applications' system requirements (processor speed, RAM size, hard drive storage capacity, video card speed and memory, etc.) note differences between minimum and recommended specifications. Vendors are often too optimistic -- and that's being charitable -- about what's needed for their software to run productively. It's much safer, and not much more expensive, to buy at least the recommended choices. In fact, I usually buy a little more power than I need. This bumps cost just a little and it avoids future problems and upgrades. Purchasing this way greatly extends a PC's life and makes it more compatible with future innovations, at least for a while.

Remember that as PCs evolve, a range of choices is always available, from bleeding-edge new to borderline obsolete. An equally valid -- and more economical -- approach to configuring is finding the current technology "sweet spot" the point where cost, performance, compatibility, and useful life are in balance. A key decision is whether to buy a brand-name system or an unknown-brand machine, have a PC built to order, or build it yourself. Choices for laptop computers are much more limited: brand-name

systems dominate, trailed by a few off-brand manufacturers. There are no build-it-yourself options, though manufactured systems can be customized extensively.

Each purchasing choice has advantages and advocates. Brand-name systems can be evaluated and compared by consulting references such as Consumer Reports magazine, are available everywhere via catalog or online shopping, and may have better standard or optional warranties (often worthwhile for quick service and peace of mind). But brand-name systems sometimes suffer from using commodity parts vs. best-quality components.

Unknown-brand machines can be reliable money savers or risky acquisitions. I'd only buy such a system from a trusted store with a flexible return policy. I favor having PCs built to order by small local shops with established reputations, offering maximum flexibility and consultation during design. And I've enjoyed watching my PCs take shape as they're assembled from a tableful of parts!

Some people build their own PCs, often with training and mentoring from computer user group volunteers. This demystifies system innards, greatly facilitating diagnosing and repairing problems and upgrading components. Build-to-order and build-yourself allow specifying brand-name parts for improved performance and reliability. No matter where you purchase, look carefully at monitor choices. Traditional CRT monitors prices have declined, allowing buying larger devices with better resolution. And newer/thinner/lighter LCD panels offer a powerful -- though sometimes less flexible -- alternative. Visit stores to compare brands and models and explore settings to match your preferences.

Decide how you'll back up your software and data. Choices include a second -- perhaps external or removable -- hard drive, writable optical media such as DVD, and tape. The first two are most often used, with each having unique advantages. Follow your backup plan regularly; nothing ruins a day like losing months or years of can't-be-replaced data, not to mention having to reconstruct all your software.

Small choices can make large differences in productivity and comfort. For example, mouse technology has advanced far beyond the traditional two-button wired device. Mouse alterna-

tives include trackball and wireless devices, gadgets with many extra programmable buttons, wheel mice allowing horizontal/vertical scrolling, etc. Considering how much time you'll use your pointing device, it's worth spending a little extra money to have the device that suits you best!

Windows offers many choices for easing use -- enlarging type, making keyboarding easier, providing special audible and visual cues, etc. Accessibility options are found in different places -- usually via Control Panel or the Start menu. It's worth exploring these to tailor your PC to your individual preferences. Similarly, small add-on programs can greatly improve a PC's comfort factor. Remember that Windows is highly configurable: you can change how it looks and operates. As you become familiar with your new PC, explore options /settings /preferences. Just as you wouldn't insist on driving a car with seats and mirrors exactly as they came from the dealer, don't be a captive of Microsoft's initial settings!

Name-brand computers usually include software bundles. Vendors shout about how valuable they are and how much money you're saving on them -- but that's only true if you'll use the software provided. As soon as you have your machine, examine pre-installed software and remove anything you know you won't use. Then defrag your disk and then install the programs you'll use. These simple steps will make your machine run better by decluttering it.

Finally, If you understand how to do this, use built-in tools such as MSCONFIG to chop out unneeded services started by default when your system boots.

Software bundles often include junior-grade versions or limited-time trial copies of critical tools such as anti-virus and anti-spyware software. For system reliability and security, upgrade these to full versions and subscribe to update services.

Not much else in modern life besides computers keeps getting faster/better/cheaper. And it's not hard to find or build a computer that meets needs for several years, runs reliably, and doesn't break the bank.

# Digital Cameras Blossom as Popularity Increases

By Ira Wilsker

APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; radio & TV show host

Website: <http://www.casio.com>

Much to no one's surprise, the popularity of digital cameras is exploding, as the quality improves even more, and the cameras become more affordable. Digital photography, which was initially slow, grainy, and sometimes difficult to manipulate has matured, and is now nearly universal. With the dramatic improvements in digital camera and storage technology in recent years, much of what early adopters of digital photography experienced has changed for the better.

Sitting in front of me as I type this column are two digital cameras, each of which are representative of the respective technology of the day. One of the cameras is a JVC GC-S1U which is about 5 years old, and when it was new it was considered a technological marvel and state of the art in its day, but by today's standards, while still functional, is technologically obsolete.



One of the first digital still cameras available, it has a .3 (that is 3/10) of a megapixel image of 640x480 pixels, which is miniscule

by today's standards. It takes 4 AA batteries, which are good for only a few dozen photos before they are exhausted, even less if the integral flash is used. Reviews of the day used the expression that this camera "eats batteries". One of the first cameras on the market to take a memory card, it uses the now large format by current standards CF or Compact Flash card for additional photo storage. Connecting to the computer via a very slow serial connection made photos slow to download, unless an external card reader was used to read the CF card. One feature that this antique camera has, that is still impressive by today's standards is a 10x optical zoom. The processor in the camera is horribly slow by today's standards,

with a noticeable lag between pressing the shutter and capturing the image, along with a long delay for a follow up snapshot.

The newer digital cameras on the market clearly show the technological improvements that have become commonplace. New digital cameras come in a wide assortment of prices and features, from tiny key-chain size cameras, to cameras embedded in a ballpoint pen, to inexpensive disposable cameras to pocket size marvels, to SLR (Single Lens Reflex) type cameras with extreme resolution rivaling 35mm film, and using an assortment of available lenses, just like traditional 35mm cameras. Zoom can range from the less expensive and generally inferior digital zoom, to the superior optical zoom. Zoom ranges typically range from 3x to 12x, with some models offering a combination of optical and digital zoom to increase the ability to manipulate the closeness of the image. Many of the newer digital still cameras can also capture video and sound, often in the popular MPEG-4 30fps (30 frames per second) format, the length of the video being only limited by the amount of storage available on the memory card.

The second camera I have in front of me is a new, state of the art Casio EX-S500, one of a series of new cameras Casio is producing in the "Exilim" series. The camera is actually small compared to my older camera, only being about 3.5 inches wide, by about 2.3 inches tall, and about .6 (6/10) of an inch thick, weighing only about 4 ounces. This full featured camera will easily fit in a shirt pocket or purse. It uses the tiny SD memory cards. With an excellent 5 megapixel maximum image size, this camera will take digital photos in six different sizes ranging from an enormous 2560x1920 pixel size (5 megapixels), to the smaller 640x480 size (3/10 of a megapixel). It should be noted that the smaller the image, the more images that can be stored in the memory

card. Also, the smaller images are more appropriate if they are going to be emailed, an important consideration in "netiquette". The larger size images are appropriate if large photos are to be printed in 8x10 inch or 11x14 inch sizes, or even larger.



Zoom is provided by a telescoping 3x optical zoom, which can be coupled with an integral 4x digital zoom, giving a maximum zoom of 12x. The lens produced very bright and sharp images. When the camera is turned off, the telescoping zoom lens is retracted into the body of the camera, making the front of the camera nearly flat. One technological marvel built into this camera an "Anti-Shake DSP" which is a digital signal processor that removes the effect of moving the camera while the image is being recorded; this contributes to an exceptionally sharp image by removing or minimizing the blurring many of us encounter when we move the camera as we take a photo.

Despite the small stature of the camera, it also can record movies and sound in three formats, 640x480 in both high quality and normal mode, and a smaller image 320x240 size for extended play. Video is saved in MPEG-4 format, and the sound is saved in the universal WAV format. With a common and inexpensive 256 megabyte memory card, the camera can capture about 8 minutes of video and sound at the high quality setting, and about 45 minutes at the extended play

*(Continued on page 20)*

## Digital Cameras (Cont.)

(Continued from page 19)

setting. Simply, available memory and battery power is the limiting factor in the length of the video that can be shot at any given time.

While my old camera ate batteries, having a very short battery life, this new Casio Exilim has a proprietary rechargeable lithium ion battery with a normal capacity of about 200 photos before it needs to be recharged.

The camera has a shutter speed of 1/8 to 1/2000 of a second, rivaling many of the classical 35mm cameras, and includes a multi-mode flash, self timer, bright 2.2

inch LCD screen, and a mini-cradle which simultaneously connects the camera to a USB 2 high speed connection as well as AC power to charge the internal battery. There is also an "AV Out" jack on the cradle. Included with the camera are two CDs of software to download and manage the still images as well as the video. A set of included video cables allows the playing of video direct from the camera when it is docked in the cradle.

The body of the Casio Exilim EX-S500 camera is stainless steel, and available in a typical steel grey color, as well as white or orange toned stainless steel. This camera has a suggested retail price of \$350. Lo-

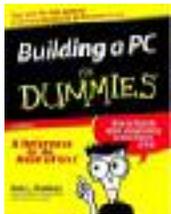
cally these cameras are available at Circuit City, CompUSA, Radio Shack, Target, Ritz Camera, Sharper Image, or online from Casio at [www.casio.com](http://www.casio.com).

Casio is now marketing some excellent quality digital cameras, and should be strongly considered when shopping for better quality and full featured digital cameras.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

## Building Your Own PC... Recommended Books

Here are some books to help you...



**Building a PC for Dummies**  
by Mark L. Chambers

If you are building your own PC it is always best to have a good book for reference. We have compiled

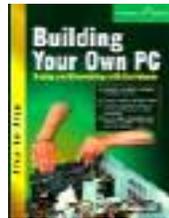
the top five books on building a PC. These books are highly detailed which thoroughly covers all aspects of building your own PC.



**Build Your Own PC (2nd Edition)**  
by Morris Rosenthal

By buying components and assembling them yourself, you can save a little money and gain a lifetime of free

technical support. Building a PC for Dummies removes the intimidation factor from building your own Intel-based personal computer, explains what you need, and shows you how to put everything in its proper place.



**Building Your Own PC**  
by Arnie Lee

Highly visual, easy-to-read guide to building a customized computer. Provides a visual glossary

that defines each part of a PC. Over 150 step-by-step photographs.



**Build Your Own Pentium III PC**  
(Paperback)  
by Aubrey Pilgrim

Build your own Pentium III PC and save a bundle! Book gives you top-to-

bottom, fully-illustrated instructions for assembling your own customized Pentium III powerhouse—from selecting components to installing software. You get detailed, step-by-step assembly and installation instructions for motherboards, floppy drives, hard disks, memory modules, scanners, modems, CD-ROM and DVD drives, sound boards and more. Plus you'll find handy comparisons of the latest generation of

chips—including those from Intel plus the latest low-cost rockets from AMD and others—along with all the tips and techniques you need to create, test and troubleshoot a sizzling state-of-the-art system. You don't need a technical degree or special tools. Just follow these simple guidelines and procedures and save hundreds in the process!



**Building the Ultimate Game PC** (Bradygames Take Your Games Further) (Paperback)  
by Loyd Case

Rarely is the raw calculating power of your computer as evident as when you're playing a modern game. If a spreadsheet takes a couple extra seconds to update, no big deal. But if your man takes a couple extra seconds to look around a room in Quake, he'll probably have copious amounts of the most heinous sort of death rained down upon him. Book will help you understand how games use processors, video cards, disks, and Internet connections. Further, it will help you design and build a fireball game machine that will strike fear into the hearts of your opponents, cybernetic and otherwise. This book gets beyond the hardware holy wars and shows you how to build what you want.

# Volunteerism

By Bob Kwater, DMA member

Over the past several years I have often been asked... What is a volunteer?., What's in it for you when you volunteer?... What do you get out of it?... I'm not an expert at anything in particular.. How can I possibly help?

There is no one agreed-to definition, and the term is frequently debated. Some say a volunteer is someone who performs or offers to perform service out of his or her own free will, without payment, usually in support of a non-profit organization, mission-based initiative or community. Others say the term volunteer can apply to someone who receives a stipend for his or her service, as long as the volunteer is engaged in full-time service and has no other paid job. The term is usually used for such service to non-profit organizations', civil society organizations or even initiatives that originate in the public sector (schools, city offices, etc.), but not for those who work for free for a for-profit business.

Some people volunteer formally, through a non-profit organization/charity. Other people volunteer informally, helping a sick neighbor, for instance. Some volunteer for clinical trials or other medical research, and may even donate their bodies to science after their death. Traditionally, dictionaries define a volunteer as someone who renders a service for another person or an organization while having no legal concern or financial interest...

Volunteers come from all age groups, educational backgrounds, income levels, genders, and types of employment. It is quite correct to say that in this society almost everyone can be looked upon as a potential volunteer.

Probably the biggest change that has occurred in volunteering during the last twenty years has been a shift towards volunteers who prefer shorter-term commitments with agencies. This shift has been caused by a variety of factors, including greater portions of working

adults and a greater demand by organizations for the available volunteers. It has now become necessary for those programs that wish to utilize volunteers to pay much greater attention to the needs and requirements of the volunteers, including providing assignments which require small commitments of time and greater flexibility in scheduling.

## Rewards for Volunteering

"Rewards" are the more intangible day-to-day activities of recognition and motivation that are given to volunteers.

By understanding what drives human behavior, we can create the conditions necessary to encourage desired behaviors.

Purpose of reward is:

- to provide a method for reinforcing the value-added contributions of each individual through the application of their talents
- the growth of their capabilities
- the performance of their actions consistent with the mission of the organization.

The challenge is to create those conditions that encourage people to collaborate because they want to, not because they have to.

## Types of Volunteers

There are several distinct types of volunteers.

Firstly there is the regular volunteer.. The one that just shows up... asks if there is anything they can help with and are willing to take on any task or duty... these are the majority of volunteers within any organization... the backbone we cannot do without.

Next are the specialty volunteers... those that do a particular task

An online volunteer is a person who contributes time and effort with an organization through an online connection, rather

than or in addition to onsite service. The practice of donating time online goes by other names, such as virtual volunteering, cyber service, tele-mentoring, e-volunteering, and cyber volunteering.

Online volunteers do a variety of tasks, such as translating documents, proof-reading books, editing or preparing proposals, designing logos, researching information, developing strategic plans, reviewing budgets, creating web pages, designing flash presentations, moderating online discussion groups and managing other online volunteers. Online volunteers usually support organizations in their own community, and often in addition to onsite service. There are also online volunteers who support organizations entirely remotely.

In recent years, "mandated volunteering" has been on the rise. This term is sometimes used to describe mandatory community service, such as (1) a high school student being required to provide so many hours of community service to a nonprofit organization in order to graduate, (2) a high school or college student engaged in service learning, using a volunteering experience to apply skills learned in the classroom and to meet a requirement to pass the class, or (3) a person convicted of a misdemeanor being required to provide such community service as part of his or her sentence. Some organizations require members to provide a certain number of community service as well.

The idea of mandated community service is controversial. Some people do not want to call such activity "volunteering," per their belief that volunteerism should be entirely "free will." Others adhere to the idea of "volunteering" meaning simply "unpaid labor" and, therefore, including those who provide mandatory service (who often work right alongside "regular" volunteers).

*(Continued on page 22)*

## Volunteerism (cont.)

(Continued from page 21)

### Many Reasons to Volunteer

Volunteers become involved for a variety of reasons, depending upon both the individual and the cause they are considering. The basic motivations that are often cited include:

- Helping others
- Interest in the work or activity
- Had a lot of free time
- Devoted to the cause
- Know someone who was involved
- Religious concerns
- Do something useful or enjoyable
- Improve the quality of life of members of the group or community
- Explore new career options and network
- Receive professional experience or training
- Maintain skills during an interruption in paid employment
- Acquire new skills to enhance their marketability
- Fulfill the service requirement of club, school, or church
- Complete mandated community restitution requirements (community service)
- Be creative, solve problems, perform challenging work
- Make friends and affiliations, join peers, belong to a group or community
- Repay what they received
- Develop and grow personally, cultivate new interests
- Contribute to a cause that is important to them
- Explore their own strengths
- Relieve boredom and monotony
- Feel like they are needed
- Because it's fun

## Volunteer of the Month



More than several years ago at a Computerfest® wrap-up meeting... I thought it would be good to honor a special vol-

unteer for achievement above the call of duty. Our first honoree was David Wilson for his duties with the Computerfest® staff. Over the years, that has proven to be a major component of the post Computerfest® wrap-up dinners.

Three years ago the Board of Trustees thought that would be a great way to salute any of DMA's volunteers, only now on a monthly basis, hopefully to encourage others to volunteer likewise.

Here are the names so honored to date:

### Awards 2003

Jan 2003 Dave Lundy  
 Feb 2003 Bob Esch  
 March 2003 Jim Hendrix  
 April 2003 Edwin Davidson  
 May 03 Randy Young  
 June 03 John Friedenbach  
 July 03 George Ewing  
 Aug 03 Dave Smith  
 September 03 Carol Ewing  
 Oct 03 George Gibbs  
 November 03 Leah Day  
 Dec 03 Volunteer of the Year Dave Lundy

### Awards 2004

Jan 04 Nancy Christolear  
 Feb 04 Jim Hendrix  
 [Volunteer of Year Award Renamed Dean Lampman Volunteer of Year Award]  
 March 04 George Lee  
 April 04 John Hargreaves, Paul Schwab, and Dave Schwab  
 May 04 Keith Singerman  
 June 04 Dave Nevel  
 July 04 George Gibbs  
 August 04 Dave Smith  
 Sept 04 Dave Wilson  
 Oct 04 Paul Ahlquist  
 Nov 04 Jerry Bodey  
 Dec 04 Chuck Gelm

### Awards of the Year 2004

GEMAIR—Paul Ahlquist  
 OTAP—Jim Hendrix  
 SIGs—George Ewing  
 2004 Dean Lampman Award\* Volunteer of the Year for Overall Achievement  
 Paul Ahlquist  
 \*Named in Honor of DMA's first President

### Awards 2005

January 2005 Darlene Sye  
 February 2005 Glady Champion  
 March 2005 Board (no honoree this month)  
 April 2005 Dayton LanFest Staff for ac-

complishment in spite of extreme difficulties.

May 2005 John Landino (for exemplary achievement in transforming Dayton LanFest)

June 2005 Tim Lingg

July 2005 Mike Carr

August 2005 Bob Kwater

Sept 2005 Chester Howes

Oct 2005 Susan Kendall

Nov 2005 Glady Campion

Dec 2005 Gaston Brown

2005 Dean Lampman Award\* Volunteer of the Year for Overall Achievement  
 Glady Campion

\*Named in Honor of DMA's first President

This month the Board of Trustees have decided to honor an out-going SIG Leader...

Keith Ciriegio has led DMA's Apple / Dayton SIG for seven years.. From the time that the group dissolved from a stand alone user group through the transition of becoming one of our SIGs...

We thank Keith for all the time he has put into not only keeping the SIG viable but in growing it. Please send him your personal thank you to keithc@gemair.com

## Wanted a Few Good Volunteers...

By Bob Kwater, DMA member

Over the year DMA needs volunteers to assist with special events the DMA is involved with as well as its day to day operation.

### TechFest 2006

Saturday and Sunday (Feb 18 & 19) at Sinclair Community College, TechFest 2006 will be held. The show times are Saturday (10 AM - 6 PM), Sunday (11 AM - 5 PM) the admission is FREE, the parking is FREE in Ponitz Center (Building 12). ... What DMA needs are volunteers to man our demo/information booth at the event.

Those who took part last year will remember this as a very fun time meeting the young attendees and spending time enjoying the activity at the event themselves. As admission and parking are both free... the only investment is your time. Please let me know what time you can be there... Special crunch times are at the opening on Saturday (I would like you to be there at least a half hour ahead) at 9:30AM. And during the close on Sunday at 5:00 PM) contact Bob Kwater for more information.

### Science Day (Science Fair)

Saturday March 18, Central State University. DMA has been a part of this event for twenty years now.. We have usually supplied not

only special judges for the awards DMA presents but also we have provided regular judges as well. Time required is only 4- 6 hours on this one day. (9:00am—2:00pm) contact Bob Kwater for more information.

### Dayton LanFest

- March 31st - April 2nd 2006 at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds... 40 + hours of fun... there are many tasks that need to be done before and during the event. To learn more and volunteer please contact Gaston Brown [gastonb@totalfiregroup.com](mailto:gastonb@totalfiregroup.com)

Additional events not yet scheduled:

Wireless Dayton Days

Chamber of Commerce Business to Business Cityfolk

Dayton Jazz Festival

Riverscape

Affiliated Societies Council Fall Joint Meeting

\*\*\*\*DMA Board Members and membership these could be a great opportunity to help increase DMA membership as well as spreading the word about ALL of DMA various functions (SIGs, Dayton LanFEST, OTAP, etc.)

Also DMA needs you to become involved in the assisting of running this organization... your club...

Many Special Interest Groups need your help to present and schedule topics.. NO you do not need to be an expert.. You simply need a willingness to learn.

Articles are always needed for this newsletter. If you wish to review software or hardware .. We do have guidelines to help you that practically write themselves.

OTAP is in need of volunteers to spend a couple hours a week contacting clients to schedule equipment pickup.

Helpers are also needed to assist in "training" the individuals how operate their "new" computers. Again you do not need to be an expert ... just be willing to show someone how to turn the machine on and do some simple tasks such as logging into the Internet.

As OTAP expands more volunteers are needed to receive, evaluate, repair, test and disassemble the donated computers. Contact Gladys Campion [otap@otap.net](mailto:otap@otap.net)

In the near future we will be planning a painting/cleaning party at 119 Valley to help spruce up the place.

## Ram & Reason: A Virus and Incident Checklist

By Rob Rice, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City



Much has been said about virus and malicious software prevention, but what if all of your precautions fail? So there you are, happily clicking along the Internet when suddenly a popup ad obstructs your view. You start to close it and then another and then another pops up so that in just a few seconds there are so many pop-up ads that you cannot possibly close them all as they just keep coming. So what do you? Delete them as fast as you can in hopes that they will stop? Turn off the computer? Suddenly a program appears from nowhere and informs you that you have been infected with a trojan virus and the program needs to scan your system so

that the trojan can be removed. The problem is that you do not remember ever having installed this program. Do you trust it?

There are some industry-accepted procedures for dealing with this type of incident and any virus or trojan infection. Just follow these five simple steps in the following order to minimize damage:

1. Do not turn off your computer unless you are certain that your files are being actively deleted!
2. Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection.
3. Write down any error messages and the names of any programs or software that

was running at the time the infection occurred.

4. Mark the computer "Do Not Use".
5. Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened identifying a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus, anti-trojan tools.

Step One:

Do not turn off your computer. Not every trojan and virus is the same so this rule will have exceptions, but generally you do not want to turn off the computer unless you can see that the virus is deleting your files. If you think that it can be stopped from deleting your files without turning off

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# Don't be a Loser at the Rebate Games

by Jim Sanders, Editor, North Orange County Computer Club  
editor@noccc.org

Most of us have bought something that sounded like a great value — “After Rebate or Rebates.” Everywhere from a great price to FREE! Most are legitimate. Most require a fair amount of work to claim. Most are never claimed. Most say you will have to wait 6 to 10 weeks for a check (for some that turns into 6 to 10 months). Many have tricky fine print. A few are outright scams!

Below are a list of things that you should do, as opposed to just think about, if your going to buy an item with a rebate and have any real intention of claiming the rebate and actually getting it. Following that are three emails that dealt with a denied rebate claim for our new President Elise Edgell.

If you are going to buy an item with a rebate, while you are at the checkout stand, **NOT AFTER YOU GET HOME**, do the following:

- Write down the sales clerk's name then ask him to show you that you have all the items needed to claim the rebate. Ask him to put an X on the correct UPC barcode.

- Make sure you have a copy of the correct rebate form(s). Some are inside the box. You just paid for the item, it is yours, open the box and read the terms.

- If it is an upgrade rebate, it is better to find out if your old product qualifies BEFORE you go to the store. Check the vendor's website, call the store and ask!

## READ THE FINE PRINT! THEN READ IT AGAIN!

- Read the “Proof of Purchase” requirement list.

- Does it require the original “Sales Receipt” or is a copy OK. If the original is required, ask the store for a duplicate original that is acceptable for a product exchange if there is a problem with the product. Some stores provide a “Rebate Receipt.” Make sure that matches the requirement list.

- Check the postmark requirement, I have seen one that gave you only three days to get it postmarked. Don't wait till the last day to mail it.

- Make sure a website address and/or telephone number is included that you can use to contact the rebate center about your rebate. Most of the upscale rebate centers include an 800 number.

- Make two copies of ALL documentation submitted. If a cheesy rebate center decides to tell you they never received your request, without copies, you're up the proverbial creek. I am working on an article about using your scanner for this purpose.

- I think it is a good idea to include one of the documentation photocopies with the submission to make the point that you have copies. Mark it “CC: Vendor, My Files.” On the larger rebates, buying the \$0.95 proof of delivery service at the post office is cheap

insurance. Having a witness to the mailing doesn't hurt. Error on your side of the game. If it says 6 to 8 weeks, check at 6 weeks, don't wait three months. Be reasonable with phone calls but check the website as often as you like. Mark your calendar to remind yourself to check on the rebate. Keep a folder for all of your rebates. Move completed ones to another folder. Once you get your rebate check, read how long it is good for. Some are good for 6 months. Most are void after 60 days. A few are void after 30 days. I got one that was expired when it was delivered. When you think you have been shafted, don't just grimace and bear it, complain. Complain to the retailer. Complain to the vendor. If all else fails, file a complaint with the FTC at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov). You can also file a complaint with the Better Business Bureau at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org). Taking the retailer to Small Claims Court is an option.

## The email exchange with BFG Technologies, Inc.

Dear Sir, My name is Jim Sanders, and I am the editor of the North Orange County Computer Club's newsletter, the Orange Bytes. PDF copies of the publication are available at <http://www.noccc.org>. For several weeks I have been gathering material for an article on the rebate games. Our members should see it in the next issue of the newsletter. This is a hot issue with our members as a number have been burned by various rebate offers. In a lot of cases it was due to not reading the fine print, not crossing all T's or dotting all I's, a claim that the request was never received or not received in time.

In some instances the rebate was a pure scam. A few refused rebates may be caused by human error on the part of the highly trained, intelligent, well paid staff of the rebate center. A common reason given for a

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### It's Time to Give Something Back, ... Volunteer !

Lead a discussion at a SIG

Learn to re-build Computers at OTAP

Write an article for the DataBus  
Become a Board of Trustee Member

Bring a Friend to a Meeting

Seek out those that have more wisdom than you....

Let those that know less find you

## Rebate Games (cont.)

*(Continued from page 24)*

rebate denial is that a required piece of documentation was not included.

All too often, that claim cannot be refuted as the original was sent in and the suggestion to photocopy all submitted documentation was not followed because of the hassle involved. In an interesting coincidence of timing, our club President, Elise Edgell, showed me the rebate denial post card that she received on 7/16/2005. The reason given for the refusal: "We did not receive a sales receipt with your request." She purchased a BFG GeForce FX 5500 OC at a special Fry's Electronics' one day sale where a \$50 rebate was offered on your product. In this case, Elise did scan all the documentation sent in with the rebate and kept it as a JPG file. In addition, the original documentation was stapled to a printout of that file and a notation was hand printed on that sheet, in bold marker pen: "CC: Vendor, My Files." That file is attached to this email. As both of us bought the product and requested the rebate in the same way, it will be interesting to see if I get the same post card.

I understand that you contract the rebate function to other companies, but the typical club member that has a problem thinks the problem is with the company that made the product and offered the rebate. It is your reputation that suffers, not the rebate center.

Would you express your opinion on which of the above reasons might be the cause of this rebate being denied?

Sincerely,

Jim Sanders, Editor, NOCCC Orange Bytes

Hi Jim,

Thanks for contacting BFG Technologies, and thanks for giving us the opportunity to clarify this particular rebate situation.

Looking at the picture in your attachment of Elise's submission, it appears there is not a copy of her "Sales Receipt" included along with the other required items.

In addition to the "Rebate Form/Receipt" and the "Proof of Purchase" cut from the box, a copy of the "Sales Receipt" is required. With Fry's it can sometimes be confusing because they label the Rebate Form as a "Rebate Receipt". This could lead a customer into thinking that the form was both the rebate form AND the sales receipt, although they are actually two separate items.

Some additional information that may be of interest; this is one of two rebates that have the highest redemption rates we have ever run. This indicates to us that majority of customers are including all the correct documentation and getting the rebate for this particular program.

In this particular case, the rebate house did refuse the rebate on proper grounds. However, we will contact the rebate house and approve Elise's rebate, and yours as well. We often do that for customers who contact us

and believe that that they were denied incorrectly. We look into individual cases and make approvals where the facts support it.

Thanks again for giving us the opportunity to respond. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

Kind regards, John @ BFG

Hi John,

Thank you for your quick response and also for fixing the problem.

In an effort to resolve why it became a problem in the first place, I made a trip to the Anaheim Fry's Electronics store. I asked to speak to the person in charge of dealing with rebates. The woman that responded to that request was pleasant enough, but not very helpful. I asked why Fry's was having their checkout clerks tell customers that the "Rebate Receipt" is the same as the full sales receipt for rebate purposes. Her response was:

"Well, sometimes it is and sometimes it's not." The discussion lasted several minutes. It bogged down into questions of semantics, perception, lack of explicit wording, and responsibility. Her rebuttal to your assertion that it is a "Rebate Form/Receipt" was that if you cut that form in two just above the line "Rebate Form:" you have a "Receipt" and a "Rebate Form." That to help the customer by not having multiple, small, separate documents that are more easily lost, or difficult to match up with the appropriate rebate form, they are printed together. That the "Proof of purchase requirements:" Section 3, says "a copy of your receipt," not "Sales Receipt," not "Full Sales Receipt," not "Rebate Receipt," just "Receipt." That obviously the "Rebate Receipt" is a receipt. I commented that the Fry's IT department controlled what is printed and how it is printed. That it would be trivial for them to better separate the two

**Helping Others also Helps You...  
Become an OTAP Volunteer  
Learn... Build... Teach...  
Become part of the solution!**

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## Virus and Incident Checklist (cont.)

*(Continued from page 23)*

the computer, then this is a better option than turning off the computer. The reason is that while turning the computer off will temporarily stop the damage more harm can come when you turn the computer back on. System files can be infected when loading, boot sectors contaminated, hard drive partitions erased, registries corrupted. For example, on a Windows system every time you make a major system change one of the first things that it wants you to do is reboot, "To allow the changes to take affect". In the case of a virus or trojan, the last thing we want to do is to allow the changes to take affect.

### Step Two:

Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection. Trojans are designed to open a door and let other trojans, spyware and viruses in. Physically disconnecting its link to the Internet stops this behavior, prevents your personnel information from going out and prevents other machines from being infected. Many check-

lists have this action rated number one and for good reasons. I rate it here as step two because step one is simply a quick decision that can have a significant impact on the recovery outcome.

### Step Three:

Write down any error messages that appear and the names of any programs or software that was running at the time the infection occurred. This is important not only for repairing the system but also for identifying which alerts are real and which ones are bogus. Error messages that contain misspellings and poor grammar are likely bogus and generated by the virus.

### Step Four:

Mark the computer "Do Not Use". This is in case you get called away and have to leave the system alone for any length of time.

### Step Five:

Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened to identify a virus attack. Next,

run your antivirus anti-trojan tools.

It's possible that your antivirus or anti-trojan software may have detected the attack and started running a system scan or is prompting you and waiting for instructions. If you are certain that it is your software then let it do what it wants to do and let it clean the system. If you have any doubts as to whether the program is in fact one of your programs then **DO NOT RUN THE SOFTWARE!**

Some trojans actually install and run a program pretending to be antivirus/anti-trojan software and scan your system all the while claiming to be cleaning your computer. In reality it is part of the trojan. Some of these programs look very commercial and very polished so be careful!

Rob Rice is a computer specialist working in Anchorage, Alaska. Rob can be contacted at [articles@isp.com](mailto:articles@isp.com)

## Rebate Games (cont.)

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forms with a couple of extra blank lines, a line of asterisks, and a line that says "Cut here." That they could easily have changed Section 3 to explicitly state what kind of "Receipt" was required. That if printing the "Rebate Receipt" is supposed to be a courtesy to the customer, it would be trivial to have the computer print out a "Duplicate Sales Receipt" when that was required by the vendor. That if Fry's is going to the effort to provide this courtesy service at all, they should go the extra step, and endeavor to do it correctly, rather than in the current, confusing, fashion. I commented that Fry's apparently feels it is their responsibility to remind

customers that they should make a copy of all documentation submitted for a rebate by handing out a yellow sheet with that warning, why not expand it to include a caution about the receipt problem.

Her response was in essence, I don't have any control over what the IT department does. I counted to ten, thanked her for her time and left. I hope this feedback helps you with future programs.

Sincerely,

Jim Sanders Editor, NOCCC Orange Bytes

On 7-23-05 we put on our best optimistic face and went to the <http://www.rebatestatus.com> website to see how well the rebate had been approved. We were hoping to see a message like: "The check is in the mail.," and lo and behold we did.

Pony Express or 4th Class, but in the mail.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

**DMA® Membership Application/Renewal (only one person per form, please)**  
**PLEASE ALLOW UP to THREE WEEKS FOR APPLICATION PROCESSING and INTERNET SET-UP**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
mo. day yr.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Home) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (Work) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to have my name and address published in the club roster: YES  NO  E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of DMA® member who recruited me: \_\_\_\_\_ (only new regular memberships)

Current or recent DMA® Member: Yes  No  Change of Address Only  Today's date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Membership number (from your *DataBus* mailing label) \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Membership**

Application is for: New Membership  Membership Renewal   
Associate Membership\*  Internet Service

Note: A \$ 10.00 fee will be charged for all returned checks.

If applying for free student membership, please give school name and student ID number: Available **only** for students under 22 years old.

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

\* A family associate membership is an additional membership for a member of your immediate family that is living in the member's household. If this is a family associate membership, give name of regular member: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dues/Fees** (Dues and Fees are subject to change without prior notice)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Membership (one year - New or Renewal)                                    | 1.) <input type="checkbox"/> \$25  |
| Family Associate Membership (must live at same address as regular member) | 2.) <input type="checkbox"/> \$12.50                                       |
| Free* Student Membership  | 3.) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>FREE</b> *for students under 22 yrs of age |
| Please assign me a user ID for E-mail and Usenet news access              | 4.) <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 one-time setup fee for new accounts.     |
| Total - - - Lines (1 or 2) (+4 if checked)                                | 5.) \$ _____   |

<input type="checkbox"/> Cash
<input type="checkbox"/> Check
Check # _____

**Make your check payable to Dayton Microcomputer Association, Inc. DMA®, then send the check and application to: - - - -**  
**- - - - ->PO Box 340402 Beavercreek, OH 45434-0402**

DMA® Use only: Membership # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Processed by: \_\_\_\_\_ REV: 01Nov05

**DMA® Member Benefits**

DMA® members receive great benefits! Not only do members participate in great meetings and Special Interest Groups, they also receive discounts at local retailers! You MUST show your membership card to receive any discounts.

**NOTE:** Discounts are subject to change without prior notice.

Discounts are currently available at:

- CompUSA** - 221 N. Springboro Pk., Dayton, OH 45449
- Dayton's Original Pizza Factory** - 1101 Wayne Avenue, Dayton, OH 45410
- Dorothy Lane Market** - 2710 Far Hills Ave. Dayton 45419, 6177 Far Hills Ave. Dayton 45459, & 740 N. Main St., Springboro 45066

- Fairborn Camera & Video** - 14 E Main St., Fairborn, OH 45324
  - GEMAIR** - 2555 S. Dixie Hwy, Suite 102, Kettering, OH 45419
  - The Mac Depot** - 2025 E. Dorothy Lane, Kettering, OH 45420
  - Microsoft Press Books** (online) - <http://mspress.microsoft.com>
  - PC Club Ohio** - 291 N. Springboro Pike, Miamisburg, OH 45342  
2602 Colonel Glenn Hwy., Fairborn, OH 45324
- Full discount information is available at [www.dma.org/benefits.shtml](http://www.dma.org/benefits.shtml) . You may also contact Membership Chairperson Bob Kwater at [kwaterb@dma.org](mailto:kwaterb@dma.org).
- If you have a question or problem with a Benefit Discount Store, please contact Bob Kwater**
- Please Do not Hassle the Store Staff !**

# DMA® Events for January 22 - March 04, 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan 22	Jan 23	Jan 24	Jan 25 <b>Hands-On SIG</b> 7:00 PM 119 Valley	Jan 26 <b>Genealogy SIG</b> 7:00 PM 119 Valley	Jan 27	Jan 28 <b>9 AM - 2 PM OTAP</b>
Jan 29	Jan 30	Jan 31 <b>Main Meeting</b> 7:30 PM 116 Health Sciences Bldg., WSU	Feb 1	Feb 2 <b>Digital Photo SIG</b> 7:00 PM 066 Rike Hall, WSU <b>Groundhog Day</b>	Feb 3	Feb 4 <b>9 AM - 2 PM OTAP</b> <b>3 PM Classic Computers</b>
Feb 5	Feb 6 <b>Board of Trustees</b> 7:00 PM 119 Valley	Feb 7 <b>Amateur Radio SIG</b> 7:00 PM 119 Valley	Feb 8 <b>Perl Mongers</b> 7:00 PM 119 Valley	Feb 9 <b>Software Development SIG</b> 6:30 PM 119 Valley	Feb 10	Feb 11 <b>9 AM - 2 PM OTAP</b>
Feb 12 <b>Lincoln's Birthday</b>	Feb 13	Feb 14 <b>Hands-On SIG</b> 7:00 PM 119 Valley <b>Valentine's Day</b>	Feb 15	Feb 16 <b>Linux SIG</b> 7:00 PM 145 Russ Engr. Ctr., WSU	Feb 17	Feb 18 <b>TechFest 2006</b> 10A - 6P SCC Ponitz <b>3 PM Classic Computers</b>
Feb 19 <b>TechFest 2006</b> 11A - 5P SCC Ponitz	Feb 20 <b>Apple SIG</b> 7:00 PM Wayne Booster Center, 5367 Fishburg <b>President's Day</b>	Feb 21	Feb 22 <b>Hands-On SIG</b> 7:00 PM 119 Valley <b>Washington's Birthday</b>	Feb 23 <b>Genealogy SIG</b> 7:00 PM 119 Valley	Feb 24	Feb 25 <b>9 AM - 2 PM OTAP</b>
Feb 26	Feb 27	Feb 28	Mar 1	Mar 2 <b>Digital Photo SIG</b> 7:00 PM 066 Rike Hall, WSU	Mar 3	Mar 4 <b>9 AM - 2 PM OTAP</b> <b>3 PM Classic Computers</b>

The DataBus deadline is the 1st of each

The DataBus deadline is the 1st of each

**Remember: January 31 meeting—VoIP—Todd Collins—guest speaker**

**February meeting moved to March 6**

**Send membership applications & renewals to PO Box 340402, Beavercreek, OH 45434-0402**



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Beavercreek OH 45434-0402

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