

Steve Bass and Dave Whittle

Thursday, July 8, 2004, 7 P.M.
Lecture Hall of the Carr-Gottstein Academic Center
Main Campus, Alaska Pacific University

PC World contributing editor and past founder of the Pasadena IBM Users Group, and author of **PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things About Your Personal Computer**, will be touring the state and plans to grant us some of his precious time. He will illustrate how to eliminate common PC annoyances and also take challenges from the audience to solve their most annoying PC problems. His book solves over 150 common annoyances and provides a download site for over 100 utilities.

David B. Whittle, author of **Cyberspace: The Human Dimension** and named by Working Woman Magazine as “one of America’s most original technological thinkers” will demonstrate cutting-edge, affordable software products including 3D-Album PicturePro,muvee autoProducer 3,PhotoVista Panorama and Virtual Tour,activePDF Symphony, and theAlpha Five v5 database. David will have books and software products on sale at this event at user group discount prices.

The Alaska Computer Society is a nonprofit educational organization. Our meetings are always free and open to the public. We meet the second Thursday of each month, usually at the Carr-Gottstein building at APU.

For further details about our group and a map to the meeting location, visit our web site at www.acs-pcug.org.

Serving Alaskans since 1983.

Door Prizes for Members:

We are planning on giving away a copy of MS Office XP to some lucky member so show up, learn, and win!!.

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1 News:

COMDEX Las Vegas 2004 Postponed

www.comdex.com

IT Industry Leaders Commit to Participate on Advisory Board to Reshape Future of Event

SAN FRANCISCO - June 23, 2004 - MediaLive International, Inc. today announced that COMDEX Las Vegas 2004 has been postponed in order to reshape the event with the cooperation of information technology (IT) industry leaders. COMDEX 2004 had been scheduled to open November 14, 2004, in Las Vegas. The company has established a COMDEX Advisory Board representing the

IT industry's foremost companies to determine how COMDEX can best meet the future needs of the industry.

One year ago, MediaLive's new management team took ownership of the COMDEX brand and began the process of repositioning COMDEX as a focused, business-to-business IT event. COMDEX 2003 attracted more than 40,000 qualified technology buyers, 550 exhibiting companies and more than 900 journalists.

"In the year since we assumed the responsibility of managing the technology industry's largest annual event, we have sought to reposition COMDEX and rebuild the market's trust," said Robert W. Priest-Heck, president and chief executive officer of MediaLive." While we could still run a profitable COMDEX this year,

it does not benefit the industry to do so without broader support of the leading technology companies. In order to give the Advisory Board the time and opportunity necessary to partake in the redesign of COMDEX, we thought it best to postpone this year's show."

"We firmly believe the \$915 billion information technology industry needs an event where the leading technology companies can speak to their global customers on neutral ground, buyers can compare all their options at one time, and thought leaders can discuss and debate the industry's future," said Eric Faurot, vice president and general manager for COMDEX." The participation on the Advisory Board of the IT industry's leading companies and thought leaders demonstrates that the industry feels it needs COMDEX as well. We are anxious to work with the industry to build the best event."

The COMDEX Advisory Board will immediately begin assessing the value of an industry event from the perspective of vendors, buyers, media and others stakeholders; and to recommend modifications to COMDEX that suit the needs of the industry. MediaLive has received commitments to join its COMDEX Advisory Board from: John Volkmann, vice president, strategic communications, AMD; George Paolini, vice president, general manager of developer tools, Borland Software; Mark Fredrickson, vice president corporate communications, EMC; Timothy J. Curran, chief executive officer, Global Technology Distribution Council; Jeff Singaas, director of events, Microsoft Corp.; Robert Shimp, vice president technology marketing, Oracle Corp.; and Peter Weedfald, senior vice presi-

dent, strategic marketing and new media, Samsung Electronics. Executives from Cisco, Dell and Intel have also agreed to join the Advisory Board and invitations have been extended to other industry leading companies.

"In the one year that MediaLive has had to rebuild COMDEX into a focused IT event they've made great strides," said Weedfald." COMDEX has always been a critical channel destination and we firmly believe that our industry needs an event of its own - COMDEX is it."

COMDEX staff will be contacting all confirmed sponsors, partners, exhibitors, speakers, vendors and attendees individually to inform them of the postponement. All other scheduled MediaLive produced events, seminars and programs will be convening as planned, including COMDEX Brazil, COMDEX Korea, COMDEX Scandinavia, COMDEX Saudi Arabia and COMDEX Greece. The next COMDEX Las Vegas is scheduled for November 13 - 17, 2005, at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

About MediaLive International, Inc.

MediaLive International is a media and marketing company that drives the advancement of technology in business. MediaLive International's products and services encompass the IT industry's largest exhibitions, including COMDEXR and NetWorldSM+InteropR, such highly focused educational programs as Next Generation NetworksR, custom seminars including JavaOneSM, respected publications including Business Communications Review, the industry's leading end-to-end event

management software solution provided by WingateWeb, and specialized vendor marketing programs. MediaLive International is a privately held company headquartered in San Francisco, with offices throughout the world. For more information about MediaLive International, visit:

www.medialiveinternational.com

MediaLive International, Seybold, Seybold Seminars, COMDEX, NetWorld+Interop, Next

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2 Announcements:

Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG)

Due to the cancellation of COMDEX 2004, APCUG's Conference Committee, led by Caryl Hall, announced a major change in our annual event. Traditionally held in the Fall, the conference is moving to new dates in January 2005, and will prelude the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada, which starts on Thursday, January 6th and ends on Sunday, January 9th. The conference will open on Monday January 3 and run through Thursday January 6, 2005. The conference will remain at the Stardust Hotel and Casino.

The original Fall plans are now being revised, along with registration and promotional announcements. Formal announcements will be posted to the APCUG web site at

www.apcug.org

For more information about the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), please visit their web site at

www.cesweb.org

Mark your calendars! **January 3-6, 2005** APCUG Annual Conference. Stardust Hotel and Casino. Las Vegas, Nevada!

Jim Evans, Secretary
Association of Personal Computer User Groups
secretary@apcug.net
www.apcug.org

3 June Meeting Report

Adobe Illustrator CS

Once again, local guru Tom Shackle gave an excellent demonstration, this time previewing Adobe Illustrator CS, a fundamentally vector line-based drawing program that can import and integrate pixel images. Projects can be created in Illustrator using layers that can later be exported to Adobe Photoshop, where as rasterized layers they can be individually manipulated. The latest version now has a tool for con-

verting 2D line drawings to 3D perspectives, whereas previously, such a feature was available only with a 3rd party plug-in. Tom said Illustrator and PhotoShop are designed to be complimentary but they perform their jobs in different ways, and that many folks confuse the two, so he helped distinguish between the two programs while defining what Illustrator does best.

4 The DealsGuy for July 2004

by Bob Click,
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

Some Rebates Aren't So Bad

We've all heard horror stories about rebates and I seldom purchase anything with a rebate unless it's a good deal even without the rebate. I recently purchased an 80-gig external Western Digital hard drive for \$110 that had two rebates, one for \$30 and another for \$20. After mailing them, I noticed I had mailed the wrong barcode. A month later I received a postcard telling me I had not included the UPC barcode and offering the opportunity to resubmit it, which I did for the \$30 rebate. Several days later, I received the same notice for the \$20 rebate, but misplaced that card. Since I had only seven days to resubmit it, I thought all was lost when I finally found it too late.

I gave up on that rebate, but was filing an-

other for a free telephone and was confused about something. I called the 800 number they provided for questions, and got my answer. Before she hung-up, she asked if she could be of any further help and I laughingly told her about the one I had misplaced and the time had expired. She said it was no problem and after giving her my information, she fixed it and got it back in the process. It was an OfficeMax rebate, which I have since received.

Since then, I called the OfficeMax rebate center about another one I hadn't received after almost a year. I was told the Seattle rebate center it was mailed to was closed, but he would fix it. I received the acknowledgement by e-mail the next day, and the check a week later. Fortunately, I have not lost any rebates so far.

Ain't Technology Grand?

Trade shows often have magazine stands with interesting ones to read. At the Home Electronics Expo I found ElectronicHouse

www.electronichouse.com

which I enjoyed, and this item caught my eye. We have often looked in our bathroom vanity's mirror. What about one that may seem like it morphs? Royal Phillips Electronics has developed a new twist for the bathroom vanity called Mirror TV, and it might be looking back at you, sort of. It will turn into a TV screen that could be showing your favorite news broadcast or stock reports. How about that — turned off, it's a mirror, or on, it's a TV! When offered, it will first appear in hotels, then to home users sometime in 2005. If the news is interesting though, how long might those BMs take? What about if your stock is dropping? Don't watch it too long or you may shut off the circulation to your legs. Can they be sued for that? Probably!

ElectronicHouse also had an article about putting your audio system on IP. Giving your speakers their own IP address properly can make amazing improvements to the sound. I was also looking through an issue of FlatPanel World that had interesting articles. It is a new publication by CE-Pro. One article offers explanations about various types of flat panel displays. I didn't see a Web site except for the parent magazine's

www.ce-pro.com

Author Robert Archer stresses that dealers should know the difference between LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) and LCOS (Liquid Cryst-

tal On Silicon) as well as plasma display technologies when giving their sales pitch. He explains them all including DLP (Digital Light Processing) and explains the importance of calibration on a thin screen, which can cost upward of \$300. He discusses some technologies of plasma displays. I saw several great articles about FPDs (Flat Panel Displays) and audio techniques.

In Digital Connect Magazine's March issue

www.digitalconnectmag.com

I read an article concerning the licensing of low voltage integrators (installers). I'll bet many of you didn't know that in some states, integrators who work with low voltage systems, such as remote controlled lighting, audio/video or telephone systems, must be licensed. Their license presently specifies 50 volts or less. One state is considering a bill requiring home installers performing electrical work at more than 50 volts to obtain high voltage licenses. CEDA (Consumer Electronic Design and Installation Assoc.) is lobbying the state to classify high-voltage projects as starting at 100 volts, a level that would not shut out integrators with a low voltage license from working with audio, video and home telephone systems. You might think that anybody could pull in some low voltage cables and hook them up according to the color code, but an experienced integrator for that type of wiring would know the importance of the proper wire and routing to eliminate interference and other problems. From my own experience installing auto audio, wire placement is extremely important. Not just anybody is capable of always installing a successful integrated digital system without experience.

With home wiring turning toward IT more and more, appliances and controls are also changing. For example, you are all familiar with your AC/heat thermostat, which originally had only the ability to turn the system on or off. Times are changing — new controls are capable of talking to the appliances as well as controlling them. Other appliances will become the same way in the future. New technologies pretty much lets your home think for itself. I hope mine doesn't get mad at me for neglecting it!

Last Minute Changes

Two vendors pulled out at the last minute because their material suppliers are raising prices at a dramatic rate and they want that to stabilize, so here are some things I have kept in reserve. Also, if you forgot to take advantage of the great Executive Software Deal, I think they will still honor it, but act soon

consumer.execsoft.com/home.asp

Don't forget also the MailWasher deal from last month.

www.firetrust.com/products/pro/

A Nice Tool For Teaching About Computers

This item has limited interest at best for my readers, but since we have teachers in our user groups, I am including it. Some larger user groups also have hardware SIGs, some of which are structured and might be interested in this product, although it may be too costly

for a SIG. While browsing through the "Association For Technical And Education Show" I saw many types of training stations and this one caught my eye. It is a "Personal Computer Training Station" with the motherboard, keyboard and some other components mounted on the top, easily accessible right before your eyes. Pull out a drawer and you will find the drives, which can be snapped out of their respective holders and quickly unplugged. It has a custom-built 350-watt UL power supply and supports AT/ATX/P4 motherboards. It also offers high-speed hard drive duplication capability.

This is a sort of breadbox type workstation and everything is very handy. Go to

www.atp-p51.com

where you can get more information and pictures of the product. The guy said he was unable to offer a deal because he depends on distributors.

Opt Out Of Spyware

According to Kim Komando, the Network Advertising Initiative,

www.networkadvertising.org

helps you drop both DoubleClick and Avenue A Inc., known for spyware. I haven't tried it yet.

Accidentally Deleted Those Pictures?

Don't worry, if you were using your digital camera and, with a slip of the finger, you deleted something from your Smart Media or Compact Flash Card that you later want, here is the answer. Just go to

www.z-a-recovery.com/digital_image_recovery.htm

and download Zero Assumption Digital Image Recovery at no cost to you. Even though it says no image is there, if it used to be there, this program will recover it. Thank God for freebies, and for Bob Schuchman of San Diego PC UG who wrote about this one some time ago in their newsletter.

5 Products

Disclaimer: The Alaska Computer Society - PC Users Group, does not endorse any products. Information on various products is provided because it may be of interest to the membership.

Quick Mail Sort

We designed Quick Mail Sort to be the easiest way for Outlook users to manage their Inbox.

Quick Mail Sort files email under an automatically built folder hierarchy based on information already entered into Outlook contacts.

If you'd like to check it out then please visit the website at

www.netroworx.com

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. 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.

Visit my Web site at for interesting articles from user group newsletters. I also posted some interesting NEW Web site pages for your viewing. They contain new product announcements that I received over a period of time. More will be forthcoming.

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click
bobclick@mindspring.com
www.dealsguy.com

I just thought it might be of interest to your users.

Greg Turner, CEO, Netroworx

Quick Reply automates routine correspondence tasks

Quick Reply is a god-sent gift to any e-mail user who has to repeatedly answer the same questions. With this application, any person can free himself or herself from having to explain over and over again what the refund policy is, where to get certain information, how to pay for a product or service, who should be

contacted in the event of emergency or why the shipping charges are what they are. Even regular 'non-commercial' users with heavy e-mail volume can save up to 50% of time previously spent answering e-mails by creating mini-templates — a set of phrases regularly used.

The program is easier to use than the similar feature that some e-mail clients offer (most don't). Quick Reply is very good at maintaining an orderly database of snippets, replies, sentences or text fragments that can be inserted into body of an e-mail or even a regular letter within a second. Any typical reply can be customized and personalized on the fly and inserted via dragging and dropping. The program supports hotkeys and macro commands. The content may be reformatted and copied to clipboard as well.

Quick Reply can be used with or without e-mail client. It runs in three different modes (full, compact, hidden) to fit individual preferences. The program is of great assistance to writers, journalists, secretaries, customer support representatives, web masters, office workers and other folks who have to deal with a large volume of e-mail correspondence.

The price of a single copy is 19.95 US Dollars. ErstenWare is offering a 15% discount to members of the ACS-PCUG. The discount coupon code is: 975409874008 and is redeemable at¹

/quick_reply/discount.html

Quick Reply is distributed electronically

over the Internet; free demo version for evaluation is available at

www.erstenware.com/

Product Page: /quick_reply/

Screenshot: /products/screens/qreply_1.gif

Download: </products/qreply.exe>

Buy Link: /quick_reply/buy.html

Time and expenses tracking application built into MS Outlook!

Time Meter for MS Outlook (Microsoft Office 2000/XP/2003) is a simple but very beneficial software application capable of tracking expenses and time spent working on certain project(s). The program can be used by individual consultants and freelancers for billing their clients, or by corporate managers to track expenses, performance and contributions of each employee. Most importantly, the program acts as a plug-in for MS Outlook, thus eliminating the need to spend time learning how to use a new application and getting familiar with interface.

The application is very flexible, letting users input different hourly fees, depending on the type of work or project done, time of year or any other factor. Also, various types of expenses, like the cost of dining, traveling or lodging can be added. Importantly, the program is capable of tracking expenses in various formats - total mileage or amount of money spent on gas, for example.

Time Meter also offers a wealth of reporting options with 35 default report templates. The program can generate summaries for particular

¹If you are entering the URL by hand, precede with "http://www.erstenware.com"

projects, individual workers, total expenditures, amount of time spent and many others. Moreover, the program can be integrated with MS Excel to create new reports or analyze data.

Time Meter for MS Outlook is an invaluable asset for the owners of the world's most popular e-mail client. It can be used as time-management, expense tracking or billing and invoicing software by anyone familiar with Microsoft's Outlook.

The program is distributed electronically over the Internet; free demo version for evaluation is available at

www.timemeter.com/

The price of a single copy is 74.95 US Dollars. Maximus Software Ltd is offering members of the ACS-PCUG a 20% discount. The discount coupon code is - "3481054008" and is redeemable at

www.timemeter.com/coupon.shtml

The following links are provided by Maximus Software Ltd.:

Screenshots

www.timemeter.com/overview.shtml

Download

www.timemeter.com/download.shtml

Buy Link www.timemeter.com/purchase.shtml

ActiveScreenLock

ActiveScreenLock is a secure and reliable application, protecting your computer from unauthorized access for Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP with a single click,

adding a password-protected window placed on top of all the others.

Do you feel like the information on your computer is worth protecting it? Probably, yes. In our age of new technologies, protecting your valuable data seems like the most important thing. ActiveScreenLock stands out in a range of programs of this sort in a way that it differs from the standard Windows blocking functions. You can monitor all of the running application, adjusting the windows' transparency. The program provides the highest level of security, allowing you to lock your PC entirely with just a click or upon a certain time period. The program actually locks your PC, not simply restricts the access to it.

Having received numerous awards and featuring the latest protection technologies, the program has an intuitive and user-friendly interface, so that no particular computer skills are required from the user. You can display custom backgrounds and the clock as lock screen and encrypt the log file and configuration data. For your convenience, ActiveScreenLock can disable Windows hotkeys (Alt+F4, Ctrl+Alt+Del, Alt+Tab, and WinKey) when you lock your PC, as well as log all user actions including log-on and unlock attempts and the configuration changes. What's more, ActiveScreenLock is also capable of hiding the mouse cursor, disabling the task manager, and runs automatically in case the computer is reset. Also, there is an option to create a lock screen slideshow by simply indicating a folder that contains the desired images.

ActiveScreenLock runs under Microsoft Windows 95 through Windows XP and requires an IBM PC compatible computer; 4MB of free

memory; about 1 MByte of free hard disk space, a mouse and a SVGA card with the High color mode.

ActiveScreenLock costs \$25 USD for a single-computer license. Volume discounts are available upon request. DMVsoft is offering a 25% discount to members of the ACS-PCUG. For more information and to download an evaluation copy, visit our Web site at:

www.dmvsoft.com

Screenshots are available at:

www.dmvsoft.com/Images/aslshot01.jpg

and: www.dmvsoft.com/Images/aslshot02.gif

Product Page:

www.dmvsoft.com/a_screenlock.htm

Download

www.dmvsoft.com/ActiveScreenLock.zip

Buy Link www.dmvsoft.com/order.htm

6 The Editor's Keyboard

Tom Schackle

Wow! Tom gave a real dandy of a talk and demonstration at our June meeting. I found his discussion of layers particularly enlightening. I use a similar technique in preparing this newsletter although I call the *layers* files.

Adobe Products

Adobe has an impressive stable of products for the graphic artist. I am a text-based kind of guy. So it follows that I could never justify the expense required to purchase either Illustrator CS or PhotoShop. On the other hand I can afford simmilar offerings in the *free and open source software* domain.

The GIMP

GIMP is an acronym for GNU Image Manipulation Program. It is a freely distributed piece of software for such tasks as photo retouching, image composition and image authoring. It works on many operating systems, in many languages. The terms of usage and rules about

copying are clearly listed in the GNU General Public License.

Visit their web site to find out more and download a copy.

www.gimp.org

Sodipodi

Sodipodi is a vector-based drawing program, like CorelDraw or Adobe Illustrator from the proprietary software world, and Sketch or Karbon14 from the free software world. It is free software, distributed under the terms of the Gnu General Public License, Version 2. Sodipodi works under most versions of Unix and Windows.

Visit their web site to find out more and download a copy.

www.sodipodi.com

Fielder George Dowding
Editor and Publisher
PC NEWS

7 Friends of ACS

We thank those businesses and individuals listed below and the many others who have donated all or a portion of some of the services, materials, and time required to help make the Alaska Computer Society succeed.

AARP – resource center, classroom space, and meeting space in the Northway Mall.²

Alaska Pacific University – General meeting room, special pricing.

Michael Ardaiz of Mad Dog Graphx – ACS PCUG logo.

Brown Bear Software – iCal program used to create the monthly event calendars.

Lewis & Lewis Computer Store – door prizes for the annual technology show and monthly meetings.

Microsoft Corporation – software for user group support functions and door prizes for monthly meetings.

Application for Membership
Alaska Computer Society — PC Users Group

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

Dues are \$25.00 per year, \$15.00 for students, seniors and the military. Please make your check payable to, the Alaska Computer Society. Thank you.

²Ed.:The initials used to stand for “American Association of Retired Persons”. However, one does not need to be retired to join.

8 The Back Pages

The Alaska Computer Society – PC Users Group (ACS–PCUG) publishes *PC News* monthly via the Internet. This newsletter is copyright © ACS-PCUG 2003. The current edition and the archive of the newsletter may be found at the ACS-PCUG web site:

<http://www.acs-pcug.org>

ACS Board of Directors

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—and,

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Newsletter Editor and Publisher *Newsletter{at}ACS-PCUG.org*

Fielder George Dowding

³Replace the “{at}” in the address with the “at-sign” to contact one of the volunteers. I have mangled the address to thwart harvesting by spam-bots.

ACS Board Meetings

Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at the AARP meeting room. Great effort is expended to start the meeting at 7:00 P.M. and to end the meeting before 9:00 P.M. The board meetings are open, and the board encourages members to attend.

ACS PCUG Volunteers

The ACS-PCUG is a volunteer organization. The members of the board are volunteers. Nothing happens without our volunteers who make it happen. Here is the current list of volunteers, who, in addition to the board members, make things happen:

Publicity Coordinator *Publicity1{at}ACS-PCUG.org*
Holly Hawkings

Public Service Announcements *PSA1{at}ACS-PCUG.org*
Marjorie Feldberg

Publications Coordinator (Position Open)

SIG Coordinator (Position Open)

E-Mail Addresses:

1. The policy of *PC NEWS* is to make e-mail addresses accessible to human beings but inaccessible to robots.
2. Members who volunteer are assigned an e-mail address from the pool available within the *ACS-PCUG.org* domain. This is the address that will be published unless a volunteer requests a personal address be published.

The Final Word:

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