

## **Favorite Web Sites and Low- and No-Cost-Utilities**

Thursday, August 12, 2004, 7 P.M.  
Lecture Hall of the Carr-Gottstein Academic Center  
Main Campus, Alaska Pacific University

Once again it's time for everyone to send in their favorite web sites along with a blurb about each one to our Program Chair, Dawn Scott. It's always interesting to see what the rest of the group has found on the World Wide Web. So do it now! Let Dawn know via email (of course) at:

[Programs@ACS-PCUG.org](mailto:Programs@ACS-PCUG.org)

This year, in addition to showing off your favorite web sites, Dawn will present your low- and no-cost-utilities. You know, the little application you just cannot get along without. The one you downloaded just to try it out and found it was so useful you made it a part of your daily routine. As with your favorite web site, send your candidates to Dawn, and include a little about your reasons for selecting it, the cost, and where to get it.

So show up, network, and learn!!

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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](http://www.acs-pcug.org).

Serving Alaskans since 1983.

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## 1 Announcements

### Alaska State Fair at Palmer

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

The Anchorage Amateur Radio Club (AARC) has graciously offered the ACS-PCUG table space in their booth at the 2004 Alaska State Fair in Palmer.

[www.kl7aa.org](http://www.kl7aa.org)

If you are planning to attend the fair this year (and I hope you are), please consider volunteering an hour at the AARC booth to be the ACS-PCUG presence. Call Gene White at 274-6782 to let him know when you plan to attend. Gene needs helpers to setup and take down before and after the fair.

The fair will run from Thursday, August 26, through Labor Day, September 6, 2004. Week-day hours are 12 noon to 10pm. Week end and Labor Day hours are from 10am to 10pm. You are responsible for your entrance and parking fees.

### IT Expo: Joint Meeting On-site

As in previous years, the ACS-PCUG will hold its monthly meeting jointly with the Mac Users Group on-site at the IT Expo. Our President, Gene White, will make an appeal for volunteers at the August and September meetings. The program details are still under discussion. Our Programs Chair, Dawn Scott, is contacting exhibitors for speakers. She will be glad to hear your desires.

The IT Expo will be Tuesday and Wednesday, October 19 and 20, this year at the Egan Center. Register online and print your entrance pass. It's free!

[www.sourdough.net/events/itbe](http://www.sourdough.net/events/itbe)

## 2 The Linux Corner

**New Column:** At the June 2004 board meeting I brought up this idea as a new feature for the newsletter. The concept was approved, and this is the first article.

The author is a fifty-six year old, happily married man, who lives and works in Texas. His name is Charles, he has a BMed from East Texas State University, and he and his wife live in Terrell, Texas, on three acres with horses (his wife's). I saw his post on Groklaw a short time ago and was interested in his story of his migration from the Windows to the Linux world.

Here is his story, enjoy:

**In** November of 1995, I bought my first computer, a close-out demo AST, defunct now I think. The specs were: Intel 486, 500 MB HD, 4, count 'em, 4 MB RAM, 1 MB video card, Windows 3.1, 14" color monitor, no modem. All for \$1200. Each day when I got home I would turn it on and sit down and just look at all the programs, and try to figure out what each would do. I learned by trial and error. I did learn quite a few DOS commands, but not enough to classify myself as a *computer geek*.

About four years later, after upgrading my PC and discovering the internet, I bought a friend's computer when he bought a new one. I still have it and it has served me well. It was a 1997 Packard Bell S600 with Intel 233MX, 3 Gig HD, 96 MB RAM, 4 MB video card, Windows 95, 15" monitor, and 56K modem. I upgraded to Win 98SE and used it until a short time ago when I bought the one I am using now.

This summer I bought an emachines W3080. It has an AMD Athlon 3000+ proces-

sor, 80 Gig HD, 512 MB RAM, 64 MB shared integrated graphics upgraded by me to a 128 MB ATI Radeon 9200 AGP card, Windows XP, 17" monitor, 56K modem, a 10/100 Ethernet card, a CD burner, and a DVD player. It's very, very nice. The only thing really lacking is a broadband connection, and I doubt that is going to happen where I live. (Sigh)

I have always tried to get the most out of my computers, to tweak them, even if I did fail miserably from time to time. I can never leave well enough alone. I think this trait of mine led me to SuSE. I have followed computer news in the Dallas Morning News and on ZDNet since I have owned a PC. I don't remember when or where, but I have been aware of Linux and Linus [Torvalds] for a long time. I was curious about Linux, but never did anything about it. I do recall going to [www.linux.org](http://www.linux.org) once and noting that the free (free is always good) download was 500 MB. Alas, this seemed to be too big a file for my dial-up and my hard drive.

My interest in Linus [Linux] ebbed from time to time, but it never died. Some time last year at ZDNet I saw that SCO had sued IBM. That caught my eye. I began to read the posts there. There were never too many replies for me, I read them all. I just copied this at Groklaw (Member Since: Tuesday, March 16 2004 at 12:26 AM EST). This is when I registered at Groklaw. I do not recall how I found out about it; it may have been a link at ZDNet from a post. Groklaw fascinated me, it still does, and I could not wait to read about SCO's latest misstep. I read mostly, noting the vast community knowledge that was poking

and prodding all things SCO. I am just a regular guy. I was reading the opinions of highly experienced IT people, lawyers, ex-lawyers, and other people like myself from all over the world. Microsoft has always seemed like a big bully to me. I guess you could say that Groklaw and the purchase of my new computer empowered me to install Linux.

Not long ago I downloaded and tried a Linux distro. It was a commercial version, but their web site had a coupon that would make it free if you downloaded it. I had to use BitTorrent to do it and that worked out well. The downloaded iso file was 600+ MB. It took about a week off and on to complete. Remember, this was all done using Windows XP. When I tried to burn the iso file to a CD, the system would not boot to it. I found out, by searching at Google, that I needed another program so Windows could read and burn the iso file properly. ISO Recorder did the trick. I checked and I could see all the files and folders on the CD. Before I saw only a copy of the iso file. You must understand that XP and CD burning were all new to me.

I tried again, and presto, installation began. I had previously bought online a partitioning tool. I installed the distro on the Linux partition I had made. The install was very quick, much faster than SuSE. What happened next shocked me to the core, I hated it. It was, IMHO, cheesy, clunky, out-dated, and slow. It did work, and I tried it out, never taking to it. I then began to have modem problems, and I knew it was time to change.

Why SuSE? Well, it seemed to get good comments from posters at Groklaw, as did several others. I looked at Debian, your distro, but

the ftp site was a bit confusing to me as there were many iso files and I did not know which to download, if in fact I needed more than one. I found a BitTorrent supported site, and downloaded SuSE 9.1.

The installation took longer than the other distro, but it was not too difficult and gave the user many options. I did change a few things, like the screen resolution, and I had to configure the modem, but SuSE made it painless. I like the "see details" option button to see what was actually going on in the install. As you know, I liked it from the start, it really was love at first sight, if you can fall in love with software.

When I made the post you saw, I was giddy. I felt pure joy. almost like being welcomed home. I know that sounds silly, but it is how I felt. One thing that really floors me is the ability to see Windows files versus Windows inability to see Linux files. To me, that says a lot. From a technical standpoint, it may mean nothing- I don't really know.

The previous Linux installation did teach me a few things, like stay away from root unless you need to do something only root will do. In that regard the other distro failed, but SuSE aced the test. I also learned a little at the Debian site when I was deciding on the next distro to try.

I have been using it for a very short time, but I am impressed. Today I gave a friend a copy. I hope they try it. I told them they were under no obligation to try it, but here it is. We had talked about my experience the day before.

Charles

IAAPLU- I am a proud Linux user.

### 3 The DealsGuy for August 2004

by Bob Click, (The Cheapskate)  
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

The American Water Works Assn. show we worked in June was interesting,

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

although most products were of an industrial/municipal nature. I spoke to an exhibitor about their automated meters that could be read while driving by. He said the meter was battery operated and it continuously emitted bursts every six seconds with all the latest data digitally contained. The meter's expected battery life is "ten years"! Another company with automated meters said theirs transmitted the data in short blasts similarly, but they are picked up by sophisticated antennas and receivers on high buildings, or towers in the area, saving a drive-by meter-reader. Looks like more people will be out of work and probably applying at Burger King since I see very few new jobs available. I'll tell you about the "Tapping Contest" event in this show next month since I already have a lengthy column for this month.

There is an announcement from Binary Research posted on my Web site that I will also publish in the column next month.

#### Quick Reply For Your E-mail

Since three editors forwarded this announcement to me, (thanks for bringing that to my attention), I decided there was sufficient interest for the DealsGuy column to include it. Unlike

most announcements, this one also offers a discount for user group members. Here is the announcement, but edited:

"Our company, ErstenWare, would like to announce the release of Quick Reply 2.07, a god-sent gift to any e-mail user for Windows 98/ME/NT/2000/XP. We'd like to offer your members a 15% discount off the regular price of \$19.95. The discount coupon code is: **975409871341** and is redeemable at

[www.erstenware.com/quick\\_reply/discount.html](http://www.erstenware.com/quick_reply/discount.html)

"With this application, any person can free him/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 or who should be contacted in the event of emergency. 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. Quick Reply is very good at maintaining an orderly database of snippets, replies, sentences or text fragments that can be inserted into the 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.

## Get Panda Free

Panda Software feels IT Professionals have a lot of influence in the industry. I imagine that's why they are offering IT professionals their AV software free. Panda Antivirus, an excellent AV product, is again offering its AV software FREE to IT professionals. Check the details at:

[www.pandasecurity.com/VIPIT](http://www.pandasecurity.com/VIPIT)

Thanks to Ira Wilsker, an APCUG director, for making us all aware of that one. I use Panda, although I can't seem to get my latest version to work right, so far. Their tech support has not been much help either. Last year's ran just great, but I wonder if there are bits and pieces left that interfere causing it to lock up, even though I removed the previous version per their instructions.

## News From Aladdin

Aladdin has a new user group coordinator. If you didn't see this posted on my Web site, Ernest Breaux is the new kid on the Aladdin block and will take care of your UG requests. He announced new products and here are his descriptions:

"Four essential Computing solutions from Aladdin Systems; Internet Cleanup 4.0, StuffIt Deluxe 8.5, Spring Cleaning and SpamCatcher For windows are now available.

"Introducing New Internet Cleanup 4.0. This offers the most powerful protection yet for users who want to protect their privacy and guard against spyware. Spyware slows down your computer, invades your privacy and can reveal sensitive information. These new

tools eradicate spyware and prevent sensitive information from leaving your computer. IC4 includes a Personal Information Blocker that safeguards names, phone numbers, addresses, credit card information and bank account numbers. IC4 prevents these and other specified pieces of information from being transmitted over the Internet without users' permission. In addition, IC4 includes file and folder locking as well as application locking features. Only IC4 provides the user all of the tools necessary to protect their privacy, security and PC, all in one complete and integrated package.

"Special offer! \$19.99 for Internet Cleanup 4.0, regularly \$29.99, offer valid through the end of Sept.

[www.aladdinsys.com/ug/cleanup](http://www.aladdinsys.com/ug/cleanup)

"ZIP, ACCESS, BACKUP, AND SEND! StuffIt Deluxe makes using the Internet fast, safe, and secure! Whether you store data securely in space-saving archives or safely send it to friends and co-workers, StuffIt makes it easier than ever to backup, upload files, and more, automatically! Reclaim wasted space on your hard disk! Store data in archives up to 98% smaller than their original size! Quickly and easily backup your data! Schedule backups to happen while you are away! StuffIt will take care of it all and send you a message when the backup is completed! Super search your data! Get instant access to any file whether it's on the network, in a local hard drive, or even burned onto a CD in the office next door, StuffIt will find it for you! Integrated with Windows and Microsoft Office! 100% integration with MS Word, Excel and Outlook eliminates 90% of

your keystrokes. Compress, save, and send in a single click!

“Special offer! \$29.99 for StuffIt Deluxe 8.5, regularly \$39.99, offer valid through the end of Sept.

[www.aladdinsys.com/ug/stuffit](http://www.aladdinsys.com/ug/stuffit)

“One-click cleanup. Easy for you. Good for your PC. Programs and pictures, folders and files, it’s amazing how quickly a hard disk fills up! When the time comes to clean up, let Spring Cleaning carry the load. From deleting duplicates to archiving programs, Spring Cleaning puts a suite of easy-to-use tools and one-click solutions at your fingertips. Fix Registry problems caused by old files nothing makes your computer more unstable than a Registry full of junk. Bad data builds up over time, causing error messages and a host of other problems. Spring Cleaning sweeps out the clutter to keep your system running smoothly.

“Special offer! \$19.99 for Spring Cleaning, regularly \$29.99, offer valid through the end of Sept.

[www.aladdinsys.com/ug/spring](http://www.aladdinsys.com/ug/spring)

“Special offer! \$19.99 for SpamCatcher, regularly \$29.99, offer valid through the end of Sept.

[www.aladdinsys.com/ug/spam](http://www.aladdinsys.com/ug/spam)

I featured SpamCatcher three months ago so I know you are already familiar with it.

“This one is for Macs: “The Big Mix is a powerful compilation of music and audio tools that deliver everything you need to record, mix, and play music your way! The

Big Mix is the perfect complement to GarageBand and your iPod. Software Includes: Audio Hijack, Disco, Doggiebox, GrooveMaker 2.5 LE, iPodRip, iTunes Publisher, Making More Music, MP3 Rage, and Spark LE. Capture webcasts and more with Audio Hijack. Mix in real-time with Disco. Create drumbeats with Doggiebox. Remix studio-quality loops with GrooveMaker’s massive library. Import tracks from your iPod with iPodRip. Share with the world with iTunes Publisher. Learn tempo, scales, and more with Making More Music’s multimedia tutorials. Fetch album cover art, clean up ID tags, and convert MP3s to play in CD players with MP3 Rage. Finally, use Spark LE to edit and blend your audio files into high-quality masters!”

“Special offer! \$49.99 for The Big Mix, regularly \$59.99, offer is valid through the end of Sept, but try anyway if you miss that deadline.

N.B.: The following URI is too long for the column width, so you will have to copy and paste the pieces together in your browser.

[www.digitalriver.com/dr/v2/  
ec\\_MAIN.Entry17c?CID=152708  
&SID=1839&SP=10007  
&PN=5&PID=624494](http://www.digitalriver.com/dr/v2/ec_MAIN.Entry17c?CID=152708&SID=1839&SP=10007&PN=5&PID=624494)

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. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click

[bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com)

Visit my Web site at

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

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 when I get the ambition.

## 4 July Meeting Report

by Howard L. Bonar  
Secretary, Alaska Computer Society

We had record attendance for Steve Bass and Dave Whittle. There were, at one point at least, 55 as counted by a reliable source. It was a hot, summer day here in beautiful Anchorage, Alaska, too.

## 5 The Editor's Keyboard

### Human Interest

We all enjoyed the presentations of Steve Bass and Dave Whittle at last month's meeting. Here we had two human beings who enjoyed what they were doing and were delighted to share their experiences with us. This is the purpose behind the new column, *The Linux Corner*, the first of which appears in this issue.

### Focus

This first article is the story of the delight one man experienced in migrating to one of the well known Linux distributions. The focus of this new column will be the human experience of migrating to and using this emerging computer operating system called Linux. I will report the good, the bad, and the ugly.

### Privacy

I and the board of directors are concerned about the personal privacy of members and guest authors. Thus, the full name, email address, etc. of guest authors will not be revealed in this newsletter. These details, and the correspondence relating to this column are on file. If you would like to contact this author or any future author, please let me know and I will pass on your request.

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Fielder George Dowding  
Editor and Publisher  
*PC NEWS*

## 6 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.<sup>1</sup>

**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.

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Application for Membership  
Alaska Computer Society — PC Users Group

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

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<sup>1</sup>Ed.:The initials used to stand for “American Association of Retired Persons”. However, one does not need to be retired to join.

## 7 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

**President** *President{at}ACS-PCUG.org*<sup>2</sup>

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—and,

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Dawn Scott

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

Fielder George Dowding

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<sup>2</sup>Replace 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:

DISCLAIMER: Neither the Alaska Computer Society nor the “PC NEWS” endorse any of the products or services that appear herein. Opinions of authors whose work appears in “PC NEWS” are not the opinions of the Alaska Computer Society, its officers, members of its board of directors, or volunteer workers unless so stated.