

Cellular Tech and Apple Tunes

CHANGE FOR OCTOBER 2004!

Tuesday, October 19, 2004, 7 P.M.
IT Expo 2004, Egan Center
Joint meeting with the AAUG
(Alaska Apple Users Group)

This will be a special two-part, joint gathering with the Alaska Apple Users Group in the lower level of the Egan Center.

First, a representative from Alaska Communications Systems will demonstrate features of their recently improved cellular phone system that now interfaces with both PC's and Macs.

And second, Apple representative Ben Kerosky will demonstrate the cross-platform capabilities of iPod, iTunes, and Airport Express for local music streaming.

Door prizes will be given away to group members and refreshments will be available for all.

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.

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1 Three Mapping Programs

Paul F. Sandhofer
Member, ACS-PCUG

At the August ACS Meeting I won the drawing and received a book "MapPoint for Dummies" along with a 60 day trial CD for MapPoint. Dawn Scott suggested that I write an article on the MapPoint Program. I expanded the article to include two other mapping programs that I frequently use.

Microsoft

Microsoft offers two mapping programs Microsoft *Streets & Trips* and *MapPoint*.

Streets & Trips

Streets & Trips is the consumer friendly mapping program that allows a person to plan a highway trip to anywhere in North America. Just enter the starting and ending points of the trip and *Streets & Trips* provides the traveler with a detailed map from starting point to destination that includes a printout of

mileage and directions of travel turn by turn.

If you do not like the designated route, other way points can be inserted to follow your desired route. The program even includes the isolated roads in the Bush Villages in Alaska. The printed maps can be as large as the entire United States or zoomed to a detailed 1,500 X 2,250-foot map. Driving speeds can be entered along with gas prices and gas mileage allowing the program to calculate the travel time and cost of driving for the trip.

Major points of interest, airports, hotels, and restaurants can be high-

lighted for additional travel planning. For the genealogist both large and small cemeteries are shown. If a person has a GPS and a laptop with interconnecting cable you can have an in-car map scrolling under an arrow centered in the screen. With the price of *Streets & Trips* under \$25 at warehouse stores, anyone who is planning an automobile trip should have the program for vacation planning purposes.

MapPoint

An upgraded program for personal and business use is Microsoft *MapPoint*.

MapPoint has all the features of *Streets & Trips* plus many additional features. For example, the program not only shows the location of National Parks but also the features available in the Park like boat launches, picnic areas, and ranger stations.

If a business requires demographic information, maps will show population by zip code or pie charts. Graphs can be made indicating area sales data using a program similar to Excel for entering the figures. Numerous county level statistics can be displayed such as number of computers having connected to the Internet, cell phone subscribers per 1,000 people, and literacy rate. The maps and information can be exported to Office for inclusion in desktop publications.

The price of \$260 makes *MapPoint*

a reasonably priced program for the person who requires all the bells and whistles in a mapping program.

Magellan: MapSend

Magellan *MapSend* (Streets & Destinations USA) is a CD that may be downloaded to Magellan MAP Series GPS's. *MapSend* is similar to *Streets & Trips* lacks many of its bells and whistles.

It is a basic program that allows the user to select a region of the US and download that region to the GPS. When traveling in a vehicle the GPS displays a triangle located in the center of the screen pointing in the direction of travel with the highway map scrolling under the arrow. The program has major errors in locating highways in Alaska.

With the GPS having an accuracy of 30-feet, the road has been shown on the screen up to 300-feet from the correct location. Road locations in the urban areas of Alaska are acceptable. The GPS shows not only location but also displays speed and direction of travel.

Magellan also produced several additional CD's that include a topographical map of the US for the outdoorsman, road map of Canada, and road map of Western Europe. The \$100 *MapSend* (Streets & Destinations USA) is a good investment if a person possesses a compatible GPS and wants to know their location on road trips when traveling in the US.

2 The DealsGuy October 2004

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

Central Florida experienced Hurricane Charlie, as you may know. Charlie was originally predicted to cross just north of us and we would only get the edge. Don't we wish; the worst of it ended up passing directly over us because it unexpectedly turned ashore further south than originally predicted. Our wind gust expectations would change to in excess of 80 mph instead of 50 mph. Actual wind gusts of 105 mph were recorded at the airport. Since we have no interior rooms, we sat in the living room waiting it out. Many times our patio doors would start rattling and we saw the glass actually warp in and out, along with the same action for our front windows and their sliders, but surprisingly, no breakage. Then the whole house would shudder and I hoped the place would hold together. If the roof had come off and we got sucked out, we would have no choice but to wish each other a good trip and I forgot to keep my camera handy so I could take pictures as I left.

In the end though, our house suffered little damage. There's only one large tree near our house while many other houses had more. One house on our block had two large trees fall on

it, but the damage wasn't bad. Charlie blew some soffit from under the eaves on one side of the house and blew one screen out of our back porch. While most homes on our block suffered the loss of many, if not all, of their shingles, we only had one broken shingle. Only one house on our block was unhurt, but others had considerable roof and tree damages. We had no power for five days, but many areas went without power for much longer. At this writing some are still without power.

When we were trying to find a restaurant (very scarce here for several days), it was an experience because with the power out in much of the eastern Orlando area, most traffic lights were inoperative and few people were courteous at intersections. Gas was scarce, but we had filled up before the storm. A station with gas and power to pump it usually had very, very long lines. It was impossible to find ice in stores, although a few places were set up, not near us, where volunteers passed out free ice, drinking water and Deet insect repellent. Grocery stores open for business were scarce, and if you found one, it was without milk and other necessities. Also, no lamp oil, wicks, batteries or plain telephones. I needed a new wick.

Our street had many downed tree branches, but many streets were even impassible for a few days until people and crews cleared them out. Some areas had no water, and where sewer lift

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stations had no power, there were problems with sewer backups, although not in our area. Our subdivision has underground utilities, but our wellbeing depends on the feeder lines coming in on poles. I saw pictures of streets where an entire line of wires and poles were broken off laying on the street. Progress Energy said that much of the grid had to be rebuilt.

There were several sad stories about people who died more or less as a result of the storm. I was unaware that a storm could affect people's pacemakers, which was the problem for one as well as his lack of oxygen. Trimming trees is also a dangerous job, which resulted in a couple of deaths. It was an experience I hope not to have again for a while. However, many neighborhoods certainly helped each other out with food when somebody had power and others didn't. Some also shared generators. The paper and TV were full of stories both sad and good for days. I'm glad we didn't live on the gulf side of the state where the storm came ashore with much more power and devastation.

Costly Celebration!

My wife and I worked the 25th anniversary of the Home Depot stores

www.homedepot.com

It was held at five different elegant hotels and the Orange County Conven-

tion Center. We worked at the Gaylord Palms

www.gaylordhotels.com/gaylordpalms/

The name of the game was party and that is what nearly 6,000 attendees did. A large well-decorated hall with pool tables, other games and a bar was set up, and Universal Studios Park was rented for one day. Attendees were flown in from all over, even from China, and all at Home Depot's expense. I'm told the cost for this celebration was over 25 million. One manager told me they would make that back in a short time. Perhaps, but I wonder if the shareholders would approve of that expense!

We also worked two days at the same hotel for the Sybase

www.sybase.com

(TechWave 2004) show that took place only a couple days after hurricane Charlie. In spite of Charlie, the attendance was about 1,300, including 300 employees, which surprised management under the circumstances. They promoted PowerBuilder 10 as well as their other products, and put on a great production.

While working that show, we certainly noticed that many Progress Energy workers, along with many utility workers that came in from out of state, were headquartered at the Gaylord Palms Resort. Their parking lot had many utility trucks and there was an inventory of poles, power transformers,

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wire and other important parts. The hotel prepared some great meals for those hard working folks, however I'm not sure who paid for that and the rooms. Power line damage was very severe in that area.

Correction

Last month one of my items was Pop-File, a product to filter spam. I misunderstood Paul Witheridge's comments and said it was also an antivirus, which was incorrect. What he had meant was that with training, it could filter out spam with a virus in it, which means it might substitute for an antivirus. Sorry for that misconception on my part.

Fundraiser

This vendor might help raise funds for your treasury. They call themselves "The \$2.95 Guys" and can offer you T-shirts at good prices. They can package or compress them in all sorts of unique shapes. Quantity for that \$2.95 price is rather high and I'm not sure how competitive their prices are with the lower quantities. However, it won't hurt to take a look if you are looking for shirts. For the compressed shirt packaging, the price is more. The sample they sent me was a Hanes, which I consider a quality name. They are at

www.295guys.com

or call them at 1-800-536-5959. The person I originally talked to was Tom Hardy, but to my surprise, he has not returned my calls for a confirmation after three days of trying, so good luck if you order. I can't change this item because the column has already been sent to my "early editors." No special deal for the column, but I thought of it as a possible fundraiser.

Another Fundraiser

This might be something a bit unique, but when I heard about it I thought it would help make money for an individual, or a group. The name is CafePress and their URL is

www.cafepress.com

You can make money with absolutely no investment. All you have to do is come up with your own individual design of some sort, or a logo that you like. They offer a number of products to carry your design or logo, which can even be a statement or question. I counted at least 70 products offered on their Web site to carry your creation. A friend designed a shirt with "Ask me where I bought this!" that he is selling.

After making your choice, set your price, which should be over their base price in order to make money for you. They handle all the ordering, sales and shipping, then send you a check when you have accumulated enough. Hopefully, their accounting is accurate. Not

a bad deal considering you have nothing invested except your time and creation. Be careful you don't infringe on something copyrighted, especially phrases and sayings.

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

Visit my Web site at

www.dealsguy.com

for interesting articles from user group newsletters. I also posted some interesting Web site pages for your viewing. They contain new product announcements that I received over a period of time in 2003. More will be forthcoming when I get the ambition.

3 The Editor's Keyboard

Closing the Digital Divide

I have not heard much about this topic lately. Perhaps I have not been eavesdropping on the right people. I want to let you know I have not forgotten.

I do not remember when I first heard the term. I has been several years in any case. I do remember I was immediately struck with the thought, "Yes, how can the poorer folk afford a computer? What a shame (I was delighted with personal computers). I wonder what I can do to help?"

Keeping Computers Out of the Landfill

Our July 2002 meeting hosted a panel of recycling experts. The outcome has

been the two computer recycling events held in May (2003 and 2004) organized by Green Star. Every one was surprised by the more than 140 tons collected in 2003. That figure was more than doubled in 2004. Wow! That sure represents a bunch of computer hardware heading South.

The ACS-PCUG *IS* Leading the Way

More next month. I plan to review the efforts of the ACS-PCUG over the years to help close the digital divide.

Fielder George Dowding
Editor and Publisher
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4 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.¹

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.

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

5 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>

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²Replace 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.

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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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