Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group

Computer News

May 2005
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Inside This Issue:

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group has served novice and experienced computer users since 1983. Through its monthly meetings, newsletters, on-line forum, special interest groups, mentor program and community involvement, it has helped educate people of all ages. The NVPCUG provides opportunities for people to find friends who share common interests and experiences. Through its Computers-to-Schools program, members refurbish used computer equipment for donation to local schools. Since January 2003 the NVPCUG has donated more than 307 computers and 102 printers.

PowerPoint Features Will Be Demonstrated at NVPCUG Meeting on May 18

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group will meet Wednesday, May 18, 2005, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa, California.

Our May general meeting will consist of only two of our regular meeting segments: **Random Access**, an open-floor question-and-answer period, and **Computer Tutor**, a session in which you can learn how to accomplish specific tasks. Each of these segments will be much longer than usual, allowing more time for discussion.

In the Computer Tutor session, **Michael Moore** will show how to use the basic features of *Microsoft PowerPoint*, an excellent graphics presentation program included in most *Microsoft Office* application suites. *PowerPoint* enables a user to create colorful computer-based multimedia slide shows with text, graphics, clip art, tables, charts, pictures, animation, sound, and video. A presentation can be displayed on a monitor, projected onto a screen, made interactive, loaded on an Internet web site, or printed as a handout.

Michael Moore

Users of *Corel Presentations* and other graphics presentation managers will also find Mike's presentation of value because these products have many similar features.

Mike is a Computer Studies instructor at Napa Valley College, where he teaches *Microsoft Word, Excel*, and *Access* courses. Prior to teaching, Mike had a varied and long career in industrial computer system design until he retired early from Westinghouse as the president of one of its high-technology subsidiaries. He is also the NVPCUG's Computer Tutor Coordinator.

During the Random Access period, which will precede the Computer Tutor session, you can ask questions about specific issues you have encountered in using computer products and receive helpful information from other meeting attendees.

Need practical information that will enable you to make better use of your computer? Come to this free meeting! Guests are always welcome.

June 15 NVPCUG Meeting Main Presentation: Building Your Own State-of-the-Art Computer
To be presented by NVPCUG member Dick Peterson

President's Message —

Join the Fun!
by Orion E. Hill

Special Events Deserve Support

We have two special events in early June that deserve your support. The first is our **2005 Used Computer Equipment Sale**, which will be held on June 3 and 4 in a vacant storefront at 1307 First Street in downtown Napa. The second is the **Fifth Annual Napa County Computers and Electronics Recycling Event**, which will be held on June 10 and 11, just a week after our sale, at Napa Valley College's Napa campus.

Our sales -- the coming sale will be the fifth -- promote the reuse of equipment that is not at end-of-life and provide essential income that helps to cover the costs of our education activities and annual expenses such as liability insurance ($805) and meeting room rental ($201). The recycling events, which we cosponsor, reduce waste by ensuring that materials in obsolete products are recovered for use in new products.

These activities, along with our Computers-to-Schools program, also generate considerable publicity for our organization. Information about our sales is included in local newspapers and public television news announcements, and our recycling event support and CTS program are highlighted in Napa County garbage bill inserts and other recycling promotion materials.

Please sign up to help when volunteer sheets for our current sale, which I'm coordinating, and the coming recycling event, for which **Bill Wheadon** is coordinating volunteer activities, are circulated at our group meeting on May 18. The volunteers who staff these activities always have a good time.

Offers of Store Space Appreciated

I want to thank Coldwell Banker Commercial Brokers of the Valley agent **Allan Wilke** for arranging with **Morris Brown Realty, LP** of Portland Oregon our use of the vacant retail store space at 1307 First Street in Napa for our coming sale. I also want to thank Napa commercial property owners **George Altamura Jr.** and **Jeff Doran** for offering their vacant properties.

Three of our past four sales were hosted by **NapaNet**. Due to the Internet service provider's move last October, we had to seek a new location for our current sale.

Which Saturday for Our Picnic?

In recent years our annual potluck picnics -- featuring delicious food, competitive games, prizes, and great fun for everyone -- have usually been scheduled for the first Saturday afternoon following our August general meetings. If we continue that pattern, our picnic this year would be held on August 20. To ensure that the maximum number of members who would like to participate can come, however, we are conducting a survey to find out if another Saturday is preferred by the majority of interested members.

All of the proposed dates are convenient for NVPCUG member **Dick Peterson** and his wife **Sandy**, who have again invited our group to use the redwood grove at their Christmas tree farm, the site of our last seven picnics.

If you are interested in attending our picnic, please let me know by May 31 your **first and second choices** of the following five dates: July 23, July 30, August 6, August 13, and August 20.

Special Interest Group Renamed

Have you noticed that the **Investment SIG** has been renamed the **Investors SIG**? Some people, upon hearing that the NVPCUG had an Investment SIG, thought that the SIG was an *investment club* which bought and sold stocks and bonds, not a group devoted to learning how to use computers and the Internet to become better informed about investing. To help clarify the SIG's educational purpose, the members, led by **Jerry Brown** since June 2000, recently renamed the SIG.

Volunteers Still Needed

We still need volunteers to serve as Vice President, Programs Director, and Special Projects Director, positions which have been vacant since December, and to help our officers plan and administer our group's activities. If you value our educational program, appreciate the problem-solving assistance of our mentors, enjoy meeting with other people with similar interests and experiences, and would like for those NVPCUG benefits to continue, please contact me to learn more about the many ways you can help. Even a couple of hours of your time each month can make a difference.

Sound Off!

Got a suggestion for improving an NVPCUG activity? Want to help with an activity? Send e-mail to *OHill@napanet.net* or call (707) 252-0637.

Used Computer Equipment Sale Set for June 3 and 4

By Orion E. Hill, Sale Coordinator

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group is conducting another huge used computer equipment sale, this one on Friday and Saturday, June 3 and 4, at 1307 First Street in downtown Napa. On Friday the sale hours will be 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; on Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

On sale will be hundreds of items, including desktop and notebook computers, color monitors, keyboards, keyboard trays, mice, hard disk drives, compact disk (CD) drives, DVD drives, floppy disk drives, printers, scanners, modems, network cards, cables of all types, power strips, and power cords. Most of the equipment is only a few years old. Quantities of many items will be limited. All of the items will be available at bargain prices.

Most of the sale items we received as donations for our Computers-to-Schools program, through which we provide refurbished equipment to Napa County public schools. These items were then determined to be unsuitable for classroom use or in excess of school needs. Major equipment donors include **Dey, L.P.** and the **County of Napa**. Many additional items have been donated by local businesses, residents, and NVPCUG members. The NVPCUG is most grateful for the contributions of these organizations and individuals, as well as for the support of **Morris Brown Realty, L.P.**, of Portland, Oregon, which is providing free store space for our sale.

This sale is the NVPCUG's primary annual fund-raising activity. Sale proceeds will be used for computer education activities benefiting Napa County residents.

Volunteers Are Needed

NVPCUG members are needed to help move sale tables and equipment, set up and take down the sale, and assist customers. No computer expertise is required. Please review the following shift schedule and then immediately let Sale Coordinator **Orion Hill** know which day(s) and shift(s) you would be able to work. Volunteers who have vehicles with cargo capacity are especially needed on Thursday and Sunday.

Thursday, June 2 - Sale Setup
Shift 1: 1:00 P.M. to 3:30 P.M. - Move items to sale site
Shift 2: 3:30 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. - Set up items on tables

Friday, June 3 - Sale Day 1
Shift 1: 8:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. - Assist customers
Shift 2: 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. - Assist customers
Shift 3: 2:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. - Assist customers
Shift 4: 5:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. - Assist customers

Saturday, June 4 - Sale Day 2
Shift 1: 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. - Assist customers
Shift 2: 11:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. - Assist customers
Shift 3: 2:30 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. - Assist customers

Sunday, June 5 - Sale Takedown
Shift 1: 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. - Remove unsold items

Let's make this sale as successful as our sales in 2000, 2002, and 2004, which netted $1,921, $2,718, and $1,867, respectively. To volunteer your help or to donate items, contact **Orion Hill** by e-mailing *OHill@napanet.net* or by calling (707) 252-0637.

NVPCUG Special Interest Groups

The NVPCUG currently has two special interest groups. By attending SIG meetings, you can learn about a subject in greater detail than is feasible at NVPCUG general meetings and share your knowledge with other people. SIG meetings are open to everyone. Meeting times and locations occasionally change. For current meeting information, check our Web site, *www.nvpcug.org*, or contact the SIG leaders.

Digital Photography SIG
Meets: Monthly, second Wednesday
7:00 to 8:30 p.m
Piner's Nursing Home
Conference Room
1800 Pueblo Avenue, Napa
Leader: **Hilton Des Roches**
(707) 224-6170
Hilton@napanet.net

Investors SIG
Meets: Monthly, second Monday
5:30 to 7:30 p.m
23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa
Leader: **Jerry Brown**
(707) 254-9607
bqandjbb@sbcglobal.net

Membership News
By Dianne Prior, NVPCUG Membership Director

The Napa Valley Computer Users Group welcomes new members **Kenneth Brown, Karla Bailey** and **Susy Ball,** who joined in April, as well as associate member **Mike Ball,** Susy's husband. Reinstated with payment of dues was **Kip Edenborough.** Total membership now stands at 112.

Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group
Officers for 2005

Board of Directors

President	Orion E. Hill	252-0637	President@nvpcug.org
Vice President	(Volunteer Needed)		VicePresident@nvpcug.org
Secretary	Julie Jerome	224-6620	Secretary@nvpcug.org
Treasurer	Roy Wagner	253-2721	Treasurer@nvpcug.org
Other Directors:	Dianne Prior, John Simcoe, James Stirling		

Appointed Officers

Computer Equipment Sale Coordinator	**Orion E. Hill**	252-0637	Sales@nvpcug.org
Computer Recycling Coordinator	Bill Wheadon	224-3901	Recycler@nvpcug.org
Computer Tutor Coordinator	Mike Moore	255-1615	Tutor@nvpcug.org
Computers-to-Schools Program Coordinator	Orion E. Hill	252-0637	CTS@nvpcug.org
Facility Arrangements Coordinator	Steve Siegrist		Facility@nvpcug.org
Greeter Coordinator	Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Greeter@nvpcug.org
Librarian	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Librarian@nvpcug.org
Membership Director	Dianne Prior	252-1506	Membership@nvpcug.org
Mentor Program Coordinator	Hilton Des Roches	224-6170	Mentors@nvpcug.org
Newsletter Circulator	Jim Hearn	224-2540	
Newsletter Editor	James Stirling	944-1177	Editor@nvpcug.org
Product Review Coord.	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Reviews@nvpcug.org
Programs Director	(Volunteer Needed)		Programs@nvpcug.org
Publicity Director	John Simcoe	258-8233	Publicity@nvpcug.org
Random Access Moderator	Jerry Brown	254-9607	Questions@nvpcug.org
Special Projects Director	(Volunteer Needed)		Projects@nvpcug.org
Webmaster	Ron Dack		Webmaster@nvpcug.org

NVPCUG Calendar

Wednesdays	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Computers-to-Schools work parties. To volunteer contact Orion Hill.
May 4	7:00 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
May 9	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG, 23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa
May 11	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Digital Photography SIG, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
May 18	7:00-9:00 p.m.	General Meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa
June 3 & 4	9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.	NVPCUG Used Computer Equipment Sale, 1307 First Street, Napa
June 10 & 11	9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	Napa County Computers & Electronics Recycling Event, Napa Valley College

Computer and Electronics Recycling Event Set for June 10, 11

By Bill Wheadon, NVPCUG Computer Recycling Coordinator

The Fifth Annual Napa County Computer and Electronics Recycling Event will be held Friday and Saturday, June 10 and 11, in the south parking lot at Napa Valley College's Napa campus. This event for Napa County residents and businesses only provides an opportunity to dispose of unwanted computer and electronic equipment free of charge at a convenient drop-off site.

Equipment collected at this event will be evaluated for possible reuse. Items deemed to be obsolete will be sent to a demanufacturing plant where various materials can be recovered in an environmentally safe manner for reuse in new products. Recycling not only conserves valuable resources but also is essential for preventing toxic materials from contaminating the environment. Each cathode ray tube (CRT) in a computer monitor or television contains five to seven pounds of lead and cadmium, toxic substances prohibited in landfills.

Those items selected for reuse will be accepted either by the Computer Recycling Center in Santa Rosa or by the Napa Valley Personal Computer User Group for use in our Computers-to-Schools (CTS) program. Last year about two tons of reusable equipment was recovered for our CTS program.

Sponsors of this event include the City of Napa, Napa Garbage Service, Napa Valley Disposal Service, American Canyon Disposal Service, Upper Valley Waste Management Agency, Napa Valley College, Recycle America Asset Recovery Group, the Computer Recycling Center and, of course, the NVPCUG.

Volunteers Needed

NVPCUG volunteers are needed at this event to provide traffic control and identify equipment suitable for reuse. Lifting of heavy equipment will not be required (or allowed); workers provided by the City of Napa and Napa Garbage Service will do the lifting. Volunteers will be provided refreshments and box lunches. Please review the following shift schedule and let **Bill Wheadon** know which day(s) and shift(s) you would like to work. If you cannot work an entire shift, please indicate when you would be available. A minimum of seven people will be needed for each shift.

Friday, June 10
Morning shift: 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.
Afternoon Shift   11:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.

Saturday, June 11
Morning shift: 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.
Afternoon shift: 11:30A.M. to 2:30 P.M.

This recycling event not only benefits our community but also provides publicity for our group. To volunteer your help contact **Bill Wheadon** by e-mailing *wheadonb@aol.com* or by calling (707) 224-3901.

Computer Donation Appreciated

By Orion E. Hill, NVPCUG Computers-to-Schools Program Coordinator

On April 27 the Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group, through our Computers-to-Schools program, donated 30 refurbished Pentium 3 and Pentium 4 computers with monitors, keyboards, and mice to **Robert Louis Stevenson Middle School** in Saint Helena. In appreciation of our gift, Principal **Lance Hanson** sent the following message:

"Thank you so much for your generosity. The majority of the computers are installed and operational, with installation of the rest anticipated shortly. The donated computers are new enough to be of real benefit to the technology at RLS and enable our teachers to more effectively use technology that was more difficult or impossible on some of the older systems we had. Programs such as *Adobe Photoshop*, *Microsoft Publisher*, and *Scholastic Read 180* (a literacy remediation educational program)

are benefiting from these newer systems. Because of the newer computers now in some rooms, we have also been able to recycle some older systems that were really no longer viable and to generally upgrade the quality of the technology experience for students here at RLS."

We currently have unfilled school requests for more than 150 Pentium 3 and Pentium 4 computers. With Napa County public schools currently experiencing severe budget squeezes, we anticipate receiving requests for many more computers.

Labels identifying the NVPCUG as the donor and bearing our Web site address are now being affixed to the fronts of all of the computers we are donating to schools and nonprofit organizations. The gold foil labels have black lettering.

Selling on eBay

By Dorothy Alexander, Executive Member, Sarnia Computer User's Group, Canada *www.scug.ca*

If you have something to sell, you should first look at the eBay site *http:\\www.ebay.com* (American site) and register with them. When you start selling on eBay they credit you with $10.00 to your eBay account to get you started. You then need to reimburse them using any of the following; credit card, money order, check or direct bank withdrawal from your account. You will need to decide on a user name and password with the auction house.

If you are planning to use Bid-Pay.com (Western Union) it is advisable to register with them. If you are going to use PayPal you need to register with them also.

You should look to see what your type of item is selling for and see if there is an interest in it. Make a note of the category that the other items were listed under that were similar to your item you wish to sell. For additional fees you can list in more than one area.

Take a picture of the item. It is a known fact that it sells better with a photo. You are allowed one photo (not be over 250 kb) of each item with eBay. Each additional photo costs five cents. After you take your photo you should scan it, remove unwanted backgrounds and size it. Make sure to save the photo. Save to an appropriate folder for easy access. I have a digital photo folder and a sub folder called "eBay photos."

You are now ready to log onto eBay. You need both your user name and password to do so. Location prompt is next. You can enter Sarnia or simply say Ontario or name of choice. The next prompt asks if you want it listed regionally (for U.S.A.) Now you indicate how many days the sale will be. You can choose 3, 5 or 7 days. There is an extra $0.10 charge for a 10-day advertisement. Mark if you want a **Reserve** price on the item and enter the amount. There is a charge for this (see below). Some-

times this is a good idea on an expensive item for which you definitely want a certain price. If there is a reserve price put on it you can start it low to get the bidding going. If you do not want to put on a reserve price, start it just around the amount of money you would be willing to sell the item for, e.g. $49.99 if you want at least $50.00 for the item.

The rates to list on eBay are:

Listing Price	Cost to List
01 to $0.99	$0.30
$1.00 to $9.99	$0.35
$10.00 to 24.99	$0.60
$25.00 to $49.99	$1.20
$50.00 to $199.99	$2.40
$200.00 to $499.00	$3.60
$500.00 and up	$4.80
Cost to Put on Reserve	
$1.00 to $49.99	$1.00
$50.00 to $199.99	$2.00
$200.00 & up, 1% of reserve	

Commissions are charged on the selling price and are as follows:

$25.00 or less, 5.25%
$25.00 to $1000.00, 5.25% on 1st $25.00, then 2.75% on balance
$1000.00 plus, 5.25% on 1st $25.00, 2.75% on balance up to $1000, then l.5% on balance above $1000.

Give your item a title. The aim here is to make it so attractive that everyone will read it!

Decide how you want to word your advertisement. Your description should be quite detailed as to what you have to offer. Next choose the category best suited for the item you wish to sell. Make sure to totally describe the item, including flaws, tears, cuts (in other words everything). If it is a garment, measure it, even if you know the size. Give details as to how you want payment for the goods and instructions in regard to shipping and handling. State if you will accept checks or what kind of payment you

wish. Make this as descriptive as possible to avoid the goods being returned for misrepresentation. You can choose font size, color, etc. when you are doing this. This is all loaded into your ad with a prompt to see if you wish to check it for spelling or errors *before* completing the ad.

These are the additional charges for special services: Home Page featured $99.95; Feature Plus in category $19.95; Highlight $5.00; Bold $2.00; Gallery $19.95; Buy It Now $0.05. The next question you need to answer would be if you want a counter on your ad. There is no charge for this and it lets you know how many people have actually looked at your item. Then you will be asked if you will accept escrow. I do not personally. I indicate that I will ship worldwide as I have a lot of my sales go abroad. After you have filled out all the areas necessary you can get a preview of what you have filed in to confirm that you are happy with it. After all is OK click continue. They will tell you how much money you have left in your account before you click that you do in fact want your ad to be activated.

Now a screen will come up telling you where your ad is located and announcing that the sale has begun. You will get an e-mail, almost immediately, giving you the status of your account and listing cost of the ad that you just placed.

When your sale has been completed the buyer can put in a FEEDBACK for you, either Positive or Negative. You will see a star following your name. The colour changes at different levels and the number shows that there has been that many feedbacks entered for you. Most of the customers do this, but occasionally some do not. Of course you strive to get a positive feedback and not a negative one. New sellers have sunglasses after their name alerting the public that they are new to eBay.

Buying on eBay--Hints and Tips

By Cathy Margolin, President, North Orange County Computer Club, California

EBay is the largest global marketplace, with very low entry cost. Tons of new and used and collectable items are bought and sold every day, as there are millions of sellers puthng up items that you may not be able to find anywhere else! Last year, eBay users exchanged some $9.3 billion worth of goods. On an average day there may be over a million sales occurring.

First off, you should start watching some auctions to get a feel for the process. Once you get used to the process, get an eBay ID (do not use your e-mail name as your user-ID the spammers will get it!). Then start bidding on small items to learn the process and develop positive feedback. It all runs on feedback. Also multiple user-IDs are still ok. Some people use one for selling and another for buying, so as not to let people know their sources.

How to Find What You Want

You can search titles and descriptions like: Haviland -johann -theo* (which means look for haviland with no johann and no theo* which is a wild card to ignore any theo).

You can also look under categories to find an item, but remember that not everyone puts their article for sale in the correct categories.

When the seller has tons of items and you want to search only Palm Pilot, go to seller search, go to the bottom of the page, enter Palm Pilot, and under Multiple sellers, put your eBay ID (or several IDs).

Bidding

Make sure you check the seller's feedback--having too many negatives and neutrals is not good. Beware of sellers with no feedback and large dollar items for sale; they may be good or bad or just not know the

> It is only the highest bidder at the close of the auction that wins. If you bid during the week, you keep driving up the price, but bidding at the last second masks interest and usually results in a lower cost.

ropes yet, but you do not have enough information to trust them with your hard-earned money.

If you have a concern about the seller, ask them a question a few days before the auctions end (such as cost of shipping, do they take PayPal, etc.) to see how they respond.

Use odd-numbered cents, such as .99, since the bids go up in increments of 50 cents; with $1 (depending on the value of the bid), you may win an item by just one cent.

Think of any auction you have been to — it is only the last price at the close of the hammer that counts! Always snipe -- which is bidding at the last minute. In this auction format,

it is only the highest bidder at the close of the auction that wins. If you bid during the week, you keep driving up the price, but bidding at the last second masks interest and usually results in a lower cost. You can use a service (*www.esnipe.com*, which charges a fee, or hammersnipe at *hammertap.com,* which does not) or use a program on your own computer.

Bid the maximum amount you want to spend (proxy bidding -- only goes up to this amount if someone places a bid against you). Be aware of the Terms of Sale (TOS) for each seller. They differ greatly.

- What form of payment do they take?
- What is the shipping cost, as this can be very high! The Post Office uses zip codes to price shipping, so now it is less complicated.
- Check out seller feedback and what type of items they usually sell.

A set of tips is at the Vendio site (which also has an on-line bulletin board about eBay auctions): *http://www.vendio.com/service/tipsandtacics/index2.html.*

How to Pay

To help protect yourself, use a credit card, if possible; PayPal; check; or lastly a money order. If the transaction goes wrong, you can stop payment on your check; and it is easier to get reimbursed (chargeback) if you use a credit card.

When the item has arrived, don't forget to give feedback to the seller.

EBay is where the market is in on-line auctions — it is an ever-changing marketplace, where change is constant.

Happy eBay-ing!

You can revise your ad, but it has to be done prior to anyone making a bid on it. You can add additional information that you may have forgotten, at any time. It will be posted beneath your description in the ad.

If you do not sell an item you can re-list it for the sale again. If it sells the second time you get this listing fee returned to you.

GOOD LUCK! Have fun.

Double Threat On-line Travel Scam

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director and Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX

iwilsker@apcug.net

Most of us like to travel and would especially enjoy a travel bargain. We may have checked with reliable travel resources such as our local travel agents, airlines, cruise lines and hotels but were unable to find the deal that we wanted. We check the major travel sites such as Expedia, Orbitz and Travelocity, but still cannot find a deal that makes us happy. Since we are experienced Internet users, we go to the major search engines such as *Yahoo, Google* or *Alltheweb*, and search for bargain travel sites. We notice some Web sites that appear at the top of the listings, sometimes in the premium paid listings on the search engines, that allege airline tickets, hotel rooms, and cruises at far below the prices charged by the reputable sources we are familiar with, so we click on the links. One link may be for *CheapClouds.com*, claiming deep discounts off published airfares; another link may be for *Busysky.net* that offers comprehensive travel services with fares far below those offered by travel agents or other on-line travel websites. Two other Web sites offering unbelievable travel bargains that appear in the paid or premium listings on the search engines are *Crazytickets.net* and *Submitprice.net*.

Tasting a good deal, we click on one of these sites and see a travel site similar to the better-known and reputable sites with which we are already familiar.

We search for airfares and find tickets for about half of what we would pay elsewhere; we find hotels and cruises similarly priced. Unable to resist such bargains, we select our trips and we are asked to enter our credit card information. A familiar window appears that asks us for our credit card number, security code (the three or four digit code on the credit card), expiration date, and name on the card. With a sense of excitement, we eagerly await the confirmation, which we are told may take a few minutes, but are instead presented with an official-looking window that says that our credit card information could not be processed. We are then presented with an option to pay with another credit card, or pay by an alternative means. Thinking that it is just a simple glitch, and not wanting to lose the opportunity for a glorious vacation at a bargain price, we enter the required information for another credit card. We are again greeted with the same screen that it could not be processed, and are then told to contact customer service by e-mail, utiliz-

> **What is especially insidious about this scam is that it is a "double whammy," in that we are not only out of the money for the trip, since the money sent via Western Union is virtually unrecoverable, but we have also given unscrupulous unknown parties our credit card information**!

ing the link and transaction number provided on the screen.

A short time later, we will receive an e-mail from the travel company apologizing for the inconvenience, and claiming that their bank is having trouble processing credit cards. Since the price quoted is valid for only a very short time, the traveler is asked to use alternative methods of payment – wire the proceeds via Western Union. Readers of this column may feel a hint of skepticism at this point, remembering that sometime ago I wrote that while a legitimate method of sending money, wiring money via Western Union to pay for Internet purchases should raise a red flag of suspicion. Still, eager not to let the bargain of a lifetime get away; we follow the instructions on the e-mail from customer service. The address to which the money is wired may raise more suspicions, as the destination is not in the United States, but instead in Bulgaria, Romania or Thailand. An inquiry e-mail back to customer service may bring a prompt canned reply that the reason why the deal is so good is that these prices are only available for tickets purchased outside of the U.S., along with an assurance that they will be honored by the airlines, cruise lines, and the hotels. Still not wanting to lose out on this dream vacation, we send the money via Western Union, exactly as requested. We will then receive an e-mail stating that it will take several days to receive our tickets, and are provided with a Web link and tracking number to show our tickets are on the way.

After not receiving the tickets in the time specified, we click on the tracking number, and are given another canned response that they are being processed, and should be delivered in the next few days. Following up clicks several days later display the identical statement. An e-mail reply from customer service reiterates the message. By the date of the dream vacation, no tickets have arrived, dashing any dreams of a good time.

We have become the victims of another very nasty scam circulating on the Internet. What is especially insidious about this scam is that it is a "double whammy," in that we are not only out of the money for the trip, since the money sent via Western Union is virtually unrecoverable, but we have also given unscrupulous unknown parties our credit card information!

This is not some fictitious scenario by a mystery writer but a documented scam. The scam has become so pervasive that even some of the antivirus companies have posted warnings about it on their Web sites. There is

Link to Digital Movies With Movielink

by Sherry Zorzi, APCUG Advisor and Director of Cajun Clickers, Baton Rogue, Louisiana

While Blockbuster and Netflix (*www. netflix.com*) battle it out for your entertainment dollar, a new on-line player just may sneak around them. Movielink (*www. Movielink.com*) allows you to order and download recent movies on a pay-for-view basis.

The movies are downloaded to your PC for viewing there, or on a TV connected to the PC, or on your laptop. The cost is about $5 for a recent release, after download to watch the movie, but some offerings are as cheap as 99 cents. You have 30 days after download to watch the movie. You are renting the movie, though, for a 24-hour period, which means that once you click "Play," you have only the next 24 hours to watch (and

anecdotal evidence that, in several of the cases, the victims' credit cards had been illicitly charged for a variety of goods and services in the days immediately following the fraudulent transaction, possibly committed by the same travel thieves. The Web sites mentioned above were real, and are well documented, but are currently off-line (as I type this). Based on their success at defrauding countless victims, it is likely that they will reappear under different names.

In order to be safe when shoppingor travel bargains, be sure to use a reputable resource, such as a local travel agent, airline or hotel website, or trusted third party website. If you pay with a credit card, there is some degree of protection from fraud from the credit card company. Never wire money, especially overseas, to pay for a travel bargain. We work too hard for our money to have miscreants steal it from us under the false pretenses of a travel bargain. □

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re-watch, if you like) the movie. You can buy additional viewing time at a reduced rate.

While visiting the Demonstration Digital Home at the Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas in January, I got a coupon for a free download from Movielink. I visited Movielink*'s* Web site as soon as I got home and decided to give it a try. The selection of movies is pretty good and includes most of Blockbuster's Top Ten Rentals.

Before downloading a movie, you must register with Movielink. They are not overly intrusive, asking only for name, e-mail address, sex, and age during the registration process. You will, of course, probably want to deselect the opportunity to get a free e-mail newsletter from Movielink.

Movielink installs *Movielink Manager* software onto your computer, which controls the download and playback of the movies you order. You should read the End User License Agreement carefully, since it does give Movielink and its partners (RealNetworks and Microsoft) the right to push upgrades and updates to you without asking permission. That might be a deal-breaker for some – indeed, it almost sent me running for the hills. But for the sake of you, the reader, I bit the bullet and signed on the virtual dotted line.

The download took about 25 minutes on my Cox cable internet connection and proceeded smoothly. It was several weeks before I had a chance to view my movie. When I clicked "Play," though, the media player would not load the movie, so I went to their Web site for help. The live-chat feature of Movielink's Web site worked beautifully. I was very quickly connected with a technician, who reset my account and had me reinstall the *Movielink Manager* software. Within minutes everything was working fine.

The video quality of the movie was excellent. Watching a movie on the typical PC, though, is much different from watching one on the typical TV. My computer screen is a 17-inch LCD flat screen. The image was beautiful but much smaller than my TV. I don't have a top-of-the-line sound card nor great speakers on that particular computer either, so the audio was acceptable to me while not outstanding. Next time I'll probably download my movie to a different computer in my home – one that has a top-notch video card, a top-notch sound card, and an awesome Surroundsound speaker set that includes a huge subwoofer.

I'll probably rent from Movielink again. I'm intrigued by the possibili-

> **I'm intrigued by the possibility of instant access to the movie of my choice without leaving home or waiting for it to be mailed.**

ties of instant access to the movie of my choice without leaving home or waiting for it to be mailed to me. The service would be even more attractive if it offered a monthly subscription deal and if it allowed me to transfer my rental to the device of my choice, including my Pocket PC and other computers on my home network.

Movielink, and other services like it, may not overtake brick-and-mortar rental stores like Blockbuster or on-line CD rental services like Netflix overnight. But it's a worthy opponent and will become more and more of a threat as more homes connect their TVs to home entertainment PCs. Give it a try.

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Current Hoaxes and Urban Legends

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director and Columnist,
The Examiner, Beaumont, Texas *iwilsker@apcug.net*

Some of us find them cute, entertaining, exciting, and fun, while others find them embarrassing, irritating, and a waste of time. Many forward them believing that they are doing good, or warning of harm, or because these items came from an allegedly reliable source. A few are so convinced of their truth that they explicitly request me to put these items in this column or announce them on my radio and TV show. What I am referring to are hoaxes and urban legends circulating on the Internet. Many of these have a grain of truth or logic in them, while others are totally lacking any basis in fact; yet many still enjoy forwarding them without a second thought to everyone in their e-mail address books.

In order to save you embarrassment, I strongly recommend that anyone tempted to forward such e-mails should check out their validity prior to another mass sending to all you know. There are several excellent Web sites that compile information on these e-mails, and a quick check can save you from sending out what may prove to be a hoax, to the detriment of your personal credibility. If you find that the interesting e-mail is indeed true, you should still consider not forwarding it to everyone. Many of your intended recipients may not find your interests to their liking and may even be offended that you consumed their valuable bandwidth and time. Typically, when I receive a new one from an acquaintance, I check it out. If it is true (a minority of the time), I may choose to selectively forward it to only those who I think may be interested in the topic; but I never send it to everyone in my address book. If it is false, I usually reply back to the sender and include a link documenting the falsehood. Some e-mailers are so humiliated that I caught them in an inaccuracy that they reply in anger

back to me, despite the incontrovertible fact that it was they who had sent the bogus e-mail.

To verify the authenticity or falsehood of these oft-forwarded e-mails, I use two primary and several secondary resources. Primarily I use the excellent and comprehensive urban legends resource of Snopes, at *www.snopes.com*. Well organized in an easy-to-navigate menu format, along with a competent search engine, Snopes is an excellent choice to check out the validity of questionable e-mails.

My other primary resource for checking the legitimacy of such e-mails is *urbanlegends.about.com*. This site is frequently updated with the latest hoaxes in circulation and can reliably document their validity.

A common topic of these questionable e-mails is virus warnings. For this reason, most of the major antivirus software publishers also compile lists of hoaxes, mostly virus-related, on their Web sites. I utilize these sites as secondary resources. It is also notable that old hoaxes and virus warnings never seem to die out and periodically reappear. One that has been documented to be in circulation for over six years, but is again currently making the rounds in mass e-mailings, is the "It takes guts to say Jesus" virus hoax. This e-mail, in several iterations, warns that according to CNN, AOL, McAfee, and other reputable resources, there is an e-mail circulating with a virus that cannot be detected by contemporary antivirus software and that if you open the e-mail, your computer will be effectively destroyed. Every one of the hoax and antivirus Web sites list this as a hoax, yet countless copies are being forwarded by well-intentioned people trying to warn their acquaintances. Some of the variations even go on to state that while it may be

false, it is so important that it is being forwarded anyway. Another similar e-mail warning that does have some validity is the one that says "I've Got Your E-mail on My Account." It goes on to warn that someone is using "your" e-mail account to spread a virus, and "I have received 10 copies of it, all with your e-mail address and ISP in the header." The e-mail then says, "I have copied all the mail text in the windows text-editor for you & zipped then. Make sure, that this mails (sic) don't come in my mail-box again." Attached to this dire warning is a file, commonly named "*your_text.zip*". If opened, the file will infest your computer with the Sober.N worm. If it infects your computer, Sober.N will terminate the antivirus and firewall software on your computer, rendering it vulnerable to further attack, and then will forward itself to everyone in your address book! This Sober.N warning is the exception to the rule that most warnings of this type are bogus.

Another dire warning, which I am receiving multiple copies of, is the warning that a directory of cell phone numbers is being compiled to enable telemarketers to call us on our cell phones, consuming our valuable supply of limited minutes. This hoax, which is now circulating for the second time, is listed by several sites as one of the top hoaxes in circulation. The grain of truth in this is that most cell phone carriers are instituting a "411" directory service of cell phone numbers; this list will emphatically not be for sale to telemarketers.

To see the latest and most widespread hoaxes in circulation, check out the hoax and urban legend Web sites, or the Web site of your favorite antivirus software. You may find some hoaxes actually quite entertaining and wonder how intelligent people could fall for such silly e-mails. □

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Everyone's a Publisher, and Blogs Are Our Printing Presses

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

Just when we think we understand technology and its buzzwords, it all changes. E-mail, chat rooms, Web boards, instant messaging, and cell phone cameras -- haven't they been around forever? But one of this year's hot words is still a bit mysterious: blog. It's neither the villain in a Star Wars movie nor a weather phenomenon: it's simply an abbreviation for "Web log." A blog is an online diary or journal, usually casual and open for all to read.

Blog topics vary as widely as the people who create them. They can be personal how-was-my-day record-keeping; focus on topics such as politics, technology, religion, etc.; and include pointers to other online resources -- such as other blogs!

To be interesting and effective, blogs need constant care and feeding. Blogs attract visitors, links, and buzz by being timely, so people are unlikely to visit blogs that don't frequently show new and interesting content.

But before you learn to read blogs -- and it's often as simple as visiting Web sites! -- you'll need a reason to do so. Searching Google for "blog" and "senior citizen" yields almost 30,000 hits. That's too many to explore but shows that blogging offers something for all ages. So I'll explore a few interesting blogs, then describe ways to explore the "blogosphere" (the worldwide and ever-growing collection of blogs).

Hosted on a colleague's Web site, Dr. John Huth's blog [*jimbuie.blogs.com/john_huth/*] highlights his personal crusade to reduce senior citizens' isolation through computers. Recent posts include "Video-Conferencing: the Killer Application to Reduce Isolation and Depression Among the Elderly" and "Bedside Computers in Hospitals".

TravelPod [*www.travelpod.com/*], an elaborate and polished Web site, describes itself as the Web's "original travel blog." The assortment of travel journals, travelogues, travelers, and destinations inspires me to hit the road! You can browse highlighted stories or search on interests. For example, having enjoyed a trip to Denmark about 15 years ago, I found dozens of bloggers discussing the country.

Web site Moreover collects news and information from thousands of editorial sites and more than a million blogs. Its "Consumer: Senior News" page [*p.moreover.com/cgi-local/page?index_seniors*] includes varied material such as travel, insurance, retirement, and crime.

John Woolington hosts a simple but deep technology blog well worth visiting [*maturetechnology.Blogspot. com/*]. Titled "Technology Is Not The Simple Life," it includes observations and opinions about coping with change.

For anything-goes fun, visit Wil Mosher's blog [*dailysnooze.blogspot.com/*]. He's a curmudgeon and proud of it, noting that he "hides in his hole by day, emerging at night to frolic and fornicate in the moonlight... when he gets off the couch!"

Ken's Weblog [*kengory.blogspot.com/*] proudly shows a fellow's family, friends, politics, humor, and favorite Web links. It's clear that having a blog is like having your personal TV station or magazine!

Gossip Cooler [*www.seniorcitizens.com/weblog/ gossipcooler.html*] is a daily blog about growing older. The site it's on has useful info and links interleaved with many advertisements; since there's no hint who writes or runs the site, be careful.

A woman artist/activist/writer's blog [*windchimewalker.blogspot.com/*] offers her responses to world events, disability, and life. Describing herself as a "raging granny," she leaves no doubt where she stands on issues. Blogs like this show the Internet's power to share ideas and create communities by allowing readers to comment on what Patricia says.

A simple blog [*www.lazydazers.com*] lets you read about and see pictures of a couple's RV travels and adventures.

Finally, the Ageless Project [*jenett.org/ageless/*] is a fascinating compilation of Web sites (not all are blogs) illustrating that "the personal, creative side of the web is diverse and ageless."

Blogs and RSS are becoming increasingly popular and are getting good press coverage [*techweb.com/ article/showArticle.jhtml?articleId=57700173*].

You can visit the blogs I've referenced as simple Web pages with normal hyperlinks. Many blogs are also readable via RSS (Rich Site Summary), an Internet technology which can bring material from multiple publishers/ blogs to you as it's published, without your having to visit multiple Web sites. I read RSS "feeds" via my email software, *Mozilla Thunderbird*, and through a Web site which collects RSS feeds [*www.bloglines.com/myblogs*].

The New, the Best, and the Worst

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

RISC, CISC, EPIC and The Cell

Almost from the inception of the microprocessor, a philosophical debate has been raging as to what design is better. A dumb processor capable of only a few simple procedures, referred to as a RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) processor, could do simple operations very fast. A smart processor, capable of performing more complicated procedures, called a CISC (Complex Instruction Set Computer), would be slower with simple tasks but faster with complicated operations. For instance, a RISC processor capable only of addition and subtraction of whole numbers could be faster in performing sorting tasks, but would require extensive software instructions to perform a floating-point multiplication that a CISC processor could perform immediately with its built-in hardware. RISC had the additional disadvantage that its programs had to be larger than similar programs for CISC processors, a big disadvantage in the days that computer memory came at a premium. On the other hand, the greater complexity of CISC processors made them more expensive to make.

In the mid-90s Apple decided to use RISC processors (e.g. the Motorola 68000) in their computers, while IBM-PC clone makers settled on the CISC architecture, even though IBM was pushing RISC processors. For reasons that have little to do with chip architecture, the Wintel community ended up outselling Apple about 20:1, making the CISC chips the clear winners.

In recent years processor chip designs have begun to merge, where RISC chips have more complex instructions and CISC chips are more efficient. Intel referred to the Pentium II as a CRISC design. Intel's major competitor, AMD, started out with a RISC design but still manages to pro-

duce chips that are compatible and competitive with Intel's Pentiums.

The next major advance in computer architecture is the use of multiple processors working together, dubbed EPIC (Explicitly Parallel Instruction Computing). This calls for rewriting computer programs if they are to make use of the new architecture. Many computer applications can be divided into separate operations that can be run simultaneously. Mathematical simulations such as those involved in weather forecasting are one example. Playing World-Master class chess is another one, and large sorting programs and spreadsheet-type manipulations are easily run in parallel fashion. Intel and AMD have both announced that upcoming powerful desktop computers will have multiple processors.

And now history repeats itself. Sony, Toshiba and IBM (STI) have announced a new microprocessor called The Cell. Cells are designed, RISC-like, to do just a few things very fast but also to work together to achieve optimum results. It might be called an EPIC RISC. Few details about The Cell have been published, other than the basic patent issued in 2002. According to IBM on its Web site: "IBM expects Cell to define an entirely new way of operating. Cell's underlying architecture will enable it to manifest itself into many forms for many purposes, helping to open up a whole new set of applications. Incorporating this architecture, chips will be developed for everything from handheld devices to mainframe computers."

Four of the Cells will power Sony's next-generation games console, the PlayStation 3. However, it is expected that The Cell will also be capable of powering super-fast desktop computers. An excellent article about The Cell can be found in *The*

Economist (February 12, 2005). There is also a summary in *PC Magazine* (April 12, 2005).

In Brief

Several months ago Google announced a new, free desktop search program. It is still under development and does not (yet) index *Acrobat* PDF files. Other search programs immediately came up with competing versions. According to *PC Magazine* (3/22/05) the best of the free desktop search programs at present is Yahoo's desktop search (*desktop.yahoo.com),* a lite version of the outstanding $75 X1 that they rate best of show.

Do you depend on *Quicken* to download your financial data from banks and brokers? Well, *Quicken* is ending online services and tech support for *Quicken 2001* and *2002* so you'll need to upgrade to *Quicken 2005*. And that version will no longer support importing data via the .qif format and will support only the .ofx format in its *WebConnect* and *DirectConnect* features. *Microsoft Money 2005* will also support on-line services for just two years. (*PC World,* April 2005).

Linspire (nee Lindows) has released its long-awaited version 5 of its user-friendly *Linux* distribution. They report that it took 3½ years to develop and cost $20 million. Subscribers to its Click 'N Run library of self-installing *Linux*-based programs can download the new distribution for free and burn it to a self-booting CD-ROM. As a long-time user and promoter of the Linspire programs, I eagerly obtained the version to evaluate its new features. Sorry to say, *Linspire* 5.0 confirms the maxim that odd-numbered versions of major programs are often buggy and are best avoided. Fortunately, the distribution

comes on a "live" CD that can be used to boot the computer and run the program without making any changes to the computer's hard drive or settings. I tried to boot the *Linspire* CD on my old Inspiron 3800 laptop, the one I have used daily for more than a year with *Linspire 4.5* – laptop edition. The screen assumed all sorts of weird color effects and the program hung, presumably. Shutting the computer off fortunately left it unharmed by the experience and still capable of running the older *Linspire* version. On my newer Inspiron 5150 laptop the CD seemed to boot OK, but the mouse was stuck at the edge of the screen and the programs did not respond to keyboard inputs. Again, no joy, but no harm was done. Finally I actually installed *Linspire 5.0* on my desktop computer in partitions on a second hard drive that I have used previously to evaluate *Linspire* as well as other *Linux* distributions. This time the install was successful, but the Grub boot manager did not recognize the presence of *Windows ME* on the other hard drive, making *Windows* essentially inaccessible – not an acceptable result. I had the same problem with the Mepis *Linux* distribution, which also uses the Grub boot manager. So for now I am sticking with the old and proven *Linspire 4.5* distribution until they work the bugs out of 5.0.

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The Latest on DVDs

By Bob Elgines, Colorado River Computer Club Editor, Lake Havasu, Arizona

The DVD world is going crazy. The price range is from $59 to $130, well within most of our budgets. DVD blanks are down to 50 cents a-piece, almost as cheap as CDs. The top four recorder manufacturers are Plextor, Toshiba, Pacific Digital and Memorex.

Speed is up to 16X, which is max on the outer part of the disk, but only 8X blanks are readily available.

Dual layer (8.5 GB of data space) is labeled as the latest big deal, but is it really? These disks are hard to manufacture and are very expensive. The most important thing is, what will they play in? Well not much of anything. Most DVD players will not recognize the format and neither will your older recorders. So I don't look for this to do anyone much good even in the future.

What is in the future (next year)? The digital world has still been undecided on DVD-R and DVD+R formats, so most of your recorders will do both. Now we come to the future of introducing two new formats named "HD-DVD" and "Blu-ray". These new formats have been developed to use the new blue laser, whereas they have been using the red laser in our present recorders. Red-laser single level DVDs have 4.7 GB of capacity, where the blue-laser single layer DVDs will have a capacity of 15 (HD-DVD format) to 25 GB (Blu-ray format) at present.

An HD (High Definition) two-hour movie uses about 17.4 GB without max compression. The compression schemes (MPEG-2, MPEG4, etc.) will be the same for both, so there will be no big difference in playback quality. Here we go again, new DVD players will be needed and this reminds us of the old video tape war on formats "Beta" and "VHS." Remember, VHS won out due to more recording time and lower costs. Will this be true of the two blue-laser formats? Only time will tell.

These blue-laser recorders and players will be coming out near the end of this year or the start of next year, but I think we are going to have to wait and see if they can decide on a format for the blue-laser.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups brings this article to you.

Freeze Your Drive

One of the more interesting remedies for a hard drive that is unreadable is placing the recalcitrant drive in your freezer. As crazy as it sounds, this treatment has an underlying rationale that makes sense. As components in your hard drive drop in temperature, they contract slightly. This change in size may permit your drive to function properly for a brief period, perhaps just enough time to allow you to retrieve your valuable data.

To use this strategy, remove your hard drive from your computer and place it in a sealed Ziploc-type bag. Next, place the drive in the freezer overnight. Reinstall the frozen drive, and if it's accessible, quickly copy your data to the backup medium of your choice. Remember, as the drive warms, it will begin to revert to its failed state. □

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TECH NEWS

By Sue Crane, Vice President / Editor, Big Bear Computer Club, California, *www.bigbearcc.org*

Traditional 911 Services Not Available From VOIPs

The Texas attorney general filed a lawsuit against Internet telephone service Vonage, saying the company fails to clearly tell consumers about the limits of 911 emergency calling over its service. The suit stems from a incident last month in Houston where a husband and wife were shot by burglars while their daughter tried to call 911 on a Vonage line and reached a recording. Independent VoIP providers typically do not have access to the traditional 911 system, which carries calls to emergency dispatchers and transmits data about the caller's location. As a work-around, Vonage tells customers they need to activate a 911 service, but that service directs calls to administrative telephone lines that in some cases are unanswered.

MRI in a Pill

A South Korean semiconductor manufacturer has announced an image sensor for pill-size cameras that doctors can use to obtain accurate information about a patient's digestive tract. The image sensor can take up to 50,000 photographs in an eight-hour tour of the patient's insides by taking two pictures a second. Mass production will begin in the second half of 2005.

Mouse Adaptor for Shaky Hands

IBM has developed an adjustable mouse adapter that compensates for the shakes of patients with hand tremors and other causes of uncontrollable shaking. According to the International Essential Tremor Foundation, in the US alone nearly 10 million people are affected by essential tremor, the most common form of hand tremors. This adapter will plug in between the mouse and computer.

Cell Phone Helmets for Bikers

Motorcyclists are now able to talk and ride by using a mobile-phone headset for crash helmets, demonstrated at the CeBit trade show. The headsets (full-face, open-face and flip-up), have audio capabilities at speeds up to 62 miles per hour.

Now You CAN Return Unwrapped Software

In the settlement of a California lawsuit Microsoft, Symantec, Adobe and others have agreed to publish EULA agreements on their websites for their respective products, while CompUSA, Best Buy, and Staples agreed to allow consumers to return unwrapped software for full monetary refunds, even if the shrink-wrap has been opened. Details of the settlement can be found at *http://www.techfirm.com/AmendedComplaintFiled.pdf*.

Great New Escape

Virtual reality, technology that gives users the feeling they are somewhere else, can be of great value in treating people suffering from a variety of physical or psychological conditions. Therapy based on the technology is being used in a small number of U.S. clinics to treat burn victims and people with phobias such as the fear of flying, spiders, and heights. Researchers say the technology holds enormous promise for treating PTSD, addictions and for use as a distraction technique in painful dental and medical procedures, including chemotherapy and physical therapy.

Creative Commons Rewrites Copyright!

When Chuck D and the Fine Arts Militia released their latest single, "No Meaning No," They encouraged everyone to view, copy, mix, remix, sample, imitate, parody and even criticize it under a new licensing scheme called Creative Commons that some say may be better suited to the electronic age than the controversial copyright license. More than 10 million other creations -- ranging from the movie "Outfoxed" and songs by the Beastie Boys to the BBC's news footage and the tech support books -- have been distributed using Creative Commons licenses, which allow artists to keep "some rights reserved" rather than "all rights reserved". Online users can go to *www.Creative Commons.org* and search its archives.

WinFS to be included in WinXP Update

Microsoft has said it plans to add support for *WinFS* to *Windows XP*. The operating system will support all three key *Longhorn* components *WinFS, Avalon,* and *Indigo*. *Win FS* is built on top of the fundamentals, which would include security features and technology to make sure applications and drivers don't conflict. A first beta of *Longhorn* is set to ship by the end of June. Microsoft plans to have a beta test version of *WinFS* available when *Longhorn* ships, probably late next year, and add it as an update to *WinXP* later. Microsoft is expected to handout a pre-beta preview release at the Microsoft Win HEC Conference.

New Photoshop CS Details

Adobe is still finding its bearings after it unintentionally released details of its next *Photoshop* upgrade. The company quickly pulled down the announcement, but *Google* never forgets. Check out *Publish.com's* rundown of the new features: *http://ct.eletters.Whatsnewnow.com/rd/cts?d=181-431-1-278-41858-19872-0-0-0-1*.

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Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group

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☐ Do not list phone number   ☐ Do not list e-mail address

Other family members in your household who want to be members:

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* To request a Corporate Membership Application/Renewal form, e-mail: *Membership @nvpcug.org.*

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For more information about the NVPCUG, visit our Web site at: http://www.nvpcug.org

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- Modems
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- Power Strips
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- Software

Quantities of many items are limited. Since everything will be offered at extremely low prices, all items will be sold in "as is" condition, and all sales will be final. All payments must be made by cash or check. Sale proceeds will be used for NVPCUG computer education programs benefiting Napa County residents. Equipment donations are wanted. For more information contact Orion E. Hill by e-mailing *sales@nvpcug.org* or by calling (707) 252-0637.

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