COMPUTER NEWS

Volume 29, No. 8   **Aug 2012**

Inside This Issue

Fun Site: Coffee Art

The artists behind this Web site have found a unique way to use an ordinary cup of joe. All the art on this site is created with coffee. The artists have perfected the technique of creating varied hues of brown using the morning drink. You can purchase some of the pieces or just browse the galleries.

Coffee Art can be found at: **http://www.justcoffeeart.com/**

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The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group will meet Wednesday, August 15ᵗʰ, 7:00-9:00 P.M.

At the Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa, California

The meeting begins with Random Access, an open-floor question-and-answer period during which attendees can ask questions about computers and computer-related problems and receive helpful information from other meeting attendees. Questions may be submitted before the meeting by emailing them to Random Access moderator **Jerry Brown** at **Questions@nvpcug.org**.

For the Computer Tutor Topic at the August 15ᵗʰ Meeting. Jeff Solomon will be exploring and demonsrating the Windows Control Panel. It is a part of the Microsoft Windows graphical user interface which allows users to view and manipulate basic system settings and controls. Jeff Solomon will be not be in attendance. Please email your ideas to the Computer Tutor, **Jeff Solomon** at **tutor@nvpcug.org**.

The presenter for the August 15ᵗʰ, 2012 meeting will be Rich MacCabe. He will talk to us about tablets and kindle. If you have an idea or questions regarding Programs, email **Ken Manfree** at **Programs@nvpcug.org**.

Could you use some practical information that would help you make better use of your computer? Come to this meeting! Guests are always welcome. Admission is always free.

Interested in becoming a member? See page 12 for application information.

Southwest Technology and Computer Conference - Friday

By Beth Pickering, member of the Napa Valley Personal Computer User's Group,
www.nvpcug.org, bethpick@emailx.net

As always, the Southwest Computer Conference was a lot of fun. I arrived earlier than originally planned and went to the usual conference area. Some of the events for the United States Police & Fire Championships were there. After watching for a while, I located our conference area and asked Judy Talour if she needed help setting up. The goodie bags that make up most of the registration packet always have to be filled. Naturally she put me to work. I broke for a quick bit of food and joined the afternoon walk to the Microsoft store. Our Microsoft tour leader wasn't as good as last year, but playing with the new stuff is always lots of fun.

We returned to the conference area and I was put back to work. Some of the things that went into the goodie bags were:

- A conference DVD with extras like fun stuff and recipes.
- A spiral notebook
- An 8 gig mini flash drive + cord
- ZAGG foam antibacterial cleaner - 2.7oz bottle & Micro-fiber cleaning cloth ($9.99)
- One of the certificates I will mention in Saturday's happenings.
- Ai Squared's ZoomText 10 free 60 day trial kit that integrates webcams and MP3 players with ZoomText to give you full access to your digital lifestyle.

We chatted a lot while we got things done, then had dinner together and chatted some more.

After dinner, it was back to the conference area for the evening tours. I had planned to go to the Apple store, but had been waiting at a table with Rick Edwards, the professional wildlife photographer. Originally from England, Rick has spent most of his life working in Africa. Before he left, he spent two years as the official photographer for the Kenya Wildlife Service. Rick often writes articles to accompany pictures of animals he has followed, so you may have seen his byline in prestigious magazines such as National Geographic. When the group left, I strayed behind with Rick. The conversation was just too good to leave. It got late, it turned chilly, but we talked on and on. Rick has a lot of interesting stories and freely shares his photography knowledge. It was a most enjoyable evening.
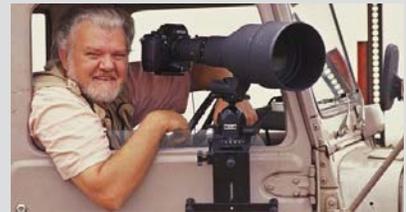
Friday morning I helped out again, talked with folks, picked up Susy Ball's registration packet, and then went to the airport to get Susy. We rushed back, checked in, and just made it to the opening session with Abby Stokes. I love her book, "Is This Thing On?", and now she has a second version that includes security, "netiquette", instant messaging, blogs, and digital photos. Abby is a very entertaining speaker and made some good points. Among them were:

- When sending email to more than one person use undisclosed recipients or the "BCC" option with your address or a fake address in the "TO" slot.
- Don't believe everything you see on the screen. Go to the source and check it out.
- Set up habits in your email so people know what

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS & MAC GROUP

In SIG meetings you can learn about a subject in greater detail than is feasible at NVPCUG general meetings. SIG meetings are open to everyone. Meeting times and locations occasionally change, so for current meeting information, see our Web site, **www.nvpcug.org**, or contact the SIG leaders.

Investors SIG

Meets: Monthly, second Monday
        5:30 to 7:30 p.m
        Jerry Brown's home,
        23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa

Leader: Jerry Brown
        (707) 254-9607
        **bqandjbb
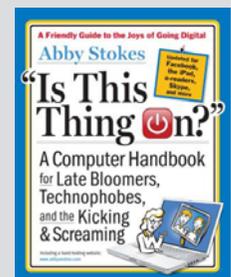   @sbcglobal.net**

Napa Valley Mac User Group

Meets: Monthly, second Thursday
        6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
        Napa Senior Activity Center
        1500 Jefferson St., Napa

Facilitator: Don Crandall
        (707) 322-0844
        **ronrogersnapamug
            @gmail.com**

Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group Contact Information

Officers for 2011

Board of Directors

President	Jim Gray	unlisted	President@nvpcug.org
Vice President	Ron Dack	unlisted	VicePresident@nvpcug.org
	Julie Jerome	224-6620	second-Vice-President@nvpcug.org
Secretary	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Secretary@nvpcug.org
Treasurer	Roy Wagner	253-2721	Treasurer@nvpcug.org

Other Directors: Susy Ball, Bernhard Krevet , Dick Peterson, Bob Simmerman, Tom Uboldi, Mel Cohen, Ron Rogers and Jerry Brown

Appointed Positions

Computer Tutor Coordinator

Jeff Solomon	553-2114	Tutor@nvpcug.org

Facility Arrangements Coordinator

Dianne Prior	252-1506	Facility@nvpcug.org

Greeter Coordinator

Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Greeter2@nvpcug.org

needs an Assistant

Membership Director

Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Membership@nvpcug.org

Newsletter Editor

Susy Ball	337-3998	Editor@nvpcug.org

Product Review CoCoordinator

Susy Ball	337-3998	Reviews@nvpcug.org
Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Reviews2@nvpcug.org

Programs Director

Ken Manfree	707-224-3722	Programs@nvpcug.org
Bernhard Krevet-asst.	(unlisted)	Programs@nvpcug.org

Publicity Director

Mel Cohen	unlisted	Publicity@nvpcug.org

Random Access Moderator

Jerry Brown	254-9607	Questions@nvpcug.org

Webmaster

Ron Dack	unlisted	Webmaster@nvpcug.org

needs an Assistant

(All telephone numbers are in Area Code 707)

NVPCUG General Meetings

Held the third Wednesday of each month, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

**Napa Senior Activity Center,
1500 Jefferson Street, Napa**

How to Share Your List of Apps for you iPhone and iPad

By Hewie Poplock, APCUG Director; VP, Central Florida Computer Society, Hewie's Views & Reviews, http://www.hewie.net

I want to share a list of the Apps I have downloaded and installed on my iPhone and iPad. I can find such a list in iTunes under Library/Apps. However, there is no way to save or print that list. I can also see my apps on the iPad by going to the Apps Store app and looking at "Purchased," but again, there is no way to have a list to share.

I did some searching and did not find any help. Someone should write an app for that. I still use iTunes to sync, so iTunes does maintain a folder with all of the apps that I use. It is stored in `C:\Users\[your Windows User Name]\Music\iTunes\Mobile Applications`. I had to go to a dark, well hidden area in my brain to recall some old DOS commands to quickly create a list.

Here is how I did it. Click the Windows Start Button and type in "cmd" and hit Enter. This opens a DOS window. At the command prompt, type the following line, but substitute your Window's user name where indicated: **cd C:\Users\[your Windows User Name]\Music\ iTunes\Mobile Applications**

Note the space immediately after "cd".

This will change the folder. If you type "dir," you should get a directory listing, which includes all of your apps. Once you know that you have the information, at the command line, type "dir>app.txt" and a file will be created with your list. You can now copy that file, "app.txt" anywhere to print, share, or edit.

I went one step farther. I made a copy of the file and then edited out everything but the list. I then opened Excel and told it to open the edited text file. It placed all of the info in columns. I deleted all of the columns except the file names and saved it. I now have a file with a list of just the app names that I have downloaded for my iPhone and iPad.

It sounds more complicated that it actually is. I am not sure how this would work if you are using the cloud for your syncing. ✱

Find out how many times your name is on the Internet

Spokeo is a people search engine that aggregates white-pages listings and public records.

http://www.spokeo.com/

NVPCUG Calendar

| Date	Time	Event
Aug 15	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, + A
Sept 10	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting + C
Sept 14	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Napa Valley Mac User Group + A
Sept 19	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, + A
Oct 8	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting + C
Oct 11	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Napa Valley Mac User Group + A
Oct 17	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, + A
Nov 3	10:00-11:30 am.	Board of Directors meeting + E
Nov 8	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Napa Valley Mac User Group + A
Nov 12	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting + C
Nov 21	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, + A
Dec 19	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, + A

Meeting Locations

A - Napa Senior Activity Center,
1500 Jefferson Street, Napa

B - Piner's Nursing Home,
1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa

C - Jerry Brown's home,
23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa

D - Peterson's Family Christmas
Tree Farm, 1120 Darms
Lane, Napa

E - Napa Senior Activity Complex,
1524 Jefferson Street, Napa

A True BCC

By Susy Ball, Newsletter Editor and member of the Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group, http://www.nvpcug.org, susyball@aol.com

The main reason for sending this article is to remind users how to send out a true Blind Carbon Copy of their email that is sent to different people at the same time.
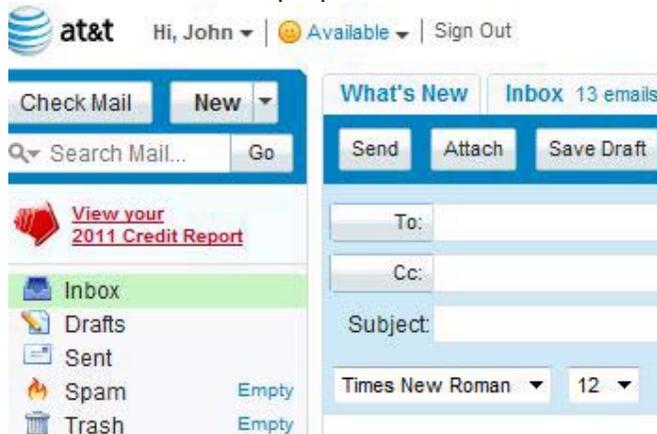
In a true BCC, all viewers see only his/her name and no other recipients. The trick to sending is to enter your own name in the **TO:** field of an email and the recipients names in the BCC: field. Sure this means you will receive another copy of the email, but none of your recipients can see one another. Therefore you are protecting your "friends" addresses from being hacked by email address harvesters. Did you know that if you forward an email without removing the previous header and its email addresses, potentially you can be sending someone else's name out there over 1,000,000 times. That's one million times folks. I for one think that is a very rude intrusion on a "friends" privacy to do that. In fact, if that "friend" finds out why their name used by email hackers they may go so far as to block receiving any email from you in the future.
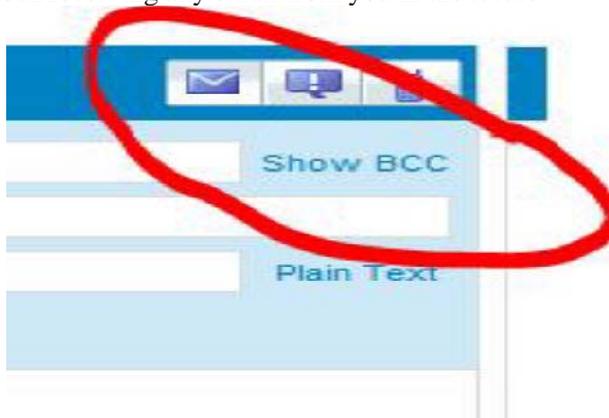
Here's an idea I once heard. If you don't want to send the email to yourself, go to one of the "free email services" such as Gmail or Hotmail and create an identity that you just want to use for BCC mail. With the use of copy & paste (cut & paste) and a little thoughtfulness on your part you can send email from this address. That way, you only have to go to it occasionally to DELETE all the copies you have sent and you're using an address you don't care about. For a list of the top 19 free email services go to **http://email.about.com/od/freeemailreviews/tp/free_email.htm**. Here's another suggestion about your free account, use a name that only makes sense to you (not anything like your real name) and include a statement in the signature block on the bottom of the email that tells people not to respond to this email address as it is only used for your BCC mail. If you insist on sending email through your regular account, remember that even though you do use your fictitious email in the **TO** field, the **FROM** field will indicate that it came from your real account. Please remove any header information.

Each provider handles BCC a little differently, you can Google BCC +your providers name to find out more details about sending a BCC. Some services will use commas to separate the recipients, others will use a semicolon. With some services you can even create an email to **Undisclosed Recipients**. **Http://email.about.com/od/emailmanagementtips/qt/How_to_Send_an_Email_to_Undisclosed_Recipients.htm** tells you how to do such a thing.

Google or the Help portion of your e-mail program can tell you were to look for BCC information and how to use it. I learned a long time ago that with AOL I could simply put a parentheses around all the names I wanted to send out as email. So be courteous to your recipients and friends by learning to use your BCC and encourage them to use it as well. Let's beat the hackers at their own game and discourage hijacking innocent addresses. ✳

Laptop Batteries

The main battery in a notebook PC does not last forever and will eventually start to fail after several hundred charge/discharge cycles. If you rarely use the battery (for example, if the laptop is running from the AC adapter), the battery should last for the life of the laptop. But if you're frequently working on the road, expect to replace the battery after about two to three years of regular use. You can tell the battery is failing when its running time becomes unusually short. For example, if you normally get four hours from a full charge, getting only two hours from a full charge might signal battery problems. You can sometimes extend the battery's working life by periodically draining the battery completely and providing a full recharge.

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Get Your Photography on the Web

By Donna Kamper, Member, Tucson Computer Society, AZ, April 2012 issue, TCS eJournal, www.aztcs.org, donna@kamper.com

The only reason you need this book is if you're looking for a quick, inexpensive and easy way for people to see your photos on the Internet. If you prefer time-consuming, difficult and costly you need to keep looking. This book was a complete revelation to me and inspired me to revamp our long-neglected (cob)web site kamper.com. Instead of working in HTML and Dreamweaver, I simply downloaded and installed a free program – WordPress. Following the guidelines in the book, I literally had my new site up and running in minutes.

Completely finished? No! No website is ever "finished," they're always (read: should be) in transition. But was it ready for viewing? Yes. Get Your Photography on the Web targets photographers who want to showcase their work. While WordPress is primarily a blogging software, as the author, Raphael (RC) Conceptión shows you, it can be so much more.
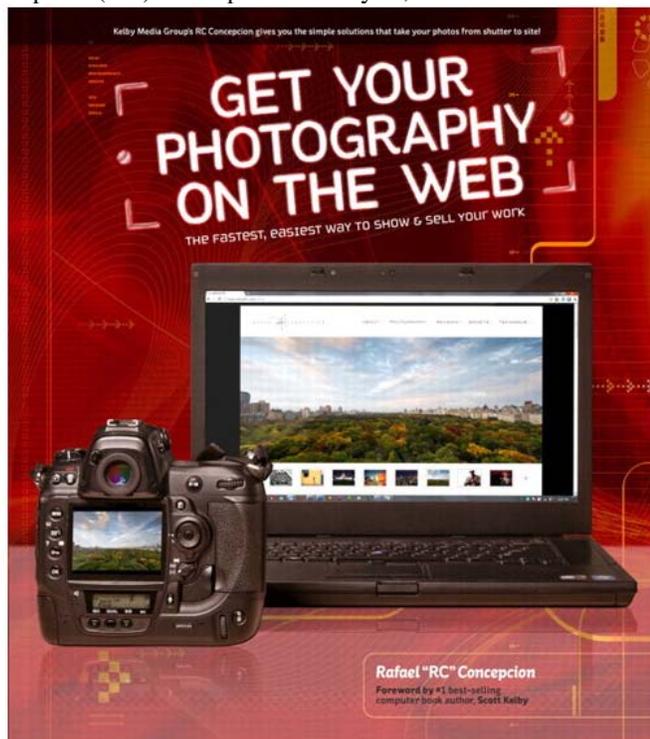
With this book, an Internet connection and basic computer skills you can literally create a showcase website in a matter of hours for next to no cost – totally free, if you don't want a domain name and in less than an hour if you have all your ducks in a row ahead of time. And RC tells you exactly what those ducks are and how to line them up.

He quickly discusses that all-important "Getting a Domain Name," and then moves into hosting. He recommends GoDaddy.com and walks you through the procedure. As with most Kelby Training books, this is done very clearly with screen-shots on the outside margins and brief descriptive text to the inside.

Since our website has been active since 1992, hosted locally through dakotacom.net (with whom we're incredibly pleased), I skipped this chapter. However, from reading I did outside this book I discovered a WordPress site must be hosted on servers supporting PHP and MySQL. So if you have your own domain and are thinking about revamping it using WordPress, check that first.

What good is a website without content? The next chapters are "Getting Your Images Ready" which encompasses a lot more than retouching. Color Space, Sharpening, Size, Watermarks, Copyright – all in 27 pages.

Then we really start to rock, setting up your first pages and adding content. More than images, even slide shows, right off the bat! Then RC moves us into how to get our site looking the way we want it to. After all, it's important that it be the proper frame for our work. To that end, he introduces us to Themes and Plugins.

It turns out WordPress is a bit of a blank slate, ready for anyone to write over it. "Themes" are overlays, if you will, for the basic WordPress installation. By changing the Theme the entire look of a site can change just by clicking "Activate."

If a global rework isn't sufficient there are Plugins, little applets that nestle inside your WordPress installation ready to spring to action. These can do anything from popping out an image in a shadowbox to creating custom menus for your site navigation. There are literally hundreds of these, and the list keeps growing. Oh, and they're all free. See my WordPress note at end of this review.#

The more I read the more I was inspired by what could be done. Then I discovered WordPress can be used for more than blogging. That's when I really snapped to attention. Blogging is not for me. I was never a diarist, I never kept a journal, and I will not keep to a blogging schedule.

But WordPress is so plastic, so malleable, so pliable that it can be used as a content management system (CMS), meaning it can hold static pages that don't change regularly if at all, and pages with other content. In fact, with a little judicious juggling and a friendly Plugin, it's even possible to run an e-store right out of my website. Oh really!?

All those years of writing materials for front-of-class instruction have left me with manuals and workbooks. Coupling that with Camtasia's on-screen recording, and I just may create a little business niche for myself. All I have to do is get it done.

This is a great book. Clearly written, visually-assisted step-by-step instructions and an attainable result. What's not to like. Now, back to my WordPress Dashboard. There are edits to be made!

About: Get Your Photography on the Web

Author: Rafael "RC" ConcepItión

Publisher: Kelby Media/Peachpit Press

Price: $39.99, $23.99 @ Amazon

#What's this about free? WordPress is Open Source Software, as are its Themes and Plugins. These are created by users and uploaded for people to use. WordPress itself is free for the download. Thousands of Themes are also freely available, and there are also multiple sites devoted to custom or for-pay Themes. As of the writing of this review there are 19,064 free Plugins available at **WordPress.org**.

There are two WordPress sites: WordPress.org is where you download the WordPress software, its Themes and Plugins and learn how to use the software. WordPress.com is a free hosting service begun by some of the original WordPress developers. It's "a hosted version of the open source package where you can start a blog in seconds without any technical knowledge." [http://en.WordPress.com/about/] It is "financially supported via paid upgrades, "VIP" services and advertising." [**Wikipedia.com**] ✳

Knoppix Live CD

By Cal Esneault, President, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA and leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGs April 2012 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News, http://ccclinuxsig.pbwiki.com, www.clickers.org, ccnewsletter@cox.net

About seven years ago I was introduced to Xandros GNU/Linux by the Cajun Clickers. Like most distro's then, it required a full installation onto the hard drive, a step for which I was not ready. Knoppix, a GNU/Linux system developed by Klaus Knopper of Germany, was then a rare version in that it could run from a CD without modifying the hard drive (known as a "live" CD). Knoppix allowed me to explore and appreciate Linux without having to jeopardize my existing system.

Since then, almost all major distro's offer downloads with "live" media choices that allow you to preview the OS and optionally install the OS directly from that media.

The strength of Knoppix is the excellent hardware detection and minimal configuration to get a working system. It shines as a system rescue and maintenance tool for working with other systems. For example, it can mount and access most other Linux or Windows partitions automatically. While it can be permanently installed, it is typically used with "live" media (CD, DVD, USB, …). Advanced methods exist to modify or give "permanence" to Knoppix, and many experts remaster their own customized versions.

I downloaded and burned a copy of the latest CD (iso Knoppix 6.7.1). A screenshot of the desktop menu and 3 open applications is shown below.
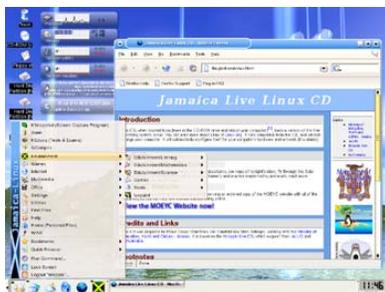
Currently Knoppix uses a lightweight 32-bit LXDE desktop (see my November 2011 article on LXDE). PCManFM is the file manager, and Iceweasel is the Internet browser. With this configuration, Knoppix hardware specs should allow it to run on older systems.

Surprisingly, it includes the powerful (and bulky) GIMP and LibreOffice programs. My biggest surprise was that it included Compiz compositing manager which gives tremendous graphics effects for screen "eye candy." See below an intermediate screen as an application window dynamically explodes into squares during application exit.

While this is interesting for those with modern graphic cards, my experience was that it made less powerful systems hang-up and require reboot. I solved this by using the cheat-code "knoppix no3d" at the boot prompt to restrict Compiz and give a working desktop.

Knoppix is an example of the unique combination of software that can be assembled when the distro is the work of a single developer. For example, there are tools for system and network administrators, applications for system rescue and repair, and a version for blind users (based on ADRIANE). Since my first encounter, Knoppix has introduced over a dozen versions with use of many new concepts (early to use KDE 4.x, early to use LibreOffice, etc.). This distro is a utilitarian system suited for experienced Linux users who want to learn more about their systems. Learn more by visiting **www.knopper.net/knoppix,** or look for Knoppix in the top search boxes at **www.distrowatch.com**. ✳

File Sharing with Acronis True Image 2012

By Gene Barlow, May 2012, User Group Relations, PO Box 911600, St George, UT 84791, 1600, **http://www.ugr.com,** gene@ugr.com

File Sharing with Acronis True Image 2012
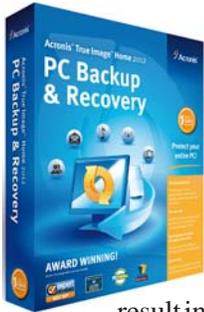
Today, we use our computers to communicate with our friends and family. Social Media, such as Facebook and Twitter are used to share brief comments with a large number of friends. We can even post pictures to the Wall in Facebook. Unfortunately, Facebook will reduce the resolution of these pictures, so that printing them will result in a terribly fuzzy picture. Attaching photos to email can get a limited number of pictures shared with others, but it may take many emails to send just a few photographs. There has to be a better way!

Data Synchronization

Acronis True Image Home 2012 introduced a major new feature to this excellent backup program. You can now use *True Image 2012* to share any number of files with your friends and family. This new feature is called Data Synchronization, but it means simply sharing files with others. Using this feature, you can select who you want to see your files and only share them with those individuals. Here's how it works.

The first task in sharing your files is to define who you want to see the files. Using *True Image 2012*, you set up a Sync Group of just those friends or family you wish to share your files with. A special Sync Folder is created to be used to share your files between you and others in your Sync Group. An email is sent to each person defined in the Sync Group inviting them to join your group. Once they join your Sync Group, then all of the files you place in your Sync Folder, can be seen in their similar Sync Folder. Your friends can also share files with you, just by placing their files to share in their Sync Folder. Everyone in the Sync Group will have a Sync Folder with identical files in it. This makes sharing files very easy.

For example, you may have grandchildren that you love to see, but they live many miles away from you. So, you don't see them as often as you'd like. Their parents take digital pictures of them, but sharing these pictures with you is not easy, so they don't do it often. All you need to do is to set up a Sync Group that includes your spouse and children in it. Then invite your kids to join your Sync Group. Now any new photos they take, they can place a copy in their Sync Folder and within a few minutes, those identical photos will appear in the Sync Folders of you and everyone else in the Sync Group. This becomes a way for your entire family to share files with each other.

You are not limited to just one Sync Group on your computer. You can set up as many different Sync Groups as you have need for. You may want to share files between your main desktop computer and your laptop computer, especially when you travel. Set up a Sync Group where you are the only person involved. You and your spouse may want to share financial records and other private information between your computers. Set up a Sync Group just for your household. I mentioned the family Sync Group above as an example. That is another group to set up. If you are into genealogy, you may want to set up a Sync Group including those you work with on your genealogy. You can set up as many Sync Groups as you want to on your computer. Those in your Sync Groups can also set up many other Sync Groups on their computers. The possibilities are endless.

What does it take to participate in a Sync Group? The requirements are very easy and at little costs, so everyone can benefit from it. First, all members of the Sync Group must use *True Image 2012* on their computer. This is the way the files are shared between computers. To make doing this very reasonable, we have introduced our new Family Pack of *True Image 2012*. Now you can purchase 3 or more copies of *True Image 2012* for only $20 per copy. This is a small onetime cost to be included in a Sync Group, as well as to give each user an outstanding backup utility as well. Then each member in the Sync Group must register their *True Image 2012* with Acronis, so that *True Image* can find them and make them part of the Sync Group. Finally, every member of the group needs access to the Internet. There is no annual fee to pay for an online storage facility or any other fees involved. This powerful Data Synchronization feature is not only an excellent way to share files between friends and family, but is a great bargain in addition.

To order *Acronis True Image Home 2012* from us, go to **www.ugr.com/TrueImage.html** and click on the appropriate **Buy Now** button. We charge only $25 for a single license or only $60 for a three license Family Pack. You can order a download copy or we can mail you a CD with the software on it. (There is a $5 shipping fee per order if you order the CD.) When checking out of the shopping cart, enter in the special order code of **UGNL0512**. In a short timeframe, you will be able to share files with others in your Sync Groups. The instructions in the *True Image 2012 Starter Guide* will make setting up and using your Sync Groups very easy to do.

If you have questions about this article or the *True Image* product, send an email to **support@ugr.com** and I will try to help you with your questions.   ✳

Editors Note: Although this CD is not an not an official CD from Acronis, User Group Relations (Gene Barlow's company) downloads the latest versions of the software whenever they duplicate additional CDs, so the software on the CD should be fairly current. Acronis does an excellent job of updating their software frequently, whenever they find and correct problems with it. When you purchase the CD version of Acronis True Image that you get from User Group Relations, also get his "Barlow's Starter Guide" and the "Acronis User's Guide" and "Data Sheet" which are a separate downloads from the Acronis site.

If you wish to receive a copy of the Barlow Newsletter in your email, please subscribe through **gene@ugr.com.**

Reasons for moving up to Windows 7

By Phil Sorrentino, Past President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida, May 2012 issue, Sarasota Monitor, **www.spcug.org, pcugedit@verizon.net**

Before we discuss the reasons for moving to a new Operating System (OS), we should consider why we would want to change the OS. After all, the OS is at the very heart of our computer's operation. If we are happy with the current operation, why change things, which could possibly lead to unknown problems. (The devil you know may be far friendlier than the devil that you don't know.) I think the reason is basically because technology does not stand still. Technology constantly improves and therefore changes. Don't we expect turn signals, power steering, power brakes, air conditioning, and even entertainment systems in our modern cars? Technologies change rapidly in their early stages and then slower as they mature. Automotive technology has changed quite a bit over the last 120 or so years, and is fairly mature now. (Think about all the automotive User Interfaces that have changed over time. Where is the high-beam lights control? It's not on the floor any more, is it.) Home computers are only about 30 years old. One might say they are still in the early, rapidly changing, years. But, unlike autos in the 50s (remember planned obsolescence?). I think the change from XP to Windows 7 is not just change for change sake. There are some very substantial improvements in the Windows 7 OS. Many of the reasons for change are "under the hood", like improved security, and simpler networking. These may be hard to appreciate, because they are not on the surface and obvious; but they are definitely present and useful. Obviously, the thing that is most noticeable is the User Interface. But it is not just a new overall look, new wallpaper, and a different color for the Taskbar.

Speaking of the Taskbar, the Taskbar is one of the major User Interface components that has been improved. The new Taskbar takes on qualities of the "Quick Launch area" that was available in XP, but not really promoted. The Taskbar not only helps you launch your applications, but it lets you easily view all of the open applications and allows you to move between windows and applications effortlessly. In addition to showing the applications that you currently have open, the new Windows 7 Taskbar supports "pinned" shortcuts to your most commonly used applications (and even websites). Click a shortcut when the app is running, and it brings the most recently used window to the foreground. Click the same shortcut when the app is closed, and it will launch the app.

Another Windows 7 enhancement comes in the form of Jump Lists. Jump Lists put frequently used files in a convenient menu that is a simple click away from the icon on the Taskbar or on the Start Menu. Apps that support Jump Lists will display the list when you right click on the shortcut, or when you left-click and drag the mouse up away from the Taskbar.

Windows Explorer has been enhanced in Windows 7. Anyone who has taken any of my classes knows, by now, that the Windows Explorer is the "keys to the kingdom". The improvements to Windows Explorer make the left-column of the Windows Explorer window the quickest way to navigate to any folder on your hard drive or network. "Libraries" is another new Explorer feature. Libraries are simply data repositories that can store content that is of a similar nature, but located in different places on the computer, across a network, or in the cloud. Libraries are handy for organizing and collecting files in one place because they appear to be, and can be used as, normal folders for most applications. Libraries become especially

useful when you integrate them with your commonly used folders, network shares, and cloud services. For example, let's say that both you and your spouse are users on your computer and suppose your music is stored in your Music folder, and your spouse's music is stored in another Music folder. And further let's say that you have some music stored on a second networked computer. If you wanted to play all of your music you could point your music software to all of the folders (if that was allowed), or you could create a Music Library that would contain the locations of all of your music folders and then point your software to the Music Library.

Another area of improvement is the use of Ribbons in the Windows 7 Accessory Applets. This may not seem like an improvement for those of you who preferred the traditional menus, but I think the more you use the Ribbons, the better you will like them; they do allow more information to be on the screen at one time without obscuring the work in progress.

Networking is another improved area. Windows 7 makes the home networking experience easier, faster and ultimately safer. Networking, in Windows 7, has been improved and made easier by the introduction of the "HomeGroup". The "WorkGroup" form of networking is still supported, but if all the computers in your network are using Windows 7 you can take advantage of the HomeGroup. A HomeGroup is easily set up by going to Control Panel - Networking and Sharing Center, and selecting "Choose homegroup and sharing options". Once you've created a HomeGroup, sharing files is as easy as right-clicking on a folder or file, clicking Share With, and selecting the options you want. When you want to share any of your files, or folders, or printers, on a network, you just Join the HomeGroup.

Joining a HomeGroup is as easy as entering the HomeGroup password that you get from a computer that is already part of the HomeGroup that you wish to join. There are no permissions, or "network shares" to set up.

One surprise, when upgrading from XP or Vista to Windows 7, is that Microsoft has removed functionality from Windows. Windows Movie Maker, Windows Photo Gallery, and Windows Mail are no longer part of the initially installed OS. Instead, they are part of a separate, optional download called Windows Live Essentials.

Whether you're upgrading from XP or Vista, Windows 7 offers great improvements in usability and security. For anyone who regularly keeps many windows open at once time, the new Taskbar is worth the effort to upgrade alone. For XP users, the security improvements are equally worth the effort to upgrade. Windows 7 is the best version of Windows that has been released, and is a worthy successor. Whether you're an average or a power user, Windows 7 is well worth the expense and effort, either for an upgrade to your current machine or to have on your next new machine. Now what about Windows 8? Stay tuned.   ✻

is and isn't yours. For example, if an email from Susy Ball isn't signed ". . . Thanks, **Susy**" on two lines, or an email from me doesn't have "—" before the Beth, the message is from somebody else no matter what the heading says and you shouldn't click on any link it contains.

• The ideal password is 8 characters (or more), with letters, numbers, and at least 1 capital.

• Multiple passwords are easier to remember if you use a root work coupled with something that identifies the website, such as r3gaLbank ,r3gaLfac3b00k, r3gaL3ma1L, etc.

After a short break Rick Edward shared some of his slide shows and photography tips. He started with pictures he had just taken on the flight deck of the USS Midway. Then he shared the 2011 Roadster Show in Los Angeles. You will find both these slide shows at **http://www.beechbrook.com/pte/index.asp?**

categoryid=&page=2 - what you won't get is Rick's comments. He said he could answer questions or show us the revised version of last years slide show. We decided to see the Kenya slide show again. It is at **http://www.beechbrook.com/pte/index.asp? categoryid=&page=11** (The Beauty of African Wildlife). Once again, he does the narrative live, so it isn't on the website. While I am not sure if I learned them from this presentation, from past presentations, or from our long talk; here are some Rick tidbits:

1. Computers are a necessary evil. He has to use them to edit his pictures so they will show what he saw, not what the camera saw. He spends 90% of his time on the computer and only 5% shooting pictures.

2. He goes to Africa every year for the migration. On one 2 week trip he shot about 500,000 images.

3. Photoshop is a graphics editor. Adobe's photo editor is called Lightroom. He makes his slide shows with Pictures to EXE.

4. As a wildlife photographer, he is allowed to adjust (edit) things like color, sharpness, and brilliance, but he cannot digitally alter them (i.e. add or remove objects).

5. All professional photographers edit their pictures, whether they admit it or not.

6. If a picture is too light it is burned out and nothing can be done. If it s too dark, you can always lighten it an bring the picture back.

7. He shoots in RAW, uses a RGB file format, only edits the digital negative copy of his original, and saves everything he shoots. Tomorrow's technology could make the bad pictures useable.

8. He buys 10 megapixel cameras and uses a program (**Genuine Fractals**) to increase the number of pixels to 50.

10. His cameras have to shoot at least 10 frames a second to stop the action. Also, original first time and exclusive use pictures sell at higher prices.

11. The faster shutter speed, the more the background blurs.

13. His "tripod" mounts in the window of his jeep.

14. He spends his money on high power lenses-up to 600mm. Animals have a "circle of confidence" (I think of it as a personal space bubble). You have to be on the outside of it to take good pictures. A wary animal moves and behaves in an unnatural manner. The size of the circle depends on how well the animal knows you. The cheetah and cubs Rick followed for 10 years would even climb in his jeep.

15. Digital images are 2x as sharp as slides and you don't have the expense and trouble of carrying film.

16. Liveview, on most middle to high end cameras, will allow you to take perfect pictures every time.

Currently Rick has two websites where you can look at and buy his pictures. The original one is at **www.rickedwardsphotography.com** and the new site is at **www.fotodimensions.com**. Some of his photographs earn between 10,000 and 20,000 dollars apiece every year.

Dinner was provides by Al & Ed's Autosounds. After dessert was served, John Haynes presented a short history of car audio electronics as done by Al & Ed's to what is happening in that field today.

The evening activities included the Hospitality room or a movie with popcorn. Susy and I started in the Hospitality room and caught the last of the movie before heading to bed. Much later I broke my left little toe with the bathroom door.

Next month I'll continue the weekend. ✱

The NVPCUG Picnic, August 4, 2012
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Revised 2-14-2010