

**What's New**  
by William Avery

Our April SLOBYTES Meeting lead off with two SIGs: our own FAQ, lead by Alan Raul, and the WinSIG group, out of range of this reporter, but in the capable hands of Jim Kiraly. Our president, Ray Miklas, noted the items to be given out in our drawing at the end of the meeting, and we had an educational Trivia presentation by Bob Ward, which is also on the club website, [www.thegrid.net/slobytes/triviapg.htm](http://www.thegrid.net/slobytes/triviapg.htm), viewable only with Internet Explorer. I tried using Netscape and got a GPF message. Thanks Bill Gates.



Alan

Alan also asked about AGP, CNR and PCI, noting that the newest specification for Pentium 4 supports these items. The AGP is the Accelerated Graphics Port, for the newest video cards, and PCI has developed as the slot of choice for most add-on computer cards. The CNR, or Communications Network Riser, is the latest development for standardizing network and modem interfaces on new mother-boards.

At the Gateway store in San Luis Obispo, Alan reported that their UPS has the ability to run the store for five days, believe it or not. For Maxtor hard drive users,

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**Speaking of Cameras**  
by bob ward

Well I hadn't thought of writing anything this month, but since the subject of digital cameras coincides with my purchase of an Olympus C2100 digital camera, I thought I'd give you a new users' perspective of digital photography.

A little background... I started photography in Daily City in the 60's. In those days there were plenty of human interest pictures to snap, mostly of the "love" generation. As a school teacher, I

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**CLUB  
CALENDAR**

**May 6th**  
**1 pm**

**Early SIG's.**

**Jim Kiraly**, General  
Windows SIG (in Kitchen)  
**Alan Raul**, General Q&A  
(main hall)

**2:30 pm**

**Bruce Fries** author of *The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook* will tell us everything we ever wanted to know about MP3 music

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## speaking

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couldn't be teacher by day and hippie by night, so I was content on the other end of the camera. My apartment kitchen was my darkroom, my bathtub my print washer, and a heat drum, my dryer. I continued my interest in photography in the service while in Thailand. Someday when Guy runs out of speakers, I'll give a travel tour of Thailand.

Although I have been looking at digital cameras for quite sometime I wasn't sure which major storage format I wanted. Sony with their floppy and now mini hard disk in the back has several advantages in being able to give a customer a disk right there on the spot, but two disadvantages are battery life and picture quality. You just can't fit much on a 1.44MB floppy. I bought a \$30 digital camera that takes web quality pictures that are almost as good as the early Sonys. Also they have been notorious for eating batteries. Our Biology depart has one of the later models and it always runs out of power at the wrong time.

I wasn't satisfied with the memory capabilities of the other cameras until recently. Now with 64MB and 128MB memory cards common place, a person can do some serious photography. And then there's the question of Megapixels. I liken it to hard disks. "My hard disk is larger than yours, my camera has more megapixels than yours." Your 40 GIG hard disk will ALWAYS be half empty, and you'll never take that 4 Megapixel picture that fills

up a 64MB memory chip! For most of us we'll never use the extra capacity we spent all that money for. My friend Jim who's quite adept in Photoshop and other graphic rendering programs had his doubts about my 2.1 megapixel purchase until we took one of my standard 1200X1400 JPG files (about 450K) and put it into Photoshop. This isn't even the camera's high resolution mode!) The standard picture would print at 14"X22". We enlarged it almost 300% before seeing pixelation. So, the bottom line is, unless you are a photographer who makes money with your camera, you'll probably NEVER use those 3.1 megapixels everyone is coming out with. Four megapixels, or even 5 is overkill for the majority of us.

So why did I chose the Olympus C2100? First of all I liked the idea of a 10X optical Zoom. Along with an anti-shaking feature for us old people, the 380mm focal length is excellent. I haven't even tried the digital zoom which makes the lens around 1000mm! Add to this the ability to go in the other direction to macro, and you have all the bases covered.

So the optics are good, what about the rest of the camera? It has the look and feel of a 35mm camera. I want something I can get my hands around when taking pictures. I don't need something that fits in my pocket. There's nothing in my pocket interesting to take pictures of anyway. It has more bells and whistles than one would possibly need, but as circumstances change I find myself thumbing through the thick manual seeing how to do different things. Although it has a

color digital backplate as most do, it also has a digital viewfinder. No, not a glass see-through, an actual miniature color LCD. Back plates are nice, but they take battery power and are about useless in bright sunlight. Like I said, I want something that feels and acts like a 35mm camera.

Besides the usual aperture or shutter priority, it has a full manual mode and several preset automodes as well. You want a portrait where the subject is in sharp focus while the background is out of focus (short depth of field), or perhaps you are looking for an action mode where you can catch that mid-air shot. It's all preprogrammed. Maybe you want to take a motion picture. Not a problem. How about 4-2 minute movie AVI files with sound! on a 64MB card.

One thing I have to get used to is light levels. The camera actually takes better pictures in low light conditions. The CCD pickup is not like film. When you think the picture is going to be impossible and it's calling for the built-in flash, I usually ignore it and take the picture anyway. It comes out great without flash!

I also wanted something with capacity. The C-2100 comes with a marginal 8MB Olympus smart card. That will get you 82 pictures on the lowest mode and one picture on the highest mode, but if you are going to use this on vacations, you had better invest in some smartcard memory. I purchased 2, 64MB smart cards and a reader with the savings I received by buying

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### \* \* \* people helping people \* \* \*

NAME	PROGRAM(S)	PHONE NO.	HOURS TO CALL
Bill Roch	Ami Pro	466-8440	anytime
Dan Logan	Internet, MS Publisher	927-0515	M-Sat 8-6, Sun 12-6
Jim Kiraly	Win 98, Office 97, Quicken, Map Programs	556-0301(pismo)	anytime
Bob Ward	Win 98, DOS, Internet, Eudora	528-0121	evenings
Ray Miklas	Any PC hardware or software questions	541-5633	anytime

We could use more volunteers here. If interested, contact Bob Ward!

## The Surf board

by Dorothy Kirk  
ibm/pcug, redning, ca.  
kirk@snowcrest.net



You know that you can shop online, but do you know that you can order hundreds of different catalogs on a variety of subjects. You need to pay for some of them, but most are free. Settle down with a catalog on your favorite subject and dream. The following sites all offer free catalogs and most allow you order online, too. These are a random selection of the many catalogs available online.

**FEDERAL CONSUMER EDUCATION CENTER** [www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cicform.htm](http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cicform.htm) -

A catalog containing pamphlets available on many consumer topics: cars, children, food, money, etc. E-mail the completed form or find the site for each category and order the publication you want. Cost is \$2 plus sales tax.

**J&R** [www.jandr.com/JRCatalogRequest.process?RestartFlow=t](http://www.jandr.com/JRCatalogRequest.process?RestartFlow=t) - Supplies audio, video, cameras, computers, home office. software, appliances gifts, and music of all kinds at discount prices. Fill in the form and catalog will be shipped.

**CABELO'S** [www.cabelas.com/cgi-bin/texis.Jan10/scripts/vnews/catreq/newspaper](http://www.cabelas.com/cgi-bin/texis.Jan10/scripts/vnews/catreq/newspaper) - See a full line of accessories for your outdoor needs. Click the button(s) to request an online catalog, fill in form, catalog will be mailed.

**SMARTHOME.COM** [www.smarthome.com/catreq.html](http://www.smarthome.com/catreq.html) - Smarthome offers hundreds of electronics devices to make your home more secure and easier to use. Download their free .pdf catalog.

**FRANKLIN ELECTRONICS** [www.franklin.com/catalog](http://www.franklin.com/catalog) - Fill in the blanks, push the button, get a free catalog. Look at their eStore while you're there.

**JR WHITNEY CO.** [www.jcwhitney.com/freecatalogs.ihtml](http://www.jcwhitney.com/freecatalogs.ihtml) - Order a catalog pointed to your auto interests. These catalogs are full of auto parts and accessories.

**METAL WORKS CATALOG** [www.metalworks.com](http://www.metalworks.com) - This is an online catalog only. Includes equipment, silver, findings, and supplies for jewelers and hobbyists.

**RADIO SPIRITS, INC- OLD TIME RADIO** <http://family.shopathome.com/normcat.htm?action=SHOWCAT&rrcode=2993> - Over 5,000 of the greatest old time radio shows. From the all-time favorites to the hard-to-find broadcasts on CD and cassette. Free catalog.

**WATER WAREHOUSE** [www.waterwarehouse.com/cat\\_request.asp?id=01140154216102513254774](http://www.waterwarehouse.com/cat_request.asp?id=01140154216102513254774) - Free catalog and online ordering of discount items for the swimming pool: liners, accessories, solar covers and reels, chemicals, spa chemicals and accessories, pool equipment, toys, floats, part, and more.

**CROWDMASTER** <http://home.shopathome.com/normcat.htm?action=SHOWCAT&rrcode=2740> - Free catalog. Banners, flags and flagpoles! More than 1,000 items to choose from. Featuring a complete line of United States, state, national and marine flags. Also official collegiate flags and a complete do-it-yourself selection of in-ground flagpoles.

**HOBBY BUILDERS SUPPLY: MINIATURES** [www.miniatures.com](http://www.miniatures.com) - Supplier of discount dollhouses and miniatures! Perfect for children as well as adult collectors. Beautiful dollhouses and dollhouse kits, and thousands of accessories to furnish and decorate your miniature home. Enjoy this Full-color catalog today.

**MUELLER RECREATIONAL PRODUCTS** <http://sports.shopathome.com/normcat.htm?action=SHOWCAT&rrcode=2567> - Billiards, dart supplies, clothing and sporting goods at wholesale prices. Also, custom cues, gifts, women's clothing, sports novelties, sporting goods. Free catalog.

## Using Multiple Email Addresses

by Irene Kraus

We've talked in the past about the importance of safeguarding your passwords, and using filters (or rules) to help you manage your email. There are many situations connected with Internet usage in which you may want to preserve your privacy as much as possible because you're not sure what someone else may or may not do. Using more than one email address can help you to protect yourself in these situations.

Examples of when having an extra address can come in handy are extensive! I'm going to list some here, and let you think about how you use your service. Messages posted to newsgroups are often snapped up by those who send out unsolicited advertising kinds of messages (called spam mail). If you don't post questions too often, you could use Deja News <<http://www.dejanews.com/>> which allows you to post anonymously. However, when you've got a lot of groups you follow, using a separate email address from the one you use normally would probably be more convenient.

What about chat rooms that are open to the public, or discussion groups? Do you really know who is sitting on the other side of that other computer screen reading whatever it is you are saying? Maybe you want to preserve your privacy through using a special email address. Then there are web sites that offer to send you more information about a product or service via email. Just how ethical are they? Believe me, it's far harder to stop the junk from rolling in once it's started that to stop it before it starts! Maybe you don't even own your own computer yet, or travel a great deal. The account you use now maybe through your school or corporation, and you'd like one for your personal mail. Your spouse or family member

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## what's new

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he also found an OEM program for acoustic management, which lowers the sound levels coming from a Maxtor hard drive. See the Technical Support site, [www.maxtor.com/products/diamondmax/techsupport/technicalprocedures/21007.html](http://www.maxtor.com/products/diamondmax/techsupport/technicalprocedures/21007.html) for details. A commentary on the technology is found on the ARP site, [www.rojakpot.com/Speed\\_Demonz/Maxtor\\_Silent\\_Store/Maxtor\\_Silent\\_Store\\_02.htm](http://www.rojakpot.com/Speed_Demonz/Maxtor_Silent_Store/Maxtor_Silent_Store_02.htm). Apparently it has to do with the speed of data seeks, and even though it reduces the overall drive seek performance, it is set as a default on the UDMA/100 drives that support it. For power users I suggest earmuffs rather than sacrificing the performance of your computer at all.

For Power Quest users, there was word that Second Chance has been discontinued, as has Lost and Found, which are similar to features now found in WinME.

A correction for last months' Netscape FAQ URL is, <http://ufaq.org> NOT <http://www.netfaq.com>. For accessibility checks on HTML code against a strict standard, try: <http://www.cast.org/bobby>.

Notice was taken of the fact that Micron is getting out of the computer manufacturing business. April has been a tough month for some users, including Alan, as seen by our bad\_day.exe fake virus, which turns the desktop upside down, but causes no harm in reality. Those who weren't dozing caught the screen when Alan turned it upside down.

Wouldn't you know it, daylight savings started the same day as our meeting. Since we also had to reset our clocks ahead and get to the meeting an hour early, Alan demonstrated a Windows scripting program to check computer clocks against the NIST Atomic Clock. Yes, you have to be logged on to the Net. It ain't that smart.

Just to see if anyone could help him, on another topic, Alan noted his difficulty in getting Internet Explorer to open a Web Page Link in Maximized mode in a New Window. Several suggestions were made, but no definitive answer was found, as the secondary window was always slightly less than maximized. After the window opens, Alt-Spacebar-N, will expand the new Window, but not directly from the previous window. Some people are real picky!

One member reported reading the answer in PC Magazine, but even Leo LaPorte did not know, according to Alan. A good graphical viewer/editor is **Gimp**, the *Poorman's Photoshop*, which has been ported to Windows from Linux. It is about 10 MB in file size, and the program is free. See Alan Raul's Free Lunch Page listed on the SLO Bytes Home Page.

Since we discussed firewalls last month, a user wanted to know whether hardware or software firewalls were better. Jim Buenrostro spoke up from the back of the room, noting that both a software firewall included with a hardware router like Ray Miklas has on his system provides maximum protection. Steve Gibson recommends the Tiny Personal Firewall program, according to Ray.

If you are a Zip Drive user, you may have heard of the Click of Death syndrome experienced by some Zip Disks and Drives. Testing for this problem is done with the Trouble in Paradise TIP program, which is one of Alan's favorite troubleshooting tools, from Gibson's site; <http://grc.com/default.htm>. This is also the source for SpinRite, a popular hard drive maintenance program to compensate for shifts in drive format tracking with time. This program has been around since the old MFM hard disk days.

Alan reported that Western Digital has released a 3 platter, 80 Gigabyte hard drive for the retail market, and that it beats IBM's drive by 5 GB. That little difference is almost twice the whole size of my newest (3.2 GB) drive, which I bought just two years ago! Sounds like Bill's bragging again :-)

As to opening an attachment which is an HTML file, we showed how to save it to the desktop, and then click on the saved file, so it will display in the default browser. Bob Ward remarked that a file may need a modem connection to display properly, if it refers to a remote web site. Viruses, and spam of the software variety, were mentioned again, in connection with an incident where AOL deleted thousands of emails by accident, thinking they were spam from Earthlink, all from one address. Oops!

An HP printer which was going *ping* after printing each page, was bothering one of the club members. We suggested taking it back to the store, and letting the technician check it out. It could be an inherent noise found in all printers of that model.

Alan explained the new names for the latest Windows XP versions, and the changes that are to come. A major change will be in the marketing of application programs, which will be rented not sold, under a concept called **Hailstorm**, where the servers house the programs, and the Net provides the link to run the programs on your system. This would be an advantage to large companies although bandwidth could cause problems. I say diversify rather than put all your eggs in one basket.

Ray asked if any members planned to do their taxes electronically. Several spoke of doing that, and I also had great results with TaxAct, recommended by Kathy Yakal during our January meeting.

Ralph Sutter joined us just before the break, and pointed out some links on

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our Internet SIG site, to help with the HTML validation problem: [www.fullbean.com/html.html](http://www.fullbean.com/html.html), raised earlier in the meeting.

Did you know Web TV pages are designed differently than HTML Pages? Neither did I, but Alan made that comment. Bob Ward finished the early session with his version of Computer Trivia, which is done with Microsoft's Power Point.

**Next Up...** Digital Cameras, with Dave Kastner, owner of Cal Photo who spoke on the latest developments in high tech digital photography.

Koffee & Kookies awaited all of us, which were provided by Nancy, our faithful Kitchen Krew!

Refreshed after the break, and Bob wide awake again, the main meeting was called to order by President Miklas, followed by Guy Kuncir, who introduced our Guest Speaker, Dave Kastner from Cal Photo, in San Luis Obispo, who spoke on the topic of Digital Cameras.

Using my starscope and counting in the dark, I counted approximately 64 members present to hear the latest about this amazing technology. Dave used a Smart Media Zip Drive to present his slide show pictures, which he used to demonstrate the various levels of video image reproduction from several digital cameras. If you want your film pictures digitized and put on a picture CD by Kodak, get it into Cal Photo in April and for \$1.99 extra, you'll get 24 pictures on CD.

Another product is called Photo CD, which costs about 99 cents per high-resolution scan, with up to 100 pictures on a disk, and about \$10 for the CD. Alternately, there is a choice of 24 low-resolution images on a floppy

disk, instead of second prints. AOL now has a service to receive similar prints online, via email, which a user can then forward to share with friends or family. Free scanners are now found in shops to scan hard copy pictures onto a CDROM, for a fee. Dave commented that to get good pictures, a scanner should be set at 2400 dpi for slides or negatives. Next, our attention turned to Digital Cameras.

Last year, the return rate on digital cameras was 20-25 %. This year, that is no longer the case, and the pictures are getting much better too. Customers are now better informed, but the fact is that digital is still not the highest picture quality.



Dave Kastner

The equipment is always changing, so twenty years from now, all will be different. Computer fears affect many photographers, although our group may be an exception. Several standards exist in competition with each other, so choices must be made to find the best one for each user.

The ease of editing digital photos must be balanced against the time taken for that task, as most pictures can be improved, but not without effort. New storage media continues to be developed, and the choices in that area are becoming more difficult. Ink Jet prints of pictures do not have a long life as the color ink deteriorates. At most expect 2 years before your picture starts to fade. Keeping it in the dark will lessen the fading. But then if it's in the dark you can't see it anyway!

These negative aspects seem balanced by the advances seen recently, mostly in cost and performance. Dave seemed to think that digital modes of photography will eventually outmode the analog ones; just as the Telex machines have been replaced by other modern modes of communications. One aspect of digital imaging is the immediate feedback of the resulting picture, which is

impossible with film. You can erase a bad shot, and rerecord a second try right away.

It is important, also, to know why you want the camera. The price can skyrocket, the more features you add. Dave asked, "Do you want the camera for the fun of it, or do you want it for prints, or for business?"

Items to watch-out for in a digital camera will include computer compatibility, such as the version of Windows or Mac O.S. needed. As USB connections become more commonplace, digital cameras will default to that mode, so your system may need to support it. Lots of RAM and hard disk space, will be needed, also. Picture size has gone from 640 x 480 to 2048 x 1536, about 3 Mb per pic. Multiply the chip size by the pixel count to determine storage capacity, plus about 10% for unused pixels. This level is almost enough for an 8 x 10 type of print, with the 4 Mega-pixel level just around the corner.

A new model from Minolta will feature 5 Mega-pixel CCD imaging, which is the largest available. With 4 x5 pictures, it is very hard to tell the difference between 35mm print and a 3 Mega-pixel digital image. Current pricing, with rebates, is at the \$499 level, for a 3 Mega-Pixel camera. Last year these prices were in the \$800 range.

Apparently some CCD sensors have a diagonal bias, to get more information than with square pixels, and so that new technique may become popular, and reduce the pixel count on better images. There is also "interperolated resolution", which Dave said was lower than the true resolution. Another factor to remember in picture quality concerns compression. Almost all digital cameras use JPEG images, of which there are two levels: Slight and Heavy. Dave explained that when X-Ray pictures were sent digitally with Slight compression, no problems were found in reading them correctly. However, with Heavy compression, false reports

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were received from reading those JPEG images. Some cameras allow a raw mode without compression, but only with single shots filling the entire memory chip.

Zoom features are of two types, Optical and Digital, with the best resolution offered by the Optical Zoom, because the Digital Zoom only uses part of the CCD sensor chip, rather than the whole chip used for Optical Zoom. File size is reduced using the Digital method, however. The newest file style, JPEG2000 has not matured yet, but offers additional file data such as copyright-holder and photographer information.

The last item of note for these cameras is the ASA rating, and adjustment, which now is up to 400, with a default automatic setting available. Dave closed his talk saying that we are all waiting for the dust to settle, but that Digital has arrived, and it is right for many computer users, as well as many photographers. The end of the meeting was to have been a raffle, however our copy of the Pick n' Win program was corrupted, so we deferred that activity until next time. Next meeting will be May 6<sup>th</sup>. See you there.

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## speaking

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the camera over the net. This along with a \$100 rebate helped with the finances. So now I can get over 650 pictures on one memory card, realistically about 350 pics per card at my normal shooting mode. I've shot over 200 pictures at one time without changing Nicad batteries, so this camera is very easy on batteries.

I purchased a smart card reader which is hooked up to my computer continuously through a USB port. It acts as an extended hard disk. I drop to DOS, of course, and copy or move

pictures from my smart card to my hard disk in a matter of seconds. The camera comes with a date and time stamp, so all pictures have that stamp imbedded in them. The camera comes with a serial / USB cord which can be used as well. The smart cards are small and very thin, look fragile but appear to be tougher than they look. I think they mis-named them though. They should call them Magic-Cards. Really, it all seems like magic.

So what have I done with my Olympus so far? It's been my constant companion for a month now. I'm starting to archive my pictures into categories on CDRW's, but will take Alan's advice and just put them on CDR's when I've got enough to fill one up. I shot about 125 pictures at Bob Hunt's son's wedding a couple weeks ago, threw out about 20 of them and took the rest, put them on a CD with Thumbnails Plus and made a nice wedding CD for them. I will be taking pictures at the meetings and injecting some of them into the newsletter as needed.

What have I found wrong with the camera so far? What would I change? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING! I've used several digital cameras, I've compared the specs, I've done my homework. This camera by far, has and does everything I could ever hope for.

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## This Coming Month...

This coming month is music to my ears.. Learn all about MP3 music from Bruce Fries, author of **The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook**. *The Bible of MP3* has been adopted as a text book by several universities, including UCLA and California Tech. Coming all the way from Silver Springs, Maryland, his talk will include a PowerPoint presentation and a live demonstration of audio compression technology on a personal computer. He will also provide a signed copy of his book as a door prize, as well as special pricing for group members.

Topics that will be covered in the demonstration:

- \* Fundamentals of digital audio on PCs
- \* Recording and playing music on PCs
- \* Audio compression technologies
- \* Music on the Internet
- \* Legal issues surrounding online music

His demonstration will include:

- \* MP3 vs. CD sound quality comparison
- \* Working with playlists
- \* Automatic crossfading
- \* Visualization and other effects

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook: Your Guide to the Digital Music Revolution  
By Bruce Fries with Marty Fries  
March 2000, TeamCom Books, 302 pp. \$24.95  
Trade paperback original; ISBN# 1-928791-10-7

### BIO

*Bruce Fries* is a writer, technology consultant and entrepreneur who lives in Silver Spring, Maryland. He is an associate of the Audio Engineering Society and the founder of TeamCom, an innovative new media publishing company.

## Preventive Maintenance

### Securing Your System by russell james, reprinted from the April, 2001 issue of the PC Alamode

How do you protect your system and more importantly, the information that you store on your system? If you only knew how easy it is for me to get by most of the passwords that you can set on your system, it would amaze you. I have to do it for my customers that lose or forget their passwords. There are other people that know how to get around the safeguards that are available to you that do not have your best interest at heart. These are the type of people that are trying to use your system at work to go places and not get themselves in trouble. You will be the one that gets the reprimand since it is your system. It is up to you to secure your system. If it is your computer at work, it could mean your job. Some of the items that we will discuss are things that you will not have any control over at work unless you help with the setup and maintenance of the computers. Others could help you at work as well as with your home computer.

The first thing that needs to be secured is the physical pieces of the computer. Some of you might have used a computer at one of the schools or libraries in your neighborhood and wondered what the padlock was doing on the back of the computer. You may be surprised to know that without the locks on the computers, some of the systems have had parts stolen out of them while still on the desks. The newer tower type systems are being made easier to get in to in order to accommodate the computer user of today that does a lot of their own upgrades and computer servicing. There are systems on the market that have a plastic tab on the back of the case that releases the side panel of the computer system. From there you have access to the memory, CPU and all of the add-in cards in the system. A thief could have the insides of a

computer in his coat pocket in about a minute and no one would know any different unless they were standing behind him. This is the reason for the padlock. The padlock is also needed to keep the software secure. You have the option to have a password setup on your system in a number of different areas. The first would be the CMOS or Bios of the computer. You can set a password for the Bios as well as the system. This would mean that anyone turning on your computer would have to enter a password before being able to access the Bios or before the software for the system would load. This is one of the best ways to secure your computer. There is usually a jumper on the motherboard that will allow you to clear the password and this is the main reason for the padlock. If they can't get the back off of the computer, then they won't be able to change the jumper and bypass the CMOS or System password.

Another type of security for your computer is a software program that protects the system from being accessed or changes being made to the system configuration. Fortres <<http://www.fortres.com/>> is one of the software programs that I have seen at a number of the schools in the area. The program is available for purchase for the home for \$29.95 as a download. This program will monitor the users actions from the time the system is turned on and based on the setting will allow or deny access to everything on the system. You can place restrictions on browsing of files, floppy drive access, and virtually anything on the system. The schools place the icons that they use on the desktop and everything else is off limits to the users. There is no chance that one of the students can make changes or delete files because access has not been granted to them. When the system boots up you have to enter a specific keystroke to bring up a password prompt that will allow you to turn off the program. By configuring the computer to boot directly from the hard drive you will have cut off just about any chance for someone to get into places that you do not want them to be or to bypass the software.. You have the option to give access to as little or as much as you choose within the settings of the program. You can set up the system so that all the files and icons are accessible but changes cannot be made to the configuration of the system. This would be good for a family with growing and inquisitive children that like to fix things.

Windows also has a password file that stores all of your online user names and passwords that you have asked to be remembered. This means that if someone cancels out of the Windows logon password, they would not be able to use any of these stored passwords. This is about the only security that this password helps with. If you leave the system on or if you have a program that will enter the password for you, this password really does not help. After you get into Windows you have the option to set up a screen saver to turn on after a period of time. You can set the screen saver to require a password before you can go back into Windows. Microsoft has finally written the software so that you are not able to use the three-finger salute (ctrl/alt/del), to stop the screen saver. But that is OK because I can still hit the reset button and after the computer reboots I will be able to go into the display properties and turn the screen saver off without knowing what the password is. Someday maybe they will get it right.

Since we are into Windows now, let's take a minute to talk about using passwords on some of the programs that you use. Did you know that you can password protect the file that contains all of your data in Microsoft Outlook? In the Control Panel click on Mail and then highlight Personal Folders. Click on Properties and then Change Password. Add a password and verify and anyone starting Outlook on your system will need to enter your password to access your e-mail. Microsoft Money and Quicken can also be password protected in the preferences of the program after you have created or opened your data file. Most of the programs

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## Securing Your System

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that deal with any type of financial or personal data will allow you to set a password to secure your work. Now that you have an idea of how many different areas you can password protect, let's take a look at what your password should or should not be. Some of the don'ts would be consecutive letters or numbers such as 123456 or abcdef. Letters as they appear on the keyboard such as QWERTY or POIUYT would not be a good idea. You would not be the first one to use these so this would make them very easy to guess. Don't use numbers such as your Social Security number, phone number, address, license plate or any birth dates of any of your family members. Try not to use any word that you would be able to look up in the dictionary. There are programs out there that are used to guess passwords. It is very easy to load a word list into one of these programs to check all the words in the English language in a matter of minutes.

If you can't use all of this easy stuff for passwords, what should you use? The first suggestion I would give you is to find a combination of random letters and numbers at least 6 digits long. Mix in upper and lower case letters to increase the odds of someone not being able to guess the password. The more digits that you use will also increase the time that it will take for a program to crack your password. This will also increase the chances of you forgetting it. Come up with your own language and then choose a couple of words for your password. Maybe wErga4hiBna7 would be a choice that you could use. This 12-digit password would take over a year to be cracked by a password program because of the number of digits and the use of upper and lower case letters. A word from the dictionary or some other type of word list might take 10 minutes to crack.

I have different levels of passwords that I like to use for the different areas that I have to get into. I use the most secure password for financial sites and easier passwords for less secure sites that I have to login to. I also have a Word document that has all of my user names and passwords in it so if I happen to forget which one I used; there is a place that I can look them up. The document is of course password protected with the most secure password.

You need to come up with a system that is right for the amount of security that you need, for the work that you do and the amount of sensitive data that you store on your system. There are ways to lock up your system so that you are the only one that can access it. If you are the only one that has access to your computer, then maybe you don't need to have passwords on every level. You need to explore the options that you have and choose a level of security that you feel comfortable with. Passwords are available to help you but they won't if you don't use them wisely.

### **Russell James**

<mailto:russell@bjassociates.com> is Operations Manager at BJ Associates of San Antonio Texas. They are an authorized service center for IBM and Toshiba systems. They are the laptop specialist and also handle system builds and parts for desktops.

## New Members

### **Mark & Lisa Hornickel**

Welcome to Mark & Lisa.  
We hope our organization  
can assist you in your  
computer needs.

## Multiple Email

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might want an email address of their own. Or, you want an email address that will be yours forever regardless of what ISP you are using.

The good news is there are lots of different options available, with prices ranging from totally free to small annual fees! Web based types of email services abound, read through a website, are free as they are paid for through the advertisements on the service. Many of these will collect mail from all of your POP mail accounts for free while offering the most up-to-date filtering options. Some will forward mail either for free or for a small fee, so you don't have to read it on their website. (Read the fine print!) Others, for a small annual fee, can be used directly with your standard email client programs like Eudora, Communicator, and Outlook Express.

Here are a list, which is by no means all inclusive, of various web based email sites:

Eudora Web Mail [www.eudoramail.com](http://www.eudoramail.com)  
GeoCities [www.geocities.com](http://www.geocities.com)  
Hotmail [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com)  
Iname [www.iname.com](http://www.iname.com)  
Rocket Mail [www.rocketmail.com](http://www.rocketmail.com)  
SoftHome [www.softhome.net](http://www.softhome.net)  
Vanity email [www.vanityemail.com](http://www.vanityemail.com)

About the Author..

**Ms. Kraus** has some 17 years of computer experience, including 13 years as a computer user group officer. Her computer related interests include writing, graphics & page design, and on-line messaging. She is the owner of Design COMP, and works as an Internet Marketing Consultant based in Erie County.  
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## club information

**HARD COPY** is a monthly publication of SLO BYTES PC User's Group located in San Luis Obispo, California. Information in this Newsletter is derived from both our own membership and other PC User Group Newsletters. The purpose of this publication is to inform our members of meetings and provide information related to the use of IBM PC's and compatible computers.

**Membership:** Dues are \$25 per year. Full membership entitles you to our monthly newsletter, full use of the public domain software library software drawing at the end of the meetings.

**Article Submission:** Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month. Articles should be provided in ASCII format without any type of formatting from your wordprocessor including tabs, indents, extra spaces, or highlighting. We prefer articles on disk but will accept hardcopies if necessary.

**Disclaimer:** Neither SLO BYTES PC User's Group, its officers, editors, or contributors to this newsletter assume liability for damages arising out of this publication of any article, including but not limited to the listing of programming code, batch files and other helpful hints.

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Direct all correspondence and newsletter submissions to:

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(805) 756-2164



## meeting times

GENERAL MEETINGS are held the 1st Sunday of each month. Our meeting location is the San Luis Obispo I.O.O.F. Hall on Dana Street.

The general meeting starts promptly at 2:30 p.m.

Special Interest Groups (SIGS) meet at 1:00 p.m.–2:15 p.m.

## slobytes website

[WWW.THEGRID.NET/SLOBYTES/](http://WWW.THEGRID.NET/SLOBYTES/)

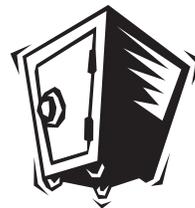
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B. Ward (Sec.)     bward@thegrid.net  
M. Baxendale (Tres) marvin@surfari.net  
B. Ward, editor

### for sale

Do YOU have some computer-related item you would like listed in this space? Contact Bob Ward, Editor at 756-2164.

## treasurer's report



April 13, 2001

### OPERATING FUND

Beginning Balance	\$2,224.09
Income	
Membership Dues	300.00
Refreshments	26.30
Bulk Mail refund	91.93
Expenses	
Room Rent	75.00
NL Xerox	33.44
Refreshments	00.00
Postage	102.00
Projector rental	10.00
Insurance	219.00
New Balance	<u>\$2,202.88</u>

### EQUIPMENT FUND

Beginning Balance	\$76.66
Projector Rental	75.00
New Balance	<u>\$151.66</u>

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SLO Bytes PC User's Group  
c/o Marvin Baxendale  
543 Gularde Road  
Arroyo Grande, CA. 93420



**I.O.O.F  
520 Dana**

Next Meeting

**Sunday**

May 6th

1:00pm

Early SIGS

2:30pm

Digital

Music