SLOBYTES

HARDCOPY • a monthly publication of the san luis obispo pc users group

NEW NEWS, OLD NEWS
BY BOB WARD, SECRETARY

IT'S TIME to fill you in on what's happening with your favorite computer club   :-)

If you missed last month, shame on you. We had a great demonstration of I-Contact. It involves a video board, some Win '95 software, a fast modem & computer. It's about the closest thing to real time video conferencing you can get, and all for the price of a local phone call through your Internet provider. With the above list of computer parts, you can talk to other people and see them in real-time video at 2-8 frames per second. If you are fortunate enough to have ISDN, the video jumps to ~28 frames per second with a good connection. The board does other neat things such as capturing any video frame from your camcorder which plugs directly into the back of your computer. There was some technical difficulty with their local NetCom connection, but the results were more than adequate.

Back-tracking a bit, George demo'd a similar item in his early SIG called Snappy. This little device sells for about $200 and is a video capture board. Hook it up to a Camcorder, video tape player or anything else that has video out and you can capture all those precious moments of your kids first bike ride, your 80th birthday, etc.

Bob Hunt was in the process of moving so I took over his SIG last month and demonstrated Acrobat Reader from Adobe Systems. We

SAVING YOUR WIN '95 REGISTRATION FILE
BY GUS THOMASSON, SLO BYTES PCUG

AS WITH MANY GREAT and useful utilities this one needs little explanation. The Win95 registry is somewhat problematic in that it is always open, has attributes set to make it hidden, and delegated a system file which Win95 does not like to view. It is therefore somewhat difficult to backup. The registry can become corrupt which requires a complete reinstallation of all programs. This little batch file will accomplish a registry backup with little fanfare.

Place it in the windows subdirectory together with pkzip and pkunzip. Boot to DOS by executing the F8 key while the screen displays "Starting Windows 95" or by going to "START-SHUTDOWN-Restart the computer in MS-DOS mode" and select start in MS DOS. Do not simply

CLUB CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2
1:00-2:30pm
Kathy Yakal
will give a demonstration of several
TAX PACKAGES,
showing the *strengths*
and *weaknesses*
of each

2:45-4:30PM
George Campbell
will demonstrate
MICROSOFT OFFICE 97
***

Bob Ward will challenge
your minds with Knowledge
Adventure's Jump Start
***

March 2nd - Open

April 2nd
Partition Magic

IN THIS ISSUE ☞

SILICON TRAVEL PART II
BY BILL MCNAMARA, SLO BYTES PCUG

IT WAS TWO DAYS AFTER CHRISTMAS, and Santa did not bring me every thing that I had asked for. He must have thought I was a bad boy; no new mother board, CPU and hard drive.

It's 4:55 am on a crisp and chilly Friday morning. A car comes racing up my long drive way with Bob Ward, his wife Sheila, and two daughters Kimberly and Elizabeth. The five of us are heading North on a trip to the Silicon Valley. We must hurry as our first appointment is at Hobee's restaurant in San Jose where Bob Hunt is awaiting our arrival for breakfast.

On the way, Bob explains to me why he brought Mrs. Claus (Sheila) and the elves. He confessed to me that he too came up short at Christmastime. With his computer hunger unquenched, we went bargain hunting. With the "boss" along, just perhaps he could fill out his Christmas list.

Since Christmas is over, look for a slow decline in prices on computers and components. This might spill over into the Pentium CPU market with Intel's release of the MMX technology. If you hadn't heard, this new chip along with software written for it, will process multimedia up to 80 times faster than the present Pentiums. Hopefully this will translate into lower prices for existing CPU's.

Today, one of our stops is at **Central Computers** on Stevens Creek Blvd in Santa Clara. They're just off the San Thomas Expressway on Stevens Creek Blvd. about 3/4 of a block north on the right side. Central has a large selection of software with excellent prices. If you don't need the fancy box most software comes in, look for the same software shrink wrapped in a jewel case and save 40% to 70% over the box price. They also sell the OEM Microsoft mouse (OEM: original equipment manufacture) for $ 29.00. This same mouse in a Microsoft box might go for $85. You'll find some excellent prices on tape drives, including the older, reliable Colorado 350's. If you are thinking of networking 2 or more computers, their prices on hubs are below $100.00 plus the cost of a network interface card.

I specifically went looking for one of the new **WeirdStuff** locations. I found one in Fremont in a shopping center on the corner Warms Spring and Mission Blvd just off highway 880. The store is small (less than a thousand square feet) and sells mostly software. Again, look for those plain paper CDs holders.

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BOB'S FAVORITE INTERNET SITES

TAKE A TRIP… Some of Bob's Favorite Companies for Reservations:
www.hilton.com/ On-line reservations for the Hilton anywhere in the world.
www.radisson.com/ On-line reservations for any Raddison Hotel/Resort anywhere in the world.
www.expedia.com/ Your on-line travel agent. Use FareTracker for the best prices.
www.reservations.com/ Car reservations, plane tickets, and more.
www.thetrip.com/ Just another company awaiting your reservations for flights, hotel, car, and more.

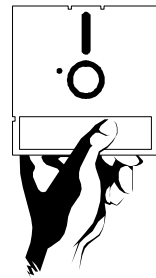## WHILE YOU'RE ONLINE TAKE A DETOUR TO THE SITE OF A FELLOW SLOBYTES MEMBER

THE TRI-TIP COMPUTER NEWS at **www.thegrid.net/dlogan**

LIBRARY NEWS
BY BOB WARD

HERE'S SOME programs for all you software junkies. Hope you like them.

#709
MWT3_2—Molecular weight calculator for Windows.
GASLAW10—Ideal gas law on the molecular level.
VECTOR11—Trigonometry and Vector exercises.
DPG10—Evaluate grammar understanding.
FLAGS215—Flags v2.15: Teacher & quiz of flags.
#710
VALNTIN1—Flying cupids, hearts & flowers for your valentine.
IVIEW218—Fast image viewer/converter for Win95/NT.
95IC1—Icon set 1 for Windows '95.
SR280—Search and Replace for Windows 95/NT, 3.1x.
PSCW9B61—One keystroke prints anything in Windows.
#711
WINCPY40—WinCopy v4.0: screen capture.
#712
4SIGHT40—Find, display, move, copy and more. Menu driven.
CTMOUS12—Cute Mouse Driver v1.2: only 8K resident size.
SMALLREG—Compress Win95 registry files of any size.
CHIEF300—Installer/Uninstaller for Win16 & Win32.

Programs found on the Internet but too large to include in our library:

ACBACK04.ZIP—Find, display, move, copy & more. Menu driven found at www.simtel.net/pub/simtelnet/msdos/win95/fileutl/acback04.zip
ASV11A.ZIP—StockVue: automatic stocks & funds tracking found at www.simtel.net/pub/simtelnet/win95/finance/asv11a.zip
SAFEIT.ZIP—Safe-It v1.0: Allows multiple TCP/IP configs found at www.simtel.net/pub/simtelnet/win95/inet/safeit.zip

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WESTERN DIGITAL EIDE HARD DRIVE "WHINE AND RAP"

BY DOUG DEPUE, SLO BYTES PCUG

ON A COMPUTER in which I had installed an MCT (Modular Circuit Technology) 486DX4/100 motherboard with the AWARD CMOS, I found that hard drive number 1, a Western Digital 1.6 gigabit EIDE model, was making a sort of metallic clicking noise from time to time. This ran on for about a year at which time it began to frequently make the click after the quiet whining, whirring sound an idling drive makes when it starts spinning its disks back into motion. On occasion, a program would terminate and I had to reboot. There it was, I thought. My first hard drive hardware failure. And this after only one year from the time I paid $379.00 for it.

So, I got up on the Internet and accessed Computer Shopper's Net Buyer Website http://www. netbuyer.com to see what kinds of new drives were available. The website allows you to compare prices and specs between various companies and, of course, enables you to make a purchase if you so desire. I noticed a Western Digital Emblem and double-clicked it (the site also lists all the advertised manufacturer's websites for direct access). Up came the Western Digital Website http://www.wdc.com which includes support information with "FAQs" (frequently asked questions), but no e-mail tech support. So, what's to lose, I might as well peruse the FAQs as long as I have come this far.

Lo and behold, one of the questions described the very problem I had; "During POST, you may hear the drive begin to spin-up and shortly thereafter produce a sharp noise. What is wrong?" It turned out that the AWARD BIOS on the Motherboard had a compatibility problem with the newer EIDE Western Digital Hard Drives that could be remedied by downloading the offered OVERLAY.EXE file by double-clicking that blue highlighted word. Within a minute, I had a small DOS ".exe" file that, when executed, exploded into a read-me file and a small ".exe" file program that identifies the type of WD drives that need the CMOS fix and performs the fix upon request. No fuss, no muss. The corrected CMOS then works fine with the EIDE drive.

I thought I would share this information for the benefit of those with Western Digital EIDE Hard Drives and a PC which has the AWARD BIOS/CMOS setup on its Motherboard. A problem that sounded like a malfunction component of the hardware was, in fact, a CMOS problem that was solved by the manufacturer's support page on the Internet. It should be noted that most, if not all manufacturers, have similar FAQ pages with downloadable files. A little bit of searching and a serious problem was solved without my making the ignorant mistake of buying a new hard drive under the mistaken notion that the one I had was defective.

NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME to our new members. Glad you decided to join us.

**Robert Carson
Thomas Conroy:** 481-2881
Laurie Fiant: 544-7415
Rosemary Flamion: 528-7372
Jerry Garren: 528-0352
Pat Perry

PATIENCE AND GETTING A USR MODEM TO WORK

BY JOAN LATCHFORD—FROM README, THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PERSONAL COMPUTER CLUB OF TORONTO, OCTOBER, 1996.

PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE, a saying goes, made a bishop of his Reverence! First, I want to say that the Plug 'n Play USRobotics Sportster Winmodem 28.8 is superb. Software updated to 36.6 bits per second, Web pages appear quickly and the CNET Newscaster no longer sounds as if he has barely overcome a speech impediment.

Installation is smooth: remove the cover from your computer, insert the modem firmly into an empty slot, connect the telephone jack and switch the computer back on. A message appears in Windows 95 identifying your Winmodem Sportster 28.8 and gives four choices for driver selection. "Driver from disk provided by manufacturer" is pre-selected so all you have to do is insert the provided disk and press enter. But …

USR's Winmodem reminds me of the archetypal little girl who, "when she was good, was very, very good but when she was bad, she was horrid." (Of a normally sunny disposition, we just know some event must have occurred to set her off - but what?)

Once installed USR's Winmodem performed flawlessly for a couple of weeks until one morning I rebooted my computer to receive a message that: "The modem is being used by another dial-up networking connection or another program." Not true …

Now Winmodem's "Plug 'n Play" installation had connected it to COM 4. And there, I believed lay the problem, since my previous modem installation was on COM 2. However, neither the Winmodem Manual nor the installation software provided any instructions on how to change the installed COM port. I am a born "tweaker" so it was natural for me to spend several days into the wee small hours in documented attempts to change my installation to COM 2. While I found a means to do this (In Win95 Open "Control Panel", double click on the Winmodem icon, de-select "Use Automatic Settings" and "Force COM 1-4", double click on COM 2 and restart your computer) it did not resolve the refrain that: "The modem is (still!) being used by another dial-up networking connection or another program." I reinstalled Win 95, Netscape Gold, removed and reinstalled Winmodem and my dial-up network connection times without number and with equal lack of success. After several phone calls to Keating Technologies (Toronto distributors for USRobotics) I was told to return the modem. While I waited for a replacement, my husband downloaded the software update file "win336.exe" from USRobotics' Web site.

A new modem arrived a couple of days later. Steve, of Keating's Tech Support told me to unpack the update file (win336.exe) to a floppy and to insert it when Winmodem asked for the manufacturer's disk. It was rejected, so I used the original 28.8 install disk, ran the 33.6.exe update file immediately after and rebooted my system.

The replacement Winmodem was again setup on COM 4 but after I had reinstalled my dial-up network connection it was recognized and made its usual raucous connection to my Internet Service Provider. When I changed the installation to COM 2 (to see if I could replicate the original problem) everything continued to work. Since I have a system crammed with peripherals it seemed logical to test for installation conflicts without suspecting an individual defective modem. However, a great deal of time would have been saved if the Winmodem software came with documentation for changing the COM port. "Plug n' Play"? I would have to say "I guess so," while recommending either an on-line "help" feature or a specific trouble shooting "Wizard".

Ironically, while I waited for a replacement modem, my USR Sportster 14.4 reinstalled on COM 2 came up with the reliability of a Ford model T — but Oh, how I missed the Jaguar swiftness of a fully functioning Winmodem 28.8!

have been archiving all our newsletters in Acrobat for several months. The latest one can be found on our internet home page. The most exciting thing about Acrobat Reader is its cross-platform compatibility. Any document, including graphics, created by a Macintosh or PC may be read and printed on the opposite machine. Before, if you created a document with a Macintosh, you couldn't read, view or print it on a PC. The "PDF" format retains the format of any document created and saved by Adobe Acrobat. Other platforms including OS2, Unix, etc. are also available. We have the Acrobat Reader in the library for purchase or diskcopy. The latest version, which was too large to put on floppy may be downloaded from the Adobe homepage.

I also discussed Netscape "Plugins", with some programs they are automatically created, with others you have to enter them manually. Similarly in Windows find the "associate" command under the File pulldown menu. To associate files just tag any file extension to a particular program in Windows which would be viewed through the file manager. As an example, perhaps you have a large number of GIF graphic files on your computer. You can associate these to PhotoShop which must also reside on your computer. After the association has been made, anytime you click on a GIF file in the file manager, PhotoShop automatically loads, displaying the file you selected. Plugins in Netscape are similar. A plug-in looks for a particular file extension in Netscape, and loads the program associated to it. There seems to be a plug-in for every Netscape task; although you don't want to load them all unless you have time on your hands and a large hard disk. Checkout the Netscape homepage for a list of categories and plug-in available.

Wow, this month's program has been a headache for Lynn Boisen

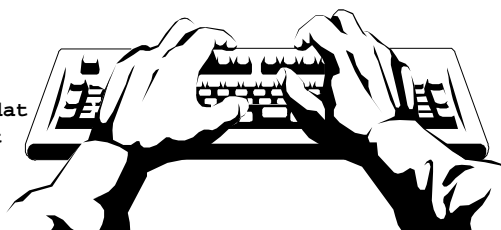shell to DOS as the registry will still be running in the background. At the c:\windows prompt type REGBACK and the name you wish to call your back up file. EXAMPLE "REGBACK GUS". The batch will do just that. To restore same simply type "REGBACK GUS" again. If a registry backup called GUS exists it will be restored.

The following is the batch file code if you wish to alter it.

```
@Echo off
:preparation
c:
cls
if '%1'== goto instructions
if not exist c:\windows\winbak\nul md c:\windows\winbak
:confirmation
cd\windows\winbak
if not exist %1.zip  Choice Backup Registry to %1.zip
if exist %1.zip if not '%1'=='#'  Choice Restore Registry from %1.zip
if exist %1.zip if '%1'=='#'   Choice Perform Fail Safe Operation
if errorlevel 2 goto end
if errorlevel 1 goto evaluation
:evaluation
echo Processing. Please Wait.
attrib -s -h -r c:\windows\system.dat
attrib -s -h -r c:\windows\user.dat
if not exist %1.zip goto backup
if exist  %1.zip if not '%1'=='#' goto restore
if exist %1.zip if '%1'=='#' goto fail-safe
goto end
:backup
pkzip %1 c:\windows\user.dat c:\windows\system.dat >nul
goto finish
:restore
pkzip # c:\windows\user.dat c:\windows\system.dat >nul
cd windows
pkunzip -o c:\windows\winbak\%1 >nul
goto finish
:fail-safe
cd\windows
pkunzip -o c:\windows\winbak\# >nul
goto finish
:instructions
Echo Makes or Restores Backup of Registry
Echo.
Echo      Usage: REGBACK filename
Echo.
Echo Where filname is a filename with no extension.
Echo.
Echo If filename.ZIP doesn't exist, a new backup with that
    name is created.
Echo.
Echo If filename.ZIP exists, the registry is restored from that file
Echo.
Echo Special case: Use REGBACK # to restore the registry from prior
backup.
Echo.
Echo.
Echo.
goto end
:finish
attrib +s +h +r c:\windows\system.dat
attrib +s +h +r c:\windows\user.dat
:end
cd\
Echo Done.
```

and a revenue maker for the phone company. It started when MidiScan cancelled after promising to show up 3 months ago. Then there were promises from other companies, then cancellations, then more promises, none of which have matured into a firm commitment. I think we should have vendors send us a check for $100 refundable when they show up. If they don't then we get to cash it and place it in the projector fund.

What are we going to do this month, you might ask. We are tapping our local talent reserves. Kathy Yakal will hold a SIG in the large lecture room (286). Remember she reviews business software including tax programs for several magazines. Also remember it's about that time to pay your '96 taxes :-((Kathy will give a demonstration on several tax packages, show the strengths and weaknesses of each, and get everyone excited about doing their taxes. Bob Hunt will not be here this coming month so I will take his place in 287. I don't have an agenda for this SIG yet, but if anyone has a suggestion or just wants Q & A, then you can e-mail me at bward@thegrid.net. So where's George? We're saving him for the main meeting. He will demonstrate Office '97, Bill Gates' latest money maker. As an addendum to his demonstration, I have received a large number of Jump Start packages from Knowledge Adventure, some of which I will show at the meeting.

Many of my favorite companies have been or will be swallowed up by a larger company called CUC Inter-national Inc. (NYSE: CU). Within CUC, find Davidsons, Sierra On-Line, Blizzard and now Knowledge Adven-ture. Look for more companies being consumed in the future. Unfortu-nately, once acquired, they seem to disappear. I don't see as much activity from Sierra On-Line com-pared to when they were private. I also don't see any close rapport with

RESTARTING WINDOWS INVOLVES GOTCHAS APLENTY

BY STEPHEN MANES

"CATCH 95," THE PRETZEL LOGIC that occasionally trips up users of America's best selling operating system, continues to blossom in unexpected ways. One of the least amusing involves the question of what may happen if your hard drive or Windows 95 itself fails catastrophically.

Even the fastidious are not immune. Make the admittedly unlikely assumption that you have dutifully backed up your hard drive with a backup utility for Windows 95. When your machine goes down for the count, you congratulate yourself on your foresight and thoroughness.

But then you recognize one teensy problem: Since the backup software runs from Windows 95, you will need to reinstall the operating system and the backup software before you can begin restoring your backup files.

No problem. Your childhood years as a Scout have paid off: you are prepared. The Windows 95 CD-ROM and the disks for your backup program are at your fingertips. Better still, you have the "Startup Disk" you made months ago when Windows 95 prompted you for a floppy and informed you that "if you have trouble starting Windows, you can use a start-up disk to start your computer, run diagnostic program, and fix any problems." You are confident that you will prevail.

Or will you? When you boot your machine with the Startup Disk, you discover another problem: The machine will not recognize the CD-ROM drive from which you installed Windows 95. Catch 95 strikes again!

First some good news: Many manufacturers supply or prompt you to make an emergency boot disk that really works in emergencies, often in conjunction with a CD-ROM that comes with the computer. An increasing number, including IBM and Compaq, sell models that can be started and resurrected directly from special CD-ROMs.

Many new computers ask you to supply 30 floppy disks and make your own backup of Windows 95 or order a set for about $50. Do not fail to do one or the other: restoration from floppies will be tedious, but it should get the computer running again from a standing start. Be sure you also make backup copies of essential driver files; the Windows 95 reinstallation may not include them. Some computers come with utilities that do the copying for you.

But particularly on systems that have been upgraded from CD-ROMs, the Startup Disk is likely to be incomplete. Windows 95 newcomers may be pardoned for not realizing what is missing from the Startup floppy, but grizzled veterans of DOS and Windows may figure it out.

First comes a file called MSCDEX.EXE typically found in the /WINDOWS/ COMMAND folder. Next is a file known as the CD-ROM "real mode device driver," which may be called almost anything with a .SYS extension and found almost anywhere on your hard drive. (Mine is NECIDE.SYS.) Then you need two startup text files from the darkest days of DOS that may or may not exist in the root directory of the drive from which you boot your Windows 95 machine: AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS. Finally, you need one line in each file to make the software in the proper way.

If you still have a DOS disk with this stuff on it, you can use it instead of your Startup Disk to boot your machine and reinstall Windows 95 from there. If not, and you happen to have an old DOS directory hanging around and understand extremely arcane and unforgiving command syntax, the old DOS help facility may help you figure out what you need to do to make your Startup Disk genuinely useful. Unfortunately, DOS help has disappeared from windows 95 itself, so if you have erased the old version, a call to your com-

User Groups. History does repeat itself. Ten years ago many companies couldn't see the purpose of User Groups… now many of them are allies to our cause. Unfortunately many large conglomerates think they can ride on reputation alone. Only time will tell.

Here's some Internet news! The Grid, one of our local internet providers has eyes on the stars and probably just touched one. Yesterday they announced a new plan, one that goes beyond AOL, Prodigy and Compuserve. They are now NATIONWIDE. Even more amazing is the fact that for $25 a month you can call from ANYWHERE in the United States using their toll free 800 number. This should fill the gaps in those little towns that are too remote for local service. Even with this new service they stand by their "no busy signal" policy. They also support the new USR X-2 56K modem speeds. Beginning the 27th of this month they will be statewide with local dialup service. They also offer any bonafide User Group a free account and webspace for a homepage plus $5 back to the club for any referrals. Quite an accomplishment for a company that started just about 1 year ago!

As a means of raising a little more money for the club projector, I'm proposing we have a raffle at our meeting for one piece of software, the rest still being given away as usual. Raffle tickets will be $1 each, all proceeds being placed in the projector fund. This month, **thanks to Doug Dupue's generosity, we will raffle a CD ROM of Calendar Creator Plus.** It's a great program, I've used it to make all kinds of calendars… weekly, monthly and yearly.

That's it for the meeting. **See you Sunday, the 2nd of February.**

COMPUTER PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE FOR WINDOWS 95
BY LON STRABALA, PCUG NEWSLETTER EDITOR, RAVENNA, OHIO

YOUR COMPUTER'S HARD DRIVE contains all your applications and files, and since the hard drive is critical for retrieval and storage of this information, maintaining the hard drive is essential. The following procedure should be completed on a regular basis depending on how often you save files to your hard drive. Remember, the rule of thumb is, how many files would you be willing to rebuild if your hard drive was to crash right now.

Preventative Maintenance routine: 1. Back Up the Hard Disk 2. Scan the Hard Disk for errors 3. Defragment Files

Important: Before you optimize (defragment) your hard disk, it is recommended that you backup your files, preferably your entire hard disk, and do a Scan Disk.

Keeping backup copies of your files is very important. Generally, you will want to do a full system backup at least once or preferably twice a year, in case your entire hard drive is damaged. You would then be able to use this complete backup to restore your entire hard disk. The following guidelines may be helpful when planning your backup procedure: 1. Do a full system backup at least twice a year. 2. Backup all changed files on a regular basis, such as daily, weekly, or monthly. 3. Keep at least two sets of backup disks or tapes. Alternate these disks or tapes each time you do a backup. If one of the sets is damaged during the backup, you will still have another set containing your files. 4. If you are using floppy disks for the backup, number them sequentially to make the restore process go faster.

After you have all your files or entire hard drive backed up, you are ready to do a Scan Disk. Errors can occur on a hard disk when a file is being copied to a disk or read from the disk. A File Allocation Table (FAT), which is used to track where files are stored on the disk, can also become damaged. In addition,

fragments of unidentified files can be scattered on your disk, or the disk itself may have some bad sectors. The Scan Disk utility can locate and repair all these problems. You should run Scan Disk every few months to keep your hard disk in good shape.

After you have repaired any bad areas on your disk, you should use a Disk Defragmenter to repair any fragmented files. When you save a file, it may be too large to store in one area on your disk, therefore Windows will store the file in separate areas. Although you can still use a fragmented file, your computer takes longer to locate all the pieces.

Periodically, you should use Disk Defragmentation to rearrange the files on your disk so that they are stored in contiguous areas, thereby improving your disk's access speed. Summary: Good computer preventative maintenance begins with a full backup of all your files. Doing a Scan Disk and running Disk Defragmenter will correct disk errors and improve your disk drive's performance, not to mention your peace of mind.

Note: Backup, Scan Disk, and Disk Defragmenter can be found under System Tools in the Start Menu for Windows 95.

RESTARTING WINDOWS95
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puter maker's technical support line or Microsoft's may be in order.

Do not depend on Windows 95 program called the Emergency Recovery Utility. According to the text file that accompanies it, "Microsoft recommends that you use the utility to create a backup each time you make any significant system changes, such as adding new hardware or software." On the CD-ROM it is buried in the folder /OTHER/MISC/ERU, presumably because it is not much help except in minor emergencies, and maybe not even then.

The program is supposed to copy important system configuration files from Windows 95 to a floppy disk or elsewhere and restore some settings in some cases, but Microsoft's Web site (http://www.microsoft.com/) admits that it does not always work correctly Still, the "emergency" disk may be of some use as a reference if you have to start over.

If you upgraded your machine to Windows 95 from an earlier version, be prepared for yet another surprise. Sometime during the installation process, the program will insist upon seeing a disk from your old edition of Windows before proceeding.

Additional gotchas arise in special situations. The problem is potentially more acute, for example, if you have upgraded a laptop computer by using a CD-ROM drive that connects to a PC card slot. If the system needs to be restored from CD, the real-mode device drivers for both the card and the CD-ROM will need to reside on the emergency disk and be mentioned properly in the CONFIG.SYS file.

And once you get all this done, you have the painstaking job of reinstalling all your applications and data, either from scratch or from backups that you hope the backup hardware and software can restore. Beyond merely bringing back Windows 95, what is really needed is a foolproof method of restoring the state of one's machine quickly and simply. Ease of use is certainly a very nice thing, but when your machine dies, what you really long for is ease of reuse.

SILICON TRAVEL
Continued from page 2

Sheila picked up a Compton's Encyclopedia '97 for $15.00. Prices start at $5 and go up from there. I found some real steals in earlier versions of popular software titles.

We marched across the street from **Weirdstuff** into the parking lot of **Fry's Electronics**. This is one of the smallest of Fry's stores. I can attest to this as I've been to all of their northern California locations. The store wasn't only packed with merchandise but people as well. Looked to me like a feeding frenzy among computer nerds. Those pocket protectors were going fast. Bob found his long lost NEC laser cartridge but blinked twice at the $189 price tag. He did explain to me that NEC Lasers use a microfine toner which doubles the number of pages per cartridge. Guess it is comparable to an HP which averages 3500 pages before a toner change.

I recently heard that Fry's bought some of Tandy's computer stores. This will expand their base of operation into Phoenix, Florida, Texas, Sacramento and San Diego. Now how do I plan a trip to visit all those stores?

You really can't depend on all Fry's stores having the same prices. That's why it is important to visit more than one location if you're a serious shopper. I have found on occasion that the Fremont store had

the same item as the Sunnyvale store, but for less money. Now you have to know the travel sequence, folks. If you buy an item at one store for more, then find it for less at another store, you get mad at yourself, plus you must backtrack to the first store for a refund. Figure the cost of gas in here, it might be cheaper to keep it and not backtrack. Of course we did stop at the Fry's in Sunnyvale and the other location in San Jose at the corner of Junction and E. Brokaw. At the Sunnyvale location, Bob moved into action with the "boss" right at his side. The dilemma was, does he purchase that cheap 14" VGA monitor or go for broke and get a new Sony monitor with a .25 dot pitch? He moved from customer to sales person as he compared the two monitors to Sheila. I don't know if she sneezed, blinked her eyes, or scratched her nose, but any and all those were a sign for Bob to go for the Sony! Perhaps she was looking at that monitor for herself or thinking it would still be around long after his demise.

Here's some other discoveries we made while touching all the shrinkwrap. In the *San Jose Mercury News* (you must have one to pour over the ad's during breakfast), **Fry's Electronics** had some spectacular advertised prices on 2x32 70ns 72 pin RAM for $ 22.88 (8 mb chip). We also found some 28.8 internal fax modems (5 year warranty) for $59.00, and 8x IDE CD-ROM drives for as low as $89.00. 5 port ethernet

mini-hub were $59.00 with ISA Ether Combo Cards for $37.00.

We checked out a new store called **Computer City** on McCarthy Road in Milpitas. It is located in the McCarthy Ranch Shopping Center just off highway 237 by the 880 junction. I found it "pricy" compared to what we had already seen that day. Scratch that one off my list in future trips.

With the day quickly coming to an end, our stomachs were telling us the hotdog we had a Costco's would not hold us until we got home. Bob Hunt was off work from Miracle Computers and ready to head home for the weekend. So we decided to meet at Original Joe's in downtown San Jose for an Italian dinner. From there it was all down hill so-to-speak. We pulled in around 11:30pm, exhausted, broke, and with Bob's Christmas list all checked off :-)

Next month join us on another Silicon Travel to the Valley of Values.

By Popular demand, here are the address of computer stores highlighted in my last two articles:

Action Computers, 500-F Lawrence Expwy, Sunnyvale, Ca.

Central Computers, 3777 Stevens Creek Blvd.,Santa Clara, Ca. 95051 (408) 248-5888 www.centralcomputer.com

Fry's Electronics, 550 E. Brokaw, San Jose, Ca. (408) 487-1000

Fry's Electronics, 1177 Kern Ave., Sunnyvale, Ca. (408) 733-1770

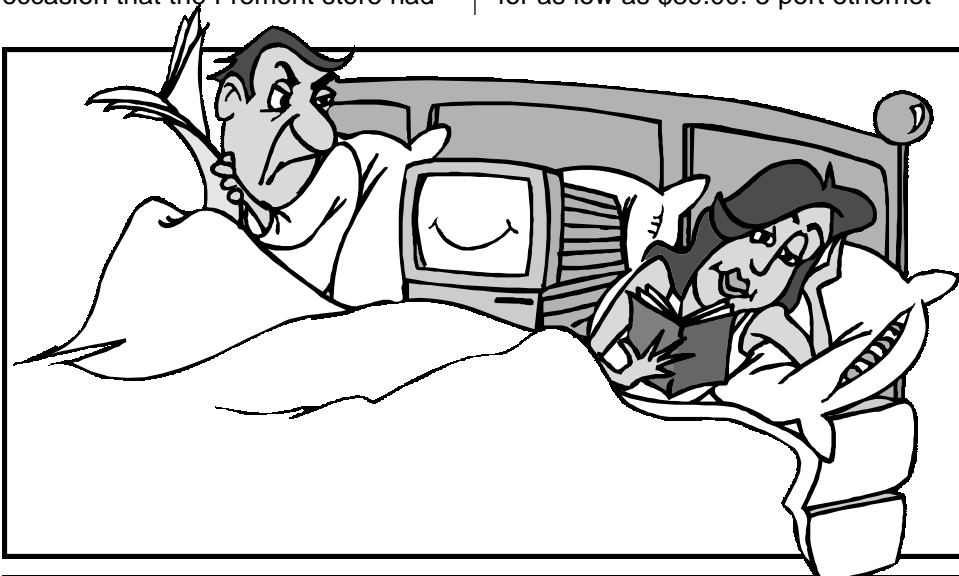**Fry's Electronics**, 440 Mission, Fremont, Ca. (410) 770-3797

Microtimes, 3470 Buskirk Ave., Pleasant Hill, Ca. 94523 (510) 934-3700 www.microtimes.com

NCA, 1202 Kifer Road, Sunnyvale, Ca. (408) 739-9010 www.ncacomputers.com

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. Newsletter only is $16 per year. Full membership entitles you to our monthly newsletter, full use of the public domain software library and discounts at local computer stores.

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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Los Osos, CA. 93402
(805) 756-2164

MEETING TIMES

GENERAL MEETINGS are held the 1st Sunday of every month, unless noted otherwise in the newsletter calendar, at 2:45 pm in the Cal Poly University Biology Department, Fisher Hall 286.

THIS MONTH ONLY
SIGS 1:00-2:30

TAX PACKAGE REVIEWS
Fisher Hall 286

???
Fisher Hall 287, Bob Ward

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TREASURER'S REPORT

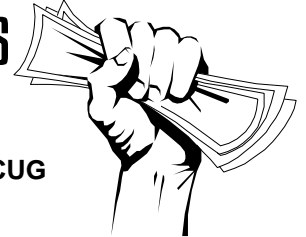**SLO Bytes PCUG**
Expenditures
January, 1997

Beg. Chk. Bal.	+	839.85
Expenses:		
Newsletter 12/96	-	87.14
BBS Phone	-	10.70
Long Dist. Cgs.	-	35.25
Stamps	-	32.00
BBS Replace Modem	-	149.00
Disks	-	53.61
	-	367.70
Deposit 01/08/97	+	515.00
	+	515.00
New Balance	**+**	**987.15**

PROJECTOR FUND—GOAL: $4,000

Opening Balance	+	404.18
Donations (Dec)	+	235.00
	+	639.18

OUR MANY THANKS to those who so generously donated to our projector fund last month. Here's the list: *Prince, Kuncir, Logan, Sandel, Yakal, Voll, Mountain, Hafer, Depue, Gustafson, Sauer.*

FLOPPY DISKS 4-SALE AT THE MEETING

DSDD 360K Formatted Floppy Disks with labels, tabs, & sleeves ..... .55 Each

DSDD 360K Formatted Label Over Floppy Disks .... .45 Each

Generic High Density Formatted Floppy Disks (5.25" X 1.2 Mb) .... .70 Each

Generic 3.5" X 720K Formatted Floppy Disks .... .70 Each

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