



The  
Voice of  
**FCUG**

**July 2003**  
**Volume 24 No. 2**

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**Meeting 7:30 pm 1<sup>st</sup> at**  
**New Canaan Historical**  
**Society**  
**13 Oenoke Ridge Road**

## **BOILERPLATE**

"The Voice of FCUG" is the monthly newsletter of the Fairfield County Computer Users Group, Inc., a registered non-profit organization dedicated to helping members use their PC computers. Non-commercial and non-profit users are free to copy or quote material herein; proper credit and sending a copy of the publication to the Editor would be appreciated.

Members can exchange ideas and opinions through this newsletter, at a monthly meeting held the first Tuesday of most months, at occasional SIG programs, and on a bulletin board reached from the Club Internet Web-site at **www.fcug.org**.

Meetings and SIG groups are open to the public. Membership costs \$30/Yr, prorated. For information and payment contact

**Ed Congleton, Treasurer: 203-966-4854,  
251 Weed Street, New Canaan, CT. 06840**

To submit articles or letters for The Voice send an e-mail message to **thevoice@fcug.org**, hopefully with article attached, or mail paper, or even a diskette in ASCII, Word, or WordPerfect format to:

**The Voice, 280 Main Street, Westport, CT 06880**

Let's **start** those card and letters coming, folks!

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**Program for 1<sup>st</sup> July 2003**

**Call to order . . . . .Fearless Leader – Charles Bryk . . . . . 7:30**

**Novice topic: . . . . Language Translation – Andy Burns. . . . . 7:40**  
It's an interesting idea, but Andy will show that in its present  
form it's more a fun concept than a productive one.

**Q and A: . . . . .Moderator – Pete Fuller . . . . . 8:00**

**Epicurean Break . . . .Chef du Soir – Pete Fuller . . . . . 8:20**  
What's all this double duty, Pete?

**Main topic: . . . . . Browsers – Pete Stair . . . . . 8:30**  
All about surfing with more programs than are generally known.

**(Possibly followed by a raffle)**

**Adjournment . . . . . 10:00**

**LOOKIN' FOR A RIDE?**

If anybody who wants to attend meetings has a transport problem, please mention it and together we will look for a solution. You can also contact Membership Chairman Dick Booth (dick.booth@juno.com or phone 203-847-8047). He can tell you who lives near you, or might pass by on their way.

### Gates at my Alma Mater

by Michael Robertson (CEO and Founder of Lindows.com)

Copied with permission from a May 2003 e-mail to LindowsOS subscribers

This week Bill Gates came to my alma mater to speak. I have to admit that I was less than thrilled to have UCSD roll out the red carpet for him, but it's understandable since he is the richest man in the world and runs the richest company in the world. I started to think about the young people who would be in attendance though, and that they were in diapers when Microsoft started. They've grown up in a Microsoft-only world, that's the only thing they know and few have any perspective about how Microsoft came to dominate the PC business. In the absence of information otherwise, they'll assume that it was through healthy, free enterprise -- which I don't believe is true.

Anyone who tracks the PC business recognizes that Microsoft has clearly been on a propaganda campaign for the last few years to clean up their image. They have been spending big money in an effort to do so on TV, in print and public appearances. They would like the world to think of Microsoft as an innovative company and of Mr. Gates as a visionary and a philanthropist. Mr. Gates is clearly very smart and Microsoft is a vicious competitor, but I'm not so sure the facts indicate they are innovative or visionary. So I've put together a two-page background on Mr. Gates and Microsoft to add some historical perspective to the debate, which I passed out to those in attendance. I hope you find it helpful to form your own conclusions.

#### Fact Sheet On Bill Gates and the Microsoft Corporation

*Q: Can you provide some background on Bill Gates?*

*A:* Bill Gates was born in 1955 and founded the Microsoft Corporation in 1975 with Paul Allen. Mr. Gates was CEO and Chairman of Microsoft until 2000, when he gave up the CEO title to Steve Ballmer. During that time, Microsoft became the largest and richest software company in the world, with \$46 billion in the bank and adding nearly one billion per month to that total. It has made Bill Gates the richest man in the world with an estimated wealth of \$54.44 billion dollars or \$187 for every man, woman and child in the United States.

*Q: Can you provide a brief history of Microsoft?*

*A:* In the early 1980s, IBM asked Microsoft to produce an operating system for their upcoming "personal computer." That product became MS DOS and made billions for Microsoft. Microsoft followed that up with Microsoft Windows and the components of Microsoft Office (Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft PowerPoint).

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*Q: Doesn't that make Microsoft the most innovative PC software company?*

*A:* Virtually every successful Microsoft product was either purchased from another company, or a direct copy of an existing company's successful product. Microsoft's first major success, MS DOS, was purchased from another company and renamed from QDOS. Microsoft Windows was a copy of Apple's innovative Macintosh operating system. Microsoft Word (1983) was a copy of Wordperfect (1982). Microsoft Excel (1985) was a copy of Lotus 1-2-3 (1983). Using revenue from their monopolies, Microsoft purchased PowerPoint (from Forethought), Frontpage (Vermeer), and Visio (Sharewear).

*Q: The history of PC software is made up of companies borrowing ideas from others, so what is wrong with that?*

*A:* To some degree, almost all technology companies build on existing ideas. Microsoft, however, has often engaged in wholesale copying without adding much. With many of the original companies gone or withering, Microsoft is embarking on a calculated plan to rewrite history and position themselves as the original innovator. For example, Microsoft now claims that they are the sole inventor of "windows" and no other company can use that term -- in spite of the fact that Microsoft Windows was such a close copy of the Apple Macintosh that it triggered a lawsuit upon its release (See <http://law.richmond.edu/jolt/v1i1/myers.html>).

*Q: Even if they're not innovative, Microsoft's products are used so widely that they must be making great products, which makes Microsoft a great company, right?*

*A:* Normally, when a company enjoys success it's a sign of a good company serving their customers. While Microsoft employees have surely worked hard, their success has been tainted by decades of illegal actions by Microsoft's management to secure, maintain and extend their monopoly position.

After the success of MS DOS, a competing product emerged called DR DOS, causing MS to lower their prices. Bill Gates wrote in an e-mail, "I believe people underestimate the impact DR-DOS has had on us in terms of pricing" (May 18, 1989). So Gates gave orders to executives at Microsoft to purposely sabotage DR DOS. "Make sure it [DR DOS] has problems running our software in the future." And where it didn't have problems, programmers were instructed to create bogus error messages saying that it did. The tactic worked and DR DOS was forced out of business, leaving the Microsoft monopoly. Years later, MS paid more than \$100 million to settle this case -- long after DR DOS was no longer a threat (See [www.drDOS.com/fullstory /factstat.html](http://www.drDOS.com/fullstory/factstat.html)).

With the MS DOS monopoly as a foundation, Microsoft continued a series of illegal actions designed to extend their monopoly to additional products, including Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office. For example, they stifled competition by threatening and extorting computer manufacturers to enter into licenses agreeing to only carry Microsoft products. By the time the Justice Department caught up

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to them and filed two antitrust cases for a wide range of unfair and anti-competitive actions (1993, 1996), Microsoft had cemented a massive monopoly which gave them hoards of cash to fight any company -- or even the government. Microsoft settled the first case, agreeing to change its illegal marketing practices and was found guilty in the second case (See [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/business/longterm/microsoft/documents.htm](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/business/longterm/microsoft/documents.htm)).

*Q: Isn't this just a case of the losing companies complaining because they couldn't compete?*

*A:* Over the last 20 years, it is difficult to find another company which exhibits such a lengthy pattern of illegal behavior designed to thwart competition. E-mail from a MS executive said it best, "It seems clear that it will be very hard to increase browser share on the merits of IE [Internet Explorer] 4 alone...It will be more important to leverage the OS asset to make people use IE instead of Navigator" (2/24/97). There have even been cases where Microsoft has stolen technology which has put companies out of business, such as San Diego's Stac Electronics. A jury found MS guilty and ordered them to pay \$110 million (See [www.vaxxine.com/lawyers/articles/stac.html](http://www.vaxxine.com/lawyers/articles/stac.html)).

*Q: Where does Microsoft make their money?*

*A:* Microsoft makes money largely from two product lines: operating system (Microsoft Windows XP) and office suite (Microsoft Office). Virtually every other venture that Microsoft has embarked upon has not generated a profit -- including WinCE, Xbox, MSN, WebTV, Sidewalk, MSNBC, etc. (See <http://biz.yahoo.com/e/1/m/msft.html>).

*Q: If most product lines lose money, how can they generate such large profits?*

*A:* Through illegal tactics, Microsoft has been able to secure and keep a monopoly which allows them to charge very high rates for their software. Enabled by the monopoly, Microsoft's profit margins are 5 times greater than the average from top 500 US companies. If Microsoft faced meaningful competition, their profits would be more in line with the rest of corporate America and software would cost 1/5 what it does today (See <http://research.businessweek.com/scoreboard.asp>).

*Q: Aren't all of these actions ancient history? Since Microsoft has been under government scrutiny, haven't we seen improved corporate behavior?*

*A:* Microsoft's massive war chest and unchanged management team means more corporate wrongdoing. This makes it extraordinarily difficult for competition to emerge. Just last week, an e-mail was revealed in which Microsoft executives disclosed a \$180 million fund designed to thwart Linux by giving away Microsoft software and services -- the same successful strategy they used to put Netscape out of business (See [www.iht.com/articles/96369.html](http://www.iht.com/articles/96369.html)). In another example, over the past year, Microsoft has spent millions in legal fees in an attempt to shutdown a San Diego Linux company, Lindows.com (See [www.lindows.com/opposition](http://www.lindows.com/opposition)).

*Q: But doesn't Microsoft do a lot of good?*

*A:* The charitable giving that Microsoft advertises is usually a business tactic, where they give away software in an attempt to gain traction in a market, such as they do with schools. The software costs them just pennies to reproduce, but they advertise the full retail value for tax and PR reasons. Microsoft rarely gives actual cash (See: [www.nytimes.com/2003/05/26/technology/26SOFT.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/26/technology/26SOFT.html)).

*Q: Hasn't Mr. Gates given away billions of dollars?*

*A:* Nearly 20 years after starting Microsoft and only after antitrust issues emerged, Mr. Gates created a foundation and moved billions of dollars of stock, tax free, into this new organization, which he controls as the sole trustee. Mr. Gates' PR folks have convinced major publications to carry as many as 5 stories in 3 days about the multi-billion dollar foundation in an attempt to bolster Mr. Gates' image (See <http://theregister.co.uk/content/4/28039.html>). By repeatedly trumpeting the formation of the foundation, then announcing individual initiatives and finally announcing individual grants, readers are left with the impression that billions of dollars are routinely dispersed, but that is simply not true. In 2001, the Gates Foundation collected more money in interest from their holdings than they dispersed in grants (See: [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)).

More troublesome, Mr. Gates has used monies from the foundation he controls, in concert with Microsoft's corporate goals. In an attempt to sway Cox Communications to use Microsoft software, Microsoft agreed to financially back them in November, 2001. Two months later Mr. Gates purchased \$500 million dollars of Cox stock using \$200 million of funds from his non-profit foundation (See [www.eureka-boston.org/readings/gates\\_foundation.htm](http://www.eureka-boston.org/readings/gates_foundation.htm)). In another example, MS gave hundreds of millions to thwart Linux growth in the Indian government, while also making funds available from the Gates foundation to Indian government initiatives (See <http://news.com.com/2100-1001-965378.html>).

*Q: What can we expect Mr. Gates to talk about?*

*A:* Mr. Gates will likely spend some time speaking about the importance of innovation and open standards. However those are just platitudes, since their actions achieve exactly the opposite. Their monopoly is built upon proprietary formats that they have no intention of publishing (e.g. Microsoft Office file format specifications), because that would allow competition. Furthermore, they have attempted to squash any standard which they believe threatens their stranglehold -- such as MP3, HTML and Java. An internal MS document entitled "Strategic Objective" had this to say about Java: "[Lets] Kill cross-platform Java by growing the polluted Java market."

In spite of the conciliatory comments Mr. Gates conveyed, Microsoft will continue to use their monopoly powers to destroy other

companies - which limits competition and innovation and keeps software prices high. "Do we have a clear plan on what we want Apple to do to undermine Sun?" (Bill Gates e-mail 8/8/97) A series of recent leaked internal memos reveal an ongoing attempt by Microsoft to discredit and derail the latest perceived threat - Linux. (See [www.opensource.org/halloween/](http://www.opensource.org/halloween/))

Microsoft is engaging in a calculated and comprehensive effort to rewrite history. In doing so, they position themselves as an innovative company and Mr. Gates as a visionary and philanthropist. Please research those claims for yourself on the Net, use the sources listed in this document to determine for yourself, the veracity of their claims.

*Lindows.com is a consumer company that is bringing affordable software to computer users.  
Lindows.com, Inc. was started by Michael Robertson, founder and former ACEO of MP3.com.  
LindowsOS and Lindows.com are trademarks of Lindows.com, Inc.  
Linux is a registered trademark of Linus Torvalds.  
Microsoft Windows operating system is a registered trademark or service mark of the Microsoft Corporation.*

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## THE WAY WE WERE – JULY 1983

**The Mailbag** – an actual letter to the Editor! A first!

**The Model 100 reviewed** – George Saladino. Two pages of praise.

**Thirteen Ways** – Thomas Callahan. Four pages of close-written TRS BASIC. The instructions start like this:

“You will play against the computer in a game of both luck and skill. The player to go first will draw at random each game. The one having the most points at the end of the game will be the winner. . . . I will now walk you through some of the different possibilities that [may] occur during the game. I will also show you how the scoring goes.

“First let us roll the dice. . . the roll was a 4 and a 3. Now the computer has the choice of putting a 4 in row 3, or putting a 3 in row 4. Let us put the 3 in row 4. . . You will see a 3 in column 6. However, the 3 is really in column 3 because all of the columns run diagonally. The number at the top of the columns are for a guide only.”

Enough!

**Boggle** – Bruce T. Goldman. Computerized version of the Parker Bros. game.

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Three pages, two of code.

**Super Blinkey Plus** – Sid Gross. Nearly seven pages of code and description.

**Generic Filler Article #2** – David Christovich. (from TCUG, Oct 1982) Short list of various technical definitions

**Stack overflow:** Dolly Parton's swimsuit

**Compiler:** converts BASIC programs into machine code, so that your error messages will come up 10 to 300 times faster.

**Fatal error:** “Honey, forget the vacation! I'm buying a daisywheel and a hard disk instead. OK with you?”

**Documentation:** The instructions that the programmer rites, stapels together and sells with his, uh, you know, program.

**Debugger:** What de customer usually calls de repairman.

**Lazy Writer:** An editor who fills spaces with articles like this one.

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## The Sorry State of Software by George Siegel

*(Copied from the May 2003 issue of the Westchester PC News, the journal of the Westchester PC Users Group, and ultimately, with permission, from the Pasadena IBM Users Group journal)*

For the last six months or so, I've become increasingly irritated by the ever growing amount of junk that comes with every new software release. You know what I'm talking about-registrations, cookies, tray icons, background processes, pop-up screens, newsletters, affiliate programs, ad infinitum.

At first, I thought maybe it was just me; heavy workload and all that. Then, a couple weeks ago, I helped an old friend set up his new PC and I reinstalled all of his 1997-vintage software including PhotoShop, PageMaker, MS-Office, and a half dozen other major apps. I finished in record time. No hassles, no online anything, no sales pitches. It felt great.

Then, over the next few days, I had to deal with the following:

- **A PC that had suddenly slowed to a crawl after the installation of the 164MB printer driver.** (Yes, 164MB of "full printing system" on a \$99 inkjet printer.) I replaced it with the 1.12MB lite version from the vendor's website and all returned to normal.
- **A cheesy checkbook program that analyses your entries, make recommendations on how to get out of debt, and**

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apparently is in a position to offer you a bank loan. George Orwell would be proud.

- **A new computer that had no Internet Explorer and no Internet Connection Wizard.** The two choices were to sign up for -- and launch -- the preloaded AOL or the preloaded DellNet. My cable-connected client didn't want either one. I found Internet Explorer as a hidden file and set up the necessary icons. It was a sad waste of 45 minutes.
- And of course there were the usual viruses, spyware, pop-ups, etc.

In the midst of all this, I realized the cause of my frustration. My role has traditionally been to "add" software and configuration elements to make a computer do that which a client needed. Today's software does too much, (When was the last time you needed to embed a sound file in your Word document?) I now spend my time loading additional software to block or remove features that no one wanted in the first place. This is nonsense and we shouldn't accept it.

So here's where you come in. As user group members, you've probably tested more versions of more apps than most users. Make a list of the most recent, stable versions of all the various applications that don't have all the junk features. The minimum requirement is that they be Y2K compatible and run on 32-bit Windows. Once you have the list finished, you can make it clear to your computing buddies that there is simply no reason to ever pay for newer versions of those programs until-or unless-the junk is removed, and any real needed improvements in functionality are added.

### Here's Where to Start:

MS-Office 97 does everything that most businesses will ever need. No reason to buy anything newer. If your new PC has Word 2002 bundled with it, remove it and load Office 97. You'll never have to spend another dime for an office suite. [Ed Note: I prefer Office 2000 for a number of reasons.]

Quicken 2000 (or thereabouts) It's just a checkbook!! Whatever version you have, keep it. If your new computer has a newer version bundled with it, delete it and load your existing version. It will run faster and work just fine.

Okay, you get the idea, right? It will give you a great opportunity to tick off software companies while enhancing your user group position as champion of the little guys.

### Hey, Protect Yourself, Willyya?

I once briefly discussed the general gullibility of new and untrained Internet Users, and our ability, through experience, to quickly see through most of the scams and ploys on the Web.

Recently, I was at the office of a client with about six employees, all of whom recently received e-mail accounts. In no time at all, they were receiving all sorts of spam. I learned that they had all been engaging in various risky activities including sending each other email greeting cards on a regular basis,

each trying to outdo the other.

I explained that things such as e-cards are a no-no because they exist primarily to gather names for spammers. I also said that no one spends hundreds of thousands of dollars to put up a sophisticated e-card system unless they had a way to recover their costs. And that even on the web, you can't get something for nothing.

Their response? The sites seemed friendly. Indeed, the sites themselves as well as the e-cards have been created with a disarming, warm and fuzzy feel.

Then the client asked me how to make the spam all go away. I had to tell them that it was too late. They had to either live with, and spend time and energy constantly fussing with spam blockers, or change their e-mail addresses.

I find that my admonishments to clients regarding safe practices are either ignored or rebelled against. It's probably that I'm pressed for time and tend to use a very direct approach ("Stop that, you idiot.")

The job of every user group member is to use your demeanor and verbal skills to present the best practices employed by experienced users in a positive, gentle, but compelling way. Teach them what would be roughly the online equivalent of street smarts. The idea is to not only give users the needed information, but also to convince them that doing things correctly is much "cooler" than being duped by every ploy that comes along.

### Hey, I got a virus!!

Want some golden rules to prevent getting a computer virus?

1. Don't trust any attachment; scan each one. (But what else is new...),
2. Update your anti-virus signature files today,.
3. Do a quick, free Internet scan with

[www.commandondemand.com](http://www.commandondemand.com).

Or, if you use MS-Outlook and are tired of playing this silly game, then download and install the Outlook e-mail security patch, by itself or included in one of several other service packs. It blocks all conceivable active attachments and is nicely described at

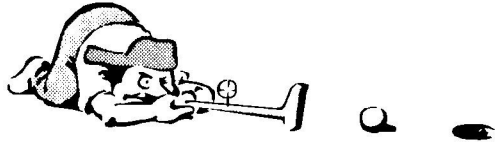
[www.slipstick.com/outlook/eseкуп.htm](http://www.slipstick.com/outlook/eseкуп.htm).

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*Copyright © 2003 by George Siegel. Reproduced with permission. Article reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group. George Siegel is a top-notch computer consultant specializing in networking, a long-time PIBMUG member, and adviser to the last four presidents. Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check his Home Office columns at <http://snurl.com/homeoffice> and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at <http://snurl.com/signup>*

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## **NOSE TO THE GROUND**



May 2003 contained a momentous anniversary which we could probably all have celebrated with a coordinated groan: it was reported by the BBC that 3 May 1978 marked the first time junk e-mail actually passed over the network. Of course, back then, the system was known as Arpanet, and was largely restricted to colleges and government departments. But on that other “day to be marked in infamy”, a marketing executive at Digital Equipment Corporation had a bright idea: he would send a message advertising a DEC Open Day to all U.S. West Coast users.

As is true of so much advertising, the message was poorly written – which generated in itself almost as many complaints through the suffering portions of the Arpanet as the fact that the message had been sent at all. In those innocent far-off days the net was supposed to be non-commercial and for serious discussion only....

It took a bit longer for this practice to become known as “spamming”. On 31 March 1993 Usenet administrator Richard Depew inadvertently posted the same message 200 times to a discussion group. Adopting a term previously used in on-line text games, outraged Usenet users branded the excessive message posting “spam”.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you are not using ZoneAlarm, better be really careful these days. An article in the Register ([www.theregister.co.uk](http://www.theregister.co.uk)) a month or so back talked of a new “Windows Root Kit” virus called Slanret, or IERK, or Backdoor-Ali. Once a hacker has found an entry to your machine through an unprotected port, he can set up one of these backdoor babies to allow him to use your machine remotely without your knowledge. They operate in Windows at the lowest system level, the system's Application Program Interface, or API, level, rather than in “user mode” like most Trojans heretofore. User-mode backdoors are at the same level as your regular applications, but root-kit backdoors tie into the system down where they can intercept the system calls of other programs, like those made to read or write a file. The Register said:

“The root kit is the man-in-the-middle, squatting between the operating system and the programs that rely on it, deciding what those programs can see and do. It uses that position to hide itself. If an application tried to list the contents of a directory containing one of the root kit's files, the malware [sic.] will censor the filename from the list. It'll do the same thing with the system registry and the process list. It will also hide anything else the hacker controlling it wants hidden – MP3s, password lists, a DivX of the last Star Trek movie. As long as it fits on the hard drive, the

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hidden cargo doesn't have to small or unobtrusive to be completely cloaked.'

They go on to say that Slanret comes with a regular backdoor program, a 27KB server called "Krei" that listens on an open port and grants the hacker remote access to the system. Slanret itself is a 7KB cloaking routine that burrow into the system as a device driver, accepting commands from Krei on what files or processes to conceal. So if your hard disk seems to have less available space than you thought it had. . . . Delightful!

\* \* \* \* \*

Think I mentioned to these many moons ago that there was a park bench in London, England which had been wired for Internet access. Anyway, VnuNet ([www.vnunet.com](http://www.vnunet.com)) reported the other day that a Microsoft idea for an Internet-linked toilet – or as they call it in England a "loo" -- dubbed the I-Loo" has been dropped. (Heard it mentioned the other day here as the Internet Port-a-Potty.) Just as well. That's one place I don't really think I want to be when told I have mail waiting. . . -- and later reports indicate that, weird as it sounds, the news was true!

\* \* \* \* \*

Don't know if you are on the mailing list of Michael Robertson, the ex-MP3 whiz who started Lindows.com a while back now. If you are you will have seen this item, so skip to the next. If not, here goes: the relationship between Intel and Micros\*\*t is causing some problems to third parties that ought not to occur. Robertson went to sign up as a participant in an Intel "road show", something Lindows has done before with success. The first reaction was "Great – welcome", but before the event occurred they were barred from appearing. Similarly, although Intel engineers were keen to take part in a recent Linux Desktop show, at the last minute their sales people vetoed it. The excuse was "branding restrictions." No-one seems to know what that means, but with other recent news it seems clear that TBOR's illegal activities have hardly been crimped at all by those famous DoJ cases.

\* \* \* \* \*

Have you acquired the Patriot Grid screensaver? If so, your computer is one of millions scouring medical data to find a drug to combat smallpox. During your idle moments the screensaver phones home to [www.grid.org](http://www.grid.org), recovers data on potential candidate molecules, and tries to match their configuration with nine so-called "binding sites" on two proteins from the smallpox virus.

Screensavers are really an out-of-date idea these days. If you came to the early FCUG meetings twenty years ago you might remember the old ex-airport monitors around the room with airport flight schedules etched onto the screens, but that doesn't happen much these days. Don't think much of screensavers at the Nostril, so don't think we shall be participating.

\* \* \* \* \*

There's yet another virus out. Palyh looks as though it is a message from MS Support, with an attachment you should open – NOT!! The file has the tag .PIF, which is unusual for such items, and should act as a warning. It doesn't seem to be too malicious, but it does set itself up in your Registry and Startup area, then sends itself on by checking all over your files for e-mail addresses. Lot of spam!

As said elsewhere in this issue, do not open any attachment until you have scanned it with a fully-up-to-date virus checker. Of course, even then you may be unlucky. . .

I have a simple rule: I examine the attachment with Notepad or Wordpad. If it looks like an executable, or purports to be a picture but I don't recognize the opening bytes, it's for the Trash bin immediately. If it's not a picture and seems to come from someone I know I may e-mail back to ask if it is genuine first. It's just not worth it to do otherwise. And, for Heaven's sake, use ZoneAlarm and tell it not to let anything phone home – check out the security-level settings. Safe computing, guys, and may all your e-mail be spam-free (hopeless wish these days!)

\* \* \* \* \*

Very interesting opinion article in E-Week ([www.eweek.com](http://www.eweek.com)) the other day, by a gentleman named Aaron Goldberg. The author's thesis was that the signs are there now that Microsoft is on the down-slope. He said No, they are probably not going bankrupt or anything like that, but in four or five years he thinks the natural progression of things will relegate them to being just another software corporation.

If you think of it, there really are some signs. He has three reasons why Windows is in trouble: first, nowadays simplification is the cry, while XP and its planned descendants are fuller and fuller with unnecessary complexity; second, Linux and Open-Source are growing, with many of the young up-and-coming kids using and liking them both (so the new blood is going to the competition); and third, the company is suffering from the same “screw-the-customer” disease that affected IBM in the mid-80s. He cites the recent 'price hikes disguised as license changes', the arbitrary end-of-life announcements for key products and what he calls 'the carnage they've left in the “Windows-compatible” software business.'

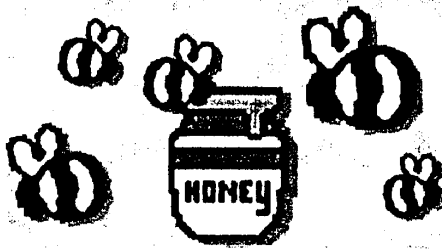
I remember when I joined the software company for which I worked for some twenty-eight years they had a simple philosophy: buy our product and you get infinite maintenance thrown in. That's OK when the market is growing fast; enough new customers are arriving to keep the profits up. But just about the time I joined (in 1970) the market was not saturated, but income was beginning to slide, so the Boss introduced an annual fee for maintenance. You didn't have to pay it, but would then miss out on the new advances, or any help is you hit a 'feature'. The rumbling in the front row of the client audience was not at all pleasant, and it took a number of years and some really phenomenal advances in the efficiency and content of the

program to get people happy again. Then, of course, as the company's resources were aimed at maintaining the current program, the time came when support was dropped for the older versions. But this was a company which, at its peak, probably never had more than forty to fifty employees, and only about three or four supporting the program internals.

And MS has considerably more than fifty people on its books. One wonders what they are all doing? I can understand dropping support for Windows 3.X, but surely W98SE is not so old? I think at the last FCUG census W98 was the most popular OS. And many of the critics reported in the press that they preferred 98SE to ME when it came out. Clearly, TBOR's idea is to drive customers to buy more copies of whatever is the latest product – which is really less and less truly required. Or, at least, would be less and less required if it was not for strong-arming application writers to make sure their new versions will not operate on the older systems. Etc., etc.

Spent too long on this hobby-horse. But it out! See you next time. . .

---ooOoo---



## Winnie the Pooh, Tar Baby and the DMCA

by  
Ogden Douglas

*Copied, with permission, from AMSI*

Heard of Honey pots? When I was a child we used to trap yellowjackets in the summer by suspending a jam jar from a tree limb. A little honey, or jam, was in there, together with an inch of more of water, and a paper cap had a triangular holed pierced in it with the broken pieces pointing inward. The insects could crawl in, following the enticing smell, but could not get back out past the sharp paper points. Ultimately, they drowned in the water.

In Internet computing terms, a Honey pot or Honey net is a machine or network (or even just a program emulating a real network) left running, apparently unprotected, with the object of being breached by hackers so as to learn about the methods they use. As the hacker breaks in and looks around, every keystroke is recorder for later analysis by the owner of the program. Possibly one of the first Honey nets was a project set up by a gentleman named Lance Spitzner three years ago as part of the Honey net Project and

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reported on the BBC website on 31 July 2001. Mr. Spitzner reported that you don't have to advertise your network; hackers looking for likely spots often use surfing programs which just interrogate strings of web addresses until an open one is found. His results showed that his network was interrogated in this manner on busy periods about 14 times a day, and that your new network would probably be probed within three days of your attaching it to the Web.

If you want to set up your own, there are a number of Honeypot programs available, particularly in the Linux community. At [www.project.honeynet.org](http://www.project.honeynet.org) you will find a fuller history and description than there is room for here, as well as downloads and sources for programs, etc.

And now we come to LaBrea. Tom Liston, who wrote this honey-pot program, was highly praised in a number of influential circles. Since there is a famous tar-pit at the old Rancho La Brea site in Los Angeles, slowly and continuously yielding up the skeletons of prehistoric creatures unfortunate enough to have fallen in, I guessed Tom's program was some sort of super honey-pot. And it certainly seems to be. I found the following on [www.eweek.com](http://www.eweek.com):

'LaBrea is a freeware application from developer Tom Liston, and it's the only tool available that actually lets businesses fight back against Nimda and other damaging worms and Trojans. This simple but revolutionary tool sits on unused IP addresses. When a worm attempts to connect, LaBrea sends false response information that traps the worm and prevents it from attacking other systems.'

The e-zine Wired, in September 2001, wrote:

'Network administrators now have a hacking tool that can help them strike back at malicious attackers. "LaBrea" is a free, open-source tool that deters worms and other hack attacks by transforming unused network resources into decoy-computers that appear and act just like normal machines on a network. But when malicious hackers or mindless worms such as Nimda or Code Red attempt to connect with a LaBrea-equipped system, they get sucked into a virtual tarpit that grabs their computer's connection – and doesn't release it. Worms trapped in the tarpit are unable to move along to infect other computers. Stuck hackers first waste their time flailing away at a non-existent machine; they are then forced to shut down their hacking program or computer to escape. Programmers hope LaBrea will be a big culture-changer and think that a sexy little hacking program intended for use only by the good guys could launch a wave of other interesting and unique security tools.'

So much for that, though – go to [www.hackbusters.net](http://www.hackbusters.net) and you will find Tom has given up on it and the program is no longer available for download, at least from that site. Why? Because of an extension to the Federal Digital Millenium Copyright Act brought in by Illinois, where he lives. Legal

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experts say, apparently, that some of the wording concerning interfering with other peoples' computer activities can be interpreted to mean that a program like LaBrea that traps others by sending false information is now illegal.

LaBrea was named the “Most useful application of 2001” by Jim Rapoza of eWeek Labs in December that year, and Tom was named as a finalist for the Second Annual “Innovation in Infrastructure (i3) Awards.” The editors of eWeek and PC Magazine decide the nominees for this award, and Tom was the only individual developer to be honored. Pretty powerful. . . .

But now he has given up. The bureaucracy has defeated him – let's hope it's for the moment only.

The whole thing reminds me of the story in the New York press a few years back now, about the lady who was mugged in the city and defended herself with a can of Mace. She was the one arrested and fined, for carrying a concealed weapon!

Don't you just love our lawmakers and enforcers?

---ooOoo---

## PUT YOUR DIGITAL PICTURES ON TV

by  
Gene Rusin

So you have hundreds of digital pictures on your hard drive and don't want to print them (takes too long & is expensive) and put them in an album (takes too long). Why not make a VCD (Video CD) and show them on your TV as a slide show accompanied by background music and captions? A VCD can theoretically hold 1,980 pictures. This limit is degraded by the addition of audio. My simplistic calculation is that an 80 minute CD, allowing 5 seconds per picture and 2 seconds in between, is 685 pictures. You will need a DVD player hooked to your TV which will accept VCDs and MP3 audio formats. You can buy these players for \$50 and up. For a list of VCD players visit [dvdthelp.com](http://dvdthelp.com).

Some players also take JPEG inputs, but as I discovered with my player, the JPEGs may have to be original, unaltered files. This might not be true of all players. As I change virtually every picture I take (cropping, sharpening, contrast, etc), this was not a viable approach. I therefore concluded that you would need a software program to create your show. Six programs which had trial version downloads were tested in order to learn the process. All of the programs were easy to use with short learning curves. These programs cost between \$20 and \$60. I found one shareware program but it required use of PhotoShop as a prerequisite. My PC was pre-loaded with Roxio, but the upgrade for slide shows (Easy Creator 6) was not available for trial and only 49% of users were positive on the software.

### The Process

#### ► Give your show a name

This is usually called a project file which can be saved and up-dated as you build your show.

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### ►Add your pictures

These are usually added (copied by dragging or clicking) into albums within your show and are selected from those on your hard drive. Whole directories can be batch copied. The albums which you name will be numbered on your TV screen and can be selected for playing with your DVD remote. Most of the programs will let you select the first album and will show all of the pictures on the VCD sequentially.

### ►Edit your pictures (optional)

All of the picture to TV programs had an editing program included, ranging from basic to sophisticated. Rather than learning a new editing program, I recommend that you edit your photos with the program you normally use when you load them onto your hard drive from the camera. You can also give them captions (rename) at that time for use later in your slide show. As an aside, I recommend Compupic by Photodex as a quick and easy editor. If your pictures are pre-edited the only thing you might have to do in your slide show edit is to rotate the few which are oriented incorrectly.

### ►Add captions (optional)

Your captions will appear on the TV with the picture. You can change font sizes, caption position on the picture and font color. A couple of the programs let you use the JPG file name as the caption, which saves typing time. One program lets you position the caption by dragging.

### ►Add background music and sound effects (optional)

You can use FreeRip to create .MP3 files of music tracks from CDs you own. The programs take .MP3 or .WAV files. I downloaded free sound effects such as the sounds of rain, a jet plane, a boat horn and jingle bells from the Internet. There is also a CD containing over 5000 sound effects available from Amazon for \$30. Background music or sound effects are dragged from your hard drive to a picture. The music plays while the slides are being shown. The audio can be stopped or changed for each picture. One program allows voice narration but that did not work well on my PC with my cheapie microphone. The volume was too low. Windows XP has a built-in sound recorder which can create .WAV files for addition to your show.

### ►Change timing and transition effects (optional)

Timing is the length of time each picture will show on the TV. Most of the programs use a 5-second default which can be changed and is variable by picture. Transition effects are shown between slides with a default of 2 seconds. There are things like fade in/out, exploding pictures, slide in from left, right, etc. One program has 170 transition effects. Timing of the effects is variable and they can also be turned off.

## Final Steps

►Preview your show on your PC, fix it as necessary, save the project file and burn your show onto a CD-R or CD-RW. Your CD can now be shown on your TV

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through your DVD player. You can go back later, open your project file, add or delete pictures, music, etc. and burn a new show. One program allows you to burn an executable CD containing code, which allows the show to be played on any PC (not tested). Three of the programs can create an Autorun CD which plays upon insertion into the DVD (not tested).

### Recommendations

I recommend **Ulead Picture Show (\$43)**, or **Pro Show Gold 1.04 by Photodex (\$60)**.

► **Ulead** is less expensive, has a 25% larger preview screen size and has some features such as video clips and voice narration which you may use in the future.

► **Pro Show** has more transition effects, more output formats, continuous play, caption dragging and based on my experience with their Compupic product, will probably have good customer service.

### Software Comparison – Picture to DVD Software

Product name	Ulead DVD Picture Show 2	Pro Show Gold 1.04	Pro Show 1.04	DVD Photo Slideshow 1.2	Dazzle on DVD	Photo2vcd Professional 1 2.54
Manufacturer	Ulead	Photodex	Photodex		Dazzle	
Download price	45	60	30	30	20	40
Boxed Price (Amazon)	43	70	40		15	
Shipping	Free	Free	Free		?	
Rating cnet/zdnet	6.5					
Rating Amazon	3 of 5 4 users	5 of 5 1 user				
My rating of 5	5	5	4	3	2	1
Ease of use	Easy	Easy	Easy	Easy	Fair	Fair
Comments			Only one album	No captions	No captions Can't drag pix	Only pix show on preview
Test limit	15 days <50 pix	15 days	15 days	15 days	10 tries	
Watermark ad on trial version		Yes	Yes			Yes
Add captions	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

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Drag caption	No			n/a	n/a	?
Add music mp3/wav	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Music timing by picture	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Add sound over music	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Built-in music	10*	No	No	No	No	No
Voice-over	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Add Movie clips	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Add GIFs	Yes	Yes	Yes	?	?	?
Variable timing	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Transition Effects	42	170	170	No	No	100
17" monitor preview size (sq.in)	44	35	35	38	16	21
Album capacity/CD (varies with pic count & music)	99	>30	1	99	1	?
Pix/album	>100	>100	?	200	?	?
Continuous play (loop)	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	1 album
Create autorun CDs	No	Yes	Yes	?	?	?
Print CD labels	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Can erase CDRW before burning	No	Yes	Yes			Yes
Output	DVD VCD SVCD	VCD XVCD SVCD XSVCD CVD	VCD XVCD	VCD	VCD	VCD
Shows can run on any PC	No	Yes	Yes			Yes
Photo editor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
More info	Ulead.com	Photodex.com	Photodex.com	dvdphotoslide show.com	Dazzle.com	Photo2vcd.com

\*including free music downloads

### FCUG Meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2003

Showers were coalescing into steadier rain as members arrived for the meeting; at the peak, 47 heads were counted. Dick Booth announced that Paul Carothers, who used to bring his grandson to meetings at the school and who had been sick for some time, had died two days before. A copy of the Hour announcement and some photos were circulated.

Roger Giler told us the Wilton library has equipped itself with T1 wireless Internet access free to users of suitably-equipped laptops. Jim Sullivan reminded us (and Ed, who had forgotten!) that in three weeks the Other Club would be learning about Access from Ed Congleton. Marylou Wilkinson also had good and timely news: after weeks of slogging work, the nominating committee had persuaded the existing board to remain in harness for another year. Charles Bryk finally got in a word to remind people that only members were eligible for the raffle coming up at the end of the meeting. A couple of new attendees introduced themselves as well.

And so to business. For novices, Roger discussed the clipboard and its mates. The clipboard is a block of memory for temporary storage until needed. Turn off your machine and the contents are lost. Text, pictures, spreadsheets, data – anything is eligible to use it. To see the contents, paste them somewhere suitable. There is also (at least on the later Windows system disks) a free Clipboard Viewer, but it has to be sought on the system CD as it is not installed automatically. He showed a path of buttons and menus to choose which was so long it had disappeared long before your reporter could scribble it all down; its started Start/Settings/Control Panel/Add-Remove Programs/Add-Remove Windows Components/Accessories and Utilities/Details/Accessories . . . and then midnight tolled and it turned into a pumpkin. (IN any case, trying this after the event, your reporter could not find the track; maybe it was introduced with XP, or there are errors in this partially-recovered list as well?)

Apart from highlighting material with the mouse, you can use keystroke combinations. Ctrl-A ('All') highlights everything. Ctrl-C ('Copy') copies the highlighted material. Ctrl-V {'V?' Hunh?!) pastes it when the cursor is at the destination point. To delete an item and put it in the clipboard, use Ctrl-X ('eXterminate?'). Or you can press the Menu item Edit/Copy, point to the destination and press Edit/Paste. Material in the clipboard can be pasted more than once. It is only lost when another item is copied – there is room for only one item at a time.

Roger then introduced us to 'Playing with Scraps'> Highlight a piece, hold down the left mouse button and drag it to the Desktop. It remains there with an icon marker until deleted. This way parts (text and pictures, say) can be effectively clipboarded at the same time.

The PrtScn key will also place the entire screen into the clipboard. Alt-PrtScrn will save the active window only. Shift-PrtScrn and Ctrl-PrtScrn have no special uses; they behave like PrtScrn. Again, paste with Ctrl-V.

Office XP, though, has 24 clipboards. Copy/paste copes with the latest only; for the others press Edit/Office Clipboard and choose your poison.

Charles Bryk then introduced Janet Lindstrom, the director of the Historical Society, who was sitting at the back of the room. Everyone thanked her with a round of spontaneous applause.

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Jim Sullivan ran the Q&A. There were many this time, so many your reporter's pen missed a few. Sorry about that. . . .

Q: Defrag keeps restarting unless I run in Safe Mode.

A: If other software is running with Defrag, it senses foreign hard disk movements, and restarts. Antivirus software could do this, for example. Safe Mode turns off other programs.

Q: Scandisk keeps restarting also, and never finishes.

A: On finding a program file error, Scandisk replaces it from the CAB files and starts again., Maybe you have a lot of repairs needed?

Q: A new hard disk in my Thinkpad is recognized as Primary Slave and I cannot FDISK it. The disk has no jumpers to force Master, and BIOS has not boot-up hot key.

A: [At the break the problem was reportedly solved by Lenny Bloom, but it was heard that it recurred again, sadly, a day or so later.]

Q: My Gateway calendar and clock die on shutdown.

A: Your battery is dead. Look for it inside the box; it's like a large watch battery.

Q: Laptop recommendation for freshman college student?

A: Go to the school store. They will have the right stuff.

Q: NAV and SNET DSL between them kill my e-mail recovery.

A: Close NAV, or reset its options to turn off "proxy for mail". By default it reads your mail into Symantec machines, then forwards it to you. SNET DSL is not recognizing the NAV machine as a valid user.

Q: I cannot save pictures modified with Photoshop 7.

A: Are they opened "read-only"? Or try saving to another place.

Q: With Office 2000, Outlook says "network not connected", but I have no network. MS KnowledgeBase said press Tools/Options, but they are grayed out.

A: Make sure your previous mail program is not set as the default.

Q: With W98 in a network, shutdown never completes.

A: Go to MS KnowledgeBase and look for "shutdown problem". A fix is there.

Stan Stanziale provided everybody with food and rink, for which he too was applauded. Then Alan started the Main Topic.

"Scanners for the Masses" was the title, presented, it said, on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1997 and June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2003. "Deja vu all over again", to repeat a famous Yogi-ism. Alan reviewed types of scanners (business card, slide, hand, roller, flat bed and drum) and fielded the questions as he went. As he said, there was a lot of material. Business card scanners come for color or b/w. They are only about 4-6" wide and have limited resolution – usually 300 dots/inch (dpi), 256 colors. Slide scanners are special-purpose, for 35mm slides, and are expensive. Hand scanners, mouse-like, are about 3-6" wide. Roll them over the document in strips and stitch together later. Roller

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scanners can only feed paper sheets – no book copying. Most people use flat-bed scanners. They usually have 8½x11” beds. Some take ADFs (Automatic Document Feeders). [Ed.Note: The one in the Editorial Office also has a top-lamp attachment for transparencies.] Drum scanners are for professionals only, and suitably expensive. Most scanners use CCDs (Charge-couple devices) to record the bytes. A CCD has a series of heads on a bar, one for each dot – the more heads, the higher the resolution possible. Drum scanners use PMTs (Photo-multiplier Tubes) for the same purpose. Many scanners are “twain compatible”; that is “Tool Without An Interesting Name”. Twain is a software driver, an interface, in this case between the scanner and the computer.

On resolution, desktop printers use 300-1200 dpi. Photos for screen display can be 100-150 dpi; top quality photos 2,500 dpi. OCR material is usually 400 dpi. For color storage, one bit per pixel (on and off only) is black and white; 4 bits give 16 tones; 8 bits 256 tones; 16 bits 32K colors; 24 bits 16.7M and 30 or 36 bits give billions. Set your scanner to match your output needs.

What do you get out of a scanner? A bitmap, regardless of whether you are scanning an image or a document. To recover text you need an OCR (Optical Character Recognition) program. Alan demonstrated Omnipage Pro 12, the current version. Working with an image of a 4-point-type document, it made a 99%-correct translation. He also showed MS Digital Image Pro, Ulead PhotoImpact 8 and XnView (sp?) Converter (for changing image formats).

Hand scanners cost less than \$40, rollers less than \$100. Flat-bed scanners are regularly under \$125, but recently Staples offered a 36-bit color 2400 dpi machine for \$15, after rebates! Watch our for specials like that.

The Picker offered Checksoft Express (check writing), Create-a-Card (birthday and other card maker) and a retractable modem cord (6 or 7 feet extended) for travellers. Eighteen names were called before the last item went! In all fairness, they were not all absent; about half-a-down replied “Pass” when their names appeared. . .

The rain was steady in for the next day or two as we sloshed out to our cars a few minutes earlier than usual (in such weather, thankfully!) and crept home.

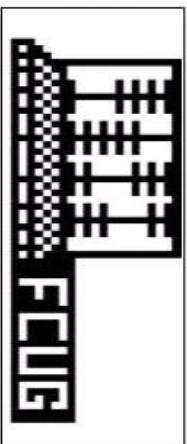
---oOo---

**THE VOICE OF FCUG**

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