The New Orleans Personal Computer Club Newsletter

MotherBoard

President's Monthly Message

I recently polled a number of the stalwart software exponents who, from one month to the next, drop in to visit us at the NOPCC. These peripatetic presenters probably visit between 150 and 200+ computer clubs each year, and a number of them have been on the scene long enough to make meaningful long term assessments of the situation. Moreover, it is in their very best interest to see computer clubs flourish, since, without us user groups, the circuit board circuit would quickly become a straight line -- the unemployment line. So, I posed two questions to representatives of various software companies who support user group demonstrations. I should point out that this survey is hardly scientific, there being no controls whatsoever on the research. Nevertheless, the respondents are, in my opinion, pretty sharp cookies, and I assured them complete anonymity so they could speak with the greatest of candor. I also, for the record, would like to invite any other applications evangelist to send in his or her response if this newsletter should fall into their errant hands. So here goes:

What trends do you see this past year regarding user groups?

1. Increase age of membership.
2. Death of BBS; birth of the URL.
3. Declining membership.
4. Smaller general meeting attendance; higher SIG attendance.
5. More focused users-- specific rather than general interest.

6. Increased stratification of membership, i.e., the rich are getting richer, the poor, poorer.

What noteworthy innovations in activities or approaches do you see being taken by particular user groups to enhance their viability and value to members?

1. Training classes.
2. Co-ordinating meeting nights with other user groups geographically close to attract better vendors.
3. Learning to reach the media to promote the groups furnishing speakers for local radio and tv shows. In other words: learning how to be a media favorite.
4. Working with local vendor reps as well as corporate evangelists.
5. Working with vendors on discounted sales, especially at meetings.
6. Offering Internet access, i.e., becoming an ISP co-op.
7. Eliminating as many variables as possible for meetings, such as date, time and location.
8. Kids SIG's and school involvement.

And here we thought we were terminally unique! Oh, well. Just thought you might want to know what the gypsies think about when they're stuck in some airport and can't even remember what city they're in.

Yours in pixels and packets,

David Freedman

A Gist of the Board Meeting

Tom Ford reports that membership is still rising for the third month in a row and now stands at 236 members. Cash assets for the NOPCC stand slightly above $6500 at month's end.

Joe Chafetz, standing in as interim Membership Chair, proposed that existing members who bring aboard new members who join for the first time should receive a one month extension on their paid up current dues expiration date. The Board of Directors approved the motion unanimously. The membership is encouraged to actively solicit new members to make our club a better place for PC Users.

Microsoft informs us that we will be receiving 5 copies of "Office 2000," when is is released, for our participation in their survey at our last meeting.

Zeke Zimmerman and John Souvestre to begin new SIGs this month.

Ed Jatho

SIGnificant News

Mark your calandars, Tuesday, April 13 at 6:30 p.m., the NOPCC Genealogy SIG will hold its initial meeting to organize itself, elect a leader and discuss future activities.

We are fortunate to have NOPCC member Aubrey LeBlanc as the nucleus around whom this group will form. Aubrey has been active in genealogical affairs for many years in South Louisiana. He is a member of Jefferson Genealogical Society and Terrebonne Genealogical Society and has served as the Society's newsletter editor.

It's important for NOPCC to offer it members a genealogy group, because computers and the Internet have become such a central factor in doing genealogical research and work. We will be meeting in the McCann Electronics Conference Room, where Marc Lewis maintains the NOPCC SIG computer.

Aubrey has let me know that, prior to the April 13 meeting, he will be loading four important genealogical programs onto our SIG computer, so that we can demonstrate and work right on the computer during our meetings. Through the NOPCC Internet SIG, our SIG computer has Internet accounts, so that the Genealogy SIG will be able to go right to the Net during its meetings for its genealogical activities.

This promises to be a popular SIG, so please let us know beforehand of your interest. We will be setting up a Genealogy SIG mailing list through our listserv at the NOPC BBS, so that members can stay abreast of our activities and share information and views with each other. If you have an Internet e-mail address and would like to be on the Genealogy SIG mailing list, please let me know by e-mail addressed to sig@nopc.org and I will add you to the list.

The Small Business Internet SIG held its first meeting on March 9 at 6:30 p.m., and decided henceforth to meet in the McCann Electronics Conference Room on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm, which this month is on April 20. Thanks to John Souvestre of Southern Star for agreeing to lead the new Small Business Internet SIG through its first six months of existence. John says this month's topic will be all about one's own Internet domain name.

Just so there's no confusion, it is the Genealogy SIG that will be meeting on the second Tuesday this month in the McCann Electronics Conference Room, while the Small Business Internet SIG will be meeting on the third Tuesday of every month.

Also keep in mind the New Users SIG, which had a well-received initial meeting conducted by our Club Vice-President, Zeke Zimmerman. If you know anyone who wants to learn about using Windows 95 and Windows 98 computers from the get-go, by all means send them to Zeke's New User SIG Thursday, April 15, and the third Thursday of every month in the McCann Electronics Conference Room.

With the addition of these new groups, the total NOPCC SIGs now number in the double digits. This is the first time in my memory that the number of active Club SIGs have reached so high, and the richness of content so inviting. Hats off to our SIG leaders, who give so much of their time and energy and expertise to make these groups the success they have become!

And thanks to you, our members. Remember that these SIGs are supported through your annual NOPCC membership and that, as members, you can participate in any and all of our SIGs. We encourage you to examine the list of NOPCC Special Interest Groups on the inside back page of this newsletter and be involved in every one of the groups that interest you!

Donald McCune

Wireless 99 Expo

Our desktop computers continue to merge with our telephones. Will all telephones or networked computers have no wires in the near future? That's the conviction of those at the Wireless99 Expo February 8-11 in New Orleans. One display at Nokia quipped, "Dr. Wolfgang Moser of Nuremberg invented wire in 1410. Too bad." Maximum data transmission speeds by cell phone are now 9.6kbs, but they expect to have 64kbs in the near future. There were some other interesting developments, however. The show was huge, taking up the whole convention center. You almost can't see from one end to the other and walking past every booth is an all day affair. I will have to seriously consider an electric scooter in the future. There were three main themes of the show; voice over the internet, voice over the network, and satellite communications. It's now possible to talk to another internet user if you both have netphone software and make an appointment to talk. The quality is not good, but it has been useful for several years for talking to friends in far away places, such as Sri Lanka, for free. It is expected that as we all get high speed ADSL and cable modem internet service, the quality will be up to expectations. Such high speed is available now on company networks. There are new software PBX systems coming on the market now which allow a handset to be attached to your workstation. This could save lots in wiring and telephone expenses. The third theme, telephones which talk directly through a satellite let you have normal conversations from any spot on earth. Some see the day when all calls will route directly to satellites.

There must have been a thousand different cellular phones on display with all colors, sizes, and features. A cornucopia of data products were also there: pagers, phones with pagers and

THE OLD RAMBLER

How much are the "things" in your life worth? Are these things, respectively worth more at some times than at others?

Only the other day, we discarded a drapery from our den patio door that had grown old and faded, replacing it with the more modern hanging slats that are so much in vogue now. As I allowed the still-working rod on which the old drapery hung to lie outside for a few days before carting it to the garbage pickup area I reflected upon a time long ago in my childhood in one of the huge upstairs front rooms of the Drummers Hotel my paternal grandfather purchased to house his large family. After the death of these grandparents we had moved into this old hotel and that large empty room cried out to be used for an auditorium and stage. Alas, rigging a curtain that, like the one in the school auditorium, could be pulled open and closed was a problem. We did the best we could with cord, old sheets and the like, but what marvels we could have accomplished with that old curtain rod, long enough to span glass patio doors!! And here I was, casually tossing it on the garbage heap. The old curtain itself with its colored flowers would have been such an elegant stage for our childish one-act plays.

My thoughts turned once more to this reverie from the long past as Langston, our substitute auctioneer for the March meeting offered what appeared to be a virtually new dedicated word processor of the type that in the mid 1970s was being purchased at handsome prices to replace the sleek, moveable ball typewriters of the previous decade. That word processor, expected to bring in at least $25, received no bids whatsoever!! What ARE "things" worth - and when? The Old Rambler was sorely tempted. He LIKES bargains - even those for which he has little or no use.

The Old Rambler, having waited until everybody else has swept into the 400 to 450 Mhz range, has now upgraded to a 300 Mhz Pentium 2 and he has a word for the hardware and software techs. Now look, fellows and girls, can't we put a plug in this competition called "more juice, whoopee, bigger programs???" Just a thought. Yeah, (grin) that's ALL it is, too.

We hesitate to mention one Special Interest Group without citing all of them so we will simply take our hats off to ALL of the leaders of these groups that you can find listed herein. All of these members are special in that they dedicate their busy time to serving fellow members wanting to reach higher levels of efficiency in some aspect of computing. Hearty thanks to all of you SIG leaders, old and new.

You had to have been there. At the March meeting, I mean. Roger L. Creighton, Editor/Writer revealed "how to" for several programs as well as for Windows and the comments on his presentation were very favorable.   He can be reached at pcprimer@rollanet.org (web site www.rollanet.org/~pcprimer).

The OR had a pleasant talk with one of our newest members, Thank Pham. He joined us in December of last year and is a member, also, of the Visual BASIC SIG as well as of the CLG (Learner) SIG. Thank is a programmer for API, a local manufacturing firm, having come to the United States from Vietnam in 1975. He had attended a Microsoft meeting where somebody advised him of the existence of NOPCC. Glad to have you on our roll. Thanks and much success in your computer life both at work and at home.
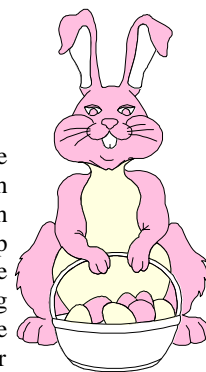
We want to rave a bit about the clever new means of identifying members with which Don Hermann favored us the March meeting. When we last issued membership identification tags they looked great but the OR, like many others, had a problem setting them up just the right way when clipped to the front pocket. These that Don put together for us strike the OR as unusually practical and simple. The identity card is large and easily readable and is attached to a string on each side which one wears around the neck like a necklace so that one forgets it's there and yet its easily removed at the end of the meeting. Now let's see if the OR can think to retrieve it from his desk drawer just before leaving for the meeting next time. It's truly a better mousetrap, Don!!

Well, if Jeff Newman were Partition Magic he'd need to have a patch applied! On the day of the March meeting if you noted, Jeff appeared even more distinguished, but keeping a low profile. It was because on that day he topped the hill for the big four O! That's usually the signal to schedule a session with the optometrist or the opthalmologist but Jeff allows as how he's been wearing glasses for a long time. He's relatively nonchalant about reaching this milepost, but this is normal for Jeff in meeting crises in his life, we think. The OR thinks he was a little past this point when he came across Jung's observation that from this point on the sun is going down. It's a long way from there to 78, though, Jeff, and for the second half, we probably value the friends we make along the way and much else about life much more than in the first forty. Of course there will probably come that inevitable time when some of our "get up and go has got up and went," but we hope that time for you will be FAR in the distance. We're glad you're in our midst and let this be a means of wishing a Happy Birthday, also, to others who blow out candles at about this time. Download that patch if you have Partition Magic and if you are 40 you can become 4.01!!

As for the OR and his speedier, upgraded computer. He's hearing "Welcome, You've Got Mail" a LOT earlier now. "Them Pentiums is where it's at Man!!!"

Would you believe that the project begun by August Comte, founder of positivism, to give us a ready-made calendar, replete with secular saints, died a natural death (the calendar, not Comte who didn't live THAT long) about 1937, the year the OR graduated from high school? Check out the "Dead Sociologists" site on the web. You can even download Thorstein Vebelen's masterpiece, _Theory of the Leisure Class_ for free and it's all text - you don't have to de-html it before reading. He's the one who gave us the term "conspicuous consumption" to throw around.

BTW, we did a telephone check with Ray Jones who gave so many of us much-appreciated tips on the Internet in his column, "The Internet Onramp." He's still computing away and is now, of course, a published author. Ray, you may or may not know, came up with the title "Old Rambler" for yours truly. All the very best, Ray, to you and Jane.

Frank M asingill

Virus Alert – Melissa Macro Worm Threat Issued By FBI/NIPC

The following is a policy alert from the Association of Online Professionals, the leading trade association for the Internet and online industries. Information regarding AOP may be found at http://www.aop.org. Please give this Alert the widest possible distribution.

"The National Infrastructure Protection Center" (NIPC) was notified on March 26, 1999, of the proliferation of a computer virus known as the "Melissa Macro Virus" (MMV).

There have been widespread reports of propagation of this virus into commercial, government and military e-mail gateways and systems. The MMV has the capability of causing a denial of service and degraded computer network performance, which could result in system administrators' having to shut-down affected networks and e-mail servers. The NIPC has received reports of significant network degradation and e-mail outages at major corporations and Internet Service Providers. The NIPC has received no reports of the virus causing any alteration of or damage to any data contained in the infected systems.

The MMV exploits a vulnerability that exists in the Microsoft computer software applications Word 97 and Word 2000. The virus is transmitted via an attachment to innocuous e-mail messages transmitted to unsuspecting computer users via the Internet and related networks. The virus is activated when a user opens the infected document. A command is immediately executed that lowers the security settings in the Microsoft Word 97 or Word 2000 application to permit all macro files to run and any newly created Word documents to be infected. The virus spreads by transmitting e-mail messages containing the infected documents to addresses contained in the infected user's e-mail address book. Corrective measures have been developed to guard against infection by the "Melissa Macro Virus" at the network and user level.

In addition, leading virus detection utilities (including Symantec {http://www.symantec.com}, McAfee {http://www.mcafee.com}, and Trend Micro {http://www. antivirus.com}), when updated properly after March 26, 1999, reportedly detect and clean this type of macro virus.

NIPC Director, Michael A. Vatis, states "e-mail users have the ability to significantly change the outcome of this incident. I urge e-mail users to exercise caution when reading their e-mail for the next few days and to bring unusual messages to the attention of their system administrator. The transmission of a virus can be a criminal matter, and the FBI is investigating."

The MMV has significant potential to cause more-widespread harm than it has to date. In an effort to reduce the impact of the MMV on computer networks, users can take several actions: As the virus requires the user to open an infected document to continue the propagation, users should carefully check their e-mail boxes for any message containing as part of the subject:

"Important Message From"

If such a message is found, please contact your system administrator or other responsible party for assistance. Users and system administrators alike should consult reputable information sources for more assistance on how to detect and minimize the impact of the MMV. Information on detection and mitigation strategies can be obtained online from CERT (the Computer Emergency Response Team at Carnegie Mellon University) at http://www.cert.org.

The NIPC is a multi-agency organization whose mission is both a national security and law enforcement effort to detect, deter, assess, warn of, respond to, and investigate computer intrusions and other unlawful acts that threaten or target our Nation's critical infrastructures. Located in the FBI's headquarters building in Washington, D. C., the NIPC brings together representatives from the FBI, other U.S. government agencies, state and local governments, and the private sector in a partnership to protect our Nation's critical infrastructures. More information on the NIPC is available on the World Wide Web at http://www. nipc.gov.

John Souvestre
Southern Star BBS & ISP, *www.sstar.com*

Reviews?

New User SIG Kickoff - A Success !!!

"WOW" what a start. The new user SIG kicked off this month with a bang. We had 25 information hungry members looking to satisfy a healthy appetite. We started off with a forty-minute video about the desktop and finished up with a hands on session in which we demonstrated answers to all questions. I had a ball and I think everyone in attendance enjoyed himself or herself. The upcoming session will in-clude working with files and folders, installing and uninstalling software, and Windows File Explorer.

Special thanks to Jerry McCann for the use of the meeting room and associated equipment and to Ray Paternostro for his knowledgeable assistance and moral support. Next meeting will be April 15 at 6:45 p.m. at McCann's See you there.

Zeke Zimmerman

Continued from Pg. 2

pda's, and many accessories. Motorola showed the new Thumb Tac telephone, billed as "the world's smallest" and the Rex PDA attached to the small StarTac cell phone. These are a full-functioned PC card size PDA, but do not have the ability to add or change data except through your computer. It dials a chosen phone number automatically.

Iridium displayed their satellite telephones as 'world ready'. Some models operate on the cellular system in both the U.S. and the rest of the world when within those boundaries and through the satellites when not. They cost about $2000 and satellite talk time is about $4 per minute, but this cost is expected to drop rapidly. They claim to have signed 5000 customers since beginning service last November.

There was also a 'battle of the technologies' at the show. Cell phones are available in analog or digital format and there are several messaging formats. It looks like all cell phones will be digital because users want the features that can be added on. If the cellular transmission cost keeps drop-ping, cell phones may be use for data transmission and networking as well as voice.

Another new technology on the market is wireless networking. Workstations and file servers can connect up to 15 miles at 4mbs and mobile PC's can connect at 600 feet to a base station. The low cost makes this a convenient replacement for wired networks in office buildings and between buildings. However, the flexibility to change locations will never replace the lower cost of wire and the wired mindset.

I expected to see the GPS vendors, such as Garmin, display cell phones with location indicated. This would be very useful for emergencies. They were there, but said that cell phone companies' towers could triangulate a call so that a call to 911 would show the location. This is being tested in several sites, but the phone must be in range of two cellular towers. Meanwhile, some companies are building GPS into the phone as a feature for delivery drivers.

Barrett Leibe

NEW LABOR LAWS

Do you ever feel overworked, over-regulated, under-leisured and under benefited? Take heart, this notice was found in the ruins of a London office building. It was dated 1852:

1. This firm has reduced the hours of work, and the clerical staff will now only have to be present between the hours of 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. weekdays.

2. Clothing must be of sober nature. The clerical staff will not disport themselves in raiment of bright colors, nor will they wear hose unless in good repair.

3. Overshoes and topcoats may not be worn in the office, but neck scarves and headwear may be worn in inclement weather.

4. A stove is provided for the benefit of the clerical staff. Coal and wood must be kept in the locker. It is recommended that each member of the clerical staff bring four pounds of coal each day during the cold weather.

5. No member of the clerical staff may leave the room without permission from the supervisor.

6. No talking is allowed during business hours.

7. The craving for tobacco, wine, or spirits is a human weakness, and as such is forbidden to all members of the clerical staff.

8. Now that the hours of business have been drastically reduced, the partaking of food is allowed between 11:30 and noon, but work will not on any account cease!!!.

9. Members of the clerical staff will provide their own pens. A new sharpener is available on application to the supervisor.

10. The supervisor will nominate a senior clerk to be responsible for the cleanliness of the main office and the supervisor's private office. All boys and juniors will report to him 40 minutes before prayers and will remain after closing hours for similar work. Brushes, brooms, scrubbers, and soap are provided by the owners.

11. The owners recognize the generosity of the new labor laws, but will expect a great rise in output of work to compensate for these near utopian conditions.

NOBullNO@aol.com

Developer SIGs News

Windows Application Developers SIG (WADSIG)

We are trying to get the WADSIG back on track. If you have an interest in Windows software development, you may wish to attend a meeting of the WADSIG. We discuss all topics available to the Windows Developer from programming languages to databases and beyond. Some future topics will include Windows Scripting Host, Developing for Office 2000, and other Developer topics.

Visual Basic Learners Group (VBLG)

The VBLG meets and watches some VB videos to help users learn about VB. We then discuss the videos and try to have a Q&A session with live demonstrations. The next few meetings we will learn about VB5 Multi-tier development, ActiveX Controls, Active Documents and ActiveX Automation. After we cover these topics we will be moving into learning VB6.

Visual C++ Learners Group (CLG)

The CLG meets and watches a Visual C++ video then we muddle through some examples and ask even more questions than the VB learners. The C++ group is a little advanced for most developers, but everyone is welcome. In future meetings the CLG will be covering Class creation, Creating Dialogs, and SDI.

Online Maillist SIGs

Year2000 (Y2K)

This maillist is set up to alert developers and users of some of the potential problems creeping up. We would like more participation. Right now we just post tidbits found floating around the web.

Windows 2000 (WIN2000)

This is for those people who will be migrating from Windows 98 NT4 to the new OS from Microsoft. You can post your questions and concerns here.

Assembly Language (ASM)

We want to get this SIG going. We have a few tutorials we want to place online so that members interested in getting down to the bytes of programming can do so.

Microsoft Certified Solution Developer (MCSD)

Those developers interested in becoming a MCSD should join this EMail list. We haven't started a serious outline, but we want to create a forum for discussing topics related to the MCSD certification.

Did you know that NOPCC maillist sigs are open; any member of the NOPCC can subscribe. Subscribe by sending an EMail to **listserv @nopc.org** and include in the body of the message the word SUBSCRIBE followed by the Online SIG abbreviation above in parenthesis. The maillists allow members to post questions and coments by sending emails to the SIG abbreviation; ie., y2k@nopc. org. We also use the lists to keep members up to date on when the next meeting will be held, and what topics will be presented.

NOPC Web Calendar

SIG Members should visit the NOPCC Web Calendar for the latest NOPCC events and SIG meeting dates, times and locations at http://www.nopc.org

Manuel Dennis III

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	David Freedman	president@nopc.org	david@wwoz.com	482-7070
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V Basic Learn Grp	Manuel Dennis III	vblg@nopc.org	md3@gs.verio.net	835-7656
Windows Apps Dev	Manuel Dennis III	wad@nopc.org	md3@gs.verio.net	835-7656

Other Important Numbers / Addresses

Club Hotline	Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours	454-6166
NOPCC BBS	Bulletin Board System for members. The original way to PC communicate.	486-7261
NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	***www.nopc.org***

This Easter, let us not forget that thousands of our young men and women are again in harm's way overseas fighting for our country and our way of life. Remember them in your prayers and ask that they may come home safely soon.   *Editor*

April 1999

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NOPCC is a private non-profit organization Chartered under the State of Louisiana. Its purpose is to provide an open forum for discussion and education of the membership in the use and application of PCs and peripheral equipment and software. Annual Dues Schedule: Regular Member, $40/yr.; Family Membership, $60/yr.; and Students (under 21) , $20/yr.

New Orleans Personal Computer Club
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