

ACPCUG

January 2000



TWO YEARS STRAIGHT!

Your ACPCUG has again been

chosen for the prestigious **JERRY Award** for meritorious service to the community. Includes a \$500 prize. *See page 3 for full story!*

January 3, 2000

Stark Technical College

North Canton, Ohio

6 PM: First Returns on Y2K Problems and

Gliches – Everyone; 6:30 Q&A

7 PM: Review of Star Office (freebie)

by Frank Ramsey

From the Dealsguy, by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer User Group

A consultant friend suggested that comments about chipsets, etc., might not be appropriate in the Deals column. He feels they're a bit above the average reader's head, and that's not what the Deals column should be about. I'm not so sure about all that but this month I'll only do a follow-up on the chipsets and USB as promised previously. My intention was to advise you of things to ask when purchasing a computer, not to make you a nerd. What do you think?

The Intel 820 chipset is finally shipping. Also, the USB development team says version 2.0 will be faster than originally expected. In fact, it may be as fast as FireWire (IEEE1394). As food for thought though, USB components use more power than the internal components, so I hope you have an adequate power supply if you use USB peripherals. There could possibly be a trend in some motherboards to only offer one plug-in slot (a PCI) and depend more on USB.

Let's touch on tech support. All my soundboards, up 'til now, have been Sound Blaster (Creative Labs) because each was something I found a deal on at Comdex. Recently, I had a technical question and tried calling Creative Lab's tech support. After many phone-menus, I finally received a recording that they no longer offer "voice" tech support. The recording said you must go to support on their Web site, or use the fax-back system. If they don't want to hear my voice, they won't see my money any more. Problems with a sound system aren't easy for the layman to troubleshoot and there's plenty of other "fish in the sea" to try.

Here's the opposite. I bought Ulead Systems' "Cool 3D" and have never waited long to talk to their tech support. Questions were answered quickly and accurately. I like Cool 3D and I'll tell my friends about Ulead's good service.

The Adobe PageMill I'm using to construct my Web site only gives you ONE tech support call. I received it free at a FACUG event, so no argument there, but what if I had bought it? Wouldn't that be a bummer!

We decided too late to attend Comdex and were unable to find a flight we could afford. My heart was there though and I missed seeing all my friends. It cost me in phone calls this month to compile the column because Comdex is the place to find deals. When telephoning, nobody ever seems to be at his or her desk, so you get voice-mail. Voice-mail doesn't work because people could be anywhere, even at the mall. Returned calls are few and far between. If they do, it's rarely on the same day, likely a week or so, and I have probably just stepped out for a few minutes. Calling back right away usually gets you voice-mail again. Talk about frustration!

Still good is the "Windows 98 in a Nutshell" book by O'Reilly Publishers.

Call 1-800-998-9938 and give the CS rep the code "DSUG" for your discount.

Also the SharpEyed Music Reader to convert sheet music to MIDI files.

Contact BMT Micro at

<<https://secure.bmtmicro.com/ECommerce-OnSite/48101.html>> to purchase the registration key for \$35.00. Don't forget the ACS Innovations new "Ezfone Pro" add-in board for phone conversations over the Internet. What a great product. Call CT & R Inc. at 1-408-566-0900 (fax 1-408-566-0909) and talk to Michael Ho to order at 20% off list.

The Web4Life offer is over, but you might give Joy Porter a call

anyway at 1-888-267-1122 to see if she would extend it for you. A one-time cost is a good deal. Joy is great to work with and may still do it. Let's get started, I even have a Mac item further down.

Big Home Page For Small Bucks

When Ken Formoyle was here for his DTP workshop, I noticed "Web Express" by MicroVision (one of the raffle prizes) and it caught my eye. It is inexpensive, but certainly gets the job done in an impressive manner. In fact, the user's manual is 212 pages, and almost a course in building your Web site. Considered a bargain by John Dvorak (on the box).

Some of the key features are: professionally designed templates, easy graphics conversion, fast image display, Web site manager (even remembers what needs to be changed on your web site when uploading), frame wizard, WYSIWYG frame editing, form wizard, setup wizard, cascading style sheets, link checking, image map editor, edit text on images, image editor launcher, sound files, video clips, browser plug-ins, marquees and ActiveX objects. All that plus hundreds of background textures, buttons, clipart, style sheets, CGI scripts and much more.

Wow, my grammar checker went nuts with that paragraph, but Web Express offers a great bargain. I lack room for more description so check their Web site <www.mvd.com> for the whole story. Now for the best part, your special deal is only \$59.00 for this package, one of my better bargains.

It's my opinion that if you've never built a Web site before, it won't build itself that easily, but Web Express and its large manual and ready-made "Web site themes" (with instructions right on the page) sure helps get you going. Even tutors you in some HTML. I liked the look of some of the professionally designed Web site themes for use as templates. I'm putting one together with Web Express for you to see but haven't received my other Web space at this writing for a URL. My readers can get MicroVision's "WebExpress" for just \$59.95 by calling 800-998-4555 or 1-760-438-7781 or via e-mail at <sales@mvd.com>. To get this discount, mention your User Group. Shipping is \$5.00 US and \$7.50 Canadian.

Did You Say 3D? No I Said 4D!

Here is a great toy (adults have toys, don't they) from a company creating professional packages. Just the thing for entry level integrated 3D modeling and raytracing (whatever that is) for Windows 9x/NT and Macintosh. Maxon's "Cinema 4D GO" is the entry level of their three packages (the one you and I can afford). The "GO" edition provides the handling, stability and speed of the SE and XL editions, but at a fractional cost. The "GO" edition arms the committed home user, student, multimedia author or Internet designer with tools to create and animate eye-catching 3D graphics quickly and effectively.

Besides 3D logos or intergalactic warfare, "GO" can output pictures and animation in full broadcast quality with 4x4 oversampling and fields). For example, the most demanding 3D titles for video films can be created using the internal composing functionality, or by using the alpha channels. The "Instant Space" CD-ROM is included, which is a modular construction system that generates countless varieties of space ships.

There's an unlimited number of objects, cameras, light sources etc., and up to one billion points per object, besides an unlimited number of textures per project. There's features galore, so check their Web site <www.maxoncomputer.com> to learn more about this high quality software, or call them for a fact sheet and demo-disk. Retail on "Cinema 4D GO" is \$195.00, but your user group price is \$149.00. Call toll free 1-877-226-4628 in US (1-805-494-0718 in Canada) to order, and be sure to mention you read it in the Dealsguy column. Shipping is \$8.00 US

(Continued on page 3)

The Deals Guy, Bob Click

(Continued from page 2)

and \$20.00 Canadian. They will send demo disks to your reviews chairman for your members.

Additionally, Paul said that if you want their upper level packages, you can buy the SE version (retail \$995) for only \$495.00 and the XL version (retail \$1995) for only \$695.00 right now. I have not had the opportunity to try any of this software, but the brochure was in the Corel User Group mailing and it looked very good to me. Wonder if I could animate myself to win the lottery. Nah, I think I can scratch that idea.

How About a PIM That's More Than a PIM?

"Communicate Pro" by "01 Communique Laboratory, Inc." is head and shoulders above what you've seen. They told me it would take at least four separate products to do what Communicate Pro does. It transforms your PC into a powerful communications center. It organizes your phone, fax, pager, Internet access, e-mail and voice-mail. By January they hope to have incorporated video conferencing into this product.

Save money with the Internet Phone and Fax-on-Demand. You save time with Pager Dispatching, contact management, and the CallAnswer Wizard. Greet callers with personalized messages, reduce paperwork and save time by centralizing all your communications under one easy-to-use interface. There's too much to include here. Visit the Web site to find out more, and to download a free version. Be aware that the file size is 13 megs. Their Web site is <www.01com.com>.

If you like it, you can purchase the unlocking key on the Web site for \$69.00 (normally \$99.00). No phone ordering right now, but you can call 1-800-668-2185 or 1-905-795-2888 x207 for more information. The sheet I looked at was chuck full of feature lists alone.

*I said I was slow in doing a web site with Web Express. That's because I had one almost finished with Adobe PageMill when I found Web Express and have been putting some last minute changes on it suggested by friends. My site is at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>. You'll find several months of past Deals columns there, except for the last three months that are on a private URL known only by my editors so they can have them first.

That's about it for January. Meet me here next month for more deals. This column is written to make user group members aware of special pricing I have arranged and my comments should not be construed to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products. Bob (The Cheap-skate) Click <dealsguy@mindspring.com>.

Association of PC Users Groups Recognizes Your ACPCUG. Two Years Running! Congratulations!

The second annual Jerry Awards for User Group Community Service Projects were announced at the Annual User Group Summit meeting at Fall Comdex 1999. These awards are named for APCUG founder Jerry Schneider whose commitment to encouraging and facilitating user group involvement in the community has led to numerous outstanding outreach programs. Many APCUG groups are involved in community service projects of all sizes and scope. The purpose of the Jerry Awards is to recognize and reward these projects and to encourage new and expanded involvement. These projects exemplify how the mottoes of "user helping users" and "user groups helping user groups" have evolved into "user groups helping the community."

Over 20 groups submitted their projects this year. Through the generosity of charter sponsors Oracle Corporation, Microsoft, and Adobe Systems and new sponsor MGI we were able to select 9 projects to receive a 1999 Jerry Award. These groups will receive an award certificate along with a check for \$500 to be used to further their worthy projects. Hopefully, this information will inspire your group into establishing or enhancing a local project. All of the project entries were great examples of what user groups can do to help empower people with technology. This made the judging process difficult. Next year we will have categories set up for the awards including, I expect, an overall grand prize award. One of the categories will be for new projects. Some of the winners this year also received a Jerry Award last year but as Dr. Yvette Marrin of National Cristina Foundation stated, "They deserve to repeat."

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Akron Canton PC Users Group - OH

Richard G. Lubinski lubinski@bright.net

The ACPCUG has expanded its Community Outreach projects during 1999. We have found a new audience for PC education in senior citizens. A recent interview in the Akron Beacon Journal by our Past President, Richard G. Lubinski, was published in a special Mature Life newspaper supplement. The newspaper reported was surprised to learn about computer User Groups, APCUG and the fact that lots of Sr. citizens are interested in computer, the internet, E-mail, etc. This newspaper supplement was published the day before the Sr. Citizen Expo at the J.S. Knight Convention Center and additional copies were passed out at the Expo. The article produced over 90 telephone inquiries about ACPCUG membership and its offer of free computer classes for Sr. Citizens. Since the article several classes were held and more are planned.

Our Computer Lab at Akron Metropolitan Housing (AMHA) is still up and running. We are now in phase two in which we are getting the residents to 'take ownership' of the educational function and the lab. ACPCUG still provides the classes and most of the manpower for the Computer Lab but we are now getting the residents to help make it 'their' Computer Lab. The Computer Lab was outfitted with ten(10) 486 PC, 2 laser printers plus tables and chairs. Our next move is to replace the 486 machines with some donated Pentium 90 PC in order to run Windows 95, etc. We are also looking into getting one or more Internet connections for the room and if we are lucky a donated cable modem service via Time Warner's RoadRunner ISP service.

Our connection to R.S.V.P. of Summit County has exposed us to its 900 senior citizen volunteers and several other senior citizen groups in the community. Some of these people are joining our free computer classes and they expect several additional classes will be needed for the INTRO. to computers series that we have been teaching.

We are continuing our computer re-cycling efforts but have learned from the past 24 months on what to do and not do. The major lesson learned was to balance out receipt of used, newer, PCs with our manpower to promptly re-cycle and deliver them. A prior ACPCUG program became overwhelmed by hundred of donated PC many of which were too old and too slow to be useful with modern software applications.

The use of membership dues alone to support the expenses of these community outreach projects also can as a bit of a surprise. Over the past 18 to 24 month 50% of the assets of ACPCUG have been spent getting these programs up and running. While the membership approved of these ex-

penses, it has put some pressure on other aspects of the User Group and made us watch our pennies!. As a IRS approved tax exempt 501(C)(3) organization we hope to find additional sources of funds to support our community outreach projects run by 100% volunteer efforts.

Richard G. Lubinski
Past President, ACPCUG
P.O. Box 2151

Presidential Ramblings

By Frank Ramsey, Pres. ACPCUG

It's a new year. No, it's a new millennium. And no, I will not get into a discussion as to when does the new millennium actually start. But I do have some important topics to discuss.

Your PC officers for the year 2000 are: President - Frank Ramsey, Vice President - John Pauer, Treasurer - Rich Lubinski, Secretary - Walt Ruthenburg, Review Chairperson - Gerry Schaeffer, Newsletter Editor - Art McRowe, Meeting Topic Chairperson - Murray Davis and Webmaster - John Pauer.

Noticeably absent from this list is Rick Beech. Rick has served various positions in your club. President and Review Chairperson to name only a few. Rick has decided to take a well-deserved rest. His fellow board members will miss him. We're very glad that Rick has agreed not to totally drop out of site. Thanks for all your efforts over the years Rick. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

Next on our agenda is the Charlotte Street School in North Canton. Some of you remember my article of this summer detailing the recycling center at the Charlotte Street School. We're drawing ACPCUG's involvement to a close in the recycling efforts at the Charlotte Street School. Equipment donated to ACPCUG has either been donated to appropriate individuals and organizations or sold. The sale of assets from the recycling efforts at Charlotte Street School netted a slight profit for ACPCUG.

Sigs will continue to be held at the Charlotte Street School. This will be ACPCUG's only involvement with this facility.

In recognition of our efforts at education at the AMHA center in Saperstien Tower in Akron and recycling donated computers to needy individuals ACPCUG is the recipient of the a Jerry Award from the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG). This is the second year in a row that we've run a Jerry Award.

The club must recognize the efforts of Rich Lubinsky and Murray Davis. They spearheaded the creation of the training room at AMHA, got donated equipment setup and have developed a number of courses for senior citizens that serve as an introduction to computers. Thanks to Rich and Murray. It's thru your efforts that ACPCUG received the national Jerry Award.

Frank

Ken's Korner by Ken Fermoyle

Computing Faces Major Changes

As We Move Into the Year 2000

Now that "Y2K" is behind us and we are actually into the year 2000, it's time to look at the changes we can expect in computers and how we use them. Predictions are risky, but two things are certain.

First, there will be major alterations in the very structure of computing. Second, some will benefit grassroots computer users-but many will not. In fact, they probably will have just the opposite effect.

Microsoft will be the focal point for many of the changes. Some will result from the Department of Justice (DOJ) and state attorneys general suit against the company. Also pending are suits against Microsoft by Sun Microsystems, Bristol Technology and other companies, not to mention several class actions that have been filed.

Findings already made by Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson in the DOJ case guarantee shifts in the way Gates & Co. do business. The questions are when and how.

Other changes will come from within Microsoft itself.

Long Struggle or Compromise?

On the legal front, opinion is divided as to whether Microsoft and DOJ can reach a compromise settlement. Most observers felt this would not happen, than Bill Gates would fight any decision by Judge Jackson all the way through the appeal process up to the Supreme Court. This kind of delaying action could take years. It would be very expensive, but Microsoft has deep pockets and Gates has shown in the past that he can be a stubborn, difficult adversary.

Those hoping for a settlement were encouraged when Judge Jackson tapped Judge Richard A. Posner, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in Chicago, to mediate between the Department of Justice, state attorneys general and Microsoft. Posner is a well-respected jurist and an expert in economics and antitrust law. He has looked with favor on corporate arguments in other antitrust situations. The computer press and other media regard his appointment as an attempt to assure Microsoft that it will get a fair hearing from a mediator who is not a fervent supporter of antitrust actions.

Microsoft spokesman Jim Cullinan said the company looks forward to working with Posner toward a fair resolution to the case. "We think this is potentially a very positive step. Both sides voluntarily agreed to it," Cullinan added.

What will happen eventually? Microsoft could be hit by anything from a large fine to a court order requiring that it spin off one or more individual companies. Almost certainly, it will have to stop treating Internet Explorer as an integral part of the operating system (OS) and change its high-handed dealings with PC vendors, which has virtually forced those vendors to use the Window OS.

However, it's done, the DOJ and attorneys general seem determined to "restore competition" by nullifying Microsoft's "monopolistic practices."

That would be good news for Linux and other Open Source software, as well as for resurgent Apple. Market share for them is still tiny compared to

Buy or Lease?

Perhaps more disturbing for many of us are indications that Microsoft and other software companies plan a dramatic change in the way software is distributed. It seems the trend will be to the system increasingly used by automobile companies: leasing of products rather than selling them outright.

This has obvious benefits for the vendors. Microsoft and others could reduce packaging and distribution costs and perhaps reduce the piracy potential. It could also insure a smoother cash flow than

results from the peaks that now occur when new software versions are introduced and valleys as sales decrease over time. It also solves the growing problem of people and companies who refuse to upgrade slavishly when a new software version debuts.

It provides benefits for corporate users too, as we will see, but what does it mean for us grassroots users working in our home offices or small businesses? My feeling is that such a trend does not look good from our standpoint.

Corporations should love it, especially the Information Technology (IT) people. They will be able to get rid of those pesky PCs, which employees insist on customizing to suit themselves and their jobs. Dumb machines, not much different from the terminals that were my introduction to computing some 20 years ago.

Application Service Providers (ASPs) will provide programs. An ASP is defined in a Spotlight Service Report as "a third-party service firm, which deploys, manages and remotely hosts a pre-packaged software application through centrally located servers in a 'rental' or lease arrangement. In exchange for accessing the application, the client renders rental-like payments."

(The report also notes that independent software vendor (ISV) could bypass a third party and act as its own ASP. Don't you think Bill Gates would find it attractive to eliminate the middleman completely?)

Death of the PC?

Note the terms "remotely hosts" and "centrally located servers." That means accessing software via the Internet, or perhaps a gigantic corporate Wide Area Network (WAN) or an Extranet. Whatever, it essentially leaves grassroots users out in the cold.

Can you imagine trying to use a modem and dial-up access use all your software if it was located on the Internet? It boggles the mind! Most of us don't have the broadband Internet access available to big corporations.

But if leasing of software becomes the norm, how else could vendors control their user base other than by having them access it from a central host that could be monitored easily?

Not to worry, corporate spokesmen hasten to assure us, the PC is dead anyway. Oh really, and when did this happen? Last time I looked PC sales were up last year over the previous year-which were higher than the year before, etcetera, etcetera-despite shortages of chips and other components caused by the Taiwan earthquakes.

IBM's 1998 annual report issued last had a whole section titled "The PC Era Is Over." Major PC antagonists such as Sun Microsystems' Scott McNealy and Oracle's Larry Ellison have been singing the same song for several years. But how much of that is sour grapes? Are McNealy and Ellison still pouting because their vision of the Net PC died on the vine?

IBM CEO Lou Gerstner believes that "new personal computing devices, such as personal digital assistants, Web-enabled TVs, screen-phones, smart cards, and a host of products we have yet to imagine" will gradually replace the personal computer.

Maybe so, but I don't expect to be tossing my PCs on the scrap heap anytime soon. I do expect to be upgrading and/or replacing them with new, faster, more capable machines well into the 21st century, which will not start officially until January 1, 2001, of course.

What's your opinion? I'd love to hear from you on these points. I will revisit this subject of more computing changes we can expect in an upcoming column-and I will include insightful comments from readers.

Copyright 1999 by Ken Fermoyle, Fermoyle Publications. Ken Fermoyle has written some 2,500 articles for publications ranging from Playboy and Popular Science to MacWeek, Microtimes & PC Laptop. Ken's Korner, a syndicated monthly column, is available free to User Groups. For information or permission to reprint this article, contact kfermoyle@earthlink.net.

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**Next Meeting - Jan. 3rd, Stark
 State Technical College
 Main Auditorium**

First Class Mail

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Mailing Label Address Goes Here

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February 7, 1999 Meeting,
 Taylor Memorial Library, Cuyahoga Falls
 TBA
 "In the Box" by Murray Davis

January ACPCUG SIGs : All at 200 Charlotte St.
 East Entrance (Annex #8) N. Canton, OH

Intuit SIG *Quicken and your taxes* Jan. 4 6-7 pm
E-Mail SIG *Program Settings* Jan. 4 7-8 pm
Internet SIG *Browser Tips* Jan. 4 8-9 pm
Windows SIG *Networking 2 PC's at Home*
 Jan. 4 6-7 pm
Linux SIG *How to Pronounce Linux* Jan. 4 7-8 pm
3COM SIG *Using Palm Pilot* Jan. 4 8-9 pm

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Future Events	
Sat., Jan. 22, 2000	Peter Trapp Computer Show at Cuyahoga Co. Fairgrounds, Berea, OH
Sun., Jan. 23rd, 2000	Peter Trapp Computer Show at Tadmor Temple, Akron, OH