

ACPCUG

December 2001

From The DealsGuy by Bob Click Greater Orlando Computer Users Group.

What a Loss To User Groups

I was distressed to hear that Adobe may dismiss Louise Miller from the user group program. Louise has worked very hard for both Adobe and we user group people. The decision was not final at this writing, but in the user group community, Louise has made Adobe a household name, and dismissal certainly doesn't seem like a just reward for her hard work. Not only will Adobe be the loser, but user groups will also lose. I hope they find a spot for her without dismissal. I understand it's a consolidation of Adobe's user group activities, but I hope it doesn't mean closing us out completely as Ambassadors for Adobe's fine products.

A few other hard-working friends have also gotten the ax for all their hard work during these slow economic times. Ever wonder why anybody should worry about doing a good job when they could be history at any given time, in spite of their best efforts? I guess conscientious employees will always give their best automatically.

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A VOLUNTEER OPOR- TUNITY for ALL ACPCUG Members!!

Richard Lubinski
2925 Circle Drive
Silver Lake, OH 44224-3045

October 31, 2001

Dear Sir:

Frank Mitch gave me your name as possibly being able to assist in finding volunteers that could help with the tax aid program that furnishes free tax assistance to elderly, low income and handicapped people between Feb. 1 and April 15 in the libraries and senior centers.

This is a program operated by AARP under a grant from the IRS. A week of tax training is provided at the University of Akron Law School the first full week of January. Teachers are AARP volunteers.

We have approx. 25 sites in Summit County. Three of which do electronic filing, the rest doing paper returns. We had developed a procedure of taking the paper returns to computers at Chapel Hill and electronically filing them which made it possible to use experienced tax preparers that did not have a computer knowledge but the IRS did not feel we were providing the proper privacy.

The IRS says that they will furnish the necessary computers if we can provide the necessary computer qualified people. The sites

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December 3, 2001

Taylor Memorial Library

Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

6 PM- Free or Low Cost Internet Service

Providers - Joe Krause 7:30 PM Q&A

8:00 PM Selecting "your" Christmas present - A general Discussion (bring your ideas!)

The Deals Guy

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A Moment of Carelessness

I thought I had become pretty good at recognizing e-mail with a virus attachment, and I had, but I still found a way to get careless. At the time of my carelessness, I didn't realize I had triggered a virus, but in the middle of the night I woke up realizing what I had done, and that was to click on a file that I actually should have remembered was virus infected. I'll handle them in a different way and will try not to get in a hurry from now on. I'm sure it didn't use my Eudora address book, but the SirCam virus finds other places to get addresses to send a familiar-looking, but infected, file out to friends.

I sent a message of warning to my address book people, but almost nobody in it had received an infected file. There were a few and I'm not sure where it found those addresses, but I thought perhaps in my trash bin, because I had about 40 returned messages with infected attachments that had addresses looking like the spam type I always delete. That would have been a perfect place to send those infected files, but alas, they all bounced back. The few friends who received an infected file were people I had communicated with recently so that may be a clue.

I receive several newsletters in PDF format and a couple in ZIP format. I decided simply to catch up printing the files by clicking on them right from my "Attachments" folder. In the process, I accidentally clicked the wrong zip file (left there for further AV checking) and had failed to notice the double extensions this time. After this, I'll move suspected files to a safe place and not depend on my 'superior' intelligence.

An interesting sidelight to this disaster is that some of the bounced e-mail containing contaminated attachments were bounced by network administrators who detected the infected file and returned it telling me that. I hope that network administrators trend continues to grow for everybody's sake. My computer is now a mess and I'm ready to reformat and start over.

Still Good

The LapDog is still good so visit [<http://www.laptopoffice.com>].

inKline's Stay Connected is also still good. [<http://www.inklineglobal.com/register>].

Don't forget the Mouse Bungee Pro deal is still

good. [<http://www.mousebungee.com>].

inkline Global is Back With Another Special Offer

If you are still using a dialup connection to surf the Net, how about something to improve the performance of your modem. "Modem Booster" from inKline Global is designed for getting the downloading done, but faster and more dependably. Here is their offer: "We are pleased to offer your column readers 15% off 'Modem Booster' (normally \$19.95) in your October column. For the Modem Booster promotion in October, 2001, simply mention "MB-DEALSGUY-1001" in the COMMENTS field of the order form [<http://www.inklineglobal.com/register>] when purchasing Modem Booster. The offer is valid till 30th Nov. 2001."

Again, ordering must be done on their Web site URL above.

Get Better Organized, Not Unionized, But Yourself

I am not a fan of PIMs (Personal Information Managers), but I must admit that they are popular. It so happens that inKline Global has a very good Personal Information Manager called RedBox Organizer 4.1 and they have offered you a deal on it. I have not had the time to review this product, although they offered it to me. Below is their description:

Now you can manage your daily activities more efficiently, and have the flexibility and ease to plan, organize and schedule virtually whatever you want. Use the Calendar, Planner, Reminder, To-do, Sticky Notes and Globe to manage daily occurrences like Expenses, Reports, Appointments, Contacts, Addresses and Travel information all within an enjoyable 3D interface. Save loads of time, send e-mails, quick-dial your contacts, keep conversation logs and even publish your activities on the Web. Extraordinary features like Multi-User capabilities, password protected program sharing, Time Converter and Global Distance Calculation abilities. All these features in one compact program make it an ideal planner for all home and small businesses. Free CD with online purchase!"

My readers get the program for just \$29.95, regular \$39.95. Use the special code "RBODEALSGUY" (enter in the "comments" field) when ordering. Below are more URLs and info for the product.

Company URL: [<http://www.inklineglobal.com>]

Program URL: [<http://www.inklineglobal.com/products/mb/>]

Download Site 1: [<ftp://inklineglobal.net/win32/mb25.zip>]

Download Site 2: [<http://inklineglobal.net/win32/mb25.zip>]

Filesize: 1.75 MB / 1803 KB / 1,845,295 Bytes

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Filename: mb25.zip Version 2.5 Install/Uninstall Included

Security Just For Your Pocket??

Yes, but I meant for your "Pocket PC." I received an announcement recently for Cresotech PocketSafe 1.16 for Windows CE, a Pocket PC security tool for protection of personal data. It's a convenient PDA-based tool for safe storage of confidential information. PocketSafe provides easy management and secure storage of passwords, contact names, credit card numbers, bank account and document data, as well as other confidential information. The records in the database are encrypted and password-protected. All popular models of PocketPC are supported: Compaq IPaq, Casio Cassiopeia, HP Jornada, Symbol, etc.

System Requirements: Pocket PC running Windows CE 3.0 or higher. 400Kb free on Pocket PC and 1Mb free on desktop PC. Supported Processors include ARM, SH3, MIPS. I was unable to test this product because I do not own a Pocket PC, but it looks very interesting. The price is only \$19.00 and my readers are even offered a 10% discount by going to [<http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=36402&pc=M6M64>] and using the password "dealsguy." If you simply want a trial version, use [<http://www.cresotech.com/ftp/pocketsafe.exe>]. The company URL is [<http://www.cresotech.com>] should you just want information on the product.

Classes For Office

Keystone Learning Systems is offering all users group members a special. Their offer follows: "Purchase any, that's right any, OFFICE related course at Full Price and get a 2nd set within the OFFICE selections at 40% off! You may get as many additional sets as you want at 40% off. Call now to start enhancing your User Group Library, and help individuals learn skills they can use. Check these courses: Excel, Access, Word, Power Point, PhotoDraw, Publisher, Outlook, Project, or Windows 95, 98, and 2000. This Special Offer will expire Friday, October 26, 2001. Reference Code UGem2.

"If you haven't requested any yet and would like to receive a free demo of our training materials or information please contact Evan Jones at 888-299-3647, EXT. 7002, e-mail:

[evanj@keystonelearning.com]. Or fill out the application at:

[<http://www.keystonelearning.com/>

[about keystone/user_group/index.html](http://www.keystonelearning.com/about_keystone/user_group/index.html)] and indicate in the field provided what products you are interested in."

Also listed are 32 other courses newly introduced or coming soon, and 1000 other topics and titles to choose from. Be aware that these courses are not classes, but come to you on CD, or VHS video format. The offer was signed by Evan Jones, Sales Representative KeyStone Learning Systems, a GlobalLearning-Systems Company (888) 299-3647 ext. 7002, (801) 418-7002. Fax: (801) 373-6872

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [Bobclick@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns. Also, I keep adding interesting articles (taken from user group newsletters) to my "Articles of Interest" page for viewing or downloading.

I can actually do remote surgery
and check my stocks
at the same time.



Volunteer Opportunity!! Use Your PC Skills, Maybe Learn About IRS Forms!! Help Out

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that now do this operate with 3 qualified preparers to interview the clients and be sure we have all the necessary information, two qualified people that know both taxes and the computer program (Tax Wise) and a site supervisor, to do 4 taxes an hour (Federal, state and local).

We need a lot of computer knowledgeable people to be able to electronically file at each of the sites in Summit County.

In addition to the tax training at Akron University, the first full week of January, we have a simultaneous class on the computers for experienced tax preparers. We would also have to set up additional training at some site when the IRS computers are delivered between January 15 and 31.

You can see why I am desperately in need of volunteers knowledgeable in both taxes and computers. Most sites operate in afternoons, some 10 am –2 (or 4). Volunteers work one or two sites as it fits their schedule during the season.

Please let me know if any can help.

Sincerely,

Bill Moorehouse
District Coordinator for West Side Summit
County
511 Overwood Road
Akron, OH 44313
330-864-0604

***The ACPCUG Board submits this letter to
your attention for serious consideration as
a good opportunity to serve your commu-
nity!***

A DSL Saga by Judy Lococo email President@apcug.org

The saga begins in the year 2000, as I went in search of a broadband connection... There were three options available to me at that time, they came from a land far, far, away, and little was known about any of them... Baby Bell was the first contact, as they held all the existing telephone lines, and had to determine when my geographical area was available as DSL. Telocity (now DIRECTV DSL) was the second option, and they used the same telephone lines as Baby Bell. And then there was Insight Communications which had all the television cable lines everywhere. How fortunate was I to have three available to me, when most had none!

After trying to understand numerous other terms that were alien to me, I discovered that I was blessed in that I was close enough to a CO (Central Office) with a DSLAM (Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexer) that my throughput would be blindingly fast. And, reasoning with myself that since Baby Bell owned the actual lines, if something happened to my service, they would be more eager to correct any problems, than if I was a Telocity customer, using the Baby Bell lines. So I asked Baby Bell to establish DSL service to me.

It was such a new technology at that time that there were many technical difficulties. For one, Baby Bell was so rabid about not allowing any of the home users actually using more than one computer in a home environment to access their DSL, that they mandated that I had to use an internal modem (more heat inside my computer). I couldn't share the DSL connection with my old computer that I had networked with a new one. They showed no remorse for the fact that their DSL storm troopers had bugged up my two-computer LAN to the point that I now had to disable the network card to the old machine before I could even access the DSL line. And I was even using a different protocol on my network as the DSL line already had a lock on TCP/IP and wouldn't allow the home network card to use that protocol... Needless to say, trying to print a document from the old machine to the printer attached to the new one, took some very fancy maneuvering. Of course, if I had elected to have the business DSL (\$\$) I could do all these marvelous things without any problem. For two computers, one of which started out life as a 486 machine, this did not compute.

The first problem I encountered was with the telephone line filters that are necessary if you wish to use the DSL service. Every extension in your house must have a filter on it, and unfortunately the one Baby Bell sent me for the wall phone in the kitchen was

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faulty. I asked for a replacement, & they couldn't replace just one, as nobody had ever done that before! So basically, I phoned & complained about their line filter for the wall phone every month for six months before they finally decided they would send me one that did work. However, what this meant was that my kitchen phone was worthless for six months.

I have always had a Hayes modem, not a Hayes-compatible modem, as I wanted top of the line error-correcting whenever I was using the phone lines. This Baby Bell internal modem was nothing but problems from the third day it was installed, and my wait on the phone to tech support was most depressing. Sometimes the device worked, and sometimes it didn't, and when it didn't, I had to reboot my machine and try it again. I must have had to reboot my machine hundreds of times during the course of the 14 months I had the Baby Bell DSL for their modem connection alone, and then you have to add to that the times the computer itself seized up when I did something blonde. I'm surprised my "control," "alt," & "delete" keys have not been worn down to a nub...

Baby Bell tech support was generally adequate, and they do have a really nice feature on their answering messages that give you an estimated wait time. But don't expect them to bypass any of their routines simply because you say you have already done them. They are going to assume that you are an imbecile, and work upwards from there. By the time the call finally reaches a point where they can converse in acronyms on equal footing with you, you've wasted at least a half-hour!

After fighting with the internal modem for over a year, I decided to complain even louder about their faulty equipment when I had to call in for some other problem. So the tech support people checked my line & found that my modem was an iffy component, and they would be sending me another. So I asked what it would take to get an external modem, as what they were sending me was basically not going to help my home network agonies. They asked a supervisor to bless it, and all agreed they could get me an internal modem for half-price, since I had used their service for over a year and the existing modem inside the machine was paid for. I said, "Great, let's do that!" The USB external modem arrived at one of my busier times, so it sat in the box for a couple of weeks before I even opened it. My telephone bill arrived in the meantime, so I checked it to see if the \$37.50 half-price charge was on there. Imagine my surprise when I discovered they had charged me \$18.50 for one of four installments, which basically said I was paying

full price for it. Once again, Baby Bell was lying to its customers, and hiding it under an enigma of numbers.

I phoned Baby Bell & explained to all who would listen that I had been wronged. It fell on really deaf ears. Never mind that I have had outrageous monthly phone bills for thirty years, or that I have recently discovered that a directory service request for a new phone number listing is now one thin penny short of two dollars! So I told the woman on the phone that if I couldn't find any resolution to the fact that they had lied to me, then I didn't wish to deal with them any more except on a have-no-choice basis, as they are a monopoly where my local telephone service is concerned. They could take their DSL back to Never Never Land. She said there was nothing anyone could do, so I explained that I no longer wanted to use their DSL service. While I was on the phone talking to her, getting instructions on how to return this external modem, etc., they totally disconnected me from all Baby Bell DSL privileges. I did not even have time to pull email off their server before I was denied access to it. I was not given time to notify people that Jlococo@bellsouth.net was no longer a viable email address. Basically, I was electronically guillotined! "How rude!"

I was suddenly without fast access and back to 56K dial-up speeds. This is tantamount to being mega-rich one day & a pauper the next. If you hadn't seen the promised land, you wouldn't know any better. So I put a panic call in to DIRECTV DSL, and they very candidly told me that their modems were external, cost approximately \$500, but were included in the monthly cost of their service. I did have to agree to a year's service with them, but they didn't care if I had two computers networked or not. I could only sit in front of one at a time, and the dogs have not learned how to surf... yet... However, whenever I discontinued their service, I had to return the modem to them. The biggest problem was that it could take up to three weeks for them to get the modem to me. Withdrawal pains, definitely.

However, the modem arrived just over a week after my call to DIRECTV DSL, so I figured I had a day of installation ahead of me again. I had to remove the Baby Bell internal DSL modem card, so it wouldn't conflict with the external DIRECTV DSL modem or my home network. Besides, at this point, it was just taking up space inside my PC. And, uh, geez, it also gave me a chance to visit with the dust bunnies populating the inside of my machine. Then I had to

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Akron-Canton PC Users Group
PO Box 2151
Akron Oh 44309-2151

Next Meeting - Dec. 3rd,
Taylor Memorial Library
Cuyahoga Falls, OH

First Class Mail

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Mailing Label Address Goes Here

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www.acpcug.org

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<http://www.acpcug.org>

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uninstall the Baby Bell software -- this was not something you should try alone at home! It required the resident Alpha Geek's expertise to figure this one out, as the uninstallation itself wanted to wipe out a few "unused" files such as regedit.exe (among others) because their removal software reported that "I wasn't using it any more & really didn't need it..." I think that was the final straw when I saw that they wanted to inflict harm on my computer because I had chosen not to use their service.

Once all remnants of the Baby Bell fiasco were removed, total time to setup the new configuration was just over an hour. For the most part, the installation went

smoothly with no major issues along the way. The new setup included attaching the DIRECTV DSL modem to my telephone line and installing their software. It also included rerouting some of the ethernet cabling in the office and installing and configuring a DSL router/firewall between the modem and my computers. I did have to tweak my software firewall settings to make it all work together. At this point, I called in "Alpha Geek" for assistance with the firewall configuration.

The DIRECTV DSL modem and the DSL router are now flashing lights back at me (comforting to an external modem user...) and my home network is happy again. I can print from any machine on my home network when I wish, I can access the Net no matter which machine I am using, and I don't have to pray that I remembered to disable the network card before I powered down the last time. I don't have to threaten my friends with a visit from Luigi if they send me a huge picture attachment, and life is once again good!

For even more acronyms and information about DSL, check out <http://www.dslreports.com>.

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Future Events	
Sun., Dec. 16th, 2001	Peter Trapp Computer Show at Tadmor Temple off I-77 to Arlington Road, Akron, OH (Exit 120)