

# ACPCUG

## **From The DealsGuy by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group**

### **Technology At Work**

My wife and I worked as security for a trade show somewhat different than we have ever worked. The National Business Aviation and Aeronautics show. It was split between the Orange County Convention Center (trade show displays) and the Orlando Executive Airport, a smaller regional airport in Orlando, where about 150 business jets, some state of the art, some used, and other jets refurbished for business use, were on display. It's fun to see all the corporate type jets, but something that really caught my eye had nothing to do with the jets. It was a giant projection screen outside mounted up on 30-foot towers. It was 4 PM and I could see the movie on the screen as plain as day, even though the sun was shining on it. I asked the technicians where the projection was coming from and it turns out it is an LED type screen made up of 10" x 10"

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## **MP3's Aren't Just Music Anymore**

**By David Navratil, Member  
1960 PC Users Group,  
Houston, Texas**

Just about everyone with a computer has probably tried their luck with downloading MP3 files. In the past two years I've put together quite a collection of songs from the 1920's through the 1970's, accumulating almost 3,000 songs during that time. I've covered the Big Band era, easy listening, holiday music, country, folk, classical - just about every genre you can imagine. During one of my many afternoons of surfing the net looking for that one elusive MP3 that would fill another CD-R, I came across a genre that was new to me but may be of interest to members of our club.

The name of these new finds is "Old Time Radio Show" or OTR's for short. What could be a better use for the MP3 format than OTR's! Most OTR's length is from 15 minutes to 1 hour. In regular "wav" format the size of one of these files could be from 60 MB to 400 MB but in MP3 format an average show is from 3 MB to 30 MB. Another advantage is that since most of these shows are from the 1920's through the 1950's the sound quality of course are not up to par with newly recorded material. This again saves you room on your hard drive because you don't have to use a bit rate of 128 kbps but can use 24 to 64 bits. (Most OTR's I've downloaded from the net are in 24 to 32 kbps.) This lower bit rate saves much space and when played back kind of gives the performance that "old time radio sound". You can easily record 60 hours of OTR's onto one CD-R, using the lower bit rates, without sacrificing sound quality.

As to the quantity of OTR's available on the net, I have found at least 560 different series and as many as 57,000 different programs. Some of the more popular and easy to find are - Amos & Andy, The Shadow, Fibber McGee & Molly, Tarzan, Sherlock Holmes, Dragnet, Inner

**November 4, 2002**

**Stark Tech Main Auditorium**

**North Canton, Ohio**

**6:00 PM Snagit by Art McRowe 7:30 PM**

**Q&A & Elections**

**8:00 PM Program Ideas & Internet**

**Tips In Response to Membership**

**Input (*That's You, Folks!!*)**

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# The Deals Guy

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modules and the entire screen was 10' x 16.' It's easily repaired if there is a problem just by replacing the faulty module. I was impressed by this technology made by Saco that could be plainly seen in spite of the sun shining on it. It is valued at a million bucks if you are interested, or you can rent it from Saco like these AV people did. Nice for the home movies, wouldn't you say!

## **SRUG Fun Weekend**

My wife and I traveled to Atlanta for the Southeastern Regional Users Group (SRUG) conference and had a great time. The organizers, Michael Rogers, Steven Morgan and Rose Lynn put in a great deal of time, along with the many other volunteers, and it paid off with a successful event. Here are some interesting numbers. They had 68 attendees representing 24 user groups. Eleven user groups were Mac, thirteen were Win/DOS and one was Linux. 24 registrants were Macintosh people and 44 were Win/DOS. Two also represented the Linux group. Pictures at [<http://www.gcmac.org/srugc>].

Atlanta PC UG and Gold Coast Macintosh UG (from south FL) each had nine registrants. The camaraderie was great and even a short refreshment break was planned between the roundtables for a bit of chitchat. Lots of raffleprizes. It's already in the planning stages for next year and I recommend it. It was not part of the event, but the Interop/Comdex show ran during the preceding week and a few attended that show. All the meal events (starting Friday evening) had vendor sponsors, and even the refreshment breaks between the RTs had a sponsor. Michael said they were proud to note they came out in the black, and with some seed money for next year. Way to go Mike! The Sunday luncheon, vender fair and prize drawings were kind of rushed though, because many attendees were from Florida and wanted to start the long drive home.

Many people who made it a point to come over and talk to me, thanking me for all my work. Talk about getting the big head, I hope I stayed humble.

It was sure encouragement to keep the column going.

## **Still Good**

All investors should know that the High Growth Stock investing solutions deal is still good for

this month. If you go for the FREE 60-day trial, it is fully functional software along with the data download and the market analysis newsletters, and it's good for a full 60 days from the time it is registered. This is only for the serious investor, but that doesn't mean a novice can't learn, so try it. If you are in the mood to check it out, go to [<http://www.highgrowthstock.com/Order/Trial.asp?from=Click>] to order your free 60-day trial. If you choose to continue the subscription after the free 60 days, your one-year subscription will be extended to 14 months for the one-year price. Wow, 16 months total service for the price of only 12, what a deal. I'm just getting started with mine, but I'm excited.

The Centuriansoft package (SoftClan e-cryptor & Steganos 3 Security Suite bundled together for just \$39.96 including S&H) is still good and all the information is still posted on my Web site (<http://www.dealsguy.com>). I thought they would put together another package, but perhaps next month. [<http://www.centuriansoft.com>].

## **How About Some Animated Gifs, If You Do Them Yourself!**

Do you find yourself wanting to create an animated gif for some purpose? Take a look at Barbarosa Gif Animator 3.2. Taken from their Web site:

"Babarosa Gif Animator provides the fast and easy way to create compact gif animations for the web. Animations can be quickly assembled from imported images (13 formats). You can also design animation directly in the program using vector graphics, image, and text edit tools. Palette optimization, data compression and colors reduction give you a possibility to obtain small size GIFs."

There is more about it on their Web site as well as some ratings, and until the end of the year you can get it for just \$29.95, regularly \$39.95, at [<http://www.liatro.com/download/download.php>]. My thanks to Clarke Birde of Alamo PC Organization for bringing this one to my attention.

## **How About a Freebie From Executive Software!**

I imagine all user groups received this announcement from Colleen Toumayan about the release of Diskeeper Lite, their manual defragmentation companion to its highly popular automatic defragmenter, Diskeeper 7.0. The following is part of their description:

"The new version of Diskeeper Lite can be run on all Windows(r) operating systems from Windows 98 on up. The new version of Diskeeper Lite was built with the same advanced defragmentation technology as Diskeeper 7.0. As a result, it's far faster than any

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manual 'built-in' defragmenter. However, it has no networking capabilities or scheduling features.

"John Kimmich, Diskeeper Product Manager, said: 'while the old Diskeeper Lite educated people about fragmentation, the re-release educates people about the limitations of manual defragmenters. It's a good introduction to the power of full-version Diskeeper, because, truthfully, automatic defrag is the only way to go, especially for enterprise users.' "Diskeeper Lite freeware is available for immediate download at [www.execsoft.com](http://www.execsoft.com). Phone numbers are (800) 829-6468 and (818) 771-1600. A variety of system management tools, trialware and free utilities are available also."

### **Free Office Suite For Cheapies**

Look what you get for all your hard-earned money <G>. It offers a word processor, a spreadsheet, a presentation tool, an HTML editor, a drawing tool and a mathematics equation editor. This one is called OpenOffice and they don't even care how many PCs you put it on. I doubt it's quite as full featured as the other popular office suites that you pay good money for, but at least using OpenOffice will not have anybody looking inside your PC to see if it shouldn't be running there.

You can download this freebie at [[http://www.openoffice.org/dev\\_docs/source/download.html](http://www.openoffice.org/dev_docs/source/download.html)]. I have not looked at this suite, but what do you have to lose, and you won't have to ask for your money back! OpenOffice will run on Windows, Linux and Solaris, and I just noticed there is also a alpha/developer version for the Mac OS X. There is information there on the development of OpenOffice, which is an outgrowth of Star Office.

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](mailto: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.

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## **Choosing A New Computer for the Kids – Part 2**

**By Ira Wilsker**

In Part 1 last week in the EXAMINER, I discussed the different types of CPU chips commonly available in new computers (I personally recommended the AMD Athlon chips over the comparable Intel Pentium and Celeron Chips), memory (generally the more the better), and video cards (AGP is better than "on-board" with shared memory). Some of the other factors that influence both usability and cost are the hard drives, CD and DVD drives, modems, network cards, and other items.

Recently, when comparing desktop computers at several local stores, the smallest installed hard drive I found was a 20-gigabyte, with 40 to 80 gigabyte hard drives common. Now that hard drives have become relatively inexpensive, large hard drives are becoming the norm rather than the option. One of the classical rules of computing is "Whatever size hard drive you have, you will manage to fill it with clutter." This is as true today as in the past. Almost any hard drive installed in a new computer will be adequate for normal use, but if the child is involved with downloading MP3 music files, ripping music CDs, or into video editing, then a larger hard drive would be preferable. Another hard drive consideration is the speed of the drive. Often they will be labeled as ATA-66, 100, or 133 speeds. This is a relative comparison of the speed when reading or writing data. Within a similar price range, faster is better. Last summer I built a computer for one of my daughters before she went off to the University of Texas at Dallas (Richardson). I put in a 20-gig ATA-100 speed drive, which I thought would be adequate. With the broadband access available in her dorm, she downloaded many MP3 music files, and videos. Her 20-size drive quickly filled up, and I recently gave her a new ATA-100, 7200 rpm, 40-gig drive to install in her computer as a second hard drive. Almost all new computers can handle an additional hard drive at a later date, if more storage is necessary, as most computers can support, without additional hardware, up to four hard drives, CD drives, and DVD drives.

CD-RW (rewritable CD drives) drives have become ubiquitous as their prices have plunged, and in some new computers, are even intended to replace the traditional 3.5" floppy. I would not recommend an old style CD player (play only) in a new computer, unless it is used in addition to a CD-RW drive for making copies. CD-RW drives

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## MP3 Files, cont.

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Sanctum, I Love a Mystery and the list just goes on. Most of these shows include the original commercials that were aired at that time. The shows started becoming popular in the late 1920's and I have some from as recently as the 1980's. I have many of the "Classic Books" presented in OTR format. These are not audio books where one person just reads to you, but full productions with sound effects, music and such. Most of these last from one hour to three hours. The late Orson Wells was involved with many of "Classics". Some titles are "War of the Worlds", "A Christmas Carol", "Pride and Prejudice", "Time Machine" etc.

Finding these programs on the net is even easier than music. There are thousands of individuals who collect OTR's as a hobby. Most of them have their own websites and offer a few selections to download changing the selection each week or month. Many sites will also send you an email when new offerings are available. You can go to Google or any search engine and key in "OTR" or "Old Time Radio Shows" and you will get thousands of different sites. Also using one of the many music download sites, such as KaZaa, keying in the name of the series will bring up hundreds of results. You can join OTR clubs at any of the major websites like AOL, Yahoo, and MSN. There are OTR trade and share sites where you post a listing of the shows you have and can trade via CD-R with others for shows you need. If you are running out of hard disk space or don't have a CD burner you can still enjoy the experience of OTR's. There are many sites on the web that broadcast the shows over the web in different formats. All you need to listen to these is one of the many free media players available on the web.

Turn off the TV some night, relax and listen to one of these shows and you may find that MP3's are not just about music!!

Here are a few sites to get you started:

<http://old-time-radio.com/>

<http://www.starcreations.com/otr/links/MP3links.htm>

<http://www.homestead.com/repsonline/BrowserDownloads.html>

<http://users2.ev1.net/~ey/audio.html>

<http://www.otrcat.com/index.html>

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## A Second Computer, cont.

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are listed with three sets of numbers, such as 32x10x40. The numbers represent the relative speed when writing a CD-R disc, writing a CD-RW disc (a slower process), and reading a CD. The faster the better, but when comparing computers, the differences in CD-RW speed are not significant unless the user intends to "burn" many discs. The discs themselves have plunged in price, with bulk spindles of the one-time writeable CD-R discs often advertised as "free after rebate." The more expensive CD-RW discs are rewritable, and can also be used to supplement a hard drive, as they can be written to over-and-over again.

Also, as prices have plunged, DVD drives (players) have become common. On some computers, they are integral with the CD-RW drive, and in some computers DVD players are a separate drive. If the child already has a separate DVD player, then the computer DVD drive is redundant, although it can often be used as a "host" drive when copying CDs. When DVDs are played on a computer, the quality of the video and sound is often superior to being viewed on a TV, because most new computer monitors are far higher resolution than all but the newest digital TVs. Becoming more common on the market are DVD writers. They and the blank DVD discs they use are currently expensive, and there are several competing but non-compatible formats on the market. While some manufacturers are starting to produce "universal" DVD writers that can read and write most of the competing formats, they are quite expensive. Until standards are decided in the market place, and the price of blank DVD discs inevitably drop, I would not recommend a DVD writer on a new computer unless the child just has to make DVDs. Be aware that some formats of computer burned DVD discs may not be playable in conventional DVD players, just as some computer burned music CDs may not be playable in conventional CD players.

While broadband internet is becoming more common, a telephone modem is still often an inexpensive necessity. While most factory built computers now come with the inexpensive, and less desirable "controlerless", "Winmodems", or "softmodems", if a computer is custom built, a real modem, with its own processor, is generally superior, but slightly more expensive. Almost all new computers now come with an industry

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## A Second Computer, cont.

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standard "Ethernet" 10/100 network card installed. While there are some differences between the brands, they have become so standardized that they will generally work fine with any network or broadband service.

As integral items on most new computers are a variety of connectors for external peripherals. USB and Firewire are becoming the universal standards. Typically there may be two or more USB ports, and one Firewire port. For peripherals, Firewire is much faster (and usually more expensive) than the older USB 1.1 standard, but the new USB 2.0 standard, which is also downwardly compatible with the older USB standards, is a direct competitor to Firewire. There are many peripherals, such as printers, digital cameras, MP3 players, and scanners that generally come with USB connectors. Inexpensive external hubs can be used to increase the number of USB ports. Firewire, and the newer USB 2.0, is commonly used for recording and editing video and other high-capacity uses.

A rule of thumb is that locally built computers are typically easier to maintain and upgrade than the name brands, and can be readily customized for the child's use, and should be considered.

As with all big-ticket items, shop around, and compare. An informed shopper is a wise shopper. Ira Wilsker is a member of the Golden Triangle PC Club, on the Board of Advisors for APCUG, on the faculty of the Lamar Institute, and writes a column each week for the Examiner, along with other things. You can email him [ira@apcug.org](mailto:ira@apcug.org). There is no restriction against any non-profit group using the article as long as it is kept in context, with proper credit given to the author. This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups



(APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.

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## Attention All ACPCUG Members!!!

Effective with the January 2003 issue, the standard method of newsletter transmittal will be electronically. We will send you an e-mail with a link to the club site to download, at your convenience, the newsletter.

This saves the ACPCUG the single largest membership expense! Postage and printing are the single set of largest outlay your club makes using membership dues.

Outreach and education have been larger, but they have been covered by generous local grants. Newsletters are not covered by grants!

We will attempt to accommodate **all members!** If you absolutely cannot get e-mail and downloads, we will work with you! There may be a financial increase in membership costs if you can't receive e-mail. (That's up in the air, we need your input!)

**This a good time to update your edition of Acrobat reader! A link is available at [apcug.org](http://apcug.org). You will be glad to update for a lot of reasons!**

Next, if you have printing problems, bring them to the club meetings, and we will try help you overcome them. Do it now to beat the crisis!

All come to the meetings to discuss the need or desire for more color vs. a simple black and white newsletter!

**EXPLAIN NASH'S CARTOON TO ME!**

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

**Next Meeting - Nov. 4th,  
 Stark Tech Auditorium  
 North Canton, OH**

**First Class Mail**

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**Attention! All members!!  
 Elections at the November  
 General Meeting (Nov. 4th).**

**Nominations open at the  
 floor (must be accepted by  
 member by voice or writing).**

**All officers expiring (below)  
 are standing for re-election.**

Club Officers				Future Events	
President	Murray Davis (2003)	440-248-0021	murray5050@yahoo.com	Sun., Nov. 22nd, 2002	Peter Trapp Computer Show at Tadmor Temple off I-77 to Ar- lington Road, Akron, OH (Exit 120)
Vice President	Frank Ramsey (2004)	330-699-4711	aframsey@yahoo.com		
Club Outreach	Rick Lubinski (2002)	330-928-7179	lubinski@bright.net		
Secretary	Walt Ruthenburg (2003)	330-283-7867	wruthenburg@usa.net		
Program Director					
Treasurer	Joe Krause (2002)	330-484-2338	Joek4646@yahoo.com		
Newsletter Editor	Art McRowe	330-666-3189	amcrowe@bright.net		
Software Review	Jim Carter (2004)	330-882-4222	jwcarter@bright.net		