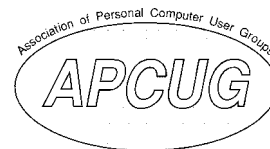


# User Friendly

January 2002



## Inside This Issue

Next Meeting	1
Farewell	1
Comdex 2001 & APCUG	1
Review — <i>askSAM v. 4.0</i>	5
Upgrade to <i>WIN XP</i> ?	7
Return to Vendor	8
December Meeting	9
Welcome to You All	10
Calendar and SIGs	11
Quick Consultants	12
List of Our Leaders	13
Free Software — Write a Review	14
Review — <i>Power Quest Partition Magic v. 7</i>	15
What Were They Thinking ...	17
CD-ROM Read Only Attributes	18
Index — User Friendly July - December 2001	20
Membership Information	23

### FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday, February 12, 2002  
Corel Office Suite

Tuesday March 12, 2002 ♦

## LACS General Meeting

### Microsoft Windows XP

Tuesday January 8, 7 P. M.

**Fellowship Hall, 8065 Emerson Ave. Westchester**

Now it's our turn to learn the benefits of WINDOWS XP. There has been a lot of controversy and confusion since WIN XP was introduced. Such questions as: "Should I upgrade from my existing WIN 98/Me or should I do a fresh full install?" What must I do when I install a new hard drive? What about my games and other programs? Will WIN XP run them? Come and see the features of WINDOWS XP, ask your questions of Microsoft representative Dana Berkoski. Dana will probably also have a few other Microsoft programs to show. An interesting evening is in store.

The Beginners corner and the computer forums will start at 6:00 PM. The General Meeting starts at 7:00 PM. Visitors are welcome. Bring a few friends. ♦

## Farewell

I have mostly enjoyed serving as your President for the past three years. Many of you have been very helpful in advancing our common goals. At our annual Holiday Party, we honored more than 40 members who made significant contributions to the Society in the past year.

This list of volunteers could have been longer, for we left out most of the people who served as Quick Consultants, answering members' phone calls about computer problems, because we couldn't de-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

## Comdex 2001 and APCUG Conference

by **Richard S Harmetz**, LACS

This year, attendance at Comdex, the huge Las Vegas annual computer convention and marketplace, was down by somewhere between 25 and 40 percent; the number of convention halls was cut by half from two years ago, and people complained that there wasn't much new to see on the convention floor.

But things were different at the annual conference of the (APCUG) held at the Orleans Hotel a mile or so away.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

**(FAREWELL)***(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)*

termine how much each of them had done. Members also answered technical questions via e-mail or at general or SIG meetings. We also left out some writers for *User Friendly*, mostly because they usually received products in exchange for their reviews, but some members contributed articles instead of reviews. I also forgot my lines and failed to mention two former directors who passed away recently, Mort Bernstein and Stan Goldstein.

As Todd said at the December meeting, LACS couldn't continue to operate successfully without the outstanding efforts of many members. Some of you put in extraordinary amounts of time and took on major responsibilities. Vice President **Charlie Semple** headed the Program Committee, served on the Membership and Audit Committees (and previously the Budget and Projector Selection committees), set up and ran the projection equipment for general and SIG meetings, served as a Moderator of LACSPC and led the Hardware SIG, among numerous other tasks.

**Jill Fox** served as a director and ran our website almost single handedly. Editor **Dick Smith** led a team that put out a 20-page *User Friendly* promptly and against all odds every month. He also served as a director and hosted the meetings of the board. **Todd Martin** saved us a lot of money by addressing and mailing *User Friendly* and provided refreshments and a

bit of income from them for us. He also served as a director and on various committees, as a delegate to various regional user group meetings and conferences and as a representative at the GBET trade show in Los Angeles. Secretary **Rosalie Kirsch** took the Minutes, while Treasurer **Charlotte Semple** kept our books, established a \$5,000 CD account at Fidelity Investments in August so that we could earn more interest and obtained the approval needed to lawfully conduct raffles.

**Mark Presky** put out press releases to numerous publications monthly. **Karl Springer** and **Cap Kierulff** handled our internal e-mail lists. Cap and **Mike Yoshikawa** led the setup and tear-down for each general meeting. **Cora Kamerman** served ably on the Audit Committee and as organizer each year for our Holiday Party. **Joe Broido** and **Dick Harmetz** represented us at the Association of PC User Groups meeting in Las Vegas last November. Cap, Dick, **Patsy Bellah**, **Cindy Cameron**, and **Paul White** served on the board. **Gene Jacobs** kept our membership database, served on and hosted the Membership Committee and helped us with postal problems.

This is only the tip of the iceberg. These people often did more than I can summarize here, and many others led or hosted SIGs, served on committees, ran for office or were otherwise helpful. While some of you were peculiar or annoying at times, we appreci-

ate your help and have enjoyed your friendship. I also wish to thank all who made financial contributions over the past three years. These contributions have helped a lot.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

During the past three years we have accomplished a lot. We have raised the money for and acquired an outstanding Toshiba projector (with its own camera) and a new Toshiba laptop while maintaining our solvency and without raising dues. General membership dues have been the same (\$36) since we incorporated in July 1991. We developed and distributed a colorful LACS brochure and business cards. We have almost maintained our membership – at least it has declined less than that of many other user groups. Conditions beyond our control influence membership levels – e.g., traffic congestion, crime rates and the many other ways people can learn about personal computers, including classes, magazines and TV shows.

In July 2000, *Los Angeles Magazine* named LACS the "Best Computer Club" in the area.

Let me wish Charlotte and her new crew the best of luck in 2002. Give them some help – they will need it! We will hold the formal installation at our meeting January 8, and the first board meeting will be on January 9.

– Stephanie Nordlinger, Outgoing President ♦

**(COMDEX 2001)***(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)*

There, attendance remained about as high as in previous years, as delegates met in a series of seminars where they discussed subjects ranging from improving newsletters to fighting viruses. Delegates also attended a series of breakfasts, lunches, and dinners hosted by software and hardware producers who demonstrated such cutting edge products as multiple use hand held devices and elaborate video editing programs.

**MICROSOFT**

Speaking at a lavish Microsoft sponsored APCUG banquet Steve Balmer, the Number Two man at Microsoft, set the tone for the convention when he said, "What you see on the floor is less exciting than what you saw four years ago." But without being specific he predicted a revolution in improved web services.

Balmer said that the next generation of software will make it easier to combine different programs into the same application. "Different devices and software will be able to talk to each other and to feed off each other." They will be easier to expand and to integrate.

He also commented that the computer screen is not as user friendly as a piece of paper. "Paper looks better and can be annotated and moved around." Sometime in 2002, Microsoft and its partners will introduce the Tablet, which will imitate paper by allowing its users to write on its screen, move things around, and in general use it as a piece of paper, whose writing can be

saved to a computer. When it becomes available, the Tablet will be priced between \$300 and \$500. Earlier, in one of the Comdex keynote addresses, Balmer's boss, Bill Gates demonstrated a prototype Tablet on the bottom of a laptop computer.

Balmer then introduced Greg Sullivan who talked about the new Windows XP, which Sullivan said is faster and more stable than previous versions and considerably less likely to crash. He also claimed that it boots up faster than previous Windows versions. (Indeed, on my system, in six weeks of use, XP has never crashed and the boot-up time has dropped from two and a half minutes to one minute.)

Balmer also said that speech recognition has yet to reach maturity. "By the time you make corrections, you would have been better off typing." But he predicted, "We're about three years away from getting it right."

In answer to a question from an APCUG delegate who complained about Microsoft's making it impossible to use a copy of XP on more than one computer, Balmer said that he had not met anybody who liked what he called *activation*. "The *activation* policy is intended to let people know what is legal." In response to the gripes about the policy, Balmer went on, Microsoft is considering a policy which would allow a user to pay for two copies of XP and use them on three computers. (An informal survey of 10 LACS members, some of them early adoptors, found that not one of them intended to buy XP be-

cause of the *activation* policy. Another member who owns four home computers and who in the past has always been one of the first to buy any Windows upgrade, said that because of the *activation* policy, he did not intend to upgrade to XP. "It would just be too expensive," he said.

Balmer also talked about Microsoft's new game machine, the Xbox, which he called "the craziest thing we've ever done. We spent hundreds of millions of dollars to build a product that you lose money on every box you sell." But, he went on, "The games you see today are the same games you saw a few years ago. In a few years, you'll see the differences. The designers do not yet know the capabilities of the Xbox."

Alan Chitlik, who heads Microsoft's relations with user groups, said that 1,300 user groups are registered with Microsoft and that Microsoft intends to double the number of review copies it sends out to those groups. He emphasized how important user groups are to his company and how dedicated Microsoft is to those groups. Thoughtful reviews and feedback from user groups, he said, are provided to programmers, and live on-line chats with product managers are being planned.

**HANDHELD**

Donna Dubinsky, the President and CEO of Handspring, at a breakfast, introduced *Treo*, a handheld device very much in line with Steve Balmer's belief that the days of *connectivity* are at hand.

*(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)*

**(COMDEX 2001)***(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)*

*Treo* is an all-in-one device that serves as a mobile phone, a Palm OS organizer, and a wireless messaging device. It also provides access to the web, and, of course, is pocket size. When an APCUG member complained about the quick obsolescence of hand held devices, Dubinsky responded that hand held devices among other things were also fashion accessories. Most people, she claimed, don't mind the expense of upgrading hand held devices because they want to make a fashion statement.

**McAFEE.COM AND VIRUSES**

At a breakfast sponsored by McAfee, the predominant topic naturally was viruses. Company representatives said that most user virus data bases are at least 6 months out of date, but with several new viruses—some of them deadly—entering the field daily, the only sure protection is to update your virus protection program at least once a week. Users at the breakfast were warned not to set up more than one virus protection program per computer since virus protection programs themselves act like viruses, and one protection program is likely to attack another. Currently close to 60,000 viruses exist and once a new virus is detected, it takes McAfee from two to six hours to develop a cure.

At another APCUG seminar, it was pointed out that broadband is especially vulnerable because of the very thing that makes it so desirable, its speed. Hackers like

to attack broadband because they can do their dirty work quickly and exit quickly. It was also observed that governmental protection from hackers is weak because no one legal authority controls the Internet, and different countries have different laws regarding the Internet. The lack of a universal treaty makes virus fighting on the legal front difficult.

A seminar for newsletter editors discussed how one user group uses its newsletter to attract new members. It condenses its thirty-two page newsletter into eight pages and drops off about 1,000 copies at places like CompUSA and Best Buy. The abbreviated newsletters entice people who read them into showing up at meetings and then joining the organization.

**ADOBE**

Alan Hamil demonstrated Adobe's *Premier*. This impressive program provides easy sound and picture editing for animated and live action videos. (Hamil said that Disney uses 500 copies of the program.) A major new feature in *Premier* simplifies storyboarding by allowing the user to easily drag and drop both sound and pictures anywhere in the videos. An audio mixer gives the user many of the facilities of a professional sound studio.

**CANNED QUICKEN REVIEW**

This LACS member was unable to attend the Quicken presentation made by Matt McCann and Richard Katz (or as they call themselves, the McKatz Brothers), but as might be expected of them, they did

issue an e-mail report on what they called "one of their wildest opening presentations yet!". Here are some excerpts :

"This year, they (Matt and Richard) showed up dressed as E.R. doctors with the past president of APCUG on a gurney...groaning and holding his stomach. They rolled the gurney behind a low curtain and performed wild surgery, pulling out debris like keyboards, hundreds of forks, other computer hardware and finally came to the problem with the patient, Microsoft Money. Upon removal, they did a Quicken implant and proclaimed to our amusement, that the patient would feel like a whole new person. It was a very funny start to an exciting meeting.

Matt and Richard showed Quicken 2002 Deluxe.... Automatic categorization allows a user to type in an unknown payee name (like Dollar Video Rental) and Quicken automatically takes a best guess at what the category might be, in this case "video rental" and categorized it as Entertainment. It did it on its own! Matt then showed Portfolio Analyzer, which looks at your investments. It shows you your five best securities as well as your five worst investments (ouch!). In addition, it analyzes your total security holdings and creates an asset allocation pie chart with the press of a button. The Analyzer also shows you your portfolio's level of risk. New Automatic Reconciliation does on-the-fly reconciliation every time you update your account online. This happens without intervention when you download your

data from your bank or credit card company. If it sees an error, like a missing transaction, or if your accounts don't balance, it notifies you on the spot!

The two concluded their e-mail by claiming that "Steve Ballmer of Microsoft may have been interesting, but these guys from the Quicken and QuickBase groups were wild!"

Putting everything at Comdex in perspective was cyber-comedian Bob Hirschfield, who complained about all the computer books for dummies. Who is the dummy, he asked, when it was computer programmers who invented the idea of shutting down a computer by clicking *Start*.

Hirschfield also worried that Balmer's *interconnectivity* would mean that someday, when he, Hirschfield, would try to open his refrigerator door, the refrigerator would announce, "Access denied. Your doctor says your cholesterol level is too high." ♦

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## Review: askSAM v. 4.0

by Tony Avallon, LACS

I am a writer and heavily into research, both focused and spurious, drawn to collect every printed word of information that I am *absolutely certain* I will use some day. Obviously, I forget where I file things, I never find the information I need when I need it, and wind up tossing out the whole stack.

For people like myself, *askSam*, a text-based database for

unstructured information (word processed documents, correspondence, legal briefs, etc.) as well as structured information (address lists, client profiles, statistics) is a way to continue my compulsions without penalties. askSAM 4.0, the product under inspection here, confirms that "the little software that could" still can - and then some. The independent askSAM Systems of Perry, Florida has grown along with the rest of us, offering not only its flexible database for stuff you already have, but stuff you haven't even dreamed about yet (like Web page info) organized, categorized, quickly findable and easily cross-referenced.

### INSTALLATION

Installation is a snap. For this report, I didn't perform my usual Windows pre-installation "clean boot." Instead, I just removed all Norton Anti-virus programs and booted my NEC (233Mhz Pentium MMX, 256 Mhz of memory) running Win98SE with everything in place. The installation - direct from the CDROM drive - was blindingly fast and flawless. After clicking through the usual legal agreements and filling out the brief identity stuff, I was greeted with the askSam splash screen - surrounded by what looks almost exactly like a Microsoft Word frame. And it is, along with a provocative "Search" bar beneath the usual button bars and drop menus.

The splash screen was automatically and quickly replaced by a "Start" window display. Within this are two areas: a "Create A New Database using..." area and a "Open existing file" area. There are two

choices in the "Create..." They are Blank Database and Template Database. Below that, a second area allows you to Open Existing File with a list of existing files in a scroll-down window below. All very Windows-ey, all very familiar.

### DOCUMENTATION

Manuals are only fair, the information is clumped together category style, so that you get primary, first-use information along with advanced information —confusing when you are starting and hard to find months later. The good news is that askSam has a solid online tutorial (called "Help" and "Read Me.") They gave me a leg up as I experimented with the program. That's important, because just reading the information does little for you until you have something real in front of you with which to work. Soon, I was able to get a pretty good overview of where I was, what I could do and where I might go.

### OPERATION

Unlike earlier versions, this 4.0 version emulates MS Word or the Internet Explorer user interface. This includes tips, multiple toolbars, etc., making it all feel familiar and intuitive. Every supplied database ("template") has a header that tells you how to use it. It also includes a list of start-up alternatives to guide you - in real time. even the blank templates.

For example, a new, blank template form starts with you assigning a name by way of a "Save New File" window. This also lists the existing ".ask" files (the extension of all your

**(REVIEW: ASKSAM)***(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)*

askSam data files. After assigning a name - say "Test" - you are delivered to a blank page overlain with a small "Entry Form Wizard - Define Fields" window. This permits you to "create a new entry form with the fields you define. You are to "enter the field names in the order you want them to appear." This is all old ground for anyone familiar with structured databases and sets askSam for your groundwork. Next, the Wizard has you define the properties (data field name, default entry form, field characters) which are shown already in their default mode. Moving on with the "next" button, you learn "This is all the information needed to create your entry form." It then offers you three choices: "Edit Data, Enter Entry Form, Save & Close" with explanations as to what they each mean. Choose one, then begin entering data.

If you decide to choose "Template Database," you are given the choice of templates designed by ask Sam which include address, clip, e-mail, Eudora, phone messages, and ToDo among many others. Choosing "Clip," I was asked to "Save New File" and entered "Newsclips. askSam opened a "Clippings File" with an introduction, a "how to" and a list of various types of clippings and how to organize them. Above all this is the usual Add", "Run a Report," Search" and "Pack This File" hyperlinks, all of them self-explanatory.

The abundance of information - in print and on the Web - creates its own conflict: storage of and accessing related bits of

information from different media. This can be ameliorated through the use of a scanner. But it's all bits and pieces, like Post-it Notes. With askSam I have a way of putting all of it into a database, categorizing it (especially useful for research) and making the critical links. Experimenting, I used the Web page "inhaler" in askSam (or "SurfSaver", see below) with formatting, graphics, photos and hyperlinks retained. I then plugged in some e-mail exchanges (once I ran them through Caere to convert them to .txt files) and include scanned print material (which askSam converted.) The result - via "New Database" template - was a file of all the material I have gathered under "Test."

**FEATURES**

Company literature claims "over 100 new features," and one can believe it: this askSam looks and behaves unlike any earlier version. It starts all searches from a "search line," initiated with the ESC key, then typing in the word or phrase you need and entering it. The results appear in a new "search results window" which displays all the documents retrieved by the search, with informational overviews. There are new import filters and askSam reads a dozen or more file types (MSWord, Word Perfect, Access, Excel among others. It supports huge file sizes (up to 16 terabytes!), ideal for legal and technical collections. And, as you work with copies, askSam has a "packer" for compressing overabundant file sizes. And the best features - complex Boolean, wild-card and phrase searches - has been an

"askSam" hallmark for some time. You can save all search parameters for later use, or search multiple databases at the same time.

I can verify that askSam is a forgiving program. I messed around, made mistakes and restarted several times at first. One can trash what isn't wanted (just keep notes on what is good, what isn't) right from the opening menu screen. And by so doing, you can learn where things are kept - the askSam subdirectories are easily accessible from within the program via the "File" pull-down or "Open File" icon - very much like MS Word or WordPerfect.

And askSam shows itself to be a powerful program, building reports, employing hypertext and other powerful search elements. Don't even think of getting it all down in one - or even a dozen - evenings. You would be doing yourself, and this creative software program, a disservice. Its power is not built in or fixed so much that your imagination and patient experimenting won't make it stronger and more useful to you.

NOTE: There is a new release of askSam, version 4.1. This features an import filter for Outlook Express, MBox (Netscape), HTML email filters, ability to create Picklists from report output, and new hosting options that allow users to publish askSam databases on the Internet.

Also, askSam offers a browser add-on called *SurfSaver* that essentially grabs the web pages you want and stores them directly into searchable

folders. Unlike bookmarks or other such "capture" programs, this one works directly with askSam to create permanent, searchable archives.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Windows 9x, NT, ME and 2000. Requires a minimum 12 MB disk space

**SUMMARY**

Powerful database program with surprising flexibility. One that you can run at any level of complexity you wish, giving it a kind of built-in customization. It works for *you*, in this sense. Unlike many other databases, everything is intuitive and/or guided by Wizards. And it is fast - even on an old 233 MHz machine!

Price: \$ 150. for the Standard Version recommended), \$395. for the Professional (which adds full text indexing to searches.. askSam Systems, POB 1428, Perry, FL 32348  
<http://www.askSam.com> ♦

**UPGRADE TO WIN XP? -  
 - GET READY NOW**

by **Steve Bass**, Pasadena IBM Users Group

**I'm Going to Upgrade.**

Yep, I'm breaking one of Bass International's number one rules, but I think it's going to be worth it. I can't give you all the details because it's coming out in December's PC World Home Office column (hey, they pay the mortgage). What I can do, however, is share parts of my upgrade experi-

ence, things that I didn't have space to say in the PCW column.\*

**DOS PROGRAMS**

Every legacy application I tried worked. A 1988 version of Fox-BASE+ 2.10, WordStar 7.0, Norton Commander, and even a 1984 copy of Autodex 1.0, something few of you could possibly remember.

More intriguing is Win XP's ability to run these programs better—faster and with more stability—that Win 9x. Why? Who knows, folks, magic maybe, but it does. I had trouble with only one program—an early Windows version of *Ventura Publisher*. It turns out that even the current version of VP won't run under Windows XP. Advice: Read MS's "Reliability Improvements" article that explains why XP's more stable than Win 9x. It's at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/techinfo/planning/reliability/prevention.asp>. Then read "Windows XP Application Compatibility Technologies," a very comprehensive article that explains how to tweak apps so they'll run in XP. Pay special attention to the QfixApp, a tool that gets you to the database of compatibility fixes included with XP. <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/techinfo/planning/appcompat/default.asp>

**DRIVERS AND UPGRADES**

My Turtle Beach Santa Cruz sound card wouldn't work with XP. Advice: As with any Operating System upgrade (excluding Amiga and GEOS), dig out the drivers and upgrades before you start the upgrade. If you can, burn them onto a CD-ROM.

**NETWORKING**

Lots, lots easier than in Win 9x with one proviso...you'll have to dump NETBEUI on the other PCs in the network. Win XP relies to-

tally on TCP/IP. Advice: Hone up on your networking skills or hire a consultant to get you up to speed. Read MS's "Home and Small Office Network Topologies," article at: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/techinfo/planning/networking/topologies.asp>

**INTERNET EXPLORER:**

E 6.0 doesn't support Netscape-style plug-ins. The only one I missed—and was annoyed with MS's removal of—Apple's QuickTime player. That meant I couldn't play MOV videos. MS claims it's for security. I say it's hogwash and a way to lock out Apple. By the time you read this, MS and Apple have probably tweaked the QuickTime Player to support ActiveX controls for IE 6.0. Advice: If the QuickTime player doesn't work, find the patch on MS's site.

**GETTING A JUMP**

One good place to see if your PC is ready for XP is with PC Pitstop. They have a neat-o XP test site that examines your PC's operating system, CPU speed, BIOS version, amount of memory, available hard drive space, and video capabilities. The results tell you how your machine matches up to XP's minimum and recommended requirements. The tool is available for you to try at <http://www.pcpitstop.com/xpready>

MS also has many good articles if you're a tinkerer:

\* The "Consumer Desktop PC Design Checklist for

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

**(UPGRADE TO WIN XP?)***(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)*

Windows XP” provides technical details for building a new PC for XP. <http://www.microsoft.com/hwdev/pcdesign>

\* You might want to continue using W2K while experimenting with XP. Read “Multibooting with Windows 2000 and Windows XP” <http://www.microsoft.com/windows2000/techinfo/administration/management/mltboot.asp>

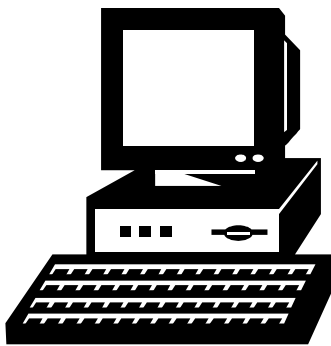
I'll have more to say about my XP upgrade experience next month. §

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Check PCW's current edition at <http://www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp> and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at [www.pcworld.com/bass\\_letter](http://www.pcworld.com/bass_letter).

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which LACS belongs. ♦

**Return To Vendor**

by **Bruce Pechman**, Atlanta PC Users Group

With holiday gift season encroaching upon us with unremitting fervor, what better time to examine and evaluate the collective return policies from major national retailers? For this article, I excluded web purchases, as Internet buying invokes another set of circumstances (except for shipping issues and small print, the policies should remain comparable). Whether you're on the receiving or giving end of computer related software or hardware this holiday season, it's a prudent investment to know your return rights at prevailing retailers.

**SOFTWARE**

Before delving any further, let me state that returns of “computer software and computer related hardware electronics” can be a very thorny affair with your rights varying from state to state and store to store. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for these hi-tech returns to fall under the “grey area” of such policies and established laws. In particular, if you buy software and decide you are unhappy with the product for any reason, you could be in for a “sorry all sales are final attitude” from your retailer. There are two sides of the coin on this rather sticky situation. The retailer takes an inflexible stance for several reasons, but the prevailing justification is the illegal copying of media thanks in part to CDRW drives costing around \$100. Not everyone agrees with this method-

ology. *Bad Software* is a book by Cem Kaner and David L. Pels about getting your money's worth when you buy computer software. The book is written to assist you with getting a refund, support, or compensation for significant losses caused by defective software. Like I said—it's a grey area. If the software does not perform as claimed or is bug-ridden, should you have to bear the loss? You can demand, and sometimes get, a refund from where you bought the software, but you had better visit the web site [badsoftware.com](http://badsoftware.com) or buy the book prior to doing battle. Another path is to review the software box and see if the software maker directly warrants a Money Back Guarantee for 30, 60, or 90 days. Remember software is not like a jacket you can try on...there is no way to know in advance if the software will adequately cover your needs or is buggy by just reading the side panel of the box. Fortunately, if the software is unopened and sealed, most retailers will gladly accept the return with a sales receipt within a specified period of time.

**HARDWARE**

When it comes to hardware and electronics, it's more of a black and white world of delineated guidelines. With the exception of the increasingly popular 15% or higher open box or “restocking” fees, your rights are reasonably negotiable for exchange, refund, or credit within a 30-day period and with a sales receipt. Be aware of unreasonable restocking fees that can come back to bite you. Can you

imagine paying a 15% restocking charge on a \$2000 computer you decided you didn't like 5 days later because the keyboard was not right for you? Well, if you purchased that computer at CompUSA you would have just flushed \$300 down the toilet -- that is an expensive "oops."

#### SAVE ORIGINAL RECEIPT

One last caveat —with the exception of the week after Christmas all major retailers will require an original receipt and valid ID for returns or adjustments. That said, here are four large national chains return policies ranked from best to worst. As return policies are subject to change and modification without prior notice, these are the store policies in writing as of November 2001.

#### STORES

1. **BestBuy:** This retailer is in the number one spot for several reasons. Aside from having great prices, they also claim the least restrictive return policy of merchants in this group. BestBuy usually is first to have new product releases on its shelves. Although they sometimes charge a 15% restocking fee (unless defective), it's only applicable to notebook computers, camcorders, and digital cameras.

2. **Circuit City:** Circuit City's 15% restocking fee expands to all computers, monitors, and printers. Now here is their grey area: "and related merchandise." This statement is open to interpretation, but generally I have found grieving my case in a diplomatic manner to the store manager can be fruitful. Circuit City

prices can be less competitive on some items so keep an eye on their circular advertisements to get the best deals.

3. **CompUSA:** This retailer plays hardball on any return. They are not quite as nasty as Media Play, but they will even soak you for a 15% "Open Box Fee" for a \$20.00 joystick. The CompUSA "Open Box Fee" goes as far to state: "...on ANY open item." In other words if you opened it and return it—you getting zonked for 15% of the purchase price!

4. **Media Play:** Media Play is just flat out malevolent when it comes to returns. Read the back of a Media Play receipt some time. Notice the first sentence: "All returns are subject to management approval." In other words management can deny your return of any product at any time for any reason. How subjective is this policy? So if the store manager is having a bad day he or she just quips, "you can't return that." I have also found their prices to be very uncompetitive. If you buy anything at Media Play I have two words of advice for you...**buyer beware.** I avoid this retailer like the plague!

Some helpful tips do help your "happy returns" go a little smoother at holiday season. Always try to keep the original bag, box, receipt, and packaging if opened. Always be as pleasant and cheery to your returns clerk as possible: "Oh gosh, where did you ever get that shirt with the embroidered Elvis rhinestones—I love Elvis too! Now about this camcorder..." Happy Returns!

The author, Bruce Pechman can be contacted by e-mail at bigbruce11@hotmail.com

*This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which LACS belongs. ♦*

## December Meeting

by **Stephanie Nordlinger,**  
LACS

We had our annual Holiday Party and Volunteer Recognition giveaways along with an interesting presentation on two *Quickpix* digital cameras.

After about 15 minutes of refreshments and socializing, we sat down and heard John Xin, the Los Angeles area manager for NSU Lexington LLP describe the Quickpix QP2 and QP3 cameras and show us their capabilities.

The **Quickpix QP2** is a spy-sized (or pocket-sized) digital, movie and web camera. If you plug it into a computer (via USB) connected to the Internet, you can talk anywhere in the world without charges. Its maximum resolution is 640 x 480 (VGA, 307,200 pixels). It has a LCD status screen and a Viewfinder. It operates on two AAA alkaline batteries or computer power via a USB port. With 8 MB of memory, it can take 26 pictures in high resolution or 107 pictures in low resolution. It works with Windows 98, Me and 2000. Costing \$129 at the Quickpix

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

**(DECEMBER MEETING)***(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)*

website (www.GlobalINSU.com), it was offered to us for \$99 for an indefinite period.

The **Quickpix QP3 digital camera** was just released at COMDEX in November. At 1.3 million pixels, it has 4 times the resolution of the QP2 (1280 x 1024). It can be used as a video web camera to send video mail or engage in web conferencing. It uses standard Compact Flash cards of 16, 32, 64 and 128 MB. The last one costs \$69 and will hold 500 high resolution images, 900 normal resolution images and 1,200 - 1,300 economy resolution images. The 8 MB of internal SDRAM stores 7 - 35 photos even when your batteries are dead.

The QP3 has a fixed focus lens (3 feet to infinity), and he claims it will produce a clear 8 x 10-inch print. It also has , a built-in flash and 2X digital zoom and a 10-second self timer so that you can get into your photos . It can make video clips in up to 50-second segments at 4.5 MB per segment. The LCD display is limited to camera functions, but you get a cable that connects to a TV set so that you can display and edit photos on its screen. Four software programs are included in the price— \$149 list, \$129 for us then or for an indefinite time. Both cameras carry a one-year warranty. The printed manual covers installation only; a downloadable 1.4 MB User's Manual is on the Website.

Mr. Xin answered questions from the audience. A major advantage of digital photogra-

phy is that you can take numerous pictures for virtually no cost and keep and print only those you really like. He recommends using rechargeable batteries because digital cameras use a lot of battery power and use it even when they are turned off.

After a break for more refreshments and socializing, we reconvened for announcements, to recognize more than 40 hard-working volunteers, and to conduct our usual drawing. Everyone went away with something, and a number of people won more than once. The following people were honored for their volunteer work:

Patsy Bellah, Joe Broido, Cindy Cameron, Ros Cirlin, Joe Clark, Leah Clark, David Cottun, Virginia Ford, Jill Fox, Lee Freehling, Richard Harmetz, Merle Hunt, Gene Jacobs, Maria Joyouspirit, Cora Kameron, Helen Karagozian, Effie Katz, Cap Kierulff, Rosalie Kirsch, Fred Kong, Bart Koslow, Zane Lang, Hy Lavere, Charles Mahan, Todd Martin, Marie Martinelli, Doug Mechaber, Fred Moore, Marge Nelson, Ron Nelson, Stephanie Nordlinger, Steve Plafker, Mark Presky, Leatrice Pride, Dick Reaser, Charlie Semple, Charlotte Semple, Elliot Silverstein, Richard Smith, Karl Springer, Bert Stock, Carol Theodore, Herb Van Brink, Paul White, George Wolkon, and Mike Yoshikawa. Following our usual custom, those who were not present didn't receive an award.

**Todd Martin** mentioned the importance of volunteering

some time to keep the Society moving along. Stephanie announced the following openings and asked for volunteers: Recording Secretary, Meeting Correspondent, Greeter Coordinator and Assistant SIG Coordinator. **Charles Mahan** agreed to be Greeter Coordinator as long as someone else lugged the box of materials to and from the meetings. The other vacancies remain. (Rosalie agreed to be our Secretary temporarily, but she would prefer to give the job to someone else.) ♦

---

## Welcome to you All

### New Members (1)

Carol Serling

### Renewing Members (11)

Nina Flores  
William Garber \*  
Roger Kohn  
Zane Lang  
Doug Mechaber  
Robert Morgan  
Gene Polgar  
Karl Springer  
Elizabeth Weinberger  
Jack Wilder  
Lee Youkeles

\* Contributing Member ♦

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## NOTICE

The columns, reviews and other expressions of opinion in *User Friendly* are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Los Angeles Computer Society. ♦

## January 2002 into February 2002

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>HAPPY NEW YEAR</b>	<b>1 January</b>	<b>2</b> Daytime SIG 12 PM	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8 General Meeting 7 PM Forum 6:00 PM</b>	<b>9</b> Board meeting 7 PM sharp	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Daytime SIG 1 PM <u>Hardware SIG 7 PM</u>	<b>16</b> Internet SIG 7 PM	<b>17</b> Membership Committee	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Beginners SIG 7 PM	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Genealogy SIG 7 PM	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>28</b> Digital Photo SIG 7 PM	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1 February</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Daytime SIG 12 PM <u>Lunch Office SIG 7:00 PM</u>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>

### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

SIG meetings are run by and for LACS members. Visitors are welcome to attend up to six SIG meetings (three of the same SIG) before joining LACS. To inquire about a SIG, please call or e-mail the contact person in advance. The temporary SIG Coordinator is Stephanie Nordlinger, (323) 299-3244, pres@lacspsc.org.

SIG	Contact	Telephone	When and Where, Notes
After Meeting	Cap Kierulff	310-472-9206	Dinah's Restaurant on Sepulveda, southwest of Centinela.
Beginners	Maria Joyouspirit	310-474-2026	4th Tuesday, 7 PM. Cal. Fed. Community Room (basement) joyouspirit@angelfire.com
Computer Forum	Beginners Welcome		2nd Tuesday, 6:00 PM before General Meeting. Front of hall,
Daytime	Cap Kierulff	310-472-9206	First Tuesday, 12-1:30 PM, Golden China Restaurant, L.A
	capk@juno.com		Third Tuesday, 1-3 PM, Felicia Mahood Center, W.L.A.
Digital Photo	Helen Karagozian	310-454-3426	helenk2@earthlink.net. 4th Monday, 7 PM American Legion Hall, 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City
Genealogy	Leah & Joe Clark	310-677-2792	Fourth Thursday, 7 PM at Clark's home 424 W. Hillsdale St. Inglewood lclark@ucla.edu.
Hardware	Charlie Semple	310-398-5052	Third Tuesday, 7 PM, Cal. Fed. * csemple@earthlink.net
Internet	Patsy Bellah	310-280-0951	Third Wednesday 7 PM at American Legion Hall, 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City
Membership	Bert Stock	818-905-1756	Third Thursday, 7 PM. Call or e-mail 74274.2312@compuserve.com. for location.
Office Suites	George Wolkon	310-459-2671	First Tuesday 7 PM. Cal. Fed.* wolkon.gbvolkon@verizon.net

\* California Federal Bank Community room (in the basement), 12101 San Vicente Blvd. (at Saltair), Brentwood, \$1/meeting donation requested for room rental at Cal Fed and at American Legion Hall ♦

### Members Helping Members

LACS members volunteer to help other members solve hardware and software problems by telephone during the hours listed below. Select the topic from the list and then call the person whose number is listed next to it. We hope that you find this free service useful. ***If you are experienced in a particular program or topic, please volunteer to be a consultant.*** To volunteer for this list or to make corrections, please e-mail editor@lacspsc.org or call Dick Smith at (323) 294-3441. More Quick Consultants are always needed. You can always decline or postpone a call if it catches you at the wrong time. You perform a valuable service and often learn something unexpected! ♦

Adobe Acrobat - 47	Microsoft Access - 48	Printing - 42, 43
America Online - 20, 44	Microsoft Excel - 7, 49, 51	Procomm + - 24
Ami Pro, WordPro - 14	Microsoft FoxPro - 27, 48	QModem, QMPro - 24
Basic - 8, 48	Microsoft Office - 41, 43	QuickBooks - 14, 37
C++ - 27	Microsoft Power Point - 49	Quicken - 14, 20
Communications - 24	Microsoft Publisher - 14, 32, 33	Speed Read - 24
Data Bases - 48	Microsoft Word - 9, 43, 49	Terminate - 24
Genealogy - 20, 34	Microsoft Works - 32, 34, 44	TurboTax - 14
GoldMine - 41	Modems - 24	Unix - 48
Graphics - 33	Networks - 7, 41, 48	Viruses - 46, 48
Hardware - 7, 41, 42, 43, 48	OLX - 24	Windows - 7, 32, 48
Internet - 43, 44, 45, 48	OnTime - 1, 20	Windows 95/98 - 7, 41, 43, 48
LA FreeNet - 14, 24	PhotoDeluxe, Adobe - 50	WordPerfect - 1, 20, 33
Linux - 48		

No.	Name	Daytime Phone	Eves/Weekends	From	To
1	Broido, Joe	310-829-3736	310-829-3736	9 AM-10P M	
7	Greenberg, Allan	310-576-1310	310-576-1310	10 AM-10 PM	
8	Heller, Elmer	310-839-9764	310-839-9764	9 AM-10 PM	
9	Hershman, Irv	310-397-9453	310-397-9453	11 AM-11 PM	
14	Kammerman, Cora	310-472-7487	310-472-7487	10 AM-8 PM	
20	Nordlinger, Stephanie	323-299-3244	323-299-3244	9 AM-10 PM	
24	Springer, Karl	310-645-3410	310-645-3410	10 AM-10 PM	
27	Rombouts, Tom	310-519-2941	310-519-2941	6 AM-11 PM	
32	LaVere, Hy	310-837-6517	310-837-6517	10 AM-9 PM	
33	Kierulff, Cap	310-472-9206	310-472-9206	9 AM-9 PM	
34	McDonald, Len	310-836-8698	310-836-8698	9 AM-10 PM	
36	Hage, Elias	310-815-8020	310-815-8020	9 AM-10 PM	
37	Ganz, Bill	310-360-7088	310-360-7088	9 AM-9 PM	
41	Engfer, Mark	N.A.	310-451-1942	5 PM-10 PM	
42	Theodore, Carol	310-659-0604	N.A.	9 AM-5 PM	
43	Semple, Charlie	310-398-5052	310-398-5052	9 AM-10 PM	
44	Lang, Bobbi	310-454-9903	310-454-9903	10 AM-5 PM	
45	Gibson, Merrill	310-785-9487	N.A.	9 AM-5 PM	
46	Martin, Todd	818-766-1151	818-766-1151	10 AM-10 PM	
47	Gold, Mike	N.A.	310-379-8321	6 PM-10 PM	
48	Flores, Alexys	N.A.	310-306-8403	8 PM-11 PM*	
49	Beckman, Loling	310-471-7893	N.A.	9 AM-5 PM	
50	Silverstein, Elliot	310-670-1644	310-670-1644	10 AM-10 PM	
51	Katz, Effie (Pager)	310-785-3313	310-785-3313	9 AM-10 PM	

\*Weekend: 3 PM-10 PM ♦

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## Free Software! Write A Review

by **Zane Lang**, Product Review Coordinator

Write a review – get free software, and help our drawings. Many vendors send extra programs for the club drawing with review software. Anyone can write a good review. Do not be afraid. We will help you. If you would like to review a program not on the list, contact me, Zane Lang, at <productreview@lacspc.org> or Fred Moore at <fredmo@ix.netcom.com>, and we will attempt to obtain a review copy for you.

### AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW:

(Please contact productreview@lacspc.org or fredmo@ix.netcom.com)

**ArcSoft Photo Studio 2000** – Powerful, easy-to-use digital image photo editing program. www.arcsoft.com

**As-U-Type** – A great tool to correct spelling and increase typing productivity on the fly. www.asutype.com

**Cookie Pal Version 1.7a** – Keeps track of Web cookies. www.kburra.com.

**Endnote Version 5** – Bibliographies made easy. www.endnote.com

**Express Thumbnail Creator** – quickly and easily prepare your image collections to be published on the web. www.express-soft.com/etc/

**Family Trees Quick and Easy.** Genealogy software. www.individualsoftware.com

**Hardwood Hearts** – Hearts

computer card game. www.silvercrk.com

**Hardwood Solitaire II** – Solitaire computer card game. www.silvercrk.com

**Hardwood Spades.** Spades computer card game. www.silvercrk.com

**HyperText Studio 4.0** - a WYSIWYG authoring tool to create

**WinHelp, Web Sites and HTML Help.** www.olsonsoft.com

**Modem Booster 2.5** – If you are having slow Web download and surfing speeds, use this Web Accelerator to increase your modem speed. www.inlineglobal.com

**Norton Utilities 2002** – Optimizes your PC's performance and solves problems easily. www.symantec.com

**PictureIt Photo 2001** – Photo gallery organizer, fix digital photos, share photos online, includes digital mats, templates and frames. http://pictureit.msn.com

**PhotoSUITE 4.0** – Web and PC photography made easy. www.photosuite.com

**PhotoVISTA 1.0** – Lets you create vivid and compelling panoramic photos quickly and easily. www.mgisoft.com

**Professor Teaches Microsoft Office XP Plus.** 9 CD tutorials on Word XP, Excel XP, PowerPoint XP, Access XP, Outlook XP, Internet Explorer 5.5, Windows ME, Windows 2000, Windows 98. www.individualsoftware.com

**Resume Maker Deluxe** – Resume and job search software.

www.individual.com

**Screen Creator Deluxe** – Create screen savers in 10 minutes. www.individual.com

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When you receive your copy of User Friendly, please notify Gene Jacobs at Eugene7685@aol.com with the date of receipt and your zip code. Gene is gathering data to try and see what can be done to improve delivery of User Friendly. Thanks for your help. ◆

## Meeting Reporter Needed

You do not have to be an expert on computers or writing-- just take a few notes or make a recording if you prefer, during the monthly meeting and in the next day or so summarize your notes or your recording and write a brief report of what happened at the meeting. Please volunteer to take on this task. You don't have to be as expert as Herb — just be willing to give it a try. If no one volunteers to pick up this job, there will be no more meeting reports in User Friendly, so give it a try. Contact editor@lacspc.org and say you will give it a try. Or phone (323)294-3441 and leave a message. Thanks. Dick Smith ◆

## Review — PowerQuest Partition Magic 7.0

by Carol Theodore, LACS

Partition Magic 7.0 is the latest partitioning software from PowerQuest. For those of you who are not familiar with partitioning software and partitioning in particular, here is a brief introduction. Before you can install an operating system on a fixed disk (hard drive), the drive must be partitioned. In Windows and DOS this means using the utility called Fdisk. Fdisk destroys any partitions on the hard drive. Therefore, if you want to change the size of a partition already created, fdisk is not a good choice. Enter Partition Magic. This program allows you to resize, change, and combine partitions without destroying your data.

### REQUIREMENTS

System requirements for Version 7.0 are a minimum of 54 MB of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive, 3.5 floppy drive. Minimum memory requirements for Windows 95/98, Windows Me, Windows NT 4.0 Workstation is 32 MB. For

Windows 2000 Pro and Windows XP the minimum memory requirement is 64 MB. For Windows 95/98 you will need at least a 486 or compatible. For Windows Me you will need a Pentium 150 or greater (or compatible.)

### INSTALLATION

I installed Partition Magic 7.0 on a Pentium 4/ 1.5 Ghz machine with 384 MB of 133 SDRAM and a 30 GB hard drive running Windows 98/SE. Installation was easy and started automatically when I put the CD in the drive. (This will occur only if you have auto-insert notification set.) I had Partition Magic 6.0 previously installed. Version 7.0 recognized that installation and asked me if I wanted to uninstall Version 6.0 to which I said yes. After Version 6.0 was uninstalled, installation of Version 7.0 started automatically. I chose the Custom installation option that allowed me to set a different directory and partition, and choose which features to install. I was prompted to make Rescue Disks and clicked "YES." I needed two formatted floppies. The first floppy is a boot disk and the second has the Partition Magic program

information. These disks will run the program. .

### OPERATION

I ran the program from Windows 98, although some operations were completed in DOS mode. This was done automatically after changes were applied.

The interface is very user friendly with helpful wizards for accomplishing some tasks. One of the most useful features of Partition Magic is resizing partitions. I resized one of my partitions in order to add more space to a swap partition I had created when the drive was set up initially. This operation was accomplished by selecting the partition I wanted to resize, choosing RESIZE from the menu and moving the slider to the appropriate amount of space I wanted to create.

Another useful feature allows the user to split a partition and move some files and folders to that new partition. This is a great feature if you purchased a computer with one large hard drive and one large partition. It is advisable to make more than one partition. I always create several partitions including a swap partition to avoid memory problems.

Using Partition Magic and Boot Magic (a separate installation on the Partition Magic CD), I was able to make a separate primary partition to install Windows 2000. I just ran the Wizard for creating a new partition, installed Boot Magic and installed the new operating system. Boot Magic allows



(CONTINUED ON PAGE 16)

## (REVIEW — POWER QUEST PARTITION MAGIC

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

you to switch between the two primary partitions by hiding the inactive partition.

Features that are new to this version:

Support for Hard Drives up to 80 GB

Support for an external USB Hard Drive

Splitting partitions below the root folder

Merging NTFS (NT files system) partitions

## SUMMARY

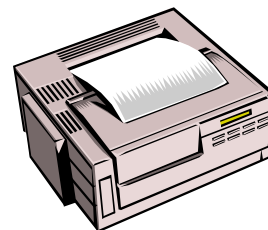
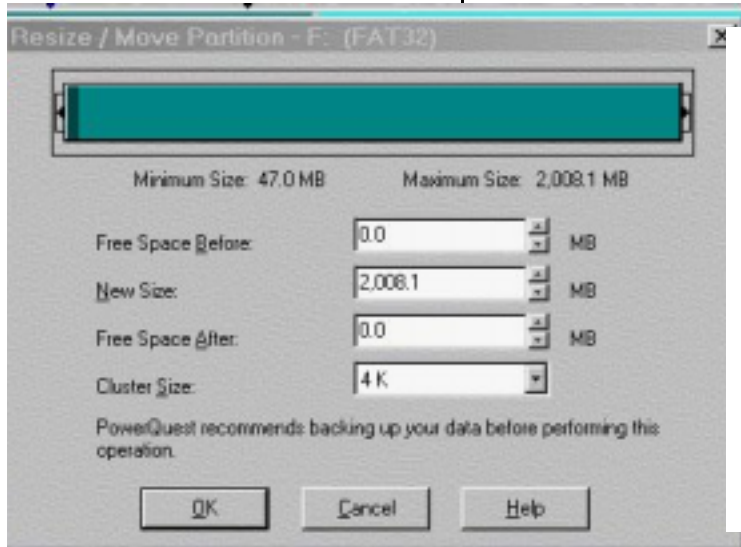
Partition Magic has always been a very useful program. This latest version works more smoothly and is more user-friendly than previous releases. Along with Drive Image, Partition Magic has been a part of my toolkit for a long time and will continue to be so.

Partition Magic 7.0  
PowerQuest Corporation

P.O. Box 1911,  
Orem, Utah 84059-1911 USA  
801-437-4218

support@powerquest.com

Street Price: \$70 ♦



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## What Were They Thinking...

### PRODUCTS THAT NEVER SAW THE LIGHT OF DAY

by **Steve Bass**, Pasadena IBM Users Group

Ever wonder about the stuff we never write about? I write for PC World and I'm on the inside. I get to see all junky software, bizarre gadgets, and wacky hardware. Here are a few that ended up in the trash can.

### TELL ME ABOUT IT

Do you need to get some work done? Tired of hassling with Windows and exhausted from installing all those upgrades? Try The Couch, a hot new product from the cool streets of Beverly Hills. Within six hours of using The Couch, you'll be ready to give up your computer and get a life. Features include WAVs with appropriate and supportive responses, dynamic help screens so you can determine your weekly progress, and a handy dialer for those late night crises. Helpful Wizards are also available to guide you--step by step--through those times when you're nagged with insecurities and doubts. And if that's not enough, you get valuable look-up tables with the most common psychiatric disorders, such as Schizophreniform, Paranoid Schizophrenia, Psychogenic Fugue, and the Writers Disorder, also known as Attention Deficit Disorder, to name just a few. The list price for The Couch is \$150 an hour but I've seen interns and psych assistants working for

as little as \$50. The Couch, Psyche International, (800) LAY-DOWN, [www.psyintl.com](http://www.psyintl.com)

### JUST EXPENSE IT!

Face it: no one likes the hassle of filling in expense accounts. But there's no getting around it, especially if you want to get reimbursed. Fortunately, there's FillUp 2.0, a handy macro for getting your spreadsheet up to speed, quickly and easily. All you need to do is give FillUp a starting range, say, \$150. Within seconds, FillUp works backwards, breaking the amount into your spreadsheet categories, including travel and entertainment, transportation, and lodging, to name just a few. The program's smart, using odd numbers, such as \$5.21, \$16.63, and \$35.17, and the total is never an even number. Don't have a spreadsheet with categories? No problem because FillUp will do it for you, in over seven professional categories including sales rep, attorney, and journalist. What's more, FillUp even prints receipts, from taxi and airline tickets to restaurant stubs and itemized hotel portfolios. Macros available for Excel, Quattro Pro, and Paradox. List Price: \$75. FillerUp Corp, (212) 555-fill, [www.fillerup.com](http://www.fillerup.com)

### LICKITY SPLIT REPLIES

It's a fact of life: In today's economy, many people are out of work. At the same time, busy executives barely have time to read, never mind answer, their electronic mail. But with QuickReply, there's a quick solution for everyone. QuickReply is a remote communication package that actually pays you to log onto an

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(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)

**(WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?)***(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17)*

keeping your child's profile in mind. In no time flat, your child has a polished report ready to go. What's more, Make the Grade discovers items even the professor probably doesn't know. The professional version creates theses, dissertations, and newspaper and magazine articles. List price: \$79; Professional \$249. MG Systems, (213) 555-grad. [www.makethegrade.com](http://www.makethegrade.com)

**PLAY IT SAFE**

You've seen them on everything from old-fashioned floppy disks and Zip drives to hard drives. **AVOID EXPOSURE TO ALL MAGNETIC FIELDS. DO NOT BEND OR FOLD.** Unfortunately, most people don't pay close attention to the warning, resulting in damage to untold thousands of disks and drives. Millions of dollars and more than thirty thousand jobs are lost each year because of this carelessness. Luckily, GayGezunt's got a hot answer: bright fluorescent BeSafe Tags that will be noticed and remembered! Self-adhesive and tough to remove, BeSafe Tags carry the important warning all end-users should heed. Available in over thirty colors, such as Hot Pfunk, Sizzling Scatado, and Cool Culumber, the tags use standard fonts as well as Algerian, Zonk and Bondini. Try BeSafe Tags on other items, such as your morning newspaper, your car, your spouse, and your children. List price: \$3/roll. GayGezunt Int'l. (714) 555-safe. [www.gaygezunt.com](http://www.gaygezunt.com)

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**DO IT YOURSELF RECEIPTS**

Do you cut those rebate coupons out of the newspaper? You know the kind: Send in the product's UPC code, fill out the form, and include the store's original receipt. Do you always fall for it? Don't feel bad, it happens to all of us. In fact, it's a well-thought out marketing scam, because you never, ever save the store receipt, and never send anything, saving the company plenty of bucks. Fortunately, there's BoguStub, a hot solution developed by a cool programmer with too much time on his hands. From an easy to use Windows interface, type in the name of the store, the date purchased, and the price and name of the purchased items. And Voila!, out pops an authentic receipt from your laser printer, complete with accurate sales tax added to the total. BoguStub's features include a handy pull-down menu of local stores, the ability to change tax tables, and even a friendly "Thanks for shopping with us!" tag at the bottom of the receipt. BoguStub is also useful when you've lost a receipt and need to return an item. Future releases will let you print a color watermark on the receipt, add store names to a look-up table, and print realistic perforations. List price: Free. LastMinuteProductions, <http://www.bogusystem.com/>

Yes, before you send me e-mail, all of these products are entirely fictional. Except, strangely enough, BoguStub, which is a legitimate product, available on the author's web

site.

*Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Write to him at [steve\\_bass@pcworld.com](mailto:steve_bass@pcworld.com). Check PCW's current edition at [www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp) and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at [www.pcworld.com/bass\\_letter](http://www.pcworld.com/bass_letter). This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization to which LACS belongs. ♦*

**CD-ROM Read Only Attribute**

by **Lou Eckhoff**, Tacoma Open Group

[Recently I bought a new laptop computer and wanted to transfer several old familiar programs to it from my old computer. The new computer did not have a 5 1/4 inch disk drive (remember them?) so I could not load the programs from the original disks. However, both computers had a compact disk drive.]

A CD-ROM with its 600 megabyte capacity sounds like a great way to transfer files from one computer to another. But if you do so, you may find that when the files are transferred to the receiving computer the Read Only attribute has been set. [That's what happened to me when I tried to copy those old DOS-based programs and

their data files from my old computer to the new one, using a CD-ROM as the transfer medium. With data files set to R/O status I could not update them.] Windows sees the CD-ROM as a read-only device and sets the attribute [to R/O] when the files are transferred to [the CD-ROM]. The R/O attribute is retained when they are copied to the hard disk. The files can be set to Read-Write status through Windows Explorer by going to the file properties. This can be tedious if you have transferred many files as it is a one-at-a-time process.

DOS to the rescue! The ATTRIB command in DOS accepts wild cards, and can be used to change the attributes of many files with one command line entry. Here's how:

Get to the DOS command prompt, Go to Start, Run and type command if you don't have a shortcut to DOS. [At the DOS prompt, C:\>,] change to the directory where you have stored the files.

To see the file attributes that have been set to Read Only type:

ATTRIB \*.\*.

To change all of the files in the directory and its sub directories type:

ATTRIB -r \*.\* /s

**Authors Notes.**

In case you don't recall [or never knew] these command "switches", let us help you recall their meanings:

ATTRIB +r filename.ext means

set the file filename.ext to Read Only

ATTRIB -r filename.ext means set the file filename.ext to Read Write

/s processes (i.e. applies the command to) files in all subdirectories of the specified path.

In this case ATTRIB -r \*.\* /s sets ALL files in the directory and any subdirectories to Read Write status.

<sup>1</sup> I had to look them up in our old MS-DOS manual!

This article was originally published in the September 2001 issue of *Toggle*, the monthly newsletter of the Tacoma-Seattle area Microcomputer Users. ♦

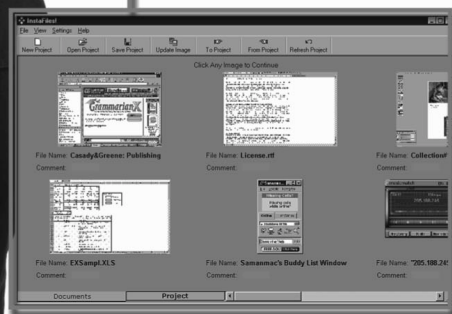
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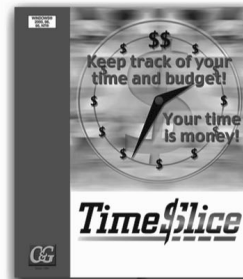
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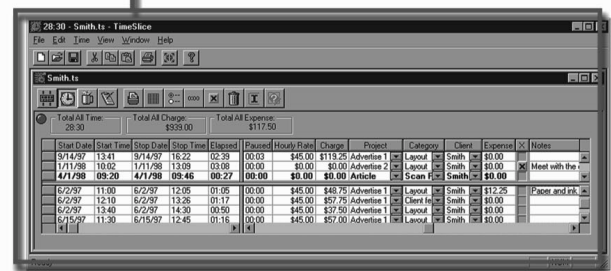


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**USER FRIENDLY INDEX CJULY-DECEMBER, 2001**

Compiled by **Merle Hunt**, LACS

**ARTICLES**

- Are You Ready for a Digital Darkroom by Beverly RosenbaumCJuly p.3  
Can Spam by Brian BackmanCOct. p.3  
Computer Terminology Explained by Don SingletonCOct. p.17  
Connecting Your PC to Your Stereo by Bruce FriesCAug. p.3  
Customizing the Start Menu by Steve BassCDec. p.3  
Freeing System Resources by Tom AndersonCNov. p.12  
From the Novice Corner--About CD's by Ed HughesCJuly p.9  
Getting Started With Internet Music by Bruce FriesCSept. p.5  
Protecting Your Computer From Viruses, Worms, And Trojans by Ira WilskerCNov. p.16  
The Internet? I Can't Live Without It! by Steve BassCDec. p.15  
The Windows Registry for Newbies by Guenter SchottCAug. p.12  
Timely Delivery of User Friendly by Dick SmithCNov. p.14  
Unofficially, USB Could Mean 'User's Super Buddy' by Ken FermoyleCOct. p.13  
Vinyl LP to Audio CD or MP3 Files by Bruce FriesCNov. p.6

**COLUMNS**

- Free Software! Write A Review by Bart KoslowCCJuly p.14; Aug. p.15  
Free Software! Write a Review by Zane LangCSept. p.12COct. p.12;CNov. p.12CDec. p.12

**NOTICES & MATTERS OF INTEREST**

- A Message from Charlie: LACS E-Mail Lists by Charlie SempleCNov. p.17  
Books at Discount by Stephanie NordlingerCOct. p.18  
Charlie Sez: User Friendly Delivery by Charlie SempleCAug. p.5  
Genealogy SIG Note by Ros CerlinCSept. p.7  
LACS Election Near CAug. p.5  
LACS Election: VOTE! CSept. p.1  
LACS Library by Leatrice PrideCSept. p.18  
Meeting Reporter Needed CSept. p.4  
Meeting Reporter Needed by Dick SmithCOct. p.12  
Meeting Reporter Needed by Dick SmithCDec. p.18  
Mort Bernstein by Gene JacobsCOct. p.7  
New SIG: E-Mail/Internet by Patsy BellahCAug. p.12  
Some Useful URL's by Jim DinkeyCDec. p.17  
The Langelist by Paul WhiteCJuly p.16  
User Friendly Font by Dick SmithCSept. p.18  
User Friendly Index--January-June, 2001 compiled by Merle HuntCJuly p.20

**SOFTWARE REVIEWS**

- ArtIcons Pro 3.01 by Zane LangCDec. p.5  
AutoEye v. 1.0 by Dick ReaserCOct. p.7  
Blue Squirrel ClickBook 5.0 by Mort BernsteinCSept. p.13  
Camtasia v. 2.1 by Bart KoslowCAug. p.4  
DeLorme Topo USA v. 3.0 by Joe ClarkCJuly p.19  
Family Tree Maker, Version 8 by Ros CirlinCJuly p.16  
FlipAlbum Suite 4.0 by Zane LangCNov. p.7  
InKline Stay Connected 3.2 by Bill HughesCAug. p.13  
JASC Paint Shop Pro v. 7.02 by Herb Van BrinkCAug. p.6  
Microsoft Office 2000 Premium Suite--Part II by Douglas MechaberCNov. p.3  
OmniPage Pro 10 Ver. 10.01 by Hyman L. LaVereCOct. p.5  
OmniPage Pro 11 by Hyman LaVereCDec. p.12

Partition Magic v.6.0 by Stephanie NordlingerCJuly p.7  
 PhotoImpact 6 by Jim WorkmanCSept. p.15  
 PowerQuest Datakeeper 3.0 by Bart KoslowCSept. p.12  
 QuickBooks Pro 2001 by Charlotte SempleCAug. p.15  
 Quicken 2001 Home & Business by Barton KoslowCAug. p.7  
 Timeslips v. 10.5 by Stephanie NordlingerCOct. p.15  
 WebWhacker 2000 by Douglas MechaberCDec. p.2

### BOOK REVIEWS

Tech TV's Upgrading Your PC by Mark Soper reviewed by Douglas MechaberCDec. p.6  
 Upgrading and Repairing PC's by Scott Mueller reviewed by Douglas MechaberCDec. p.6

### AUTHOR INDEX

Tom Anderson : Freeing System Resources- Nov.  
 \*Brian Backman: Can Spam- Oct.  
 \*Steve Bass  
     Customizing the Start Menu- Dec.  
     The Internet? I Can't Live Without It!- Dec.  
 Patsy Bellah : New SIG: E-Mail/Internet- Aug.  
 Mort Bernstein  
     Blue Squirrel ClickBook 5.0- Sept.  
     June Meeting Report- July  
 Ros Cerlin  
     Genealogy SIG Note- Sept.  
     Family Tree Maker, Version 8- July  
 Joe Clark : DeLorme Topo USA v. 3.0- July  
 \*Jim Dinkey : Some Useful URL's- Dec.  
 HKen Fermoyle: Unofficially, USB Could Mean 'User's Super Buddy'- Oct.  
 HBruce Fries  
     Connecting Your PC to Your Stereo- Aug.  
     Getting Started With Internet Music- Sept.  
     Vinyl LP to Audio CD or MP3 Files- Nov.  
 Bill Hughes : InKline Stay Connected 3.2- Aug.  
 \*Ed Hughes : From the Novice Corner--About CD's- July  
 Merle Hunt : User Friendly Index--January-June, 2001- July  
 Gene Jacobs : Mort Bernstein- Oct.  
 Bart Koslow  
     Camtasia v. 2.1- Aug.  
     Free Software! Write A Review- Aug.; July  
     PowerQuest Datakeeper 3.0- Sept.  
     Quicken 2001 Home & Business- Aug.  
 Hyman L. LaVere :  
     OmniPage Pro 10 Ver. 10.01- Oct.  
     OmniPage Pro 11- Dec.  
 Zane Lang  
     ArtIcons Pro 3.01- Dec.  
     FlipAlbum Suite 4.0- Nov.  
     Free Software! Write a Review- Sept.; Oct.;Nov.; Dec.  
 Douglas Mechaber :  
     Microsoft Office 2000 Premium Suite--Part II- Nov.  
     Tech TV's Upgrading Your PC by Mark Soper- Dec.  
     Upgrading and Repairing PC's by Scott Mueller- Dec.  
     WebWhacker 2000- Dec.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 22)

**USER FRIENDLY INDEX)***(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21)*

Stephanie Nordlinger

Books at Discount- Oct.

Partition Magic v.6.0- July

Timeslips v. 10.5- Oct.

Leatrice Pride : LACS Library- Sept.

Dick Reaser : AutoEye v. 1.0- Oct.

\*Beverly Rosenbaum : Are You Ready for a Digital Darkroom- July

\*Guenter Schott : The Windows Registry for Newbies- Aug.

Charlie Semple

A Message from Charlie: LACS E-Mail Lists- Nov.

Charlie Sez: User Friendly Delivery- Aug.

Charlotte Semple : QuickBooks Pro 2001- Aug.

HDon Singleton : Computer Terminology Explained- Oct.

Dick Smith

Meeting Reporter Needed- Oct.; Dec.

September Meeting Report- Oct.

November Meeting Report- Dec.

Timely Delivery of User Friendly- Nov.

User Friendly Font- Sept.

Herb Van Brink

July Meeting Report- Aug.

August Meeting Report- Sept.

October Meeting Report- Nov.

JASC Paint Shop Pro v. 7.02- Aug.

Paul White : The Langalist- July

\*Ira Wilsker : Protecting Your Computer From Viruses, Worms, And Trojans- Nov.

Jim Workman : PhotoImpact 6- Sept.

**PRESENTERS-LACS MEETINGS**

June Meeting Report in July issue p. 2:

Charlie Semple: Power Quality

July Meeting Report in Aug. issue page 1:

Powerquest: Partition Magic; Managing hard disks .

August Meeting Report in Sept. issue page 1:

Microsoft: Office XP .

November Meeting Report in Dec. issue page1:

FBI Special Agent Frank Harrill: Computer Crime .

**LEGEND**

\* = Author of article reprinted from a PC User group publication

H = Article reprinted from various PC publications ♦



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In addition to LACS monthly general meetings, members enjoy these special benefits:

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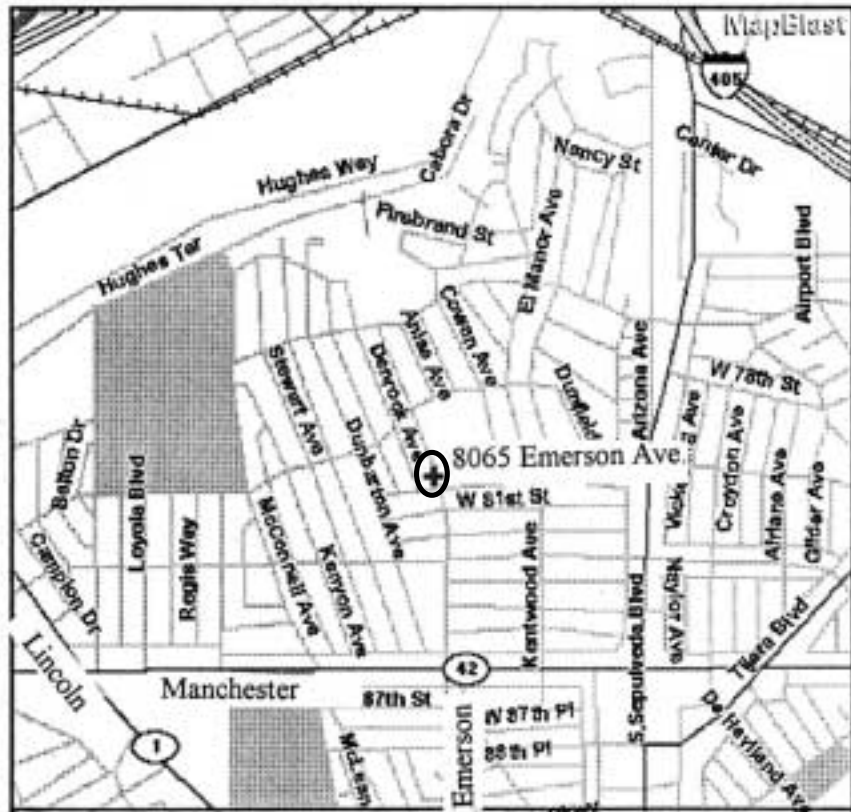
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