

Bits & Bytes

A Publication of the Kern PC Users Group

A WORD FROM HENLEY'S

Dusty Wagner is our speaker for the February program. He has been with Henley's Photo Shop for seventeen years and is the manager there. Dusty is going to talk about how the industry has changed with cameras and photography. He will also talk about Digital cameras and media format.

Henley's Photo Shop has been in business for over fifty three years and is located at 2000 H Street. They do full service photography, which entails new equipment, repairs of cameras and photos, processing, developing, color, black and white, enlargements, rentals, dark room, lighting and a studio. They also give photo classes throughout the year.

The meeting is February 14 (Bring your Valentine)



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The following rates are for one insertion in the **KIPUG** newsletter. All copy must be received camera-ready, no later than the 15th day of any given month for publication in the following month's newsletter.

Camera-ready copy should be submitted to Bits & Bytes, c/o Dave Chalmers, P.O. Box 2780, Bakersfield, CA 93303

KIPUG members who have computer related items for sale or trade or who have information they would like to share with other members may do so **FREE** of charge as space permits. Ads larger than business card size are subject to 50% of normal advertising fees. Non-members are subject to the normal advertising fees.

Business Card \$ 5.00
Quarter Page \$ 15.00
Third Page \$ 20.00
Half Page \$ 30.00
Full Page \$ 60.00

ADVERTISERS

KIPUG will mail your direct computer user targeted mail advertisement (fully prepared for mailing, including postage) to our entire membership at a reasonable fee. For more information, please contact Rhonda Pierce, President, at pierce27@earthlink.net.

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I want to thank everyone who worked on the Xmas Meeting Potluck and Door Prizes. I don't want to list names because I know I will accidentally miss someone and don't want to forget anyone. You all did a wonderful job working on the December meeting activities. A great big thank you to you all.

We are starting off this year with a different format at the meetings. The first few minutes are business related things, the program speaker, and then we break out into SIG Groups such as Video/Digital and Imaging SIG ran by Sam Thompson, which also meets the third Thursday at Sam's house, Linux SIG coordinated by Steve Garcia, Web Page SIG coordinated by Sarah Perelli-Minetti, Games SIG coordinated by Ryan Turner and Newbies SIG coordinated by Lance Clarke. The Tech SIG (Nerd Nite) is still meeting the fourth Thursday at Sam's house. Rick Daney is the SIG coordinator for all of the SIG Groups. A big thank you to these members for taking over as coordinators of these SIG's. We can always add other SIG's as people show interest in them, just contact Rick. We had a good response to the SIG's meeting at the end of the January regular meeting, everyone seemed to have a good time.

We are also starting a Games critic/review column in the newsletter, which will be done by Ryan Turner. This will help a lot of parents and grandparents to buy or not buy certain games as presents for kids. Sarah Perelli-Minetti has agree to be our new WEB Master for the KIPUG Web Site. Cont pg 10

Bio hazard game review

STRONGHOLD

STRONGHOLD is a game that will drag you into a medieval world of stunning realism Take control as king and build a castle like none have ever seen! *BY: Ryan Turner.*

The Dirt

Graphics: 8

Birds flyin! trees movin!, kids playin! The Gfx ROCK!

Sound: 10

Everyone talks, you can hear the wind blowing, and you can even hear the enemy's units chatting!

Gameplay: 6

So many game modes ranging from a simple economic based game to a mid war siege game!

Controls: 8

The controls are easy to learn and there are more than in a regular RTS game.

Total coolness: 8

Overview

Stronghold is about castle building, similar to age of empires. I have played many RTS (real time strategy) games but this has to be the game with the most impressive graphics and sound of all the RTS games I've ever played (on my computer) a definite winner!

Evaluation

Ups:

- Superior graphics, superior sound
- Quick to learn, Packed with functions
- Tons of speech, All text is spoken

Downs :

- Doesn't have music

Mom-O-Meter

Mom-o-meter will be substituted by Dad-o-meter this month

This looks like a fun game that has lots of interactive characters doing all kinds of jobs that are needed to create a secure kingdom. There is no gore in the game it looks like a very fun game to play.

System Specs: DirectX 7, Pentium II 300, 64 MB RAM, 750 MB HD, 8X CD-ROM, 4 MB graphics card, sound card, 56K modem (for multiplayer).

Genealogy Corner

Bits & Bytes

Jim Opperman

February 2002

This month we bring you some hot sites to check out on-line. Even if you think a site is not of interest to you because of location or family surnames, it can be worth a visit in directing you to another site that is of more interest to you, or you may discover something by serendipity that you would otherwise have missed. Don't be afraid to explore!

[http://
freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/
~ccfgpw/](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~ccfgpw/)

[http://
freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/
~holdengeneral/](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~holdengeneral/)

[http://
freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/
~woodruffgen/cbw.htm/](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~woodruffgen/cbw.htm/)

USGENWEB and WORLDGEN-
WEB:

<http://usgenweb.org> is a volunteer project site where you can find much valuable information.

The ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER contains the USGenWeb Archives submissions of the prior week:

[http://www.rootsweb.com/
~usgenweb/newsletter/index.htm](http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/newsletter/index.htm)

Remember sites such as this one are always changing, and there is usually a means for you to post queries of a surname or family line you are re-searching.

Please let us know when you find something that is important to you at mentorjim@atsecure.net.

Tell us about your favorite links so we can post them here for all to see.

I recently got a ton of family information because I went to Fulton Co, OH excellent web site and found ancestors and extended family I had previously thought were only in Holmes Co., OH. The webmaster turned out to be a distant cousin! I was able to provide some family information he didn't have in exchange. It is, indeed, a small world especially when you use the Internet.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

WILLIE LOWELL, KIPUG Treasurer

by Caroline Corser

Think of Willie Lowell as consistent and persistent over the long haul. Once his family settled in Bakersfield when Willie, properly known as William, was in the fourth grade, he never left except for vacation travel. He never lost his interest in electronics, either, which began when he started working on audio visual equipment in the fifth and sixth grades. This interest led to part-time work in high school as a stage hand at Harvey Auditorium where he ran the lights and sound for visiting and local programs. During the summers, he repaired and overhauled the electronic equipment for the high school district, which at that time included the junior college district.

When Willie graduated from high school, he promptly enrolled at Bakersfield College with a major in, you guessed it, electronics. He studied computer programming on an IBM 1620 main frame with 20K memory. It used punch cards for input, and output was on the cards or on an IBM Selectric typewriter.

After he earned his degree at B.C., Willie worked as stage manager and technical director for the theater program there. He continued in that position until the college built the Finlinson Center, instructional Forums, and the new Language Arts Building, all with electronic instructional equipment and labs. They decided they needed an electronics technician to manage all that equipment, and Willie was it.

Willie saw the college progress from the IBM 1620 through an NCR Century 200 with tape drives for storing the programs, but he didn't get involved with computers on campus until the early 80's when they started putting computers, with 5 1/4" floppies, on secretaries' desks. Then came instructional computer labs, and the use of electronics mushroomed into every aspect of college instruction and administration.

Willie is now Senior Electronics Technician and handles all electronic systems that are attached to buildings. He designs computer labs, wiring, infrastructure, fire alarms, energy management, electronic signaling, and score boards, to mention a few of his responsibilities.

But he never gave up working as a stage hand. He just moved up to the

Bakersfield Convention Center where he now serves as audio engineer, house electrician, and projectionist.

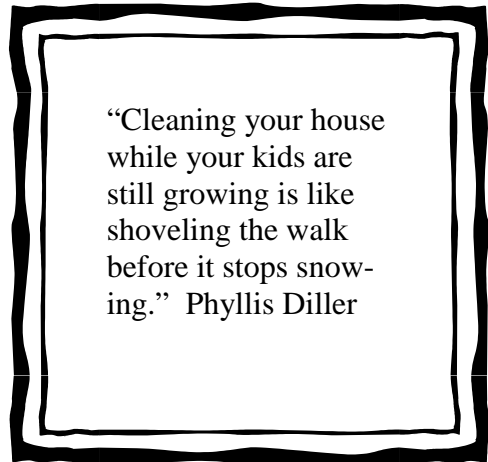
Willie also has a fascinating hobby, as he put it, "chasing trains." He loves to hang out at The Tehachapi Loop near Caliente, or go on up to Tehachapi and Mojave to photograph them. And Willie has traveled across most of the U.S. by train to places like Chicago, Washington, D.C., or his birth place in Wisconsin. He says he meets interesting people and enjoys the friendly atmosphere on trains.

Our faithful treasurer has been a member of KIPUG since the early 80's, back when Bill Peacock was president the first time. He can't remember exactly how long he's been treasurer--at least ten years, according to his recollection.

Besides taking care of KIPUG money, and chasing trains, and working as a stage hand, Willie spends time with his extended family, all here in Bakersfield. In addition to his parents, two brothers, and one sister, with their respective spouses, Willie has "tons of nieces and nephews" whose company he enjoys, often babysitting with them and taking them places.

Willie Lowell is a busy man. Just try to reach him at home,

and you'll discover how hard it is. But you can always count on him to come through with his responsibilities. Thanks for being there for us, Willie.



"Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing is like shoveling the walk before it stops snowing." Phyllis Diller

Rumblings from the editor

Our writers have been so prolific in these last few months that I haven't had room for any comments of my own. Hey! I'm not complaining! I traveled to Comdex this year and had a great time. The goodies available at the APCUG Users group were stunning. As an example, Microsoft passed out a complete Windows XP Pro package to all who attended their meeting. Steve Ballmer attended and gave a very dynamic presentation. Some of the other goodies were passed out to prospective reviewers in our club, when we got back. This is a good point to sell you about volunteering to be club officers. The APCUG meeting is for club officers only. Go to the APCUG meeting as an officer and these goodies are available to you!

Another one of the goodies passed out to us was Adobe Photoshop Elements. This new graphic editing program is essentially a simplified version of Photoshop 6. They have changed the layout of the menus, added a hint section and a recipe menu. There are lots of filters with this program that allow you to do things that look really great to doing something outrageous This

program is designed for the beginner, who can't afford \$600 for Photoshop 6. As far as I am concerned this is not a crippled version of Photoshop. The items missing for the most part are important to graphics professionals, not the person using a digital camera for amateur photos. The product appears to be popular enough that there are books available out there that supplement the Adobe manual. If you want to do some picture editing and are tired of some of the fixed menu programs that don't have flexibility in the way you want to do things, look at this one. The street price after rebates is around \$70. Hopefully there will be a review of Paintshop Pro from Jasc software soon to compare. The prices of both products are very close. I want to greet Ryan Turner as a new columnist. It looks like we will have a steady games review section. This will help us decide what games we will buy for that "Business Computer" that we justified to our spouses. I also want to thank Jim Opperman for his steady column.
Dave

Linux Distributions By Steve Garcia

In our last article about Linux, we discovered that Linux is a Unix-like operating system for PCs.

In a sense, this is a very incomplete view of Linux. More properly, what Linux really consists of is a single very large program known as the “**kernel**”. Other operating systems also have kernels -- if you ever looked at the hidden files on a DOS boot disk you noticed two files with odd names. The names varied depending on whose version of DOS you were running, but these were the DOS kernel. Windows has a kernel, OS/2 has a kernel.

The kernel is the master program that controls every other program that runs. It truly is the center of the operating system.

But no operating system is able to do useful work with only the kernel running. No kernel is set up to communicate with humans, for example. In order to communicate with the end user, the kernel has to have a “**shell**”. The shell's only job is to communicate with the user and allow the user to communicate with the underlying system. Many people thought that “DOS” was a program called COMMAND.COM, but in fact, COMMAND.COM was just the shell that communicated with the user. There were better shell programs out there. I was very fond of one called 4DOS.COM that made

working at the command line a breeze.

Windows has a graphical shell called explorer, but it retains the text based shell too. On the DOS versions of Windows this shell is called COMMAND.COM -- what a surprise. On the OS/2 based versions of Windows (NT and later) it is called CMD.EXE.

So a Unix-like system based on the Linux kernel needs a shell. It also needs a system to start up the rest of the system in an orderly fashion, and it needs a bunch of other systems to do various housekeeping chores. If you have a network card, it needs to have programs that do networking services. It might be nice to give the user a nice graphical environment, and some applications might be nice too. It would be nice if some sort of procedure were available to help the user install all the pieces so a working system was the result.

In the early days of Linux systems, this was pretty much up to the end user. You grabbed a copy of the kernel, grabbed a copy of a C compiler, and went looking for source code of the utilities you thought you'd need. Using your trusty compiler you built from scratch all those utilities and put them into place on your system, and after lots of wailing and gnashing of teeth, you had a working system. But when you got done, you knew your system thoroughly, and Cont pg 10

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you had chosen what you thought were the best set of utilities for your needs.

Still, this was a pretty high bar to jump. Even high powered techies might have a tough time getting the system to work, and even after they did, the system they ended up with might not be set up anything like anyone else's system. Swell for individuality, but not so terrific if you wanted someone else to be able to work on the same system. So fairly early on, motivated system builders came up with the idea of a **“distribution”**. The packager would put together a list of all the utilities and other software that he felt would make a good system, along with a copy of the Linux kernel. He would gather all these components in one place (usually an FTP site) and maybe he would have them all compiled and ready to install. Maybe if you were lucky there would even be instructions on how to put it all together. After a time, the better distributions would even have some sort of installation utility that would do some or all of the work for you. Many modern distributions are so easy to install that you just start them, answer a few questions, and then walk away.

There are now dozens of Linux distributions. Some of these are commercial, some are small groups, some are individual. Slackware is an example of a non-commercial individual who has put together

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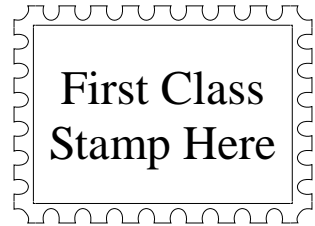
We will have elections this month, so let me know if you are interested in any office or chairmanship.

I went to SCRUGS on January 19th in La Crescenta, California. It was very interesting. I met several officers from other clubs. We talked about several things and it was a good meeting, I enjoyed it very much. We should have an interesting program for Valentine's Day. It is by Dusty Wagner with Henley's Photo on Digital Cameras. See you there! Rhonda [:]

a highly thought of distribution. Not for the faint of heart, but if you want a rock solid system, Slack may be your best bet. Of the commercial distributions, Red Hat is the best known in this country, and [S.U.S.E](#) is very popular in Europe. Mandrake, originally a Red Hat offshoot, is very popular for those who like the bleeding edge, and Debian has a small but loyal following.

Which is best? We'll discuss that another time.

I split Steve's article due to size limitations. Part two next month ED.



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Bakersfield, CA

Your Address Here

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month
at the Kern Superintendent of Schools Building.
17th and L streets Downtown
Meeting Time is 7 pm