

# Bits & Bytes

**A Publication of the Kern PC Users Group**



**This is our picnic meeting. Bring your goodies for the potluck  
June 12 at 7 pm**



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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.

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### 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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Guess What Everybody - Summer Is Officially Here!

We will have our Summer Social Potluck, instead of a meeting this month. Don't forget to bring something yummy! We will have a few nice door prizes to give away, so don't forget to mark Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup> on your calendar. See you there. Rhonda [:-)

Don't forget elections. We need new people. The currently elected officials don't mind if someone else takes the reins. Bob Campbell's letter in the May issue brings out these needs.

## **Volunteer and Vote**

Ed.



## Printer Retirement By Aubrey Cochran

There are ways to avoid the disposal fee for printers.

You should resist as long as possible the allure of a flashy new printer, because otherwise you'll have to figure out what to do with the old one. No longer can we just toss them in the trash. We have to take them to the dump and pay a disposal fee. Resistance is futile, because manufacturers sell printers at a relatively low cost.

However, they make up the money they lose in printer sales by selling ink, at relatively high cost. As far as they are concerned the purpose of a printer is to use ink.

One way to evade the disposal fee is to keep them in use. We currently have five in use, and I suspect there are more in the recesses of our garage. But we've also tried other solutions. One printer, we gave with an older computer to our grandchildren. Another I finally donated to the museum of a local computer store. I think they accepted it more because I had just purchased a high end computer, than the fact that it was one they just had to



have for their collection. But it was a classic and our very first printer, a 1982 Brother HR-1 daisy wheel which printed at an amazing 12 cps (characters per second I had time to make a cup of instant coffee after I sent the document to print). I hauled it out of the closet every year to address envelopes for Christmas cards which it did better than my newer printer.

Our last black only printer we give to an expert computer technician for parts. I understand he has it still intact on his workbench.

The first color printer we decided to abandon be-

cause while the black ink system worked the color didn't. However we let it sit next to our fireplace for about a year while we figured out what to do with it. But really no one wanted it so finally we decided to take it to the dump while enroute to Los Angeles, since the dump is near Arvin.

Just as one prepares a loved one for burial with a nice suit and perhaps a few mementoes, I carefully put the foam supports in place around the printer, and respectfully placed the installation disk and directions inside the box with it. When we got to the dump and asked which road to take up

the pile, I commented to the person inside the booth how sorry I was to have to do this to our printer, and that it still printed in black. She showed some interest and I explained that the booklet and disk were also inside the carton and she could have it if she wanted it. She did, and once more we evaded the disposal fee.

## **I Never Backup Because It Will Never Happen To Me**

By Barry Keniston

No, wait, that's not right. I do backup. I do, I do, I do. It's just that I do it in ways that may be a little different than what you consider to be a conventional backup. At work my computer is a laptop. I work in the field and a laptop is a must for taking my valuable data with me as well as being the console device for much of the equipment that I service. My office, however, has a Novell server on the network for everybody else that is chained to a desk all day to use. Well, I also have a folder or two on the server for my documents, spreadsheets, databases, firmware, and other such files that I need. I use Microsoft Briefcase (free with Windows) to synchronize these files between the office server and my laptop. The important part of this method is to follow two simple rules of operation. Rule #1 - EVERY time I come into the office and connect my laptop to the network, sync Briefcase BEFORE doing anything else. Rule #2 - EVERY time I get ready to leave the office, sync Briefcase as the LAST step before shutting down and disconnecting. I often borrow someone's desktop computer while I am in the office and these rules of operation keep all of my data in line no matter which computer I use at the time.

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## **Ask Not What You Can Do For Your Computer**

But What Your Computer Can Do For You

by Elise M. Edgell

North Orange County Computer Club,  
CA

For many years I have been looking for hardware and software that I could buy for my computer to make it faster, smarter, have more colors, give it more memory, and be able to run more printers, scanners, modems, and various other gadgets. It always seemed that I never had the funds to purchase what I really needed to be able to edit photographs, print high quality photos, have a computer fast enough to run the software to do all the marvelous things available.

Now it seems that computers have evolved to the point where the necessary CPU speed, sound, video, RAM memory, monitor, broadband connection to the Internet, and printers are powerful enough and inexpensive enough to enable people to do all the wonderful things that were previously out of reach. The use of the Internet and digital photography are two very popular uses of the home computer.

But what else can we let the computer do for us? It is obvious in our club that we have an aging membership. It is time to let the computer start assisting us in the things we do. There are some features

built into Windows that can make life easier. It is possible to enlarge the size of the type on the monitor. The speed that the mouse moves can be changed to compensate for a hand that is not as steady as it once was. The color scheme in Windows is changeable. There are many choices as to what appeals to you or as to what makes it easier for you to read the text on the screen. Also, many programs let you change the color scheme to make it easier for you to read the screen.

Have you ever thought about having the computer read to you? There are programs that are able to read any text file. This means that any text that you can copy into Windows Clipboard can be read to you. It can read your e-mail, help files, documents, books, web pages, etc. One such program is iSpeak by Fonix. It also has a place where you can enter your own text and the program will say each letter as you type it and each word as it is completed. Then the text can easily be copied and pasted into your favorite word processing program or e-mail program. The thing that I found very interesting is that when I did some searching on the Web for information about the program there was a whole list of things that it can do for you, none of which indicated that it would be very helpful for anyone with impaired vision.

There is a program called Zoom Text by AiSquared that is aimed at the vision im-

paired market and has an add-on which will read the text out loud, but it is a much more expensive program.

Do you have a problem with carpal tunnel syndrome or are the joints just not working as well as they once did? Are you not a touch typist and have trouble seeing the keyboard? Programs such as Via Voice by IBM and Dragon Naturally Speaking allow you to write text by dictation and even control the functions of the computer with voice commands. In the past these programs weren't very efficient because they take a very powerful computer to work properly. I think the current computers are approaching the necessary compute power.

Many programs can also be used on a PDA such as a Palm or a Pocket PC. Such devices can be very useful because they are easy to take with you when you leave your computer. A PDA can remember megabytes of names, addresses and phone numbers that you are having trouble remembering (Senior moments?). They can be easily programmed to remind you of appointments (time to take pills?), lists of things to do, directions on where to go, etc. About the only requirement is that a person has the ability to read.

E-mail is getting very popular with Seniors but how many people are using the Internet to order groceries? Shopping can

be a major problem if you can no longer drive. Public transportation leaves a lot to be desired. Being able to place an order from your computer and have it delivered is more than a convenience for many people. Also, many pharmacies allow you to order refills of prescriptions on their Web sites. There are many other sites that will mail your prescriptions to you. Using a search program such as Google is also a good way to get information about any medication that you are taking (and about anything else that interests you). You can do all of your shopping using the Internet. Not being able to walk around a shopping mall is no longer a bar to the Shop Till You Drop syndrome.

There are other devices that can be used in the home in conjunction with a computer or in a stand-alone capability that can make life much easier. When it is difficult to get around, it is handy to have a remote control device to turn lights on and off, control a fan, room air conditioner, or any other small appliance. Having a remote video camera in position to show who is at the door is also very handy. There are also devices that can be worn on a cord around the neck so in case of an emergency help can be summoned at the press of a button. Telephones for hearing impaired are available for free in California (with the proper documentation).

This process protects my data by storing it in two different places. Not a bad idea. It even gets better. I also manage the software that automatically performs a tape backup on the Novell server every night. I use a different tape for each day of the week. That way if someone screws up a file and doesn't catch it or report it for a few days I can go back, up to a week, to retrieve the file. On top of that, at the end of each month's billing cycle I run an extra tape labeled for that month which is stored off-site in a secure place. So, with 5 tapes for each day of the work week and 12 tapes for each month of the year, I can go back a full year to find a file that I may need. And yes, it has happened. I had to go back 5 months to get a database file that obviously isn't used very often but when it was discovered to be damaged the user was very appreciative that I was able to restore it.

At home I use a very different method to protect my data. If you have been a member of KIPUG for very long (see, membership does have it's rewards) you will remember the excellent presentations of Partition Magic that occur every year or so. During these presentations we learn to create multiple Logical drives (or even physical drives) to organize the "stuff" that is on our computer. In my case the primary operating system is on Drive C:. My data is on Drive D: and applications are divided between Drive E: and Drive F: depending on what they are

and who uses them. (My stuff is on F: and my grandson's games are on drive E:) This makes Drive D: quite small and easy to back up. Here's how I do it. My wife's computer is set up much the same way and they are networked together to share the same wideband Internet connection. There is a folder on my computer that contains a copy of my wife's data and a folder on her computer that contains a copy of my data.

In the "good-old-days" of DOS, I used a batch file that utilized the REPLACE command to copy only the files that were new or modified from one place to the other. With Windows 3.1 and upgrade to 95 the REPLACE command in the batch file still worked. With Windows 98, however, the REPLACE command went away, but I then discovered that the XCOPY command could be configured to do the same job (almost but close enough).

I told you all of that so I could tell you this; the real reason that I sat down to write this article.

A few months ago a member commented about replacing a dead computer and the difficulties of restoring all of the data onto the new machine. Well, with all of the methods that I use to protect myself from these problems there are still two files that I always forget about that are not part of my current backup procedures. Back in the Windows 3.1 days these files

were included in my batch file process with the REPLACE commands but when REPLACE went away I looked into tape, zip, and other methods of backing up the entire machine and forgot about these two critical files. They are a little hard to find and therefore hard to backup on a file-by-file or folder-by-folder approach. But they are worth the effort to locate and copy to a floppy or something every once in a while for safe keeping, you know, just in case the “unmentionable” ever occurs.

Here they are: Your e-mail address book and your web browser favorites. I use Outlook Express since it is free and most of the people who ask me for help are also using it. Fortunately this program includes an Export menu item to make it easy to get a copy of the data out of the machine. Go to Tools – Address Book to bring up the real address book program. From here do a File – Export. If you are wanting a copy for backup purposes only select Address Book (WAB) from the list of formats. Then follow the normal Windows procedure for giving the data a name and location which can be a floppy disk or even a folder on another computer on your network. The WAB file can then be imported very easily into a replacement machine or any other machine you want to share your address book with. During the import process, duplicates are discarded. I use this method whenever I add people to my address book in one

computer to get the address into my other computers.

The web browser favorites is a folder buried somewhere in the Windows operating area depending on what version of Windows you are running and how many users there are on your machine. Each favorite location is simply a file in this folder. In my Windows 98 computer the folder is found at “C:\Windows\Favorites”. Not too hard to find. However in my Windows XP computer the folder is buried much deeper. I have to go to “My Computer C:\Documents and Settings\Barry Keniston.TOSHIBAS254\Favorites” to get to my favorites. If you have multiple users of your machine they each may have their own Favorites folder and you will need to find each and every one of them if you want to back them up. Make sure to keep them segregated when you back them up so you can put them back where they belong if there are multiple sets of Favorites.

So, if you already have a way to backup EVERYTHING and you do it all the time, wonderful! But, if you don’t, consider backing up SOME of your stuff, some of the time. And don’t forget these two files that I always seem to forget when I’m backing up my stuff.

## SPOTLIGHT ON...

Cynthia Jung

Everyone knows Cynthia Jung. She's the one who always works with Connie Lewis to make coffee for every meeting and helps set up the room for our potluck meetings.

This energetic worker has been involved with KIPUG since the early 90's when she was still working at Chevron. With a degree from Cal State Bakersfield in geology, Cynthia worked with Chevron for 13 years as a technician and in various support roles. At first, they had only five computers in the office, but by 1994, there was a PC on every desk. Chevron sent her to classes to learn to use computers, and she did a lot of learning on the job through trial and error.

She moved on, though. Cynthia started back to school in 1995, and earned a teaching credential in 1998. She started teaching as a long-term substitute for the Bakersfield City School District that year. Since then,

she has taught second and fourth grades, and for the past two years she's been employed as a second grade teacher with the Delano Union School District.

Cynthia also tutors elementary and secondary students for the Sylvan Learning Center. There, she teaches a variety of subjects—reading, math, study skills—whatever they need help with.



The computer has become a valuable tool for Cynthia in her teaching. She uses it to make lesson plans and analyze student data, as well to surf the Internet. When her Gateway computer crashed last year, she got her second computer, a Dell, through e-Bay.

We can thank Connie Lewis for introducing Cynthia to KIPUG, and she's been a constant and dependable member since. Since her whole family is here in Bakersfield, we can probably expect Cynthia to stick with us for a long time.

Caroline Corser



## Membership Application

Annual Dues \$30.00 Mail to:  
PO Box 2780  
Bakersfield, CA 93303

Please Print Clearly — This application is [ ] New [ ] Renewal [ ] Address Change

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
( )

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
( )

Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
@

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I'm a:

[ ] Beginner

[ ] Intermediate

[ ] Advanced

[ ] Hobbyist

[ ] Professional

I'm Willing to:

[ ] Serve on a committee

[ ] Assist the Editor

[ ] Help at Meetings

[ ] Join a SIG

[ ] Do Whatever..

The Software I use is

[ ] WIN 95

[ ] WIN 98

[ ] WIN 98 SE

[ ] WIN 2000 ME

[ ] WIN NT

[ ] Other \_\_\_\_\_

The Kern Independent PC Users Group — KIPUG is a nonprofit organization of computer users — novices, experts, professionals and hobbyists. KIPUG welcomes all new members interested in computers. A General Meeting is held on the second Thursday of the month at the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Building, City Center, at 17th and L streets in Bakersfield. Meetings run from 7:00 PM until 9:00 PM and include a business meeting along with product demonstrations, door prizes and a drawing.

### Membership Information and Benefits:

General Meetings are open to the public, free of charge. The public and guests are welcome but certain benefits apply to members only.

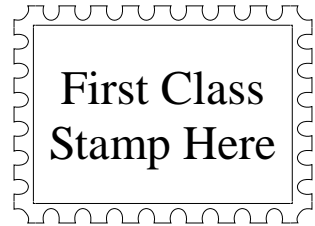
To become a member, complete the form above and mail your check to KIPUG.

#### Member Benefits Include:

- A monthly newsletter — *Bits & Bytes* — a place to publish your articles!
- Free ads to buy or sell computer items.
- One free month's business card ad for corporate members.
- Web Site with free Listserv and access to the newsletter on-line.
- User group product discounts and special offers.
- Networking with computer enthusiasts who share common interests.
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to help you solve problems.
- All general memberships are family memberships, bring the family.
- Eligibility for door prizes and vendor giveaways.
- Product evaluation/review program — write an evaluation — keep the product.

Visit KIPUG's Web Site: <http://www.kipug.org/>





P.O. Box 2780  
Bakersfield, CA

*We are on the web at*  
**WWW.KIPUG.ORG**

**Your Address Here**

**Sarah Perelli-Minetti Webmaster**

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