GPS-ing

by Fred Thorlin

Houston Area League of PC Users

You are Here! Who needs a GPS (Global Positioning System)? Now you do. Even if you don't go adventuring in the great outdoors or sailing out of sight of the coast, it doesn't matter. You need a GPS now.

A GPS is a device that can determine your location on the earth, based on information it receives from satellites. From that information, it can develop a lot of other handy information, e.g., your speed. These devices have been available since the late 1980s.

What has changed recently? At least one GPS has gotten so easy to operate, economical to buy, and reliable to use, that now I can't imagine going far from home without it. Consider the following experiences:

- I visited a friend in Las Vegas. He gave me directions to his house, but I knew if I missed one landmark that I was in dire straits. Before going, I looked up the latitude and longitude of his house and entered it in my GPS. I intentionally ignored his directions and just went to where the GPS pointed. Following the arrow got me within 100 feet of his house. If I missed a turn, so what? I may not get there in the minimum amount of time, but on the other hand, I won't have the frustration at not being able to follow his directions.
- Driving past the Sands Convention Center I pressed a button twice on my GPS. Two days later I got disoriented in the canyons behind the strip hotels. My GPS pointed me straight to the Center. The two taps were enough to record the location.
- I stayed with a friend in the mountains. His house was not visible from the main road and the entrance road was undistinguished. In the past, I had several times spent 20 minutes wandering up and down that road trying to identify his driveway. With the GPS, even at night, I found my way flawlessly.

The Magellan 315 is a big improvement over an earlier Magellan GPS I own. The 315 only weighs 7 ounces, is waterproof, and is available for as little as $135. It identifies my position quicker and hangs on to it through bad visibility better than its predecessor that cost twice as much. The new model provides more, and more useful information. It provides so much information you want to turn some of it off. Fortunately, you can.

The display shows the Magellan's clever way of overcoming a common complaint with earlier GPSs. The circle represents a compass, as you would expect. The arrow in the center points in the direction you are moving and the compass ring rotates around it. The gray arrow points to your destination as long as you are moving. But what if you are standing still? There are two marks outside the ring. One represents the sun and the other the moon. Orient the GPS with the sun or moon, whichever is visible, and you will be correctly oriented, *i.e.*, it now gives you the same information as a compass. A backlight is included. The text above the compass ring identifies the destination, declares the compass bearing you are moving along and the compass bearing of your destination. The last field tells you the distance to your destination in miles or kilometers. If you haven't entered any destinations, the unit comes with thousands of international landmarks already loaded. These range from Baytown, Texas to Veraval, India.

Another eight displays are offered for your insatiable appetite for navigational data. Some are interesting. One draws a map of your movements superimposed over your collection of landmarks. Another is a cute, animated odometer. One shows the orientation of locally visible navigation satellites. The others I don't look at.

I am very enthusiastic about this unit, but it isn't without flaws. The most serious one is there is no way of telling if your unit can still compute its position. This could lead to you to following it when it didn't know where it was going. In practice, this hasn't been a problem, but it is certainly a step backwards from the earlier models. The manual is weak. The database of cities provided is laughable. For unknown reasons, Magellan partitioned the list of provided cities into major, large and medium cities based on some demographic criteria. Unless you happen to know the population of the city you are looking for, you can't predict which group it will turn up in. You end up searching all three. Try looking up Albany. There are three of them in the medium city group and one of them in the major city group, and there is no qualifying information, excluding latitude and longitude, to indicate you are selecting the Albany in Alabama, California, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana or elsewhere! A really cool feature that reduces the severity of this problem is that the 315 will produce a list of the roughly, 20 closest locations in its database. There is a program, DataSend, available to load thousands of additional locations. It even includes about 20 restaurants within a few miles of me. On the other hand, the program is so flaky I didn't attempt the transfer. I highly recommend the 315, just not the supplementary software.

The product works beautifully with Delorme Street Atlas 6.0 and, presumably, comparable mapping programs. I have looked up the latitude and longitude of several appointments here in Houston. I can then drive to these meetings without having to worry about missing a turn here or a landmark there. I now explore alternate routes and different areas of Houston without the slightest concern about becoming disoriented, which used to make me very frustrated. I am looking forward to my next trip to a strange city. I will be able to wander around completely at random without having to worry about getting lost in a strange land. At the Consumer Electronics Show 2000, I was told I could connect the 315 to a notebook computer running Street Atlas, and it would track my movements on the map just as well as if I had purchased Delorme's yellow hockey puck that performs only that function. It was also indicated that an update to DataSend would be forthcoming.

On May 1, 2000 President Clinton announced that "selective availability (SA)" will be discontinued by 2006 and will be diminished immediately. SA refers to the error introduced into GPS data by the Department of Defense.

This can currently range up to 100 meters. With the removal of SA, other error sources will become significant, but we can look forward to their impact to be 10 meters or less. This will materially increase the utility and applicability of handheld GPS units such as the Magellan 315.

The Magellan 315, like most GPSs, is marketed to the offshore fishing crowd. There are features that are only useful in that context. There are some pricey GPS models intended for use in cars. Nonetheless, I think Magellan is missing out on a big market because the rest of us can make good use of their low priced GPSs now. If you do get a 315, I believe you will shortly start wondering how you got along without it.

From the June 2000 issue of *HAL-PC Magazine*. Fred Thorlin is a long-term Houston Area League of PC Users member who can be reached at fredt@hal-pc.org.

Review

Deneba Canvas 7 (SE)
Jorga Riggenbach
Tucson Computer Society

Canvas 7 is an interesting product in competition with a whole raft of graphics software. For that matter, Deneba itself is an intriguing, 70-employee company headquartered in Miami, Florida. Launched in 1986, graphics software is their raison d'etre. The Deneba name is perhaps better known overseas, and Canvas is available in French, German, Italian, and Japanese versions. Deneba has a strong Mac OS following and also makes DenebaCAD2.

Canvas 7 Standard Edition (SE)
Installation was fast and easy and menu-driven from the CD. Uninstalling was a piece of cake too.

Canvas 7's primary claim to fame is that it is multi-functional. The first thing that struck me was that some of the icons looked just like some of the Adobe icons and performed the same functions. That is not to say it is like the Adobe environment. There are basic similarities among all graphics programs.

One weird little quirk I noticed right away was that you have to hit "escape" to stop a function or get out of a tool. I've gotten out of the habit of using the "escape" button for much of anything and it seems a little clunky to go back to it, but it's no biggie.

The four basic functions of Canvas 7 are animation, illustration, presentation, and publication. Whenever you create a new file, you choose an option from those categories.

Illustration
Canvas 7 makes vector graphics and lets you apply effects to them — these are things you'd ordinarily only be able to do to a bitmap image. The ability to do 3-D designs and images easily and quickly is one of the more spectacular features.

The interface is fairly typical with a menu bar, toolbar, docking bar, toolbox, layout area, zoom bar, and status bar.

The docking bar is particularly nifty because you can use it to customize the interface by docking palettes for easy, quick use. Once docked, the palettes appear as tabs which can be easily sized and arranged.

Most of us are used to working with floating palettes that stack up and often get lost behind each other. The docking bar is a sweet alternative to floating palettes and you can use both simultaneously.

Of course, Canvas 7 offers an undo/redo feature. What would we do without undo/redo? How did we ever get along without it? You can specify the minimum/maximum undo/redo number in File/Preferences/General.

A quick note here — Canvas 7 offers a Wizard option for setting up new documents. Wizards are always handy when you are exploring unknown territory and can be very helpful. Of course, once you catch onto the process, you can skip the wizard and work on your own.

The tool box is chock full of goodies. Some of them take a fair amount of eye-hand coordination, since they require holding the shift key and doing some fancy mouse work.

The Arc tool is fun and gives you a perfect quarter circle. EasyShapes also has an interesting selection from arrows and call-outs to cubes and spirals. My hands-down favorite is the cube — a perfectly proportioned, dimensional cube in two mouse clicks.

There is a selection of super fill tools and a second CD with a huge clip art collection. Drawing curved paths is a breeze and you can define curves with anchor points while tangent lines control the curve shape. Curves can be handled manually or with an Auto Curve tool. Curves have been notori-ously difficult to handle in graphics programs, but Canvas 7 has made it easier.

Sprite Effects
One of the big features of Canvas 7 is SpriteEffects. I love that name, and the way it works is sensational. Basically it is a feature based on a rendering engine that is quick and agile and gives the user the ability to combine painterly effects like Gaussian Blur with vector control.

There is also a fabulous lens effect that creates a lens object from vector or text objects and you can add SpriteEffects to lenses for some incredibly far-out graphics. Extruding 3D objects is another great feature.

It is like turning an object on a digital lathe. In fact, that was the first thing I thought of — how I could perfect an object digitally with the extrusion palette and then cut the pattern and replicate it on my lathe in the woodworking shop.

Typography and Page Layout
Canvas 7 contains a fairly comprehensive page layout environment. I say that, but I must also tell you that I only use one page layout program, PageMaker, so that is the only comparison I can make. In fact, Canvas has many similarities to PageMaker.

Of course, there is a well-done tutorial, as there are with the other major sections. The page layout contains the usual characters including layers, master pages, text wrapping and so on.
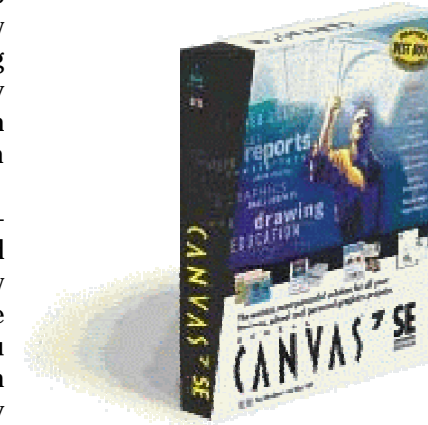
Image

Editing Again, this is a standard feature with vignettes and such, but vector masks, channel masks, and more sophisticated features than some other products have pump it up to offer a wide-array of possibilities.

Web Publishing

You can create buttons, animated GIFs and just about anything else for web graphics and layouts.

Using the Save to Web command to optimize images.

Although you can do this directly, they recommend that you save the file first as a Canvas document so you can come back and edit it if need be.

Is It Right For You?

There are so many competing products, each with its own many claims, that it is difficult to decide which of them to get. Canvas 7 is an excellent choice because it does such a wide range of jobs. I won't tell you it is easy to use, but it's certainly not the most difficult program either.

There are tutorials and the 120-page manual that comes with it is easy to understand and follow. If that isn't enough, on their web site they sell a video tutorial for $49.

I will say that all graphics programs take a lot of work and patience to learn to use well. That isn't so bad, because they are so much a hoot to work with and Canvas 7 is right up there in the fun-to-use-category.

You already have a graphics program or two? So do I, but I recently heard a presentation by JASC representative, Todd Matzke, and he explained that a carpenter wouldn't limit himself to just one tool. He'd have whatever tools it took to get the job done. Todd suggested that graphics software is the same way. You should have as many graphics programs as you need to get the exact result you want and you use all of them as the tools of your trade. I think Todd has exactly the right idea.

Requirements and Price

A word of caution: There are two versions of this product — a Standard Edition and a Professional Edition. You must read very carefully to determine which edition Deneba is describing.

The Standard Edition, the basis of this review, contains 10,000 Clip art images, 500 Fonts, web features, drawing tools, photo-editing tools, and page layout features. It sells for $85–$100 and it is sold on the Deneba web site and at CompUSA and Best Buy, so it is worthwhile to watch the ads and look for the lowest price.

The program requires a Pentium-class processor, Windows 95/98/ 2000, NT 4.0, or later, 32 MB RAM (I think this is way too low for a graphics program like Canvas 7), 80 megabytes of free hard disk space, 16-bit color or higher and 800 x 600 or higher screen resolution.

You can also download a 15-day free trial from Deneba's web site.

Review

eGems Professional
by Russell J. Jacobsen
Stanford Palo Also User Group

The program eGems Professional is a powerful new technology that works alongside other applications including your word processor, spreadsheet, web browser or any other Windows application. Whether you want a particular quote, table, statistic or picture, you need only drag the selected item to the always-available eGems Logo and a gem will be created for you, complete with 13 available bibliographical formats. The data is stored in your own personal gem database for later use in your work. It is more robust than other software applications because it does not integrate itself into your browser. eGems works smoothly alongside multiple browsers with no need to switch back and forth between applications.

eGems helps the user organize and maintain facts, quotes, graphics, or any type of electronic information into a simple, graphical application. It even tracks the reference source where the information came from so the user can go back to the source if need be. Get a free trial at http://egems.com.

Challenge

Change Your Mouse Hand

Try using your non-dominant hand for your mouse. Your dominant hand will then be free to make notes, use the phone, and otherwise make itself useful.

From The Dealsguy
by Bob Click
Greater Orlando
Computer Users Group

Talking about "paid referral URLs," I'll try to leave out the ones that are obvious, but I think some are actually just a shorter way to take you to an information page. I'm going to leave it up to your own discretion whether you will use a numbered URL or not, now that you know the possibilities.

Some feedback on freedsl.com says that if you don't keep the service for one year, there is a stiff termination fee. I noticed that you are forwarded to a different URL, but the information is the same. Thanks for the feedback.

Offer Still Good–Including Two New Games

The Hang2000 game is still good and Ken Winograd e-mailed me that he has released two new games that are very educational. They are "States3000" and "Presidents3000" and are based on an improved Hang2000 engine. You can check for more info at his Web site [http://www.winograd.com]. The "private" URL for PC users group members is [http://www.winograd.com/pcug2.html].

I'm Keepin' Mine

I think you can still take advantage of the Sizzlin' Summer offer for the Friendly Robotics lawn mower. I have kept a diary on my Web site (Announcements page) for you to read. I've had some minor problems, but so far I love it. They have offered to send me a new mower to correct a bad charging message which I'll take advantage of. That doesn't keep the mower from doing its job and I certainly have the neighbors intrigued. How embarrassing that I didn't include the ordering number (1-888-244-5178) last month. A few people e-mailed me about it.

This One's For You Cheapskate Investors

I know many of you are trading stocks for as low as $8 per trade, but how about trading securities for *free*. Freetradez.com is the latest entry in the online brokerage field. They said they went into operation on June 19, 2000 with the intention of doing options trading towards fall. They are offering trades with NO commission charge,

even for limit orders, plus, they offer Nasdaq Level II quotes.

You guessed it, advertising pays for it. If you type in a ticker symbol, up pops an ad from that very company. Or, get this, if that company wasn't interested, the ad at the top of your screen will be for their competitor or a related company. How's that for strategy! And, another company will sponsor confirmations. Your monthly statement has an ad from that same company.

Most trades should be executed in one second, but if it is not executed in 45 seconds, your account is credited with $5. A day trader can set a price at the bid, or below the bid. Just so you know, anytime you type in a stock symbol, an advertiser pays them. And yes, they accept trades any time of the day or night. Check them out at [http://www.freetradez.com].

Convert Those Old Videos (After Brushing Off the Dust)

Here is an announcement I received some time ago from Bill Loesch, vice-president of Consumer Products for Pinnacle Systems. I've not tried their products which appear to be just for PCS.

"Do your members want to edit those baby videos collecting dust in their attics, or maybe preserve the memories of their best vacations? With Pinnacle Systems' Emmy-award-winning technology, video editing is simple.

"All you need is a Pentium-based computer, a video camera and/or a VCR. Sign up your Users Group at the Users Group Support Program Web site at [http://usergroup.pinnaclesys.com/] and review our products for your newsletter on a 60-day loan. [DealsGuy note — "a loan" just doesn't work for me. If the reviewer can't keep it for all their work, forget it.] User group

members receive 15 percent off suggested retail price (SRP) on all our Studio line of video editing products; arrange for a customized demo from a Pinnacle Systems representative in your area. Sincerely, Bill Loesch."

Check Out E-mail Hoaxes.

I hate to take up column space with this kind of stuff, but I have been deluged with so-called warnings lately and many people read this column. If you are a person that "insists" on sending out all those "warnings" to your friends, do them a favor and check further before you send them any more "spam." Here are some informational sites gleaned from newsletters I receive. Out of all those URLs I read and tried, several either didn't work, or else I couldn't find the correlation, but here are the ones that worked for me:

1. http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/index.html]
2. http://www.avp.ch/avpve]
3. [http://www.datafellows.com/virus-info]
4. http://www.datafellows.com/news/hoax]
5. [http://www.icsa.net/services/consortia/anti-virus/aler-hoax.html] (I had problems with this one but I'm including it anyway).
6. [http://www.kumite.com/myths]
7. [http://www.snopes.com] (This one also has music so it loads slowly.)
8. [http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/]

Can Your Web Browser Get A Ticket?

Not likely, but I assume everybody is interested in accelerating his or her browser power. Murray Davis of Akron/ Canton PC UG passed this one on to me. Your browser's cache is meant to help if visiting a Web site again by already having the data to load it. However, you have little control over that

cache. There is PC software to speed the whole process called "NetSonic." It works with any browser and they can share NetSonic's cache, thus saving space on your hard drive as well.

It also retains Domain Name Server information. There's more, so I suggest you visit their Web site and take a look at this FREE program. They are hoping you will like it enough that you will eventually purchase their more full-featured "NetSonic Pro" that sells for $39.95. ($29.95 if you use a special URL given to me by their marketing people) [http://www.netsonic.com/redir/buy_redirect.asp?DIRECT_FLAG=25off&netsonic=~,~c~,~]. Find out more about the software at [http://www.netsonic.com] where you can also see a description for the Pro version. Unfortunately, I had to wrap up this column a bit early and the special ordering URL doesn't find the $29.95 price. If it is a problem this month, I'll feature the special offer next month for the Pro version. That will give you time to see if you like the free version enough to buy it.

A Way to Combine Both Your PC and the Web for Some Projects

Beth Fordyce from Southeastern Michigan Computer Organization referred this to me some time ago and I'm just now following up. I e-mailed French Prescott of Enfish Software and the following is what he told me:

"Enfish's current release product is 'Onespace.' This product has superceded the Tracker Pro, their original flagship product. It incorporates the same tracking and search function of Tracker Pro, but it now extends the product to bring Web content and the user's own content into one unified workspace.

"For example, if you're working on a project, say the annual Christmas party, you can earmark the relevant Web pages (maybe caterers or decoration suppliers) and see it all in context with all the e-mail you send and receive about the project. You'll see any documents (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.) related to the planning, and any other files that you specifically indicate are involved. Onespace does the tracking on your own system automatically and you can use search tools (much like Internet search engines) to expand the tracking. The user can set up and configure the working area to fit individual needs."

This product is a *free* working download from the Enfish site: [http://www.enfish.com]. The latest release version was made available July 19. French gave me many more details, so check the above Web site for more information. Looks like it is for PC only. I've seen good reviews on it.

More Invasion Testing for Hacker-Worried Computer Owners

You've all read in many places about Steve Gibson's "Shields Up" for testing your machine for hacker invasion, a great service at no cost. In case you want an additional test to check further, I read that you can visit Webtrend's site at [http://www.webtrends.net/tools/security /scan.asp]. Or try Hacker-Wacker at [http://www.hackerwacker.com] and click on "Free Security Scan."

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no

matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [dealsguy @mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [http://www.dealsguy.com] for past columns. Also check out the distribution page.

Napster Redux: Round II Comin' at ya

by Tim Condon, Esq.
Tampa PC Users Group

So here we have it: A federal judge entered an injunction to shut down the Napster music-sharing server and shut out its more than 20 million users. On July 26, 2000 Judge Marilyn Patel shocked just about everyone, including the lawyers for the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), by abruptly entering a verbal order for Napster to shut down its server by midnight on Friday, July 28th (Pacific Standard Time). Then, within 48 hours of that ruling, the next judicial level up, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, heard an entreaty from the Napster lawyers … and countermanded the lower court's injunction. So Napster remains online and serving its millions of customers … for the time being, at least.

"Pirates" is how the RIAA characterizes both Napster and the music-copying and music-trading fans of the software. While the RIAA argued that the entire Napster operation was a front for wholesale copyright infringement and piracy, the Napster lawyers argued that people have an inherent right to copy and share music downloaded on the Internet as long as no money is changing hands. Round I for the RIAA. Round one-and-a-half for Napster. Where to now? Good question!

The Napster phenomenon has become a cause celebre for both sides of the struggle. Probably because the issues presented involve digitized information that can be utilized for writings as well as pictures, recordings, software and any other kind of information. The battle has been joined on the frontlines of most media outlets, including newspapers, magazines, online forums, online magazines, television reports, etc. And now the stars of the music industry have begun to weigh in, complementing the split ranks (about 85 percent to 15 percent) of the music industry "suits." So let's take a look at who's who among those manning each side of the Napster/Anti-Napster barricades:

1. On the Anti-side is a growing list of musicians who feel their work is being "ripped off" by consumers utilizing the Napster software and web site … consumers who they believe would otherwise be buying their pricey music CD's. A short review of current articles on the question shows that these include Aimee Mann, Kristin Hersh (a founding member of The Throwing Muses), Scott Sapp (lead singer of Creed), Chris Robinson (lead singer of the Black Crowes), Sean "Puffy" Combs (aka "Puff Daddy"), Jonathan Brook, Morgan Rose of the hard rock band Sevendust, Mandy Barnett, former Blondie star Debbie Harry, and last but not least, recording star Bif Naked.

2. But wait! Coming up fast on the outside is a list of music writers and performers who, if they're not as numerous as the Anti's, make up for it with their star-power. Included on this side is a list of people who argue that the "music industry" as it is constituted today is based upon the wholesale exploitation and abuse of artists, and that the destruction of this distribution and marketing semi-monopoly can do nothing other than benefit both artists and their fans. Examples?

Courtney Love, lead singer of the band Hole, who has indicted the music industry as little more than an organized system of stealing from artists (her recent inflammatory speech before a Chicago convention can be found at http://www.salon.com/tech/feature/2000/06/14/love/); rapper Chuck D (who says "I believe in the technology … it's a fantastic way to build a minor league system of artists"); Grateful Dead songwriter and philosopher John Perry Barlow (who maintains that the music industry is inherently corrupt, greedy, abusive and grasping); the band Limp Bizkit; Marianne Faithfull; and non-star musician Christian Viveros, who simply says "The recording industry is a Mafia."

In addition, there are renegade music industry professionals who are bolting from the anti-Napster line and saying that the music-sharing revolution can birth an entirely new (and profitable) way of doing business. Included are Alan Kovac, president of a management company that represents the bands Motley Crue, the Bee Gees, and others. Ditto for Jim Guerinot, a manager for the bands Offspring and No Doubt, who thinks that the music industry and Napster can work together to birth a new way of serving both artists and fans.

What's going to happen? Well, first of all Napster is probably going to lose the lawsuit that the RIAA has brought against it (although the case could well end up going all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court). Most copyright lawyers and other professionals seem to agree that Napster and the services it offers are clear examples of copyright violation as the law exists today.

Secondly, it looks like "the genie is out of the bottle" when it comes to digital copying and trading of music (not to mention pictures, movies, software, books, and all other forms of information transfer). Even as the Judge Patel was ordering Napster to shut down, alternate methods of doing the same thing were being revved up on the Internet in different parts of the world. All of these alternatives do essentially the same thing as Napster, allowing the wholesale free copying and sharing of music files. They include Gnutella (a decentralized software system for sharing music files); AudioGnome (which relies on about 70 servers in half a dozen countries running a free program called OpenNap); Freenet (which makes every participating computer in essence a file-sharing server and is believed to be "invulnerable to any attack" by the authorities because of its de-centralized nature and the use of encryption); Napigator and the "Open Napster" movement (which consists of more than 100 Napster servers running Napster- clone software located in a number of countries); and even MP3Board, Inc., which is being sued by the RIAA for being a company which points to locations on the Internet where bootleg music recordings may be found.

Stay tuned. The recording industry is fighting for its right to force music buyers to buy CD's for $17 or $18 which cost about 35 cents to manufacture (and which have multiple songs on them that no one wants to hear instead of just the song hits which people do want to buy). Essentially, the music/recording industry is fighting any effort to use the Internet to cut them out of the distribution function which up until now they have dominated. In the long run, how-

ever, look for the death of the "music industry" and the birth of a new industry which could be called "the artists and fans industry."

Review

Get it Together With Act! 2000

by Cindy Thorson

Greater Victoria PC Users' Association

Let me start this review by letting you know up-front that I'm writing it from the viewpoint of a small-business owner. This is a personal review about the features I find useful and productive for my small business. There are plenty of excellent software reviews on Act! 2000 from various sources in magazines and on the web. However, I found that most of them were either tediously bogged down with details on features for high-end corporate users that I would never use, or lacking in any detail at all and opting for the generic "canned" review approach. I'll try to do neither here and hope that some of you will get a good enough picture as to what and why you would benefit from using Act! 2000.

There's a saying "knowledge is power" From an entrepreneurial point of view, I'd like to add a word to that: "customer knowledge is power." Your business, whether a small home-based one operating from your spare-bedroom or a full-scale retail store or industrial plant, all have one thing in common: the need to keep selling to the customers you do have and be in a position to attract and follow-up on new customers. All of that depends on having customer infor-

mation at your fingertips-which means you need a dependable way of maintaining good client records. The current computer buzz-word for keeping client information records is called "contact management."

Who is Contact Management Software For?

It used to be when you heard the word "contact manager" you were most likely talking about the idea of a big corporation with hundreds of networked users plugged into a mainframe server computer. Complicated databases sometimes meant outdated customer or sales data and the need for whole plethora of system and database administrators to keep the thing glued together.

Those mammoth database systems are all well and good for the "suits" of the blue-chip corporate world, but what about the little guy and gal, the small business owner? The networked contact-management solutions are not in reach nor are they terribly useful for today's on-their-own entrepreneurs. As a response to the growing small-business sector, several excellent mid-range contact systems have been developed to fill the gap. The new off the shelf-products don't cost a lot and learning how to use them properly is well worth the time and effort. Symantec Act! 2000 is the defacto standard in this arena and more than you'll most likely ever need and then some.

My company comes under the SOHO (small-office/ home-office) category. I am a small computer-tech and tutorial business, and most times a one-person show. While I may not use some the more grandeur networked-features included with Act! 2000, the features that I do use serve me well. As I learn the product more I'm adding uses for the additional features so that as my com-

pany grows I can use Act! to be repaired for it. Contact Management à la Dysfunctional

This is how I, and I bet many of you, have been managing contacts thus far:

- Crumpled bits of paper — very useful for the first 15 minutes or until I did the laundry — whichever came first.
- A paper-based Rolodex. Good for about three to six weeks until the information was outdated or until I grabbed one out of the Rolodex because I couldn't see the tiny printing of the phone number. Afterwards, I promptly forgot to put the card back in and it found its way to the recycle basket just beneath my feet.
- The phone-index pages at the back of my day-timer. Also good for a limited time, but more importantly good only for a phone number and little else, no customer notes available here.
- The speed dial list on my phone. Lot's of useful information there too.

I see you're beginning to get the picture so let's move on. It's time for out with the old and in with the new fangled-way of doing things.

Keeping in Touch With Your World

ACT! 2000 allows you to put all of the contact information you will use the most right at your fingertips. You can use one of the pre-defined layouts provided or you can highly customize the layout screens to meet your specific needs. I am big on customization, it's one of the reasons I chose Act! over other popular contact management software.

Everything you need is within easy reach. The screen is divided into two up/down screens. The top has the main contact information and the bottom half uses the tabs approach to let you get to all

the other information with minimal effort. If you choose one of the existing pre-made layouts, the tabs will consist of a clients Notes/History tab where you can enter notes say on a conversation you had, an Activities tab which keeps track of all specific activities such as meetings, a Sales Opportunities tab to keep track of what marketing, calls, or sales you've made, a Groups tab to let you know what groups the contact belongs too such as Big Blue and Cousins members, Suppliers and Golf buddies. An additional tab called "User Fields" lets you add customized fields for any information that the others don't cover such as birthdays, account numbers and whatever you can think of. A Home/Phone tab is included for your contacts personal phone numbers and home address. And finally, there is a tab for alternate contacts such as assistant's names and other associated contact info.

The main contact screen at the top has all the usual information such as phone numbers, addresses, company name, etc., and anything else you'd like to appear. I have made myself a customized Contact screen by adding several other fields that I want to see immediately when I call up a persons record. In my customized layout, I see at once who referred me the business, their customer account number, a gazillion different phone numbers including toll-free, direct-line, main-company line, fax, cell-phone, home phone, e-mail, and finally a small Comments field.

Some people I know have six different e-mail addresses. While I may not want to list all six on the main-contact page, I still want to have them handy for reference. So, I have even created a custom tab dedicated to all-things Internet for each of my contacts. E-mail addresses, their home web-page,

their companies web-site, their ftp server and password, their ICQ nickname and, for those techie friends of mine that still have a BBS running in their basements, I keep track of the dial-in phone numbers and passwords for that too. Now, you may or may not want that much detail in your layout, but it works for me, and that's just the point; I like software that can work for me, instead of me working for it!

Find the Information You Need

Each field is neatly kept in the Act! database and can be grouped, sorted, filtered, and searched in a number of different ways so you can get lists of contacts generated for all sorts of reasons. I have created groups for *Big Blue and Cousins*, the ladies luncheon group I attend, my customers, my suppliers, my medical doctors, and family and friends (yes even tech-heads do have some). So you can see that you can use Act 2000 for both personal and business reasons. Depending on what sorting-type function you're using, lists can be generated on a one-time or recurring basis too. An example might be that you'd like a list of every person whose occupation is "owner/opera-tor" or a list of all contacts who live in B.C.

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You can also set up "Reports" that can be very specific and run on special days or the month or year. You can find the best sales leads, for any given period of days, weeks, or months. In a nutshell, Act has many ways that you can get and organize the information in your contact database.

Keep Your Times and Dates Straight

You can also use Act! to keep from frittering away your valuable time. I find Act! keeps me focused. The small amount of effort it takes me to type in an activity or task, phone call, or a reminder alarm, is far shorter that the time I waste trying to remember all this stuff in my head and taking up brainpower worrying that I'll forget something. I am now free to keep my energy focused on whatever task needs doing in the here and now. Handy to-do lists replace little pieces or paper that I often lose. On-screen reminders are a lifesaver for the little things. You can set alarms to let you know that you should leave for that appointment, take a pill, get prepared for a client, or any other reason you want to be given a reminder about. Daily, weekly, and monthly calendars that I can enter information or correct on the fly work great. You can set up multiple tasks that you repeat frequently such as a monthly board meeting, or that

Tuesday afternoon squash game with your buddy. You can schedule automatic tasks to be performed such as mailing letters, and list a set of follow-up sales calls you need to make. Just about anything can be scheduled and followed-up easily in a one-step process.

Keep Client Docs, Notes, and E-mails Handy

This aspect of Act! 2000 is one of my favorites. Not only can I keep detailed notes on phone calls, meetings, and scheduled activities, I can also use Act! to collect all correspondence, e-mails, invoices, or any other file in one place so that they are in easy reach when the client calls. You can attach shortcuts to documents, photos, e-mails, driving directions to a client's business, scans of business receipts and invoices, etc. right with the contact.

Embarrassing question of the day: Have you ever made an appointment over the phone to meet an old associate at a café, but can't remember what they look like? So now you can cover your butt by attaching an old photo permanently to his contact record. Double-click the icon; up comes his mugshot that you can print out and re-etch into your memory before you drive off to meet him. Would you like directions to a client's office? Just attach it to the client's record, double-click on its icon and presto the directions come up on your screen, ready to be printed out to take with you in the car.

With Act! you can create, send, and receive e-mail, produce letters, memos, quotes, or a dozen other template documents automatically. You can also fax to your client right from within Act! using Winfax Pro.

Other Cool Features of Act! 2000

Side Act! — a little applet that runs independently of the full program. You can jot down to-do's, appointments, and other stuff quickly and later transfer it to the main program. Runs in the Windows System Tray.

Built-in Sales training and tips from Dale Carnegie.

The ability in this version of Act! to further divide your groups into subgroups which helps keep all related contacts organized

Integration with industry software packages such as Microsoft Word, Outlook, WinFax Pro, and third-party e-mail programs. You can perform mail merges, multiple faxing, and e-mails right within Act! 2000, making it a great tool for generating and distributing information to a variety of sources.

Download contacts to your Cell-Phone! Using FoneSync software. Cool!

If you subscribe to your telephone company's Caller ID service, you can even get Act! to bring up the person's name and information automatically when the phone rings!

Great third-party add-ons for business applications. Quicken's Expensable is a good example, where you can keep track of expenses associated with each of your clients. If you use Dragon Naturally Speaking, you can even speak your activities into Act!

Cindy's "Cut That Out!" Gripe list:

No review would be complete with out the "it's-not-perfect" list. So, here goes:

My biggest peeve is that you must associate every to-do and calendar event with a person (contact). So e.g. if I want to jot down a to-do, to pick up my dry cleaning, I have to

either create a contact-record for the dry-cleaner (which is absurd) or create a scheduled event with myself to pick up my dry cleaning (only slightly less absurd).

Another example is I wanted to write "Canada Day" on the July 1st square in my calendar. I have to associate this "event" with a contact. Dumb! Cut that Out!

You can type a small text-only signature file for e-mail, but you can't use your own text file and therefore have no formatting options. Cut that Out!

No on-screen dialog box for typing in a quick name search. Must go to the Menu and choose Lookup to find your contact's name.

Having no choice for the alarm sound for an activity. Act! uses whatever sound Windows 95/98 uses for the exclamation alarm. Which usually means a very boring "ding" sound. I believe multiple dings might qualify as "torture" during wartime. Cut that Out!

No place to keep company documents such as Invoice templates, Company Policy Manuals, or other collections of company files that are not related to just one contact, but which would be handy to retrieve within the contact management software.

All attached documents to a client's record must have a mandatory date. Nowhere is there a repository for non-date-oriented items such a photo attachment, or a text-document of driving directions to your client's place of business. So, if you want to attach a photo of your client to his record, it will be just one among many entries in the Notes/History tab and you will have to search for it manually among the dates (a minor, but annoying proposition).

Side Act! would be a lot handier if it also included a quick way of looking up a phone number.

Act! rolls over uncompleted activities to show up on the following day. While that feature is a good idea, I really hate that it implies that it is an original activity for the current day and doesn't display the original date of the scheduled activity. I may want to know how long something has been going undone so I can sufficiently shame myself into getting off my butt! In a nutshell:

Act! 2000 is a great product; it's not perfect, but it is highly customizable and that comes as close to perfect as I need. Of course, the usefulness of any software package is directly proportional to the willingness of the individual to spend the time and energy needed to learn new skills. Going through the awkward stage of retraining yourself to use the tools that can effectively enhance those skills can be a challenge. If you are willing to take the plunge, then you will no doubt meet with success in using this product.

Act! 2000 System Requirements: Windows 95/98/NT. 80486/66 MHZ or higher CPU (Pentium 133 MHZ or higher recommended). 16 MB of RAM (32 MB recommended). 50 MB of free hard disk space (minimum). CD ROM drive, VGA or higher resolution monitor. Windows compatible modem required for auto-dialing or modem-based synchronization. More information can be obtained on their website at: www.actsoftware.com.

From the July 2000 issue of *Big Blue & Cousins Newsletter*, published by the Greater Victoria PC Users' Association of British Columbia.

CD-RW Problems
by Bob LaFave
Tampa PC Users Group

Part One Last September I bought a CD burner because my son Chris was interested in making music CD's and because I wanted to have the use of one for copying larger files without having to use a zip utility and spanning multiple floppy disks. I was able to find an Imation on sale at BestBuy and installed it into the computer that Chris and his brother Joshua use, a homemade (Merle Nicholson brand) running an AMD233-MMX. It installed easily, and we encountered the first problem. I had installed it on the IDE cable that contained a 40X CD, and when we tried to copy from one CD to the other CD we encountered buffer error messages. Calling the local Tech Support (Merle), it was suggested that we needed to have each CD an a separate IDE controller, and after some rearranging of both CD's and both hard drives we were up and running. Everything appeared to be working, and we both learned how to use the Adaptec software that was included with the CD writer. Between the kids and myself we made use of it one or two times a day for different projects and had become very happy with its performance.

Then a couple of months ago Chris started complaining that it wasn't working right, and that he was getting blue screens which were preventing him from making a CD. I would use it daily to copy downloaded files that I could use on my computer and also take to other locations. Without the use of a cable modem this allowed me to only download once at night when less traffic was on the net. Very seldom did I copy a CD, but I was continually adding files to re-writeable CD's. I had not encountered any blue screen copying single files and asked Chris if he could create a blue screen for me.

The blue screen message offered no clues on which file had a problem so I couldn't look at a specific problem file, but I had had a similar experience in the past that suggested maybe an overheating problem with the AMD processor. I had encountered countless similar problems when the computer was built. I removed the AMD chip and replaced it with a Cyrix chip that ran great and found out later that the AMD needed a special heat sink and fan for cooling, I replaced them with AMD approved equipment and solved those early blue screen problems.

I opened the computer case to see if maybe the fan wasn't working or was off-center and saw what was a possible problem: one of the IDE cables was directly over the fan, cutting down the air flow. I than called Imation to find out if there was anything else I could try to get it working again, and they suggested that I update the firmware. So I obtained a longer IDE cable and downloaded the suggested version of firmware. Since I had the case open to replace the cable I decided that I would add some grease to the heat sink to further help with the cooling, and I routed all cables away from the chip. I then went to replace the firmware as suggested and proceeded to kill the CD completely. The access light stayed on at all times, the ejection buttons did not work and the CD properties appeared as the firmware update. Imation was called and more help was requested. They apologized and stated that sometimes the firmware updates didn't work, but they

would e-mail me the original firmware version to return it to the beginning condition. That also didn't work, and the CD remained locked. When I called Imation and offered to return it to them, they agreed and issued the RMA authorization. That night when I walked in to dismantle the case and remove the CD, I noticed the CD access light was off and pushed the eject button. It was working, so I went to the CD properties to see what it showed and saw that the original version was there. I was impressed to say the least. I grabbed a blank CD and proceed to make an audio CD. It worked correctly, and I told Chris that his machine was back in working order. I called Imation and offered to keep the CD and give it a week of use before taking them up on their return and exchange for a new CD-RW. It performed with no problems for a month and all was well until....

Part Two Chris wanted to replace the 4x4x20 CD-RW drive with a faster CD-RW, and we started watching the ads to see if we could find an affordable 8x speed for him. BestBuy had an ACER 8x4x32 on sale so here we go again. I removed the Imation and replaced it with the ACER and have experienced no problems (other than he now wants a faster CD-ROM installed to keep up with the new CD-RW — he wants a 50X instead of the 40X) up to the time I am writing this. But what to do with the Imation CD-RW?

My computer has an empty bay, and we can't have that now can we. The CD-RW installed quite easily in my case, and the Adaptec software as well. The CD-RW properties showed correctly, so I proceeded to try to create a CD as a test. A Blue Screen appeared the minute the computer

tried to read the blank CD, but this time I got files included in the blue screen and started to look for help. Both files were vxd (device drivers), so I began to experiment with them. I called Imation and explained that I was moving the CD-RW to another machine and was having problems again. I declined the first suggestion to upgrade the firmware because of the last experience with that update.

We started by renaming the vxd's to see what would happen. We were able to get the CD-RW to work sometimes but eventually we would get a blue screen referencing the same two files, CD_Read.vxd and CDVSD .vxd, even after they were re-named. I could get the CD-RW to work making data CD's or Audio CD's depending on which file was renamed, but I wasn't going to rename files each time I wanted to make a CD. These files where located in WINDOWS\SYSTEM\IOSUBSYS and CD_Reader.vxd was also located in an additional folder called Recordit for a program from IOMEGA. The tech person suggested that maybe the IOMEGA Zip that was on the same IDE cable might be causing the problem. He suggested that we uninstall Recordit and also remove the ZIP drive from the cable. The problem remained.

I also had noticed, each time a Blue Screen froze the computer, upon the restart an error message from AdaptecDirectCD stated that the CD properties had either the "Disconnect" or the "AutoInsert" settings unchecked and that they needed to be returned to the correct settings and the computer restarted. According to the tech, Imation had reports that on some computers the "AutoInsert" needs to be turned off but never that the "Disconnect" needed to or could be turned off.

We then decided to try turn them both off to see what would happen, but first we needed to stop the error message from AdaptecDirectCD each time that the machine started. We uninstalled the Adaptec program then went and turned off both the "AutoInsert" and "Disconnect," returned the two vxd's to their original names and rebooted the machine.

I have made one each Data and Audio CD's successfully as of this writing with no apparent problems and definitely no blue screens. Imation says that the "Disconnect" setting should be enabled in order for the CD-RW to work correctly, but the tech and I agree that if it works not to change it. I had told them that the IDE controllers and chipset were capable of UDMA66 the first time that I called after installing in the second machine, and they now "think" that may be the reason for the problems.

Imation also offered that this model was not designed for Windows98 or for the UDMA66 speed.

I have learned a few more things about computers with this experience, which is always good, but the one I will remember is that, eight months after I purchased an Imation CD-RW I was able to get a support person on the phone each time I called within two minutes and they were more than helpful. I will look for their products in any future purchase simply because of this terrific support.

From the August 2000 issue of *Bits of Blue*, the monthly publications of the Tampa PC Users Group.

A Newbie's View
by Louise Alderman

Click in a big OPEN space, Gramma!" Those words still ring in my ears after almost three years of owning a PC. In fact they were said in chorus many times, with the word Gramma overlaid with "Mom" and "Louise." This problem was definitely not due to my age, I have been 55 and holding for a few years, but has been a problem for most of my life.

The fact is that I hit a stone wall every once in a while when I am trying to learn something. For some reason it seems to take my brain forever to take in what is sometimes a very simple fact. The example above is among "my most embarrassing moments."

I used to panic on a regular schedule. My PC was not in good working order and it would freeze, sometimes every few minutes, sometimes just once in awhile. Each time I would reach for the panic button. I no longer have that button, it wore out finally and I threw it away. Now I just start clicking keys and/or my mouse. If that doesn't work, I'll try rebooting my system. I can, most of the time, work my way out of a situation these days. I feel like I have progressed quite well. I still have things that shake me but I always know that I can pick up the phone and call my mentor.

My granddaughter is the one responsible for me sitting here, right now, typing away on an article that she feels may be of interest to people new to PCs and might even be encouraging to older Newbie's. You are not alone. I know it feels like it quite often, and I know also that you may feel that you will never get beyond a certain point, but it will happen. I have really surprised myself in this new world of comput-

ing technology. I entered it with the feeling I would never be able to cope with it even to the point of knowing what I was doing and especially not to the point of actually enjoying it. Now I can say I not only enjoy it, **I love it!**

Even the bold face type I just used only came to fruition about a week ago. Each day or so I learn a little something new. So hopefully this will be encouraging to others and give them the incentive to go ahead and try things. If you are already into PCs, keep on keeping on. It will come to you no matter what your age. You can always learn enough to enjoy yourself. That is the point of the whole thing for me. I enjoy myself immensely!

Something you will want to do is to seek out a group of fellow PC users. Go to meetings and meet people with whom you feel a rapport. Most are very willing to give assistance to newbies. Even those with years of experience consult with each other at times. "Not everyone can know everything" is a good motto to live by. Just knowing where to go for an answer is the only criteria necessary.

To make finding an answer easier, build a list of people who are willing to help you, keep a list of phone numbers handy — AT ALL TIMES. You never know when you may need assistance. Remember that the officers in the club and the SIG leaders are dedicated to helping others. That is why they have these positions — to teach and assist.

Do not be shy about asking someone for help. If all the clicking of the keys and the mouse do not solve my problem my solution at that point is to pick up the phone and call my granddaughter. I only hope each of

you, who feel that you may be a little too far up the line of years to learn this new technology, will have or find someone as dedicated to helping you as Cheryl is to helping me. Like the kitty on the refrigerator, "Hang in there."

Review

Secure Clean

by Don Nendell
Utah Computer Society

What if...?" "If only I'd known /done/(fill-in-your-own-blanks here)...?" "Looking back now, I can clearly see...?" "If foresight was as good as hindsight...?" "The saddest words . . . what might have been?" And, on and on it goes — ad infinitum, ad nauseam. A perfect example immediately comes to mind. Oliver "Oly" North is still muttering to himself, "If only I'd known about SecureClean™, I'd be a General now?" Monica — yes that one — might never have become so well known, given that she was the primary focus of interest in "The" Sensation of 1999, when she was (and, just like 99+% of all Windows users still are) ignorant of the fact that Windows does not erase the contents of deleted files — yes, they have been "deleted" but, they are still totally recoverable as our protagonists herein so tragically found out. The world is replete with such sad stories, any one of which should be enough to show just how important SecureClean (plus file encryption) is to a person's complete privacy? Expressed more succinctly, "You have none with the likes of programs such as Norton's Undelete, PowerQuest's Lost & Found, et al.!"

I first became aware of AccessData Corp. in an insightful, delightful and educational article by Vince Horiuchi in the Sat-

urday, March 4, 2000 Salt Lake Tribune, Tech Connection Section (pg. D-12), entitled "Cracking The Code." In the article, "AccessData says it is the only one in the country that makes its bread and butter on the fact people forget their passwords." Thoroughly intrigued, I visited AccessData, a couple of months ago, was totally convinced of their veracity, and I've been using SecureClean ever since. "I love this thing!"

The "Oly" and "Monica" episodes mentioned above are merely the tip of the iceberg really. For example, did you know that even after reformatting your hard drive, anyone with access to your computer can recover your e-mail, personal documents, and sensitive files — this includes unauthorized persons/employees, corporate intruders/bosses, or possibly even the person who just bought your old computer? I've mentioned encryption above because programs such as: (The FBI's) Carnivore, Napster, Trojan Horses, Worms, Hackers, et al., literally own your PC. Then, there's the ever-faithful trusted insider — current and former employees, temps, onsite contractors, consultants, partners and suppliers — who represent the greatest threat to corporate intellectual property, says the 1999 ASIS Survey. Then too, the 1999 CSI-FBI Survey reported fully, "61% of surveyed corporations experienced . . . unauthorized use of computer systems," and that, ". . . disgruntled employees or former employees who seek to damage the company in some way or who sell corporate information are the greatest sources of stolen corporate secrets and data."

Still need more to convince you? OK! Completely unbeknownst to the naive PC user, Windows™ simply does not provide the security you'd expect. Every Windows O/S

stores unwanted data in various locations on your hard drive like: Swap files, RAM slack, File Slack, Free Space, Temporary Files, Spool Files, File Names, Recycle Bin and Heaven only knows where else? So how can you protect yourself in all this mess? How do you decrease the risk of intellectual property loss? How do you continuously eliminate data liabilities? The simple answer is, use SecureClean religiously (and add file encryption to all your other important/private "stuff"). It's the safe, effective and thorough way of keeping your system clean of unwanted PC data.

The kicker to all this diatribe? I personally heard, "Get Insurance," mentioned more than a few times at the July 2000 USA Black Hat Briefings in Las Vegas. So, contrary to what you've ever thought, or not thought, or been taught, "Your PC is not safe — never has been," period.

Bottom line? Your best bet for security, I feel, is to get and use SecureClean (and other safety measures, like using file encryption and the Virus and PC Firewall protection. SecureClean completely solves the biggest part of these security problems by removing the deleted data, files and folders you specify quickly, easily and permanently, while everything else remains safe and untouched.

That's the "Why?" you should use SecureClean — or its benefit(s) — here's the nitty-gritty on it being Reliable and Comprehensive — It is easy to Use, Highly Secure and has Automated Cleaning Options.
Reliable and Comprehensive.
SecureClean: Securely eliminates ALL previously deleted and unwanted files; Cleans all PC media (ZIP, JAZ, Syquest, SuperDisk, Tape, Floppy, Hard Drive, et al.); Cleans compressed or uncompressed

FAT and NTFS drives; cleans free space, file slack, RAM slack and swap files; eliminates deleted file names and folder names; securely deletes individual files on a network.

Easy to Use.

Features and benefits such as: There is a Special trash bin on the Desktop for easy drag and drop file deletion (even from the Recycle Bin itself); Quickly clean a file, folder or drive with a simple right click of the mouse; Easily discover and view where deleted data is stored; and, It is very simple to install (even on a network), to use, customize and uninstall (should the need arise).

Highly Secure.

SecureClean: Cleans without risk of damage to the file system integrity (no direct disk writes); Has adjustable data overwrites corresponding to Department of Defense standards; and, has been tested by computer forensic specialists.

Automated Cleaning Options.

SecureClean: Automatically empties the Recycle Bin, Temp folder, Spool folder and other User selectable locations during cleaning operations; Can be scheduled for automatic system cleaning; and, can automatically clean at shutdown or log off.

Just like all other SecureClean capabilities, it's as easy as 1-2-3-4 to Secure Zap(ping) Files and Folders Using the SecureClean Zap Icon (on the Desktop):

1. Open Windows Explorer and select the files or folders you want to destroy;
2. Size Windows Explorer so you can see the SecureClean Zap Icon on the desktop;
3. Drag the selection onto the desktop SecureClean Zap Icon; and,

4. Follow the prompts for destroying the files. Warning: When you Zap a file, it's gone forever! Voila!

Be sure to get, and use, this very valuable product designed with your safety in mind. You'll be very glad you did. Or, then again, maybe you'd like the notoriety given to Monica, Oly, and those yet to make the list? Ciao!

P.S. AccessData Corporation specializes in:
1. Password Recovery (with PASSWORD RECOVERY Windows95/98/2000 NT 4.0 Software which recovers passwords for PKZip, WinZip, Word, Excel, Word-Perfect, Lotus1-2-3, Paradox, Q&A, Quattro-Pro, Ami Pro, Approach, Quick-Books, Act!, Pro Write, Access, Word Pro, DataPerfect, dBase, Symphony, Outlook, Express, MS Money, Quicken, Scheduler+, Ascend, NetWare, and Windows NT Server /Workstation);
2. Cryptographic Design; and,
3. Forensic Investigation (with its brand new comprehensive computer crimes investigation tool, the Forensic Toolkit), as well as File Security with Secure-Clean, that is, if you have the need of such things? If so, please contact: Amber Schroader, the General Manager (see data above), whose E-mail address is: amber@accessdata.com.

Manufacturer: AccessData Corporation, 2500 N. University Ave. Suite 200, Provo, UT 84604. Web Site: Phone: 801.377.5410 Fax: 801.377.5426 E-mail: info@secureclean com. Suggested Retail: $49.95. System Requirements: Windows 95/98/2000 /NT CD ROM drive.

From the September 2000 issue of *Blue Chips*, the magazine of the Utah Computer Society.

Society News

President's Letter
Joe Varga

Hello to all! I hope you all had a great summer. The New Year has begun and we are off to a terrific start. I was not at the first meeting of the year, due to unforeseen circumstances. I have heard, though, that it was a success. I hope the presentation was up to everyone's expectations. We still have more great presentations to come in the next meetings. We will also do our best to provide you with quality door prizes that will be both useful and helpful.

As always, we still need volunteers to help with some of the club duties. Someone in the past had volunteered to be the librarian and that position is still available. We have the books sorted and ordered so that they can be easily stored. We also still need a Communications Chairperson. This position will entail both telephone and email communication that relate to club business. Your job will be to maintain a database of email addresses and telephone numbers of people and companies that we contact and to communicate with them as needed. Both of these positions are easy to handle and training and support are available for both positions.

I am also ready to give the maintenance of the web page up to a willing volunteer. I will train who ever has the interest and help with it until you are comfortable. We are regularly getting 25 to 50 or so "hits" a week, and I would like to see that number go up, but I no longer have the time to perform regular maintenance and improvements. If anyone has an interest in filling any of the positions above, please call me at

233-7841 or email me at jrvarga@rochester .rr.com

There is only one other thing to mention. When we give out door prizes of software and books, we need a review of the product to return to the provider. We have been doing this on the honor system and it has been working well, but not perfectly. If we do not return a review for every product we give away, we will not be able to get more free products in the future. We need a review back within 60 days of when you receive the product. Your cooperation in this effort will only benefit you, as there will be more products to give away.

Overall, I think the club is in pretty good shape. We are still always open to suggestions for improvements, so please feel free to offer ideas at your convenience.

NEW USER GROUP MEETING
September 5, 2000
John McMillan

Three guests joined seven regulars at the September New Users Group Meeting at the Monroe Developmental Center, 630 Westfall Rd. The first question of the evening arose from a class in which multiple E-mail providers were described. One reason for multiple servers or accounts would be to separate messages intended for different family members or business mail from personal mail. Most users do not need more than one or two servers (Hotmail, AOL, Juno etc.). It was felt that class members would likely be using different systems so the teachers described a number of services which might differ in minor ways. Some of the systems could even be config-

ured to check multiple mail boxes with a simple procedure.

The discussion turned to downloading music with a question of how to get words as well as music. Bill Statt mentioned a piano tutoring program which claims that music in a midi format will be printed with both notes and words. Bill wondered if he went to Napster or Gnuetella could he download midi files with both words and notes. Midi format has been composed on instruments or a computer and compressed by a factor of ten or more. It contains decompression instructions to generate wave sounds when executed. MP3 files are digital files that have been converted from an analogue (.Wav) file. Another suggestion was to do a web search to see if the particular song was available somewhere.

It was pointed out that music could be downloaded onto a hard drive, read into memory and played that way but that trying to create a CD required a CDW or CDRW unit. CDRW generated disks did not play as well on other hi-fi equipment but the price of one time writeables has dropped to about 20 cents apiece in bulk. It was mentioned that Napster, which is under fire in the courts, provides both software for downloading and a massive central file of available music. Gnuetella on the other hand provides software that lets you communicate, via the Internet, with other individuals who are willing to share music files they have.

Another user who was trying to play radio stations from the web said that for some stations there is no sound. It was felt that he might need a plug in for the browser quite possibly real player. That could be downloaded from www.real.com either for free or in a $30 version. Greg Sayre has used the free one without problems. It was also recommended that he go to Microsoft's web page and download Media Player 7. It was pointed out that some stations are not transmitting. Users of this feature were reaching for distant stations such as Los Angeles which is not available on a regular radio.

Another user wondered if he should buy expensive speakers for his Pentium I. The advice he got was that if he was considering upgrading the computer within the next year and a half, get the lowest cost acceptable quality speakers since any new machine would probably include balanced speakers in the package.

One of the newcomers mentioned getting the dreaded illegal operation message and not knowing how to shut the machine off.

Gregg Sayre described the proper way to get out of a similar situation. First choose details which will display a window filled with what to most of us is gibberish. Carefully write down exactly what the display shows for possible use in trouble shooting afterwards. Then try to shut the machine down in the preferred sequence. The key combination of control, alt., and delete should present a list of all open programs with the hung program first. Try closing that program and each successive program in the list and then a normal shut down. Sometimes when a program hangs up, the files cannot be saved and may cause problems upon restart.

If the shutdown is abnormal, when windows is started next time, a message states that scan disk will be executed before opening windows to determine if any files have been corrupted. If files have been corrupted and the illegal operation message repeats, then the software package should be uninstalled and reinstalled to correct any software problems. Concern was expressed by several of the attendees over the tone of this and similar messages that leave people with a feeling of guilt, wondering what they did wrong.

The advisability of upgrading to Windows Millennium Edition was questioned. Several people thought that users should wait until it had a chance to be shaken down pointing to experiences with several versions of Windows 95 and 98. Early purchasers are often frustrated as they help debug the process and lead the way to fixes that are incorporated in future versions.

The next question came from a user of Lotus 1-2-3 within Windows 98. He experiences a machine lock up about half the time when Lotus is shut down. Gregg thought this might be caused by Lotus changing the video resolution to a size that the video card could not handle. He suggested right clicking on desktop; choosing properties; and selecting the setting tab which would tell what resolution and color depth the desk top is being set at. That should be compared with the amount of video memory which is briefly displayed when the computer is first turned on. This is also available by right clicking on my computer; select properties; select device manager; then hit the plus sign next to video devices or double click

video devices. This provides a description of the video card and on most Dell machines will also tell how many megs of ram there are on the video card. A good common ground for resolution would be 800 x 600 with a color depth of 256. Findfast was mentioned as another possible cause of the problem and Dell technical support was suggested as an alternative source of information.

Another user questioned random lock ups of his machine. The need for adequate ventilation and a dust free environment were discussed with methods for checking the cpu fan operation. Memory hogging programs were also mentioned as a possible cause. A word processing program might be opened several times to work on different documents rather than minimizing the documents and working within one active copy of the program. Running defrag might also prevent the lockups.

"If you've got questions, we try to answer." Join us at the Oct. 3rd meeting at the Monroe Developmental Center, 630 Westfall Rd.

Planning Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2000
Ron Matteson, acting secretary

President Joe Varga convened the September, 2000, Planning Meeting of the RCSi Board at 7:17 p.m. at the offices of Heveron & Heveron, Rochester. Also present were Steve Staub, Treasurer; Ron Matteson, Larilyn Bauer, Joe Pia, and Sally Springett.

Sally inquired about the mailing cost of adding one additional sheet to the *Monitor*

(four pages). It was determined by weighing a previous issue that there should be no increase in postage.

Steve recommended changing the RCSi account to the HSBC bank, based on the availability of electronic banking, balance requirements, and cost. There was a corresponding motion to take this action, and it was unanimously approved.

The September program meeting will be held on September 24 at East High, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Ron will do Help's Half Hour, and introduce the speaker, Ms Sonal Shaw from Microsoft. Some Microsoft software will be raffled.

Two short program are scheduled for October. Merrill Lynch will give a 20 minute demonstration of their on-line investing services, and plan also to provide refreshments and a Palm Pilot as door prize. Some software will also be available for the raffle. Also, a representative from Frontier will talk about DSL (Digital Subscriber Link, a high speed Internet service available over telephone lines in some locations).

In November, the SoundBytes crew will run the meeting, and tape the proceedings for a future broadcast.

Other possible future programs include: MGI will discuss Video Wave and Photo Suite IV. Corel will talk about Word Perfect Suite and Linux. Joe Varga may give a mini-presentation on OmniUpdate and PageCharmer. Other possible programs in cooperation with the Buffalo Users Group, chaired by Rita Gay.

The educational programs for new users have been delayed until computer resources are located for potential students.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Program Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2000
Charles Grover, Secretary

Our September meeting was held on a Sunday, September 24, at 2 p.m. to make it possible for a representative from Microsoft to be our speaker. We met at our usual place, East High School, begriming with Ron Matteson leading Helps Half Hour.

Ms Sonal Shah, Channel Marketing representative for Microsoft Corporation, presented a program about Windows Millennium Edition. The program was a fast-paced review of the operating system emphasizing additions and changes from Windows 98.

Ms Shah focused extensively on "Digital Media," "User Experience," "Home Networking," and "Internet Experience." Some of the features provided in Windows Me to improve user experience are the ability to restore the system to a previous state using a "snapshot" taken earlier of the system, scheduling automatic updates from Microsoft's web site, and "System File Protection" to restore necessary system files should they be deleted.

Ms Shah described how RCSI members may order MS Press titles at 20 percent discount. During a question and answer session, Ms. Shah handled our queries well, showing her knowledge of the product.

We were informed of a special upgrade package available to users of Windows 98 until January 15, 2000, with a street price of less than $50. After that, upgrading from Win 98 will require the package now required for a Win 95 upgrade, costing about twice as much.

Procedure for RCSi members to order from MS Press at 20 percent discount.
1. E-Mail mindshar@microsoft.com. Tell them you belong to the Rochester Computer Society, Inc, and request the discount code.
2. Go to www.mspress.microsoft.com to view available titles.
3. Call 1-800-MSPRESS; give them the code and order your books.

Treasurer's Report
Steve Staub

Income	$150.00
Expenses	
St. Stephens (2 mo.)	$30.00
Picnic food	8.00
Sam's Club	113.40
Paper	33.70
Food for newsletter staff	15.35
Rent of folding machine (2 mo.)	150.00
Copier rental	100.00
Total expenses	$450.45
Balance as of 9/29/00	$1,365.32

The Lighter Side
Instructions for Your New Device
IMPORTANT!
READ THIS BEFORE USING YOUR NEW DEVICE

Congratulations! You have purchased an extremely fine device that should give you thousands of years of trouble-free service, except that you undoubtedly will destroy it via some typical bonehead consumer maneuver. Which is why we ask you to: Please, for heaven's sake, read this owner's manual carefully before you unpack the device.

You already unpacked it, didn't you? You unpacked it and plugged it in and turned it on and fiddled with the knobs, didn't you? And now your child, the same one who once shoved a Polish sausage into your VCR and set it to Fast Forward is also fiddling with the knobs, right? Hell, we might as well just break these things before we ship them out, you know that?

Sorry! We just get a little crazy sometimes because we're always getting back "defective" merchandise where it turns out the consumer "inadvertently" bathed the device in iced tea for six days. So, in writing these instructions, we naturally tend to assume that your skull is filled with dead insects, but we mean nothing personal by it. OK? Now let's talk about:
Unpacking the Device

The device is encased in foam to protect it from the Shipping People, who like nothing more than to jab spears into outgoing boxes. Please inspect the contents carefully for evidence of spear jabs or bottle caps, pull tabs, candy wrappers, and Lord knows what else.

WARNING: Do not ever, as long as you live, throw away the box or any of the pieces of Styrofoam, especially the ones shaped like peanuts. If you attempt to return the device to the store, and you are missing one single peanut, the store personnel will laugh in the chilling manner exhibited by Joseph Stalin

just after he enslaved Eastern Europe. Besides the device, the box should contain:

- Eight little rectangular snippets of paper that say "**WARNING**"
- A little plastic packet containing four 5/17 inch pilfer grommets
- Two club-ended 6/93 inch boxcar prawns.

You will need to supply:

- a matrix wrench
- 60,000 feet of tram cable.

If anything is damaged or missing:

You immediately should turn to your spouse and say "Margaret, you know why this country can't make a car that can get all the way through the drive-through at Burger King without a major transmission overhaul? Because nobody cares, that's why." **WARNING**: This is assuming your spouse's name is Margaret and not something else.

1. **PLUGGING IN THE DEVICE**

The plug on this device represents the latest thinking of the electrical industry's Plug Mutation Group, which, in a continuing effort to prevent consumers from causing hazardous electrical current to flow through their appliances, developed the Three-Pronged Plug, then the plug where one prong is bigger than the other.

Your device is equipped with the revolutionary new plug whose prongs consist of six small religious figurines made of chocolate.

Adapters are sold separately and require 16 weeks for delivery. Please call 1-900- YOU-FOOL for current pricing. (You must be 18 or older to call at $17.95 per minute. Average call duration: three hours.) Do not try to plug it in! Lay it gently on the floor near an outlet, but out of direct sunlight, and clean it first with a damp handkerchief. Then, give us a call.

2. **OPERATION OF THE DEVICE**

WARNING: We manufacture only the attractive designer case. The actual working parts are manufactured in Japan. The instructions were translated by Mrs. Shirley Peltwater of Accounts Receivable, who has never actually been to Japan (or anywhere else for that matter), but has a second cousin who once was.

INSTRUCTIONS: For results that can be the finest, we advising that: **NEVER** to hold these buttons two times!! Except the battery. Next taking the (something) earth section may cause a large occurrence! However. If this is not a trouble, such rotation is a very maintenance action, as a kindly (something) virepoint from Drawing B.

3. **WARRANTY**

Be it hereby known that this device, together with (but not excluding) all those certain parts thereunto, shall be warranted against all defects, failures, and malfunctions as shall occur between now and next Thursday afternoon and shall be repaired/replaced at no cost to the owner. After that time, a slight service and shipping charge shall apply. Information on this extended warranty is available from Mr. Lance Haskill of the Last National Bank's Third Mortgage Department in Last Gasp, Wyoming.

This warranty does not cover the attractive designer case.