

# NEWSbits

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## WHAT'S INSIDE

Page 2  
Back to Basics  
Article: *How to  
Protect from Viruses*  
Smart Computing  
Mags Giveaway

Page 3  
President's Corner

Page 4  
November 14 Reunion  
Poses and Reposes



Page 5  
Kim Komando—  
*Perfect Photos*  
DVD/CD Media  
Backup

Page 7  
Genealogy 2010  
Nov. Prize Winners

Page 8  
The Deals Guy

Page 9  
Double Take

Page 10  
Fox Techie

Page 11  
CCUG-PC Help Desk  
CCUG-PC Online

Page 12  
Chuckles Cartoon  
Websites of the Month



CCUG-PC Banner

## "What Was Old Is New Again" by Elaine Pitre

The year 2009 has come and gone. The luncheon/meeting went very well this past November with an attendance of twenty-plus people. Some members or their spouse could not make it, but am sure they will return again in February, 2010 for our next meeting. We had some new, old familiar faces attending today. Jim Stone, Curtis and Virginia McElroy came for their first time since we began these luncheons. Our February meeting was rescheduled for Saturday, February 20th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Due to Mardi Gras and scheduling, it was moved to the weekend after Mardi Gras. After having lunch and visiting with everyone, the meeting was started. CCUG is always on the lookout for bargains.



Jerry Montalbano touched on one particular device that seemed interesting. It is called CarMD. This connects under the dashboard of your car. It is a diagnostic tool that lets you know what is wrong with your car. Why the engine light is on. It works on vehicles from 1996 on. Now ladies, we may not be able to fix the car, but at least a mechanic shouldn't be able to get one over on us.

Who knows, we just may need gas, oil or perhaps the gas cap wasn't put on correctly.

*(Old, continued on page 7)*

## Supporting Our Troops



The holidays are right around the corner. Be sure to check out your local stores for great deals on new computers, software and other electronic devices you may be considering.

## The Internet—History & Future!



Ray Paternostro will speak on the History of the Internet—how it came into being, what its present form exists as Internet I and speculation as to where it's headed in the future as Internet II. It will include a screening of the ½ hour movie "Computer Networks: The Heralds of Resource Sharing", which has interviews with some of the architects of what started as ARPANET and has evolved into the modern-day internet. A Q & A session will follow afterwards.

## Upcoming Event - Feb. 20, 2010



St. Tammany Public Library (Slidell)

555 Robert Blvd - (985-646-6470)

CCUG-PC will meet February 20 in Slidell for this meeting event from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The presentation requires a meeting room with visual equipment so the location will be held here to accommodate the speaker. C'Ya!

# Smart Computing® In Plain English



At the meeting on Saturday, February 20th, prize winners will be awarded their choice of the following magazines: **Smart Computing** (Plain English, informative articles, reviews, technology), **PC Today** (Mobile Technology/Laptop magazine), and **CPU Magazine** (for advanced/technical users).. Winners will receive a 12-month free subscription. Non-Winners can go to [www.smartcomputing.com](http://www.smartcomputing.com) for low prices and additional info.



## Back to BASICS



The Newsbits staff has kept this tiny corner to remind of us the good times we spent in Back to Basics. Margaret Wynn led this superb gathering each week with presentations, Q. & A and loads of fun and excitement.



Please keep Margaret in your prayers as she presently is challenged with her illness and wish her speedy recovery after operation and malady. If you cannot

offer her well-wishes personally at a meeting, do write to offer her any kind words, at [melody43@bellsouth.net](mailto:melody43@bellsouth.net). Get well soon, Margaret! Our prayers are a rock to your recovery!

## How You Can Protect Your System —from Bugs! by Jerry Montalbano



Nowadays, as the Internet and other networks are greatly developed, you can expect computer viruses to be distributed rapidly and intensively. Everyday, there are quite a few new viruses that arise and is capable of considerably damaging your computer system. Anti-virus specialists work diligently to make *updates* for their

software to guard your system against new and creative-type, but devious viruses. They also wish to address them and issue these updates of protection for you as soon as possible. Viruses can get inside computers in various ways. That's why there is no simple method to protect any given system. Only a series of measures can give you reliable protection from the infection. Here are nine steps to protect MS Windows-based PC systems from viruses that you'll find quite informative and helpful to peace of mind.

1. Make regular backups. It should be said that there is no *absolutely safe way of protection*. Virus creators regularly find holes or work-a-rounds in new computer products to target them for infection of computer systems. Some dangerous viruses can considerably damage data files or even erase an entire file system. Make regular backups of your data files to separate them from the computer with the use of a file storage device. It can be a separate hard drive (or USB external drive to simply plug into a USB port in front or rear), flash card, like a USB thumb/flash drive, CD/DVD disc or another file storage device of your choosing. To ease the procedure, you can use some automatic backup software. If you're more familiar with MS Windows Explorer (file management), you can copy and paste.

And, be ready if the system will crash and burn (not literally) because of virus infection. No fun, no gain, huh?

2. Be ready to reinstall your system if it drops dead because of viruses. It's not a pretty sight. Get distributives of your operation system and distributives of software (system restore discs for your computer) which you use, but please keep them altogether. (I can't tell you how many times I've asked a client for their software and they couldn't locate it to save their life. Not being mindful of where it exists can be traumatic when you're looking to get your computer restored to good order). For instance, keep them on a set of CDs not far away from you (I keep mine in a large sealable plastic Glad storage bag. This way, I always know where all software is to all of my computers. Now, in this case, if virus infection will cause unrecoverable system failure, you can rapidly reinstall your working medium back to good health.

(Continues on Page 6)



# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

## Hi, CCUG-PC Members!

Hopefully, you get to read Newsbits (as you are reading it now to have my message revealed to you) each time it arrives at your e-mail doorstep. Feel free to send an article or picture to me that you'd like published.

Yes, "da beat goes on".

When CCUG-PC members meet again in May, the group's re-union meetings will have reached a year already. Moreover, later in the year, CCUG-PC will be 20 years of age. Already (minus 4 disturbing years of Katrina).

You will notice that we shifted gears somewhat to accommodate Ray Paternostro and borrow the St. Tammany Library in Slidell for this month's general meeting. We mentioned there were a chance to rotate from time to time around so as to take advantage of resources, distances between us all and change of pace. February's meeting will allow us a break of the luncheon so as to accommodate Ray's interesting demonstration of the Internet, complete with movie and popcorn (OK, so there'll be no popcorn, but the movie will be there to assist in his demo). We appreciate Ray and his knowledge, so please offer him your support for this presentation. It should be informative as he's given it before to another sister organization, New Orleans Personal Computer User's Club (NOPC) with success.

## ARTICLE CONTRIBUTIONS

NEWSBITS Newsletter is currently published Quarterly by CCUG-PC. Articles for publication *must* be submitted, typewritten and on disk to our newsletter staff by the **15th** of the month before a meeting date for publication. We welcome all articles of computing interest and we reserve the newsletter.



In 2009, the economy tanked. Computer costs remained constant and many systems gave more for the money paid by customers. If you weren't a gamer, you could have gotten a speeded system with nice sized LCD monitor for under \$500.00 (Some for under \$500). The irony about a bad economy is that there are bargains around when money is tight for those who have the extra cash on hand to take advantage of them.

As this past 6-10 weeks winds down, we may be able to return to some degree of normalcy. For most of us, these past few months have been very hectic starting with Thanksgiving, Christmas and holidays, the Saints run to the Superbowl 44 win, and now we're just getting over Mardi Gras. Whew!! Many of us need to catch our breath and recover our composure.

## Health Care

NO, it's not the U.S. government in action here. It's more targeted towards computer health that's important. Although some of us use the computer for work-related use, others want this incredible tool for daily relaxation. Some will use it for online usage—hours on end. But, if you do so, it's always a good measure to take frequent breaks (10 minutes to each hour). This helps to avoid hand pain and eye strain. Additionally, if you still use a tube-type-CRT glass monitor, there's the EMF (electro-magnetic field) rays that could be harmful to long-term exposure, so limit your time somewhat with care.

## Celebrating 20 Years - 1990 - 2010

This year, CCUG-PC is celebrating it's 20th year in existence. Throughout the year, we'll be highlighting memories and history in photos and information which many of your who have been with us for any lengthy period of time might recall. We've had ups and downs with the group both before and after the storm. Enjoy the wonderful spirit of the group. Attend and participate.

*Jerry Montalbano*

## CCUG-PC Board Members

### President

Jerry Montalbano  
jerryccug@cox.net

### Secretary

Laura Brunies  
fluffylb@aol.com

### Treasurer

Harry Cancienne  
harrycan@cox.net

### Membership Secretary

Margaret Wynn  
melody43@bellsouth.net

### Program Coordinator

Sheila McElroy  
samce@cox.net

### Committee & Helpers

Sue Wessing  
swessing@hotmail.com  
Carolyn Wagner  
carowag@bellsouth.net

### Setups

Buster Matthews  
busterm2@yahoo.com

### Parliamentarian/Sergeants

Virginia&Curtis McElroy

### Assistant Editors, Graphics

Columnist & Circulation  
Anyone

## CCUG-PC Contacts

Newsletter Editor, Jerry M.

Phone: 225-788-2537

jerryccug@cox.net

Webpage Address:

www.ccugpc.org

## NOTICE!

Upcoming Date to Remember

May 8, 2010

Meeting place: TBA.



## November 14 CCUG-PC Luncheon



*Top: CarMD is presented to members, Ray, Mac & Virginia, Carolyn, Marge, Mary and Harry*

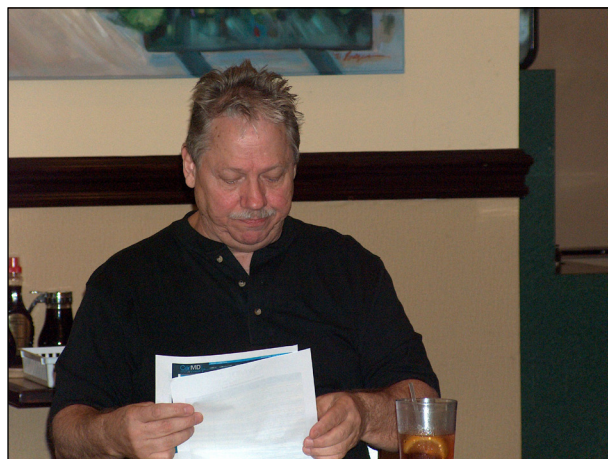


*Jim Diggs (L) listens along with Priscilla Scott and Elaine Pitre*



*Members Margaret Wynn sits alone (not really), but others follow along—say cheese!*

## A Meeting in Progress



*Above: Jerry gets to the meetings presentation of the morning*



*Members Mac and Virginia paying close attention to Jerry's presentation while Marge & Carolyn chat*



*Group therapy – that's what it was at the presentation, but still, it was better than sleep induced after a good meal!*



## Take Perfect Photos Every Time with Scene Modes *by Kim Komando*

It would be nice if a camera's automatic settings mode took perfect pictures every time. Truth is, it doesn't. You may miss the warm tones of a sunset. Or, skin tones are off.

You don't need to be a camera geek to get excellent photos. Virtually all point-and-shoots and many SLRs feature scene modes. Turn a dial to specify the shooting situation. Or, select it from a camera menu. The camera optimizes the settings.

Available scene modes vary by manufacturer. Modes are more common on point-and-shoots and entry-level SLRs. You won't find them on high-end SLRs. Let's take a look at some common scene modes and when to them.

Starting with portrait mode, use this when shooting well-lit people or animals. Its icon is typically a person. You'll get soft, natural skin tones. Focus is on the subject's face, drawing viewers' attention.

The background will be blurred to eliminate distractions. However, the closer your subject is to the background, the clearer the background.

The sports mode icon is a person running. Use it for children, pets or any fast-moving subject. Exposure time is minimized, so you take photos quickly. Continuous shooting is enabled for rapid, multiple shots. Focus tracking is also enabled. The subject should always be in focus.



Sports mode may yield noisier photos, particularly in poor lighting. Noise is off-color pixels; it looks somewhat similar to film grain.

The icon with a mountain and star is night (or night landscape) mode. Use it for night scenes without a

person or other central subject. It is perfect for photographing skylines. Night mode brings as much of the scene into focus as possible.

Settings are optimized for low light. You'll get detailed dark areas. But lights and other bright areas won't lose detail.

Again, noise may be a problem. Also, flash is disabled. Use a tripod to avoid camera shake.

Use night portrait when shooting a central subject at night. Night portrait mode is represented by a person and star. The background may be dark. But, your subject will be well lit, thanks to your camera's flash. Night portrait may add noise to your shots.

Photographing bugs or flowers? Select the flower icon to put your camera in close up (macro) mode. It also works well for shots of small objects or details.

Your camera will focus at its closest distance. The background is softened so that your subject stands out. Additionally, flash settings may be tweaked to prevent bleached out subjects.

The picture of mountains is landscape mode. Use it for capturing detailed landscapes and streetscapes. Land-



scape mode puts as much of your scene in focus as possible. Foreground objects and distant objects should be equally sharp.

Use sunset mode for sunsets and sunrises. It is represented by a picture of the sun. Sunset mode preserves warm tones. You'll get the rich colors you want. Flash is turned off and your camera focuses farther away.

Child mode is represented by a picture of a child. It yields smooth, natural skin tones. But background details and clothing are vivid. The camera will track the child and focus continually. Settings are changed to avoid blurring.

The scene modes on your camera may differ slightly. Try using them. Experiment. After all, there is no more film to waste.



## DVD/CD Media Backup

Today, CD and DVD Writers are very common and CDRs and CDRWs and DVDs

are cheaper than ever. While most people use their CD/DVD writers to create music CDs or to copy files, CD-R, CD-RWs and DVDs can also be to store backups in an easy way. A normal CD can store 700MBs of data. This number can often be doubled to 1.3GB using an efficient compression algorithm. Since most backups are often smaller than 1.3GBs this makes CDRs or CDRWs a perfect solution for storing backups. By comparison, DVD's will hold 4.77 GB, 9GB (Double sided) and the latest Blu-Ray is the max with a Blu-Ray "burner" that can house up to 7 times more at about 25-50GB (dual-layered discs). Whew!!

### Compression

For all intent, we'll stick mostly with DVD and backwards compatible since

*(Continues on Page 10)*



(Virus, continued from page 2)



3. Protect your network connection with a “firewall”. A Firewall is software which blocks suspicious, potentially dangerous connections by preventing viruses from your network to penetrate into your system. It simply puts a safeguard between those who want to harm your system and your computer.

Windows XP system has a quite simple, but reliable built-in firewall. Not great, but it's better than none at all. You can enable it as follows. 1) in Control Panel, double-click Networking and Internet Connections, and then click Network Connections. 2) Right-click the connection on which you would like to enable the firewall, then click Properties. 3) On the Advanced tab, check the option to Protect my computer and network.

If you need more flexible control of connections with a network, you can get and install a better quality firewall software like Norton Personal Firewall, McAfee or Outpost Firewall. If you use this software you have the ability to permit or to block cular connections and to monitor network activity. It allows you to be in control, yet with automatic features can lessen the workload on your end.

4. Use antivirus software. If your system is new, it probably come with a limited anti-virus program like McAfee or Norton/Norton Security. However, it might be a 30-day to a 1 yr. subscription and then expire. If that's the case, you might have been notified that it is/has been expired and you'll have to go on their website or call to have it reinstated for another year or so. Installing antivirus software if none is active will help you scan your system actively from boot-time by searching and erasing viruses then or on a regular basis. Leaders in antivirus software products for Windows systems are Norton Antivirus, McAfee, Kaspersky Anti-Virus and PC-cilin. There are even free and trialware versions available. Such a free example is AVG - [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com).

5. Regularly update the operating system. Windows XP has built-in automatic update service. It regularly contacts a Microsoft server to find updates and then notifies you if updates are ready to be installed. Updates are important because hackers regularly find holes in operating system which are often used by virus creators.

6. Don't install and don't run suspicious software. Check new programs which you are going to install with your anti-virus software (especially if you're one to be given the program and can't be sure that a virus is attached to the CD when installing. It does and can happen. Don't download software from suspicious websites. Use trusted sites like Symantec.com, McAfee.com, etc. or Cnet.com/download.com which certifies that their downloads are safe and trusted enough to use. To download software, always seek a website of the software creator or official distributor. Do not open applications received by e-mail from unknown persons. This will almost get you every time.

7. Limit access to your computer. Protect the entrance to the system with the use of a password. Please, nothing like your name or pet.

(Continues on Page 10)



(Old, continued from page 7)

It could save a trip to the mechanic. The average price is \$100. You can view or purchase it at [www.carMD.com](http://www.carMD.com) using the code ExtraSmart or [www.CarMD.com/Smart](http://www.CarMD.com/Smart) using promo code: NovSmart for \$89.99.

Some of you may be itching to get the new Windows 7. Jerry Montalbano and Ray Paternostro discussed the pros and cons. Be on the lookout, because there are several versions of Windows 7. They come in different colored boxes, green (Home Premium \$120), blue (Professional \$200), and black (Ultimate \$220). Look them over carefully to see the best option for you.

FYI: I saw in Smart Computing, eligible college students can purchase an upgrade copy of Home Premium or Professional for \$29.99. For more information, visit [www.win741.com](http://www.win741.com).

Speaking of Smart Computing, coupons were distributed to receive this magazine at a discounted price of \$29 for 12 issues. Just go to [www.smartcomputing.com](http://www.smartcomputing.com) and mention code 14142.

The Q & A portion of our meeting is always entertaining. It brings in simple and complex questions that we all have from time to time. Facebook, Google Dashboard and Macs versus PC were the main topics discussed.

Microsoft Office Professional 2003 and Acronis True Image Home 2009 (a PC Backup and Recovery Software) were the raffle items of the day. Virginia McElroy won MS Office and Buster Matthews won Acronis True Image. Congratulations to you both.

Hope to see you'll in February. Until then, Chalmette Computer Users Group wishes everyone a safe and happy holidays. May peace be with you and your families. **EP**

## DISCLAIMER

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## **Genealogy 2010**

*By Sue Wessing*

**St. Bernard Genealogical Society, Inc**

Queries (requests for information) and how to do them:

Many genealogy societies have websites and publications that will publish (sometimes free) your request for information on that elusive relative. In many cases you may have to take a one year subscription to their publication which is usually under \$20. Try to be specific as to what you are looking for.

Do a Google search of the location where you think they may have lived and find the local societies there, even abroad you may find some. Try something like this: "genealogy societies Texarkana Texas". When you find one or several societies that cover that area you next prepare a query. The following is just a suggestion of one I am researching.

"I'm requesting any information on death and burial place for David Moore Smith born in Tennessee, approximately November 1, 1830. He was last seen in New Orleans census (1870). He was a steamboat captain/pilot on the Mississippi River during the Civil War. He and his wife, Mary Clemence Corneille married Dec. 5 1860 and had 7 children in New Orleans. Three lived to be adults. An obituary on his wife in 1932 mentioned they moved to Texarkana, Texas where he was in charge of the construction of one of the early railroads in the state. It is said he is died in Shreveport Louisiana February 14th 1874, but I have not been able to find an obituary, gravesite or other information on him." List your contact information here:

Someone belonging to those societies may have more information on that person. Another location for information on genealogy societies is found at <http://www.cyndislist.com/society.htm>



### **RESEARCHING LOCALLY ONLINE:**

New Orleans Public Library Loyola branch on Tulane Ave. Special Collections:

<http://www.neworleanspubliclibrary.org/~nopl/spec/specist.htm>

Online guide to what is available there:  
<http://www.neworleanspubliclibrary.org/~nopl/guides/gen-guide/gguide4.htm>

Louisiana biography and obituary index, death notices

<http://neworleanspubliclibrary.org/obits/obits.htm>

Vital records: Orleans births, deaths, etc.:

<http://www.usgwarchives.org/la/orleans.htm>

Remember to enter your data in a genealogy program and back up all your data frequently. Save in remote locations or share with an interested family member.

Enter researched information in your software as soon as possible after you get it and back it up in several locations: on memory sticks, backup drives, with relatives interested in the history also, and online to secure sites.

Scan your family photos into the program also, it is a great way to store them and share them. Keep

**Happy Easter!**



**Happy Passover!**



your originals off the walls and in dark, dry, insect free locations. Next edition more places to search online and where to go locally to research and obtain records.

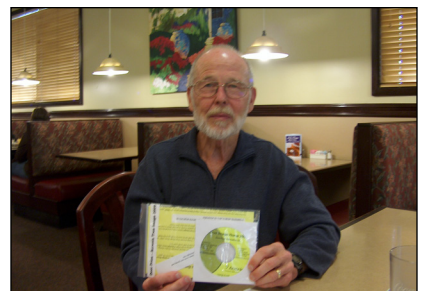
For more links visit our website:  
[www.ccugpc.org/sbgs/sbgs.htm](http://www.ccugpc.org/sbgs/sbgs.htm)  
**Suzanne "Sue" Doole Wessing**  
**St. Bernard Genealogical Society, Inc.**

### **HAPPY CCUG-PC PRIZE WINNERS**

At the past November meeting, Virginia McElroy and Buster Matthews were the winners in the grand prize drawings. Virginia won a package of Microsoft Office and Buster walked out with his copy of Acronis True image, back-up software for backing up an image of his entire hard drive. Needless to say, both were tickled pink and we congratulate both on their lucky drawings!



***Elated Virginia McElroy with hubby, Curtis***



***Buster Wins Acronis True Image***





**Feb-March, 2010**

### **Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group**



I often check <<http://www.giveawayoftheday.com>> to see what's free that day and if it looks interesting, I sometimes download things just in case I might need them some day, but it often takes me a while to get smart. I saw a good Windows tune-up program offered that I liked the other day and it was something I planned to use immediately. Suddenly I noticed a short paragraph on the download page telling me that I should not only download it within the time limit to get it free, but I should install it during that time and then run the activation file so it would be fully activated. Looks like I'll be deleting several files that I downloaded for future use. At least that oversight didn't cost me anything.

By the way, if you like those limited time offers, here's something else you might like to check occasionally. Like the others, these deals are only good for 24 hours, so each day when you check, the product will be different. Start checking <<http://www.software-dod.com>> daily when you have some spare time and see if they might have anything you like.



#### ***Help From Google For Your Job?***

I've said before that Louis Vitale of Macon Users Group <<http://www.maconusersgroup.org>> is one of my favorite authors; I never miss reading his column. A while back, he wrote about asking his nephew why he uses Google a lot. His nephew astounded him when he said that Google helps him make his living. Want to know how? He told Louis that he works for a roofing contractor writing job estimates and all he has to do to obtain the measurements for a house's roof is "Google" that address for the information and do the calculations to estimate the price of its roof. I was astounded to read that because I was uninformed about that capability in Google Earth. Louis then went on to mention how much fun he had that evening exploring Google's capabilities, even way into the wee hours.

For that matter, I was surprised when my grandson called me Christmas Eve to get my house address so he could use Google to get a map for driving to my house from where he was in Florida; and in the process, he mentioned being able to see my house and the flag flying. I do have a 25' flagpole in my yard and he would not have known that. This high-tech stuff continues to astound me.



#### ***A Unique Way That Modern Technology Affects Ranchers***

I read an article in Information Week that certainly opened my eyes to the strategy some ranchers must use to avoid criticism for their use of water for irrigation. Many ranchers need irrigation to grow their crops, but the human race also needs water for human consumption, and water is becoming scarcer all the time. So, the ranchers need a compromise which they can do by refining their irrigation technology. It certainly made sense when I read about this technology that has been in use for a while, but now they're refining it to save water even "during" the irrigation. I think you'll find it interesting. <<http://www.informationweek.com/news/mobility/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=221601558&queryText=Chris%20Murphy>>.



#### ***What If The Medication Doesn't Work***

Who knows what might lead to your demise, but how about an impressive way to be presented when the time comes. Another of my favorite writers was Pim Borman and I wish he was still writing "The New, The Best, and the Worst". In the last column that he wrote when his user group disbanded, one item was about a personalized casket for the deceased's eternal life. They will actually decorate the casket according to the way you lived your life. For example, a firefighter's casket might have a fire engine and ladders decorating the sides, a chemist might have the glass items for his trade or a doctor might have a stethoscope or other medical apparatus engraved on the sides.

The Web site <<http://www.artcaskets.com>> states: "Whether bold and vivid or soft and subdued, Art Caskets are as unforgettable as the life they commemorate." I can't say if the mourners would be impressed, but it's your funeral, isn't it? Thinking further, what if the deceased was a former Madam? Wow! Would that funeral be "adults only" if the casket was inscribed accordingly? Don't laugh; during recent excavations in the city of Pompeii, archeologists noted that there was a certain male organ depicted over the doorway to one of the shops, so that occupation is certainly nothing new. Anyway, I enjoyed that personalized casket item in the last column Pim wrote. "The DealsGuy" inscribed on the side of my "discounted" casket will do just fine.



#### ***Just In Case You Wondered***

Many people may be somewhat suspicious when they receive e-mails that you are asked to read, or other ones containing items such as a greeting card you click on to view it, and other catchy things. I never click on them because I've known people who got a virus when they clicked to see a so-called greeting card. Of course, that's not always the case, but bad things are possible.

Anyway, if someone sends you an invitation to try Drop-box, it's actually something you might want to look into. Of course, you should check closely to see where that URL  
*(Continues on Next Page)*





is really taking you, but an invitation to Dropbox could be something that interests you. It's actually a place to store your files on the Web and they can be shared with others if you desire. In your home, a thief could steal your personal files or worse yet, you might have the backup well hidden, but you can't "hide" it from a fire. Dropbox is also handy to sync your files between two machines, and I'm told there are other uses such as linking Dropbox to your machine. Dropbox is good for Windows, Linux and Mac.

Several members here use it, like it and suggested I use it in my column. The Dropbox invitation you were sent is also a way for the sender to earn benefits from Dropbox if you decide to use it, they just didn't mention that, but if it looks interesting, you'll also be helping the friend that recommended it. There is a free version allowing you to store up to two gigabytes of files, and share them with others if you like. Larger storage will cost you so if you're curious; check <<http://www.dropbox.com>> to look further into the many features.

On the other hand, in the case of Dropbox, you're dependent on somebody else's server to keep your stored files, not to mention staying in business. Mine aren't that important that they need to be kept secret, but you're the judge of yours. I also have a backup in a fireproof safe.



***Need a Coloring Book? (Their announcement was edited by me to shorten it)***

Star Coloring has launched Animals Coloring Book, a computer-based educational development program aimed at children 4-13 years old. The website based activity course is a perfect choice for parents who want to familiarize their kids with computers without exposing them to violent computer games and the dangers of the Internet. Animals Coloring Book features 25 three-dimensional pictures that strike an innovative balance for different skill levels. With a clear 3D interface, the artistic puzzles are guaranteed to keep a child occupied for a long time.

Animals Coloring Book offers kids an opportunity to develop their artistic abilities without getting messy with real paint. Once Animals Coloring Book has been opened, there is a simple tip for every tool and button (e.g. how to clear the picture, how to return to the previous color, etc). The program features nine basic colors and a palette for blending them, so it's possible to achieve almost any color. The 3D objects and landscapes look much more attractive than those of common coloring programs. The original music creates a fairytale atmosphere and sound effects make the process of coloring almost real. The auto-save feature ensures that the coloring will be safely stored after each session. Simple mistakes are impossible when working with Animals Coloring Book, which is always in full-screen mode. Animals Coloring Book

is compatible with both Windows and Mac OS X and costs US\$19.95 (all updates are free). User group members will receive a 20% discount by using the coupon code 'DealsGuy' when ordering. Further information on the product, as well as a free trial edition, is available at <<http://starcoloring.com/coloring-books/animals-coloring-book>>.

Visit <[www.starcoloring.com](http://www.starcoloring.com)>

Windows download link: <[http://download.starcoloring.com/win/animals\\_coloring\\_book.exe](http://download.starcoloring.com/win/animals_coloring_book.exe)> (14.2 MB)

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That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

**Bob (The Cheapskate) Click!!**



## Photographic Doubletake



*Sue Wessing in photographic action*

Ok, it "ain't" a "dog bites man" story by any stretch. However, this is a Didya Notice moment of a photographer photographing a photographer. Doesn't happen often, but it was submitted as a light moment by an unreported photographic we can't recall. It's a photo of group photographer, **Sue Wessing** capturing a moment of the meeting at the front of the luncheon room in November.

Our thanks to both Sue Wessing for her photographic contributions and everyone else who participated in this wonderful photographic moment, including the unknown author of this picture.



### (VIRUS, continued from page 6)

8. If you use Internet Explorer, consider moving to another browser. As IE is the most distributed browser today, virus creators actively use

defects in IE's security system to infect computers. Infection may arise if you will visit webpage which contains invisible harmful code. Believe it or not. You are more safe if you use a less known browser--only because virus creators do not pay as much attention to them. Major IE competitors such as Firefox and Opera browsers now provide the same comfortable interface and range of services for working on the Web.

9. Use spam protection. Viruses are often distributed via e-mail. Switch on any spam filters in your e-mail box to block spam receptance. If you need

assistance with using any of the filters you can ask your e-mail service provider (Cox, AT&T and others).

Now that you've got an idea of what it entails to help protect your system from "space invaders", you can feel more assured that your on-line activity, gaming and work productivity will not be interfered with by attacks and attackers bent on making your day more miserable. Like the scouts, be prepared but have a good backup and recovery plan. They can include restore discs where/when you can find them, imaging software (like Acronis/Norton Ghost, etc.) which captures an image of your computer and restores it at a time designated by you.

Systems crash for various reasons. Crashing can mean a virus or ad-ware can make using your computer so miserable that you'd want to restore it to its former glory. That's an insurance policy worth investigating. **JM**



### Fox Techie

Jerry Seregni reports that his technology section on the Fox 8 website is now up and running! For articles accompanying his segments and answers to viewer email questions, please add the following link to your favorites:

<http://www.fox8live.com/content/news/seregni/default.aspx>. You can follow him on Twitter at [Twitter.com/TechGuru8](https://twitter.com/TechGuru8)

He now appears on Wednesdays. First, at 6:20 a.m., covering the latest PC hardware/software, cool gadgets and useful web sites. Then again at 7:20 a.m., answering email questions sent in by viewers.



### (Discs, continued from Page 5)

most readers will be using them. In order to use the CD/DVD media more efficiently you will probably want to compress your backup before writing it to the media. Compression can often reduce the size of a backup by 50% or more,


doubling the capacity of your CDs and DVDs. If you have ever tried to compress a 1GB file you probably know that this will take a lot of time. Since WinBackup compresses files on-the-fly, backup operations will be performed considerably faster. The built-in compression also reduces the need for a large temporary storage location and makes it much easier to run large backups to CD-R or CD-RW and DVD discs.

## Encryption

When storing backups on CDs, security can easily become a problem. Since CDs can easily get lost or even stolen, you will need to protect your backups from unauthorized access by using some kind of password protection or encryption. Backups often contains emails, important documents and other sensitive information, and in fact, if you backup your entire harddrive, your backup could even contain passwords to computers and websites. WinBackup allows you to password protect and encrypt your backups with 128 or 256 bit AES encryption, making it virtually impossible for anyone else to access your files. Since encryption can be performed automatically on all backups you do not need to worry about security every time to save a backup to CD.

## Integrated CD Writing

Even though many pc owners have a CD and/or DVD writer installed in their computer, surprisingly few use it to backup important data. One reason for this could be that many users feel that writing backups to this plastic media is a little too complicated. WinBackups integrated CD/DVD writing features makes it easier than ever before to write backups directly to CDs or DVDs without knowing anything about CD Writing. Storing your backup on a CD or CDRW is as simple as inserting an empty the disc into your writer and clicking on "Run Backup". You can even leave a CDRW (re-writeable) in the writer and schedule WinBackup to automatically update the contents daily. If the burner is located on some other computer on the network you could schedule WinBackup to backup to that computer first and then to write the backup to a CD. WinBackup also makes it easy to backup emails, documents or internet favorites with built-in shortcuts to important user data.

Both WinVista and Windows 7 have a burn to disc option to explore and we shouldn't forget about others available on the market for backups such as Norton Backup, CNET (Download.com <free!>, using on-line options for backing up to sites, TrueImage, Ghost, and others: <http://www.pcmag.com/category2/0,2806,4798,00.asp> 



CCUG-PC

HELP! DESK

Questions &  
Answers



with Jerry Montalbano

**Q.** *Have you any suggestions to how to get rid of all those spamming e-mails I find hourly to daily in my Outlook Express mailbox? It's driving me crazy and wonder if I have to create another e-mail address and drop the "invaded one". I use Windows XP and Cox Cable.*

**A.** Certainly. One way to help eliminate them is to use the Spam filter in your service provider's site. In this case, its in Cox Communications, [www.cox.com](http://www.cox.com) site after logging in (create a password with your present ID/ xxxx@cox.net format). You will click Support, then find Internet Tools and Manage Spam Blocker. It is here that it will help eliminate some trash, block senders and repeated offenders, etc. Other services providers offer similar spam-blocking features.

In addition, there are "junk mail removers" available for trial before buying (usually 14-30 days) on the web (search: junk mail remover or junk mail filters). After trying with dissatisfaction, you can uninstall it in Control Panel's Programs and uninstall that program.

Keep in mind, we're discussing "junk e-mail elimination and not necessarily adware/malware programs which can be more disturbing to the system in spyware, viruses or more damaging-type net invasion stuff. Programs geared for this malady include Ad-Aware, Malwarebytes, which will scan your system/harddrive for malware.

To go further, there are some ad-ware blockers popular on the market which include Norton 360 or Norton Internet Tools (Symantec.com), McAfee Security Center or Total Protection, (McAfee.com), and others.

Regarding your e-mail again. Most savvy users open "spare mail accounts" (free) at Microsoft's hotmail (Hotmail.com), Yahoo.com, Google's gmail.com and others so that any e-mail address given out unwantedly (to anyone else but friends/family) can be funneled to their servers to eliminate the trash pouring into your main e-mail serviced account. You can visit there occasionally to weed through "interesting" junk mail if you wish (if there is such an oxymoron as such!

**Q.** *Can you recommend a tool that would help me check if my passwords are good enough to use on on-line sites? Some say combinations of digits, (alpha-numeric), and other keystrokes help tighten the security of hackers breaking into online accounts.*

**A.** I can recommend one off the top of my head. You can see whether your current passwords — you do use more than one, right? — are rated "strong" by using Microsoft's online Password Checker. You'll be unpleasantly surprised by the results.

The three keys to strong passwords are length, randomness, and use of different types of characters. Each additional character multiplies the potential combinations a brute-force attack must try. Random passwords use upper- and lower-case letters, numbers, and symbols. When at least three of these four categories are used, an eight-character password should suffice in most instances.

According to the FrontLine security site, such a password would take a century or more to crack by a hacker using a single PC. The eight-character standard is also the minimum the Microsoft Password Checker deems "strong." Of course, the more characters in your password, the safer you'll be.

(Never use any password-creation system you've read in a book or on the Web, including the example in the preceding paragraph. The password crackers read these articles, too). Be creative. The goal is to produce a random-seeming combination of letters, numbers, and special characters — one generated by a set of rules you can remember and recreate. Please, no family names, birthdays, addresses, pets or familiar terms to you. People make good guessers and crackers/hackers make better ones with good hacking software and moreso with lots of time. Also, no fill-ins automatically (remember password) or at someone else's computer!

A good password keeper, CallPod's Keeper ([www.callpod.com](http://www.callpod.com) for \$19.95 with a free-trial), allows you to keep all your passwords in sync. (and that includes iPhones and Macs). Another is Roboform ([www.roboform.com](http://www.roboform.com)).

You also might wish to change your passwords on a frequent basis because you CAN become too complacent with the same one month-in, year-out which opens it up to allow hackers lots of time to find out what you have. Probably every 3-6 months would be acceptable. You'll find this Microsoft site a good "checker":

<https://www.microsoft.com/protect/fraud/passwords/checker.aspx>



**Yahoo  
Online**  
**Help from  
CCUG-PC!**

Any of you who haven't joined the CCUG-PC Yahoo Online Group are doing yourself and your PC a disservice.



With all the things that are packed into a limited time frame for the monthly meetings we can't possibly answer all your questions fully or tell you: the latest news and virus alerts, software bugs and patches, scams, trojans, spywares, new technology, workarounds, new software, great sites for

pc resources, hardware and software bargains, the many MS bulletins that come out each month and more.

There's no time limit on our CCUG-PC Yahoo Online Group. We have over 400 members from all around the world who will take all the time needed to get your questions answered and your problems solved. You can post anything pc related and if it needs a reply check back at your convenience and see if anyone has one for you.

It also takes some of the stress off of Jerry and other techs as they can respond when time is available and not have to rush to something else to keep on schedule.

This is the best Free Support you'll find anywhere and you can do it from work or home! Try it, you'll like it.

Buster Matthews, Yahoo Group CCUG-PC Online Moderator  
**Worldwide CCUG-PC Yahoo Club:**  
**<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ccugpconline/>**

## Where are we today?

Four years later begs the question, "where are we today" with our computer knowledge, careers and interests? Have we grown technically, professionally, and skillwise concerning these matters? Have we taken advantage of the Internet, reading materials and courses, user groups, and other choices which help us to better the usage of these marvelous pieces of technology? Perhaps some have added more tools of technology such as mobile devices (Apple iPhone, iPod, SmartPhones) as well as portable laptops, satellite phones, and peripherals. Just where are we, today?



**CCUG-PC CHUCKLES**

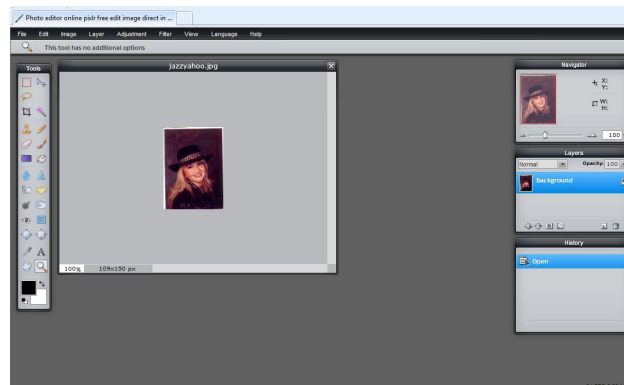
**"Laugh til' you chuckle"**



**"Eh, sorry, dear. Didn't you get my e-mail?"**

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**<http://www.pixlr.com>**



**Pixlr can help your editing of photos!**

Pixlr is a free online photo-editing tool. And, unlike others, it offers advanced features, including working with layers. You have great tools including a wand, cropper, lasso and features the big boys like Photoshop has like eliminating red eye, dodge and burn capability, color picking, drawing tools, gradients, brushes and erasers, clone stamp for duplicating areas, and more! It's also great for making changes to photo backgrounds! You'll find it fascinating and can see it at [www.pixlr.com](http://www.pixlr.com).

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