



Orange Bytes

Award Winning News Magazine of the North Orange County Computer Club *

Vol 31 • No 8

AUGUST 2006

August Main Meeting to be announced by email

August meeting details on page 4

E-waste day

Please see page 7 for of the details

NEW! NOCCC Offers a New SIG for AmiBroker

Details on page 9

NOCCC Meetings - August 6th

NOCCC Thirty years and counting

8:30 a.m:

Visual Programming I&II..... *Science 109*
Visual Basic and Visual Basic Script for Beginners
Visual C++ and Visual J++ for Beginners

9:00 a.m:

Autocad..... *Science 203*
Linux for Desktop Users *Wilkinson 117*

9:30 a.m:

Computer Aided Investing.....*Science 111*
Member Investment Strategies, Techniques and Software
Computer Essentials *Science 306*
Computer basics for new and inexperienced users
Digital Photography *Irvine Hall*
Curves can do powerful things

10:00 a.m:

Linux for Server Administrators *Wilkinson 117*
Visual Programming III *Science 109*
Intermediate and Advanced Visual Basic

11:15 a.m:

Amibroker SIG *Science 111*
Beginners, existing users, learn how to use and apply Ami-Broker for investing and trading, share ideas and software.
Computer Security *Science 203*
Linux Programming Concepts *Wilkinson 117*
Macintosh..... *Wilkinson 221*
PC Q & A - Jim Sanders *Irvine Hall*
Most Q's A'd, some problems solved, assorted demos done
Understanding Operating Systems *Science 306*
Get Help with DOS, Windows 3.1, Windows 9x, OS/2, etc.
Visual Programming IV *Science 109*
Office 97 VB for Applications programming.

12:00 Noon PIG SIG. *Argyros Hall Cafeteria*
A lunch get together and talk.

1:00 p.m: Main Meeting, Irvine Hall
To be announced

2:30 p.m:
Genealogy..... *Science 111*
To be announced
Hardware Essentials *Science 109*
Optical Disks (CD/DVD)
OS/2 News and Installation *Science 203*

NOCCC web site:
<http://www.noccc.org>

Meeting Dates
Aug 6, Sep 10, Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3, Jan 7

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Borrow a computer book from our library, see page 19



Celebrating 30 years of
“Friends Helping Friends”



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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

for the following positions:

Help Line • Maintains the volunteer list, and the software and hardware subjects for which they are willing to answer questions.

Circulation — Oversees the mailing and distribution.

Commercial Swap Meets • Distributes Orange Bytes and NOCCC material at swap meets.

Commercial Advertising • Obtains ads from both national and local vendors for the Bytes; the success of this helps our club finances.

President's Message

By Elise M. Edgell

It is summer and the temperature is really letting me know it. Our meeting rooms are air-conditioned. So, on August 6th, when you are trying to decide what to do to get out of the heat, come to NOCCC. You can get cool, learn something, and have great company, all at the same time.

I want to talk about the Volunteer Party on August 20th at 2:00P.M. Please come, even if you are not sure of your volunteer status. The party is open to any NOCCC members (and their guests) who have volunteered in the past or are thinking of volunteering in the future. Volunteering doesn't have to be a formal position. It can be handing out papers during a meeting, picking up a discarded cup and throwing it away, selling raffle tickets before the Main Meeting starts (we could really use a volunteer for doing this), erasing a white board after a SIG or the Main Meeting so the rooms are left clean, or ...you get the idea.

I especially would like to see all of the SIG leaders at the Party. Since there are some SIGs that I never attend, I may not know what the SIG leader looks like. It would be really nice to have a chance to meet all of the SIG leaders and have a chance to hear what is going on in their SIGs. We might even be able to solve some problems if we knew about them.

The party will be potluck with a big pot of award winning chili made by Jim (that way if you don't like it you can blame him). Soft drinks, utensils, cups, plates, condiments, etc. will be provided. Bring your favorite dish, whether it is salad, side dish, dessert, or whatever. It is always fun to see the variety of food that is brought. If you have any thing that you cannot survive without, then bring it.

This time the party is only for NOCCC members and their guests. Eat drink and be merry-at least have a good time. See you all the third Sunday in August and please RSVP to President@noccc.org.

Several of us will be going to the Southwest User Group Conference in San Diego from August 11 through the 13th. I am really looking forward to getting away for a weekend. Last year I was not able to stay in San Diego for the conference so I ended up driving back and forth. Sometimes my age catches up with me, and that was one of those times. I decided that I would not try to do that again. There are going to be four sets of Workshops on Saturday and one set on Sunday. This will be a very good time to meet some vendors which are still supporting User Groups. There is still time to register From July 27 to August 12, the registration fee is \$75 by going to www.swugconf.org.

One interesting side note. If any of you are confused by the terminology "User Group" instead of "Computer Club" in referring to computer clubs. I heard that initially it was thought that vendors would respect us more if we were "User Groups" instead of "Computer Clubs." It appears that the term "User Group" has been rethought since we are not recovering from any type of addiction, unless you count an interest in computers as an addiction and if you do, then a computer "User Group" is the last place you would want to send a recovering computer addict. Since NOCCC has always been a computer club and we are in our 30th year I guess it hasn't hurt us and we don't have to go through the trouble to change our name. ■

Membership Benefits

As a valued member, we bring you a section of discounts and offers as part of the entire "Benefit of Belonging." (Caveat - we are unable to endorse these companies, but make these offers available as a service to our members).

Orange Bytes on PDF earlier in the month!

Members ONLY: Watch your e-mail every month for the Password to get the award winning Orange Bytes much earlier in the month via PDF file on the <http://www.noccc.org> website. Make certain you let us know any e-mail changes (membership@noccc.org) so you can get the jump on all the great Reviews and Articles!

User Group Offers

AskSam - is offering SurfSaver 6, it places information from your browser into a searchable filing cabinet. Normally \$29.95, you can get it for \$19.95. AskSam 6 + SurfSaver 6 is a flexible and powerful way to organize information and create searchable databases from Web pages, Email, PDF files, texts, and Word documents. Normally \$149.95 but you can get it for \$69.95. You can also download 30 day trial versions.

Blue Squirrel - www.bluesquirrel.com/ 50% off all products - call 800.403.0925 to order and mention user group special pricing.

Corel - at the Feb 5 presentation, Corel gave us the following link for special pricing to user group members. <http://www.corel.com/specialusergroups>

WordPerfect Office X3 for \$159, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X3 for \$179, Corel Painter for \$229, Paint Shop Pro X for \$59, and Paint Shop Photo Album 5 for \$29.

Laplink - www.laplink.com - Laplink Everywhere 4 is a great remote computer control and access program. An annual 3 PC license normally sells for \$129.95. Use coupon code LLE4THRTY at checkout and get it for \$30. Their PCmover program, for moving all of your applications, settings, and data files from your old PC to your new PC while keeping all the new software intact, is normally \$39.95. Use coupon code PCMVRTEN and get it for \$10.

O'Reilly Books

Get 30% off a single book or 35% off two or more books from O'Reilly, No Starch, Paraglyph, PC Publishing, Pragmatic Bookshelf, SitePoint, or Syngress books you purchase directly from O'Reilly. Just use code DSUG when ordering online (<http://www.oreilly.com/store/>) or by phone (800-998-9938). Free ground shipping on orders \$29.95 or more in the US. If, for any reason, you're not completely satisfied with your purchase, return it to O'Reilly and get your money back. A return shipping label is included with every direct purchase, and directions are posted online in case you've misplaced it: (<http://www.oreilly.com/oreilly/cs/guarantee>).

Peachpit Press Books Discount - of 30% can be obtained by joining the Peachpit Club. Go to <http://www.peachpit.com> to sign up as a member. User group members should note that once you've become a Peachpit Club member, you may use your user group coupon code ON TOP of the permanent savings you earn as a member of the club. Just make sure you've logged into the site before you make a purchase to ensure this permanent discount will be in effect, and then enter coupon code UE-23AA-PEUF (case-sensitive) at checkout! This coupon code is an exclusive offer that may not be used in conjunction with any other coupon codes. The offer applies to all titles at peachpit.com including New Riders, Macromedia Press, Adobe Press, and Peachpit Press.

Prentice Hall, Addison-Wesley, and IBM Press

Become a registered member at these publishers' sites and

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July Board Meeting Minutes

The monthly Board of Directors meeting was held on Monday, July 10, 2006, at Elise Edgell's home. The meeting was called to order



at 7:30pm by club president, Elise Edgell. In attendance were: Jim Sanders Elise Edgell, Gerry Resch, Herb Wong, Jr., Bill Thornton, Ted Littman, Doug Steiner, Else Olovsson, Robert Krishfield, Mary Cornett and Richard Miller.

Officers Reports:

Secretary's report – (Mary Cornett) - Minutes from the June 5, 2006 board meeting were discussed.

Richard Miller motioned to approve minutes as printed, with additional comments after meeting.

Treasurer's report – (Doug Steiner) is our new Treasurer and has recently taken over. He has made deposits, copied checks and noted funds. (He is not liable for past reports.) Elise Edgell will research the need for a bank card. There's presently \$900.00 for deposit in the bank checking account plus the consignment table \$24.10 and the Raffle \$84.00 Coffee and donuts at \$31.97 is at a break even point. Next month (August), exact figures for coffee and donuts will be reported and a price will then be decided. Meanwhile a sign showing 75 cents for coffee and donuts will be placed at the August meeting. Current Membership: (Doug Steiner) will report at the August meeting. There will be some notes in the membership database on complimentary membership.

Next Main Meeting – August 6, 2006 Program will be MAC Smart Computing. Gerry will have a trailer on premise to pick up old computers and related recyclable items.

Next Board Meeting will be the following Monday, August 7, 2006 at Elise Edgell's home.

Report on General Meeting – (Elise Edgell) - reports 53 persons attended. Jim Sanders stated that we had favorable reviews on the McAfee presentation by Dennis London.

Committee Reports:

Publications – (Jim Sanders) said we had 31/2 reviews and Ted Littman started a new column, Digital Divots (a summary of new tech items). PDF version was changed and added to website. We printed news on the South West User Group conference (SWUG), and the contest with PDF, mail delivery went well.

Programs – (Elise Edgell) - Elise attended the Saturday, SWUG meeting. (Jim Sanders) said the IBM User Group is changing it's name to the Long Beach Computer Club. Herb Wong, Jr. agreed to post the link on the home page under members. Also, Herb will forward NOCCC.org emails to Jim & Elise.

Reviews - (Ted Littman) We gave out 3 books for review. 3 ½ July, 3 ½ Aug, 2 in Sept. Library fees for 2 months were \$8.00. **Public Relations** – (Elise Edgell) said an ad would be in the Computer User. September 4th there will be a Labor Day Swap Meet in Orange.

University Liaison – (Elise Edgell) said she will check on the handicapped restrooms and access.

Internet Committee – (Herb Wong, Jr.) Updated the officer page with new emails. We should only have one email per person. Jim Sanders – needs emails and phone numbers that work.

Raffle - (Gerry Resch) - We gave out 3 McAfee Security Suite packages, (with 4 more left for next month.) We also gave out 2 spam killer packages. (Ted Littman) C+ and C++ given out at regular raffle.

SIG'S – (Herb Wong, Jr.) – Photoshop by Larry had some new ideas. Jim Sanders felt the shadowing was a good idea. Gerry Resch will ask John Johnson if he's willing to do the Genealogy SIG. Bill Thornton believes, Question and Answer is a good format for meetings.

Consignment Table – (Richard Miller) – Text to review at College Level.

Membership – (Bill Thornton) – Will be in charge of encouraging new members. Elise Edgell said she will help with the vendor correspondence addresses. Elise would like each board member to do a job responsibility list.

Classified Ads – (Jim Sanders) - will update the message on the answering machine ■

AUGUST 6TH MEETING PREVIEW

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY SIG - 9:30 am - Larry Klees - At the July meeting Larry will cover: • How to use curves to sharpen details. Also use curves to bring out details when photographing black on black or white on white.

COMPUTER ESSENTIALS SIG - 9:30 am - Elise Edgell, your club President, will be leading the SIG that is dedicated to helping new and inexperienced users conquer their computer challenges.

MAIN MEETING 1:00 pm, Irvine Hall - Our August Main Meeting was scheduled to be a presentation on electronic banking. This was to include managing your bank accounts over the internet and electronic bill paying. We had a tentative agree-

ment with a local bank which backed out at the last minute saying they didn't have the budget to pay the presenter double time on Sunday. If we can't find a replacement bank, we have a presentation on a popular piece of major software as a backup. We will send out an email notice when we know for sure.

THE CLUB RAFFLE items this month are: McAfee Internet Security Suite 2006, Effective C++, Beyond the C++ Standard Library. Hedge your bet, wear your current membership badge and get a free ticket for the member only raffle.

THE MEMBER-ONLY PRIZES (requires wearing badge to get a free ticket) will be: McAfee Antivirus, Secure Coding in C and C++ book, & ??? ■

Consignment Table

1. The consignment table is for members only. Only current members can place items for sale, but non-members are welcome to purchase items from the table. This is a great place to get some money for your surplus computer items, and help your Club at the same time.

2. The consignment table operates on a 90/10% basis — with the owner getting 90%, and the Club treasury 10%.

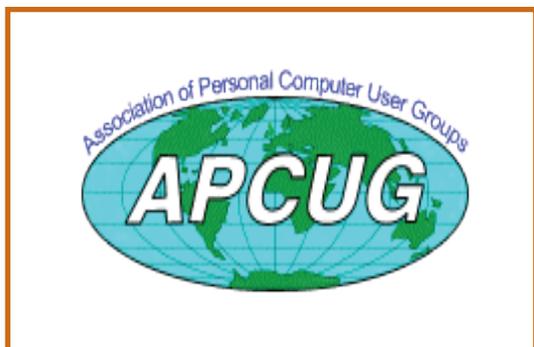
3. Fill out a tag on each item! It must contain: Seller's Name, NOCCC Membership Number, Item name, a short description and selling price.

4. Also, fill out the USER LIST with Name, Address, Phone Number. and a complete list of items and their selling prices.

5. All items and/or money may be picked up by the owner at any time, but MUST be picked up no later than 2 PM on day of sale. Because of the new disposal laws, if you have a display or computer that doesn't sell, you must pick it up. The club has no storage room available, and can not legally put it in the trash.

6. Any items and/or money not picked up by 2 PM, will become the property of NOCCC and will be subject to disposal at the Club's discretion. As it is now illegal to put monitors or computers in the regular trash, you must agree to pick these items up if they don't sell.

7. NOCCC is NOT RESPONSIBLE in any way for items bought and/or sold at the Consignment Table. Each item is placed and sold on an AS-IS BASIS. ■



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Open

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Ted's Stuff

By Ted Littman, NOCCC Reviews Editor and Board Member

This is the 2nd issue of a new column for the Bytes that I hope will become a regular feature. In it, I will share with my fellow NOCCC members links to interesting and useful web sites as well tips and ideas on computing that I come across. If you would like to share your gems or make comments, please email them to me at tedsstuff@adelphia.net for publication in this column, with appropriate attribution of course.



Windows XP Support

If you're running Windows XP Service Pack 1 or a previous version of Windows XP, now is the time to upgrade to Service Pack 2 (for free). Starting October 10, 2006, Microsoft will end assisted support and security updates for Service Pack 1 as part of the life-cycle policy (<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/sp2/default.mspx>) for Microsoft software. If you currently use Windows XP, upgrade for free to Service Pack 2 (<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/sp2/default.mspx>) to continue receiving the latest security updates.

5 Useful Tips for Outlook Express Users

A Microsoft newsletter provided these tips to improve your e-mailing productivity from a New Riders' book (Windows XP Killer Tips) with a link to: <http://www.microsoft.com/athome/intouch/OEtips.mspx>. The tips deal with sending email to a group, adding your signature to the bottom of your messages, organizing e-mail into folders, blocking a sender, and use of sorting to find a lost message.



7 Things to look for in a new desktop PC

If you are thinking about getting a new computer and aren't sure where to start, take a look at this article by Kim Komando: http://www.microsoft.com/smallbusiness/resources/technology/hardware/7_things_to_look_for_in_a_new_desktop_pc.mspx. Kim's the host of the nation's largest talk-radio show about computers and the Internet, and writes a syndicated column for more than 100 Gannett newspapers and for USA Today. With her looks, she should be doing a TV show!

Backing Up Your Files

This is a critical issue that we too often

tend to neglect with painful consequences. Here's a link to a nice introductory article on some easy, affordable options by author Jon Canfield: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/prophoto/backup.mspx>.

Protecting Your Computers against Viruses & Spyware

This article from a Microsoft article (http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/viruses/intro_viruses_protect.mspx), provides some useful advice. It also has a link to a list of free antivirus programs: <http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/downloads/default.mspx> from Microsoft and others. Some thoughts from Microsoft on spyware, including the free beta Windows Defender, are covered at <http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/default.mspx>.

Spyware Doctor

This is an inexpensive and highly rated utility to help protect your PCs against spyware and other malicious invaders (<http://www.firetrust.com/firetrustspywaredoctor.html>). You can download a free trial version or the pay version. During June, it was on sale for \$20.

XP's No-Reformat, Nondestructive Total-Rebuild Option

I found a summary of this very important subject on reinstalling XP without losing any software or settings in Fred Langa's free LangaList newsletter of 6-21-06. For the complete article, go to: <http://www.informationweek.com/windows/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=189400897>. To subscribe to Fred's free weekly e-mail newsletter, go to: http://langa.com/join_langalist.htm.



Mouse Software for "Shaky Hands"

If you or someone you care about suffers from tremors (as I do), a neurologic movement disorder, or even worse - Parkinson's disease, here is something worth checking for help in using a computer mouse. It was in the LangaList of 6-21-06 and came from a Dutch subscriber who has a "shaky hands" problem that made using his computer mouse very difficult. The application is called **Mousecage** and is provided by a UK company: <http://www.mousecage.org>. It is free to download and try for 7 days. Purchase price is \$30 (US). If you want to learn more about Essential Tremors (the most common form of tremors), go to: <http://www.essentialtremor.org/>.

That's it for now. Happy computing and see you next month. Ted Littman, NOCCC Reviews Editor and Board Member. ■



LIGAS Microsystems

Custom Systems - Consulting - Service
Cable and DSL services configured

Routers installed
sick computers healed

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NOCCC member 0019, Jim Sanders



RSS Explained

from page 7

of 512MB of RAM. From most reports it appears to me that Vista running on less than 1 GB of RAM will be seriously slow. Just like computers that try to run XP on only 128 MB of RAM.

So what does Aero offer the average computer user? If you have a 3D graphics card with enough video RAM (128 MB or more), then Aero will provide an entirely different appearance on your screen. (Some commentators have compared the Aero graphics interface to that of the Apple Macintosh OS X!!) Graphics designers refer to some of the capabilities as transparency, blurring, window previewing, and graphical rollover indicators. The easiest way to describe some of the effects is to provide some examples. The minimize, maximize and close indicators that you find in the upper right corner of your current window will change color as you pass your mouse over them. And this color will spill out around the edges of the icon. This gives you an additional visual indicator when your mouse is in the right position. Another example is when you place your mouse on the shortcut on the taskbar you will see a thumbnail view of the program. So when you are multi-tasking you can easily see which application you want. Or, you can check on the progress of a video feed or other running processes. Some other advantages of Aero are the ability to see “around the edges” of windows to the windows behind. This involves the transparency and blurring referred to earlier. This is advantageous to those who do multi-tasking. This ability is also apparently built-in to the new tabbed interface being included in Internet Explorer 7. There is also a change to the Alt-Tab function which allowed users to tab through the list of running programs to find the one they wanted to shift to in earlier versions of Windows. In Vista this function, now called Flip, allows users to see a larger thumbnail view of open programs. There may also be a related 3D view which will show all the open windows twisted to a 45 degree angle. The user can then cycle through the windows by repeatedly pressing the Tab key.

The Aero graphics will be incorporated in the Home Premium and Ultimate versions. However, it requires a minimum of 128 MB of fast video RAM, DX9 3D support and a minimum of 1 GB of system RAM. Some comments have led me to believe that it will not work with motherboards that use shared RAM for the video function. It requires a separate graphics card. Also, I would never recommend trying to run a system with these minimums. They should both be doubled at the very least. If your PC doesn't have this capacity, then you will still be able to run Aero, but in a limited or basic mode. It will not display all the features found in the full Aero mode.

There have been a number of articles related to hardware requirements to run Vista. In my mind, I think it's a little early for these specs to be firm. One thing you can be sure of, Vista will require more RAM, a large hard drive and a fast central processor. Both Intel and AMD are touting their latest generation of processors as being necessary for running Vista. It does appear that current single core processors will be able to run Vista in 32 bit mode. I suspect that at some later date you will need to consider a dual-core 64 bit processors or a 32 bit processors that runs hyperthreading. Naturally, the 64 bit processor will have a definite advantage in running Vista.

The other question is, how well will Vista run current 32 bit software? Most of the new computers currently being manufactured have 64 bit processors. These are designed to work with both 32 bit and 64 bit operating systems. Vista will be a 64 bit OS. There are very few 64 bit software applications available and most of your current software is, or should be, 32 bit. It is expected that “well behaved” 32 bit software will run on Vista without problems. Only those applications that don't install system level drivers or try to take control of the OS are considered well-behaved. You will have to replace your anti-virus and firewall software. That is a given. New Vista applications should be available when Vista comes on the market. The same is true of anti-trojan/anti-parasite software. Other software that might be a problem would include video games and multimedia applications. Those of you who have been running Windows for a few years and have upgraded from earlier versions are already familiar with one of the real road blocks to getting started with a new OS. That's right – device drivers! Every device driver for your hardware like printers, scanners, external USB drives, etc, will have to be re-written. Early adopters of Vista will have similar problems.

Windows XP runs 16 bit software in “Windows on Windows” (WOW) emulation mode. Vista will run 32 bit software in much the same way using an emulation layer to talk to the software. This converts the 32 bit program calls to 64 bit code. This process should be transparent to the user. Now, if you still have some 16 bit software or DOS software, it really is time to upgrade. These will not run on Vista without the use of third-party emulation software. There is no indication that Microsoft will support 16 bit or DOS applications.

Now the next topic is one that is really of primary interest with this Windows upgrade. It is also the one for which the least info is available. That is – Security! Windows XP and Internet Explorer have developed quite a reputation for being full of security holes. In spite of all the efforts to plug the gaps, new ones keep showing up. Microsoft has indicated that Vista will be far more secure than previous versions. The problem is that in trying to tighten the security net, Microsoft seems to be making things more difficult for the average user. With XP Home, the user generally operates in an administrator mode so that new applications can be installed and unused ones removed without having to set up additional permissions. With both XP Home and XP Professional, Microsoft has tried to get individual users to use a limited non-administrator mode on a regular basis. This has been singularly unsuccessful. The reason for running in the limited user mode is to prevent malware from accessing system applications in the Windows director and subdirectories and/or the registry. When the computer is set up so that accessing these functions requires a password, less damage can be done, by any outside influence, to the operating system or to the installed applications. However, because the limitations of the user mode are so great, most Windows users end up running in the administrator mode to simplify making changes to their computer. Well, it appears that Microsoft is going to change that. Vista will enforce the limited user or user account control (UAC) to prevent the user from having constant access to administrative functions. Microsoft obviously doesn't believe that users can be allowed unlimited access to their own computers. Included in this there may be increased blocking of online software distribution.

You may get more pop-up warnings when your installed software tries to access the Internet. Nearly all applications need to access the Internet at one time or another. This gives them the capability to download updates, patches, bug fixes and other security related information. Many applications also need to hook into the operating system in ways that are similar to those used by malware. If your operating system is constantly popping up warning windows and telling you that your computer is at risk, how would you react? Especially if responding to these warnings by clicking on "Cancel" closes the program and prevents you from using an application. You may try to go back and run all of your applications as an "Administrator" as you did in XP. However, Vista has various levels of "Administrator" and may still require you to enter a password for non-Microsoft applications. Now for the caveat: Vista is not yet in final beta form, therefore there can be many changes, especially in the security setup. It will depend in part, on the comments from the testing community. Hopefully not all of them will be system administrators for large corporations. What Microsoft has admitted in one of their own tech articles is that "Windows services represent a large percentage of the overall attack surface in Windows". That is a direct quotation. So if Windows is the problem why are they trying to solve it by limiting the ability of users to use their computers and their software?

Over the coming months I will continue to provide updates on my own experience with Vista as well as information I obtain from other beta testers. We'll see just how much benefit we'll really get from this Windows upgrade.

Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years. He can be reached via e-mail: bwsail at yahoo.com.

Editors Note: *I was planning on doing a follow on article to last month's comments about Vista and laptops. I was going to use a new Beta copy of Vista this month but the shipment from Microsoft was delayed. The February Vista Beta I clean installed on my Shuttle computer was not a pleasing experience. A perky 2.8GHz, 1G RAM machine, became a slug even though it rates the "Windows Vista Capable" logo. In the mean time this article should provide some food for thought. ■*

AmiBroker SIG

By Bob Krishfield, NOCCC

NEW!.....NOCCC Offers a New SIG for AmiBroker Users

A new SIG is being formed for AmiBroker users. This SIG is for investors interested in AmiBroker. For those just getting started, and those more advanced that are continuing to develop AB capabilities and skills. The meetings follow the CAI SIG and begin at 11:00am and run till Noon. The location is in Science 111. Bob Krishfield will serve as the SIG Leader. Meetings will be informal, with time divided between beginners and users with some experience. Learning will primarily rely upon self-instruction from materials such as

the user manual, tutorials and published write-ups. For beginners, the meetings will demo how to get started, identifying what to learn and answer questions. For existing users, we will review specific capabilities and programs, share available AFL programs, and how to modify and apply them.

About AmiBroker

AmiBroker is a comprehensive technical analysis program, with an advanced charting, back-testing and scanning capabilities. It gives you everything you need to trade successfully. AmiBroker is a Windows software program (\$149 from AmiBroker.com) for charting and analysis of stocks, mutual funds, options and Forex using EOD, intraday or Real Time data, and developing and testing trading systems and interfaces with automated trading platforms. For an additional \$49, AmiQuote downloads free quote data, avoiding subscription data services. Both programs have a 30 day free trial period.

AmiBroker is a very powerful program, with many ready-to-use charts and indicators, and 266 built-in functions for building new capabilities, using AFL a special programming language to define and create custom indicators, scans, explorations, trading rules and explorations, back-tests and guru commentaries. AmiBroker features automatic technical analysis tools and many user developed tools shared by the community. AmiBroker can check for user defined buy/sell conditions giving you an idea about the current situation on the market. It can perform a system test (simulation) telling you about the performance of your trading system, plot a 3D chart of the optimal system parameters, or run an artificial intelligent optimization of millions of possibilities with walkforward analyses to validate out of sample results. Experienced users of other technical analysis software, e.g. MetaStock, TC2000, TradeStation, FastTrack, find AmiBroker easier to learn, and while learning AmiBroker often use it in parallel with their current tools. They make the switch as they become more capable using AmiBroker. It was chosen this year by Stocks and Commodities as the #1 program for charting, analysis and trading for under \$500. ■

Digital Photography

from page 23

The after picture had curves applied a couple of times and then the saturation was lowered because the colors were brightened as the details were enhanced. No sharpening of any kind was applied!

All of these modifications were easy, required no tedious selections, and took only a few minutes to perform.

Although the changes were simple there is simply not enough room in the news letter to describe them and include the requisite graphs. If you don't go to another meeting this year you must come to this one. The demo will be performed using curves in Photoshop, Photo Paint, and GIMP.

As impressive as these adjustments are they are actually quite easy (once you know how); so if someone brings a photo requiring similar corrections, we can do the demo on that photo. ■

Spring into LINUX

By William D. Allen, NOCCC

This is the fifth book I have referred to in learning to use Linux, and it is the best! While it makes certain assumptions about your level of Linux knowledge, it is comprehensive enough to clarify most unique Linux terminology for beginners. For example, this is the first of the five books to explain that a “tar” file is an archived set of files to be downloaded and installed.

The book, by Janet Valade, has nineteen chapters but does not require a “one through nineteen” reading. For example, if you know why you want to use Linux and have selected your distro (the distribution version you want) and have it installed you could bypass the first five chapters – however these steps are thoroughly covered for the truly novice Linux user. The book covers three popular distributions: Red Hat/Fedora; Mandrake; and SuSE, and guides the new user through the installation process. Nevertheless, it is recommended for Linux tyros that the first five chapters be read and understood before starting your distribution selection and installation process.

The new user should be prepared to learn to use the command line window interface (CLI) shell which is analogous to Windows’ DOS window. For those of us weaned on DOS it is not a great transition but for those with limited computer experience since the early Windows desktops it will be a new experience, but not overwhelming. The shell commands provided in Appendix B of the book have a certain logic that becomes apparent once the new user launches into them. However, today some Linux distros install sufficient GUI (graphical user interface) equipped programs that little use of the CLI may actually be necessary for the casual user. For example, the Fedora “yum” application for the selection/downloading/installation of application programs now has its own GUI, called YUM Extender, which makes installing new applications a relative breeze. That said, it should be kept in mind that many Linux programs are found in source code format only, meaning they must be edited and compiled, etc., a process that many new computer users will have little or no idea how to accomplish. However, as time goes by there will be more easy-to-install applications for Linux. For the casual computer user, easily installed software is already available.



That said, Spring into Linux guides you through downloading and installation of all files formats, including source code.

As explained in the book one feature of Linux that Windows lacks is keeping new users out of the Linux core (the guts of Linux that all else depends on). Typically, a user gets a desktop folder in the home folder for his files along with access to installed applications such as Open Office, Firefox, data files, and such. Only the administrator (typically the person who installed Linux and controls any modifications) has access to the root folder. He must be the “super user” and can access the root folder only with a password. This is safer than the Windows approach where any user can clobber the entire operating system. Linux achieves the above through a system of user accounts in groups each having specified permissions. Thus the kids can be kept out of dad’s business files by limiting their accounts with permissions for access to only certain programs.

Editors Note: *While it is true that the default installation of Windows XP results in the administrator account being the default user, it is not difficult to set up user accounts with limited privileges. In fact, Microsoft strongly recommends that you do exactly that. There are many reasons why that seldom happens. Money is probably the largest one. For an OEM like Compaq, Sony, or Toshiba, every support call puts a significant dent in their profit. Trying to explain to a large percentage of their customers that the reason they couldn’t install the software they just bought, because they were in the limited privilege user mode, would be an expensive nightmare.*

The preceding subjects are amply covered in chapters one through ten of Janet Valade’s book. Chapters eleven through seventeen discuss subjects Windows users will be familiar with. Open Office for both Windows and Linux is provided with most Linux distros. Since the word processor and spreadsheet are compatible with Microsoft’s Office Suite, there is no learning curve to speak of, which should help make Linux attractive for undecided Linux users. Chapter thirteen discusses the Linux GIMP program for handling images. The program handles the familiar image file name extensions used in Windows. Printing uses the Linux CUPS driver program. The user initiates printing through Open Office or KDE, the Linux desktop program, with readily apparent procedures. Multimedia programs are described for playing audio CDs, downloading music, using Real Player, and listening to the radio, etc.

Firefox is now the Linux standard Internet browser. It is analogous in appearance to Window’s Internet Explorer, but is considered safer than IE regarding viruses, etc. The book explains email, instant messaging and newsgroups usage using a number of programs: Evolution; Kmail; Mozilla; Thunderbird; and Netscape. Once again there should be little or no learning curve to surmount for a new Linux user. Text files can be generated using either Kate or the “vi” program as explained in chapter eighteen.

The final chapter discusses shell scripts. For someone familiar with a programming language mastering shell scripting should be easy. For those without that background it is recommended they rely on more expert Linux users. That said, learning to write scripts is really the way to learn just how Linux functions.

In summary, Ms. Valade’s book is comprehensive, yet easy to read and understand. I strongly recommend new

Linux users have a copy at hand when starting their Linux adventure. The book emphasizes the Fedora distro since it is about the most common distribution used. That said, other distribution users will still benefit from Spring Into Linux.

This review was conducted with Fedora Core 5 on a 2.5GHz CPU, 512 Mbytes of RAM, a wideband modem, and a 40 Gbytes HD. The book has a list price of \$29.99 but can be found on Amazon at \$19.79 new or \$8.43 used. It is also available from the publisher, Addison-Wesley (ISBN: 0131853546): <http://www.awprofessional.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0131853546&rl=1>, at a 30% discount to user group members and free shipping.

For another reader's opinion of Valade's book, go to: <http://www.linux-tutorial.info/modules.php?name=MReviews&op=show&rid=12> ■.

The Photoshop Channels Book

Starring ... Scott Kelby

By John F. Donan, NOCCC

They say you like that which you are good at and vice versa. I know curves but seldom use them; I accomplish things in other ways. I know of channels but don't use them but think I should. I have become quite accomplished using Photoshop, in my limited way. Last Thursday a tutorial came in my email titled: Photoshop How-To: Merge Two Images for a Custom Collage, stating "These collaging techniques use Photoshop's channels and layers." Because of its channels flavor I postponed looking it over. The following Sunday I just happened to spot "The Photoshop Channels Book, Starring ... Scott Kelby." With channels fresh on my mind the timing was just right. So here we are.

The book cover states: How to unlock the hidden power of channels for color correction, masking, collages and more. ("and more" seems to be an over used nondescriptor these days.) It has turned out to be a book which was easy for me to plow through non-stop. There are eight chapters, 275 pages, 425 illustrations. Kelby has chosen 37 topics, which are covered step by step within the chapters, some with multiple examples. Fifty five of the images used for the examples in the book are available at <http://scottkelbybooks.com/channels-photos> so that the reader can duplicate the steps of the author.

Here are the contents of the book by chapter:

Channel Basics

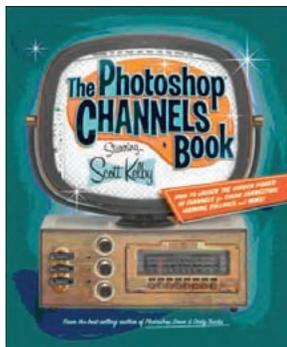
Masking Using Channels

Layer Masks & Adjustment Layers

From Color to Black & White

Channels & Better Color

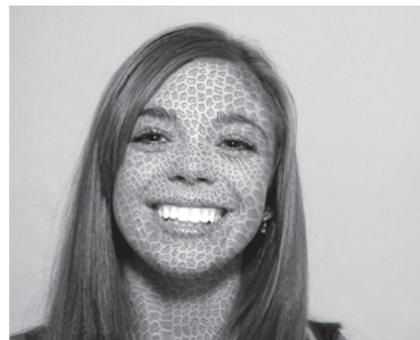
August 2006



Sharpening with Channels Channels & Web Optimization Special Effects using Channels

Four of the topics were not of immediate interest to me so I skipped Spot-Color Channels of Chapter four, Infrared Effects of Chapter eight and all 26 pages of the Web applications of chapter seven. Because of the limited size of the illustrations (6 to 10 square inches), the before/after comparisons are not as impressive in the book as on the screen. This is not the case for the Color to Black & White where the differences of channels, grayscale and final results are quite obvious.

The two easy conversions from color to grays in Photoshop are by converting Image/Mode to Grayscale or desaturating an HSL image. The book shows four additional ways by using channels with the possible variations for each technique to improve appearance. The Best of Three technique is simple, it converts the most appealing RG or B channel to Grayscale; the means of improving is to find a best blend of the image with a copy of itself. The Lab Lightness Channel technique utilizes the Lightness channel, of an Image/Mode-Lab Color conversion, converted to Grayscale. To improve appearances, a Multiply Blend is applied; overly dark areas can be corrected by applying a layer mask. The Calculations Method utilizes the pop-up settings which appear by selecting Image/Calculations. Here, one can blend two selected channels which can be from different layers having also selected the blend mode and opacity. There are additional settings for those more deeply involved. The Channel Mixer adjustment layer (introduced in Photoshop 5) allows the combining of different percentages of all the channels to create the resulting image.



I have made a six-image array showing the same image after each of the conversions mentioned above, starting with the Grayscale in the upper left corner, the order following as mentioned above ending with the Channel Mixer image at the

bottom right. They are not intended to be anything special, just



Continued on page 17

Part 2 Review of Mathematica 5.2

By Skillman Hunter, NOCCC

The result of this rather complex formatting has two impacts on the user, 1) there is great flexibility in having the equations displayed in most of the ways one would want them displayed mathematically, and 2) publishing notebook data can be rather complicated when interfacing with other publishing applications. A user on the comp.soft-sys.math.mathematica recommended the LaTeX application for publishing as being Mathematica-friendly. My point here is that anyone using Mathematica must spend some time learning the various Input and Output Format Types to effectively master publishing. Moving on, to solve an equation, enter

Solve[X^2+x==a,x] and the result for x is returned as

$$\left\{ \left\{ x \rightarrow \frac{1}{2} (-1 - \sqrt{1 + 4a}) \right\}, \left\{ x \rightarrow \frac{1}{2} (-1 + \sqrt{1 + 4a}) \right\} \right\}$$

Note that that result can be copied and pasted into a Word document as a graphic object. The double == defines an equation which in this case is solved for x in terms of a.

Differential equations are solved using **DSolve[eqn,y,x]** for the function y and independent variable x:

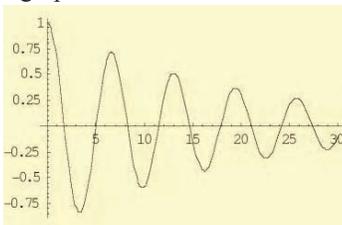
DSolve{y'[x] == a y[x]+1,y[0]==0},y[x],x]

In this formula the == is the special Word font, MathematicalMono, code 0xAE. This includes a boundary condition for y, y[0] = 0. The result is:

$$\left\{ \left\{ y[x] \rightarrow \frac{-1 + e^{ax}}{a} \right\} \right\}$$

Note that the graphic of the equation can be enlarged to enhance reading. Instead of having the result printed, a result can be stored in a variable, for example, using a nonlinear differential equation: **result=NDSolve{y''[t]+0.1 y'[t]==-Sin[y[t]],y[0]==1,y'[0] ==0},y,{t,0,50}]**

This outputs **{y==InterpolatingFunction[{{0.,50.}},<>]}** which can be plotted:**Plot[y[x]/.result,{x,0,30}]**; to produce a graph:



In the y output, "<>" is shorthand for function StringJoin[[]]. In the Plot input "/" represents "replace" indicating y[x] is to be replaced by

the contents of "result". These are rather simple operations but you can see that the shorthand notation has already gotten rather complex.

GETTING TO WORK

Mathematica has one main problem if you have a specific task to accomplish: There are so many things to explore it is easy to forget why you started a task with Mathematica.

What attracted me to Mathematica is a rocket nozzle computer program I developed for the Air Force that integrates nonlinear partial differential equations for one dimensional three-phase reacting gas-particle flow to predict the effect of various rocket propellants on nozzle performance. That program was written in FORTRAN circa 1980. The program was successful in predicting particle sizes but had one problem: the energy flow was not conserved and the project ran out of funds before that could be resolved. No error in the equations could be identified and it was concluded that the main problem was that gas and particle equations were uncoupled. What was required was to combine all the partial differential equations into one solution.

This program was run in 1980 on a CDC 6600 at Edwards Air Force Base, at the time the fastest mainframe for scientific problems, on which a case took about 30 minutes. Currently it runs on my PC in under a second. So my original objective with Mathematica is to see how easy it would be to solve the rocket equations in the much simpler mathematics.

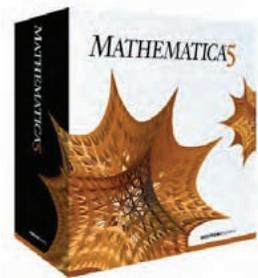
I did briefly look at programming in Mathematica and found basic operations like conditionals and looping:

If[7 > 8, Print[x], Print[y]]

Do[Print[i^2], {i, 4}]

Debugging is a problem that make me nervous with "Geewiz" kinds of software that promise to eliminate programming. I did not study all the details but I did note that there are commands that make me feel safe:

```
Trace[],
Print[Stack[_]]
$RecursionLimit = 20
$IterationLimit = 20
Interrupt[]
Abort[]
CheckAbort[]
ProtectAbort[]
Catch[#,Throw[a]]
```



I presume Mathematica is an interpreted language – the typed formulas are decoded every time they are executed. There is a Compile[] command for speeding up loops with large numbers of iterations. But there seems to be no process for compiling and linking an entire program as in normal programming.

MathLink is a library that can be used by compilers such as Borland C++ and Visual C++ to send and receive expressions to and from Mathematica. A header file, mathlink.h, is provided for interface.

My rocket problem is basically just inversion of a monstrous matrix, but I gave up trying to set up my quite complex set of rocket motor partial differential equations and decided to see how Mathematica does fractals, one of my favorite subjects. I found the Mandelbrot function in the Demos> Notebooks> Programming Sampler

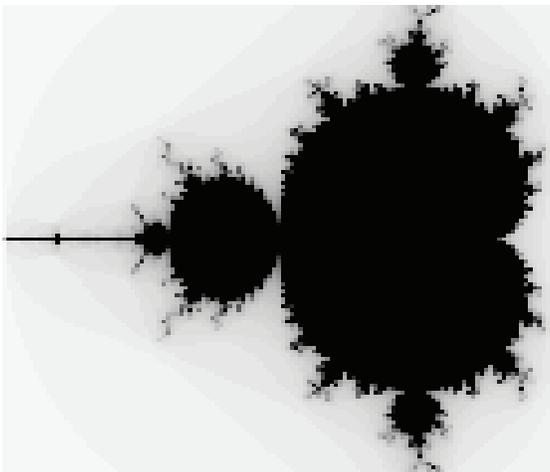
section. First I had to enter the function, MandelbrotFunction, by just copying it (I have to admit even though I understand how Mandelbrot functions work, it would take me a while to understand how the Mathematica equation works.) This creates a compiled function which computes membership in the Mandelbrot set.

```
MandelbrotFunction = Compile[{{c, _  
Complex}},  
-Length[FixedPointList[#^2 + c &, c, 50,  
SameTest -> (Abs[#2] > 2.0 & )]]];
```

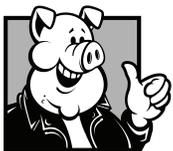
Then the function is used in the DensityPlot function to create the graph.

```
DensityPlot[MandelbrotFunction[x+y I],  
{x, -2, 0.5}, {y, -1, 1},  
Mesh -> False,  
AspectRatio -> Automatic,  
Frame -> False, PlotPoints -> 125];
```

Immediately up popped the fractal Mandelbrot bug:



I do intend to pursue my rocket program but have a lot to learn to express the equations in Mathematica. Hopefully it will take less time than writing the FORTRAN original program. If I make significant progress, I will file a second review.



Pig SIG Open To ALL

Meet us in the Cafeteria in Argyros Hall around 11:30 am (until about 1pm). If you're hungry, there is a buffet lunch and snack bars open.

There are several sets of tables where NOCCC people gather, eat and chat. Just look for the badges, grab a chair, and join in! This is an informal group, so many different subjects are discussed. It's a great opportunity to mix, mingle and network. See ya there! CLOSED IN SUMMER ■

Overall I would say that Mathematica is well worth its cost for any person that is serious about Mathematics.

Steven Wolfram has written an interesting new book, "A New Kind of Science", with excerpts on Amazon.

SUPPORT

Mathematica 5.2 is shipped with one year of Premium Service which includes phone and e-mail tech support, automatic upgrades, access to the on-line Mathematica Journal, and other benefits. Annual renewal of service is about \$400.

There is a good, active newsgroup where users can be found: comp.soft-sys.math.mathematica. Often the questions are answered by Wolfram employees that are obviously math whizzes.

<http://library.wolfram.com/> contains a library of downloadable resources provided by Wolfram and third parties. Included are articles, books, conference notices and downloadable mathbook examples.

VERSIONS AND PRODUCTS

Mathematica 5.2 for Windows, Mac or Linux x86 sells for \$1880.00. Other versions for Linux x86/x86-64 bit/titanium, Solaris UltraSPARC/x86, HP-UX, HP Tru64 UNIX, IBM AIX and IRIX are \$3150.00. Mathematica is available as a fully functional, 15-day, save-disabled trial version for download or on CD-ROM. The download size is 100-170 MB. I was able to test both the Windows and Macintosh versions.

MathReader is a free downloadable reader that opens Mathematica .nb notebooks for viewing, somewhat like Adobe Reader for .PDF files.

Mathematica CalcCenter is a limited version selling for \$595 for Windows and Mac OSX only, probably a good place to start to see if Mathematica is what you need. CalcCenter is not just a down-featured version of Mathematica; it has a substantially different interface that is more point-and-click. CalcCenter is available as a fully functional, 15-day, save-disabled trial version for download or on CD-ROM. The download size for Windows is 35 MB and for Mac OSX is 120 MB.

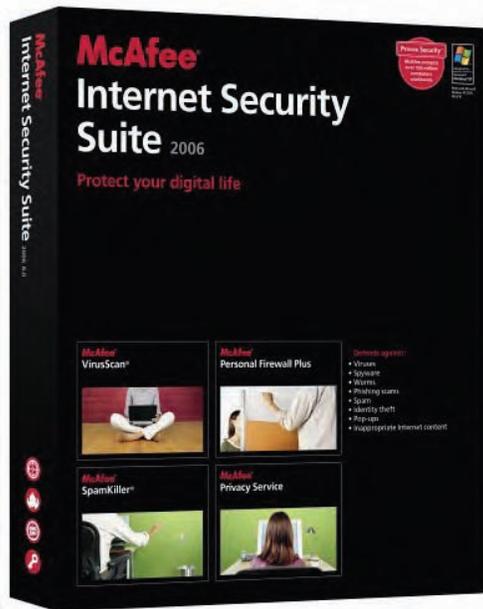
webMathematica is a version that creates websites that allow users to compute and visualize results directly from a web browser, based on Mathematica software and Java Servlet technology. Pricing is by special contact with Wolfram.

gridMathematica is a multi-processor version that will use networked computers to perform large scale solutions. This is the version for super-hard number crunching. Pricing is by special contact with Wolfram.

Wolfram has nineteen applications that enhance Mathematica. For example, Advanced Numerical Methods, \$495, implements reliable and robust numerical algorithms, including several new methods to solve a wide class of control problems and linear algebra problems with applications in control theory.

Part 1 of this review was published in the July issue of the Orange Bytes. ■

July Meeting Photos

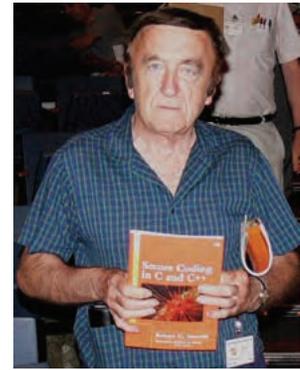


Dennis London from McAfee, provided the audience with some malware history, a few of the very few humorous aspects of malware, and some great education on how we can protect our computers.

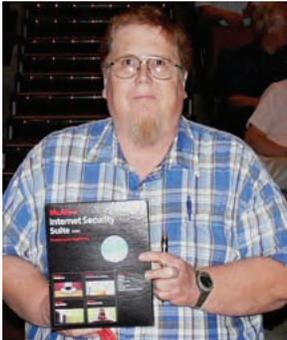




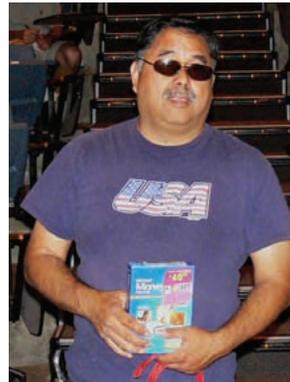
This months prize winners and the goodies that they are the proud new owners of.



Dan Coakley



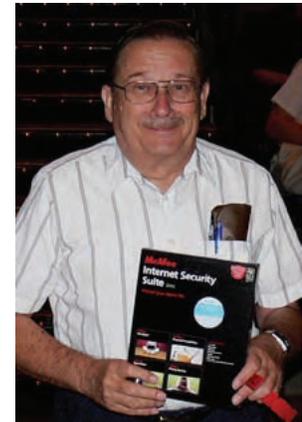
John Johnson



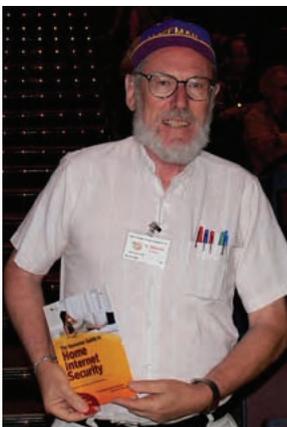
Joe Wilhelm



Steven Breitbart



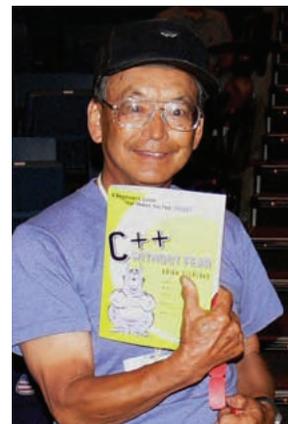
Leo Dierix



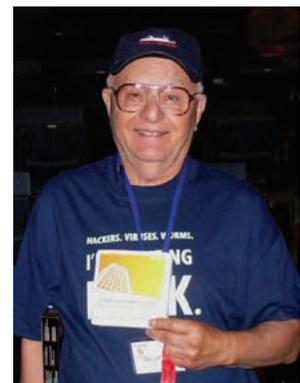
H. Marvin



Kaz Aduchi



Kaz Aduchi



Ted Littman

Norton Internet Security (NIS) 2006

By *Ted Littman, NOCCC*

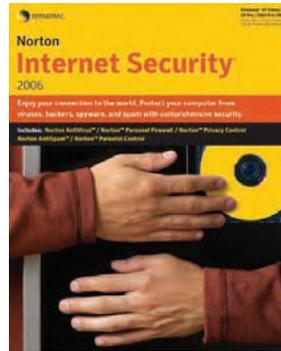
This latest version of Symantec's suite of security utilities is intended to protect your home or small business office computer against virtually any threat (other than a home break in). The five utilities are **Antivirus (NAV)**, **Personal Firewall (NPF)**, **AntiSpam (NAS)**, **Privacy Control (NPC)**, and **Parental Control (NPC)**. For more information: http://www.symantec.com/home_homeoffice/products/overview.jsp?pcid=is&pvid=nis2006. According to Symantec, their security programs protect over 370 million computers and e-mail accounts worldwide! This review concentrates on those things of particular interest to me since one could write a book to cover everything in NIS.

My Experience I installed NIS about a month ago and, except for a minor (but annoying) glitch, the security suite appears all that it's cracked up to be. I have not had any problems with incompatibilities between NIS and my other software programs or Windows XP HE operating system. In the past, this has been a problem for me and, based on web-posted reviews of NIS 2006, some others have had to deal with this issue.

NAV and NPF, working together, have kept my PC free of malware invaders. E-mails, both incoming and outgoing, are scanned for viruses and none have been noted. Norton's **LiveUpdate** feature provides daily automatic downloads to keep these two utilities performing at top efficiency. And, with the 2006 version of NIS, one year of downloadable free product updates are provided for all utilities. NAS also works well and puts suspected "junk" messages into a special folder for review before deletion. It integrates with Microsoft's Outlook and Outlook Express as well as Eudora and other POP3 e-mail clients. While not 100% effective (some spams get through while some "good" messages wind up in the spam folder), you can train the program by manually identifying the incorrectly designated ones. In fact, e-mails from those addresses listed in your Address Book are automatically accepted unless you indicate otherwise. Other adjustments can be made to improve NAS's accuracy. The privacy control tool prevents your personal information from being sent from your computer without your consent. I did not use the parental control guard since its protection is unnecessary for me, but it is designed to help safeguard your youngsters from inappropriate Web content.

Other Reviews For some strange reason, the professional reviews generally give higher grades to NIS 2006 than do individual reviewers. PC Magazine (1-19-06 issue) rated the security suite "Good" (3.5 out of 5), but it complained that the program was slow to install and scan, unresponsive at times, and its antispam accuracy had declined. However, this was done before Symantec issued some fixes to its antivirus and antispam utilities.

PC World (http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0_aid,125792,00.asp) gave NIS its "Best Buy" award and said the "full-featured security suite offers top-tier protection, but



it's a space hog." I particularly commend the full article for your reading. CNET gave NIS an Editor's Rating of 6.0 (out of 10) and called it "a solid security suite," but said it bogs down PC performance. The average rating from their readers was a mediocre 4. On Amazon.com, there were 157 customer reviews with an average rating of 2 ½ stars out of 5) and comments ranging from "it works flawlessly" to "it's a total rip off." Go figure!

Installation I found installing NIS from its CD a no-brainer and it was accomplished quickly on my Dell 8400 PC using Windows XP Home Edition as the operating system. But, if you have another antivirus or firewall program installed, you need to remove it first and that even includes NAV. Now, I had previously installed the Norton SystemWorks 2006 Premier suite of utilities that also includes NAV 2006. Even though it is the "same" issue as the one in NIS, you still have to remove it first! This is done through the Windows Control Panel/Add & Remove Software function, which is usually no big deal. The problem that I had was it wasn't clear how to do that without removing the entire NSW program in the process. The listing in Add & Remove Software was for NSW and not its individual parts! Fortunately, the online help that Symantec provided (both through Chat and e-mail response) clarified the procedure. However, I do think that the Norton programmers should "fix" this so that NIS deals with it automatically during installation, at least for their own NAV program.

Activation In order to try and protect against software piracy, including your installing NIS on multiple computers without purchasing a license, Symantec, like Microsoft and others, requires online (or phone) activation if you want to use the program for more than a month. The procedure is fairly automatic and fast so I consider it a minor nuisance. An optional registration follows. During this procedure, you should run the NIS "Home Network Wizard" which sets things up so that other computers on your home or local network will be allowed to access your PC. If you want to use NIS to protect them as well, you can purchase a multi-computer license. Lastly, Norton's LiveUpdate will run and download any new/revised files to give you full protection.

Operation Once NIS is installed, your PC is protected automatically. If the program finds an issue that it thinks requires your attention, a window pops up to alert you and offer options to resolve it. You only need to open the program to adjust the default settings (which work fine for most users), check or change your protection level, or perform preventative maintenance..

After installation, NIS offers to run a full system scan (for all of your drives and partitions "to ensure that your computer is free from viruses, spyware, and other security risks." This check includes all boot records, master boot records, and files. One caution – it can take a long time, even for a fast computer if you have installed a lot of stuff. My system took over 4 hours to scan over 967,000 files! So you may want to do this over-

night. My good news was that no security threats were found.

System Requirements Although NIS 2006 is designated for Windows XP or 2000, there is a second version (2005) on the CD for 98 & ME operating systems. You will need at least a 300 MHz processor, 256 MB RAM, and 325 MB free hard disk space, a DVD or CD drive, and Internet Explorer 6. My PC has a 3.2 GHz processor, 1 GB RAM, and loads of free space on its two hard disks.

Getting Program Help The purchased box contains a 37-page printed "User Guide," which, while brief, covers most of the essentials for normal installation and operation. Its three chapters are titled Installation, Getting Started, and Responding to Emergencies. The latter deals with the issues of a PC infected with a virus before installing NIS as well as some installation questions. IN the program's Help menu, you can connect with Symantec online and search its Knowledge Base for answers to specific questions, get e-mail responses to your questions within 72 hours (usually much faster than that), or have a "live chat" with a technician. I really liked the chat thing (<http://live-symantec.custhelp.com>), since it avoids the possible speech comprehensive problem when talking on the phone to someone in a foreign country and you get much quicker help than using e-mail. I tried both and they worked well for me as I mentioned previously. Finally, you can turn to phone support, but it is fee-based and you could have the problem of communicating with a tech abroad.

Cost The MSRP is \$70 for either the box or download versions. However, as of this writing, there is a \$20 mail-in rebate available from Symantec for upgraders or users of competitive products. The price includes 12 months of protection updates which you can extend by buying an annual subscription. Numerous sellers, both regular stores and online, offer the software for less, sometimes far less with tie-ins to the purchase of other programs. Symantec offers a 60-day money-back guarantee.

Some Final Comments I like the Norton suite of security programs and have not had any problems since installation. It seems to work well for me and without the problems some others have complained about. However, it does seem that Symantec has expanded the capabilities of the various Norton utilities and suites with each passing year so that there is increased potential for negative interactions with other installed software and your PC's operating system as well as sluggishness in running. The competition between security software vendors (not to mention those offering free software) and the drive to stay ahead of malware purveyors is awesome. In addition, these programs are so inexpensive that it surprises me that vendors can make enough money and still provide adequate support to users.

So, in conclusion, you may want to take advantage of Symantec's offer to try NIS before you buy it or get your money back if you are not satisfied. With the multitude of PC configurations and installed software, it is no wonder that programs like NIS may not work for everyone. But if you do have problems that Symantec can't resolve to your satisfaction, you can always try another product or set of products. **But, do protect your PCs against the threats that increase with time, or you will have even bigger problems to deal with!** ■

PHOTOSHOP

FROM PAGE 11

an exercise for me. The image used came from Mapping One Image to Another of chapter eight. Here, a reptilian pattern was blended to the model's face such that it followed the contours of her face and neck.

I like to establish a perspective before reviewing a book by reading the reviews of others. This book, although published just three months ago, has more reviews, with more varied opinions, than I have experienced with other books. At one source, I found two strongly worded opinions, adjacent to each other, both over 500 words long: one from a user, giving praise, who has been a Photoshop user since version 2.5; the other criticized the book as being superficial. This critic seemed more concerned with the author than the content.

The following is a very small condensation of the many comments I found out there. First, those on the book's content:

Pro Layers which as it turns out are not that different from channels in the way you can manipulate them - No CD but a website for downloading work along pictures which is so 21st century - One of the things I liked the most is that he teaches you how to select a person with flyaway hair and keeping all the details - If you already know the basics, and want to take your knowledge of Photoshop to the next level.- Since Photoshop Channel Chops is long out of print, Kelby's volume does fill a need and fills it reasonably well - Now I can wade through the last part and reread the first part of Dan Margulis' book - I really didn't think anyone could add to Katrin Eismann's incredible work on Compositing and Masking, but Sir Kelby has.

Con It does not provide you with the depth of understanding available for example, in Katrin Eismann's superb Photoshop Masking & Compositing - Without doubt, channel manipulation is an important tool for those of us who are advanced Photoshop users. But that group of people needs much more than this superficial book provides - if you did use both masks and channels consciously on your own even a couple of times, it will hardly teach you anything new - One could do far better with Dan Margulis' book on Lab color.

The favorable comments on the book were the overwhelming majority. For me, I can now do with ease 33 things with masks and channels that I didn't do before reading the book. As for the way the book was written:

Pro Well written, easy to follow book - he is very funny and easy going as a writer - to follow book and certainly a pleasure to read - interspersed with those seemingly quick-witted comments - Scott Kelby cracks me up. I haven't ever read instructional manuals that are actually humorous.

Con Be prepared to wade through a lot of fluff with this one - his silly style can be a bit annoying - any Kelby book is the relentless promotion of Kelby's little empire - Why is it that some Photoshop authors think they are some kind of TV comedians when they write technical books?

In my opinion his light approach reads well and had I not come across those negative comments, I might not have detected the space devoted to his humor. He seems to have overdone a good thing. Some of it creates discontinuity and some of it made me squirm as if some one had just told a colossally bad pun.

I continually pick up small things about Photoshop as I go along. After this book I am now creating new layers by the shortcut Ctrl-J, viewing channels in the layers palette by way of Ctrl-1, etc.

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Products Available for Review

A number of products have been obtained from vendors for review by qualified NOCCC members. If you are interested in doing a review (which will be published in Orange Bytes), please call or send an e-mail to me and provide your membership number, phone number, and e-mail address; or pick up the product at the next NOCCC meeting.

Remember, **YOU GET TO KEEP THE SOFTWARE OR BOOK!** Currently available are the following products:

Boxed Programs and CDs

Linux Starter Kit – This new software/manual/DVD from Sams contains everything you need to start using Linux. The DVD includes the full SUSE Linux 10.1. MSRP=\$40.

Printshop Deluxe 21 – This is the newest version of Broderbund's great program and affords users a complete and easy way to create impressive print projects of all sorts with over 320,000 premium images, 17,500+ professionally designed projects, and 600+ fonts. MSRP=\$50.

SendPhotos Gold – "If you would like to e-mail photos without hassle, SendPhotos, from Novatix, is easy and fun to use." - PC Magazine, April 22, 2003. MSRP=\$20.

Internet Security Suite 2006 –

McAfee's defense against Viruses, Spyware, Worms, Phishing, ID Theft, & Pop-ups. MSRP=\$70.

V2i Protector 2.0 – From PowerQuest/Symantec, this program provides desktop backup & disaster recovery by capturing and protecting real-time working states of systems & data partitions. MSRP=\$39.

Backup MyPC 2006 Deluxe – This is Sonic's latest version of its software backup program with new features to protect your system. MSRP=\$50.

Undelete 5 Pro – Worry-free data protection with instant recovery—faster than going to backup. From Executive Software. MSRP=\$40.

My DVD Studio Deluxe 8 – From Sonic, the "easiest & most complete solution for DVD & CD Creation." MSRP= 150.

Easy Media Creator 8 – This suite empowers you to live your digital lifestyle to its fullest potential. With 25 products in 1, you go beyond just CD burning! Now you can organize, edit, share, and preserve your digital photos, music, video and data. From Roxio, MSRP=80.

ConceptDraw 5.5, Pro Edition – This Windows business & technical diagramming software from Russia "with love," is intended for professional flowcharting, diagramming and illustrating. Its flexible, handy tools help quickly document a variety of complex structures, systems, and processes. Its charts can be shared as a large array of graphic files and CAD documents, presentations, and web pages. It is a Windows and Macintosh cross platform. All documents and libraries are 100% compatible. Produced by Computer Systems Odessa, the MSRP=\$299.

ConceptDraw Project 2, Desktop Edition – This software also is from Computer Systems Odessa and is a unique project planning tool designed for efficient planning and tracking of multiple projects. Any business activity requires planning of several simultaneous projects with different dependencies and limited resources to be used. With You can easily share resources

between projects, establish links between them and organize them in a single workspace to successfully plan projects of any size and complexity. MSRP=\$249.

Concept Draw Mindmap 4 Pro - This software also is from Computer Systems Odessa and allows you to capture and present ideas as mind maps - concise radiant diagrams. Mind maps speed up understanding, decision making and learning up to 90%. Also, use it to illustrate your MS PowerPoint presentations, generate project plans, draw pro-quality flowcharts and many more. MSRP=\$199.

Books

Photoshop Masking & Compositing

– Masking and compositing are two of the most fascinating aspects of creative imagemaking and are essential to master if you're trying to create truly inspiring images. Katrin Eismann zeros in on the fine points of this craft in this book published by New Riders. MSRP=\$55.

Real World Adobe Creative Suite 2

– How to manage, integrate, and synchronize all of the apps in the suite: Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Acrobat, and GoLive. Co-authors Sandee Cohen & Steve Werner show you how to use the right app at the right time so

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Preparing a Review Article for the Orange Bytes

by Ted Littman, NOCCC Reviews Editor

Important!

The article, "Preparing a Review Article for the Orange Bytes" and "Guidelines for Submittal" at the following link provides suggestions for writing and for submitting articles and reviews. Please read both. <http://www.noccc.org/bytes/info/index.html>. ■

BOOKS AVAILABLE IN THE LIBRARY

NOCCC has a special benefit program for members – the **Club Library**. Members may check out books at the Reviews & Library Desk at the monthly meeting for a period of one or two months for a nominal fee of \$2 for one month or \$3 for two months. A security deposit (equal to the list price of the book) must be posted. When the book is returned in good condition, the deposit is refunded. **No review is required.**

The partial list of 54 available books is as follows, see website for full list: This is the second half of the list.

.Net Security & Cryptography – A book from Addison-Wesley by Peter Thorsteinson & G. Ganesh provides practical & comprehensive coverage on implementing cryptography and security in the Microsoft .Net platform. MSRP=\$50.

2/6/5/2006

The Effective Incident Response Team – An Addison-Wesley book by Julie Lucas & Brian Moeller. A complete guide for network administrators & managers on dealing with computer attacks by intruders, worms, & viruses. MSRP=\$40.

Outsource: Competing in the Global Productivity Race – This hardcover book by Edward Yourdon presents a balanced view of why outsourcing is occurring, how it is likely to impact people's lives, and how best to prepare career-wise for the new realities it introduces. From Prentice Hall. MSRP=\$28.

Project 2003 Personal Trainer – You can become the Project Superhero in your office with this easy-to-follow training manual with an interactive simulation CD. Published by O'Reilly. MSRP=\$30.

Will Wheaton: Just a Geek – Will Wheaton, a regular on the Star Trek series, tell all in this book from O'Reilly. MSRP=\$25.

The following books were donated to our Library by an NOCCC member:
C, A Reference Manual, 2nd Edition – This book from Pren Hall has a complete description of the full C language and over 180 standard run-time library

functions.

Expert C Programming Deep C Secrets – This 1994 book by Peter van der Linden is from Pren Hall & reveals the coding techniques used by the best C programmers. MSRP=\$35.

C# Essentials – This 2001 O'Reilly book contains everything the intermediate-to-advanced programmer needs to know to begin using C# and the .NET Framework SDK. MSRP=\$20.

A Programmer's Introduction to C# – This 2000 book from Eric Gunnerson, a member of Microsoft's C# design team, teaches you to program with C# and to author .NET components. MSRP=\$35.

Introduction to Assembly Language Programming – This 1998 undergraduate text by Sivarama Dandamudi covers the 8086 family of processors up to and including the Pentium.

Introduction to C++ - A Microsoft short guide to programming in C++.

Microsoft Visual Basic C++ User's Guide, Vol. I, Version 4 – The first of six volumes from Microsoft Press, this 1995, 700-page book provides a complete guide to use with integrated development environment and command-line tools. MSRP=\$30.

Inside Visual C++, 4th Edition – This 1997 book by David Kruglinski from Microsoft Press is the standard reference for programming with Microsoft Visual C++ Version 5.0. MSRP=\$50.

Programming with Qt – An O'Reilly book about writing GUI applications that run on Linux & several Windows platforms. MSRP=\$33.

Internetworking with TCP/IP, Vol. I, 3rd Edition – This 1995 book by Douglas Comer from Prentice Hall covers the principles, protocols, & architecture and is a classic introductory text of TCP/IP.

Internetworking with TCP/IP – Douglas Comer's 1988 book from Pren Hall covers the principles, protocols, & architecture of this technology and the Internet in general terms.

Internetworking with TCP/IP, Vol. II, 2nd Edition – This 1994 book by Douglas Comer & David Stevens from Prentice Hall covers the design, implementation, & internals of the structure of TCP/IP software in an operating system.

Learning PERL – A 1993 O'Reilly book on this language for UNIX. MSRP=\$25.
3/6/5/2006

An Introduction to Database Systems, Vol. I, 5th Edition – This 1991 book by C.J. Date from Addison-Wesley takes you from basic concepts through design and directions and contains numerous working examples. MSRP=\$54.

An Introduction to Database Systems, Vol. II – This 1983 book by C.J. Date from Addison-Wesley effectively ties together eight loosely related topics in database technology.

A Guide to the SQL Standard, 3rd Edition – Another C.J. Date book from Addison-Wesley on the common language of database management. MSRP=\$35.

More Programming Pearls, Confessions of a Coder – A witty and lively collection of essays from Addison-Wesley demonstrating the many varied aspects of programming, showing how programming can be both fun & elegant science.

Advanced Programming in the UNIX Environment – A 1996 book by W. Richard Stevens from Addison-Wesley, this 740-page tutorial is on the system call interface and the most important functions found in the ANSI C library. MSRP=\$55.

ActionScript for Flash MX: The Definitive Guide, 2nd Edition – This 2003 1000-page O'Reilly book is dedicated entirely to ActionScript, Flash MX's object-oriented programming language and is for web developers of all levels. MSRP=\$55.

The XML Handbook – Written in 1998 by Charles Goldfarb and published by Prentice Hall PTR, this 600-page book is an excellent starting point where you can learn and experiment with XML. MSRP=\$45.

DocBook Publishing – This 2001 book shows you how to use DocBook's markup language to produce professional documents that can be easily distributed in a variety of media. MSRP=\$40.

Active Template Library: A Developer's Guide – This 1998 book by Tom Armstrong from M & T Books, clearly spells out how C++ templates work within the COM architecture and how template-based reuse works. MSRP=\$40.

Professional Active Server Pages 2.0 – This book is for anyone responsible for planning, building, or maintaining a web site. ■

Main Meeting Report



By Eric Saca, NOCCC

McAfee, the security company, presented for us in July. Dynamic speaker Dennis London presented their latest products for the consumer market. This was their first time at NOCCC.

President Elise Edgell ran the meeting. After some brief announcements and random access, Dennis began his presentation.

He started with an explanation of Malware. He presented several definitions from different sources. Microsoft defines malware as follows: "Malware is short for malicious software and is typically used as a catch-all term to refer to any software designed to cause damage to a single computer, server, or computer network, whether it's a virus, spyware, et al."

Next, Dennis covered the different types of malware, starting with the Virus. He defined a virus as "self replicating code which generally requires action by a user. May or may not carry a payload." He discussed some examples of viruses, including the classic Laroux, a macro virus that infected/affected Excel workbooks. He noted that typical enterprise reaction to this threat is regular virus scanning.

Next, he covered the Worm, a "self replicating program which needs no user involvement. Generally uses known loopholes or vulnerabilities." He discussed examples of worms, including the classic Explore.zip, which appeared as an attachment in e-mail. Once triggered by a single user (by opening the attachment), Explore.zip would spread

itself to Microsoft Office documents, searching through all the user's drive letters, from A: to Z:. The only recovery method was to restore files from backup. He noted that typical enterprise reaction to worms was to block ZIP files and password-protect documents.

A related threat was the Mass Mailer, "a worm which spreads itself via email using contacts listed in the infected computer's address book." A classic example of this was Melissa. Enterprise reaction was to shut down entire mail servers to clean the worm -- and in some cases, to press big red buttons that powered down whole server rooms. Macs and OS/2 systems were also carriers of this worm, as they sometimes held e-mail with the dangerous attachments.

Next, Dennis discussed the Trojan Horse, defined as follows: "Like its namesake in Greek mythology, a program which presents itself as one thing but is actually something else. Usually has a hidden negative payload." A classic example was the SubSeven Trojan (AKA the BackdoorSub-7). This was often disguised as a JPG or BMP picture. When launched, it would drop two files into the Windows folder of the unsuspecting user. When those two files were run, they created a backdoor, allowing full access to the host machine and/or network. Typical enterprise reaction was to deny all types of files known to contain the Trojans, including JPGs and BMPs.

Next came Adware, which "was and is still intended for marketing purposes. Gets installed with other software and functions as a separate program. Generates unwanted or irrelevant advertising via email or pop-ups." The classic examples are Weatherbug, Doubleclick, and Gator. Weatherbug would invite the user to enter his/her zip code to get local weather information. Then the program would gather and send user information, including browsing habits, to third-party advertisers. They would then respond with direct marketing e-mails (spam), pop-ups, and other intrusive forms of communication. Adware was fully funded by the advertising corporations involved. The Russian mafia is also

using it to get into peoples' computers.

Related to Adware is Spyware, "An unwanted program secretly attached to a wanted program which gets installed simultaneously. The unwanted program collects user information which can be used for identity theft, fraud, or other malicious and/or criminal activity."

There was also Phishing, "A scam designed to trick people into handing over personal information to thieves. Phish often arrives as an email message where the attacker has forged, or spoofed, the sender's address to make the message look authentic. Such messages usually ask the user to connect to a forged website to enter in personal information, such as: username, password, account number, Social Security number, mother's maiden name, driver's license number."

Next, Dennis covered the Data Diddler, described as a "Payload in a trojan or virus that deliberately corrupts data, generally by small increments over time." This was the type of program described in the movie "Office Space", which got loaded into a banking system and used decimal rounding to divert small amounts of cash over time. (After a while, it would add up to a huge sum of money in the thief's bank account.) This type of malware was actually attempted in the mid- to late-1970s and then tried again in the '80s. There is no standard enterprise reaction to this threat because companies generally don't know it's happening until after the fact. The only way to prevent it is by constant monitoring.

Next came the Logic Bomb, "Generally implanted by an insider which waits for a specified condition then triggers a usually negative payload." The classic example of this was Michelangelo, "triggered on March 6. The payload on this date is a reformat of the system hard disk by overwriting any data with random characters. Once the virus is executed, it will infect the hard drive's MBR and may become memory resident. With every subsequent boot, the virus will be loaded into memory and will attempt to infect floppy diskettes accessed by the machine." Logic bombs like this are

cleaned via virus scanning. Dennis noted that by now, March 6 is not the only infamous date; every day on the calendar now has a logic bomb associated with it.

Lastly, Dennis covered the Hoax. "Hoax virus warning messages are more than mere annoyances. After repeatedly becoming alarmed, only to learn that there was no real virus, computer users may get into the habit of ignoring all virus warning messages, leaving them especially vulnerable to the next real, and truly destructive, virus. The AOL4FREE hoax began as a hoax warning about a nonexistent virus. Once it was known that this was a hoax, somebody began to distribute a destructive trojan horse in a file named AOL4FREE, attached to the original hoax virus warning!"

Dennis mentioned that modern malware is very different from before. There are new means of spreading or distribution, new methods of attack, new payloads, and new centralized targets. Many modern malware programs cross boundaries, combining more than one type of function. For example, Code Red had at least 16 vectors. Dennis mentioned that a whole project team in China developed Code Red!

Dennis then covered methods for hardening your enterprise against malware. These included OS patches, intelligent network architecture and design, software-based protection (antivirus, host firewall, host intrusion prevention, anti-spyware, anti-adware), and hardware- or appliance-based protection (gateway scanning appliances, firewalls, IDS/IPS devices).

He mentioned that all these can be combined into one system. McAfee offers ePolicy Orchestrator (ePO), a powerful tool that allows companies to implement and centrally manage combined protections against a variety of different malware types. It also allows network administrators to see who is connected at any given time -- and to disconnect systems if necessary.

Dennis mentioned the main reason for patching: fixing buffer overflow problems. He explained that buffer overflows can't be stopped, but you

can stop programs from running in buffers. McAfee is the only antivirus company that incorporates buffer overflow prevention in its product.

He advised us of a malicious site that pretends to be from McAfee -- www.mcafee-security.com. He warned everyone to stay away from that site. The real McAfee website is www.mcafee.com.

Dennis explained a special benefit of McAfee VirusScan -- it is an ON-ACCESS scanner, meaning -- that it scans files all the time as they are read from and written to disk. They are not just checked when the software is told to scan a folder or disk. Thus, protection from viruses is ongoing. It doesn't just occur when a virus scan is scheduled or when the user thinks to launch one. (By contrast, CA is not an on-access scanner. As a free product, CA does have its limitations.)

To demonstrate VirusScan's on-access behavior, Dennis wrote a short 5-line piece of HTML that can crash Internet Explorer. It was the following:

```
html
form
input type crash
/form
/html
```

(Please note that angle brackets; <>, should surround each of the above lines. They were omitted so this report would not be considered a virus.)

The moment he tried to save this code, VirusScan reacted and stopped him from saving it. It was considered a form of a virus.

In addition to VirusScan, Dennis mentioned that McAfee Anti-Spyware is also an on-access product -- currently the only on-access anti-spyware product available. He said that on a student library computer where McAfee Anti-Spyware was run after the CA product, McAfee Anti-Spyware caught 95 pieces of spyware that CA missed.

As Dennis ran his presentation and asked questions to encourage audience participation, he handed free copies of McAfee Internet Security to people who gave the right answers. The McAfee Internet Security Suite comes with

VirusScan, Anti-Spyware, Desktop Firewall, spam and pop-up blockers, and a digital document shredder.

He finished up by quickly running through charts that detailed features of various products -- and by comparing McAfee products to those of competitors. He also answered some brief questions but time was limited.

When he was finished, the raffle included several copies of McAfee Internet Security Suite. Dennis also provided enough copies to give away in August.

Next Meeting --
Is up in the air at publication time. See page 4 for details.

Computer Aided Investing SIG



By Bob Krishfield, NOCCC

Technical Review of the Market: The last month was encouraging as we bounced off a bottom that occurred in early June turning around from the May-June 1000 point drop in the Dow. The bounce recovered 55% of the drop, but is not likely to continue upwards. The indicators show the market is recovering, but there is still much weakness as shown in a decline of the AD line. The ratio of the NY to OTC index favors the NY, which means the market is not in a favorable environment for making new investments. Most of the common signals including the Tango system are in a sell or no-buy state. The gurus are indicating market leadership is bearish which is not good as we enter the earnings reporting period. Rising oil prices are likely to kill the short-term recovery.

When we expect a correction or reversal, it is helpful to look at daily, weekly and monthly charts to find if the pattern of a top, bottom, or trend

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Meeting Reports

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appears, and determine its significance. For example, a broken trend in a daily chart means the market is making a short term correction, but a broken trend in a weekly or monthly chart has more significance, mover further, and last longer. We demonstrated this for trends using Bollinger Band charts - that is, if the prices stayed in the upper portion of the bands, a rising trend was in effect, if prices crossed from the upper to lower bands, a transition was taking place, and so forth. For the S&P500, the daily charts showed the end of a downtrend, as prices transitioned from the lower Bollinger Bands to the upper. For the weekly chart, we could see that this downtrend was ending as the prices were crossing back into the upper bands. The monthly chart showed a continuing long term up trend – the prices remained in the upper bands. This is encouraging, since it means the short / intermediate term correction is completed and not reflected as a long-term condition.

Presentation – Basket Trading (Selections from a Video by Roy Ashworth) This video was poor quality, but the content made it worthwhile. He outlined how many professional money managers have given up on mutual fund trading because of the restrictions, and were creating their own equivalent funds, i.e. baskets of stocks to trade without restrictions. This cloning of funds makes portfolios that can emulate the best of funds – even if they are closed, so you can trade them with proven mutual fund trading systems and trade as frequent as you personally desire. The approach requires building a stock basket or portfolio that is managed as a single equity – buying all and selling all stocks in the basket at a given signal, using a composite equity curve. The uniqueness of this approach is how you build the baskets. Techniques developed in Fast Track for ranking high performance funds (e.g. Mike Price) are applied to stock selection. This involves selecting periods when the market experienced strong uptrend and using a one-year lookback, ranking eligible stocks by UPI, NCAAlpha, Sharpe or Std

Deviation figures. Composite average plots are made of the top 20-50 stocks and the best equity performance chosen. This becomes the stock basket, which is traded using your favorite fund trading system, buying and selling the whole basket (stocks equally weighted). In the video, Roy developed a method for multi-year backtesting that recomputed baskets monthly as they were updated replacing 5 or 6 stocks of the 33 in the basket. Compound average returns over the 5-year period ranged from 20 to 120%. His approach was to compute a new portfolio when a buy signal flashed, buy and hold it until the next sell signal – usually weeks or months away. With time running out, we showed how this could be done in Amibroker (see briefing on website bobsden.org). More work is required to refine the “system”, but it has already proven to be a moneymaker in the last rally. One big drawback is the cost of trading. We will continue discussions on the pros and cons of this approach. One final note – we’re starting up an AmiBroker SIG following the CAI SIG. Look for the announcement. ■

Computer Essentials

By Elise Edgell, NOCCC

ATTENTION: Our next meeting will be held in Science 306. This is on the 3rd floor. There is an elevator (next to the rest rooms) on the east side of the Science building so you do not have to climb the stairs.

I will go over my experience in installing McAfee Internet Security Suite 2006. Also, I will talk about the downloadable program, Site Advisor, which gives an indication about whether the web site found in a Google search is safe to use or is dangerous. This program works with Internet Explorer but not with Firefox. I think that this is a useful feature since I installed it on my laptop computer and I am more likely to be using it in locations other than my home. Further discussion will be held at the SIG.

This is the SIG for you if you are

new to computers or if you want to review some of the more basic features and problems with your computer and programs. I promise that I will not get too technical in my answers. An answer that you do not understand does not help you. I try to always use words that are understandable and if jargon is used, then I will define the terms so that you can understand them.

If you have a gadget that you can not get to work on your computer please bring it, along with installation CD, user guide, and any other potentially helpful information. I will see if we can figure out the problem.

This is an interactive SIG. It is surprising how often others have solved your problem.

I'll be looking forward to seeing all of you at the next meeting in Science 306. ■

Digital Photography



By Larry Klees, NOCCC

At the August meeting we will examine some of the things that can be done with the curves tool.

“how urgently I desire to achieve that exquisite tonality and miraculous definition of light and substance in my own Prints.” - Ansel Adams

Ansel Adams was one of the best photographic print makers ever. His zone system, precise exposures, careful dodging & burning were all directed towards that goal. He would have loved everything about digital photography, but one of his favorite things would have to have been the curves function.

I have seen great potential in using curves but (except for weird posterization type effects or correcting for dot gain in printing processes) have only recently achieved practical results. Over the last few months I have seen some of what others are able to achieve with curves. While I've only scratched the surface of what they and this tool can do, I now get great results with photographs of white on white or black on black. On more typical pho-



PRODUCTS FOR REVIEW

FROM PAGE 18

you can work better and smarter. Published by Peachpit Press/Adobe Press, MSRP=\$50.

Design to Sell – Published by Microsoft Press. MSRP=\$30.

Word Hacks – This new book from O'Reilly, authored by Andrew Savikas, offers tips and tools for customizing, programming, and automating Microsoft Word. This book explicitly covers only Word 2000, 2002, and 2003 although many of the "Hacks" will work with older versions. MSRP=\$25.

QuickBooks 2005 – The Missing Manual – This thorough guide by Bonnie Biafore, examines the many features of the popular QuickBooks accounting software. Through dozens of insightful tips and tricks and a friendly writing style, it enables financial managers to quickly understand how to use the program's tools to implement and maintain critical accounting processes. Ideal for QuickBooks users of all levels. Published by O'Reilly. MSRP=\$30.

eBay: The Missing Manual – Another good book on eBay from O'Reilly/Pogue Press, authored by Nancy Conner and issued Aug. 2005. MSRP=\$25.

The eBay Price Guide – This 570-page book by Julia Wilkinson takes the guesswork out of buying on eBay from the very proper museum-quality item to the truly bizarre. The companion CD contains a demo version of HammerTap's DeepAnalysis auction research software as well as The eBay Appetizer, The Seller's Guide, and The Auction Accelerator which has 6 startup lessons. Published by O'Reilly/No Starch Press, the MSRP=\$30.

BlackBerry Hacks - The versatile and flexible BlackBerry handheld computing device allows you to stay in touch and in-the-know--no matter where you are or where you go. For both corporate and consumer users, BlackBerry Hacks delivers tips, tools, and innovative ways to most effectively use the all-in-one phone, inbox, organizer, and browser for phone calls, instant messaging, email, organizing, web browsing, receiving RSS feeds, and much more. From O'Reilly, MSRP=\$25.

Home Networking: The Missing Manual – This book, authored by Scott Lowe, from O'Reilly/Pogue Press shows you how to do everything you need to set up a home network. MSRP=\$25.

PC Hacks – 100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools by Jim Aspinwall from O'Reilly

shows you how to get the most out of your hardware and software. MSRP=\$ 25.

Windows XP for Starters: The Missing Manual – This new book by David Pogue from O'Reilly provides everything you need to know to set up Windows XP, whatever your knowledge level. The step-by-step tutorials save you time and frustration, and prevent you from making common mistakes. MSRP=\$20.

Data Binding with Windows Forms 2.0 – A new book by Brian Noyes on programming smart client data applications with .Net. Published by Addison-Wesley, MSRP=\$50.

Murach's ASP.NET 2.0 Upgrader's Guide VB Edition – Mike Murach has just published this VB edition of their ASP.NET book for experienced developers. MSRP=\$39.50.

iPod & iTunes Garage – Author Kirk McElhearn shows you how to get more music and way more magic from your iPod & iTunes. From Prentice Hall PTR. MSRP=\$25.

Implementing CIFS, the Common Internet File System – An authoritative guide to the inner workings of Microsoft's Internet/intranet file sharing system from Prentice Hall authored by Christopher Hertel. MSRP=\$45.

UNIX to Linux Porting – This new book is a definitive guide to porting applications from today's most widely used UNIX platforms to Linux. Published by Prentice Hall, it has an MSRP=\$65.

User Mode Linux – This new addition to the Bruce Peren's Open Source Series, this book by Jeff Dike shows you how to create virtual Linux machines within a Linux computer and use them to safely test and debug applications, network services, and kernels. Published by Prentice Hall, the MSRP=\$55.

Classic Shell Scripting – The key to unlocking the real potential of Unix. A How To book by Arnold Robbins & Nelson Beebe from O'Reilly. MSRP=\$35.

Guide to Linux – This new book by Peter van der Linden from Prentice Hall takes the mystery out of learning Linux. It comes with the Linspire 5.0 CD. MSRP=\$40.

Linux Pocket Guide – This book by Daniel Barrett covers the most useful and important parts of day-to-day Linux in a concise & friendly style for beginners as well as experience users. From O'Reilly. MSRP=\$10.

Linux Desktop Garage – This book/CD by Susan Matteson from Prentice Hall PTR is full of tools and info to do practically everything with Linux. MSRP=\$30.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

SIG List

Those who have listed an e-mail address would prefer to be contacted by e-mail rather than by phone, whenever possible

SIG	Bldg	Room	Time	Leader	E-mail	Phone
AmiBroker	Science	111	11:15	Bob Krishfield	bobkrish@socal.rr.com	714-532-3096
Autocad	Wilkinson	111	9:00	Joe Mizer	joem@pvateplaamerica.com	909-688-9848
Computer Aided Investing	Science	111	9:30	Bob Krishfield	bobkrish@socal.rr.com	714-532-3096
Computer Security	Science	203	11:15	Dave Keays	rdksoft@sbcglobal.net	714-821-4792
Digital Photography	Irvine Hall	—	9:30	Larry Klees	lklees@dslextreme.com	714-879-6405
Genealogy	Science	111	2:30	John Johnson	jrosjohnson@juno.com	714-991-3314
Computer Essentials	Science	306	9:30	Elise Edgell	EliseEdgell@aol.com	714-544-3589
Hardware Essentials	Science	109	2:30	Herbert Wong	ocug@singularitytechnology.com	714-968-7264
Linux for Desktop Users	Wilkinson	117	9:00	Bob C. Ray	bobcray@pacbell.net	714-634-7520
Linux for Server Administrat	Wilkinson	117	10:00	Bob C. Ray	bobcray@pacbell.net	714-634-7520
Linux Programming Concepts	Wilkinson	117	11:15	Bob C. Ray	bobcray@pacbell.net	714-634-7520
Macintosh	Wilkinson	221	11:15	Claire Lemire	clemire@ucdavis-alumni.com	714-292-9772
PC Q&A	Irvine Hall	—	11:15	Jim Sanders	jsanders@ligasmicro.com	714-544-3589
Understanding OS's	Wilkinson	111	11:15	Charlie Moore	mooreca@adelphia.net	714-529-9071
Visual Programming I & II	Science	109	8:30	Anson Chapman	aecrcss@hotmail.com	909-860-9515
Visual Programming III	Science	109	10:00	Anson Chapman	aecrcss@hotmail.com	909-860-9515
Visual Programming IV	Science	109	11:15	Anson Chapman	aecrcss@hotmail.com	909-860-9515
Please report SIG changes to	Herbert Wong, Jr.				ocug@singularitytechnology.com	714-968-7264

Membership Benefits

FROM PAGE 3

enjoy savings on books of 30%: go to <http://www.phptr.com>, <http://www.awprofessional.com>, and <http://www.ibmpress-books.com>.

RoboForm is a Password Manager and web form filler for storing your online passwords and automates entering passwords. You can download a complimentary version at www.roboform.com/corts. If you want to upgrade to the PRO version before September 30, 2005 use the coupon code CORTS and get 10% off.

Smart Computing - www.smartcomputing.com For each paid membership (subscription to either Smart Computing or Computer Power User) via personalized membership forms or by telephone, our group will receive one credit. When the group has accumulated 5 credits (subscriptions), Smart Computing will donate one subscription to the group (great to use as a raffle prize or a "thank you" to a member, etc.). Call customer service at 1-800-733-3809 and tell them you are with the North Orange County Computer Club. If you go to their website to subscribe, click on User Groups and there is a drop down menu with our group's name on it.

Techsmith www.techsmith.com/store/order/bundle.asp using promotion code PRESBN05 you can get SnagIt (screen capture program) and Camtasia Studio (quickly record, edit and publish multimedia demos and presentations) Bundle for \$269, a \$50 savings. ■

PHOTOSHOP

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and can reduce the grid size on the Curves screen by performing an Alt-Click. The book illustrates each step of a procedure, two of them on each page. Of advantage are the headers on each step which serve as memory joggers when you want to review. Not only does Kelby utilize shortcuts throughout the book, 26 related to the subject matter are listed at appropriate places. Information sidebars would be inappropriate in the style of this book so they are posed as question-answer topics at the end of each chapter.

Book details: The Photoshop Channels Book, By Scott Kelby, Published by Peachpit Press, ISBN: 0321269063, Published: Feb 14, 2006, Copyright 2006, Dimensions 7-1/2 X 9, Pages: 288; Edition: 1st; MSRP = \$40 USA (less a 30 % discount to User Group members).

Kelby touts two books which are advanced to his: Katrin Eismann's superb Photoshop Masking & Compositing (New Riders, 2005 ISBN 0-7357-1279-4) and Dan Margulis' Photoshop Lab Color: The Canyon Conundrum and Other Adventures in the Most Powerful Colorspace (Peachpit Press ISBN: 0321356780) He also cites Websites of Greg Gorman, www.gormanphotography.com/bw and John Paul Caponigro at www.adobe.com/digitalimage/pdfs/phs8bwconversion.pdf. ■

NOCCC Help Line

The Help Line is in the true spirit of NOCCC, which is to help others to learn more about computers. The following is a list of Help Line Volunteers. The list is organized by the topic that each volunteer is willing to help you with. Please help us to keep this list current. Call or e-mail editor@noccc.org with additions, deletions, or corrections.



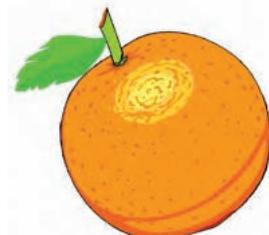
- AI
- Amiga
- Apple
- Apple II
- Apple/Educator
- C/C++
- Computer Boards
- Corel Draw
- Excel(IBM)
- MacIntosh
- MacIntosh
- Memory/Interrupts
- Modem Hardware
- Modem Software
- Neural Networks
- OS/2
- PC, Beginners
- PC Hardware
- Quicken 6.0
- Quickbooks 5.0
- Quicken 2000,2001
- Quickbooks
- Quicken Home & Business 2000, 2001
- Powerpoint
- Realtime Control
- Robotics
- Tcl/Tk
- Unix
- Windows 9X
- Windows 9X
- Windows 2000
- Word
- Word
- WordPerfect

The help line list is published in the printed version of the Orange Bytes which is mailed to the membership

FREE AD SPACE

If you are an NOCCC member, and have a computer-related, non-commercial ad that you would like to have placed on the Internet, visit the Classified Ads section of our website at: <http://www.noccc.org> or contact Jim Sanders at jsanders@ligasmicro.com

Club members are also welcome to post **“Wanted”** or **“For Sale”** notices on the kiosk, but please do not tape them on doors, windows, or walls.



New volunteers for the Help Line would be appreciated!
If you have an area of expertise to share, let us know.

Self-Service Linux – This new book from Prentice Hall PTR is authored by Mark Wilding & Dan Behman and offers a definitive overview of practical hints and tips for Linux users. MSRP=\$40.

Linux Debugging and Performance Tuning Tips & Techniques – This is the definitive Guide to Linux software debugging & performance optimization at both the kernel and application levels. Author Steve Best systematically introduces open source tools & best-practice techniques for delivering bug-free, well-tuned code. Published by Pren Hall PTR, the MSRP=\$50.

J2EE Security for Servlets, EJBs, and Web Services – This book by Pankaj Kumar from Prentice Hall is the definitive guide to securing server-side Java and covers every significant J2SE and J2EE security mechanism. MSRP=\$50.

Linux Phrasebook: Essential Codes & Commands – This new pocketbook from Sams Publishing is authored by Scott Granneman and contains the codes you need to quickly & effectively work in a Linux OS and development environment. MSRP=\$15.

A Practical Guide to Red Hat Linux, 3rd Edition – This new book from Prentice Hall was written by Mark Sobell and includes the full Fedora Core on the accompanying DVD. Completely revised, it will meet all your Fedora Core & Red Hat Enterprise Linux needs. MSRP=\$50.

Red Hat Fedora 5 Unleashed – This new book from Sams Publishing was written by Paul Hudson & Andrew Hudson & presents comprehensive coverage of Fedora 5, the open-community version of Red Hat Linux – the most comprehensive Linux distribution. The accompanying DVD includes the full Fedora Core 5 binary distribution & the complete OpenOffice.org office suite. MSRP=\$50.

Point & Click Open Office.org! – Book + CD from Prentice Hall. MSRP=\$30.

The Official Samba-3 How To and Reference Guide – This book is part of Bruce Perens’ “Open Source” series. Authored by John Terpstra & Jelmer Vernooij, this is the practical, authoritative, step-by-step guide to cutting IT costs with Samba-3. From Prentice Hall. MSRP=\$50.

The Design & Implementation of the FreeBSD Operating System – This hard-cover book by Kirk McKusick & George Neville-Neil from Addison-Wesley is the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and authoritative technical information on the internal structure of this open source operating system. MSRP=\$60.

Core Web Application Development with PHP and MySQL – This book from Prentice Hall PTR by Marc Wandschneider has everything developers need to know to build robust web database applications from upfront design and planning through testing & deployment. Three start-to-finish application case studies with code are provided on CD-Rom. MSRP=\$50.

PHP 5 Power Programming – In this book from Prentice Hall, PHP 5’s co-creator and two leading PHP developers show you how to make the most of its industrial-strength enhancements in any project. MSRP=\$40.

Apache Derby – Off to the Races – This book tells you how to master Apache Derby, the only open source, pure Java, fully transactional, small-footprint RDBMS. Authored by Paul Zikopoulos, Dan Scott, & George Baklarz, the hardcover book is published by IBM Press/Pearson plc and has an MSRP=\$40.

Web Design Garage – This book has everything you need to help

design your web site. From author Marc Campbell and publisher Pren Hall PTR. MSRP=\$30.

How to Do Everything with Dreamweaver 8 - Covering the latest version of this Web design tool, this step-by-step guide shows beginning to intermediate users how to create and maintain striking Web sites with Dreamweaver. Readers will learn to use all the components, including the visual layout tools, application development features, and code editing capabilities. The clearly defined chapters work equally well for readers who prefer to learn sequentially in a tutorial fashion, and those who need a quick reference to a specific task or feature. Published by Osborne/McGraw Hill, MSRP=\$25.

Ted Littman, NOCCC Reviews Editor (714) 779-1936
 reviews@noccc.org ■

NOCCC Membership Fee Schedule

In an effort to increase club membership and provide additional resources, attract young people involved or having an interest in computing, to attract local computer-related businesses to place ads in the Orange Bytes with or without becoming NOCCC members, the schedule has been revised. And, we are offering members the opportunity to help our club financially by making donations that should be income-tax deductible since we are chartered as a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization. Membership level will be designated on the Membership Badge and Donators will be acknowledged in an issue of the Bytes. ■

Membership Level	Fee (\$)	
	1 Year	3 Years
Individual Member	\$35	90
Each Additional Family Member	15	45
College Student	20	
High School Student	15	
Business Member + Ad (Business Card)	180	
Business Member + Ad (1/4 Page)	465	
Business Member + Ad (1/2 Page)	800	
Business Member + Ad (Full Page)	1,475	
Membership Donations (\$)		
Contributing Member	75	
Supporting Member	100	
Advocate Member	250	
Patron Member	500	

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- **Get help with your current computer problems.** In the Random Access portions of the Irvine Hall meetings, you ask your question of the entire assemblage, and more than likely someone will have the answer.
- **The NOCCC HelpLine.** Some 20 NOCCC volunteers, experts in their fields, are ready to assist with your problems, and are as close as your telephone.
- **The Orange Bytes Newsmagazine.** Our Award Winning newsmagazine mailed monthly to your address reports on current activities and gives you articles and reviews geared toward your needs.
- **Raffles.** We have distributed thousands of dollars worth of hardware and software raffle prizes at our General meetings.
- **Product Review.** Write a review for this newsletter and keep the software, hardware, book or CD. Members reviews are published in this newsletter.
- **Consignment Table.** We have a thriving consignment table on our regular meeting day in which we assist members to sell or buy all kinds of computer items.
- **Volunteer Work.** You are given opportunities to help our activities with interesting assignments. *An all-volunteer organization*, you can join with other members in a variety of activities, write articles for our newsletter, conduct a seminar, run a SIG, man the help desk, show new members around, help the membership committee, and more.

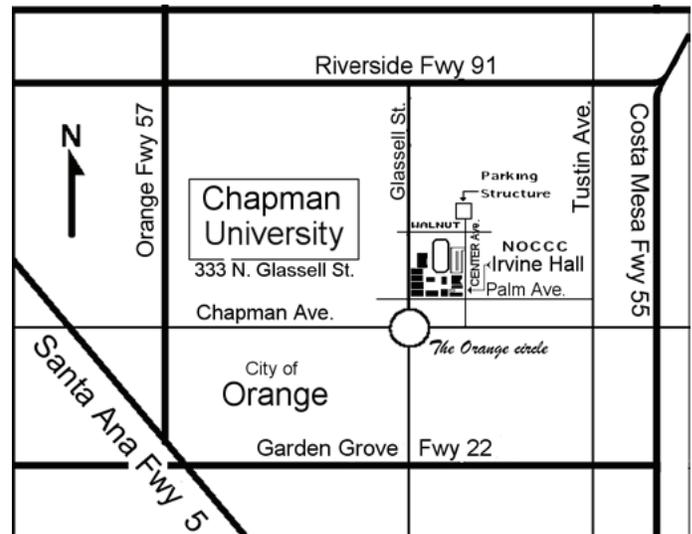
Parking Information — Chapman University's main parking

lot (P6) is on the north side of the campus (enter from Glassell & University Dr.) and lot P3 (N Center St. & E Sycamore Ave) is free of charge for NOCCC's meetings on Sunday. Please feel free to park in the parking lots.

Parking is also free on the **campus-side** of the surface streets. The city of Orange's parking laws prohibit parking in front of residential housing which is across the street from Chapman University. **Expensive parking tickets will be issued to violators.**

The NOCCC Information Desk, Membership Desk, Reviews Desk, Consignment Table, and most of the meeting rooms are in Irvine/Hashinger Hall and the Science Center on the east side of the campus (near Center Street).

Become an NOCCC member by signing up at the Membership Desk on our general meeting day, usually the first Sunday of the month. Or simply fill out the form on the reverse side of this page and send it in!



For current meeting information, please call
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