

Diablo Blue

August, 2002



The Monthly Newsletter of the Diablo Valley PC User's Group

August 1, 2002 Meeting Announcement *Audio/Video Featuring Nick Chase*

The August 1st DVPC meeting will feature DVPC's own Nick Chase who will talk about the latest audio and video hardware and software, including what's new that will let you easily create your own digital movies and record your own music. As you probably know, Nick works in the video unit at Sony, so he has both a professional and a hobbyist perspective on audio and video. Couple that with the fact that Nick is a musician, and you have the ideal speaker to tell us all about using the latest technology, whether we simply want to email or some pictures or post them on the web, or transfer some home video tapes to CD-R or DVD+/-R disks, or make a collection of our favorite records, audio tapes, and CDs onto CD-R disks.

DVPC meetings are held in the lobby conference room in Building B at the Bank of America Technology Center office complex in Concord, located near the northeast corner of Clayton Road at Galindo (see the Map to Monthly Meetings on page 15). Please use the entrance that's on the east side near the southeast corner of the building. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.

The New Users SIG holds its meetings at 6:30 p.m. prior to the regular DVPC monthly meeting on the first Thursday of each month at Bank of America building B. We discuss whatever is confusing or puzzling new PC users. If you are a new user of PCs who would like to meet with other new users — and some experienced users who can answer your questions as well — then join us at the New Users SIG meetings at 6:30 p.m. prior to each DVPC monthly meeting.

We'll also have the Networking Table from 6:30 to 7:00; if you have something to sell or trade, need technical help, or just want to exchange views, visit the Networking Table. We will have one of our pre-meeting games, with a great prize for the winner! Also, as usual, we'll have library disks and those great DVPC mugs (version 2) for sale, SIG news, and some of our usual great door prizes.

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President's Corner

by [Alan Mildwurm](#) DVPC

My Newest Toy

For the past two years I have been very happy with my Handspring Visor. I had the Prism — which is their color PDA. The Prism operates on the Palm operating system and has well met my needs. I liked the expansion socket because it was easy to add a small camera, backup memory module, or a modem. I especially liked the clear crisp screen.

Anyway, I decided I needed a new toy and have been anxious to move over to the PocketPC world. I initially looked at the Compaq iPAQs but they are expensive and hard to find — especially the upper end units.

For graduation, we bought Jason a new Toshiba E310 which is a basic PDA running on the PocketPC 2002 platform. It is small, well designed, comes with a secure digital (SD) slot for expansion (watch for cameras, modems, etc. that will soon plug into the SD slot) and has great screen resolution. It is also well priced.

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Ten Years Ago: The Windows Dilemma by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

A look back at a column that deals with the transition to Windows in 1992.

If you're like many computer users, you're gradually making the switch to Windows. You've abandoned some of your DOS applications and forced others to work in Windows and maybe even found some neat replacements that are designed for Windows.

If you play around with a few Windows applications, the advantages are easy to see. To begin with, Windows applications all adhere to the same basic interface. That means once you've grown accustomed to clicking the mouse on the File portion of the menu in one application — for example, to Save, Open, or Print a file — you'll discover it's in the same place on all Windows applications. That reduces the learning curve on new applications and, well, just makes each product easier to use.

From Here to There

You'll also find out how easy it is to transfer data from one Windows application to another. That's because all Windows products — as opposed to DOS programs — are generally made to work in the same way thereby allowing them to share data. And because Windows is a graphical environment, it means you can easily see things on the screen just as they'll look when you print them out.

Some adjustments, however, are harder to make. Because I come from a DOS environment, I rarely used the mouse. Unfortunately, Windows word processing programs are notorious in their attempt to make me use the rodent. When I write — as opposed to working in a spreadsheet — I like to keep my fingers on the keyboard. So along with learning to use the mouse, I've searched out keyboard alternatives to mouse clicks.

It's not that difficult, but, as you may have discovered, not always a slick solution. Especially if you're used to a series of DOS keystrokes.

To get around the problem, I've taken advantage of the macro function of most Windows programs. A macro gives me the ability to assign numerous keystrokes to one or two key combinations, easily duplicating keystrokes from my old DOS programs. Now I know you're going to laugh but the first Word for Windows macro I created was CTRL-T.

1-2-3...Quattro

Borland's Quattro Pro for Windows, the star of Windows spreadsheet programs, took a bold — but obvious step — in making the mouse more useful. If you've highlighted a spreadsheet cell and click on the right mouse button, for example, you'll get a dialogue box allowing you to modify the properties within that cell. Pretty bright. Not only that, as you scroll across QP/WIN's Speedbar, a brief description telling you what each icon does appears on the bottom of the screen. Boy, does that help in learning.

Overall, I think the most daunting part of switching to Windows is first facing — and then choosing from — the staggering number of Windows applications on the market. The problem is they're all solid contenders. (We should always have such problems.) In the last month, for example, I've tried to decide on a word processor. Because of my work with PC World (I have to test every user group tip so I've tried lots of software), I've played with Lotus' Ami Pro and Microsoft's Word for Windows. Both products are winners and each has half a dozen features I like.

For example, Ami Pro's Smart Icons — shortcut buttons that help me get to many other features — are a great help with navigating through the program. I can move the icons to just about any location, handy if I'm fiddling with some design at the bottom of the page. Ami Pro's Icons are colorful, something I didn't think was important until I compared it to Word for Windows' monochrome Toolbar.

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Get Involved! Learn! Join a SIG today!

Ten Years Ago: The Windows Dilemma...

(Continued from page 2)

But wait, Microsoft has some neat things too. Word for Windows Create Envelope feature lets me address and print an envelope in less time than it takes to lick a stamp. The outlining feature, something I've ignored in stand-alone programs because it was so hard to get to, was addicting. The Page Preview functions in Word for Windows are glorious.

Too bad I can't combine the best features of both and call it BassWord WinPro.

Need a Database?

The one program that I'm still up in the air about is a Windows database.

The two software giants are slugging it out, each vying for my attention, trying to get me to buy their database. And if you played your cards right, you cashed in on the ridiculously low prices. I mean, Microsoft's Access for \$99 bucks. Hell, it's almost like buying shareware.

Then Borland, with its stock wallowing in the low twenties, (it looked like it dropped a point for every day Paradox was delayed), tempting you with user group specials. Paradox for Windows for \$125 and, for another \$55, Quattro for Windows. At the Borland meeting, one guy bought five copies and said he was a commodities broker. Sure, I'll take a hundred pork bellies, a bushel of soy beans and a handful of PDX/WIN's.

Look, the prices are low because there's a lot at stake for both companies. Generally, the product you start with is the one you'll stay with because you've spent so much time learning the keystrokes. So if they can get the product into your hands before the other guy, well, you get the picture.

And we're in the catbird seat because they look at user groups members as Influential End Users. They figure that if you buy one and like it — and with any luck use it — you'll likely tell ten other users. Then if you like it and you're MIS, well, they've really hit the jackpot.

But I Digress...

Hey, did I get off the subject? Both Access and Paradox for Windows are great products. Microsoft's tempts you with Wizards and Templates while Paradox for Windows mesmerizes you with power, speed and, the best of all, familiarity. You already know Paradox, why learn something new? So which one are you going to choose? It's the perennial battle, the one you face with every program you see at Egghead.

Remember, this article was published in 1992; many of the products and vendors mentioned are no longer with us!

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check PCW's current edition at www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at www.pcworld.com/bass_letter.

IncrediMail – A FREE Email Program by Sigrid Foreman, [Tyler Computer Club](#)

Many of us use e-mail on a daily basis and we use different e-mail programs depending on what we want from it. Here are a few that are available.

Free Programs such as Juno do not require you to have an internet account with anyone. They simply let you send and receive e-mail (including attachments) without any internet surfing. This means that you have no monthly or hourly charge to worry about.

E-mail programs that require an Internet account is what most of us use, be it thru providers like AOL, Prodigy, MSN or an independent internet provider where you would use programs such as Outlook Express, Netscape Messenger, Eudora or my favorite IncrediMail. <http://www.incredimail.com/> Many of you have not heard it, and I would like to take this opportunity to speak a little about it.

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SIG News Compiled by [Nick Chase](#), SIG Coordinator, DVPC, 680-4211

Advanced Developers SIG [Ron Ogg](#), SIG Co-Leader – 415-281-0431

The Advanced Developers SIG is a learning co-op. Every month we choose a topic and let people know where they can learn about it. We then get together and go over the information. We hope that if everyone learns a little on their own, and when we get together everyone can learn a lot. If you are an advanced developer you are invited to join the ADSIG. Beginners will want to get some serious development experience before joining the SIG. See the ADSIG page on the DVPC web site at www.dvpc.org/clarion.html for meeting location, dates, and time.

Advanced Users SIG [Jeff and Sharon Noyer](#), SIG Co-Leaders – 778-4348

The Advanced Users SIG meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at 4208 Amargosa Drive in Antioch. Directions: Go east on Highway 4 through Antioch to the Hillcrest Avenue exit. At the light at the end of the exit ramp, go right onto Hillcrest Avenue, and then stay towards your left. At the 3rd light, Hillcrest Avenue turns to the left. Go left and stay on Hillcrest. (Landmark: "The Crossings" Shopping Center is at intersection). At the 4th light, go left onto Wildhorse Drive. (Landmark: 7-Eleven on corner at intersection). At the 2nd left turn, go left onto Meadow Lake Drive. At the 4th right turn, go right onto Amargosa Drive. 4208 Amargosa Drive is the 3rd house on your right, blue and white one-story. The Advanced Users SIG is for anyone interested in discussing advanced topics such as hardware and software issues, cutting-edge technologies, networking, Windows NT Server and Workstation, troubleshooting, etc. Please join us to participate in this very informative and educational forum. We hope to see you at the meeting!

Genealogy eSIG [Peggy Johnson](#), SIG Leader – 676-7522

The DVPC Genealogy SIG is a group of computer genealogists who share helpful websites, databases and source information found on the internet. It's an opportunity for members seeking help to put forth a question or problem to the SIG and receive suggestions and advice. When you locate a useful website, database or visit a research facility, please email the group of the details so we also can take advantage of this information. If you wish to be included in this Genealogy SIG, please email Peggy Johnson, pegszone@aol.com.

Education and Entertainment SIG [Alan Mildwurm](#) SIG Leader – 510-770-5770

The Education & Entertainment SIG usually meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Montevideo School in San Ramon at 7:30 p.m. Check the DVPC web site (www.dvpc.org) for information about each month's meeting. The E&E SIG is oriented to exploring the best in education and entertainment software for the PC. Come back in the fall when everyone is invited to attend our meetings, and bring your kids along - they'll have a great time, too! Directions for our next meetings: Take 680 to Bollinger Canyon Road, go west to San Ramon Valley Blvd., go south to Montevideo Rd. and turn left. Proceed east on Montevideo about 3 blocks to Broadmoor and turn left. The school is 1 block on the right. We meet in Room 22.

Internet SIG [Craig Peterson](#), SIG Leader – 671-7025

The Internet SIG usually meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at Computer Renaissance, 959 Contra Costa Blvd. in Pleasant Hill. We cover everything about the Internet, from browsing and e-mail to creating your own web site and the tools for doing so. For more information, please call Craig Peterson at (925) 671-7025 or e-mail him at compmail@pacbell.net.

.NET SIG [Ted Armstrong](#), SIG Leader – 939-5874

The .NET SIG has its meetings on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room at Concord Police Department building (see directions in the Windows SIG announcement below). The .NET SIG is dedicated to the new Microsoft .NET development tools, the newest Microsoft standard for developing cross-platform stand-alone and web-site applications. .NET tools include Microsoft Visual Basic .NET, Microsoft Visual C++ .NET, and Microsoft Visual C#. .NET developers can take advantage of a common toolbox, debugger, and task window, greatly reducing

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SIG News...

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the developer learning curve and ensuring that developers can always choose the language most appropriate for their task and expertise .NET gives developers the tools for integrating solutions across operating systems and languages.

The .NET SIG will provide an opportunity for .NET developers at all levels who live or work in the East Bay to network with fellow developers. The SIG will provide speakers on different .NET topics. If you or anyone you know could benefit from this SIG, please come to our meetings. Contact Ted Armstrong at ted1003@yahoo.com for more information.

New Users SIG [Bill Earl](#), SIG Leader – 939-5874

The New Users SIG holds its meetings at 6:30 p.m. prior to the regular DVPC monthly meeting on the first Thursday of each month at Bank of America building B. We discuss whatever is confusing or puzzling new PC users. If you are a new user of PCs who would like to meet with other new users – and some experienced users who can answer your questions as well – then join us at the New Users SIG meetings at 6:30 p.m. prior to each DVPC monthly meeting.

PC 101 SIG [Craig Peterson](#), SIG Leader – 671-7025

PC 101 (a class on how to use the computer) is on vacation until the **fall**. When we resume, we'll again have classes on the Saturday following the general meeting at 1:00 p. m. at the Community Room of the Concord Police Station, 1350 Galindo Street, in Concord (see directions in the Windows SIG announcement below). The classes will start at 1:00 pm and end at 3:00. Join us in the fall for some hands on, one-on-one help with the nuts and bolts of using computers. Those in the class enjoy the extra time we can devote to each problem, as well as the time to answer questions in class.

Windows SIG [Ron Ogg](#) (415-281-0431) and [Walt Parsons](#) (934-0775), SIG Co-Leaders

The Windows SIG meets at the Community Room at the Concord Police Department building on the first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. We discuss the latest version of Windows, demonstrate interesting shareware and freeware, and have random access sessions where we all try to answer SIG members' questions. Everyone who uses, is interested in, or is curious about Windows on their PC is invited to attend.

Directions: The Concord Police Department is at 1350 Galindo Street in Concord. From the 242 Freeway take Clayton Road east to Galindo and turn right; the Police Department building is 3 blocks south on your left. From Highway 24 take Monument Blvd. east and continue on Monument Blvd. to where it changes to Galindo; the Police Department building will be on your right a short distance past the signal at Cowell Road.

IncrediMail – A FREE Email Program...

(Continued from page 3)

IncrediMail (IM) is provided to you free of charge... unless you choose to get the full program (\$29), which basically provides support (which I have used and is pretty good) and allows you to preview your messages on the server prior to you downloading them. It comes with a demo program of Letter Creators (you're allowed to make 1-3 letters before you have to purchase the full version at \$39... or get both for the price of \$49). IM offers you e-cards, letter backgrounds, sounds and animation that you can add to personalize your e-mail. It also come with an mail notifier (of your choice) which will tell you when you have new mail. You can even make your own handwritten signature to add to your mail.

The thing I like about IncrediMail is that I have such a large variety of letter backgrounds to choose from that I can add to personalize my e-mails. Besides the basic ones that come standard in the program, there are many more backgrounds, e-

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DVPC Board Meeting Minutes

certainly not by [Tom Krauss](#), DVPC

Your Board of Directors did **not** hold their meeting on July 17 as scheduled. It seemed everyone was either traveling (Charlie was probably in Alaska, again... what **is** it about Alaska that draws Charlie like a magnet??), had family obligations, wanted to watch something on TV (do we suspect that some of Board members were watching *Big Brother*? Nooo, they are much too sophisticated for a TV show like *Big Brother*... aren't they??), were tied up at the office (the rumor that most of the Board members have to be tied up in order for their employers to actually get some productive work out of them is a crass libel!!), were asleep, or wanted to be asleep.

Regardless of the reasons (or lack thereof) on the part of the Board members, there was no Board meeting. A highly complex and detailed computer program that processes the Board of Directors inputs (or lack thereof) and creates an output that can be acted upon to direct the generation of this very column, is as follows:

```
100     if boardmeeting = "no" then
110     move "no" to boardmeetingminutes
120     else
130     move "yes" to boardmeetingminutes
140     end-if.
```

If you're not quite up on your Cobol programming, you could dust off those old Cobol books and delve into Cobol syntax. Or you could take my word for it — the key here is lines 100 and 110. What these lines mean is that, since there was no Board meeting (*if boardmeeting = "no"*) then there are no DVPC Board Meeting minutes (*move "no" to boardmeetingminutes*).

Since there are no DVPC Board Meeting Minutes this month, there is no DVPC Board Meeting Minutes column this month either. So why are you reading this? It must be a puerile interest in the happenings of the Board and its meetings. Or a perverted interest in the sordid lives of the individual and collective members of the Board of Directors. Or, since *Big Brother* isn't on TV tonight, maybe it's because you don't have anything better to do.

Regardless of your reasons (or lack thereof), there truly isn't any valid, explainable or justifiable reason to be reading this column. To reiterate: because there was no Board of Directors meeting, which directly resulted in no Board of Directors meeting minutes, the further and penultimate result is and must be that there is no DVPC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes column. As a direct corollary to the preceding proof (the definition of "proof" being: *The evidence or argument that compels the mind to accept an assertion as true*), you can't possibly be reading this column because it, by definition and by the preceding clear, concise, and thorough explanations, couldn't possibly exist. It's a figment of your imagination. It's a figment of **my** imagination. To paraphrase the famous *Monty Python's Flying Circus* "Dead Parrot" episode (©1968, 1970 Python (Monty) Pictures Limited, marketed and distributed in the U.S. by New Video Group, distributed in continuity by Time-Life Video, DVD video disc catalog #V835-01):

" This column is no more. It has ceased to be. It's expired and gone to meet its maker. It's a late column. It's a stiff. Bereft of life, it rests in peace. This is an ex-column."

So turn the page. Look somewhere else. Read another article. I'm confident that there are many articles of consummate interest on the many other pages of this magnificent publication. Read on, live well, and prosper!

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10% Discount for DVPC Members with this Ad!

IncrediMail – A FREE Email Program...

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cards, animation and sounds that can be added (all free of charge) without having to make your own... if you're not talented enough like me... by going to IncrediMail's multimedia web gallery, or to one of the many IM websites where you can find a variety of all of these plus help with problems you may encounter. These sites also list other sites where you can learn how to make your own backgrounds using either Letter Creator or using a different program such as Paint Shop Pro.

One of the IM letter sites I went to (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/A_S-A-F-E_Place/) offers a link to tutorial classes at <http://enchanted1designs.com/abcs/about.html> that have at least 2 tutorial links every week for the following subjects: psp (paint shop pro), eye candy (plug-in for psp), blade pro (plug-in for psp), SIG tags, making letters for LC/IncrediMail & 20/20. Classes last for 8 weeks & have a top limit of 30 "students" per class. The owners of this tutorial site, Becky & Candy, said, "We have had great success with the classes so far & have high hopes of it's continuous success!" Hey... if I'm in the class, they can't be bad... right??? So check it out!!

Ok, some people don't like me to use this program because it takes a little longer to download than a standard e-mail, but at least I don't use sound which **DOES** take a long time to due to the midi or wav file attachment. All you have to remember is that the more you add to an e-mail, the longer it will take to download. If someone does not like receiving these "stationary" e-mails, ask them to let you know and you can then select a "no background" and they will receive a standard e-mail with a white background. Most people do not mind that it takes a little longer since there are so many neat backgrounds or sidebars (including your own pictures) that can be seen and that they can "snag" or add to their own collection just by viewing yours. One thing about e-mail programs, you **do** have a few choices... you do not have to stay with the default selection that is given you. Use your imagination... use it in color... use it with pictures... it's all up to you!! The IncrediMail home gallery offers a wide variety as well as animations, sounds and e-cards. All these can also be found on many sites all over the Internet.

Going to www.yahoo.com and typing "incrediemail stationary" in the search window and will result in multiple listings that [\(Continued on page 8\)](#)

Email Meeting Notification Available

We're providing an Email Notification service for the DVPC monthly meeting, and for SIGs as well, for all current, paid-up members. If you're interested in receiving an email message announcing each monthly meeting, and for the SIGs you attend, fill out this form and mail to the address on page 16 of this copy of *Diablo Blue*. Note that there's no separate notification for the New Users SIG since it's held on the same night as the monthly meeting.

Send me Email notification of each monthly DVPC meeting and these SIGs:

Name _____

Email Address: _____

Advanced Users SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	.NET SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced Developers SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	New Users SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education and Entertainment SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	PC 101 SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Genealogy eSIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	Windows SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

IncrediMail – A FREE Email Program...

(Continued from page 7)

feature downloadable stationary. A popular site listing that you will see is Bomis, where you find many popular stationary sites with a short description of each. On most you simply have to click on a download button or the stationary itself and it will automatically add itself to your style box. On others it's a little more involved but instructions are usually available under help. Also listed there are some IncrediMail groups. A extensive list of 161 IncrediMail groups with description can be found at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/search?query=incredimail>.

To participate in most of the groups you would have to join... its FREE... and be a part of that group. Some groups require that you be on "individual mail" to be a member and some do not. By being on individual mail, you will receive and be able to "snag" all the stationary that goes thru the group. Some of these groups, in order to cut down on unnecessary mail traffic have replies going directly back to the sender instead of passing back thru the group for all to see, this helps eliminate a lot of unwanted mail for those on dialup.

To help me manage my group mail (I'm currently in 7 groups) I establish a second identity in IncrediMail. Basically what you [\(Continued on page 9\)](#)

Switch to the Diablo Blue Web Edition

"I am a real computer person and as such recognize the ultimate reality of the 'Paperless Society'. In keeping with this spirit and in an effort to help DVPC reduce overhead costs, I say "Nay" to a written newsletter. Give it to me electronically, I want to get my copy of DVPC's Diablo Blue off the Web. (I can always print it out on blue paper and don't even have to admit that I did!)" Turn in this form at the monthly meeting or email to: nopaper@dvpc.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email address for meeting notification: _____

Also notify me about these SIGs:

Bring a Friend to a DVPC Meeting
Help Them Grow their PC Knowledge
Help Grow DVPC Membership

Incredimail – A FREE Email Program...

(Continued from page 8)

have then are 2 separate accounts in the same e-mail program. My group mail is then kept separate and does not get mixed up with my regular mail. Another thing that I did was to have each groups mail go into its own subfolder by using the message rules found under Tools. A subfolder needs to be added prior to using the Rules, and usually given a group name.

This second account can be set up thru your ISP as a second address or you can get another e-mail address from the many free or pay hosts that are available. Each server/host usually has instructions on how to setup your new e-mail address to enable you to download your mail via your POP account. You should find a host who will give you as much storage as possible. If you do not have enough storage then your group mail will be bounced back to the sender and Yahoo may think you are on vacation and suspend your account until you reactivate it. Be aware some hosts do not allow you to do this since it is in violation of their terms... services such as Juno and I believe AOL do not, while Yahoo and Hotmail do. I will list some free e-mail sites with their storage amounts at the end of this article.

Why join these groups? Oh... to "snag" the stationary and "beg" for "tags" of course!! Each message will have a different stationary, or "stat" as they are called, but some will be personalized with the senders name and they usually include a "tag" which is what is known as a digital signature and consists of a smaller image of the stationary graphic with the senders name embedded... although it does not have to be the same image as that of the stationary itself.

Snagging — When you see a stat that you like, simply click on the yellow star in the upper right hand corner of the e-mail message. It will then automatically add itself to your style box, where all your stationary is stored. Each will usually add itself to its own category and you will then have to organize it at a later date or you will have hundreds of categories. Your style box is accessed whenever you write an email by clicking on the red tab on the left side of your stationary. As you click on each category you will see a list of stat names, select each one to view the stationary. To organize stats, simply select the one you wish to move, drag and drop it into the category into which you want it to belong.

Begging for Tags — Tags are used in the same manner as a written signature. To receive a personalized tag, we "beg" for it. It is named begging in fun, not fact. All you do is request it from the person who wrote the letter and if that person made it they will usually make you one. If not, they will generally tell you who did and direct you to them...if they can remember. Tags are sent to you as attachments with an e-mail, simply click on the paper clip, and save into a folder that you have established for it.

IncrediMail Signatures — are separate from and can be used in place of or in conjunction with a tag. There you can "write" your own name in the graph and it will transfer it to the signature box. Tags may also be added to the signature box. I use a time\weather bar below my written signature. The time\weather bar can be found at www.wunderground.com, type your town and state into the fast search window. When your forecast arrives, scroll down until you see "add this sticker..." in the left column and click on it. There you have a choice of several formats, select the one you like, highlight the bar and copy. Open a new message, go to Tools, Edit Signature and click in the box below the graph, paste in the bar by doing a "CTRL V". If you would like this with every message that you send, you would check the box "insert to outgoing messages" and "insert to reply/forward" under Tools\Options\Compose. This has to be done for each identity or it will only work for one. Ok, I think I have covered getting yourself some tags and stats and what to do with them once you've found them.

As promised, here are some of the free e-mail sites. These sites were compiled by Charles Misner of Catskill Herbs 'n Spice <http://www.csng.net/>, an IM group owner/moderator, with storage limitations where known.

50 mgs	http://www.totalise.net	Good one	20 mgs	http://www.graffiti.net
50 mgs	http://www.smartvia.de	in German	10 mgs	http://www.ailandnews.com
20 mgs	http://www.macnews.de	in German	no limit (?)	http://www.onemarg.com
10 mgs	http://www.telebot.com		10 mgs	http://www.subdimension.com
15 mgs	http://www.visto.com		20 mgs	http://www.mail.uk2.net
50 mgs	http://www.Xlarge.de	in German	100 mgs	http://www.freesserve.com
no limit	http://www.madasafish.com		40 mgs	http://www.eudoramail.com
10 mgs	http://www.qmx.com		no limit	http://www.freeuk.com
Unknown	http://www.atozasia.com			

My Newest Toy...

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Toshiba also recently released the E-740. This PDA works on the same platform but includes both SD and Compact Flash memory slots. It also has built in Wi-Fi and the new 400 MHz (that is not a mistake!) scaled processor and an advanced graphics processor. Admittedly there is not a lot of software out now to take advantage of these improvements, but just wait. (The new iPAQ has the same processor). The Toshiba E-740 has a MSRP of \$599.00, which is about \$150.00 less than the iPAQ. (I bought mine for close to \$500.00). A Wi-Fi add on compact flash or SD card runs about \$150.00. The unit is also much smaller than the iPAQ which makes it fit in a shirt pocket easily.

I love having Word and Excel right on my PDA. Using the infrared port I just hold my E-740 next to my IRDA printer and printing out a document is a snap. ActiveSync seems to work well. I have my E-740 set up to sync on 2 machines. With Wi-Fi built in, it allows me to roam the house and get networking and Internet connectivity. My Linksys wireless router had no problem connecting with it. Very cool. Battery life seems pretty good. Maybe not as good as the Prism, but unlike the Prism the Li-Ion batteries are USER replaceable! A soon to be released \$99 add-on module will let me connect a USB keyboard and provides a VGA port. The software included is not as rich as some other offerings, but all the basic PocketPC stuff is there including software to do PowerPoint, etc. I love the jog wheel for fast scrolling. The hand writing recognition is very good. No special characters to learn, and I find with practice that I need less editing. Check out their website for all the specs: www.toshiba.com.

So what's not to like: the speaker sounds a bit tinny, but plug in earphones and the sound is terrific. I keep hitting the side mounted record button. (Practice needed in taking it out of its carry case.) Lastly, I liked the way my Prism displayed two weeks of my calendar side by side. (For those of you with the Palm operating system, this is a feature of the Handspring called Calendar Plus is not available on the Palm — as far as I know.)

All in all, I am very pleased with my new toy. Like my old Handspring, it manages my calendar and contacts (running Outlook 2002 no less). It has all the expansion I want/need. And it plays SimCity 2000. What more would any fool want?

Tired of Your Keyboard?

by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

Look down. That's it, right above your knees. It's your keyboard and chances are good you're not getting everything you should from it.

Some of you old-timers are grinning, as you clickity-clack away on your ancient keyboards, because you've been there, done that.

But whether you're staring at a C: prompt or you're new to computing (and to my rants), I think you'll get a kick out of what I have say about keyboards.

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Special Raffle Promotion

Bring a guest to a *DVPC* meeting, you get 10 Raffle tickets!
If your guest joins at the meeting, you get 10 Raffle tickets –
and your new member guest *also* gets 10 Raffle tickets!!

Tired of Your Keyboard?...

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First, the Rant

Most of the new keyboards I've tried are mushy to the touch. It feels yucky, like typing on an overripe peach (something my editor says often reminds him of my columns). I wonder if manufacturers spend more than 75 cents on each keyboard, a peripheral that can bump up your productivity tenfold. Okay, so I'm exaggerating a little. But geez, would it kill keyboard designers to make the Backspace, Enter, and Backslash keys just a little bigger?

Enjoy rants? Here's another: Steve Manes, PCWorld.com's resident curmudgeon, goes into a tirade about keyboards in "How to Fix Keyboards: Don't Touch 'Em!" Keystroke your way to it here: <http://www.pcworld.com/features/article/0,aid,86932,tk,sbx,00.asp>

Dig this: If you're as dyslexic as I am, you won't have any problem with this version of Google: <http://www.alltooflat.com/geeky/elgoog/>

Dig this, too: So you didn't dig the Google thing, eh? Okay, how about an animation that shows Uncle Bill switching to the Mac? <http://www.macboy.com/switch>

A Few Cool Keyboards

If you have a minute, start by reading my Home Office column, "Treat Your Fingers to a New Keyboard." In it, I tell you about two keyboards --the Avant Stellar and Microsoft's Office Keyboard--and why I like them. Use your mouse and click here: <http://www.pcworld.com/features/article/0,aid,97425,tk,sbx,00.asp>

I got dozens of e-mails from readers about that column. I've culled through them and have a few surprise recommendations. Joe L. tells me "a smile came over my face as I read your recent article... about the Northgate OmniKey Ultra keyboard." Joe's Northgate is about 14 years old--even older than mine -- and he said that "one thing Northgate did right was to make a keyboard that outlasts a lot of computers." I've seen used Northgate OmniKeys on EBay in the \$30-to-\$40 dollar range. Search on either "northgate" or "omnikey" at: <http://www.ebay.com>

"You have overlooked the greatest keyboard on the market," says David S. from Torrance, California. David's talking about the SmartBoard from DataDesk Technologies that has a "QWERTY layout that puts all other attempts at a 'natural' layout to shame." What's unique is that the compact board's keys vary slightly in size. For instance, the keys typists have to reach for ("P," "Q," "O," and "!", for example) are larger than the easy-to-punch central keys. Read more about it here: <http://www.datadesktech.com>

Steven G. from New York extols the pleasures of using the Versakey Keyboard. It's got 60 extra function keys across the top in addition to the usual 12 (which are on the left side), and all 60 keys are programmable via the keyboard, so no software's necessary. Check it out at: <http://www.versakey.com>

"I'd rather go without pizza for a whole year than live without my MCK-142Pro," says Norman S. The Adesso MCK-142Pro has 24 programmable keys and a clickity-clack feel. You can get details here: http://www.adessoinc.com/product_detail.cfm?productid=47

More than a dozen people wrote to say they're using old Gateway AnyKey 124-key programmable keyboards. These were copies of the MaxiPro-II, a programmable keyboard manufactured by MaxiPro with function keys on top and the side. I use one on a test PC and think it's terrific, with a comfortable feel. The downside, though, is that the Back-

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Get a Friend to Join DVPC!

Tired of Your Keyboard?...

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space key is way too small. I found about a dozen of these gems for sale on EBay; most sell for roughly \$12.

Of course, if you try some of these older keyboards on a new PC, there may be complications. My old Northgate keyboard works fine with a fast 1.2-GHz PC, but to make it work I needed a \$12 AT-to-PS/2 adapter. It's available at Belkin; look for the Pro Series Keyboard Converter Cable, AT to PS/2-6 inches (part number: F2N017-06INCH): <http://makeashorterlink.com/?G1521169>

Dig this: I've heard that cats enjoy the tactile feeling of walking across a keyboard. That's not a problem unless your system's up and running, in which case those bawdy images may end up e-mailed to your boss. Try PawSense, a \$20 utility (yeah, I agree, that's high) that is supposed to detect when a cat is walking across your keyboard. And no, I didn't test it — I don't have a cat. <http://www.bitboost.com/pawsense/index.html>

Stay tuned for keyboard remappers, macro programs, and other keyboard odds and ends in a future column.

Use Your Keyboard

That's right. I want you to use your keyboard to forward this newsletter article to a couple mouse fanatics you know. It's easy; click on the link below to subscribe, then when you receive your first issue forward it including a personal note such as "This is a great newsletter, filled with useful information and funny links." Subscribe to it here: http://www.pcworld.com/resource/newsletters/index.asp?sub_source=NL_XB

There, now wasn't that fun?

AOL Scam Alert by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

My mother recently received a beautifully done AOL scam. It's the kind of thing you read about but rarely get to see firsthand. The message she received is from the AOL Billing Services Team. She forwarded it to her accounting department — moi — because I pay for her account. (She has me to blame for using AOL, I know). It took less than a minute to figure out something wasn't right.

Telltale Clues

For one thing, the e-mail header showed that the AOL Billing Services Team was blind copying her using version AOL 5.0. You'd think they could use a more current version, right? There's more: The return address was Remindinyou@aol.com and the subject line had a misspelling. I followed the Billing link in the message. At first glance I saw an AOL Welcome box. Take a careful look and you'll know why something's not quite right. Yep, lots of misspellings: <http://www.pibmug.com/files/aolwelcomescreen.jpg>. I went along with the game plan and clicked OK. Now I was staring into what looked like a remarkably authentic credit card payment form: <http://www.pibmug.com/files/aolcreditcard.jpg>

Is It Really You?

To make sure it's really you, they also want your Social Security Number, date of birth, driver's license number, and mother's maiden name. With that, the scammers can get to "identity theft" heaven before you shut down your PC for the night. But they're not finished. How about throwing in your AOL screen name and password, something even novices know AOL wouldn't do. To add a level of legitimacy, they warn you that, "For your safety, Please do not

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Give a *DVPC* Membership Gift Certificate!

AOL Scam Alert...

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download any files from strangers. AOL will never ask you to download anything."

Who Is?

I went to <http://www.samspade.org>, my favorite Web examination site, and traced the Billing link. It's an obfuscated URL: <http://www.aol.com-billing:july-2002@072002.hypermart.net> that leads to <http://072002.hypermart.net>. (That's because any characters before the @ sign are ignored.) And all it took was a quick web search with Google to find locations loaded with other AOL scamming files. I found one at the top of Google's search: <http://kenel.hypermart.net/aol-scam/>

What I did

I contacted Rich D'Amato, one of AOL's security people. I met Rich years ago because of a story I did on AOL. It's been four days and I haven't heard back from him. I also sent a message to abuse@hypermart.net. Nope, I didn't hear from them either. And the site's still up and running.

What you should do

The best AOL protection strategy is to be alert to constant scams. You know, if it looks like a duck, smells like one, and occasionally quacks, there's a good chance it is one. If you're unsure about a billing question, it's best to call AOL's billing services directly at 800/827-6364, or their Screen Name/Password line at 888/265-8004.

Here's the message, complete with headers:

Return-path: <Remindingyou@aol.com>

From: Remindingyou@aol.com

Date: Fri, 5 Jul 2002 04:26:47 EDT

Subject: Possible Service Interruption

X-Mailer: AOL 5.0 for Windows sub 138

Dear Member:

Thank you for choosing America Online. Unfortunately there has been a problem processing your billing information for the month of July, 2002. Please review our billing requirements at *KW: Billing*. You will be able to update your billing information quickly and easily using our secure server webform. Please understand that without promptly updating your billing information, your America Online Internet service may be discontinued. To update your billing at this time, please visit our secure server webform by clicking the hyperlink below.

America Online Billing Services. {hyperlink deleted for this article!}

We appreciate your business and hope to keep you as a customer for life. America Online is so easy, no wonder it's number 1 !

Sincerely,

The AOL Billing Services Team

Moving? Changing Your E-mail Address?

Tell us so you will continue receiving *Diablo Blue*!

E-mail your name and new information to changes@dvpc.org

Diablo Blue Article and Ad Information

Diablo Blue needs articles from the members of DVPC. See your name in print! Achieve fame and fortune! (Well, maybe just some limited fame in Contra Costa County...) We are particularly interested in product and book reviews and articles about your PC experiences.

Commercial advertising is available in Diablo Blue. Prices are \$75 for a full page, \$40 for a half page, and \$25 for a quarter page for one insertion — or get three consecutive insertions for the price of two. For more information, call editor Ronald Ogg, at 415-281-0431 (days). Members of DVPC can submit personal classified ads that will be printed in Diablo Blue for three insertions at no charge. The rules are simple: up to 9 lines (as we typeset it), material must be suitable for publication (the editor is the sole judge of suitability), the member must be in good standing (current dues paid), and ad space is available on a first-come first-served space available basis only. If you want fewer than three insertions note that on your ad copy. If members want their business card reproduced, the rate is \$10 for one insertion, or \$25 for three insertions. The card must be horizontal and must be scannable.

Send your articles or member ad copy as email attachments to the [Newsletter Editor](#). See the deadline information in the Calendar on page 16 of each issue of Diablo Blue.

DVPC on the Internet

DVPC has a web site on the Internet — thanks to our Web Team: Ron Ogg and Stan Umlauft. You can surf your way to our own domain and home page by starting your favorite Web browser and typing the following URL; be sure to save it in your browser's hotlist so you don't have to type it each time: www.dvpc.org.

DVPC Officers and Directors

Alan Mildwurm, President/Programs 510-770-5770 (work)

Nicholas Chase, SIG Coordinator 680-4211 (home)

Will Crites, Publicity 938-1291 (home)

Charlie Crothers, At Large 829-2237 (home)

Dick Curry, At Large 376-5541 (home)

Peggy Johnson, Membership Secretary 676-7522 (home)

Tom Krauss, Secretary 689-9960 (home)

Jessica Mildwurm, Treasurer 829-5858 (home)

Ron Ogg, Newsletter Editor 415-281-0431 (work)

Craig Peterson, Librarian 671-7025 (home)

Stan Umlauft, Web Site 458-5560 (home)

The Board of Directors usually meets the week following the general meeting. Check the DVPC Calendar on page 16 of each issue of Diablo Blue, or the DVPC home page on the Internet (www.dvpc.org) for the meeting date, time, and location. You can reach any of the officers and directors by talking to them at the DVPC monthly meeting, by email to bod@value.net, or leaving a message on the DVPC voicemail System.

DVPC Voice Mail System

DVPC has a computer -based voice mail system. The phone number for the DVPC VMS is 925-556-1449. Hear up-to-date information about monthly and SIG meetings, information about DVPC for potential new members, and a message center for Board of Directors members and SIG Leaders.

Diablo Blue is the monthly newsletter of the Diablo Valley PC Users' Group.
Editor: Ronald Ogg, Mailing: Peggy Johnson

Support DVPC — Get a friend to join!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Enclose a check for \$30.00 for one year's dues with printed edition of *Diablo Blue*, or \$25.00 for one year's dues with access to the Internet edition of *Diablo Blue* (\$20.00 for students who must enclose a copy of current Student ID), made payable to **DVPC** and mail to: DVPC User's Group, PO Box 3244, San Ramon, CA 94583

Renewal _____ New Member _____ Referred by current member? Name _____

Name: _____

Company/School: _____ Email address: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

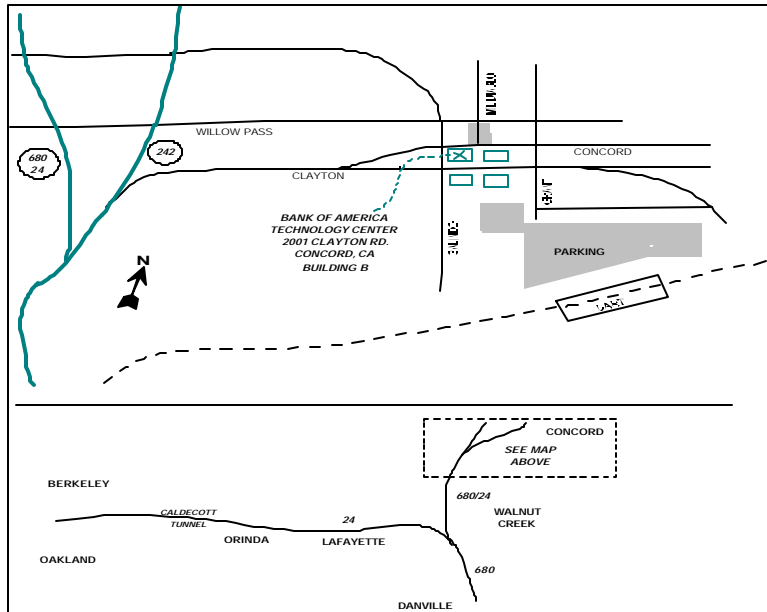
On occasion DVPC publishes a list of members for distribution to DVPC members only. Please check how you would like to be listed: **No listing** _____ **List Name and Home** _____ Work _____ phone number(s) _____

I'm also interested in these SIGs: _____

Directions to Bank of America Building B in Concord

Take the Clayton Road exit off of the 242 Freeway, and go east on Clayton Road. After about 1½ miles you'll come to Galindo, and you'll see the Bank of America complex of four high-rise buildings. Enter the door on the east side near the southeast corner of the building. Building B is the first building on your left, at the northeast corner of Clayton and Galindo. Parking: Turn right on Grant Street (the first block past Galindo), then right into the BART parking lot at the back of the BofA complex. Or turn left on Galindo then right onto Concord Avenue to find street parking.

Be sure to observe parking regulations! Concord parking officers are very efficient!



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DVPC August 2002 Calendar

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
See SIG News starting on page 4 for more information about SIG meeting dates, times, topics, and locations			DVPC Monthly Meeting 7:00 p.m. New User's SIG 6:30 p.m.	1 2	3 PC 101 SIG On Summer Vacation
5 Windows SIG 7:30 p.m.	6	7 DVPC Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. Alan Mildwurm's house	8	9	10
12	13	14	15 Advanced Users SIG 7:30 p.m. Advanced Developers SIG 7:00 p.m. NETSIG 7:30 p.m.	16	17
19 Genealogy eSIG See SIG News on page 4	20	21 Internet SIG 7:00 p.m.	22	23	24 Diablo Blue deadline: Email articles and ads to the Editor: rogg@value.net
26	27	28 Education & Entertainment SIG 7:30 p.m.	29	30	31

TO:

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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