



September 4, 2003 Meeting Announcement

Ken Mintz, SBC Communications: DSL and WiFi HotSpots

The September 4th DVPC meeting will feature Ken Mintz of SBC Communications (www.sbc.com) who will tell us everything that's new about two of today's hottest broadband communications topics, DSL and WiFi HotSpots.

DSL, which is the acronym for *Digital Subscriber Line*, is one of the two major broadband connectivity methods (the other is cable). DSL connects to your home over your existing 2-wire copper telephone lines. DSL signals are digital, and your telephone signals are analog, so the two can exist on the same line. DSL is an "always on" service, which means that you don't have to establish a connection each time you want to go onto the Internet. DSL offers a choice of speeds, ranging from 144 Kbps to 1.5 Mbps; even faster speeds are available for businesses, up to 52.8 Mbps. There are also many type of DSL connections. The typical home services are ADSL and SDSL. ADSL, Asynchronous DSL, is the most common. The "Asynchronous" means that the download and upload speeds are different. The most common data rate for ADSL is 384 Kb when downloading, and 128 Kb when uploading. This download rate is more than 7 times faster than a 56 Kb modem, and the upload rate is more than 2½ times faster. Your DSL line can be installed by a phone company technician, or you can do it yourself using a self-install kit.

WiFi is becoming very common these days. WiFi lets you connect a PC to a network or the Internet via RF. These days, most laptop computers and many PDAs are being shipped with built-in WiFi adapters. So, retailers like McDonalds and Starbucks are starting to provide "HotSpots", either fee-based or free WiFi connectivity.

This will be a very informative and interesting meeting. Ken Mintz will tell us about these technologies, and what DSL and WiFi HotSpot offerings we can expect to see from SBC Communications in the near future.

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 on page 4). Please use the entrance that's on the south side 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. 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.

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 Message

by Alan Mildwurm, DVPC

Hope you had a great summer. I really enjoyed my first cruise. As you can see from my FlashTrax review (see page 10), even on vacation I was testing stuff for Diablo Blue – hmmm, since I was doing work for *Diablo Blue* during the cruise, does this mean that DVPC will pick up my cruise costs? No? I guess I didn't think that would really happen! Back to reality...

I am pleased to announce that Ken Mintz from SBC (formerly Southwestern Bell, now SBC Communications, our local telephone company) will discuss what's new in the world of DSL and some interesting developments in public Wi-Fi. Hotspots abound! (In fact even our cruise ship had Wi-Fi Internet connections!)

In October you gadget jockeys will love some of the new toys from Zip-Linq (www.ziplinq.com). I'm working on a really interesting speaker for November, check back for more information. In December Dave Whittle will show us some interesting video products. My annual Comdex report will be in January.

As always, we are anxious to increase our membership and attendance. I have some very interesting and exciting speakers lined up, but I need a "fuller house" BEFORE I will schedule them – so bring a friend. Check out the related articles in this month's issue.

See you all on the fourth of September!

DVPC September 2003 Calendar

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Windows SIG 7:30 p.m. <i>No meeting this month – Labor Day Holiday</i>	2	3	4 DVPC Monthly Meeting 7:00 p.m. New User's SIG 6:30 p.m.	5	6
8 Genealogy eSIG See SIG News on page 5	9	10 DVPC Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. Alan Mildwurm's house	11	12	13
15	16	17 Internet SIG 7:00 p.m. <i>On vacation until November 19th</i>	18 Advanced Users SIG 7:30 p.m. Clarion SIG 7:00 p.m.	19 <i>Diablo Blue deadline: Email articles and ads to the Editor: rogg@value.net</i>	20 PC101/PC201 Classes <i>On vacation until November 15th</i>
22	23	24	25	26	27
29	30				<i>See SIG News starting on page 5 for more information about SIG meeting dates, times, topics, and locations</i>

Email Notification

We provide an email notification service for the current month's *Diablo Blue* password, the DVPC monthly meeting, and information about SIG meetings as well. You have to be a current, paid-up member to receive this service. To read the current month's issue of *Diablo Blue* on-line you need to receive these monthly email messages, so print this page, fill out the form, and mail it to DVPC, PO Box 3244, San Ramon, CA 94583, or bring it to the sign-in desk at the monthly meeting. Or, if you prefer, you can send an email message to nopaper@dvpc.org with your name and email address and your favorite SIGs.

Send me email notification of each monthly *Diablo Blue* password, the DVPC meeting, and the following SIGs:

Name _____

Email Address: _____

Advanced Users SIG						New Users SIG
Clarion SIG						PC 101/PC 201 Classes
Genealogy eSIG						Windows SIG
Internet SIG						

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 stories about your PC experiences. Send your articles or member ad copy as email attachments to the Newsletter Editor, rogg@value.net.

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 format 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 ad copy as email attachments to the Newsletter Editor, rogg@value.net. 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

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Craig Peterson, Librarian 671-7025 (home), compmail@pacbell.net

Stan Umlauft, Web Site 458-5560 (home), stanu@honeybee.com

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 calendar page, 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 by leaving a message on the DVPC voice mail 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 Web-based newsletter of the Diablo Valley PC Users' Group.

Editor: Ronald Ogg, Membership: Peggy Johnson

Please submit articles and columns to the Newsletter editor by email at rogg@value.net

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The Diablo Valley PC Users Group is a non-profit corporation.

DVPC is a member of APCUG, the Association of PC Users Groups, www.apcug.org

Get Involved! Learn! Join a SIG today!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Print this page, fill out this form, and enclose it with your check for \$30.00 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, 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: _____

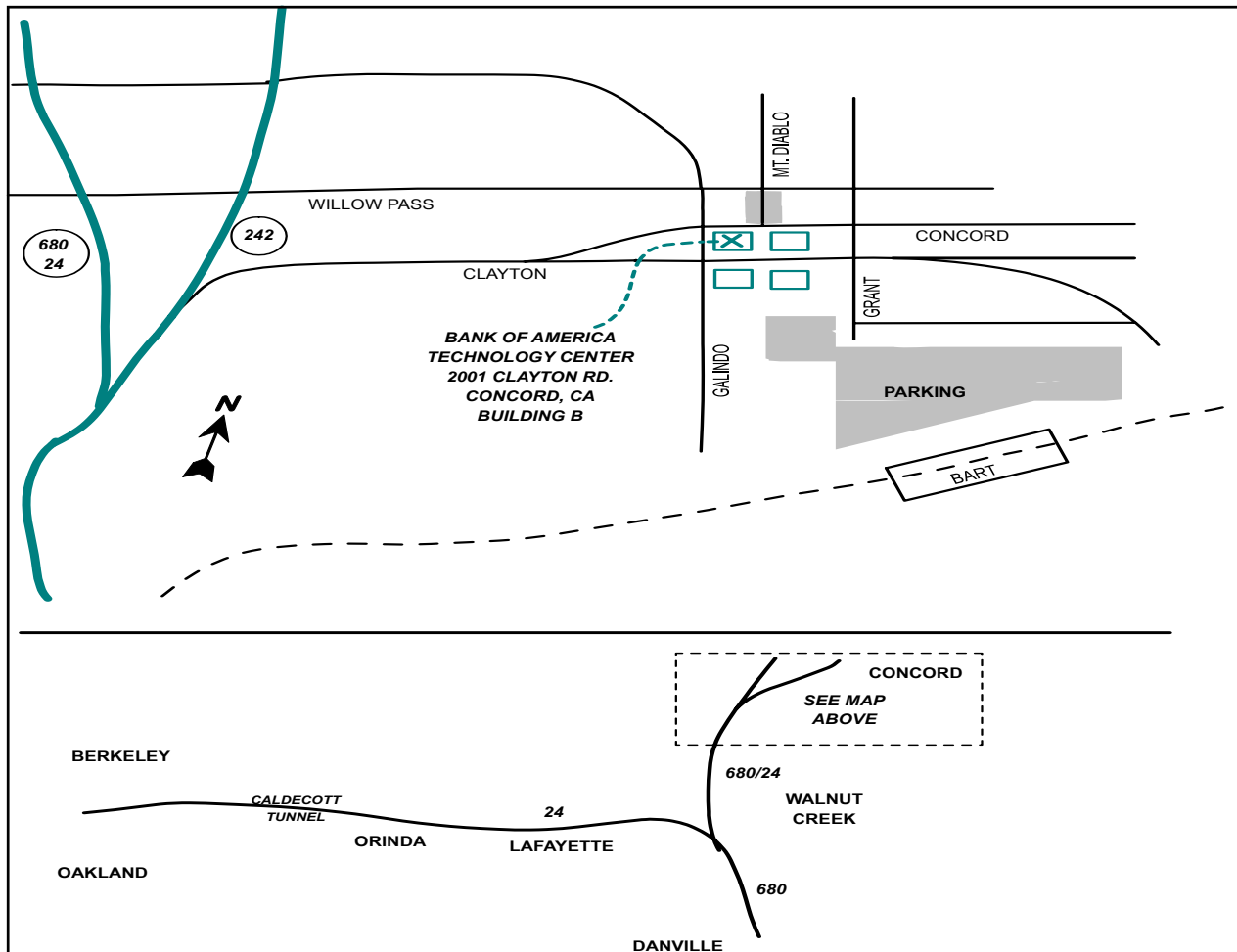
On occasion DVPC publishes a list of members for distribution to DVPC members only. Please check how you would like to be listed: No listing_____ List Name and Home_____ Work_____ phone number(s)

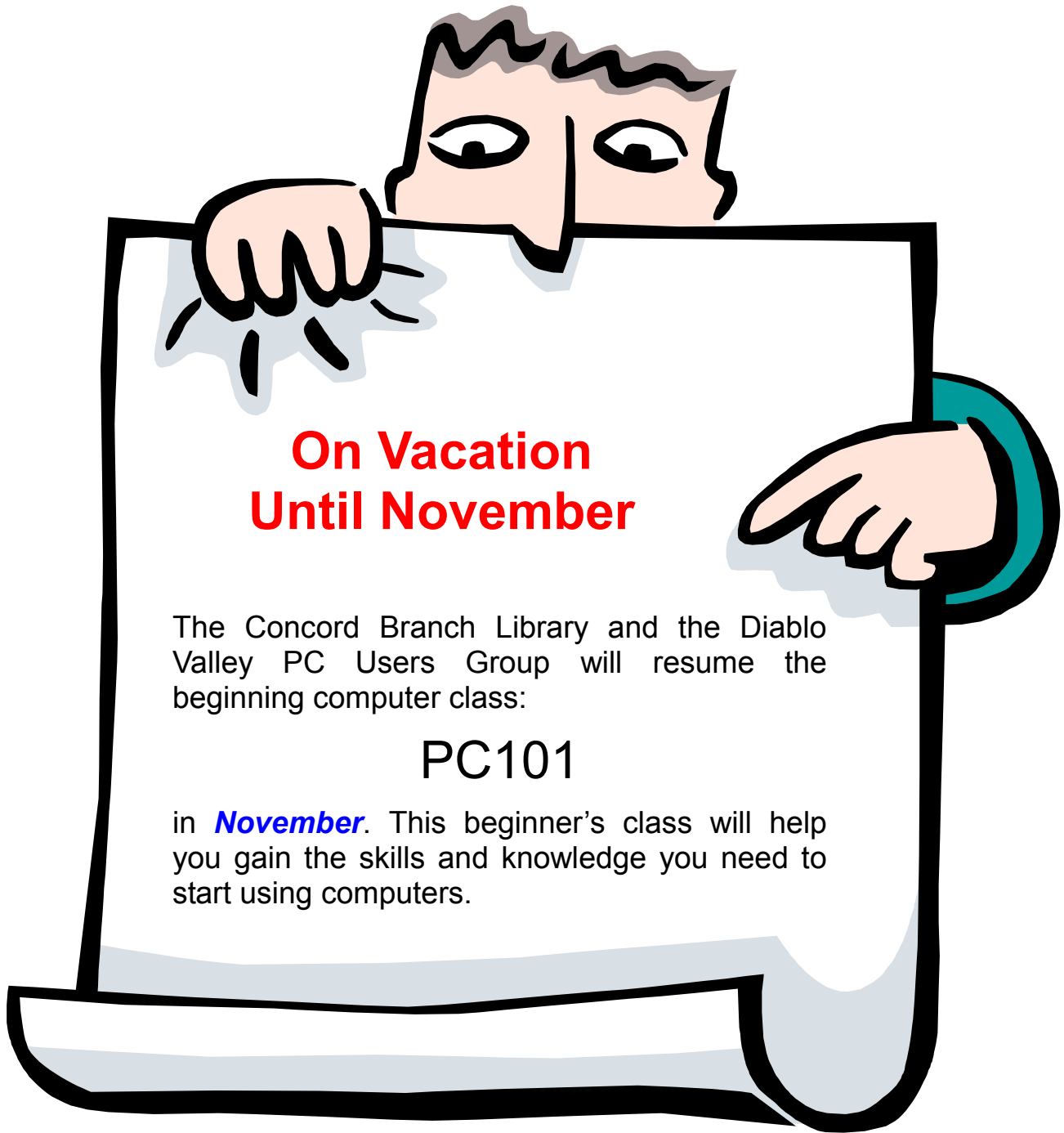
I'm also interested in these SIGs: _____

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!

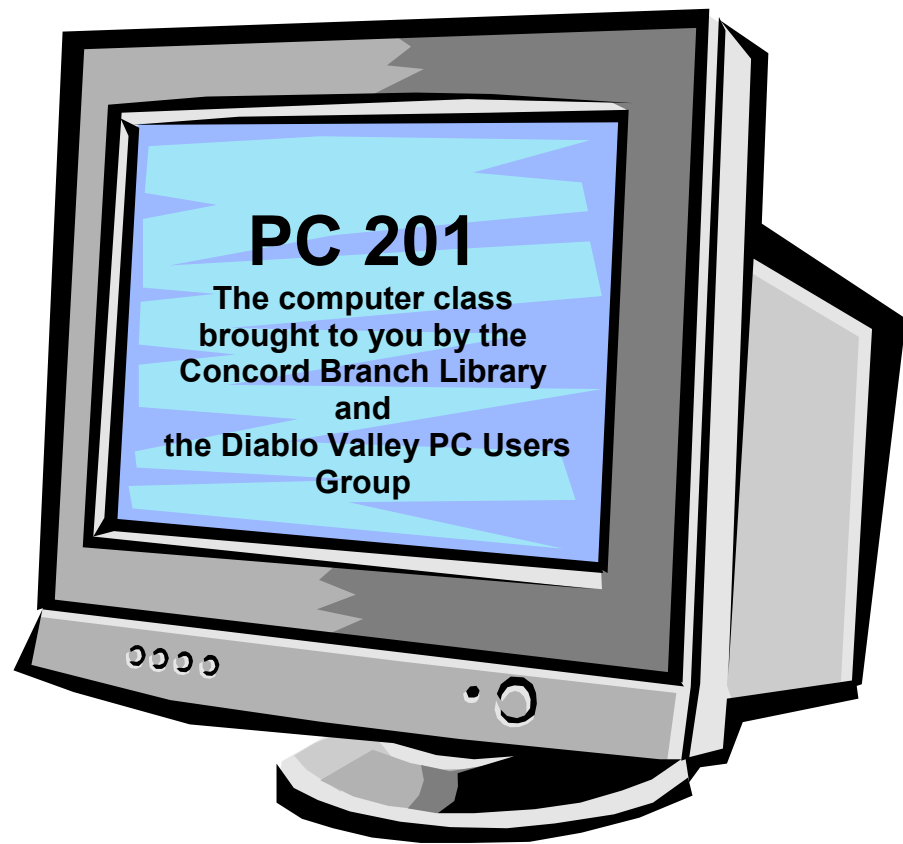




The next class will be **November 15th** from 10 am until 2 pm. In November we will cover **Unit #6 – The Future**

All classes are at the Concord Branch Library's Community room, 2900 Salvio Street, Concord, CA.

Space is limited, so sign up at the information desk at the Concord Branch Library.



On Vacation

PC 201 is on vacation during September and October. We will resume our classes in November. Watch for updates in the October issue of *Diablo Blue*.

Join us **Saturday, November 15, 2003** for an exciting program. As usual, your questions will be answered by our speaker.

The class will be held from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. in the Concord Branch Library's Community room, 2900 Salvio Street, Concord, CA.

This free class is brought to you by the Concord Branch Library and the Diablo Valley PC Users Group.

SIG News *Compiled by Nick Chase, SIG Coordinator, DVPC, 680-4211*

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. The Advanced Users SIG is for anyone interested in discussing advanced topics such as hardware and software issues, cutting-edge technologies, networking, servers, troubleshooting, etc. Please join us to participate in this very informative and educational forum. We hope to see you at the meeting!

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.

Clarion SIG *SIG Leader Bill Morris (bill@soft-trak.com)*

See the Clarion SIG page on the web at http://www.desine.com/svcug/sv_meet.htm for meeting location, dates, and time, or send an email to Bill Morris (bill@soft-trak.com) asking to be put on his email announcement list for the Clarion SIG.

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 the Genealogy eSIG, please email Peggy Johnson, pegszone@aol.com.

Internet SIG *Craig Peterson, SIG Leader – 671-7025*

The Internet SIG will be on vacation during September and October. Have a great summer. See you on November 19th!

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.

New Users SIG *Craig Peterson, SIG Leader – 671-7025*

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.

PC101 and PC201 Classes *Craig Peterson, SIG Leader – 671-7025*

PC101 and PC201 will be on vacation during September and October. Have a great summer. See you on November 15th!

PC101 takes place on from 10 am to 2 pm and PC201 takes place from noon to 2 pm at the Concord Library, 2900 Salvio Street, on the third Saturday of each month. Look information on future classes on the DVPC web site and each month's issue of *Diablo Blue*.

PC101 is a beginning class on computers. Offered in conjunction with the Concord Branch Library, it helps introduce computers to and empower the person not comfortable with the technology. This month we will be looking at communication using computers in a class titled “Linking your computer to the world.” Class space is limited, so sign up at the information desk at the Concord Library, 2900 Salvio Street, CA 94519-2597. The class will meet August 16th from 10 am to 2 pm in the community room of the Concord Branch library. For more details, see page 5.

PC201 is a series of lectures that will be given by experts in different areas of computers and technology. This month we will have Board Member Tom Krauss show us how to better use some of Microsoft's programs. In a class titled “Microsoft Word and other work related programs.” Join us as we look at and get a better understanding of the software that is on 90% of the computers we use. The class will take place on August 16th. For more details, see page 6.

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

The Windows SIG is going to be on holiday during September because of Labor Day. Have a great summer, and we'll see you on October 6th!

The Windows SIG usually 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 680 Freeway take Monument Blvd. east and continue to where it changes to Galindo; the Police Department building will be on your right a short distance past the signal at Cowell Road.

Palm Acquires Handspring, Splits into Two Companies by Ron Ogg, DVPC

Do you own a Palm PDA? If so, you own one of the largest selling line of PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants), a line that runs on the Palm OS – the most widely used PDA operating system. Do you own a Handspring PDA? If so, you own one of the second largest selling line of Palm-compatible PDAs, those that use the Palm OS. Well, folks, get ready for some changes!

First, Palm Inc. has acquired Handspring, their #1 competitor. According to the Palm press release:

The merger is designed to create a stronger competitor in handheld computing and communication solutions. Palm Solutions will become better able to realize its stated objectives of growing the market, maintaining industry leadership, and achieving consistent profitability. The strategic and operational benefits to the merged company include:

- *Maximizing Palm and Handspring's combined scale and operational excellence to take full advantage of future growth opportunities;*
- *Delivering an unmatched portfolio of innovative mobile products from traditional and multimedia handhelds to wireless handhelds and smartphones;*
- *Adding Palm's strong brand and distribution channels to Handspring's highly regarded Treo product line and carrier relationships; and*
- *Enhancing the Palm management team, including hardware and software design, engineering, and marketing, to help drive handheld computing into deeper and broader solutions.*

The merged companies expect greater revenue opportunities. They also expect to obtain improved operating efficiencies of approximately \$25 million in cost savings annually. The cost savings assume combined employee reductions of approximately 125 people, elimination of overlapping programs and unnecessary real estate, and the advantages of increased volume in manufacturing and distribution. Handspring employees are expected to move to Palm Solutions headquarters in Milpitas, CA.

"This is a merger of leaders -- the world's leading maker of handheld computers and a global leader of Palm OS based smartphones," said Todd Bradley, Palm Solutions Group president and chief executive officer. "Having the best and broadest portfolio of innovative products that deliver what matters most to customers, sold by a robust channel and built from a foundation of operational excellence, is the best formula to expand our young, promising markets."

"Palm and Handspring share a vision that handheld computers and smartphones have the potential to redefine the landscape of personal computing," said Donna Dubinsky, chief executive officer of Handspring. "This merger brings together the best teams in the industry, and strengthens us to realize this vision."

The merged company will be led by Bradley, who will continue as president and chief executive officer, and will be structured around two business units: handheld computing solutions, led by Ken Wirt, currently senior vice president, sales and marketing, for Palm Solutions; and smartphone solutions, to be led by Ed Colligan, current president and chief operating officer for Handspring. Jeff Hawkins, Handspring chairman and chief product officer, will become chief technology officer for the merged company.

"The vision and leadership that Jeff and Ed have brought to the industry will be tremendous assets to the Palm Solutions management team. Together, we'll advance the industry in ways never before possible," Bradley said.

But the Handspring acquisition is only half of the Palm plan. Following, and integrated with the Handspring acquisition, Palm Inc. is being split into two separate companies:

1. PalmOne, which will design, manufacture, and sell PDAs and smartphones that will use the Palm OS.
2. PalmSource, which will develop and market the Palm OS to OEMs, including PalmOne.

The Palm press release says this about the reorganization into two separate companies:

The separation of PalmSource from Palm, Inc. is based on three principles. They are that:

- *Clarity of focus and mission for both Palm businesses leads to improved execution;*
- *Creation of a level playing field among current and future licensees will lead to more licensees and developers who have deeper commitments to the Palm OS platform. This is expected to bring greater growth in the Palm Economy, especially as the market for smartphones emerges; and*
- *Shareholder value can be enhanced if investors could evaluate and choose between both businesses separately, thereby attracting new and different investors.*

"This is a great day for the Palm Economy," said David Nagel, PalmSource president and chief executive officer. "The establishment of PalmSource as an independent company and the strengthening of our largest licensee mark an historic day in the handheld industry. As the leading mobile platform provider, we look forward to the opportunity to attract new customers and to grow the market for mobile computing and communication products."

If you are a Palm or Handspring PDA owner, or own a PDA or smartphone from another manufacturer like Sony or Kyocera, what does this mean for you? Palm says that development and support of their products will continue and new products will be introduced on a regular basis. The two resulting companies should be stronger, and the financial problems that Palm has experienced recently should be eliminated. This all sounds good for owners of Palms and Palm-based products. Stay tuned!

Digital Fortress by Dan Brown – A Book Review by Ron Ogg, DVPC

Dan Brown has the current (as reported in the *Book Review* section in the Sunday, August 24, 2003 *San Francisco Chronicle*) number one novel on the California and National fiction best-seller lists. That book is *The Da Vinci Code*, a mystery that is based on a conspiracy that can only be unraveled by solving ciphers left as clues for the protagonists. Dan Brown's first novel, *Digital Fortress*, is also based on a conspiracy and cryptography. It also involves the use of computers for breaking ciphers, computer viruses, hackers, and much more.

The protagonists are an engaged couple. Susan Fletcher is the head of the cryptography section of the NSA – the National Security Agency, and her fiancée David Becker is a professor and foreign language specialist who has worked on several small projects for the NSA. The NSA is described as being totally secret, so secret that it's referred to as "No Such Agency" by those who work there. It's a Saturday, and Susan and David had planned a romantic weekend trip to their favorite bed and breakfast inn in the mountains. Things start to unravel for Susan when David calls to tell her that he can't make their trip, that he has to take a sudden flight that he won't explain, and cuts off her questions by saying a car's arrived to pick him up and hangs up the phone. Then Susan's boss, Commander Trevor J. Strathmore, the head of operations for the NSA cryptography unit, calls her and tells her to come in to work, and that all he can say is that there's an emergency and he needs her immediately. When Susan arrives at NSA headquarters she learns from Strathmore that an unknown algorithm had been used to encrypt a message that was sent to him, and that it had been sent by a former employee of the NSA cryptography section. NSA has a secret super computer, TRANSLTR, that can decrypt – break the code of – any encrypted message in minutes. This system lets NSA spy on the communications of terrorists and governments unfriendly to the United States. However, TRANSLTR has not been able to decrypt this message; the algorithm appears to be unbreakable. Strathmore is in panic mode, because if the algorithm gets into the wrong hands enemies of the United States will be able to communicate without any fear that the NSA will be able to read those communications.

While some of the technical aspects either aren't up to date (the book was published way back in 1998, about 35 computer-years ago [bet you didn't realize that computer years are the same as dog years, did you?]), and some don't make technical sense (all of the data communications lines coming into NSA are ISDN, an old and insecure technology), this is a good read. It has all of the elements of a good mystery and a technological bent: romance, jealousy, revenge, intrigue, secrecy, murder, conspiracy, subterfuge, car chases, foreign locales... And, of course, encryption, code breaking, hackers, computers, and technology.

If you like fast-paced mysteries, pick up or borrow a copy of *Digital Fortress*, an interesting tale that will take you into the heart of the NSA.

By the way, the NSA is no longer a highly secret agency of the U.S. government – you can read all about the NSA's purpose at www.nsa.gov/about_nsa/index.html, and visit their home page at www.nsa.gov. Times, they have changed since 1998!

FlashTrax – A Hardware Review by Alan Mildwurm, DVPC

Hello, my name is Alan and I am a photoholic. I love taking pictures. Pull out your old Life magazine from July 1969 and that is me behind the 400mm telephoto lens taking a picture of Apollo 11 lifting off. I was made for digital photography. My problem was that taking lots of pictures would quickly fill up my camera's memory. Years ago I bought the lomega Clik drive which held a then whopping 40 Megs on a disk the size of a quarter. I would pull the SmartMedia or compact flash memory out of the camera, stick it in the Clik drive, push a button and transfer my photos onto the Clik disk thus freeing up the memory card for new photos. It worked great. My only problem with the Clik drive is that I now shoot with a 5 megapixel camera and a 40 Meg disk doesn't hold a lot of pictures. And I take a LOT of pictures. Today's answer to this problem is the SmartDisk FlashTrax (www.smartdisk.com).

The FlashTrax is simply a hand sized device that allows you to store, view, and play all sorts of media files. It comes with a rechargeable Lithium-Ion battery, a remote control, carrying case, AC adapter, and cables to connect to your computer (USB 2.0) and television.

Like my old Clik drive, when I fill up my camera's memory card, I pull it out, stick it in the FlashTrax and hit the copy button. My pictures then transfer onto the **30 GIG hard drive**. What makes this product revolutionary is the fact that I can view my pix on the 3.5" LCD screen to make sure they transferred before I erase my memory card! I can also use the 3.5" LCD screen to set up a slide

(Continued on page 10)

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FlashTrax – A Hardware Review...

(Continued from page 9)

show and bore people with my pix anywhere! (No computer or TV needed). What's more, the FlashTrax is also a **MP3 player** with side mounted controls (you don't need to keep it open and use battery power to run the screen). The built in speaker is a bit disappointing and even the manual suggests plugging in headphones or an external speaker.



Of course, just plugging the FlashTrax into a computer turns it into an external hard drive so you can transfer any type of file between machines. The FlashTrax supports JPEG format viewing, with hardware zoom in/out, pan/scroll, rotation support. (Some RAW format as well as GIF and BMP files can also be viewed.) It also supports simple text (.txt) files in addition to Video: Motion JPEG picture decoding, up to 320 x 240 x 30 frames/sec or 640 x 480 x 10 frames/sec. Unfortunately, it does not support my Sony camera's digital video (mpeg movie) but I hope that a firmware upgrade will remedy that.

To get my memory stick into the FlashTrax, I need to use their FlashTrax adapter, which also reads SmartMedia, Secure Digital and MultiMedia Cards.

(Continued on page 11)

Give a DVPC Membership Gift Certificate!

FlashTrax – A Hardware Review...

(Continued from page 10)

The adapter works fine and transfers the pix in about 30 seconds. I appreciate the lights on the adapter which indicate that it is connected and working.



Using the FlashTrax is fairly intuitive. Stick in the memory card, push the copy button and watch the indicator bar across the screen letting you know that the files are being copied. They are copied into a date stamped folder – e.g. 20030725a – which means created July 25, 2003. If I download another set of files to the FlashTrax on that day, it will be 20030725b and so on. Turning on the unit will take you to the main menu where you can select whether you wish to listen to MP3s (or WAV) files, or view your photos or other files. Navigating thru the menus is very easy and the onboard tutorial is helpful. There is enough functionality to rotate pictures, zoom, pan and scroll and view as thumbnails. You can also duplicate, erase, move and get file info. In MP3 mode you can repeat your music, play randomly or sequentially (alphabetical order). Outputting to a TV is as simple as plugging in the supplied video cable.

Battery life is adequate. Probably about 1½ to 2 hours viewing pictures, longer if listening to MP3s. Charging the battery does take over 3 hours, though!

I just took the FlashTrax on a cruise. I decided to travel light and not take a laptop to download my pictures. The FlashTrax performed perfectly. I could easily transfer my pictures to the FlashTrax and immediately view them to make sure the transfer occurred before erasing the memory stick. I could carry the FlashTrax in my pocket (a big leg pocket) and have my MP3's with me and show people my pictures on the spot – very cool.

There are other products available that let you download pictures to a portable hard drive, but they don't include the screen for viewing the pictures.

The FlashTrax at \$499.00 MSRP is not cheap (in fact double the cost of some drives without a screen and mp3 ability), but the fact that you can see your pictures safely stored before erasing your memory card is important to me. This product will be hard to send back!

I will bring the FlashTrax for show-and-tell at our September meeting.

Fixes for the “Right Click Hangs Windows XP” Problem by Ron Ogg, DVPC

There's an interesting problem making the rounds of some Windows XP users; interesting, that is, if you're not one of the unlucky users who have been besieged by this problem! I'd like to tell you what causes the problem, but I can do that only in generalities, not specifics.

The problem is as follows: you right-click on a desktop icon, or a directory or file name in Windows Explorer, or click-and-drag a file in Windows Explorer, and an hourglass is displayed and never goes away. Or the hourglass is displayed and after a very long time (minutes to hours) it goes away. In the first case, or in the second case if you don't have much patience, your only option is to do the three-finger salute (Ctrl-Alt-Del) and click on the *Reboot* button to restart Windows XP. You may see one or more dialog boxes that tell you about non-responsive programs; you can click the *Exit Now* button or wait until each program is closed by the shutdown process.

Right-clicking is something we all get very accustomed to doing, and when it stops working (especially when it stops working by hanging Windows) it's very irritating.

The problem appears to be caused by some program (so far no one seems to know what program or programs) adds a link to the right-click context menu (CLSID), and it damages the context menu, causing Windows to hang in a never-ending loop of some sort. Well, it happened to me, and I don't know what program that I installed caused this problem. All I knew is that I wanted to fix it, ASAP! I went to Microsoft's web site and searched for “right click hangs” and “context menu” and there was no reference to the problem. I went to Google and searched for “right click hangs windows” and Google found “about 60,000” links! By looking through several pages of the Google links, I found a solution that worked. In case you discover, some day, that you have this problem, here's the fix. The changes you will make to the registry will restore the associations that are corrupted to their default values (Any changes or additions you have made to the right-click context menus will be removed.)

NOTE: This fix involves making significant changes to the Windows XP registry. After reading these instructions, if you are not totally comfortable following them, STOP and get someone with experience editing the registry to help you!

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Support DVPC – Get a friend to join!

Fixes for the “Right Click Hangs Windows XP” Problem...

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1. Start Internet Explorer (or whatever browser you use). Go to www.dougknox.com/xp/fileassoc/xp_directory_reg.zip, select a location to save the file (like c:\temp), and click the *Save* button.
2. Go to www.dougknox.com/xp/xp_HKCR_Drive.zip, select the same location as step 1, and click the *Save* button.
3. Go to www.dougknox.com/xp/fileassoc/folder_reg.zip, select the same location as step 1, and click the *Save* button.
4. Go to www.dougknox.com/xp/fileassoc/linkfile_fix.zip, select the same location as step 1, and click the *Save* button. Close your browser.
5. Start Windows Explorer and navigate to the folder where you saved the files from steps 1 through 4. Using your unzip program (like WinZip, PKZip, Stuffit, etc.) uncompress the first file, xp_directory_reg.zip, and save the resulting .reg file to the Desktop – this is important: you must save all four of the .reg files that you will be uncompressing to the Desktop.
6. Uncompress the second file, xp_HKCR_Drive.zip, and save the resulting .reg file to the Desktop.
7. Uncompress the third file, folder_reg.zip, and save the resulting .reg file to the Desktop. Close Windows Explorer.
8. Uncompress the fourth file, linkfile_fix.zip, and save the resulting .reg file to the Desktop. Close Windows Explorer.
9. Go to Start – Help and Support and click on the *Undo changes to your computer with System Restore* choice. When the System Restore window opens, click on *Create a restore point* to select it, and click the *Next* button. Type a description of the restore point (like the date), and click the *Create* button.
10. Start the Registry Editor. Go to Start – Run and type *regedit* in the Open field and press *Enter*. When the Registry Editor opens, right-click on *My Computer* at the top of the left column, and select *Export* from the pop-up menu. Pick a folder (like c:\temp) and enter a file name (like “registry backup”), then click the *Save* button.
11. Now, if things go wrong, you have both a restore point and a backed up copy of your registry to help you recover.
12. In the Registry Editor, click on the + sign at the left of HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT in the left pane so it expands, and scroll down until you see the *Directory* subkey. Right-click on the *Directory* subkey, and select *Export* from the pop-up menu. Pick the same folder that you picked in step 10, and enter a file name (like “directory subkey backup”), then click the *Save* button.
13. Right-click on the *Directory* subkey, and select *Delete* from the pop-up menu. Click the *Yes* button to confirm that you want to delete this subkey.
14. **Immediately** minimize the Registry Editor. Find the xp_directory_reg.reg file icon on the desktop, double-click on it, and click the *Yes* button to confirm that you want to merge this registry key file.
15. Maximize the Registry Editor. Scroll down until you see the *Drive* subkey. Right-click on the *Drive* subkey, and select *Export* from the pop-up menu. Pick the same folder that you picked in step 10, and enter a file name (like “drive subkey backup”), then click the *Save* button.
16. Right-click on the *Drive* subkey, and select *Delete* from the pop-up menu. Click the *Yes* button to confirm that you want to delete this subkey.
17. **Immediately** minimize the Registry Editor. Find the xp_HKCR_Drive.reg file icon on the desktop, double-click on it, and click the *Yes* button to confirm that you want to merge this registry key file.
18. Maximize the Registry Editor. Scroll down until you see the *Folder* subkey. Right-click on the *Folder* subkey, and select *Export* from the pop-up menu. Pick the same folder that you picked in step 10, and enter a file name (like “folder subkey backup”), then click the *Save* button.
19. Right-click on the *Folder* subkey, and select *Delete* from the pop-up menu. Click the *Yes* button to confirm that you want to delete this subkey.
20. **Immediately** minimize the Registry Editor. Find the folder_reg.reg file icon on the desktop, double-click on it, and click the *Yes* button to confirm that you want to merge this registry key file.
21. Maximize the Registry Editor. Scroll down until you see the *Linkfile* subkey. Right-click on the *Linkfile* subkey, and select *Export* from the pop-up menu. Pick the same folder that you picked in step 10, and enter a file name (like “linkfile subkey backup”), then click the *Save* button.
22. Right-click on the *Linkfile* subkey, and select *Delete* from the pop-up menu. Click the *Yes* button to confirm that you want to delete this subkey.
23. **Immediately** minimize the Registry Editor. Find the linkfile_fix.reg file icon on the desktop, double-click on it, and click the *Yes* button to confirm that you want to merge this registry key file.

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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

Fixes for the “Right Click Hangs Windows XP” Problem...

(Continued from page 12)

24. Restart Windows XP.

Now, let's test those context menus. Right-click on something that didn't work before, like a file or folder name in Windows Explorer. It shouldn't hang. If it's OK, try each of the rest of the context menus that didn't work before.

If they all work, you've fixed the problems and you're done.

If they didn't all work, you have another problem. The next step is that we need to find what might be causing the problem. You can do so by following the steps in the article below, **What's in My Right-Click Context Menus?** Then you need to figure out what item(s) you don't need, and disable them by right-clicking on the item and selecting *Disable Selected Items* from the pop-up menu.

What's in My Right-Click Context Menus? by Ron Ogg, DVPC

You might not be having problems with your right-click context menus as described in the article **Fixes for the WinXP “Right Click Hangs Windows XP” Problem** above. But maybe you're just a little curious to find out what all that stuff is in your context menus. Here's how.

First, you need to download ShellExView. This freeware program can be found at:

<http://nirsoft.mirrorz.com/>

In the menu at the top left, click on Utilities, then scroll down until you see ShellExView in the Other Utilities section. Click on the file name ShellExView, and you will be taken to a page that shows the instructions for using this utility (I recommend that you print this page), and at the bottom of the page you'll find the link to download the ShellExView program. Download it to your Downloads or some other appropriate folder. What you've downloaded is a zip file; you will need to unzip the file to extract the program and help files to any appropriate folder. I created a folder named ShellExView in my Program Files folder.

Run ShellExView; after it starts a list of all context menu items, known as shell extensions, will be displayed. You can click on the column headers to resort the list. Read the instructions, and experiment with the program. I think you'll be surprised when you see how many shell extensions have been installed in your copy of Windows XP!

RIP DVPC Voicemail Computer by Alan Mildwurm, DVPC

In Memorium

With a great sense of grief, I am sad to announce the passing of the club voice mail computer. It was pronounced dead at 3:33 p.m. on Saturday August 23, 2003. No efforts were made to resuscitate the device. This faithful computer was a Dell 386SX25 with 2 MB of RAM, a 10 MB hard disk drive (yes, that's not a misprint, it had a 10 MB hard disk drive, not the GB size drive we are used to these days). The operating system was MSDOS 6.1. The Dell has been serving as the club voice mail system since the early 1990s. With the exception of power failures, it has run continuously. In the interim, an answering machine will be put into service in the next few days.

Donations for a new voicemail card will be gladly accepted in lieu of flowers. A replacement PC has been donated to the club.

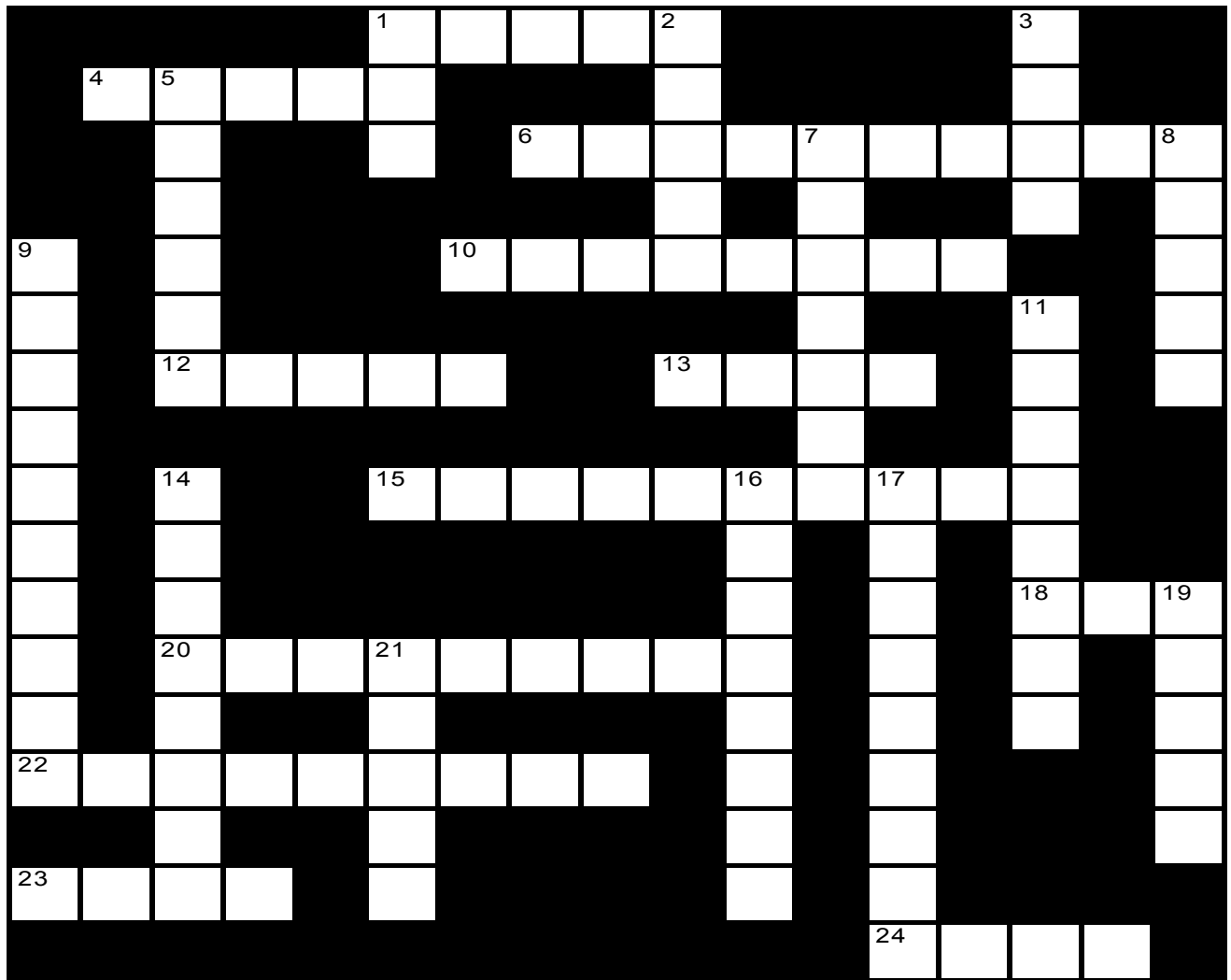
Special Raffle Promotion

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!!

Computer Crossword
by Craig Peterson, DVPC
"Back to School"



Kids throughout the Bay Area as well as the rest of the country will once more know the pain and joy of school being back in session. See if you can solve this month's puzzle all about those "golden days of academe." If you need help, ask any child you see with a new backpack and new clothes, or check out www.dvpc.org/solution.html.

Across

1. Thin sheets of wood pulp used by students to doodle, write phone numbers of cute new students, and (sometimes) notes from class
4. To eat, give to the teacher, or use for homework
6. Old fashioned electric mathematic device
10. What the teacher expects you to learn this year
12. Most important part of the school day
13. Old fashioned data storage device
15. Class where you find out that those in Washington DC didn't take this class
18. Class that helps you realize just how hard it is to draw a straight line
20. Old fashioned manual mathematic device (2 words)
22. Class that tells you where you are and where you might travel someday
23. First chance to tell your teacher that you were sleeping in class
24. Class where you find 100 new ways to make a bird house

Down

1. Manual printing device for long term storage of data
2. Something that measures, helps draw straight lines, or leads a people
3. What to study when things just don't add up
5. Manual printing device for short term storage of data
7. Clothes that "All the kids are wearing"
8. Event to get out of class to show how much everyone likes the football team (at least more then they like going to class)
9. The football and dance combination where former students start to realize why they left high school
11. Sport that lets the 200 pound kids to get their letter on their jacket
14. Item mom told you never to run with
16. Type of computer or place to store phone numbers of cute new students
17. Class where you find out how to balance a checkbook
19. Sport that lets the kids who can run faster then the cops can get their letter on their jacket
21. Class where you try to overcome your fear of being in front of a crowd

DVPC Board Meeting Minutes by Tom Krauss, DVPC

This month I remembered that the Board meeting was on the 13th, so at the last minute they postponed it one week. But I remembered the new date, and showed up on time. I even remembered that I was to assist Craig with a presentation at PC 101/201 on August 16th and made it there on time (although he had cancelled the sessions due to illness). I think the Alzheimer's is finally in remission.

We met at Alan's house, sitting outside to enjoy the pleasantly cool evening air, basking in the glow of the pool lights and surrounded by the sound of water gurgling in fountains and Zipper, the dog, shouting to his friends in the neighborhood. It was very relaxing, and fortunately there was little business to distract us.

Ron presented us with some statistics from our ISP regarding access to our website. We were all at a loss to explain why the volume is as high as the reports indicated. In July of this year there were over **23,000** hits! Several months over the last year logged over **30,000** hits!!! The single largest source for these hits is Google, indicating that 1) Google looks at us regularly for content, and 2) our content interests Google customers. The peak hour of the day for hits is 4-5 p.m. Based on our own personal experience, the Board assumes that that is when these people wake up from their afternoon nap. I would offer more statistics, but that's all I wrote down because Ron said the information is available on the Infosaic website. He neglected to mention the need for the proper ID and password, however, so I am unable to deliver more data.

Alan informed us that our insurance premium has been raised to just over \$700. And he paid our web hosting company, Infosaic, for the next 12 months, \$120. This does not bode well for continuing the rapid growth of the Projector Fund.

Craig announced a two month hiatus for PC 101/201 because of the recall election. I became a little confused here. I am not certain whether this is because his employer, the U.S. Post Office, is requiring him to work weekends, or because he made commitments to one or more political activist groups, or if he is one of the 135 candidates for governor and needs the time to campaign. Anyway, class is called off in September and October, as well as the Internet SIG.

Alan has been diligently signing up speakers and the next several months are booked (subject to change, of course). I won't spoil the excitement and anticipation by telling you what's coming up: you'll just have to come to the meetings and find out. Besides, I neglected to write them down.

We then picked up a discussion from several past meetings: internet scams. We touched briefly on viruses; reminisced about hardware that we knew and loved, but which was obsolete thirty years ago; dropped a few names (people and software – remember HiJaak?), and verbally abused several cable and Internet providers. As the last of the sunglow faded from the sky and the first of a dozen or so large drops of rain fell, we wandered out to our cars full of satisfaction in a job well done and a pizza well eaten.

Humorous Quotations About Computers from the May 2000 issue of *Toggle*, Tacoma-Seattle Area MUG

- A computer is like an Old Testament God, with a lot of rules and no mercy. –Joseph Campbell
- A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history – with the possible exceptions of hand-guns and tequila. –Mitch Ratliffe
- The most likely way for the world to be destroyed, most experts agree, is by accident. We're computer professionals. We cause accidents. –Nathaniel Borenstein
- To err is human – and to blame it on a computer even more so. –Robert Orben
- Computers are useless. They can only give you answers. –Pablo Picasso
- Computers will never take the place of books. You can't stand on a floppy disk to reach a high shelf. –Sam Ewing
- Hardware: the parts of a computer that can be kicked. –Jeff Pesis
- Man is the best computer we can put aboard a spacecraft... and the only one that can be mass produced with unskilled labor. –Werner Von Braun
- No computer has ever been designed that is ever aware of what it's doing; but most of the time, we aren't either. –Marvin Minsky
- One thing a computer can do that most humans can't is be sealed up in a cardboard box and sit in a warehouse –Jack Handley
- They have computers, and they may have other weapons of mass destruction. –Janet Reno
- Wow! They've got the Internet on computers now! –Homer Simpson

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