



## November 5 Meeting Announcement *Windows Night* and *Lincoln Spector*

It's *baaack!* Yes, the ever-popular DVPC annual event, *Windows Night*, is back and better than ever! See the *President's Corner* article below for more news about Windows Night. And remember that we'll have lots of raffles and auctions of great products from our Windows Night vendors to make your evening even more interesting! This is also a great opportunity to bring friends and relatives to a DVPC meeting, get them to join, then get *extra raffle tickets*.

And, to make your November 5th evening even more interesting and exciting, we're going to have *Lincoln Spector*, the ever-popular [Computer Currents](#) columnist, to kick off the evening. Lincoln is famed for his *Gigglebytes* humor columns in *Computer Currents*, and you can expect to hear some very funny discourse.

Wow! Not only Windows Night, but Lincoln Spector too! That's a *lot* going on! So, the meeting arrangements are going to be a bit different. First, *Lincoln Spector* will kick off the evening at 7:00 p.m. in the **Building A** conference room – that's directly across the plaza from our normal meeting location in Building B. Then, immediately following Lincoln's talk, *Windows Night* will be held in the **Building B** conference room (the vendors will be setting up starting at 6:30 p.m., and no one will be allowed to enter Building B until Lincoln's talk is finished).

The New User's SIG will have their meeting in **Building A** from 6:30 to 7:00. See you in

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### President's Corner

By [Alan Mildwurm](#), DVPC

We are really pleased that *Lincoln Spector*, Mr. Deeram himself, will be joining us at our November meeting. Lincoln is a well known author and pundit, perhaps best known for his *Gigglebytes* column which appears regularly in *Computer Currents*. Since our November meeting is also Windows Night, we have made a few special arrangements for the meeting.

Lincoln will lead off the meeting at 7 p.m. in the Lobby Conference Room in **Building A**. **THIS IS A CHANGE!** After his presentation, we will adjourn to our regular location (the Building B Conference Room).

After Lincoln's talk, we will open up the Building B Conference Room and hold our traditional *Windows Night* mini tradeshow. We have several vendors lined up and it should be a very interesting and entertaining evening. As more vendors confirm, we will try and update the web site to let you know who is coming. As usual, we will have

[\(Continued on page 2\)](#)

## **Ken's Korner – Upgrade or Buy New?** *by Ken Fermoye, TUG-NET*

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### *Tough decision, but adding big hard drive makes sense*

With new computer prices at record low levels, does it make sense to upgrade your current computer or should you just take the plunge and buy a new one? Unfortunately, there are few easy answers, and those few apply mainly to very old (386 and 486 models) and rather new ones.

Upgrading 386/486 and even some early Pentiums generally is not wise economically. Their motherboards don't support newer CPUs that bring big boosts in performance. If you buy a new motherboard, it must be an AT type to fit in your old case, and many new boards are ATX types.

How about overdrive processors? Forget them, is my advice, unless you can get one for little or nothing from a friend or at a swap meet. According to recent catalogs, a new Intel OverDrive that jumps a 486DX/33 to an 84MHz Pentium costs close to \$200; same for upgrading a Pentium 100 to a Pentium 166 with MMX. Evergreen overdrives bump a 486 up to 133MHz for about \$100, early Pentiums to 200MHz with MMX for \$160. You can buy a Socket 7 motherboard and 225MHz WinChip for about \$150 to \$200, which may be a better choice. (More coming on WinChips in a future column.)

Upgrading a Pentium 75 to 150 to MMX 180MHz Pentium (about \$240) or Pentium 100/133/166 to 200MHz Pentium with MMX (about \$280) are possible options. Notethat those prices represent 25 to 40% or more of the cost of a new Pentium MMX, AMD K6, or Cyrix machine with more advanced components than those in your old computer.

For later models Pentium MMX computers, two enhancements that make sense are adding memory and a second, large-capacity hard drive. If you run Windows 95 and go from 16 to 32 megs of RAM (Random Access Memory), you should get a noticeable increase in performance. Going from 32 to 64 megs brings performance rewards, too, and costs very little these days.

Adding a large-capacity hard drive is, in fact, a sound upgrade for just about any Pentium-class machine. An Ultra DMA drive is backward compatible with IDE technology. It just won't deliver the same level of performance in an older computer as it will in a newer one that supports such drives.

Your investment in the drive will not be lost if you later buy a new computer. The Ultra DMA drive can be swapped into your new machine with no difficulty.

More good news: installing the big new drives is not the hassle that hard drive installation was not too many years ago. I added a 6.4-gig Seagate Medalist to one of our machines some months back. I set aside an entire afternoon and psyched myself up for the project. To my surprise, it took less than two hours, with most of that spent in shoehorning the drive into the box, which is pretty loaded.

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## **President's Corner...**

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*[\(Continued from page 1\)](#)*

several raffles, auctions and giveaways during the evening. As of this writing, Microsoft, Microsoft Gaming Zone, MGI, Cybernet Express, Cendant (Davidson, Blizzard, Sierra, and Berkeley Systems), and Storm Technology have confirmed. I expect to hear from several additional vendors in the next few days.

I am also pleased that I have secured our room for 1999. We will continue to meet in the Building B Conference Center on the first Thursday of each month. Thanks very much to the Bank of America for hosting our meetings. Anyone who has looked to find regular meeting space knows how difficult it is to locate a nice facility, especially one with the capacity for our monthly meetings. A venue as nice as ours would normally cost several hundred dollars per session. Bank of America is continuing to allow us to conduct our meetings at no cost to DVPC!

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## What is USB? by [Walt Parsons, DVPC](#)

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What is a USB? What's that you say? Is it an Under Sea Bug? Unusually Silly Batteries? Ugly Overstuffed Boys?

Well, Ron soon straightened us all out as he proceeded to tell us everything we every wanted to know about USBs at the October Windows SIG meeting. What's that? **You** still don't know what a USB is? Well, if you'd been at the Windows SIG meeting you would have.

USB is the abbreviation for *Universal Serial Bus*. It's a new feature that is found in most new computers and in Windows 98. An instant, no-hassle way to connect devices to your PC that is already designed-in most new PCs being sold today. USB can be added to older PCs using an adapter card. USB makes adding peripheral devices easy. USB replaces all the different kinds of serial and parallel port connectors with one standardized plug and port combination. With USB-compliant PCs and peripherals, you just plug them in and turn them on!

With USB "hot-swapping" you don't need to shut down and restart your PC to attach or remove a peripheral just plug it in and go! The PC automatically detects the peripheral and configures the necessary software

- USB connections allow data to flow both ways between the PC and peripheral
- USB lets you connect many peripherals at one time
- Most USB-equipped PCs come with two USB ports
- USB peripherals have additional ports that let you "daisy-chain" multiple devices together
- Another USB feature is that it distributes electrical power to many peripherals – no more power cords!

### *Q and A*

*Q: What do USB ports look like?*

A: The USB port is a square connector that's about 1/2" x 1/2" in size.

*Q: Will I need special software to run USB?*

A: No separate software should be needed; USB driver support is built-in to the latest versions of the Windows 98 operating system.

*Q: Is USB available on mobile computers in addition to desktops?*

A: USB is currently a key feature on many notebook computers from leading manufacturers, including Hitachi, NEC, Panasonic, Sony and Toshiba

*Q: What kinds of USB peripherals can I connect to my PC?*

A: USB carries data at the rate of 12 megabits per second, which is sufficient for "medium to low-speed peripherals". This broad category includes digital cameras, modems, keyboards, mice, monitors, digital joysticks, some CD-ROM drives, tape and floppy drives, speakers, digital scanners, printers, interfaces for network and communications devices including modems, ISDN adapters, telephones, and digital PBXs. USB's data rate also accommodates a whole new generation of peripherals, including MPEG-2 video, data gloves, and digitizers

*Q: Will traditional PC serial and parallel ports disappear?*

A: While USB will not replace traditional PC ports overnight, it is expected to rapidly become the preferred means to connect "medium-speed" peripherals and I/O devices

*Q: How many USB peripherals can be connected at once?*

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Get Involved! Learn!

## Join a SIG today!

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## **SIG NEWS** *Compiled by Bill Earl, SIG Coordinator, DVPC, 939-5874*

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*See the DVPC Calendar on [page 16](#) for the date and time of each SIG meeting.*

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### **Access/Visual Basic SIG** [Ron Ogg](#) (283-7900 Ext. 201) and [Ted Armstrong](#) (939-4096) SIG Co-Leaders

The Access/Visual Basic SIG meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Gateway Group's offices, 3687 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 350, in Lafayette. Check out the Access/VB SIG on the web for information about this month's meeting at [www.dvpc.org/sig\\_vbaccess](http://www.dvpc.org/sig_vbaccess) – or navigate there from the DVPC home page ([www.dvpc.org](http://www.dvpc.org)), select SIGs from the menu bar at the left, then click on the Access/VB SIG icon. See the Clarion SIG announcement below for directions.

### **Advanced Users SIG** [Jeff Noyer and Sharon Clark](#), SIG Co-Leaders – 937-5282

The Advanced Users SIG meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at 336 El Divisadero Avenue in Walnut Creek. Directions: From downtown Walnut Creek, take Ygnacio Valley Road toward John Muir Hospital. Continue past Walnut *Boulevard* and John Muir Hospital. At the intersection of Ygnacio Valley Road and Walnut *Avenue*, turn right onto Walnut *Avenue*. At the first traffic light, turn right onto Blackstone Drive, then make the first right onto El Divisadero Avenue. Follow the road as it curves to the left. 336 El Divisadero Avenue will be on your right, immediately after the curve. It is a one-story, gray/brown house with white trim. 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!

### **Clarion SIG** [Ron Ogg](#), SIG Leader – 283-7900 Ext. 201

The Clarion SIG meets at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Gateway Group's offices, 3687 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 350, in Lafayette. Check out the Clarion SIG on the web for information about each month's meeting at [www.dvpc.org/sig\\_clar](http://www.dvpc.org/sig_clar) – or navigate there from the DVPC home page ([www.dvpc.org](http://www.dvpc.org)), select SIGs from the menu bar at the left, then click on the CWSIG icon.

Directions: take Highway 24 west to the Central Lafayette exit, and keep to your left to the stop sign at Deer Hill Road at the end of the exit ramp. Turn left onto Deer Hill Road, and continue to where it dead ends at Happy Valley Road. Turn left onto Happy Valley Road. Turn right at the traffic signal at Mt. Diablo Blvd. Take Mt. Diablo Blvd. through the next traffic signal and turn left into the driveway at 3685/3687. Immediately turn right into the parking lot in front of 3687. Take the elevator to the third floor to the door on the right just before the end of the hallway. See Gateway Group's Web site at [www.gatewaygroup.com](http://www.gatewaygroup.com) for a map. If you get lost, call Ron Ogg at 283-7900 Ext. 201. TopSpeed's Clarion 4 and Clarion for Windows are powerful database development tools that compete with products like Visual Basic and Delphi and even products like PowerBuilder. If you are an advanced Clarion developer you are invited to join the SIG. This is a SIG for advanced users, so beginners will want to get more hands-on experience before joining. Be sure to come early for a good seat; the meetings are very well-attended.

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

The Education & Entertainment SIG meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at Montevideo School in San Ramon at 7:30 p.m. Call Alan at (510) 770-5770 (work) to confirm the date. The E&E SIG is oriented to exploring the best in education and entertainment software for the PC. Everyone is invited to attend our meetings, and bring your kids along – they'll have a great time, too!

Directions: 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.

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**Internet SIG** *SIG Leader TBA*

The Internet SIG is being rescued, reconstituted, and reborn. We didn't receive information about the inaugural meeting, but check the DVPC web site for updated information, and we should have the complete story in this space in an upcoming issue of *Diablo Blue*.

**Microsoft Project SIG** *Elias Asmar, SIG Leader – 299-8500*

The Microsoft Project SIG meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at InterPro ADF's office at 3569 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 210. Park in the lot behind Radio Shack. The entrance to suite 210 is at the back of the building. Enter through the door marked "210" at the parking lot end of the walkway from the street and take the stairs to the second floor. Everyone who is interested in Microsoft Project and project management is invited to attend. If you plan on attending, please call Elias Asmar at 925-299-8500, Fax 925-299-8511, leave a message on the DVPC BBS, or send an E-mail message to Elias on the Internet to:

[elie.asmar@iadf.com](mailto:elie.asmar@iadf.com)

**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.

**Real Estate SIG** *Bill Thompson, SIG Leader – 693-0174*

Come to the Real Estate SIG meeting on October 9th, 1998 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon. We will be meeting in the conference room located at 3480 Buskirk Avenue, Suite 120 in Pleasant Hill at North American Title's offices. For more information contact SIG leader Bill Thompson at (510) 693-0174 or email at [thompson@DLSNetwork.com](mailto:thompson@DLSNetwork.com).

**Windows SIG** *Ron Ogg (283-7900 Ext. 201) and Walt Parsons (934-0775), SIG Co-Leaders*

This month's meeting will feature an advance look at Office 2000 – and who knows what else? Come to the November Windows SIG meeting and find out!

The Windows SIG meets on the first Tuesday of each month at Nordic Computers in Concord (see their ad on page 12 for a map) at 7:30 p.m. Everyone who uses, is interested in, or is curious about Windows on their PC, is invited to attend. See you all at the next Windows SIG meeting.

**WordPerfect SIG** *Walt Parsons, 934-0775, SIG Leader*

The WordPerfect SIG meets on the fourth Monday of each month, and is held at Walt Parsons' home in Walnut Creek. It was also decided to limit the majority of the discussion to the Windows version of WordPerfect, and mainly versions 7 and 8. Other members of the suite will only be discussed in passing; the emphasis will be on WordPerfect.

If there is something that you want to know about WordPerfect, come to the WordPerfect SIG meetings on the 4th Monday of each month. The SIG meets at the Parsons' home in Walnut Creek. Due to limited seating, please RSVP in advance to the e-mail address: [waltnewf@pacbell.net](mailto:waltnewf@pacbell.net). Anybody wishing to get on the e-mail notification list should contact Walt at the above e-mail address.

***Be Sure to Come to DVPC's Windows Night***

*Lots of Products will be Ruffled and Auctioned*

**For each Friend or Relative you Bring to Windows Night You will Get an Extra Raffle Ticket**

**See Lincoln Spector First at 7:00 p.m.**

## What is USB?...

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*(Continued from page 3)*

A: You can connect up to 127 individual USB peripherals at one time; just one USB plug must be connected to the USB port on the PC and other connections may be made on the desktop, using the extra USB ports on peripherals or an external USB hub.

*Q: How many USB products are available?*

A: More than 250 individual USB products are being developed by the industry's leading manufacturers, most of which are available today or will be available by the end of the year.

### ***The Technical Side of USB***

*Two data rates:*

12Mbps for devices requiring increased bandwidth & 1.5 Mbps for lower-speed devices like joysticks and game pads

*Tiered-star topology:*

Some USB devices called USB "hubs" can serve as connection ports for other USB peripherals

*USB Hubs:*

USB hubs may be embedded in such devices as monitors, printers and keyboards Stand-alone hubs are also available, providing a handful of convenient USB ports right on the desktop Hubs feature an upstream connection (pointed toward the PC) as well as multiple downstream ports to allow the connection of additional peripheral devices

*Capacity:*

Up to 127 USB devices can be connected together

*Automatic configuration:*

USB host controllers manage and control the driver software and bandwidth (data flow) required by each peripheral con-

*(Continued on page 10)*

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## Switch to the Diablo Blue Web Edition

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*"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](mailto:nopaper@dvpc.org)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address for meeting notification: \_\_\_\_\_ Also notify me about these SIGs:

## DVPC Board Meeting Minutes by Tom Krauss, DVPC

**Meeting Date:** 10/8/98 **Time:** 7:00 pm **Location:** Alan Mildwurm's house

**Bank Account:** Not discussed

**Upcoming Speakers:** TBA

### A Personal Note

*After several months of commuting weekly first to Oklahoma City and then to Boston, I am back at a real job, commuting daily to San Francisco. This means I once again am privileged to spend one magic Wednesday night each month at the DVPC Board meeting, and October 8 lived up to my expectations.*

*It is hard to believe that with nearly 300 members to choose from, every member of the Board turned out to be someone congenitally unable to concentrate on one topic for more than thirty seconds unless they are the one speaking. But that's the way it is. The good news, however, is that during the frequent digressions one can indeed learn something.*

*For example, the latest hot rumor is that Fry's is going to open a new store in the Concord area, probably out by Port Chicago Highway and Interstate 4. And how do you make certain your system clock time is correct? Alan uses Parson's Atomic Clock software. Stan's computer resets itself when it's turned on. Craig changed his battery. At one point Nick mentioned he wants to have a personal web site with, among other things, a bad joke section. This led to a flurry of bad jokes badly told – all great candidates for his new web site.*

*Despite the wandering conversation, we managed to cram the following business into one hour and forty-five minutes. But then, Charlie wasn't there...*

### Old Business:

Open Positions: We may have a volunteer to resuscitate the Internet SIG, and another to take over Janet's Membership

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Email Meeting Notification Available by Ron Ogg, DVPC

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:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Also send me Email notification of each of the SIG meetings I've checked below:

Access/VB SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	Microsoft Project SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced Users SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paradox SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarion SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	Real Estate SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education and Entertainment SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	Windows SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	WordPerfect SIG	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## DVPC Board Meeting Minutes...

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*(Continued from page 7)*

Secretary responsibilities. Two volunteers in one month ties the previous club record set in March, 1983 when two members each wrote an article for *Diablo Blue*. Let's hope this trend continues.

**Membership:** Speaking of positive trends, at the October meeting six visitors turned in the yellow, special drawing tickets that Craig hands out at computer shows. Craig is practically a one-man recruiting machine, but he would appreciate any help the rest of us can give him. If you can spend even an hour at one of the shows, let Craig know. You will get in free, and Craig will get to go to the restroom.

**Windows Night:** Seven or eight vendors are already lined up for Window's Night next month, and the Board is contacting more. We have Bank of America's approval for the use of a second room (Building A, across the plaza from Building B where we normally meet) so that Lincoln Spector can speak without the disruption of the vendors' setting up.

### **New Business:**

**Amazon.DVPC:** Ron reported that Amazon.com has a program whereby DVPC will get a percentage of any book orders they receive when the person ordering jumps to amazon.com from our web site. Ron will investigate this further.

**Video Projector:** Every so often the video projector moves on to someone else without telling anyone where it is going. The Board agreed to adopt Walt Parson's clever suggestion that borrowers of the projector email Alan ([awm@mildwurm.com](mailto:awm@mildwurm.com)) when they receive it **and** when they pass it on.

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## Ken's Korner...

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*(Continued from page 2)*

Seagate's DiscWizard software formatted and partitioned the new drive automatically. The process is a no-brainer, if you follow the instructions, especially the one about installing and running DiscWizard before you install and configure the hard drive.

I was so pleased with the drive I bought a second one for another of our office computers. The machine was an older one I goofed somehow. I got help from the most competent, nicest tech support support person it has been my good fortune to encounter in the 15 years since I bought my first computer. He took me carefully through the process, explaining where I had gone wrong and what I needed to do to correct the problem.

We swapped some of the components, including the Seagate drive, out of this old system into a brand-new computer recently. (The new mid-tower box contains a 225MHz WinChip CPU and Tyan Socket 7 motherboard, an excellent, budget-priced combination we will look at in more detail next month.) It performs beautifully in the new environment, and neither of the Medalist 6.4-gig drives have given us even a hint of trouble.

Adding memory, as mentioned above, is an excellent way to enhance the performance of almost any Windows computer that is running Win3.X or Win95/98. Most experts regard 32 megs of RAM as the practical minimum for Win9X (64 megs for NT). Anyone using just 16 megs is not getting optimum performance from his or her system.

With memory prices so low today, upgrading RAM is well worth the small cost involved. As part of my upgrading program, all of the computers in our office will soon have at least 64 megabytes of RAM, and I'm planning to have 128 installed in our new server.

One cautionary note here: the variety of RAM chips available is very confusing. We have older machines with standard

*(Continued on page 11)*

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## What is USB?...

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*(Continued from page 6)*

nected to the bus all the configuration steps happen automatically

### *Is USB for You?*

USB is an industry-wide Plug and Play specification that makes it easy to expand PC functionality. USB peripherals are easier to install. No IRQs. No DMAs. Fully Plug-and-Play. "Hot insertion and removal" feature lets you add peripherals without turning off your PC. USB distributes power, so many peripheral products no longer require separate power supplies. By eliminating the need for add-in cards, USB makes peripherals easier to design and manufacture and install. Universal Serial Bus allows virtually unlimited PC expansion "outside the box." USB peripherals are becoming available. USB peripherals should have lower prices. USB peripherals are less complex than serial, parallel, or SCSI peripherals. Standard software and hardware interfaces and connector for both PCs and Macs.

You can learn a lot about our favorite operating system by attending DVPC's Windows SIG. Next month's SIG meeting will feature an advance look at Word 2000 – and who knows what else.

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## Yeah Write Special Offer *by Stacie Bise, Word Place, Inc.*

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This is just to let you know of a discount we are offering users group members who wish to purchase *Yeah Write* for Windows. With the upcoming holiday season, we are extending this offer until the end of December. (See Nick Chase's review of *Yeah Write* in the August, 1998 issue of *Diablo Blue*.)

The standard pricing is \$19 for the Internet version (no media or manual), and \$29 + \$5 shipping and handling for the boxed version.

If a customer mentions their user group when they call to order, we won't charge them for shipping. We're also offering two copies for \$34 (shipping included) to user group members from now until the end of December. Our order number is 1-800-549-5682.

### *Member's Want Ad*

Have backup tape for Colorado Jumbo/Trakker 700 series tape (new) that I can't use.  
For sale or trade for DT 350 tape for Colorado Jumbo/Trakker 350 unit.

Call Duane Peterson, 825-2109 or email [duanep@hotcoco.infi.net](mailto:duanep@hotcoco.infi.net)

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## Ken's Korner...

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*(Continued from page 9)*

RAM, many with EDO (Extended Data Output) RAM and newer machines with SD-RAM (Synchronous Dynamic RAM. We had RAM chips, the SIMMs (Single Inline Memory Modules) and new DIMMs (Double Inline Memory modules).

And there are more new types coming, folks.

So be very careful when buying RAM; be sure what you get will work in your system. Consult your manuals and documents, and deal with someone knowledgeable about the subject. That may NOT include the hardto-find "sales associates" at the big computer chain stores!

You might be better dealing with someone who specializes in memory chips, at a computer show or swap meet, or on the Internet. If you're fortunate enough to have a reliable local computer shop with a competent staff, as I have (ASC Computers in Woodland Hills, CA, 818/876-9187. [www.ascci.com](http://www.ascci.com)), take your computer there. Technicians can check your system, tell you what RAM will work in it, and then install it for you.

Watch for Upgrades, Part 2 in the next Ken's Korner column.

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*Ken Fermoye has written some 2,500 articles for publications ranging from Playboy, PC World and Popular Science to MacWeek and currently contributes to Microtimes. He was cohost/producer of a radio show on computers and a partner in a DTP service bureau during the '80s. Ken's Korner articles are available free to User Group newsletters and Websites. For permission to reprint this article, contact [kfermoyle@earthlink.net](mailto:kfermoyle@earthlink.net).*

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## WinProxy – A Software Review by [Alan Mildwurm](#), DVPC

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### **WINPROXY @ LAST!**

Many of you already know that we recently installed a cable modem here at home. My wife insisted that we install one. As a dutiful (and smart) husband, I decided to comply. (20 years as a Family Law attorney certainly helped me gain the insight that it is important to keep the Boss happy). As a schoolteacher Ruth gets free Internet access through the school district, but their dial up is probably as bad as AOL ever was. Even her direct connection in the classroom is often prone to failure!

So, we called [@Home](#). I have to admit I put it off for a few months. (I don't like [TCI](#), I didn't like Viacom – but I digress). I was very pleasantly impressed with their installation. We were given a window of time as to when the installers would arrive. The doorbell rang exactly at the time given. A crew of cable installers came out to install the coax. After some tests, they decided that our cable line had too many junctions for a good signal. Ruth suggested that they run a new line into her office. This solved the problem. We now have a very neatly tacked down coax cable running through our ga-

*(Continued on page 13)*

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## WinProxy...

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*(Continued from page 11)*

rage and into her office.

About an hour after the “cable guys” came, the doorbell rang again and the “tech guys” arrived. They are the ones who put in the modem and configured Ruth’s computer. We already had a NIC (network interface card) in her computer because we have a network running in our house. (5 people = 5 computers = we don’t share well). The cable modem, which I think is really a router, plugs into your cable system (the same one that brings you your *I Love Lucy* reruns), and then using Category 5 network cabling plugs into the NIC in your computer.

It works great. Things that would take hours (days?) to download take minutes or seconds. As of this writing, the service has suffered no down time that we have encountered. I like it.

The installation is “normally” \$150.00 but there always seems to be a special. I had a \$50.00 off coupon. I subsequently saw a \$100.00 off coupon in the paper, and @Home refunded me the additional \$50.00. Monthly charge is \$39.95 plus tax. There are no other basic charges. It comes with three email addresses, 5 MB of disk space, with a 300 MB per month bandwidth limit on your webspace account. Technical support is 24x7.

While installing the system, I asked the “tech guys” why we shouldn’t just plug the cable modem into our network hub to allow it to feed the entire house. They explained that doing so wouldn’t work but, if I set up a proxy server, I could accomplish that goal. They suggested a program called *winproxy*.

With my (okay, Ruth’s) new cable modem, I found winproxy. A local company, Ositis, distributes it. You can download a fully working 30-day demo from [www.winproxy.com](http://www.winproxy.com). I immediately set to work. I first learned that in order to establish a fire wall – so all our neighbors can’t access our computers – I needed to put a second NIC into Ruth’s computer. This NIC would connect to our hub. No problem. Their on-line manual and instructions on the web site are very clear. If you follow their directions (to the number), things should work.

As many of you know, I was having a problem with our other computers connecting with the server. A call to Ositis tech support (and an exchange of email) informed me that TCI may be using a proxy server itself, and therefore I needed to set up a cascaded proxy server (a proxy server behind another proxy server) to make things work. I needed to know TCI’s internal IP address to accomplish this – but TCI (for security reasons) wouldn’t tell me what it is.

I used a DOS program that comes on the Windows 98 CD called *tracert* to trace the hops to a designated site, figuring that the first or second hop would be this mysterious IP address. I noticed that the first two IP addresses were always the same. I plugged each of these addresses into winproxy – but no luck.

I had now been working on this problem for days. Mysteriously, winproxy began to work (I have no IP address in the cascade window). All five computers are now able to enjoy the cable modem. Of course, Ruth’s machine must be turned on. I can configure each machine to it’s own email – i.e. Ruth at the district, mine at Verio, Jessica at AOL, etc. I still have some tweaking to do, but it works.

We can access AOL over the cable. Since my business does not have access to cable, I can’t drop my other ISP, nor can we use @Home when travelling – I was told there would eventually be a dial up number to use when you are away.

Is the additional speed worth the cost? Yes. One download will justify that. Being able to share the cable modem with winproxy makes the decision to have a cable modem a slam-dunk in my opinion. It is no wonder that home networking is becoming a “growth industry”.

In speaking with Ositis, they presently have two versions of their program. A three computer proxy server for \$50.00, and one which will support an unlimited number of computers which runs about \$300.00. They will probably release some interim variations. As I understand it, even with the three unit version you can set up more computers, but only three can be online at the same time. This program will not only work with cable modems but also with dial up modems and other devices.

A cable modem with winproxy is an incredible combination!

## 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 283-7900, Ext. 201 (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](#), or mail to: Editor, Diablo Blue, P.O. Box 2222, Orinda, CA 94563-2222. See the deadline information in the Calendar on page 15 of each issue of Diablo Blue.

## DVPC on the Internet

DVPC has a web site on the Internet – thanks to our Web Team: Cindy Barnes, Ron Ogg, and Stan Umlauf. 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:

<http://www.dvpc.org>

## DVPC Officers and Directors

Alan Mildwurm, President/Programs 770-5770 (work) Cindy Barnes, Recruitment, Web Site  
Nicholas Chase, Special Events 680-4211 (home) Charlie Crothers, Publicity 829-2237 (home)  
Bill Earl, SIG Coordinator 939-5874 (home) Peggy Johnson, Membership Secretary  
Tom Krauss, Secretary 689-9960 (home) Jessica Mildwurm, Treasurer 829-5858 (home)  
Ron Ogg, Newsletter Editor 283-7900 x201 (work) Craig Peterson, Librarian 671-7025 (home)  
Stan Umlauf, Web Site 458-5560 (home)

The Board of Directors usually meets on the Wednesday evening following the general meeting each month. Check the DVPC Calendar on page 16 of each issue of *Diablo Blue*, or the DVPC home page on the Internet ([www.dvpc.org](http://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, 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 556-1449. This communication vehicle provides members with up-to-date information about monthly and SIG meetings, potential new members with information about DVPC, and a message center for Board of Directors members and SIG Leaders.

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

Please submit articles and columns to the Newsletter editor by email at [rogg@value.net](mailto:rogg@value.net) or mail them to:

Ronald Ogg, P.O. Box 2222, Orinda, CA 94563-2222

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DVPC is a member of [APCUG](#), the Association of PC Users Groups

DVPC is a member of [UGNN](#), the User Group Network News Service



**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 667, Danville, CA 945296**

Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by current member? Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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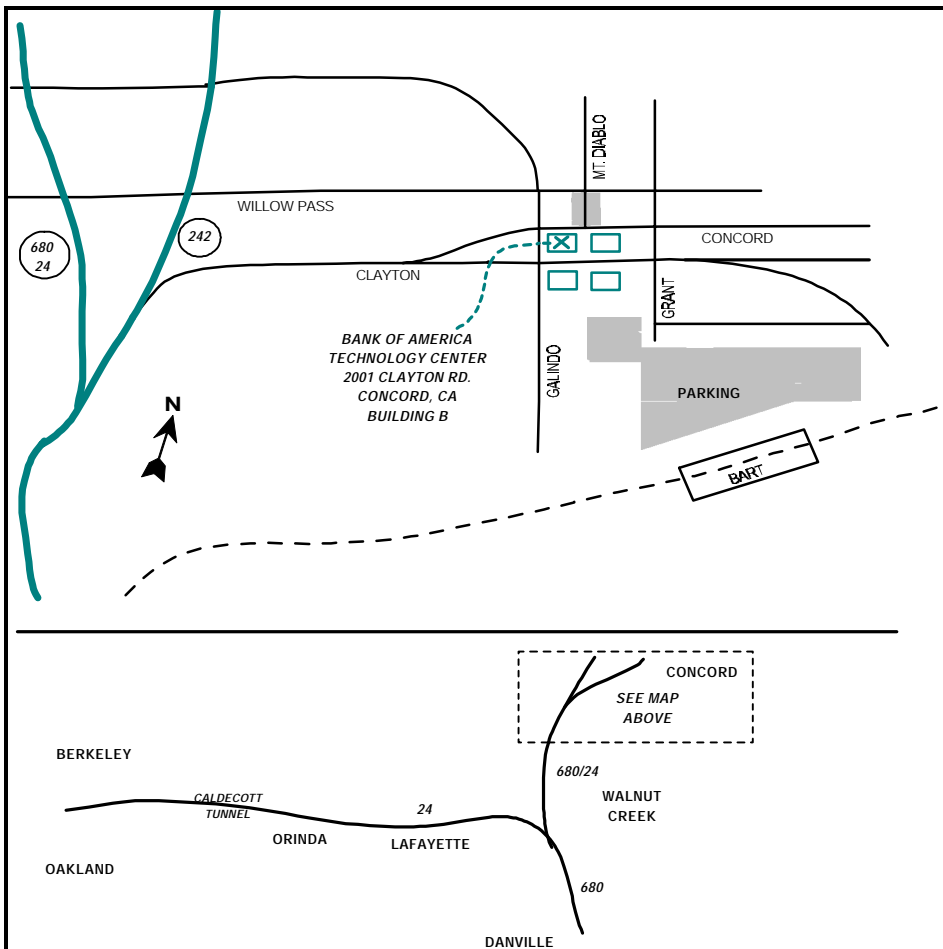
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On occasion DVPC publishes a list of members **for distribution to DVPC members only**. Please check how you would like to be listed: **No listing** \_\_\_\_\_ **List Name and Home** \_\_\_\_\_ **Work** \_\_\_\_\_ **phone number(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

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 office buildings.

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!**

## DVPC November 1998 Calendar

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2	3 Windows SIG 7:30 p.m.	4	5 DVPC Monthly Meeting 7:00 p.m. New User's SIG 6:30 p.m.	6	7
9	10	11 Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. Alan Mildwurm's house	12	13 Real Estate SIG 9:00 a.m. <i>New meeting day, time, and location!</i>	14
16 Microsoft Project SIG 7:30 p.m.	17	18	19 Advanced Users SIG 7:30 p.m.	20 <i>Diablo Blue deadline</i> Email articles and ads to the Newsletter Editor: rogg@value.net	21 Internet SIG <i>Check SIG News for latest Internet SIG information</i>
23 WordPerfect SIG 7:30 p.m.	24 Access/Visual Basic SIG 7:30 p.m.	25 Clarion SIG 7:30 p.m. Education & Entertainment SIG 7:30 p.m.	26	27	28
30					See SIG News starting on page 4 for more information about SIG meeting dates, times, topics, and locations

Diablo Valley PC User's Group  
 PO Box 667  
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**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

**TO:**