



The PULP

HUGE this month:

General Meeting: Jan. 20th
Tax Software
presented by Charles Gagliardi

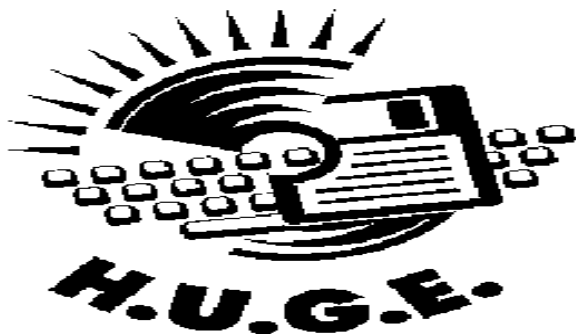
See you there!

East Hartford Public Library
Main St. & Central Ave., East Hartford, CT.

Q&A Session: 7:00PM–7:30PM
Meeting starts at: 7:30PM

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MEETING LOCATIONS

East Hartford Public Library
Main & Central Avenue
in the Lion's Room(downstairs)

Wethersfield Public Library 500 Silas Deane Hwy., Wethersfield, CT

Editors Corner

It's that season again, and I'm talking about the other one--taxes. Our own Charles Gagliardi will be talking about the current crop of tax prep software.

In upcoming months we'll revisit preventive computer maintenance and wireless home networking.

BTW--If you missed the meeting, on page 8 is a list & links to some of the geeky gifts.

Stuart Rabinowitz
Editor-in-Chief

Here is the appropriate copyright citation and link to the full text. articles from "Tidbits"

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Income Tax Software

Currently, more than two dozen tax software programs are commercially available. Offering range from free programs available at www.irs.gov to complete accounting programs that include tax preparation as part of their features. The presentation at the January meeting will cover:

- IRS data on how people file their taxes
- Electronic Filing – e-File and Modernized e-File (MeF) / state e-file requirements
- Differences between home and professional packages
- Types of returns – Range of examples / which packages do which forms
- Brief demo - full-feature tax program (Drake Software)
- Demo - TaxACT Home Edition

About the presenter

Charles Gagliardi is the Treasurer of HUGE and has worked as a tax preparer for four years. He is familiar with several tax software programs. Charles is a member of the National Association of Tax Professionals. In 2008, he became an Enrolled Agent and is now authorized to represent taxpayers before the IRS.

Please note that the clubs PO Box has been closed. When membership renewals go out in the fall the return address will be that of our Membership person Richard Sztaba.



A Little Computer Quiz

by Stuart Rabinowitz

The trivia and minutiae of the computer related world. The answers will appear next month or you can submit an answer sheet at the General Meeting. Good Luck!

- 1 Who was the first (based on the fact that he got caught) to succeed in illegally electronically transferring a large sum of money from a major bank? When and how much?
- 2 Who was the first person to invest in Google and how much?
- 3 When did Apple discontinue the Apple II line?
- 4 In February 1985 someone confirmed that it is possible to electronically eavesdrop on the signal between a computer and the CRT. Who?
- 5 What does the "i" in iMac refer to?

Answers to , 2008 Quiz

- 1 What do the following computer software companies have in common?
Central Point Software, Delrina, PowerQuest, Brightmail, PowerQuest, & Peter Norton Computing
A Beside the fact that they no longer exist as independent companies, they have all been acquired by Symantec
- 2 What is a "jumper"?
A A small plastic connector that fits over 2 (pins) or motherboard to complete an electrical connection.
- 3 Who made the first jumperless motherboard?
A Abit
- 4 What is "a programming library for terminal-independent cursor movement" called in UNIX?
A Unix Curses
- 4 The initial chip designed was called the 1201 and was later renamed when it was first released commercially in 1972. What was the renamed chip called?
A It was the Intel 8008, the basis for the x86 architecture. CTC gave the rights to Intel.

On December 18, a couple of days after the last meeting, Majel Barrett Roddenberry passed away. For those of you that do not recognize the name, she was the voice of the computer in "Star Trek" through all six TV series and several of the movies. As an actress she appeared in the original pilot, three of the series, a far based internet spin-off, and several of the movies.





More Photo Backup Options While Traveling

by Adam C. Engst <ace@tidbits.com>
article link: <<http://db.tidbits.com/article/9732>>

You're planning a big trip, and you know you'll be taking lots of photos with your digital camera. What's the best way to protect those photos while you're away from home and your normal backup gear?

In "Backing up Photos While Traveling" (2008-08-11), I shared my thoughts about how to back up while traveling, including the following:

<<http://db.tidbits.com/article/9728>>

* Internet Backup: If you can be certain of finding an Internet connection with high-speed upload capabilities on a regular basis, uploading photos to a photo sharing site like Flickr or to a server you control is a great way to ensure that disaster cannot claim your photos.

* iPod Storage: Although it's slow and limited, Apple's \$29 iPod Camera Connector could be a good solution if you happen to have a supported iPod model.

* Mac Storage: We settled on the blindingly obvious approach of copying photos from our cameras to my MacBook every night, leaving the photos on the 4 GB SD cards as well, so we had two copies in separate locations at all times. This worked well on this trip, but would have fallen down if we'd been gone much longer (since my MacBook didn't have much more free disk space) or if I hadn't wanted to take the MacBook at all.

Ever-alert TidBITS readers immediately sent me email with several other solutions that they've employed over the years. Depending on your situation, one of these might be just what you need on your next trip.

Recordable Disc -- David Malin suggests bringing a number of recordable CDs or DVDs along with self-addressed envelopes. Then, whenever you have enough photos to fill up a CD or DVD, you burn a disc, pop it in the envelope, add postage, and mail

it home. This approach would require bringing a laptop, of course, but it eliminates the disk space concern. Eric Watson worked around the need for the laptop by finding a shop down the street that would burn his photos to DVD for a few bucks. I'd be leery of depending on there always being such a shop down the street, though it could work if you're mostly staying in one place. I'd also be concerned about the effort of figuring out the necessary postage and mailbox locations, but even having the photos on disc would meet my goal of two copies in separate locations.

Hard Disk-Based Photo Wallet -- Lynette Kent and Rick Redfern enthusiastically recommended the PhotoSafe II and Picture Porter Elite from Digital Foci, and Dale Gould pointed me to what look like similar devices: the NexTo eXtreme ND2700 Portable Storage Unit and the Vosonic VP8860 Multimedia Viewer Recorder.

<http://www.digitalfoci.com/photo_safe.html>
<http://www.digitalfoci.com/picture_porter_elite.html>
<<http://www.mydigitaldiscount.com/Categor yProductList.jsp?cat=Browse+By+Brand%3ANextTo:NexTo+eXtreme+ND-2700>>
<<http://www.mydigitaldiscount.com/Categor yProductList.jsp?cat=Browse+By+Brand%3AVosonic:Vosonic+VP8860+Multimedia+Viewer+Recorder>>

The PhotoSafe II and the NexTo Extreme basically let you copy memory cards to the device's internal hard disk; they have only small text-based LCD screens that provide feedback. In comparison, the more-capable Picture Porter Elite and Vosonic Multimedia Viewer Recorder provide color LCDs that are larger than those in cameras for viewing your photos; they can also play and record audio and video, play FM radio, and print directly to printers. All these devices have rechargeable lithium-ion

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E-Mailing Photographs

By Richard Kennon, Editor, Amador
Computer Users Group, CA
www.acug.net
Drtrdguy(at)volcano.net

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

First, we **must** understand that photograph (image) size in the camera and in the computer is measured in **pixels**. These are the basic dots of color that make the picture. **Do not** pay any attention to anything that says "inches" or "pixels per inch." These terms are meaningless when we are considering a picture either in the camera or in the computer. They may come into play later if we want to print the photo on paper. But, that is another subject for another time. For now, we think only of pixels. Most cameras record too many pixels to e-mail. For instance a 6 megapixel camera will make a picture about 3000 pixels wide by 2000 pixels tall and the file size may be several megabytes. Our screens are usually only about 1000 pixels wide (some are larger and some smaller). So, if we e-mail the native picture, it will be wider than the screen for the recipient and the file will be so large, it may take "forever" to download to the recipient's computer. It is possible the service provider will not even accept it.

There are two things we must do to make a photo e-mailable. The first is to **resize** or **resample** the picture. We want to change the picture width from 3000 pixels to 800 pixels, for instance. This process is called resizing or resampling. We have to pick the best 800 pixels out of the 3000 to

represent our photo. Well, no, that is not exactly correct but it simplifies things to think of it that way. We don't have to worry about it because a lot of very smart programmers have developed ways (algorithms) to help us. Just remember, you want to resize or resample to get the photo down to a size convenient for e-mailing. I usually use 800 pixels or 900 pixels width for pictures I attach to e-mails.

The second thing to do to make a photo e-mailable is to save it in **JPEG format (.jpg)**. That is a format that reduces file size a lot and picture quality a little so the picture can be downloaded more quickly and still be nice to look at. Some software programs give you choices of compression amount with numbers ranging from 1 to 10. One will result in a very small file but the picture quality will not be good at all. A 10 will give the very best quality but with a very large file size. A reasonable compromise is to use 5 or 6. I usually use 6.

How do you do this? First, I will describe how to do it with a free Microsoft program. Then I will try to look at some other programs.

Microsoft Power Toys for XP has a Resize Pictures toy that is slick and easy but feedback says it only works on XP. It can be downloaded at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx>. Right click on an image name or thumbnail in Explorer or My Computer and choose **Resize Pictures**. You are limited to four specific sizes but they are good choices. They don't tell us what compression they are using but the results look OK. Unless you tell them under **Advanced** to replace the image in the file, it will make a copy. That's good. They will add the word, "Large", "Medium" or "Small" to the end of the name you have chosen.

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Apple Bytes

Laptop Battery Maintenance Procedures

By Norm Kronenberg, Macintosh Director, Hilton Head Island Computer Club

<http://hhicc.org>

nkron (at) roadrunner.com

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Standard Maintenance

For proper maintenance of a lithium-based battery, it's important to keep the electrons in it moving occasionally. Apple does not recommend leaving your portable plugged in all the time. An ideal use would be a commuter who uses her MacBook Pro on the train, then plugs it in at the office to charge. This keeps the battery juices flowing. If on the other hand, you use a desktop computer at work, and save a notebook for infrequent travel, Apple recommends charging and discharging its battery at least once per month. Need a reminder? Add an event to your desktop's iCal

Calibrate battery

PowerBook G4 (15-inch Double-Layer SD), MacBook (all models), MacBook Pro (all models), and MacBook Pro (17-inch) (all models).

The battery calibration for the PowerBook G4 (15-inch Double-Layer SD) and any model of MacBook or MacBook Pro has been updated because of a new battery released with this computer. With these computers, follow these steps to calibrate your battery:

1. Plug in the power adapter and fully charge your PowerBook's battery until the light ring or

LED on the power adapter plug changes to green and the onscreen meter in the menu bar indicates that the battery is fully charged.

2. Allow the battery to rest in the fully charged state for at least two hours. You may use your computer during this time as long as the adapter is plugged in.

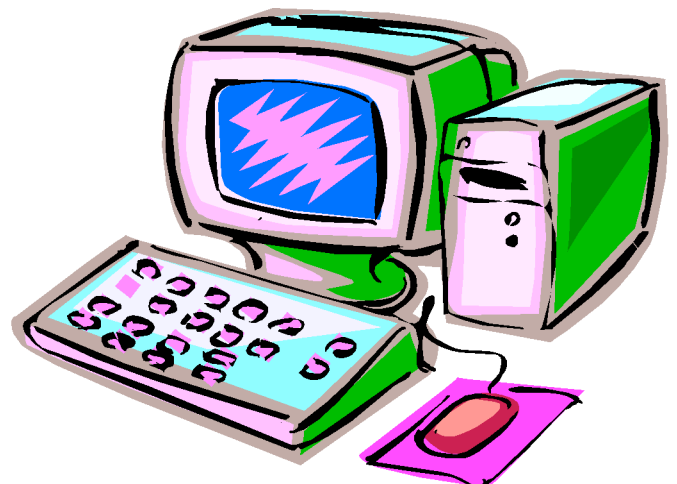
3. Disconnect the power adapter with the computer still on and start running the computer off battery power. You may use your computer during this time. When your battery gets low, you will see the low battery warning dialog on the screen.

4. Continue to keep your computer on until it goes to sleep. Save all your work and close all applications when the battery gets very low, before the computer goes to sleep.

5. Turn off the computer or allow it to sleep for five hours or more.

6. Connect the power adapter and leave it connected until the battery is fully charged again.

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Vanity Spreads to Top-Level Domain Names

by Glenn Fleishman <glenn@tidbits.com>
 article link: <<http://db.tidbits.com/article/9669>>

We all know about _vanity_ domain names - www dot yourname here dot com, org, net, info, c otherwise. The Internet authority that oversees domain names is about to let you get a little more top-heavy with your vanity, if you have deep enough pockets.

ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) has voted to move forward on allowing new top-level domains (TLDs), which form the right-most part of a domain name, like .com, .uk, or .aero. The original TLDs included .gov, .edu, .mil, .com, and .org, and expanded to include all two-letter country codes, such as .au for Australia and .nu for the island nation of Niue. (If you look at "www.tidbits.com", .com is the TLD, tidbits is the domain name registered in the .com hierarchy, and www is the local host name that defines a real or virtual server.)

<<http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5gvve1Yb-5RVLcOGTklwFT6fIYwvAD91HR4N80>>

For \$100,000 to \$500,000, a company or an individual could apply for a TLD. Many years ago, when I worked at Amazon.com, I saw that TLD proposals were underway, and I suggested Amazon sponsor .book so that an ISBN number plus .book would result in a search result on the site. That wasn't possible then, it turned out, but would be possible under this new regime.

Names could be turned down in a first-pass review if they were offensive, violated trademarks or were too similar to an existing TLD (.con for grifters, perhaps? :-)). There's little information now about how two companies that want the same generic TLD, like .book, would work that out. Bidding? First-come, first-serve? Shared delegated authority? These details are expected to be worked out between now and about April 2009. The ICANN page on the topic is unfortunately quite bureaucratic and technical in discussing this issue.

<<http://www.icann.org/topics/new-gtld-program.htm>>

Is this change necessary? Hard to say. It could be quite difficult to find the appropriate domain name for your business, non-profit organization, social site, or personal domain because of the exhaustion of generic words, and the vast growth in the use of sites to pull in advertising dollars through Google AdSense and affiliate program referrals. Opening up new TLDs could allow ISPs and other organizations to build a little more wiggle room.

For instance, a soccer organization could register .soccer, and then work with a registrar to allow both fans and teams to have domains underneath that. The related problem, though, is that companies controlling TLDs that have a relationship to their product might be more ready to yank domain names that have content or engage in behavior they disagree with. That might run counter to the rules that ICANN requires for domain name handling.

I could also see some interesting cooperative work emerge. Say 5,000 Mac users wanted to register .fanboy - to take back the pejorative - and were willing to pony up \$20 each, if the TLD cost were \$100,000. That's certainly do-able.

The proposal will also allow the creation of TLDs that don't use English. Domain names and TLDs currently are limited to a through z and 0 through 9; domain names can also include one or more hyphens. An obscure system currently allows a kind of mapping for non-English characters and letters, and ICANN has been working on a way to allow a more straightforward encoding method. They started testing this in October 2007. (See "ICANN Tests Non-Roman Characters in Domain Names," 2007-10-12.)

<<http://db.tidbits.com/article/9235>>

Part of the new TLD proposal would allow countries to request their two-letter code in



characters from their native language or languages. The final report on that proposal was presented at an ICANN meeting. A draft report on the non-Roman character test was released on 24-Jun-08.

<<http://www.ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/n-time-table-19dec07.htm>>
<<http://icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-24jun08-en.htm>>

The real question, of course, is how long it takes our fearless leader here at TidBITS to put together enough pennies for .bits.

Mini- DLP Projector

<http://accessories.us.dell.com/sna/products/Projector/productdetail.aspx?c=us&l=en&s=bsd&cs=04&sku=24-0939>

Polaroid PoGo

<http://www.polaroid.com/pogo/us/specs.html>

Novo Minoru 3D Webcam

<http://www.minoru3dwebcam.com/>

Cellphone Signal Extender

<http://www.thinkgeek.com/gadgets/cellphone/9823/>

USB Laser Guided Missile Launcher

<http://www.thinkgeek.com/geektoys/warfare/8bc4/>

Solio S19-B38D Universal Hybrid Solar Charger w/ USB 2.0 Cable (for iPod & Cell Phones)

http://www.powermax.com/parts/show/a-bet-s19-b38d?utm_source=Pricegrabber&utm_medium=Referral&utm_campaign=Pricegrabber&src=pg

Giant Swiss Army Knife

<http://www.thinkgeek.com/gadgets/tools/8b97/>

Lapworks - Ergonomic New Laptop Desk Futura

http://www.laptopdesk.net/laptopdesk_futura.html

Flexible Chromatic USB Hub

<http://www.thinktechno.com/2008/10/05/flexible-chromatic-usb-hub-for-the-young-and-flexible/>

USB Powered Retro Web Cam

http://www.fatbraintoy.com/toy_companies/jumpin_anana/usb_powered_retro_web_cam.cfm?source=pricegrabber&utm_source=pricegrabber&utm_medium=cse&utm_campaign=cse_November&cvsfa=1327&cvsfe=C&cvsfp=JB015-1

from pg. 6

**New iPod Touch
A Computer in Your Pocket**

The iPhone 3G has gotten all of the attention, but the new iPod Touch is a powerful touchscreen computer, with Wi-Fi access to the Internet, but without the cell phone feature or GPS. It is available in 8-, 16- or 32 MB capacities. Connect to the Internet wherever there's a wireless network. Surf the web and send email from any Wi-Fi hotspot. Get directions, check the weather, follow stocks, watch YouTube, and more.

The 3.5-inch touchscreen display is perfect for surfing the Web, watching movies and playing games.

from pg. 4

batteries for use away from a computer. They can also connect to a Mac via USB 2.0, at which point they can act as memory card readers and as normal external hard drives. Prices depend on the size hard disk you want, ranging from about \$130 to \$500.

I'd be hesitant to buy one of these devices for a single trip, but I like the fact that they can be used as battery-powered external hard drives as well, since that would make them more generally useful beyond travel. Lynette also said that the Picture Porter Elite can copy files back to memory cards, which would make it possible to create additional backups on inexpensive memory cards and mail those home for even more peace of mind.



from pg. 5

If you are happy with this solution, then read no further. But, if you want to use a picture editing program, maybe this will help.

In Photoshop Elements 5, click on **Image>Resize>Image Size** and this window will pop up. Note that there is some garbage at the bottom about “inches” but we will ignore that. First we will click the **Resample Image** box. That puts the Pixel Dimensions in play and that is what we want. I selected the Width box and changed the width to 800 pixels. Since the **Constrain Proportions** box is selected, that is all I have to do.

Note, down at the bottom, that we have several choices of sampling algorithms. This is frosting on the cake. I read somewhere that I should use **Bicubic Sharper** when downsizing so that is what I do. Most programs don't give us all these choices. Then we should click on **File>Save As** and give the photo a new name. I often just use the same name and add “_800px” so the next time I will know it is ready to e-mail. Here we can choose the JPEG format and the compression amount. Photoshop Elements 6 is out now and sells for about \$100. If you are able to spend that much and want one of the best editing programs, I highly recommend it.

Let's look at Picasa2. It is a free program from Google and looks really good but I do not have much experience with it. By all means, try it first because the price is right! When it comes to e-mailing photographs, it is a little more automated but not any easier to use than Elements. First, click on **Tools>Options>E-Mail**. Then select the width you want in pixels. There are six choices. Then click on **Apply** and **OK**.

The next step is to click on **File>E-Mail** and you will get three choices of how you want to e-mail your photos. Fortunately, I use Outlook Express so my choice is listed.

When I clicked on Outlook Express, an e-mail page popped up with the photo attached. At this point we can write something else on the e-mail and send it. I recommend this so the recipient will know it is really from you and not something sent out by a virus. When I receive e-mails that only say “Attached”, I **Delete** them without looking at the attachment. This saved me one time when I received a virus from my sister-in-law that she did not know she sent. She spent weeks and dollars getting her computer back up. Oh, I digress. If you want to send more than one picture (and, who doesn't?), you must select the picture and click on the Hold button near the bottom of the screen. Do this for each photo you want to send and they will all be attached to the e-mail. The program automatically chooses JPEG format and a compression ratio but does not tell you. That is OK as the pictures I tried looked good. Picasa2 has considerable capability for editing photos in many respects. Try it!

There are many other editing programs that I haven't mentioned and have no experience with. In all cases you want to change the picture's size in pixels by resizing or resampling. Pay no attention to anything that says “inches” as that will have no meaning for this process. Sometime later we will talk about printing pictures and then we will use inches.

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PULP Staff	
Editor	Stuart Rabinowitz
Distribution	George Carbonell

Membership: Anyone may become a member. Dues are \$12 per year and include a one-year subscription to The Pulp as well as access to the HUGE Public Domain disk libraries and BBS. Meeting topics, times and places can be found on page 1 of this issue.

Officers & SIG Leaders

President:	George Carbonell	568-0492	george.carbonell@comcast.net
Vice President	Stuart Rabinowitz	633-9038	s.e.rabinowitz@att.net
Secretary:	Ted Bade	643-0430	tbade@cox.net
Treasurer:	Charles Gagliardi	233-0370	epencil@att.net
Director at Large:	Richard Sztaba		richer1@aol.com
Web Manager:	Bob Bonato		wmaster@huge.org

Membership:	Richard Sztaba		richer1@aol.com
Integrated SIG:	Stuart Rabinowitz	633-9038	s.e.rabinowitz@att.net

January 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Apple incorporated 1977
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 HAL operational 1997	12	13	14	15	16	17
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