

# MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP

## July 2000 Newsletter

### MEETING NOTICE

by: Steve Turner

**When:** Tues., July 11th, 7:30 PM

**Where:** Old Bedford School  
(1800 block of Bedford Road)  
Second Floor.

**Program:** July's program will be given by a representative of the investing firm Morgan, Stanley, Dean Witter. Come and learn all you can about the benefits and ease of investing over the Internet.

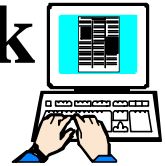
At the last board meeting for the Mid-Cities PCUG we decided to plan a set of dates for web-site training. They will be held on the following Thursday evenings from 7-9 PM, July 13th, 20th & 27th. The location will be St. Paul United Methodist Church at 852 Bedford Euless Rd. in Bedford (between N.E. Mall & Precinct Line Rd.).

FYI - After attending the hardware workshop, Clem Countess built an AMD Athlon system and used the processor that he won at last November's meeting. Also, Harold Washburn built himself a Celeron system as a result of attending this session.

We will be having another workshop later this summer. Ask me at the next meeting and I should have more information for you.

## From the President's Cluttered Desk

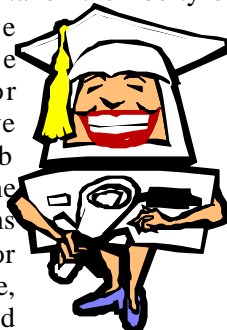
by Rick Howell



First, let me thank those of you who have sent along their well-wishes for my wife Donna, who recently underwent some surgery and is currently recovering at home. She is doing well, and I hope to have her back to making a living in the near future. I would also like to report that Earl Drake is still in the hospital, and is fighting a respiratory infection at the time of this writing. Our best wishes for a speedy recovery go out to Earl.

Some of you have commented on the quality of the programs we are getting at the meetings these days, and Steve has been doing an excellent job for us there. His job is getting a little easier with our increased presence on the internet. In the past two months, we have received three requests from people asking to make presentations to the group. This is a welcome trend. In the past we have had to beg and plead people to come and make presentations to the group. Our internet presence has let the world know we are here and we are here to stay!

Because we were having some difficulty in making our website easily accessible, I have taken the liberty of registering the domain name [mcpug.org](http://mcpug.org) for our group. I have also secured a web host by the name of DFW Domains to host our site for a minimal charge, which I have paid



out of my own pocket just to show you guys how much I believe in all of you. Don't get me wrong, this is no great expense. It helps that the CEO of DFW Domains is in our own group. If he wants to let you know who he is, I will leave that up to him. Anyway, the end result is that if you want to find us on the worldwide web, all you have to do is type in [www.mcpug.org](http://www.mcpug.org) and there we are. It doesn't get any easier than that folks! I am going to be taking on the duties as webmaster myself for a while, at least until we get things operating more smoothly, and the web site will be changing slowly. Right now, it looks a lot like it originally did when nobody could find it. You may now send email to me at [webmaster@mcpug.org](mailto:webmaster@mcpug.org). You may send email to Anne Johnson, our membership chairperson at [membership@mcpug.org](mailto:membership@mcpug.org). You may email Steve Turner, our Vice-President in charge of programs at [programs@mcpug.org](mailto:programs@mcpug.org), and you may email Nancy Hester, our newsletter editor and chairperson at [newsletter@mcpug.org](mailto:newsletter@mcpug.org). Hopefully, this will make operations a little smoother.

I still must impress upon you how important it is for us to get new members in the group. Certainly, our new website and internet presence will help, but we really need you to spread the word. Please bring a friend or acquaintances to a meeting and let's get that attendance up. It is a lot of fun and more people can only make it a more rewarding experience.

# Quips N Tips

By Rick Howell

Computers and the Internet have been responsible for a lot of changes in our world today. Now, perhaps one of the most interesting things that can be attributed, at least partially, to computers is the formation of a whole new country. Nope, I'm not joking.

It all started back during World War II, when Adolph Hitler was sending love letters via airmail to the people of Great Britain in the form of high explosives. The Brits finally tired of German aircraft flying around and built a series of offshore anti-aircraft platforms in the North Sea. One of the platforms in particular, known as Rough's Tower stands in 24 feet of water, 6 miles east of Felixstowe, England, an industrial port on the southeast coast. The platform was abandoned after the war, and remained so until 1967, when a man named Roy Bates, a British war veteran, occupied the tower, renamed it Sealand, and declared its independence from Great Britain. Roy proclaimed himself the governing monarch of Sealand.

Well, you're saying, what's all this got to do with computers? Ok, ok, hang on. I'm getting to it. Along comes Ryan Lackey, a 21-year-old MIT dropout and self-taught crypto expert. Starting to sound more like it? Lackey feels that freedom to store and move data of all types is going to be a money-making proposition in the near future, and the only way to get away from government-imposed restrictions is to create your own country and make up your own rules. Enter Sealand and Roy Bates. Lackey has obtained a million bucks in seed money from

some Internet investors and is setting up Sealand as a data repository, outside the jurisdiction of the rest of the world. The company name is HavenCo Ltd. They plan to allow such things as online gambling, pyramid schemes and adult pornography, as well as data co-location services to any company anywhere.

Now you're saying "Just what the heck is data co-location?". Ok, case in point. Let's say an accounting firm handles accounts for a large casino who doesn't want the IRS to know exactly how much money is coming and going. The accounting firm feels that the data they have on the casino could be legally damaging if the wrong government agency got their greedy little paws on it, so they make sure the records are stored at Sealand. The government agency decides to investigate the casino, so the first thing they do is subpoena all the records of the accounting firm pertaining to the casino. But, oops, the casino's records aren't kept in this country, so sorry, Charlie. No can do. And that's the whole reason Sealand hopes to make millions, by offering a safe haven for data, beyond the reaches of those who don't have a need-to-know. Interesting concept. We'll just have to see how it goes. If you want to read more about Sealand, pick up the July issue of *Wired* magazine. It's featured on the cover, or go to [www.havenco.com](http://www.havenco.com) and get the whole story.

Since security seems to be in the news and all the talk these days, have you ever



wondered how companies gather information about you and your habits on the web? Did you know that many of the shareware programs we all know and love have built-in routines that actually report your activities to people you never knew existed? If I told you that one of the offending programs was PKZIP would you still use it? If you are interested, and I think you should be, please pick up a copy of *PC Magazine*, dated July, 2000 and read the article by Neil J. Rubenking entitled "Who's Watching You Surf?". It is an eye-opener.

I seem to be getting a little long-winded here, but there is one other thing I need to pass along. Many of the people in our group are getting high-speed cable or DSL internet connections. If any of you are interested in setting up a high-speed internet connection on all the computers in your house without having to pay AT&T or Southwestern Bell for extra connections, you need to look into using some of the new routers that are coming on the market today. The router acts as your single point-of-contact for your internet connection, and routes packets to and from the various computers on your home network to the ISP while maintaining a single web identity to the ISP. These systems will work on AT&T's @home service and on DSL. Steve and I have checked them on both systems. If you are interested in more information about this, contact Steve Turner or me. See you at the meeting.

# *Ghost In The Machine*

*Provided by ISYNDICATE*

Last week I had two people ask basically the same question. The question was: "Is it possible to completely remove data from a hard drive?" The simple answer is yes and no. When you send a file or folder to the recycle bin or the trash can (for you Mac users) the file is actually still there. Until you empty the recycle bin, the file is still there. But even if you empty the recycle bin or trash can, the file will still be there on the hard drive. When you delete a file, the only thing that is deleted is the file name or the reference to the file in the file allocation table. With the right software, it is relatively easy to recover deleted files from your hard drive. Some file recovery software can even work over a network connection. What this means is that if you have confidential information or documents on your computer, simply deleting them does not get rid of them and an enterprising person could, if he or she wanted to, get at those files on your hard drive and see your confidential information. If you have financial information or any other sensitive or confidential information on your hard drive you should always keep this in mind that once deleted, your files are not really gone. Often times, in a corporate environment, computers get moved around. The CFO gets a new computer so his assistant gets his old one. Steps are taken to remove all of the files on the computer's hard drive so that sensitive company information such as salaries and bank account numbers are no longer there. The assistant, disgruntled and low paid who just happens to know how to recover deleted files, runs a little software utility on the "cleaned"

hard drive and by the next day he has enough information in his hands that he can now clean the company's bank account and by the next day is pleasantly retired at the age of 37 on a beach somewhere in the South Pacific.

There are some very good file recovery utilities on the market today. Programs such as Undelete for Windows works very well at recovering files locally or over the network. Other utilities such as Lost and Found or EasyRecovery can recover files from what most people would consider to be a dead unbootable hard drive. Recovery can even be done on a hard drive that has been formatted. I have used software such as this on a hard drive that had a damaged FAT to recover two years worth of genealogical research that my wife had done. It worked beautifully. These software solutions claim that if the drive can spin, the data can be recovered.

If these software methods do not work, there are services such as DataRec that are dedicated to file recovery, from hard drives that do not even spin. The cost of this service can run from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars for the recovery of the lost files. What I am trying to point out here is that unless you take special measures the files on your hard drive can be gotten back out again, even from a hard drive that has been trashed as much as junk metal.

## **File Deletion:**

With proper care your files can be permanently removed. In order to completely delete or wipe your hard drive the data must be

removed first and then overwritten with other data. The overwriting is not just more data, but overwriting with 1's and 0's. To be completely sure the overwriting should be done several times. If you were to look at a hard drive that has been wiped this way with a hex editor you would see 0x24 0x92 0x49 0x92 0x49 0x24 in a never ending pattern. Most of your good software file wipers will overwrite at least three times, and some of the more sophisticated utilities will overwrite twelve or more times.

Some of the recommended programs for permanently removing files are:

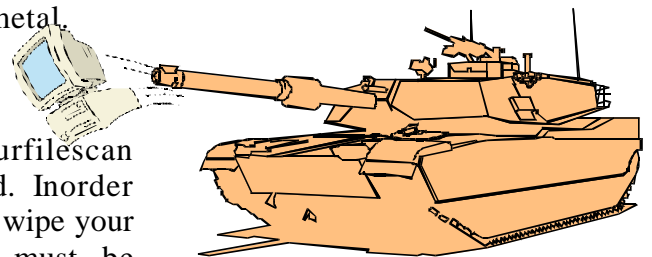
DATA ERASER (one for professional use and another for home users)

SHREDX (drag & drop interface)

WIPE (version 0.16 or above)

THE ERASER (for Mac users)

Even with all of the sophistication available for file deletion, the defense department does not consider usual measures safe enough. When the Defense Department wants to discard old, unused hard drives they wipe them, degauss them and then physically shred them until there is nothing left but pea sized pieces of metal. Now that is secure file deletion.



## THE MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP

The Mid-Cities PC Users' Group is a not for-profit organization whose objectives are:

- \*to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experience,
- \*education in the form of seminars and programs, and
- \*community as pertains to the computer industry.

Annual membership is \$24.00 per family with one vote per membership. Members are encouraged to notify the Membership Chairperson of any change of address as soon as possible to continue receiving their monthly newsletter. Please address any notification to: Mid-Cities PC Users' Group: Attn. Membership Chair, P.O. Box 54141, Hurst, TX 76054

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## THE MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP NEWSLETTER

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### CONTRIBUTING ARTICLES

**Article Style:** Type all copy flush left without justification; use word wrap feature for your paragraphs. This includes headings, by-lines, and the first line of each paragraph. Place a credit by-line (author's name) between the title and first paragraph. Leave no blank lines between paragraphs. Use only one space between sentences.

**File Formats:** Word Perfect 5.0 is preferred. If formatting is crucial and you do not have access to Word Perfect 5.0 or Microsoft Word, send a hard copy to show the layout.

**Submitting Articles:** You may use one of two methods. Uploading the article to Nancy Hester at nancyhesterusa@netscape.net or you can hand them to her on diskette (3.5" preferred) during the general membership meetings.



Thanks a lot!

**Deadline:** The last Friday of the month prior to intended publication.

### Advertising Rates:

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