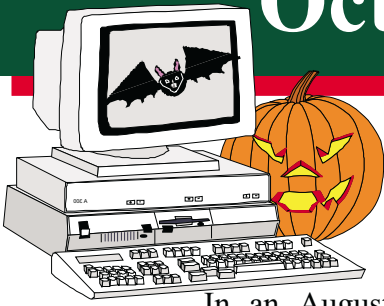


MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP

October 2002 Newsletter



Quips N' Tips

by Rick Howell

In an August 28th article posted on <http://sci.newsfactor.com>, reporter Jay Lyman revealed that Seagate, a name with which we are all familiar, has announced a breakthrough in magnetic recording technology. Designated with the acronym HAMR for Heat-Assisted Magnetic Recording, Seagate researchers believe they can compress data to a density which may accommodate as much as fifty terabytes per square inch. To put this into perspective, you would be able to store the entire written contents of the Library of Congress on a disk drive for a notebook computer. Sign me up for one. Seagate spokesperson John Paulsen says the technology will be incorporated within five to ten years.

It seems that Microsoft has finally taken XP out of Beta testing and released Service Pack 1 for XP. In my opinion, the release of the first service pack signals the end of the beta testing for Microsoft, who continues to release untested software, allowing their customers to beta test everything for them, all the while paying for the privilege. It's good to be the king.

While on the subject of my favorite company, Microsoft has recently introduced their Media Center Edition of Windows XP. The Media Center Edition contains features which will allow you to record television broadcasts on your PC. Expect to see Media Center PCs on the market by Christmas. In an effort to appease Hollywood and the Motion Picture Association of America, Microsoft has crippled their software by making the recording media only usable on a single computer. What this means is you can write your favorite programs to CD or DVD, but you can only view them on the PC on which they were

originally recorded. Many people feel that this concession to the MPAA places Microsoft in bed with the Hollywood bunch and shows a cold shoulder to the people who brought them to the dance – the end user. Watch for third-party software which will bypass Microsoft's security crap and make the Media PCs a truly desirable addition to your home entertainment system.

Two months ago, a friend of mine, Sheila Doyle, introduced us to the Lego Mindstorm robotics technology with her robot which collected cans. It was an interesting time for all who attended and we got to see a dynamic application of personal computing. It is easy for most of us to sit in front of our computers and type or surf the net and forget that the computer is capable of so much more. Thanks to Sheila for adding a new dimension to our computer experience. We also got to see Steve Turner and George Miner diagnose a problem with George's computer and we found out who the real nerd was when one of our members just happened to have an extra power supply in the back of his car.

Last month Steve entertained us with the construction of a new PC. It kind of reminded me of Tom Sawyer painting the fence, the way all the members pitched in to build the system. It will be interesting to see how he tops that this month. See y'all at the meeting.

MEETING NOTICE

by: George Miner

When: Tuesday, October 8, at 7:15 PM

Where: Haltom City Library, located in the 3200 block of Friendly Lane. See our web site for more specific directions. [Http://www.mcpcug.org](http://www.mcpcug.org)

Program: Finding Reliable Medical Information on the Internet. Our speakers will be **Anne and Ted Drake** from TCC.



Hard Drive Full? Here's How to Make More Room

*By Preston Gralla, Contributing Columnist for ZDNet Anchor Desk
Taken from May 14th, 2002 article*

Your hard disk is probably littered with junk: duplicate files, data left behind by ill-behaved programs, and other worthless detritus created in the normal course of computing.

It's time for spring cleaning, and ZDNet Downloads can help. I've tracked down three programs that help remove those useless files from your hard disk and give you a cleaner, leaner machine, one that has more disk space and runs more smoothly.

PC Magazine's Dupeless finds duplicate files on your hard disk, and then lets you delete them. It finds more than just the obvious duplications; it also locates files that have the exact same contents, but different file names. This program can also distinguish between files that have the same name, and different contents, but it won't identify those as duplicates. *(Free/Windows)*

Disk Space Recovery Wizard finds useless data scattered on your hard disk, and deletes it to free up disk space. Before it deletes any files, though, it makes sure the data's not being used by an application. *(Shareware/Windows)*

RYSO Cleaner is a duplicate file finder that works across LANs, so you can use it to clean more than one system. You can fine-tune how the program searches for duplicate files, such as telling it to find duplicates of a certain file size. This program also includes a viewer so you can examine the duplicate files yourself. *(Shareware/Windows)*

Say good-bye to junk data, and say hello to more hard disk space! Try these downloads, and you'll have a PC that holds more data and operates more smoothly than before.

Money Matters: Tools for Managing Investments

*By Jason Parker, Contributing Editor, for ZDNet Downloads
Taken from September 18th article*

Do you play the stockmarket? If so, you probably know how tricky it is to manage your portfolio.

I'm not just talking about the current economic turmoil, either. It's a big hassle to monitor your stocks in bear and bull markets alike, whether your methods involve flipping through the paper or searching the Web for stock quotes.

So where do you go when you want timely information on your investments all in one place? Fortunately, there are a number of free or inexpensive programs at ZDNet Downloads that are designed to keep track of your burgeoning portfolio.

Medved Quote Tracker offers streaming real-time quotes and extensive data to help you identify trends. You can also have this program send you e-mail alerts with the current price of stocks you're following

closely. *(Free/Windows)*

Omnia Stock Tracker lets you evaluate your portfolio with the push of a button. This helps you keep an eye on the current worth of all your investments, from your 401(k) to individual stocks. *(Free/Windows)*

Stock Calculator for Mac helps online investors calculate which stocks are performing well based on initial price and user-defined profit margins. It also lets you convert fractional stock prices into decimals and print your data for review offline. *(Shareware/Mac)*

Though the market may not be where you want it to be, that should give you even more incentive to track and manage your investments wisely. These programs will help you be prepared for when the big turnaround finally arrives.

Computer Lessons to be Learned

By Pat Hester

It happened just a month ago. Here in Tennessee, the local Tri Cities Computer Club, that had been in operation for over 20 years, decided to disband. I don't really know the number of active members remaining. However, the club produced monthly newsletters with pictures and stories that, as a non member, I found interesting and informative. I suspect that like our club, its membership got down to a size that the remaining active few decided to throw in the towel. Perhaps they suffered from having no new members, or a lack of good programs. Perhaps they should have decided to hold bimonthly or quarterly meetings and re-focus the club on PC technical help or trouble shooting their mutual problems.

Less meetings mean fewer dues. The stress of coming up with programs for small size groups is one of the biggest problems. Vendors won't come to a small group meeting.

Another thought. The remaining few should elect a new president and staff to add new life to those who want to keep the club alive. Everyone knows it's the ability to call another user and ask them how they solved a problem that is one of the single most important benefit that an active group can offer each other. We should never throw out the baby with the bath water. Our current president, Steve Turner, is one of the most technically savvy people I know, and I would miss the knowledge and personality of Rick's newsletters

and insights. If he were to walk away. No, these folks should be honored with lifetime membership and plaques that show how much we care. Rick's column has always been a cornerstone of this club's outstanding contribution to its members. Steve has been the one person to spearhead building of PCs by its members. We must honor them and yet not take them for granted. We need new people to run the club, less meetings, but maybe more coffee club get together to share our problems and our goals in computing.

Who will come forward and keep us from being disbanded?

Now the rest of the story....The Tri-Cities PC Computer Club did disband. However, within two weeks time, they became the MAC computer club, because the original club had a MAC SIG that refused to disband and they carried on the club name and united all the MAC members to keep it going.

Perhaps we should consider all the alternatives. We've met most all of you and think you are a great bunch of friends. Maybe we can change and grow. We should at least have all of each others e-mail addresses and a web page with FTP in which to leave questions and answers.

Long live Mid Cities PC Users group.

**One of our members,
Nolan Terrill, is in the hospital.
Drop him a line when you can
nterrill@nationwide.net**

**Articles are needed!
Put on your thinking caps
and throw one at us!**

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 notifications 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: MS Word or Word Perfect is preferred. If formatting is crucial and you do not have access to the above programs, send a hard copy to show the layout.

Submitting Articles: You may use one of two methods. Uploading the article to Nancy Hester at newsletter@mcpcug.org or e-mailing her directly at nancyhesterusa@netscape.net



Thanks a lot!

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

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