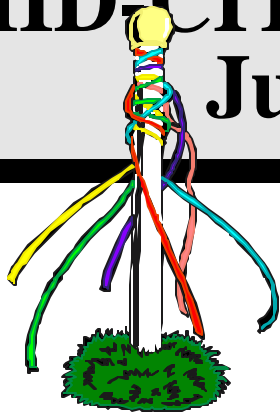


MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP

June 2001 Newsletter



Quips N' Tips

by Rick Howell



The magazines this month are full of XP, Microsoft's newest attempt to relieve you of your hard-earned cash. Andy Patrizio of *WiredNews*, an online computer magazine, summed it up about as well as anyone when he said, "If the dairy industry could get as much milk out of a cash cow as Microsoft, we'd need no more than a dozen cows to keep the whole country a wash dairy". So, we all pay for the evolution of a software product just to have the "latest and greatest" on our home computer. Is it worth it? I guess that depends on whether you can actually justify paying the cost of an upgrade just for the new features you will gain. Office XP standard retails at \$239 for the upgrade and \$479 for the full version. Office XP Professional is \$329 for the upgrade and \$579 for the full version. Street prices should be somewhat lower.

Speaking of cash cows, Microsoft announced on June 4th they will be including Windows Messenger to soon-to-be-released Windows XP. Windows Messenger will provide enhanced instant messaging, text, chat, video, audio and telephony services, very similar to America On Line's Instant Messenger. This may be part of Microsoft's strategy to incorporate more of the features of Net Meeting and Instant Messenger into their new operating system. Beta copies should be on their way to product evaluators.

If you are a fan of computer games or multimedia processing and you are in the market for a new computer, you might want to wait a bit. NVidia, the graphics processor company is planning to introduce a new chip set for AMD Athlon and Duron processor motherboards. The performance numbers NVidia is quoting are impressive. They are claiming video processing times eight times faster than current Intel and AMD chipsets, and a Dynamic Adaptive Speculative Pre-Processor which monitors memory traffic and pre-processes data providing up to a twenty percent performance improvement. Data between the chip set and the processor passes along a bridge called a HyperTransport which transmits data at 800MB per second. Traditional PCI bridges are limited to a maximum of about 200MB per second. What this means is that you won't waste so many CD-Rs because of burn failure due to slow data transfer. Audiophiles will appreciate the 1922-D voices and 643-D voices compared to Sound Blaster Live's half that much. NVidia is also claiming 15 to 20 percent increase in network performance over 3Com. NVidia is licensing their products to motherboard manufacturers Gigabyte, MicroStar, Mitac, ASUSTeK and Abit.

The new boards should be available this fall. Gotta have it!

Via Technologies Inc. has announced they are releasing a chip set which will allow Pentium based motherboard to utilize DDR SDRAM instead of RAMBUS RAM which Intel has been promoting so much lately. Via claims roughly an 8 percent increase in system performance utilizing DDR SDRAM. Makes you wonder why Intel went that route originally. At the time of my writing this article, Via had not been licensed yet by Intel to use the Pentium 4 bus, and was still in negotiations with Intel. Via claims they will ship the chip set in August whether they have an agreement with Intel or not.

Several of our members (including myself) were fortunate enough to be invited to attend the AMD Tech Tour show in Dallas on June 5th, where AMD introduced their new Multi-Processor system for low-end workstations. This was the first time the product was shown in the United States and I have to admit it was impressive. The graphics demo they were displaying was SolidWorks, a 3-D solid modeling program and the dual-processor handled processor-intensive calculations like a supercomputer. This product is targeting workstations which usually retail in the seven to ten thousand dollar range. The AMD price has not yet been announced, but should be substantially lower.

MEETING NOTICE

by: George Miner

When: Tuesday, June 12 at 7:15PM

Where: Old Bedford School (in 1800 block of Bedford Road)

Program: Our speakers for June will be group discussion by members on their favorite programs. This will be a great program, and will add to your enjoyment and knowledge. Bring a friend.

Our newsletter editor was Tennessee this past week and left her husband to do the hat trick.

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

2000/01 OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

President	Steve Turner	(817) 457-7131 president@mcpcug.org
VPP Programs	George Miner	(817) 292-3965 programs@mcpcug.org
Publicity	Don Helyer	(817) 318-8475 publicity@mcpcug.org
Secretary	Sheryl Lynn Roberts	(817) 292-5420 secretary@mcpcug.org
Treasurer	Tom Waak	(817) 281-8950 treasurer@mcpcug.org
Newsletter Ed.	Nancy Hester	(817) 496-1961 newsletter@mcpcug.org
Member Chair	Anne Johnson	(817) 268-6411 Membership@mcpcug.org

Mid-Cities PC Users' Group
PO Box 54141
Hurst, TX 76054 <http://www.mcpcug.org>

THE MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP NEWSLETTER

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CONTRIBUTING ARTICLES

Article Style: Type all copy flush left without justification; use wordwrap 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 hardcopy to show the layout.

Submitting Articles: You may use one of two methods. Uploading the article to Nancy Hester at newsletter@mcpcug.org 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:

7½ in. x 9 in.	Full Page	\$40.00
7½ in. x 4 in.	Half Page	\$20.00
3¾ in. x 4¼ in.	Quarter Page	\$12.50
3½ in. x 2 in.	Business Card	\$5.50

Discounts: 3 months = 5%; 6 months = 10%. 1st month full price, discount applies to months thereafter.

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