



OMUG

<http://www.oly mug.org>

NEWS



Vol. 13, No. 4

Olympia Microcomputer Users Group

April 2005

April meeting sets direction of OMUG

By Bill Gortz
OMUG President

In some respects the April general meeting will be the most important meeting of the year with the election of officers for the coming year, and will help determine the course OMUG will be taking this next year. Except for the position of Director At Large, all candidates are running unopposed this year and I hope this means that everyone is satisfied with the current officers and the way things are going.

Nominations for the various offices are as follows:

- President – Bill Gortz
- Vice President – Shirley Bellinghausen
- Secretary – Emily Brooks
- Treasurer – Max Whipps
- Newsletter Editor – Sandra Pishner
- Webmaster – Pat Sonnenstuhl
- Director At Large (3 positions) (Alphabetical)
James Gunnells



Tom Johnson
Christie McCormick
L.D. McNall
May Murrell

There will also be a space on the ballots for a write-in candidate for each position. If anyone has changed their mind and has decided that they want to be a write-in candidate for an office I suggest that they get on the reflector and let OMUG members know before the election.

I would like to thank the nominating committee for its efforts in making this a successful election - chair Wes Kirkpatrick, and members Don Hertzog and Tonnie Yamane.

There are two people on the

executive board who have decided not to run for reelection who deserve our thanks for the jobs they have done. They are Vivian Forrester, OMUG Secretary and John Marshall, Director At Large and former president. Neither one is completely giving up OMUG duties, as Vivian has agreed to be the chair of the public relations committee and John will continue with the Windows SIG, the Hot Topics SIG, and other activities.

This month's presentation at the general meeting will be on JASC Paint Shop products, Paint Shop Pro 9, Paint Shot Pro Studio and Paint Shop Photo Album and will be presented by myself. I will touch lightly on Paint Shop Pro 9 and Paint Shop Pro Studio, but the main emphasis will be on Paint Shop Photo Album to give some idea of what to do to with your digital images besides storing them in a digital "shoe box" on your computer's hard drive.

I hope to see you at this month's general meeting and don't forget about coming out to vote.

Making a movie with Windows Movie Maker

By Chuck Guion, Editor
Rockport Computer Users' Group

Many of our club members saw Patty Beasley's movie that she made on Joe Files. She used Windows Movie Maker 2 (WMM2) to make it. I thought I would also create some movies. Patty gave me some hints on how she made her movie. One very

helpful tip she gave me was to first create your movie in PowerPoint and save each slide as a JPG. You can add text, templates, etc. while you are in PowerPoint. Another way to make a movie is to use WMM 2.1. (You don't have to use PowerPoint; you can use Video Effects, Video Transitions, and add text within the program.)

If you haven't downloaded XP's

Service Pack 2, then you should download and install it since WMM Version 2.1 is included. Open up WMM 2.1 and make a Collection (import all of your slides from PowerPoint into the Collection). Start a New Project and drag the slides into Storybook View. Import a music file (MP3) from

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EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Bill Gortz, 426-2310,
president@olymug.org

Vice President: Shirley
Bellinghausen, 426-7149,
vicepresident@olymug.org

Secretary: Vivian Forrester, 357-
5029, secretary@olymug.org

Treasurer: Max Whipps, 486-9959
treasurer@olymug.org

Newsletter Editor: Sandy
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Webmaster: Pat Sonnenstuhl,
webmaster@olymug.org

Director at Large: Christie
McCormick, 426-9996,
librarian@olymug.org

Director at Large: James
Gunnells, director1@olymug.org

Director at Large: John Marshall,
director2@olymug.org

KEY MEMBERS

APCUG Representative: Bill Gortz

Budget Committee Chair: Bill Gortz

Database Manager: Max Whipps

Elections Chair: Bob Steinberg

Historian: David Belles

Membership Chair: James Gunnells

Membership Renewal Coordinator:
Max Whipps

Newsletter Distribution Coordinator:
Loren Freeman

Nominating Committee Chair:
Wes Kirkpatrick

Scholarship Committee Chair:
Bob Wing

SIG Coordinator: Shirley Bellinghausen

Visitors Coordinator: Elizabeth Ross

Special Activities Committee Chair:
Gary Bigger

The Olympia Microcomputer Users
Group is a not for profit organization
dedicated to helping computer users
improve their skills with computers.

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MOVIES

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Windows Media Player (download
Version 10 from [www.microsoft.com/
windows/windowsmedia](http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia) and install it)
and drag it to the far left in Timeline
View. You can also use a microphone to
narrate your movie. But you cannot
narrate and play music at the same time.

You can play the Storybook and
Timeline and shorten your music by
moving the corner arrow to the left and
cutting it off. You can add Transitions
and Video Effects in the Timeline View
(in WMM 2.1). You can also lengthen the
time your slide stays on the screen. If
you want to take a break, you can give
your project a name and save it.

When you are satisfied with your
movie you can save it as a WMV file in
My Videos or put it on a CD. The music
files are large so you may want to save
them on a CD.

You can bring video clips into WMM
2.1 and add them to your movie. You
can also take slides from Digital Video
Recorders and bring them into WMM
2.1 but you may have to buy a special



video card to
get your
Analog and
Digital
recorders to
work with
WMM 2.1.

Windows
Movie Maker

has the usual help files but you might to
go to for more help on using WMM 2.1.

I have made several movies for the
CAUG DigiCam SIG and have also
made some on architecture, boats, and
birds. WMM 2.1 is a good way to make
a family movie. Gather old pictures,
cards, poems, etc., scan them, and bring
them into WMM 2.1. You can also record
your children and grandchildren's voices
and put them in the movie. The
possibilities are endless. Why don't you
try making a movie? It's a lot of fun!

*The Editorial Committee of the
Association of Personal Computer
User Groups (APCUG), an
international organization of which
this group is a member, brings this
article to you.*

Welcome New/Returning Members

Georgelanning

JeanKnoxka

MikeMidd

MayGortz

MajordVoice

OlaveMauell

Thanks For Renewing

Clint Crocker

Gary & Mary

Bigger

Kenneth Bragg

Bill Albert

Vivian & Gene

Forrester

Board finalizes slate of candidates

By Vivian Forrester
OMUG Secretary



OMUG president Bill Gortz opened the meeting at 7 p.m. in the computer room of the Senior Center in the Olympia Center. Other board members present were Shirley Bellinghausen, vice president; Vivian Forrester, secretary; Max Whipps, treasurer; John Marshall, past president and director at large; James Gunnells, director at large; Christie McCormick, director at large; Sandy Pishner, newsletter editor; and Pat Sonnenstuhl, webmaster. Also in attendance was Bob Steinberg.

Minutes of the February meeting were accepted as presented.

TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP: The treasurer reported income of \$260 in dues, \$3.26 interest, and a \$10 donation for a total income of \$273.26. February expenses were \$10 fee for Washington State Nonprofit Corp., rent donation of \$25, newsletter copying and mailing \$307.67, and membership



committee supplies of \$12.51, for total expenses of \$355.18; leaving a deficit of \$81.82 for February.

Account balance as of March 17 was \$4,555.74, with

\$250 to be deposited, for a treasury total of \$4805.74. Current primary membership is 184. We need to increase this number in order to continue the advantage of newsletter bulk mail rates.

SIGS: Hardware SIG is going well. James Gunnells will conclude the Hot Topics SIG on Microsoft Access at the next meeting and volunteered to lead the Office SIG. A discussion was held on adding new groups and finding facilitators. Max moved that the \$50 budgeted for the librarian be reallocated to the Internet SIG leader. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PROGRAMS: April 14: Bill Gortz presenting JASC Paint Shop products with emphasis on JASC Paint Shop Photo Album. May 12: a presentation on banking security, including Phishing and Identity Theft. Other program possibilities were discussed for future arrangements.

ELECTION: 2005 nominations for OMUG April Elections:

President: Bill Gortz
Vice President: Shirley Bellinghausen
Secretary: Emily Brooks
Treasurer: Max Whipps
Newsletter Editor: Sandra Pishner
Webmaster: Pat Sonnenstuhl
Director at Large (3 positions):
James Gunnells
Tom Johnson
Christie McCormick
L. D. McNall
May Murrell

Nominations were closed at this meeting, but write-in votes will be accepted at the election on April 14. The board unanimously approved the appointment of Bob Steinberg as the new election committee chair. Other committee members are John Gerecht and Gary Bigger.

It was decided to try to hold the OMUG Retreat in May at the same place as last year. Bill Gortz will see if it is available.

It was noted at our last general meeting that the Internet cables were frayed and needed replacing. Max moved that John Marshall be authorized to purchase two ethernet cables storage spools. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

OMUG Income & Expenses February 2005



Income: \$273

[Dues-\$260, Interest-\$3, Donation-\$10]

Expenses: \$355

[SSSS Donation-\$25, Newsletter-\$307, WA Corporate Renewal Fee-\$10, Membership Cmte Supplies-\$13]

Net Deficit: \$82

Account Balance:	\$4517	3/25/05
To Be Deposited:	\$290	
Current Treasury:	\$4807 (Incl. Scholarship Fund)	

Configuring a basic user's PC

By Gabe Goldberg
APCUG Advisor & Columnist

Don't be alarmed by the high-falutin word "configuring". It just means deciding what components — otherwise called "parts" — will perform various PC functions. It's like old-days car buying: reviewing a dealer checklist to pick dozens of individual features, from radio to power steering to disc brakes and more.

The good news is that almost any current PC with a printer and Internet connectivity will handle mainstream requirements. That means that a generic Windows PC is usually adequate — but you should upgrade if you'll do anything challenging or exotic.

Just as when buying a car, the first step in buying a computer is deciding what you'll do with it: e-mail, Web searching/viewing, word processing? Financial work with Quicken? Digital photography? Simple games? Ultra-demanding tasks like high-end games and digital video editing?

Just as when making any major purchase, a small investment in learning pays off for years. Before buying a PC, learn the basics: — take a class, buy a book, attend local computer user group meetings, consult Web sites, read technology magazines at the library.

As you look at

applications' system requirements (processor speed, RAM size, hard drive storage capacity, video card speed and memory, etc.) note differences between minimum and recommended specifications. Vendors are often too optimistic — and that's being charitable — about what's needed for their software to run productively. It's much safer, and not much more expensive, to buy at least the recommended choices. In fact, I usually buy a little more power than I need. This bumps cost just a little and it avoids future problems and upgrades. Purchasing this way greatly extends a PC's life and makes it more compatible with future innovations, at least for a while.

Remember that as PCs evolve, a range of choices is always available, from bleeding-edge new to borderline obsolete. An equally valid — and more economical — approach to configuring is finding the current technology "sweet spot" the point where cost, performance, compatibility, and useful life are in balance.

A key decision is whether to buy a brand-name system or an unknown-brand machine, have a PC built to order, or build it yourself. Choices for laptop computers are much more limited: brand-name systems dominate, trailed by a few off-brand manufacturers. There are no build-it-yourself options,

though manufactured systems can be customized extensively.

Each purchasing choice has advantages and advocates. Brand-name systems can be evaluated and compared by consulting references such as Consumer Reports magazine, are available everywhere via catalog or on-line shopping, and may have better standard or optional warranties (often worthwhile for quick service and peace of mind). But brand-name systems sometimes suffer from using commodity parts vs. best-quality components.

Unknown-brand machines can be reliable money savers or risky acquisitions. I'd only buy such a system from a trusted store with a flexible return policy. I favor having PCs built to order by small local shops with established reputations, offering maximum flexibility and consultation during design. And I've enjoyed watching my PCs take shape as they're assembled from a table full of parts!

Some people build their own PCs, often with training and mentoring from computer user group volunteers. This demystifies system innards, greatly facilitating diagnosing and repairing problems and upgrading components. Build-to-order and build-yourself allow specifying brand-name parts for improved performance and reliability.

No matter where you

purchase, look carefully at monitor choices. Traditional CRT monitors prices have declined, allowing buying larger devices with better resolution. And newer/thinner/lighter LCD panels offer a powerful — though sometimes less flexible — alternative. Visit stores to compare brands and models and explore settings to match your preferences.

Decide how you'll back up your software and data. Choices include a second — perhaps external or removable — hard drive, writable optical media such as DVD, and tape. The first two are most often used, with each having unique advantages. Follow your backup plan regularly; nothing ruins a day like losing months or years of can't-be-replaced data, not to mention having to reconstruct all your software.

Small choices can make large differences in productivity and comfort. For example, mouse technology has advanced far beyond the traditional two-button wired device. Mouse alternatives include trackball and wireless devices, gadgets with many extra programmable buttons, wheel mice allowing horizontal/vertical scrolling, etc. Considering how much time you'll use your pointing device, it's worth spending a little extra money to have the device that suits you best!

Windows offers many

**See CONFIGURING,
Page 5**

Technology touches taxes, telephones, trash

By Sue Crane, VP / Editor
Big Bear Computer Club

Tech Notes

IRS partners Intuit, TaxAct and eSmartTax are offering no-cost services to everyone this year. Two additional companies, FreeTaxUSA.com and FileYourTaxes.com, are extending free services to residents of certain U.S. states. The 10 remaining participating companies, including tax giant H&R Block, have no-cost programs for specific demographics, such as people over the age of 60 or members of the military.

Forty states and the District of Columbia are working on a national Internet sales tax system. Streamlined Sales Tax Project has issued two requests for bids for software and Web-based networks to track on-line purchases sales tax payments. As currently envisioned by the states, Web merchants would pay nothing for the

services; instead, the vendors would take a cut from tax revenues

EBay and Intel have developed a "Rethink Initiative" which seeks to bring together public and private organizations to promote recycling and reuse of old PCs and consumer electronics products. The announcement comes days after the Electronic Waste Recycling Act of 2003 became active in California, requiring consumers to pay an Electronic Waste Recycling Fee for certain devices, including monitors and laptop computers. EBay president and chief executive officer Meg Whitman said. "I would love to try as an industry to come together with market-based solutions so we won't have to face federal and state regulation."

Vonage, the No. 1 Internet phone

company, is offering its subscribers a wireless Wi-Fi phone that can make calls over the Internet at homes or at public Wi-Fi hot spots. New phone will let consumers make VoIP calls from any Wi-Fi hot spot. Wi-Fi calls are essentially free, in contrast to cell phone calls, and customers will plug a regular phone into an adapter linked to a broadband Internet line. Vonage will then turn the calls into data that travel by Internet before being converted back to voice at the other end. Meanwhile, Comcast Corp., the nation's biggest cable company, said Monday it plans to roll out phone service over the Internet to all 21.5 million of its customers within the next year and a half, bringing the on-line technology into the mainstream.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

CONFIGURING

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choices for easing use — enlarging type, making keyboarding easier, providing special audible and visual cues, etc. Accessibility options are found in different places — usually via Control Panel or the Start menu. It's worth exploring these to tailor your PC to your individual preferences. Similarly, small add-on programs can greatly improve a PC's comfort factor. Remember that Windows is highly configurable: you can change how it looks and operates. As you become familiar with your new PC, explore options/settings/preferences. Just as

you wouldn't insist on driving a car with seats and mirrors exactly as they came from the dealer, don't be captive of Microsoft's initial settings!

Name-brand computers usually include software bundles. Vendors shout about how valuable they are and how much money you're saving on them — but that's only true if you'll use the software provided. As soon as you have your machine, examine pre-installed software and remove anything you know you won't use. Then defrag your disk and then install the programs you'll use. These simple steps will make your machine run better by decluttering it.

Finally, If you understand how to do this, use built-in tools such as MSCONFIG to chop out unneeded services started by default when your system boots.

Software bundles often include junior-grade versions or limited-time trial copies of critical tools such as anti-virus and anti-spyware software. For system reliability and security, upgrade these to full versions and subscribe to update services.

Not much else in modern life besides computers keeps getting faster/better/cheaper. And it's not hard to find or build a computer that meets needs for several years, runs

reliably, and doesn't break the bank.

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