



OMUG

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

NEWS



Vol. 13, No. 6

Olympia Microcomputer Users Group

June 2005

June brings OMUG focus to digital cameras, various photo software

By Bill Gortz
OMUG President

It looks like we should call this month the OMUG Digital Imaging Month. There will be two new SIG's plus the regular Digital Imaging SIG all covering various aspects of digital imaging.

The first new SIG will be the **Paint Shop SIG** held by myself and will cover the Jasc (now Corel) Paint Shop Products which are Paint Shop Pro, Paint Shop Photo Album and the new Paint Shop Pro Studio. This SIG will meet at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month in the computer room of the Olympia Center, just above where we have our regular monthly general meeting.

The first meeting will cover the highlights of the different programs and get into a little of what can be done with each. I will also find out what programs people have, what they want to do, and will try to use this information to determine the topics to cover in future meeting.

This SIG will be directed toward the home user / beginner and how to make digital imaging more useful to them. This SIG will truly be one where everyone can be helping everyone else as we go along and I will be learning along with everyone else.

The next SIG is the old standby **Digital Imaging SIG** lead by John Gerech and is held at 7 p.m. in the Capital High School's Graphic



Computer Lab on the second Monday of each month. John primarily uses Adobe Photoshop for this SIG, but has been known to wander to other programs from time to time. See more information in the Special Interest Groups section of this newsletter.

John's focus is different then what the Paint Shop SIG's will be, so even though both SIG's cover digital imaging they use different programs and have different approaches so there should be no conflict between them. In fact those interested enough, or curious enough, can hopefully benefit from attending both SIG's.

The Hot Topics SIG has finished up with Microsoft Access and will start up its new topic - how to get these marvelous digital pictures in the first place. The new subject for the Hot Topics SIG will be **How to Use Your Digital Camera**. John Acocks will lead this SIG which meets at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month in the Computer Room of the Olympia Center and for the next few months will cover how to use digital cameras.

John asks that anyone who brings their camera to have the users manual that came with the camera and any

cables that connect the camera to your computer. Also, as I have learned the hard way, make sure your camera batteries are charged. Even if you don't have a digital camera and just want to learn what they are all about you are welcome to attend this SIG.

IPMA - I want to thank everyone who came to help with the OMUG booth at IPMA. It appears to have been successful for those that attended, I know I learned a few things and hope the rest did too.

Super Saturday - Super Saturday at The Evergreen State College will be held on June 11 from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. and as of this writing we still need some members to help with the OMUG booth. If you would like to help please contact Gary Bigger, our Special Activities Chairman, at g37bigger@yahoo.com. This year we will be located in front of the Library Building and will have electrical power and wireless access to the Internet. If you do go, please spend some time helping at the OMUG Booth, but make sure to take the time to see what else there is at the college on that day.

Remember to check our website, <http://www.oly mug.org>, for current happenings within OMUG.

This month's general meeting presentation will be about data safety and various backup strategies and will be presented by Shawn Rowan from Generation D Computers. I hope to see you there.



EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Bill Gortz,
president@olymug.org

Vice President: Shirley Bellinghausen,
vicepresident@olymug.org

Secretary: Jean Brooks,
secretary@olymug.org

Treasurer: Max Whipps,
treasurer@olymug.org

Newsletter Editor: Sandy Pishner,
editor@olymug.org

Webmaster: Pat Sonnenstuhl,
webmaster@olymug.org

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

Director at Large: Christie McCormick,
director2@olymug.org

Director at Large: L.D. McNall,
director3@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

Public Relations Chair: Vivian Forrester

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

OMUG News
Vol. 13, No. 6
June 2005
Published
monthly

PMB 225
3430 Pacific Ave
SE Ste. A6
Olympia, WA
98501-2177



Member attends board meeting, offers service

By Jean Brooks
OMUG Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by President Bill Gortz.

In attendance were John Marshall, past president; Shirley Bellinghausen, vice president; Max Whipps, treasurer; Pat Sonnenstuhl, webmaster; Chris McCormick, director-at large; Sandra Pishner, newsletter editor; Jean Brooks, secretary; and Chance Maxwell, member.

The secretary asked for clarification of her duties. Taking and maintaining minutes of the board meeting and general membership meeting are the most important duties.

Chris McCormick announced that the audit committee will meet on May 31.

John Acocks will head the Hot Topics SIG on digital cameras starting the second Wednesday in June.

Chance Maxwell volunteered to head a phone committee to help remind people of upcoming special events and activities. This would have been a good way to improve attendance at the May retreat.

Due to the delay in finding a suitable meeting place, the retreat was not well attended.

There was some discussion in starting a Yahoo e-mail center for board members. If all goes well, we may consider this service for the general membership as well, in place of the current Reflector.

There was some concern that members may find it difficult to sign up for the Yahoo service. This will be considered in future discussions.

The suggestions given for public relations were to have extra newsletters and business cards to distribute which can acquaint people with this organization.

The Shelton Community Center, newly developed, can possibly be of assistance in getting people acquainted with OMUG. We will look into having a satellite chapter of OMUG in Shelton.

Thanks For
Renewing

Rick & Kathy Stacy

Stuart & Janice

Ferester

Joe Ryan

Sydney Larison

John Gerecht

Bob & Gwen Stimmel

Dena Mowell

Upcoming events need your help

By Gary Bigger
Special Activities Chairman

The IPMA Forum was held at St. Martin's College in Lacey on May 24 and 25. I want to thank the 12 members who helped out. Without these great people who manned our booth, OMUG would not have appeared as robust as we did.

IPMA provided us with a prime location so there was good exposure. I hope that the interest that was shown by the visitors will result in a few new members.

Our next special activity will be Super Saturday on June 11. We will set up at Evergreen College just before 9 a.m. and will close up shop at 6:30 p.m. We need your help to man our table and answer questions from the public.

The exposure for OMUG is excellent. Last year we were able to interest several people in joining OMUG. Besides OMUG members handing out information at our table, wandering the campus can be a lot of fun. Bring your appetite, camera and good spirits. There are more than 55 community booths, 100 art booths, more than 40 food booths and hundreds of others working with the public service center booths.

There are musical groups for the stages and numerous volunteers orchestrating all of the events. Please contact Gary Bigger (garybigger@yahoo.com) to volunteer for one of the five two hour time slots.

Aug. 6-8 we have our greatest challenge of the year. From 2 a.m., yes AM, Aug. 6 through 2 p.m., Aug. 8 we will be serving coffee and cookies at the Scatter-Creek rest stop.

This rest stop is located on Northbound I-5 at mile post 91. It is imperative that we have the entire 36 hour period covered by at least two people at all times. I would hope that during the periods of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., there are two males present. As in the past, the coverage will be divided into four hour shifts.

The monies donated by the public from this project funds the majority of our activities during the year. Please keep these dates open in order to assist. I will be sending out information on the



Photo by Bill Gortz

Gary Bigger mans the OMUG booth at the IPMA in May at St. Martin's College in Lacey. Twelve OMUG members assisted at this special event, giving OMUG a robust presence and great community outreach.

Reflector requesting a commitment of your time. If you do not get the Reflector message, please call 426-7055 or e-mail me at garybigger@yahoo.com.

Our annual picnic will be Aug. 20 at Priest Point Park in Olympia. This is the last special activity of the summer. It should also be the most relaxed. Just an opportunity to come together as a group of friends and enjoy conversation, stories (lies?) and good food. Please bring your spouse or significant other, kids and grandkids. Stay for an hour or the entire day.

**Welcome
New/Returning
Members**

**Kay Remillard
William Raymond**

OMUG Income & Expenses April 2005



Income: \$284

[Dues-\$280, Interest-\$4]

Expenses: \$133

[SSSS Donation-\$25, Newsletter-\$108,]

Net Income: \$150

Checking Account Balance:	\$656	5/25/05
Savings Account Balance:	\$3032	
Scholarship Account Balance:	\$1212	
Bank Accounts Total:	\$4900	
To Be Deposited:	\$60	
Current Treasury:	\$4960	

Watch for travel scams online

By Ira Wilsker

APCUG Director & Columnist

Most of us like to travel, and would especially enjoy a travel bargain. We may have checked with reliable travel resources such as our local travel agents, airlines, cruise lines and hotels, but were unable to find the deal that we wanted.

We check the major travel sites such as Expedia, Orbitz and Travelocity, but still can not find a deal that makes us happy. Since we are experienced Internet users, we go to the major search engines such as Yahoo, Google or Alltheweb, and search for bargain travel sites.

We notice some websites that appear at the top of the listings, sometimes in the premium paid listings on the search engines, that allege airline tickets, hotel rooms, and cruises at far below the prices charged by the reputable sources we are familiar with, so we click on the links.

One link may be for CheapClouds.com, claiming deep discounts off published airfares; another link may be for Busysky.net that offers comprehensive travel services with fares far below those offered by travel agents or other online travel websites.

Two other websites offering unbelievable travel bargains that appear in the paid or premium listings on the search engines are Crazytickets.net and Submitprice.net.

Tasting a good deal, we click on one of these sites and see a travel site similar to the better-known and reputable sites with which we are already familiar.

We search for airfares and find tickets for about half of what we would pay elsewhere; we find hotels and

cruises similarly priced. Unable to resist such bargains, we select our trips and we are asked to enter our credit card information. A familiar window appears that asks us for our credit card number, security code (the three or four digit code on the credit card), expiration date, and name on the card.

With a sense of excitement, we eagerly await the confirmation, which we are told may take a few minutes, but are instead presented with an official looking window that says our credit card information could not be processed. We are then presented with an option to pay with another credit card, or pay by an alternative means.

Thinking that it is just a simple glitch, and not wanting to lose the opportunity for a glorious vacation at a bargain price, we enter the required information for another credit card. We are again greeted with the same screen that it could not be processed and are then told to contact customer service by e-mail, utilizing the link and transaction number provided on the screen.

A short time later, we will receive an e-mail from the travel company apologizing for the inconvenience, and claiming that their bank is having trouble processing credit cards. Since the price quoted is only valid for a very short time, the traveler is asked to use alternative methods of payment – wire the proceeds via Western Union.

Readers of this column may feel a hint of skepticism at this point, remembering that sometime ago I wrote that while a legitimate method of sending



money, wiring money via Western Union to pay for Internet purchases should raise a red flag of suspicion.

Still, eager not to let the bargain of a lifetime get away;

we follow the instructions on the e-mail from customer service. The address to wire the money to may raise more suspicions, as the destination is not in the United States, but instead in Bulgaria, Romania or Thailand. An inquiry e-mail back to customer service may bring a prompt canned reply that the reason why the deal is so good is that these prices are only available for tickets purchased outside of the U.S., along with an assurance they will be honored by the airlines, cruise lines, and the hotels.

Still not wanting to lose out on this dream vacation, we send the money via Western Union, exactly as requested. We will then receive an e-mail stating that it will take several days to receive our tickets, and are provided with a web link and tracking number to show our tickets are on the way.

After not receiving the tickets in the time specified we click on the tracking number, and are given another canned response that they are being processed, and should be delivered in the next few days; following up clicks several days later display the identical statement. An e-mail reply from customer service reiterates the message. By the date of the dream vacation, no tickets have arrived, dashing dreams of a good time.

We have become the victims of another very nasty scam circulating on the Internet. What is especially insidious about this scam is that it is a “double whammy,” in that we are not only out of the money for the trip, since the

See TRAVELING, Page 5

Link to digital movies with Movielink

By Sherry Zorzi
APCUG Advisor

While Blockbuster and Netflix battle it out for your entertainment dollar, a new online player just may sneak around them. Movielink (www.movielink.com) allows you to order and download recent movies on a pay-for-view basis.

The movies are downloaded to your PC for viewing there, or on a TV connected to the PC, or on your laptop. The cost is about \$5 for a recent release, but some offerings are as cheap as 99 cents. You have 30 days after download to watch the movie. You are renting the movie, though, for a 24-hour period which means that once you click play, you have only the next 24 hours to watch (and re-watch, if you like) the movie. You can buy additional viewing time.

While visiting the Demonstration Digital Home at the Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas in January, I got a coupon for a free download from Movielink. I visited Movielink's website as soon as I got home and decided to give it a try. The selection of movies is pretty good and includes most of Blockbuster's Top Ten Rentals.

Before downloading a movie, you

must register with Movielink. They are not overly intrusive, asking only for name, e-mail address, sex, and age during the registration process. You will, of course, probably want to deselect the opportunity to receive a free e-mail newsletter.

Movielink installs Movielink Manager software onto your computer, which controls the download and playback of the movies you order. You should read the End User License Agreement carefully, since it does give Movielink and its partners the right to push upgrades and updates to you without asking permission. That might be a deal-breaker for some – indeed, it almost sent me running for the hills. But for the sake of you, the reader, I bit the bullet and signed on the virtual dotted line.

The download took about 25 minutes on my cable Internet connection and proceeded smoothly. It was several weeks before I had a chance to view my movie. When I clicked play, though, the media player would not load the movie. So I went to the website for help. The live chat feature of Movielink's website worked beautifully. I was quickly connected with a technician who reset my account and had me reinstall the Movielink Manager software. Within minutes everything was working fine.

The video quality of the movie was excellent. Watching a movie on the typical PC, though, is much different from watching one on the typical TV. My computer screen is a 17 inch LCD flat screen. The image was beautiful but much smaller than my TV. I don't have a top of the line sound card nor great speakers on that particular computer either, so the audio was acceptable to me while not outstanding. Next time I'll probably download my movie to a different computer in my home – one that has a top-notch video card, a top-notch sound card, and an awesome surround sound speaker.

I'll probably rent from Movielink again. I'm intrigued by the possibilities of instant access to the movie of my choice without leaving home or waiting for it to be mailed to me. The service would be even more attractive to me if it offered a monthly subscription deal and allowed me to transfer my rental to the device of my choice, including my Pocket PC and other computers on my home network

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.

TRAVELING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

money sent via Western Union is virtually unrecoverable, but we have also given unscrupulous unknown parties our credit card information!

This is not some fictitious scenario by a mystery writer, but a documented scam. The scam has become so pervasive that even some of the antivirus companies have posted warnings about it on their websites.

There is anecdotal evidence that, in several of the cases, the victims' credit

cards had been illicitly charged for a variety of goods and services in the days immediately following the fraudulent transaction, possibly committed by the same travel thieves.

The websites mentioned above were real, and are well documented, but are currently offline (as I type this). Based on their success at defrauding countless victims, it is likely they will reappear under different names.

In order to be safe when shopping for travel bargains, be sure to use a reputable resource, such as a local travel

agent, airline or hotel website, or trusted third party website. If you pay with a credit card, there is some degree of protection from fraud from the credit card company. Never wire money, especially overseas, to pay for a travel bargain. We work too hard for our money to have miscreants steal it from us under the false pretenses of a travel bargain.

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.