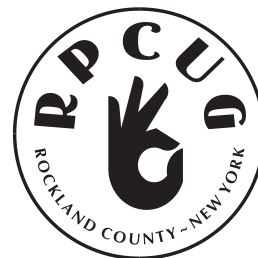


THE COMPUTER CONNECTION

Published by
The ROCKLAND
PC USERS GROUP
August 2005



JOINT GENERAL MEETING

Presentation on Computer Crime/Identity Theft & Annual Swap Meet

Please join us for our combined summer General Meetings of the Rockland PC Users Group and the Westchester PC Users Group on Tuesday, August 9th, 7:15 PM, RASO Community Room, 4th Floor, Palisades Mall, West Nyack, NY.

The Rockland County Sheriff's Dept. will present information on computer crime. In June of 2000, the Rockland County Sheriff's Computer Crime Task Force, comprised of veteran detectives and computer forensic investigators, was formed through the partnership of the Sheriff and District Attorney. Sheriff Kralik and District Attorney Bongiorno realized that the increased use of computers for e-commerce, e-mail and entertainment would soon lead to an increase of computer-related crime. Topics: credit card fraud, identity theft, child porn.

Everyone loves a bargain. One person's white elephant is another's treasure. Each August, RPCUG members and friends come to buy, sell, swap or browse at the Annual Swap Meet. There are always terrific deals in hardware and software. Sellers are looking to recover a bit of their

investments in computer-related products that they have become tired of or outgrown.

Prior to the main presentation, members can bring and swap hardware and software. We will have tables for members to display their wares.

Introductory remarks and audience question and answer session followed by a presentation at 8 PM. Learn all about hardware/software and get your computer questions answered.

For the guidelines of the Swap Meet, visit RPCUG's Website at www.rpcug.org go to the "Calendar" and click on General Meeting.

For more information about the Rockland County Sheriff's Computer Crime Task Force, please see page 7. 🖨️

JOIN the FUN!

MEETINGS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC *with newcomers especially welcome.*
For directions and up-to-date meeting information, visit RPCUG's Website at www.rpcug.org

WEB SITES editor's picks:

GOOGLE EARTH:

Explore, Search and Discover
<http://earth.google.com/>

TOP TEN DOT.COM FLOPS (if you care:)

"The most astounding thing about the dot-com boom was the obscene amount of money that was spent."

www.enet.com/4580-11136-6278387.html?tag=nl.e501

DRIVE YOURSELF NUTS:

<http://zapatopi.net/themes/dactylfractalzoom.html>

MORE FUN:

Optical Illusions & Visual Phenomena
www.michaelbach.de/ot/index.html

LACK OF STANDARDS SPARKS INKJET PHOTO FADE DEBATE:

How long inkjet-printed photos last depends on who you ask, experts say
<http://tinyurl.com/dobxc>

GOT A FAVORITE?

email the editor!
editor@rpcug.org



THE ROCKLAND PC USERS GROUP

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The Purpose of the Group:

To exchange computer-related ideas and information among its members; to engage in computer-related activities for the benefit of the membership and the community at large; to increase understanding and utilization of the personal computer; to provide an opportunity for the formation of special interest groups (SIGs), to provide a medium for the exchange and propagation of public domain software, freeware, and shareware. *—(From the RPCUG Constitution & Bylaws)*

MEETING SCHEDULE

GENERAL MEETING

7:15 PM

MULTIMEDIA WORKSHOP

6:00 PM

Tuesday, August 9th, 2005
The Palisades Center Community Room
Palisades Center Mall, West Nyack, NY

Multi-Media Workshop meets on the second Tuesday of the month, prior to the general meeting at 6:00 PM in the Raso Room in the Palisades Mall, West Nyack

Windows XP Workshop meets on the third Tuesday of the month in the Pearl River Room at the Pearl River Library, 7-8:45 PM.

The **Executive Board** meets last Thursday of the month
West Nyack Library, 7:00 PM

The Rockland PC Users Group, a tax-exempt educational organization, meets monthly, usually on the second Tuesday. Meetings begin at 7:15 PM. The latest information about meeting programs and dates is available on the Internet at <http://www.rpcug.org>



"Feed that to the computer and see if it's a message, or just a forest fire."

Message from the President

I want to start off by saying it is really a pleasure having the Westchester PC Users Group meet with us in July and August. We can always count on at least one discussion on the deficit of Norton products and the benefits of AVG Anti-Virus and other free utility programs. It is great to see members from both Groups bringing in new and used computer equipment and software to be displayed at our Annual Swap Meet. The summer wouldn't be the same without it!

It seems that every meeting has a discussion on virus protection, spyware programs and things to watch out for in your e-mail. You receive e-mails that look like they are from a bank, credit card company or Paypal asking you to update your records. This should be your first warning sign. They tell you that if you don't update your info you may be put on hold and would not be able to use their service until you do. If you click on the link that they provide for your convenience, you are taken to a site that may look exactly like one that you are used to seeing. How can you tell what is real and what is fake? How can you protect yourself from identity theft? After tonight's presentation I am sure that these and other questions on Internet Security and Identity Theft will be answered for you.

I would like to thank Detective Ken Procopio of the Rockland County Sheriffs Department Computer Crime Task Force, along with Special Agents Joe Mc Donnell and Ted Maliga of the United States Secret Service for taking the time to visit with us and help us to understand how to battle this ongoing and ever growing problem.

This fall we will be starting new workshops for our members. What we have planned is a beginners workshop, so bring your friends and neighbors. Another workshop planned is on how to access and get more out of the Internet. Other workshops include Microsoft Excel and home networking. Steve will be starting up the Windows Workshop again in September and we still have the Graphics Workshop before the

General Meeting every month. Keep an eye on the Calendar Page of our Web Site for upcoming announcements. We will also send out an e-mail as soon as we know the locations of these workshops.

A couple of months ago, instead of having a presentation at the general meeting, we held a "Round Robin Workshop." The response that we received was so positive that we have decided to have another one in September.

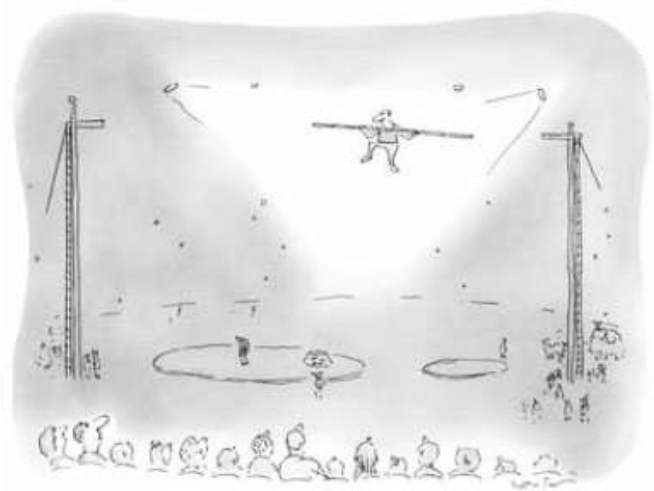
There will be four topics to choose from at the meeting. Everyone can choose two of the four listed topics and will have a chance to participate in two half hour sessions.

- 1) E-mail
- 2) MS Word
- 3) Digital Photography
- 4) Computer Maintenance

Remember...A Group is only as good as its members!

"JOIN THE FUN!"

Ken Herbig,
President ↑



"It appears to be some kind of wireless technology."

SOFTWARE

available for REVIEW

Email **Roberta** at Roberta316@yahoo.com or
Ken at hobbikat@hobbikats.com

- ✓ **ActiveScreenLock** by *DMVsoft* is a secure and reliable application, protecting your computer from unauthorized access.
Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP
www.dmvsoft.com
- ✓ **Chameleon Calendar 1.0** by *Softshape.com* is a nifty desktop calendar with a wealth of scheduling, reminder and customization options.
Windows 95/98/2000/XP
www.softshape.com
- ✓ **Excel Compare 2.0** by *Formula Software* Excel file and spreadsheet comparison tool that frees you from finding differences manually.
Windows 95/98/2000/XP
www.formulasoft.com
- ✓ **PS Hot Folders** by *PS Soft Lab* is a smart and handy utility that should come with the standard Windows configuration on all PCs.
Windows NT/2000/XP
www.psssoftlab.com/pshf_info.phtml
- ✓ **Quick Reply 2.07** by *ErstenWare* is a god-sent gift to any e-mail user who has to repeatedly answer the same questions.
Win98/ME/NT/2000/XP
www.erstenware.com
- ✓ **Red Eye Remover 1.5 & Anti Red Eye 1.5** by *VicMan Software* is a Windows program that can remove a common "red-eye" effect from your images almost automatically. Anti Red Eye is a Photoshop plug-in.
www.vicman.net
- ✓ **Space-theme 3D Screensavers** by *Astro Gemini Software*. With the latest 3D technology they offer very realistic, eye-catching, astronomically accurate and educational presentations of every planet and the Sun.
www.space-screensavers.com

- ✓ **Time Meter for MS Outlook 2.4** by *Maximus Software Ltd.*; a simple but very beneficial software application capable of tracking expenses and time spent working on certain projects.
Windows 2000/XP/2003
www.timemeter.com
- ✓ **TweakWindow 1.2** by *AbsoluteWay* features like one-click minimization to the system tray, transparency tweaking, hiding a window or making it topmost, TweakWindow offers two innovative features - chameleon windows and ghost windows.
Windows 2000/XP/2003
www.absoluteway.com ↵

IS WINDOWS A VIRUS ?

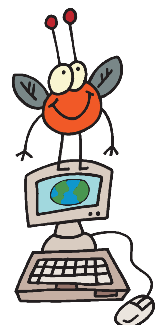
No, Windows is not a virus. Here's what viruses do:

- ✓ They replicate quickly - okay, Windows does that.
- ✓ Viruses use up valuable system resources, slowing down the system as they do so - okay, Windows does that.
- ✓ Viruses will, from time to time, trash your hard disk - okay, Windows does that too.
- ✓ Viruses are usually carried, unknown to the user, along with valuable programs and systems. Sigh... Windows does that, too.
- ✓ Viruses will occasionally make the user suspect their system is too slow (see 2) and the user will buy new hardware. Yup, that's with Windows, too.

Until now it seems Windows is a virus but there are fundamental differences: Viruses are well supported by their authors, are running on most systems, their program code is fast, compact and efficient and they tend to become more sophisticated as they mature.

So Windows is not a virus.

It's a bug. 🐛

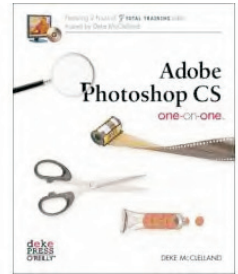


BOOK REVIEW:

Adobe Photoshop CS one-on-one by Deke McClelland

reviewed by MaryAnn Lajoux

This full-color book, accompanied by two hours of video tutorials on CD, is an up close and personal training experience. Installation and setup were effortless and within a few minutes the program was installed and I was up and running. There is a big advantage to being able to use two computers with this training. I have installed the video training on my desktop and the program on my other desktop – this way I don't have to flip back and forth between the training and the program. After reading a lesson, I watched a training video then returned to the book to complete the corresponding practice lesson using the supplied practice files. Finally, at the end of each chapter there is a quiz. I was able to learn by doing, set my own pace and establish my own sequence of lessons.



The book is meant for the beginner to intermediate user, but the beginner benefits the most. The book is supplemented by a CD-ROM containing 12 video lessons covering navigation, color correction, cropping, editing, masking, focus, type, styles and output. I use Photoshop for fixing up photos I've taken with my digital camera or scanned in from the family archives. I found the chapters on highlights, midtones, shadows and color correction invaluable, especially when trying to fix up old color pictures. The magnitude and dept of Photoshop CS means that topics are dealt with in a reasonable simplified manner rather than in depth. The book doesn't cover all of the techniques needed to effectively handle Photoshop CS. McClelland has planned ahead and lists up front techniques not included (i.e., Image ready, a companion program to Photoshop) and states that there will be another book in this series to cover those techniques.

The book is structured as a series of book and video lessons that reach progressively more advanced Photoshop features by working on real projects. It will take a lot of time to get through. Along the way, I got a good amount of graphics theory, best practices and tips for avoiding disasters. 'Pearls of Wisdom' provides an overview of how the topic fits into a bigger view of Photoshop use. 'Extra credit' paragraphs are advanced exercises that can be skipped but if you do them they stretch your abilities.

Neither the book or CD is dependent on each other but it helps to combine the two. The book goes into a lot more detail than the video. I would have liked the book to give more than one example for each technique. The high quality paper and beautiful colors on the examples are quite good. One flaw I found was that the font on the illustrations was too small, making it difficult to read the text and therefore of little value. While the video helped to visualize things, I found all the advertisements to buy additional video lessons distracting.

Photoshop CS one-on-one is the equivalent of a 12-week training course with your own private instructor. McClelland has written a book that not only gives you a greater understanding and appreciation of Photoshop but also is a valuable reference and training tool.

System Requirements:

Intel Pentium III or 4 processor running
Windows XP

256MB of RAM

650M of free hard disk space

Color monitor with 16-bit color video card

1024 by 768-pixel monitor resolution

CD-ROM drive

Apple's Quick Time Player software 5.02 or higher

Adobe Photoshop CS sample files, video training software, preference settings, color settings, keyboard shortcuts. 🖨️

SWFText version 1.1

reviewed by Steve Weinberg



SWFTEXT is a product for use by web page designers to create “Flash” animations. I’m sure you’ve seen them on web pages. Some consist of just a small animated graphic. Others take over your whole browser window with a huge presentation that has that well –used button, “Click here to Skip Intro.” Flash has been ill-used to produce unnecessarily large and complex “movies” for the web with a very negative audience reaction. More recently, Flash has been used to provide very dynamic and small animations that catch the web surfer’s attention very effectively.

Flash development is complex and tedious using the Macromedia Flash product itself. Along comes SWFText that provides the ability to create animated text Flash animations with just a few clicks. The product advertisement includes the following paragraph that amply describes what and how SWFText works.

SWF Text is an author tool of Flash text animation. It embraces 150+ text effects and 20+ background effects, and users may also customize all the properties of a Flash, including font, text color, and layout, etc. With SWFText, a user without any experience of Flash development can easily create a Flash banner or an introductory page within a few minutes. And all you need do is to input text, select font and animation effects. While a veteran Flash designer may use SWF Text for text animation in a project, which greatly saves your time and effort.

Every word they state is true based on my use of the product for just a few hours. You input your text, select attributes like size and font and then select a variety of animation effects. It even provides for placing your newly created animation on a web page so that you can build the rest of the page around it.

Here’s an animation I created for the RPCUG Website advertising the April, 2005 General Meeting and the SWFText screen used to create it.

The pages and buttons are clear and have only a few points that need explanation. I had to learn that there are two elements that can get saved. One is the Flash animation file (.swf) that

is produced. Having done this, I included it in a web page and moved on to create another. Later on, I decided to improve upon the first .swf. As it turned out, I couldn’t modify the .swf for the first one. It is important to save the animation project as an .ini file. The buttons to do each of these tasks are clearly marked, but I didn’t find an explanation of when to do each one. The .ini file saves all the text and selections for creating a Flash animation. Opening that file immediately gives you access to the original creation process and let’s you change any values or text to produce a new animation.

The output .swf file is optimized and takes only a small file size reasonable for use on a web page. The variety of customizable effects is mind boggling. The learning curve is minimal. You can change the speed of text entering and exiting, the form used to create the text (i.e. Bomb, BlowUp, Billboard, BlackHole, Blur Light, Beam, Bevel Mask, Blast Off, Blur In, Blur Out, Bounce, Bounce Back, Butterfly, Bright Pop, Blur Up, Blur In Blur Out and that’s just the B’s in the list of 150+). It’s fun and easy and well worth the cost. Go to:

www.antssoft.com/swftext/ to download a free 30 day trial.

SWFText, \$ 29.99

www.swftext.com

System Requirements:

Windows 95/98/ME/2000/NT/XP,
Macromedia Flash Player 6 or later 



Task Force Profile

In June of 2000 the Rockland County Sheriff's Computer Crime Task Force was formed through the partnership of the Sheriff and District Attorney. Sheriff James F. Kralik and District Attorney Michael E. Bongiorno realized that the increased use of computers for e-commerce, e-mail and entertainment would soon lead to an increase of computer-related crime. The same time-saving benefits that a computer provides to the law-abiding citizen provides the same advantage to those intent on doing you harm either financially or physically.

The Computer Crime Task Force is comprised of veteran detectives and computer forensic investigators from the Rockland County Sheriff's Office and The Rockland County District Attorney's Office. The Task Force personnel represent a wide range of law-enforcement and computer forensic experience. The Task Force works closely with all local, state and federal law enforcement agencies both in Rockland and across the nation. The Task Force often works jointly with the U.S. Secret Service and United States Attorney's Office.

The Task Force operates under the direction of Det. Lt. John J. Gould of the Rockland County District Attorney's Office. Det. Lt. Gould brings over 30 years of law enforcement experience to the Computer Crime Task Force. The Task Force was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice through the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) initiative and is a member of the U.S. Secret Service New York Electronic Crimes Task Force

(USSS NYECTF). The Task Force is also a voting member of the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C).

INTERNET: (www.rocklandcomputer-cops.com/-internetsafety.htm) safety and online child pornography cases have made up the bulk of the investigations to date. Significant arrests have included child predators that include a US Air Force staff sergeant, now serving 40 years in a military prison. Other individuals arrested by the Task Force as child predators include an emergency medical service officer, a Boy Scout administrator, a Teacher, a Certified Public Accountant, a computer specialist and numerous business professionals. Many cases are investigated jointly with the United States Secret Service and the New York Electronic Crimes Task Force due to jurisdictional issues as well as the severity of the federal penalties.

IDENTITY THEFT: (www.rocklandcomputer-cops.com/-identity.htm) and credit card fraud is becoming more prevalent and there has been an increase in cases reported as more people go to the internet for commerce. Please read our suggestions for safeguarding your identity while online.

Forensic investigations of computer intrusion cases are also on the rise. Proprietary business information is a high priced commodity in today's very competitive high-tech society. The Rockland County Sheriff's Computer Crime Task Force exists to offer assistance and expertise in all areas involving the use of computers to other law enforcement agencies, the business community, schools and families. ☺



Windows: Better Safe (Mode) Than Sorry

by Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor & Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Website

Though the Windows operating system isn't usually dangerous, it includes a special "Safe Mode." This is a handy way to boot a PC to investigate and fix problems. You may have read advice about when to use this, and even how to run it. But scarce and fragmented Safe Mode information can make it sound more exotic than it is.

Windows XP books' indexes provided surprisingly few entries for "Safe Mode." I found the best coverage in two O'Reilly books [www.oreilly.com], "Windows XP Pro: The Missing Manual" and "Windows XP Home Edition: The Missing Manual". Naturally, Google found a gazillion hits. But they're mostly "just the facts" writeups targeting people who already know "what" and "why" and just need "how" information. So this article provides background for this built-in Windows facility.

Over the years, as it became more powerful and reliable, Windows grew significantly from its slender 1992-era Version 3.1 self. There's no free lunch; learning new tricks required more software. But that complexity gets in the way when problems occur. Just as doctors rarely diagnose patients through heavy winter coats, Windows needs to shed layers to expose problems' causes.

Safe Mode slims Windows down, only loading and running specific pieces needed for basic operation. So your video display looks strange in Safe Mode because Windows doesn't load the monitor's specific driver program. This lets you recover from problems caused by buggy drivers you may have just installed. There are other restrictions: you likely can't get online and may not be able to print. But Safe Mode lets you perform tests, fix problems, and install/uninstall programs.

If you think your PC may have a virus or spyware, it's worth installing the antidote in Safe Mode, since some malware prevents installing anti-virus software. If installed anti-virus software can't remove a virus, Safe Mode may let it succeed. (Some experts recommend always running virus/spyware scans under Windows in Safe Mode.) If defragmenting your hard

drive [www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/howto/Articles/a2004-06-16-defrag.html] never finishes, Safe Mode may remove programs that keep interrupting it. And it lets you erase files that Windows normally says are in use (though only do this when you're sure what you're doing).

Windows XP defines two kinds of user accounts: "administrator" and "limited." An administrator can install/remove software, change settings, etc., while a limited user can only run programs and use facilities. Even if only one account is defined, a secret companion called Administrator is available. Booting in Safe Mode lets you access this account, handy when normal accounts won't work — for example, uninstalling software that doesn't want to leave.

Enter Safe Mode by repeatedly pressing F8 as your PC boots, just after BIOS information displays; then select Safe Mode from the options list. Leaving Safe Mode is simple — just reboot via the Start button and your usual procedure; Windows will return looking normal again, not holding a grudge for being run in diagnostic Mode.

Here's an important point: It's worth practicing booting into Safe Mode when you're relaxed and your PC is working properly. Consider running a PC in Safe Mode to be like starting your car's engine with the hood up at a service station. It's routine; there's nothing alarming about it. But just as you wouldn't want to open the hood for the first time (Where *is* that latch release?) when something is wrong with your car, you shouldn't first use Safe Mode when you're already worried about a PC problem.

And a PS: It's sometimes hard picking between a dozen competing books on a topic. A helpful technique for evaluating choices is searching for a few topics — like Safe Mode — in the books' indexes and judging them on coverage.

This article originated on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, www.aarp.org/computers, and is copyrighted by AARP. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, or transferred, for single use, or by nonprofit organizations for educational purposes, with attribution to AARP. 📄

The Latest on DVDs

by Bob Elgines, Colorado River Computer Club Editor, Lake Havasu, AZ

THE DVD WORLD IS GOING CRAZY.

The price range (for recorders) is \$59 to \$130, well within most of our budgets. DVD blanks are down to 50 cents each, almost as cheap as CDs. The top four recorder manufacturers are Plector, Toshiba, Pacific Digital, and Memorex.

Speed is up to 16X, which is max on the outer part of the disk, but only 8X blanks are readily available.

Dual layer (8.5 GB of data space) is labeled as the latest big deal, but is it really? These disks are hard to manufacture and are very expensive. The most important thing is, what will they play in? Well - not much of anything. Most DVD players will not recognize the format and neither will your older recorders. So I don't look for this to do anyone much good even in the future.

What is in the future (next year)? The digital world has still been undecided on DVD-R and DVD+R formats, so most of your recorders will do both. Now we come to the future of introducing two new formats named "HD-DVD" and "Blu-ray." These new formats have been developed to use the new blue-laser, although they have been using the red-laser in our present recorders. Red laser single level DVDs have 4.7 GB of capacity, where the Blue-laser single layer DVDs will have a capacity of 15 (HD-DVD format) to 25 GB (Blu-ray format) at present.

A HD (High Definition) two hour movie uses about 17.4 GB without max compression. The compression schemes (MPEG-2, MPEG4, etc.) will be the same for both, so there will be no big difference in playback quality. Here we go again, new DVD players will be needed and this reminds us of the old video tape war on formats "Beta" and "VHS." Remember: VHS won out due to more recording time and lower costs! Will this be true of the two blue-laser formats? Only time will tell.

These Blue-laser recorders and players will be coming out near the end of this year or the start of next year, but I think we are going to have to wait and see if they can decide on a format for the Blue-laser.

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. ■

Booting Your Computer

Q: What does it mean to "boot" your computer?

A: Booting a computer is a simple procedure that's performed when it acts up. Let's say it's the 20th time in an hour that Windows has locked up. You simply lift the computer up at about chest-high level and drop-kick it. It doesn't always fix the problem, but it does tend to make you feel a little better.

The term originated from the old west cowboys. Their computers (running Win 1870) would often cause them no end of grief and would be riddled with thousands of triangular dents produced from the tips of those boots they wore. ★



DiskInternals Flash Recovery 1.32

reviewed by Steve Weinberg

Here's a program that everyone who has used a digital camera can appreciate. Have you ever seen a message on your camera or picture storage device, "No Images," when you're sure you do have images. DiskInternals Flash Recovery is a file recovery tool that purports to restore corrupted and deleted photographs or the ones that were lost due to hardware malfunction. The claim is that the utility works even if a memory card was reformatted. I found this to be the case most of the time.

The tool is easy to install and even easier to use. There are very few options, only ones that let you select where you would like to save the recovered pictures. The ones you select will be saved there, not on your original device. Initially, you'll see a screen that presents a list of all the storage devices on your computer. Just pick one.

The larger the device is, the longer it will take for the program to scan it. Prepare to be patient as it takes several minutes. My 128Mb Sony Memory Stick took about 5 minutes. I'm sure it would be faster if this was on a USB 2.0 port, but I have only USB 1. Be careful not to select your hard drive from the list as it may take hours to scan it.

Once the scan was finished, I got a count of recovered images and a thumbnail of each one. I selected those that I wished to recover, designated a location on my hard drive to save them and I was done. Pretty simple!

DiskInternals provides excellent documentation with the program and online help. How refreshing to read the text and not feel that it was roughly translated from some other language!

There are things to be aware of when you use a program of this sort. You have to realize that a file, in this case one that holds a picture, can be marked as deleted, but not really be removed. That's how UNerase programs can work. They examine the disk at a lower level than you would normally when you see a list of files in a folder. If you have a problem with a memory card, don't try anything with it until you try to recover the pictures. The more you do, the more chance you will overwrite the pictures. If



the area on the disk where the original picture was gets reused by you adding new pictures, then the original will not be recoverable. You may get a partial recovery or one with pieces of several pictures like I did below.

You cannot be sure that you will be able to recover any pictures, but it's sure nice to know that you have a very good shot at it when you use this affordable program.


System Requirements:

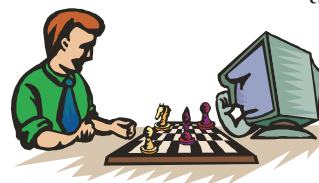
- Windows 9x/ME/NT4.0/2000/XP/2003
- 16 MB of RAM
- a mouse
- enough disk space for recovered files

from **DiskInternals Research**
www.diskinternals.com. 

MAN VS. SUPERCOMPUTER

Michael Adams, United Kingdom's strongest chess player, is the latest player to take on a supercomputer. Adams and the Hydra computer will play up to six games for a prize fund of \$150,000. Some experts are already predicting that Hydra will win the contest. But correspondence chess grandmaster Arno Nickel, who recently beat Hydra 2-0 in a correspondence match, has predicted that Adams could secure a 3-3

draw. According to the team that developed Hydra, it can calculate 200 million moves per second and see up to 40 moves ahead. 



Web Link Validator

reviewed by Steve Weinberg

THE “BROKEN LINK DOCTOR.”

That’s what REL Software calls their latest incantation of **Web Link Validator**. Rightly so, and much more! This software program finds broken links in web pages (like www.rpcug.org) and lots of statistics too (old pages, slow pages, deep pages, etc.).

Let me backup and explain what this is all about. What is a “broken page”? Ever click on a link on a website and get the dreaded 404 error (*page not found*)? This means that the web page code is sending you to a place that does not exist. Maybe it did once upon a time, but it’s gone now. It’s the webmaster’s responsibility to check the website periodically to prevent these problems. I was glad to have the opportunity to review this software as it makes my job so much easier.

How could a link break after it’s been working just fine? Often there is a link to a page on some company’s website and the company reorganizes and updates the site or just removes that page? Companies do this all the time to give us the new and improved versions of their websites. For this reason (this always change), the website links should be validated (checked) periodically.

Web Link Validator is a very comprehensive tool that checks an entire website including internal and external links as well as compiling lots of statistics simply by entering the URL (like www.rpcug.org). There are loads of reports to analyze your website in many different ways.

A useful feature is the easy way to exclude links from being checked through which I excluded the checking of the links on our calendar pages. The page for each month on our online calendar has links to every other month of the year and the previous and next years. Checking this would go on indefinitely and the results would be senseless and useless.

I use JavaScript code in our RPCUG website to enable the left-side menu. This is one of the first validator tools I have used that can deal with the JavaScript code and validate the links that it points to. It worked flawlessly.

If you have a website that consists of many links or one that has links to other sites that change frequently, this is the tool for you. The speed is quite good as well. It is free to try and \$95 to buy.

Go to www.relsoft.com to check it out. 

News from PCReNew

We have reached the 1,000 mark in computers built and given away. It takes the time and talent of all the people involved at PC ReNew to make this happen.

The benefit to the community is far-reaching as we have touched upon the lives of many more than 1,000 people. Recently we donated and networked 8 more computers to the Rockland Independent Living Center Cyber Café in Spring Valley. Over 60 people with varying disabilities attend this program on Fridays. It is heart warming to see how the use of computers has enriched their lives.

Many thanks to the Solid Waste Management Authority of Rockland for their continuous support since 2001. We have a contract with them that allows us to take computers and components that are discarded and dropped off at the Pomona station. We refurbish and turn these into working units.

This year Rockland Community College has given us over five tons of monitors and computers that would have otherwise been disposed of at the County Hazardous Waste facility (at a cost to Rockland taxpayers.) We will recycle these to needy families as working computer systems. Thanks to Ramapo supervisor Chris St. Lawrence for his continuous support of **PC ReNew** and for giving us a public forum to discuss **PC ReNew** and RPCUG. As head of the Count Waste Authority it has helped make our relationship with them a BIG WIN-WIN for Rockland.

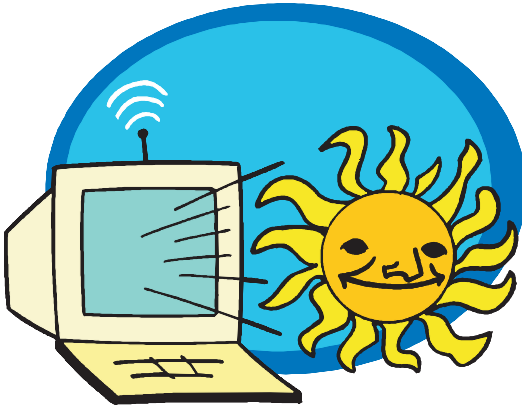
Volunteer with the **PC ReNew** “Big Hearts” and “Join the Fun”! —Hank Feinberg 



ROCKLAND PC USERS GROUP

PO Box 802
New City, NY 10956

F I R S T C L A S S



WANT TO JOIN THE GROUP? HERE'S HOW!

Bring your completed application and a check payable to RPCUG to a meeting or mail your application and check to:
RPCUG at PO Box 802, New City, NY 10956. (PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION)

Name

E-mail Address

Address

Spouse's Name (if joint membership)

Day Phone:

Spouse's E-mail address

Evening Phone:

Children's Names (for Family Membership)

INDIVIDUAL \$5	JOINT \$4	FAMILY \$6	STUDENT \$3	CORPORATE SPONSOR \$10	RENEWAL: Member # _____
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