



OTTAWA PC NEWS

Vol. 18 number 2

The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

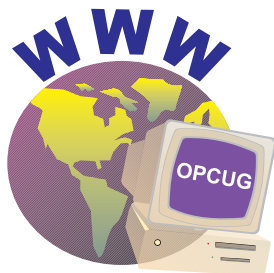
February 2001

CLUB NEWS

The Year in Review

by Chris Taylor, Chairman

The year 2000 saw quite a few changes at the OPCUG. Early in the year, we decided to move the public Web site onto our own server — PUB II. Besides easing administration tasks, by switching the DNS pointer for opcug.ottawa.com to PUB II, it allowed users to also use that address for the private Web site, Telnet, FTP, and POP3 access to PUB II. At the same time, I had a DNS entry for www.opcug.ottawa.com added, since that had been published in a few places. A big thanks to Magma for the free domain hosting and to *The Ottawa Citizen* for allowing us to continue as a subdomain of ottawa.com.



The Board of Directors saw more than the normal shifting of duties. We started the year with **Terry Mahoney** as Chairman. When Terry passed away in the spring, **Bert Schopf** agreed to resume duties as an interim Chairman. By the summer, I agreed to take on the duties of Chairman as long as someone else took care of getting speakers for the general meetings. **Tim Mahoney** accepted a nomination to the Board as Program Chairman.

David Reeves, the first Web Master for the OPCUG decided to step down. Although **Brigitte Lord** did not consider herself an expert in matters of the Web, she volunteered to do her best and has done a terrific job of revamping and bringing a consistent look and feel to the web site.



Chris Taylor



Bert Schopf



Tim Mahoney



Brigitte Lord

Jean Vaumoron, after years of doing the layout work for the newsletter, decided to go live on the other side of the pond. Fortunately, Bert, who had previously done the layout work for the newsletter and was already the editor, stepped forward and offered to also do the layout.

We had our first review of the finances of the OPCUG in three years, which made it quite a chore. Thanks much to **John Archibald**. We will try to make sure we do it every year. It will make the job a whole lot easier.

The Board spent a fair amount of time deciding how to deal with the decline in membership, and therefore revenues. We were spending money faster than it came in and, while we have healthy reserves, it was not a good trend. By cutting back to one phone line on PUB II and starting our highly successful

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Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, February 21st, 2001**

COMING UP

White is not a colour!

by Tim Mahoney

There's a chance to add colour to your winter on February 21st. **Ruth Gmehlin** of Corel has graciously volunteered to present to us CorelDRAW 10.

So come on out, bring a friend and help relieve those mid-winter blues!

The CorelDRAW 10 Graphics Suite delivers vector illustration, layout, bitmap creation, image-editing, painting and animation software all in one package.

The enhanced interface, improved customization features, professional output capabilities and support for text in multiple languages simplify the design process — whether you're creating for print or the Web.

With Corel R.A.V.E., a powerful new animation application, you can create live effects over time, generate a time line of edited work, create rollover graphics and output images to Macromedia Flash SWF format.

◆◆◆



CLUB NEWS

January prize winner

Eric Clyde - a copy of Partition Magic

A big thanks to everyone who bought a ticket!

Just when we were getting used to second Wednesdays...

Please note that because Scouts Canada has booked the museum for the first two weeks in February, we will hold our General Meeting on the **THIRD** Wednesday, February the 21st. It's back to the second Wednesdays again in March.



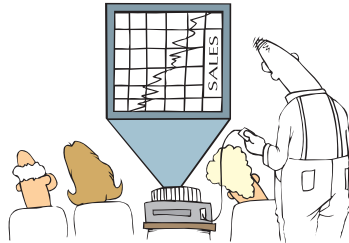
CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, February 21 st	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.
Ottawa Paradox Users Group	Third Thursday of each month	6:00-8:00 p.m. — Corel Bldg 1600 Carling Ave
PIG SIG (i.e., Wing SIG)	February 21 st — An informal social event held after the other SIGs are finished	"Good Times" cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe
Internet SIG (I-SIG)	Wednesday, February 21 st	Come and join our discussions!
Developers SIG	Wednesday, February 21 st	Immediately following the main OPCUG presentation the second Wednesday of the month, and occasionally at other locations in the region.

Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).

raffles, we appear to have reversed that trend. We also more heavily promoted the idea of obtaining the newsletter electronically, either in Adobe Acrobat or plain text format. At this point 22 members have elected to stop receiving the printed version of the newsletter, saving the Group hundreds of dollars per year.

We had presentations from Microsoft on Windows 2000 and games. Bloom Microtech told us how to take better care of our computers and also how to set up a home network. Corel showed us their distribution of Linux. Zero Knowledge proved it is possible (with the help of their software) to use the Internet without allowing anyone to trace your movements or find out private information. The Toronto Dominion Bank showed us their on-line banking system. Forefront Graphics gave us a peek into the world of digital video editing. Andre Demers from Environment Canada showed us how the disabled can use computers effectively with the help of technology.

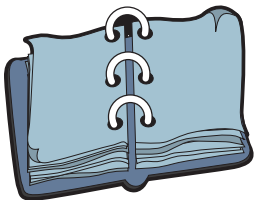


they meet on the first Wednesday of the month. Fortunately, they did not switch to the second Wednesday!

We finally got around to a task I thought long ago was a worthwhile endeavour – acknowledging the efforts of all the volunteers who have made the OPCUG what it is today. We eventually compiled a list of 93 people who have served on the executive or board of directors, or contributed in some significant other manner to the health and operation of our group. I commend them all. You can see the entire list on the OPCUG web site. Just click the “Friends” button.

Friends

I would like to express my gratitude to all those I have not mentioned who contribute to the operation of the OPCUG. And I would also like to thank the general membership. Without you, this would all be meaningless.



In an effort to allow our members to also attend meetings of the Ottawa Carleton Linux User Group, who happened to meet on the first Wednesday of the month, we decided to switch our meetings to the second Wednesday of the month starting in September. Recently, OCLUG found that they could no longer get space where

Results of 2001 Board of Directors Election

by David Reeves, Elections Officer

Chris Taylor, Tim Mahoney, Jocelyn Doire, Bob Walker, Brigitte Lord, Bob Gowan and Morris Turpin have been nominated for election to the 2001 OPCUG Board of Directors. As the Board consists of nine members and only seven individuals were nominated, an election will not be held and all nominees are elected by acclamation.



Joc Doire



Bob Gowan



Morris Turpin

Great Seats Still Available!!!



The filling of vacant positions will be one of the early orders of business of the 2001 executive. **If you are interested in one of these positions, please contact one of the Directors.** While being a Director involves work for no direct remuneration, there are advantages for your career and resume. As a member of past executives, I found the experience rewarding and encourage you to get involved in the running of your organization.



Hey — who's that?

by Timothy Mahoney

Been seeing new faces around the OPCUG lately? They're likely HUGO members that have recently joined our group. Twenty-six in fact.

The name HUGO stands for the Helpful Users Group of Ottawa which started back in the summer of 1983. Back then it called itself the Hyperion Users Group of Ottawa with over a thousand members with some as far away as New Zealand and Australia devoted to helping users with Hyperion personal computers.

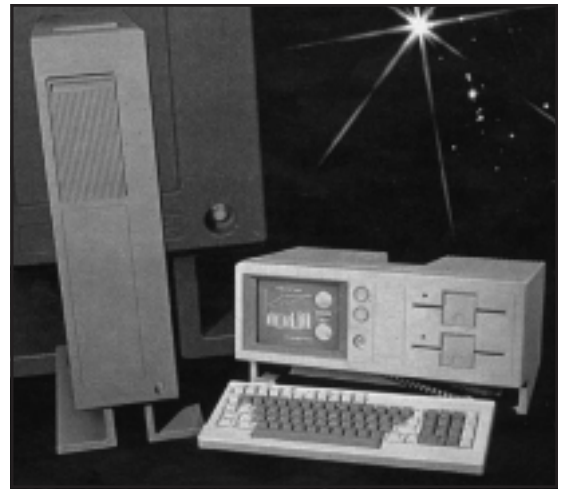
The Hyperion was an IBM compatible computer manufactured here in Ottawa by a firm called Bytec. The system consisted of two 5 1/4" 360k floppy disk drives, 256K of ram memory, an integral 4" amber monochrome screen, an inbuilt 300 baud modem, and a 16bit 8088 4.5 Mhz processor.

Best of all it was portable and came with carry case which resembled a gym bag. It included integrated software such as the MULTIPLAN or optional Lotus 123 spreadsheet, In:Scribe for word processing, Aladin for databases and In:Touch for communications.

Later in 1983 came the EX expansion plug in chassis unveiled at Comdex in Atlanta which provided 7 IBM expansion slots, housed a 10 megabyte Winchester hard drive and memory expansion to 640k of RAM. All of this was to increase the versatility of the Hyperion. The chassis even had rollers to be able to wheel it around the office where ever you needed it.

In the end the very promising Hyperion computer was purchased by Comterm who mistakenly saw no future in personal computers and decided to continue building mainframe systems instead and ceased all future development of the Hyperion.

Fortunately HUGO had a strong core of members who were keenly devoted to helping computer users through out the years. As time passed and people replaced there aging Hyperions with other systems,



Hyperion Computer

HUGO

the group remained together but modified their name to the Helpful Users Group of Ottawa and opened its membership to include other makes of IBM compatible computer users.

Their membership has dwindled over the last couple of years, probably attributable to the internet and its easy access to information. But perhaps the use of the motto; "Users Helping Users" carried by both the OPCUG and HUGO is what has brought us together.

Welcome aboard HUGO!



Ooops...

by Chris Taylor

In the January issue of *Ottawa PC News*, I wrote about a means to lock the workstation from an icon. I indicated it would work for Windows NT and 2000.

Unfortunately, as was pointed out to me by a member, the tip only works for Windows 2000. I double-checked and it is true. The function *LockWorkStation* does not exist in the version of *user32.dll* that comes with Windows NT. Sorry 'bout that.

Q. How many software engineers does it take to change a light bulb?



A. None. It's a hardware issue.

A hardware-based router

by Chris Taylor

I have written several articles over the past year or two on sharing an Internet connection using software-based NAT (Network Address Translation) products, such as SyGate and WinRoute Pro (see webref 1 in sidebar below). As well, I have written about how these products, as well as some others, such as BlackICE Defender help prevent intruders from attaching to your computer and doing horrible things (see webref 2).

If you have a high-speed connection to the Internet through cable modem or DSL (such as Sympatico's High Speed Edition), there is another solution you can go with — a hardware-based router.

There is a relatively new category of routers that have come onto the market recently that are designed and priced for the home user. There are two main benefits to using a hardware-based solution. First, if you are trying to connect multiple machines to the Internet, a software-based NAT solution requires that one machine always remain on to provide the Internet connection. With a hardware-based solution, only the router needs to remain turned on. Second, from a security perspective, it is generally more reliable to have a piece of hardware as a buffer between your computers and the Internet, rather than just software.

I recently helped a relative configure one of these routers and am very impressed with it. The router is the Linksys EtherFast Cable/DSL Router. There are three models to choose from. Model BEFSR81 has an 8-port 10/100Mb/sec switch built in for connecting up to eight computers together on a LAN. Model BEFSR41 has a 4-port switch. Model BEFSR11 has a single port and may be used if you have only a single computer or if you already have a hub or switch. Other than the different number of ports, the three models are functionally equivalent.

The 45-page manual is quite clear and steps you through the process of installation and configuration. It assumes you already have the network cards installed in each of your computers. It then walks you through the physical connections.

The router has a built-in web server and it is through it that you configure the router. The manual assumes you have configured the TCP/IP protocol on your computer to use DHCP. If you have not, you must ensure that your computers are using IP addresses in the range



Linksys EtherFast Cable/DSL Router

192.168.1.2 through 192.168.1.254 and your subnet mask is set to 255.255.255.0. Otherwise, you will not be able to access the router. This information is detailed in the *Troubleshooting* section of the manual. I wonder how many people struggle with this step before figuring out how it has to be configured.

Once you connect with your browser, you are prompted to log into the router with a default password, which can be changed later. There are a number of screens you can access for various configuration options.

On the main *Setup* screen you can change the LAN IP address of the router from the default 192.168.1.1. Normally there is no need to do so. For the WAN side of the router, you specify the IP address assigned to you by your ISP. If your ISP uses DHCP, you make the selection *Obtain an IP Address Automatically*. Enter the IP Addresses for the DNS servers, as provided by your ISP. If you are using Sympatico's High Speed Edition, enable the option for *PPPoE* and enter the username and password assigned by Sympatico. Do not install the software that Sympatico provides for connecting. It is not required and will actually cause you problems if you try to use it.

On the *DHCP* tab, you can tell the router if you want it to assign IP addresses for all the machines on your network. If you have

Continued next page...

Webrefs:

- 1 opcug.ottawa.com/public/reviews/sygate.htm and opcug.ottawa.com/public/reviews/winroute.htm.
- 2 opcug.ottawa.com/public/Reviews/blackice.htm
opcug.ottawa.com/public/Reviews/zonealar.htm, and
opcug.ottawa.com/public/Reviews/sscan.htm

A hardware-based router ...continued from previous page

manually configured TCP/IP on your machines, you can skip this step. Make sure that if you use DHCP for *any* machine on your network, you use it for *all* machines to prevent IP address conflicts.

Once these two configuration screens have been set, any computer on your network should be able to access the Internet. The router takes care of the details of connecting, as well as the address translation between your private IP addresses and the single public IP address provided by your ISP.

After you have verified that things are working right, it is a good idea to connect to the router again and continue with some additional configuration options.

You can use the *Filters* page to block certain machines on your network from accessing the Internet. You can either block complete access by entering an IP address of a machine on your local LAN or just a port number. For example, by entering port 80, you would effectively block anyone from accessing the Web. Also on this page is an option *Block WAN Request*. By toggling this on, you are telling the router not to respond to pings or connection requests from the Internet. This effectively makes your router disappear from the Internet — a great security feature.

There are times when you want someone on the Internet to be able to access one of the computers on your LAN. Normally, when using NAT, this is not possible because your computers are assigned what is known as *private IP addresses* and the Internet routers simply refuse to route packets to such addresses. However, the router permits this functionality through what it terms *Forwarding*. What this does is instruct the router that incoming packets to a particular port should be forwarded on to a specific IP address on your LAN. You can configure up to ten ports in this manner.

For example, if you're running a web server on your machine that is configured as 192.168.1.30, you configure the router to forward connection requests on port 80 to that address. For another example, some Internet-based games require that your computer listen on a particular port. If running such a game, you have to configure the router to forward requests on that port to the computer on your LAN running the game.

A DMZ configuration option in the router allows you to configure a single computer on your LAN to accept *all* inbound connection requests. As such, it is totally exposed to the Internet. While this is useful in a few circumstances, unless you know why you are doing it, you should normally avoid doing this. There are additional configuration screens for dynamic and static routing. Most people will not have to worry about these.

All in all, I am very impressed with the Linksys EtherFast Cable/DSL Router. It is quite simple to set up and has pretty much all the configuration options most people will need. After several weeks of use, the only problem that cropped up was one time when the router went haywire and refused to route any packets. Powering the router off and back on again fixed the problem.

After 10 minutes on the web and 5 minutes on the phone, the best local prices I found were \$180 for the 1-port version, \$270 for the 4-port version, and \$365 for the 8-port version.



CLUB NEWS

Raffle for February

There will be a raffle at the February general meeting.

This month we will be departing from the norm of raffling off software. Microsoft has donated a copy of the coffee table book *Inside Out: Microsoft – In Our Own Words*.

It is a fascinating book that Microsoft published to celebrate their 25th anniversary. Thousands of current and former employees were interviewed. It provides a unique perspective on the way Microsoft operates.

Read tales on how the developers chose the features you use every day. Find out how marketing decisions were made. Read about the visions that turned ideas into products. Anecdotes abound.

Through the 315 pages of the book there are plenty of photographs. I found it fascinating to see how the size of development teams have grown over the years.

As always, the raffles help keep your membership dues low. Tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.



Don't miss any meeting announcements

The topic for the January 2001 OPCUG general meeting was determined too late to make the newsletter deadline. However, those who are subscribed to the "Announcements" list on the OPCUG listserver found out about the meeting topic on the weekend before the general meeting.

"Announcements" is a low volume list that the Board of Directors can use to get in touch with the membership. Subscribers can expect at least one message per month – the meeting reminder that goes out a few days in advance of the general meeting. Other than that, the only time it is used is when the Board feels there is some important news that should be brought to the attention of all members.

If you are not subscribed to the "Announcements" list, you are encouraged to do so. Send an email to listserv@opcug.ottawa.com. Leave the subject blank. In the body of the message put;

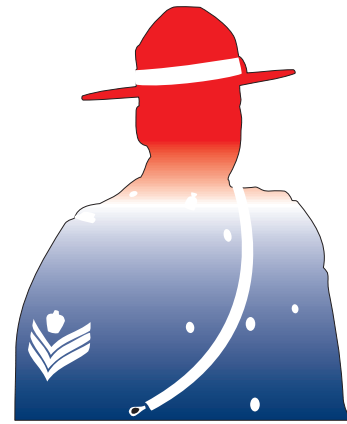
subscribe announcements

and send the email. Within a couple of minutes you will receive a confirmation message from the listserver.



OPCUG mugs and multitools are in!

Check out these great thermal coffee mugs and multitools sporting our club logo at the back of the auditorium at General Meetings! OPCUG insulated mugs are \$15 and OPCUG multitools are \$20.



Security references

by Chris Taylor

At the January 2001 OPCUG general meeting there was a presentation given by myself, **Morris Turpin**, and **Brigitte Lord** on securing your computer. There was a fairly extensive list of sites on the Internet for information and programs dealing with viruses, Trojan programs, security, NAT routers, etc. If you want this list of sites, send an email to listserv@opcug.ottawa.com. Leave the subject blank and on the first line of the body of the message, enter;

GET SECURITY

The list has been updated since the general meeting with additional references I have and others that were forwarded to me by members. If you retrieved a copy prior to January 14th, you might want to get the file again.

The PowerPoint file that was used during the presentation, which includes speaker notes, is available on PUB II in file area 52 – Text - OPCUG - General.



OTTAWA PC NEWS

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July and August. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members. Deadline for submissions is three Saturdays before the general meeting. If you would like to contribute an article to *Ottawa PC News*, please submit it to the newsletter editor.

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups go until 10 p.m.

Fees

Membership: \$25 per year.

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<http://opcug.ottawa.com/>

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Up to 33.6 kbps V.34 228-8951

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CLUB NEWS

Welcome new member:

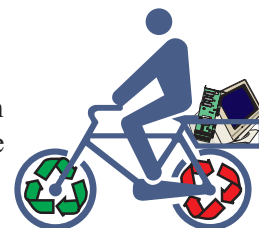
Richard Scott, Ottawa

CLUB LIFE

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Bring your old computer books, software, hardware, and paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the general meetings, and leave them at the table near the auditorium's entrance. *Please limit your magazines to publication dates of less than two years old.*

If you don't bring something, you may want to TAKE AWAY something of interest, so look in on this area. Any item left over at the end of the meeting will be sent to the... recycle bin.



How to get the Ottawa PC News by e-mail or PDF

To receive the newsletter by e-mail, send a message to listserv@opcug.ottawa.com with the text "subscribe Newslettertxt" or "subscribe NewsletterPDF" (without the quotes) in the body of the message. No subject line is required.

Cancelling the paper version

You can help the environment and save us some costs by sending an e-mail to mark.cayer@opcug.ottawa.com asking to cancel the delivery of the paper version of the newsletter (or ask him in person — Mark is usually at the back of the auditorium at General Meetings).



Mark Cayer

