



PRODUCT REVIEW

Recover4All Professional *by Chris Taylor*

Did you ever get that sinking feeling just after deleting a file? You know the one – where you think, “Jeez, *that’s* not the file I meant to delete...” Sure, Windows 95 and later has the Recycle Bin, but it is not a panacea. You can hold the shift key down while deleting a file and it won’t go to the Recycle Bin. You could have misconfigured the settings on the Recycle Bin. Or maybe you accidentally emptied the Recycle Bin.

On top of those problems, you could be deleting a file from the command prompt, which always bypasses the Recycle Bin. Or you could be deleting a file on a network drive. When you do that, the file never gets sent to the Recycle Bin on either your computer or the networked machine.

For whatever reason, accidental file loss happens. When it does, it can be a very painful process if you don’t have a backup. The file may contain years of financial records. It could be some elegant words you finally put down in electrons. It could be a file you just struggled for days to download from the Internet.

When you delete a file, the operating system does not wipe out the data. It merely marks the space that was occupied by the file as being available for use. Until the operating system decides to use that space for another file, all your data is still there and is recoverable. This is nothing new and since the early days of the Norton Utilities

back in the mid-1980’s there have been ways of recovering deleted files. NTFS partitions bring new challenges to the problem and there are far fewer solutions for recovering deleted files from NTFS partitions, but it can still be done.

I recently took a look at **Recover4All Professional v2.18** from **Advanced Utilities**, whose sole purpose is to recover deleted files. It works on FAT12, FAT16, FAT32 and NTFS partitions. The program runs under Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2K/XP.

*“Jeez, **that’s** not
the file I meant to
delete...”*

The most important thing to do when trying to recover deleted files is *stop writing to the disk partition that contains the deleted file*. This is essential to maximize the chances of recovering the deleted file. To use Recover4All Pro, you should ideally go to another computer and browse to their web site at www.recover4all.com. Download the program from there.

The downloaded file is a self-extracting archive. When you run it, it offers to extract the files to drive A:. This is a good default for such a program, since you might be doing this on your only available computer. Remember, you want to minimize writing to disk on the computer with

the deleted file.

Another good thing about Recover4All Pro is that it does not have an installation routine, which would also cause disk writes. In fact, it can be run from a floppy disk, being only about ¼ MB in size. If you are running the program for the first time, you can enter your registration code in-memory only to avoid writing to the registry.

Recover4All Pro opens a window with two panes. The left pane shows a list of all drives on the local system. You can choose any drive and the program will scan the entire drive for deleted files.

When the program finishes scanning, it will show a tree structure in the left pane. Only deleted directories and directories containing deleted files are shown, which helps you focus in on

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, May 14th, 2003**

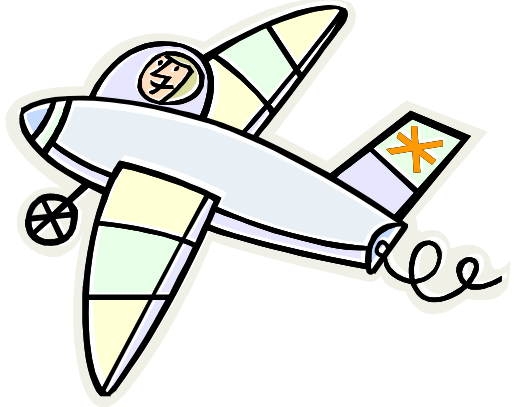
Coming Up in May

Did you ever wonder about the performance impact of choosing one disk format over another, such as NTFS vs. FAT32? Do you regularly defrag your hard drive? Do you wonder if it really does any good? Do you wonder why NTFS has such a big overhead for its own structures? Did you ever hear about NTFS being a “journaling” file system and wonder what that really meant?

If so, you are in for a treat at the May 14th general meeting of the OPCUG. Greg Hayes, Manager, Windows Technical Support at Raxco Software in Washington, D.C. will be flying in to give us a presentation on *Improving File System Performance*. Greg will talk about file system related issues such as differences between FATx and NTFS file systems, the anatomy of an \$MFT record in the NTFS file system, the impact of cluster size on file system performance, the impact of fragmentation on file system performance, issues to consider when defragmenting such as limitations of Micro-soft's defrag APIs, and more.

This promises to be an *excellent* technical presentation from a firm intimately involved with the nitty gritty details of file systems. *Not to be missed!* Be sure to extend an invitation to others to attend as guests.

NOTE: See Chris Taylor's review of **Raxco's** disk defragmentation utility [PerfectDisk](#) in last month's issue of *Ottawa PC News*.



A new home for the PIG SIG (WING SIG)

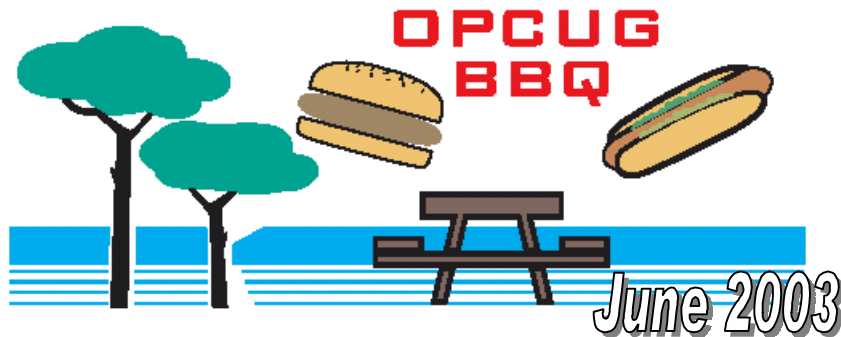
Check out our new hang-out. Join us after the general meeting at the newly renovated Chances “R” restaurant at Baseline and Woodroffe (address in CALENDAR below). Yes, ladies, you'll appreciate the nice, new décor. Enjoy good food and drink while shooting the breeze with club members. Conversation topics cover a wide range of subjects. It may be the most informative SIG meeting of the evening. See you there.

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, May. 14 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.
Internet SIG (I-SIG)	Wednesday, May. 14 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. Come and join our discussions!
Developers' SIG	Wednesday, May. 14 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting, and occasionally at other locations in the region.
Orphans' SIG	Wednesday, May. 14 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Delphi User Group	TBA	TBA (contact information on page 8)
PIG SIG (Wing SIG)	Wednesday, May. 14 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances “R” restaurant, 1365 Woodroffe Ave. (formerly Shoppers' City West mall)

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

CLUB EVENT



The Second Annual OPCUG BBQ!

by Bob Gowan—Program Co-ordinator

The OPCUG held its first barbeque last June, and we think everyone who attended had a great time. Therefore, your Board of Directors has decided to hold this end-of-the-season event again this year. The BBQ will be part of the regular June meeting and once again, OPCUG is supplying the food and drink. Guests are welcome – your family or prospective members - but we need some member input now to make it as successful as last year.

Firstly, please send me an e-mail before June 1, 2003, and let me know how many will be in your party. Include your preference for hot dogs or hamburgers and whether you are a big eater or little eater. We will have soft drinks on hand as well. PLEASE NOTE: NO alcohol is permitted on the museum grounds.

Secondly, if you would like to help out with the event – either helping to get supplies, bringing a BBQ, flipping burgers, or helping clean up afterwards – contact me at the e-mail address below as soon as possible.

After the BBQ, we will be having our regular meeting inside the Museum (Canada Science and Technology Museum, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.).

Please take a moment to email me at gowanb@inac.gc.ca.

May Raffle

Thanks to Microsoft's user group support program *Mindshare*, we have a copy of Encarta Reference Library 2003 to raffle off. Please note that it is on DVD-ROM. Encarta Reference Library includes Encarta Encyclopedia Deluxe, Encarta Interactive World Atlas, Encarta World English Dictionary, Thesaurus, Book of Quotations and Research & Learning tools. An excellent resource for any computer user. Street value approximately \$100.

For more information on Encarta Reference Library, see <http://encarta.msn.com/shop/ERL.asp>.

If you don't have a DVD-ROM drive on your computer yet, maybe this is the perfect excuse you have been waiting for to enhance your computer system. Not only will you avoid swapping amongst the 5 disks that come with the CD-ROM version, but you also get extra content on the DVD-ROM version.

Tickets on the raffle are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten. Those at the April anniversary meeting may recall from the trivia contest (see <http://opcug.ca/public/history/trivia.htm>) that the last time membership dues were raised was over 13 years ago. One of the ways we have maintained our low membership dues for so long is through raffles. Help keep your membership dues low and buy a chance or ten on this terrific prize.

Recover4All Professional (Continued from page 1)

finding files of interest. Deleted files show up in the right pane as you drill down through your directory structure. The pane shows the file names, sizes, recovery chances, and the start sector of the files.

Once you select the file or files you want to recover, you click the *Recover* button on the toolbar. You are then prompted for a location. Recover4All Pro will not let you simply undelete the file, nor save it to a new location on the same disk partition. This would cause a write to the disk and there is a chance this will make your situation worse. So, you have to save it to a different partition on the local computer or you can save it to a network drive. UNC specifications are not supported, so if you want to save it to a network drive, you must map a drive letter to the destination. I would like to see the addition of a *Network Neighborhood* option here to browse to another computer on the network.

If you are on a stand-alone machine and only have a single disk partition and a floppy drive, you are out of luck if you need to recover a file bigger than the capacity of a floppy disk. Recover4All Pro will happily write and write and write to a floppy disk. Then it chokes with an error message

File could not be saved. Is the disk full?

The folks at Advanced Utilities claim this is becoming less of an issue as more people get CD writers, but I wonder. In addition to having the hardware, you need to use a packet writer feature of your burning software, such as Roxio's DirectCD or Nero's InCD that treats your optical media like a big removable drive. I think it would be a good idea if Recover4All Pro could split the file across multiple floppies and create a process that could stick the parts back together again. While I wouldn't want to have to use this on a 100MB file, it sure would be handy if the file was only a couple of megs.

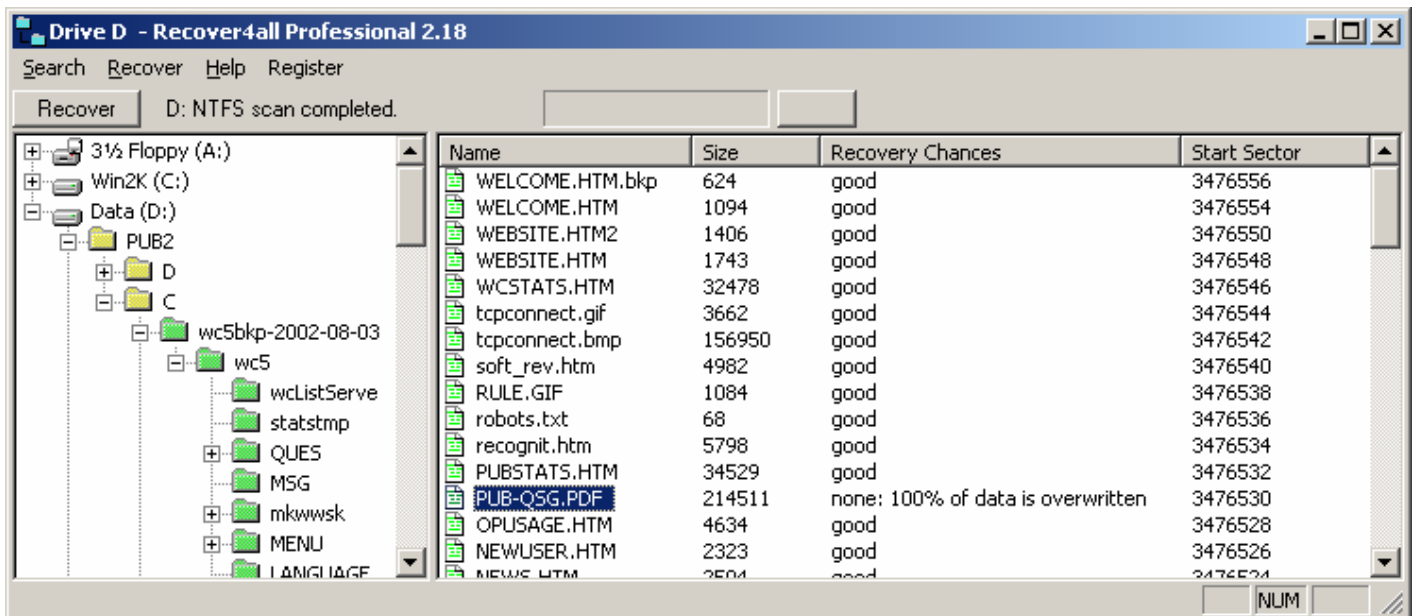
The only other problem I had with Recover4All Pro was the fact that the process to scan for deleted files does not include a cancel option. If scanning only took a few seconds, this would not be an issue. But on my PIII/933, it took almost seven minutes to scan a 35GB partition. If you accidentally select the wrong partition, you just have to wait until it completes before you can select another partition and continue. I am told the next build will allow you to cancel operations, but as of this writing, it was not available.

Overall, I found the program to be very easy to use. In every test I did, as long as I tried to avoid writing to the

disk, I was successful in recovering deleted files. And even if I did write to the disk containing the deleted file, I was surprised at the number of deleted files that were completely recoverable. Just don't count on it. The more you use the disk, the less likely files will be recoverable.

You can download an eval version of Recover4All Pro from the vendor's web site at www.recover4all.com which will find all deleted files and allow you to recover files up to 10K in size. Registration is required to recover larger files. There are two versions of the program available; the basic Recover4All works only on Windows 95/98/ME and only supports FAT volumes. It costs US\$49. The Pro version adds support for Windows NT/2K/XP and NTFS volumes. It costs US\$69.

The cost seems a little steep to me. But the program does what it says it will do. And it does it easily and efficiently. Download the eval version and give it a try, even if you don't want to part with your hard-earned money. At least that way, you will be better prepared for when that essential file gets deleted and you decide it is less painful to pay the money to get the file back than to recreate the data.



CLUB BYTES



Presenters and Topics Wanted

by Bob Gowan – Program Co-ordinator

While we are all set for the next few meetings, there is still time to let me know what sort of presentations you would like to have at OPCUG meetings in the fall and winter of 2003/04. Typically, we have a mixture of software and hardware presentations; or services that may be useful to OPCUG members. We like to provide an opportunity for local companies to showcase their products or services; and “the big ones” are always sure to draw a crowd.

Let me know what you’d like to see and I’ll do my best to try to get them to an OPCUG meeting. All the better if you know someone who could present something of interest to the OPCUG. Perhaps you have favourite product that you would like to demonstrate to the club. Anecdotal feedback on past member presentations suggests that many of our members enjoy these talks as much as any others. This may be your big chance to show your stuff !!!

Comments and suggestions welcomed at gowanb@inac.gc.ca.

CLUB BITS

April Prize Winners *by Mark Cayer*

Who could keep track of the prizes flying around at the 20th anniversary meeting of the OPCUG!!

What with T-shirts, survival cards, mints, visor clips and pens lots of folks went home with something. Thanks to Microsoft for the many giveaways we had during our OPCUG Trivia Game.

John Cocklin and **Bob Walker** went home with software donated by Toggle Software.

Our raffle winners were:

Micheline Johnson who won an XP Plus Kit

Fred Lipsett who took home a C++ Programming Kit and

Henry Sims who now has a book on XP to add to his collection.



COMPUTERS AT LARGE

So What Do You Actually Do With a Computer?

by Bob Thomas

Reprinted with permission from the December 2002 issue of *PC Update*, the magazine of Melbourne PC User Group, Australia

My next door neighbour once said to me "I want to learn the computer", to which I responded, "What do you plan to do with one?" "Don't know, really", she said "I just want to learn to use it". It transpired that she really didn't understand what a computer can do, or more importantly what she could do with a computer. She is now on her third computer, all hand-me-downs from her children, and as far as I can tell each computer has been a total waste of space. This might seem strange to the seasoned user, but there are many people who really struggle with finding practical uses for their computers.

Whilst I applaud and encourage people's desire to "learn to use one", I always feel that it helps if you have some general idea of what you might use a computer for if you had one - after all, you wouldn't get behind the wheel of a car unless you had some idea of where you were going. Computers are not all that different.

As the owner of one of the worst memories one might not wish for, I use my computer as a substitute for my poor memory. Unlike my failing brain, I can store literally thousands of pieces of information on my computer, and know that they will all still be there long after the brain cells have fallen by the wayside. The following is a summary of some of the uses I have found for my computers, and maybe somewhere in here you might find a new idea or two of your own.

Word Processing Spreadsheets and More

Probably the most basic use for a computer is as a glorified typewriter, and some people are happy enough writing the occasional letter, typing out recipes or compiling a list of addresses for their social club. Writing and storing information is perhaps the primary use people find for computers, yet this can embrace far more than one might think. I used to write myself notes on scraps of paper,

and I still do - but the important notes now find their way to the computer where all my addresses, telephone numbers, reminders, banking details, correspondence, medical details and so forth are stored electronically. At the touch of a button I can retrieve significant details relating to my health. I can see my current financial situation, or find that joke I laughed at several years ago. I can find the words to a poem I liked or the copy of my will or even the paint colour I used when renovating the lounge some years back. Add to this information the countless items I have downloaded from the Internet or knowledge stored in my electronic Encyclopaedias, and you begin to see how central my computer is to the way my life's affairs are organised. It's amazing just how much information we have around us, and computers enable you to access that information quickly and to keep it all in the one place.

This might sound complicated to maintain, but it isn't. Once you have settled into a routine, it's just as easy to type information into a computer as it is to try and organise those zillions of pieces of paper that pass through our hands every year. Information can be scanned, typed, or imported electronically, and there is no practical limitation to the amount of information one can store. Retrieval of information is simplicity itself, and one's entire life can be documented, analysed, retrieved and transported with amazing ease, with multiple copies of everything just to be safe. That's a lot more than the brain can do!

My wife prepares a newsletter for an anti-Landmine group, solely produced on her PC and distributed via mail and the Internet. Using a combination of word processing, publishing and graphics software she regularly produces a professional publication for Australia-wide distribution. Copies are also mailed via regular mail using pre-printed labels I produce for her on my PC. While she is producing her newsletter, I might be

developing a spreadsheet that will monitor our finances or produce information for our taxation returns. Recently I used these same spreadsheets to calculate the projected costs of an overseas trip, and to prepare currency conversion tables for use in Europe.

Rather than use a telex for frequently accessed telephone numbers, my computer periodically prints out a mini telephone directory which sits beside my telephone. In the kitchen is a folder with all my recipes inserted into plastic envelopes. Each recipe title is held on a database from which I can print an indexed guide for those recipes, allowing me to find favourite recipes in an instant - no need to type any recipes in full, just their titles. When I mail Christmas cards each year, the computer spits out a list of names and addresses for me to check off. Similarly, instead of taking a written list of people's names when travelling, my list is in the form of labels so that I just peel them off and attach them to postcards. None of this however, means that paper and pen are dead - there are still many occasions when I forsake the computer for a simple handwritten note - but there are so many ways in which your PC can make life a lot more organised.

Genealogy

Once I tried compiling my family tree on paper. A total disaster, and impossible to structure - especially when new information came to hand. Now, the whole process is stored and compiled electronically with all my genealogical information automatically sorted and re-sorted by specialised software. If I wonder what relation some obscure person is to me I simply press a button and the computer tells me that Alice is my second cousin twice removed. If I want a printed family tree it is there for the asking, in any form desired; and if I want to send a copy to a relative overseas it is there in an instant.

(Continued on next page)

COMPUTERS AT LARGE

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Hobbies

I have a number of interests including coin collecting, craft, photography, music, writing, fish keeping plus various other hobbies. Each one is aided via collections of articles, pictures, instructions, notes and all the peripheral data that accompanies any hobby. Instruction manuals, tuition material, contacts and information about my pursuits are all stored on the computer, and managed by specialised software to help me manage and pursue those interests. There are an amazing number of free programs available via the internet which have been designed to facilitate the pursuit of virtually every interest one might develop. Some of these hobbies require high-end software, but there are also many interests that can be greatly enhanced using low-cost software involving little extra cost. I know of women who exchange knitting patterns and cooking tips, and use their computers to store their recipes and sewing ideas. My own wife takes this a step further by connecting her advanced sewing machine directly to the computer, thus availing herself of a potentially endless supply of patterns.

Video Editing and Photography

Recently I ventured into the latest use hobbyists are finding for their computers - the manipulation of still and video images to produce quality photographs and films for pleasure or profit. Today, home movies can be edited and enhanced using software that would have cost tens of thousands of dollars only a few years ago. The technology available to the home user is staggering, and those blurry, disjointed home movies or photographs can now be a thing of the past. My grandchildren will be able to see professionally produced images of themselves as youngsters when they grow up, and the whole family will be able to re-live those important occasions just by inserting a DVD into their home entertainment centre. Granted, this is one area where significant costs can be involved, but not such that they are totally out of reach.

Music

Using specially designed software, I will

(when time permits) take the first steps towards writing my first symphony, or perhaps my first children's song if an overture proves a tad ambitious. I have software that will convert my computer into a piano teacher, patiently leading me onward to the point where I can decipher all those strange black notes, or allow me to differentiate between a treble clef and a middle "C". If I choose to limit myself to existing music there are other rewarding possibilities.

Already I have used the computer to transfer my favourite music from my old vinyl records to shiny new CDs - removing the scratchy sounds and leaving off any songs I didn't particularly like. My series of "Compilation CD's" contain nothing but the best of my youth and they provide me with endless pleasure.

The Internet

The Internet is the new electronic frontier. From the comfort of your own home you can visit new lands, meet new people and make lasting friendships. There are discussion groups, hobby groups, electronic meeting places covering anything you care to name - and there is information about any topic you can imagine. There would be few, if any activities not represented on the Internet, and no area of human endeavour that cannot be pursued via the internet. Truly it is an amazing place, and I am just thankful I am here to experience it. One would have to live in a vacuum not to be able to find some point of interest amongst the millions of computers and the millions of people who combine to make this a truly global community. Distant relatives become closer due to the magic of e-mail; letters that were once taken to the post box are redundant provided that your friends are "on the Net". Overseas messages reach their targets within seconds instead of days or weeks, and hard-to-get items can be purchased from exotic locations. You can buy and sell things online, and you can exchange photographs of your grandchildren without having to print extra copies.

Computers Themselves

Finally, of course, is the pleasure gained from just learning how to use the computer itself, to understand what makes it

tick, and to be able to deal with its complexities and foibles. Computers are like cars. You don't have to be a mechanic to drive them, but it sure makes life a lot easier if you understand a little of what goes on under the bonnet. To this end there are an amazing number of free sources of guidance, help and support. There is an astonishing range of avenues to pursue, and you will find millions of people in the world who have exactly the same level of (in)competence as yourself. You can seek the views of experts on the Internet or within Melb PC itself. Remember, an expert is just someone who knows more than you do, and it is surprising how soon everyone becomes an expert to someone else and is able in turn to share their own knowledge with someone further down the knowledge chain.

Unless you have no hobbies, no interests and no wish to explore your own horizons, everyone can benefit from using a computer. Even those who simply like to play games (not my preferred option) can while away hours in front of a computer screen. Maybe you have the Great Australian Novel lurking within you, or a manuscript for a new play. Whatever it is that presses your buttons can be made more interesting by pressing the "On" button of a computer. Computers keep you young, they keep you alert and they keep your brain active.

So - have you just bought a computer? Are you contemplating buying one? Have you wondered what all the fuss is about? Hopefully this will give you some idea of the possibilities, the potential and the pleasures that computing can bring to you. Melb PC has members from all walks of life, and all age groups. We have members in their 80s whose lives are made so much more interesting by their new found involvement with computing. Computers can benefit everyone, all it takes is the will to give it a go, and if you don't know how to begin, all you need do is ask.

Reprinted from the December 2002 issue of PC Update, the magazine of Melbourne PC User Group, Australia



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.

Member participation is encouraged! If you would like to contribute an article to Ottawa PC News, please submit it to the newsletter editor (contact info below). Deadline for submissions is three Saturdays before the next General Meeting.

Group Meetings

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

Fees: OPCUG annual membership: \$25 per year.

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Web address: <http://opcug.ca>

Bulletin board — the PUB II (BBS) Up to 33.6 kbps V.34 **228-8951**

NOTE: As of June 16th, dial-up access to PUB II will be removed. Only Internet access via your internet service provider (ISP) will be available at:
<http://opcug.ca/default.htm>

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“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.

