



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

Volume 22, Number 6

June 2005

PRODUCT REVIEW

Zoo Tycoon 2

by Chris Taylor

Last October I wrote a review of Zoo Tycoon Complete Collection, which is the original Zoo Tycoon with a couple of add-on packs. You can read the review at http://opcug.ca/public/reviews/zoo_tycoon.htm.

I found the program engaging and addictive. So when Microsoft released Zoo Tycoon 2 (ZT2), I decided to give it a whirl.

The main objective of the game has not changed. You run a zoo and make a profit. Sounds pretty simple, right? But it is not so easy.

As with the original game, you have to build enclosures for the animals. Of course, the habitat must be adjusted to suit the animals that will live there. Keeping habitat in mind, you can pretty freely mix and match species in a single enclosure. As an experiment, I put lions, tigers, and crocodiles together with peafowl and ostriches. I gave them no (other) food. To my surprise, they all survived.

ZT2 continues in the tradition of the first release in that everything hinges on happiness. If your animals are happy, the guests will enjoy them more and your guests will be happy. Happy guests hang around longer and spend more money.

But guests need more than animals to keep them happy and spending money. You can make your zoo attractive by

buying scenery items including benches, lamps, topiary, and more. Your guests need rest rooms, food and drink carts and restaurants. A gift shop or two can help your bottom line as well.

There are three main modes to play ZT2.

A freeform game gives you unlimited funds and all animals and objects are available for purchase. You start from scratch and build anything you want. As you add more animals and other attractions, more guests will arrive. As long as you care for all aspects of your zoo, it is almost certain to be profitable.

The next step up is a challenge game. You still build just about anything you want and you can choose some specific challenges, but you don't have goals you have to meet. You can choose whatever starting bank account you want.

The hardest is a campaign game. These games have several scenarios, each with specific goals to complete. And often these are very tough tasks. One example is where you have to take over a neglected, run-down zoo. Exhibits are filthy, animals are underfed and sick, and trash litters the park. You are given very limited funds and it is up to you to turn things around. If you don't act quickly, your zoo will get shut down.

I found playing the challenge games the most interesting. When you have limited funds, you have to make careful choices. While a couple of Giant Pandas might attract a lot of guests, at \$50,000 each, you may not be able to afford them. Starting with some less

expensive animals like moose (\$1,250 each) or Emperor Penguins (\$2,000 each) might allow you to slowly build up to a thriving zoo. Likewise, when choosing amenities for your guests, you might have to start with hot dogs stands rather than fancy restaurants. And a \$560 splash fountain might be a little extravagant when funds are short.

Much so far is quite similar to the original Zoo Tycoon. But what sets Zoo Tycoon 2 far apart from the original is the graphic detail. ZT2 is spectacular in this regard. The animals, enclosures, scenery, guests, and buildings all have a much more realistic appearance to them. This adds immensely to the immersive quality of the game.

Not only are the overhead views more detailed and realistic, but ZT2 adds another new dimension to running a zoo – guest mode! This zooms you down to ground level and you can walk around the zoo just like one of your guests. In this mode, the additional graphic detail really shines.

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Next Meeting: **THIRD Wednesday, June 15th, 2005**
ANNUAL BBQ

June Raffle *by Chris Taylor*

At the June meeting we have a bit of a change when it comes to the raffle – hardware! We have a 512MB **iPod shuffle** portable music player that some lucky person will win.

When I first heard of the iPod shuffle, I thought it kind of strange. By default, your music is played in random order. You cannot select songs by artist, album, genre, playlist, etc. Then it hit me. People like listening to the radio and they have no control over what gets played there. So, think of the iPod shuffle as a radio that has no advertising, no DJ talking, and...it only plays the music you like! Viewed that way, the iPod shuffle is pretty nifty.

The iPod shuffle has a street price of about \$130. For more information see <http://www.apple.com/ca/ipodshuffle/>.

Tickets, as always, are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.



June is our annual BBQ, Don't miss it!

Details on page 3.

May Raffle Winners

At the May 11th general meeting, **Alan German** took home a Country Garden calendar courtesy of Doculink International, **Bruce Dodd** has a new T-shirt courtesy of Microsoft and **Harry Gross** was the winner of the evenings raffle prize, a copy of the Easy Media Creator Suite thanks to Roxio Inc.

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to the prize donors.

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, June 15 th (THIRD Wednesday in June)	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, June 15 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, June 15 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG)	Wednesday, June 15 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (formerly Shoppers' City West)

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

CLUB LIFE

Annual BBQ

June is our wrap-up meeting before we break for the summer. Continuing with tradition, we will be having our 4th annual barbeque. It will take place under the big tent near the main doors to the museum. There will be cold drinks, hamburgers, hot dogs and dessert. **Make sure you let Brigitte Lord know at brigitte.lord@opcug.ca how many people will be in your party and how many hamburgers and/or hotdogs you will need.** If you can help out at the BBQ (bringing a grill or flipping burs and dogs) please let Brigitte know.

The barbeque will start at 6:00 and run until about 7:45. After that we will head into the museum for our regular meeting (see article below), which will start at 8:00.

See you there!

June 15, 2005—**THIRD** Wednesday in June

Swapping old treasures

It has been many years since the OPCUG held a swap meet. A couple of years ago, we surveyed the membership to see if there was any interest in reviving this once-popular event. Only one person interested in selling and a couple of people interested in buying identified themselves.

Rather than try to organize a special evening, at this year's BBQ event at the June general meeting, if anyone is interested in getting rid of the old computer junk ... errr, treasures ... feel free to haul it on down and you can set up on one of the picnic tables under the big tent where we will be eating.

Only a few rules, it must be non-commercial (no businesses), all items must be legal to sell, **and you must take away everything you bring that you don't trade, sell, or give away.**

Coming up...

Date: June 15, 2005—**THIRD** Wednesday in June

8 pm after the BBQ:

Speakers:

Stuart Morrison, VP-Market Development, OS Security
<http://www.ossecurity.ca>

Gary MacArthur, President, GMA Perfect Image Inc.
<http://GMAPerfectImage.com>

Title:

Next-Generation Protection for Your Windows Computer

Abstract:

Performing ongoing updates to your virus signature database, applying security patches and scanning your system to determine if you have been infected by a virus, spyware, Trojan or worm has become an all too familiar pastime. Even with the most diligent security practices, users are not protected from the next attack until the signature or patch exists and they have deployed it on their computer - this may take days to weeks from the time the virus or vulnerability is first identified to when the protection is available.

OS Security has developed a next-generation PC security technology which provides lifetime protection for the computer without any need for updates to protect against the next attack. Gary MacArthur and Stuart Morrison will describe the weaknesses in the traditional protection approaches and provide an overview of the protection technology in their Next-Generation PC protection product called OSsurance Desktop.

Speaker Bio's.:

Stuart Morrison

Stuart Morrison has over 20 years of experience in technology and business management in bringing new solutions to market. Prior to joining OS Security Inc as VP of Market Development, Stuart has held data networking related Product Management and Marketing roles with Nortel Networks and a US based startup. His conference participation includes IEEE, Networks Conference, ISS and IP Related Forums. Mr. Morrison has a degree in Electrical Engineering. He has been with OS Security Inc. since November 2003.

About OS Security Inc.:

OS Security Inc. considers itself a leader in a new generation of Intrusion Protection solutions for both enterprise and individual computer users. OS Security was incorporated in 2003 and is based in Ottawa ON. Further information about OS Security is available from: <http://www.ossecurity.ca>.

Gary MacArthur

Gary Mac Arthur has been involved in sales for over 25 years with both national and international companies. Gary has been a distributor of the OSsurance product line since 2004.

About GMA Perfect Image:

GMA Perfect Image is a sales organization that promotes excellent ideas and products from forward thinking companies. GMA Perfect Image is located in Ottawa, ON. Further information about GMA Perfect Image is available from: <http://GMAPerfectImage.com>

PRODUCT REVIEW

Copying vinyl to CD for less than five bucks - Part II *by Alan German*

Last time, we recorded a long-playing vinyl record and created a WAV file. Did you notice it was somewhere around 300-500 MB? Hopefully you didn't since that would mean you have lots of disk space available. You are going to need some of this free space because we are now going to edit the file and split it up into the individual tracks from the record. This means we will more or less double the disk space requirements because effectively we will have two sets of WAV files containing the same music. Still, disk space is cheap these days, isn't it?

So, let's fire up Wave Repair once more. Select: File – Open – and the WAV file you recorded in the last session. That waveform sure looks complex doesn't it? But, help is at hand. Wave Repair has a neat feature that automatically scans the waveform and finds the "gaps" between the music tracks. So, select Cue Points – Find Tracks and let 'er rip.

As the program scans through the file, the break points (cue points) between tracks are marked as coloured vertical lines. At the end of the process, the cue points are labeled with the track number (T2.1, T3.1, etc.) and an information box will pop up with a message along the lines of "12 possible track boundaries detected".

While the program does its best to identify the quiet areas between tracks, it can be fooled if there is a lead-in section of music followed by a quiet bridge to the main theme. So, it's a good idea at this point to check the track boundaries manually. With Wave Repair it's possible to delete extraneous cue points and/or add new ones as necessary.

To accomplish this task, it's useful to expand the scale of the waveform by zooming in (View – Zoom In) until, for popular music, full scale across the screen is around 6-7 minutes of music. Note that some of the menu icons allow

easy access to the zoom functions (e.g. the magnifying glass with the plus sign is zoom-in).

Now, using the mouse, click on the waveform a little to the left of the first cue point and drag the mouse a little to the right of the same cue point. Press play to listen to the selected section of music and check that the cue point is indeed marking the boundary between the first and second tracks.

As an example of the need to further refine the track boundaries, take a look at [Figure 1 \(next page\)](#). Wave Repair has correctly identified T8.1 as the cue point for the beginning of a new track; however, it has also marked cue points at T9.1 through T13.1, all in rather quick succession. Listening to the marked sound clip, the problem becomes evident, the lead into the piece is a piano solo, with sequences of notes being followed by pianissimo sections and brief pauses. Wave Repair thinks that each period of "quiet" is the start of a new track. In fact, the introduction runs from T8.1 through T12.1 and the vocal solo comes in about half way between T12.1 and T13.1. Consequently, we need to clean up the track by deleting some of the erroneous cue points.

Once again, drag the mouse across the waveform, this time starting just before T9.1 and ending just after this cue point. Play the sound clip if you wish just to be sure that this truly is part of the current track. If you are satisfied, select Cue Points – Delete Cue Point and T9.1 will magically disappear from the marked section of the waveform. However, note that the subsequent cue points have all been renumbered so that the old T10.1 is now T9.1, etc. Continue deleting cue points until you find the real start of the next music track.

In the event that Wave Repair misses a valid track boundary, you can click the mouse at the desired point along the waveform and select Cue Points – Add Cue Point to set your own selection for

the start of a track.

Now that we have cleaned up the entire waveform and have all the desired cue points marked, we are ready to create individual WAV files for the tracks from our record. Select: Cue Points – Split Tracks. In the pop-up box, enter a base filename to produce a series of WAV files with this name and a series of sequential numbers (e.g. a base filename of *beatles.wav* produces files named *beatles01.wav*, *beatles02.wav*, etc.) A second pop-up box may indicate that the "WAV file is not an exact multiple of CD blocks. Do you want the last track padded with zeros?". Say yes to this prompt (what else would you say?) and the program scans through the waveform, providing a running commentary on the individual WAV files that are being created.

At the end of the process, we will have our original 360 MB WAV file and eight individual WAV files, each being 30-60 MB. See why we need lots of disk space?

Actually, it's not all doom and gloom. We are not going to fill the hard drive with WAV files of all our LP's. The next step is to burn the individual music files to a CD-R and, once we have a working CD, we can delete the intermediate WAV files, and free up the space to record and process the music from another LP.

Now, it's crunch time. Can we continue with the process of making our music CD-ROM for less than five bucks? After all, we've already spent the cash on the cable used in Part I to connect the output of our sound system to the input of our computer's sound card, and we don't have much change for burning software. Clive Backham, the author of Wave Repair, recommends using CDRWIN (Golden Hawk Technology), a shareware program to control burning the individual music tracks to a CD. My problem with this

(Continued on page 5)

Vinyl to CD *(Continued from page 4)*

software is that it's not very intuitive. One needs to learn how to write a "cuesheet file" that defines all of the files to be recorded and the starting time of each track/index. While this may be a relatively easy process, in my view, life is too short when simpler solutions are readily at hand.

Everyone has CD burning software. It came bundled with your CD drive. So, you don't need to spend another dime. Just make use of the software that you already have available. In my case, I have Roxio's Easy CD Creator and, for the purposes of this article, I will use Version 5.2 which did come as bundled software with a CD burner.

The "trick" to creating a useful CD is to run Easy CD Creator and, from the main menu, select Project – Make a music CD (not a data CD!). In the Explorer-type top window, navigate to the directory containing the individual WAV files, select all these files (e.g. beatles01.wav through beatles08.wav), and press the Add button on the Music CD Project bar. The status bar at the foot of the lower window now indicates

the individual tracks selected, the disk space on the CD that will be used, the total recording time, and the disk space and time still available. Note that it is often possible to record all the tracks from two LP's onto a single CD by extending the above-noted process. Alternatively, you can create compilation CD's of your favourite pieces of music recorded from a variety of sources.

The other "trick" is to press the Record button and check the Options, making sure that Disk at Once is selected. This will ensure that Easy CD Creator will write the individual music tracks as CDA files, and will close the CD once the burning process is complete. In turn, this will mean that you will be able to play the CD in a regular audio CD player rather than only from a CD drive in a computer.

So be brave, set things up, press the red Record button, make sure the right options are selected for the burn, press Start Recording, and sit back as Easy CD Creator easily creates your brand new music CD.

You should now find that all your hard

work – and your five bucks – have paid off. You should have a shiny CD-ROM containing a copy of your favourite LP record(s). Note that we haven't done anything terribly fancy to get to this point; we took a very basic approach primarily to prove the methodology. In the next and probably final part of this series, we will see what happens if we spend a few more dollars on the system to purchase the "platinum version" of Easy CD Creator. We should find that the extra cost software provides vastly superior processing capabilities and makes our life easier to boot. Now, that's worth exploring...

Bottom Line

Wave Repair, Version 4.8.2 (Freeware/Shareware - depending on level of use) <http://www.delback.co.uk/wavrep/> (Latest release is Version 4.8.7)

CDRWIN (Shareware)

Golden Hawk Technology,
Merrimack, NH
<http://www.goldenhawk.com>

Easy CD Creator (Proprietary - now Easy Media Creator 7)
Roxio, Inc. <http://www.roxio.com>

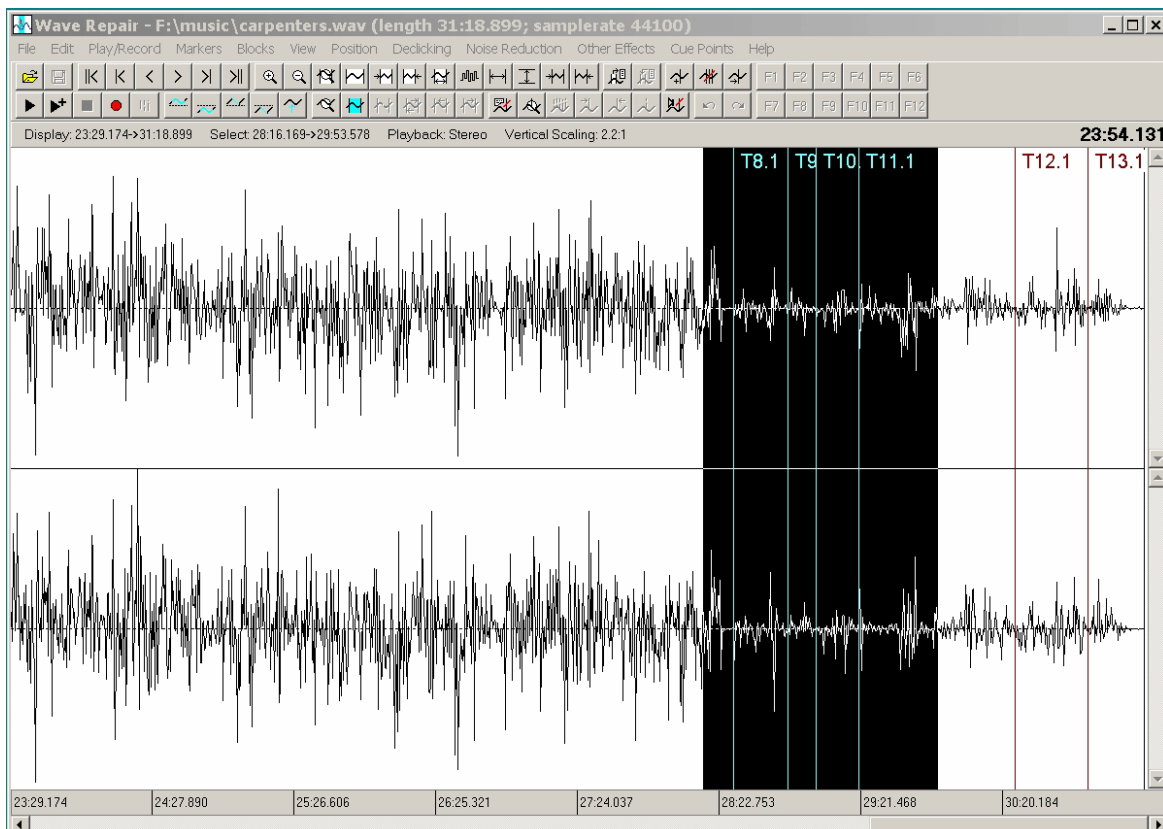


Figure 1

Zoo Tycoon 2

(Continued from page 1)

Not only can you act as a guest, but you can help run your park from ground level. If you are short on staff, you can help out by picking up trash, emptying garbage cans and even take care of animals – feeding them, grooming them, and picking up their poop.

There is also a photo mode, where you can wander around your zoo snapping pictures which can be saved in photo albums. They are stored on disk as Jpeg files, so you can use them elsewhere as well.

ZT2 comes with a video DVD with a whole pile of short – most are a couple of minutes long – clips about animals from National Geographic Channel's Totally Wild series. Quite educational and entertaining.

Updates to the main program, as well as additional objects such as animals, scenery, entire themes, toys for animals, etc can be downloaded from Microsoft to keep the game new and interesting.

All in all, I found Zoo Tycoon 2 to be even more interesting and engaging than the original. Highly recommended for those who enjoy this genre of game.

Minimum system requirements:
Windows 98 SE or better,
733MHz CPU,
256MB RAM,
8x CD-ROM drive,
16MB 3D graphics card.

Average street price in Ottawa is \$50.



Up close and personal



Centre caption reads: "Zookeeper can't reach the ungulate poop!"

CLUB LIFE

Contest for Best Newsletter Article

In an effort to generate more content for our popular Ottawa PC News, the Board of Directors (BOD) has decided to hold a contest for best article written by one of our members. The contest will launch in September 2005 and run until June 2006. Members of the BOD cannot participate.

You do not need to be a computer expert to participate. You can write about a personal computer experience that was humorous or frustrating. Did something you buy improve your computer experience (be it software or hardware)? Maybe you know of a terrific virtual photo album that organizes digital pictures. How do you ward off all the SPAM invading our inboxes? There are many computer topics.

Articles can be submitted between June 1, 2005 and May 14, 2006. These will

be published in the Ottawa PC News between September 2005 and June 2006 inclusive. Articles will be published in the order they are received. If a large number of articles is received, some may not be published due to space restrictions as we approach the May deadline. And in that case, in order to have as many contestants as possible, an article submitted by a new participant will be published over one submitted by a returning participant. Participants will be offered a choice of having unused articles published after the contest period or having them destroyed. Only those articles published during the contest period will be eligible for the contest.

All articles must be original and written by the participant. Articles must be kept under 1000 words (including words like 'the', 'a', 'it', etc.). Only members of the OPCUG may participate (BOD members are excluded). The BOD reserves the right to refuse an article because of improper or question-

able content and the article will be returned to the author for revision or retraction. Individual participants may submit more than one article over the contest period.

A voting sheet will be included in the June 2006 newsletter and posted on the website at that time. Ballots from the general membership will be collected at the June 2006 general meeting. Votes will be tallied at the meeting and the winner presented with a prize (to be determined).

Send submissions to brigitte.lord@opcug.ca between June 1, 2005 and May 14, 2006. Articles may be written in any basic text editor, MS Word, or Corel WordPerfect.

Good luck and good writing!

Brigitte Lord
Editor, Ottawa PC News

Humour Funny Signs - Part 2 (final)

(source unknown)

Continued from April 2005 newsletter

On the wall of a Baltimore estate:
"Trespassers will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. ---Sisters of Mercy"

On a long-established New Mexico dry cleaners: "38 years on the same spot."

In a Los Angeles dance hall: "Good clean dancing every night but Sunday."

In a Florida maternity ward:
"No children allowed."

In a New York drugstore:
"We dispense with accuracy."

In the offices of a loan company:
"Ask about our plans for owning your home."

In a New York medical building:
"Mental Health Prevention Center"

On a New York convalescent home:
"For the sick and tired of the Episcopal Church."

On a Maine shop:
"Our motto is to give our customers the lowest possible prices and workmanship."

At a number of military bases:
"Restricted to unauthorized personnel."

On a display of "I love you only" Valentine cards:
"Now available in multi-packs."

In the window of a Kentucky appliance store: "Don't kill your wife. Let our washing machine do the dirty work."

In a funeral parlor:
"Ask about our layaway plan."

In a clothing store: "Wonderful bargains for men with 16 and 17 necks."

In a Tacoma, Washington men's clothing store: "15 men's wool suits, \$10. They won't last an hour!"

On a shopping mall marquee:
"Archery Tournament -- Ears pierced"

Outside a country shop:
"We buy junk and sell antiques."

In the window of an Oregon store:
"Why go elsewhere and be cheated when you can come here?"

In a Maine restaurant:
"Open 7 days a week and weekends."

On a radiator repair garage:
"Best place to take a leak."

In the vestry of a New England church:
"Will the last person to leave please see that the perpetual light is extinguished."

In a Pennsylvania cemetery:
"Persons are prohibited from picking flowers from any but their own graves."

On a roller coaster: "Watch your head."

On the grounds of a public school:
"No trespassing without permission."

On a Tennessee highway:
"When this sign is under water, this road is impassable."

Similarly, in front of a New Hampshire car wash: "If you can't read this, it's time to wash your car."

And apparently, somewhere in England in an open field otherwise untouched by human presence, there is a sign that says, "Do not throw stones at this sign."



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 Sundays before the next General Meeting.

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Canada 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:	OPCUG membership:	\$25 per year
Mailing Address:	3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6	
Web address:	http://opcug.ca	
Bulletin board — PUB II (BBS)	http://opcug.ca/default.htm	

President and System Administrator

Chris Taylor chris.taylor@opcug.ca 727-5453

Meeting Coordinator

Bob Gowan bob.gowan@opcug.ca

Treasurer

Alan German alan.german@opcug.ca

Secretary

(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca

Membership Chairman

Mark Cayer mark.cayer@opcug.ca 823-0354

Newsletter

Brigitte Lord (editor/layout) brigitte.lord@opcug.ca
(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca
 (e-mail distribution)

Public Relations

Morris Turpin PR@opcug.ca 729-6955

Facilities

Bob Walker 489-2084

Webmaster

Brigitte Lord opcug-webmaster@opcug.ca

Privacy Director

Bob Thomas privacy@opcug.ca 820-6835

Director without Portfolio

Wayne Houston

Beginners' SIG

Chris Taylor chris.taylor@opcug.ca 727-5453

IT-Pro SIG

Bob Thomas ITProSIG@opcug.ca 820-6835

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And, if you decide you do not need the printed version sent to you anymore, simply let Mark Cayer (membership chairman) know. He can be reached at general meetings, as well as by e-mail at Mark.Cayer@opcug.ca. You might want to wait until you have successfully received at least one issue electronically before opting out from the printed version.

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