



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Need Traffic Control on Boot-up? – Call the Cops!

by Alan German

I'm a long-time fan of utility programs from PC Magazine so, when I saw Startup Cop Pro advertised as a way to control applications loading on boot-up, I couldn't resist giving this program a workout.

However, there is a downside from the good old days. PC Mag's utilities are no longer free; one has to subscribe in order to download the software. The good news is that an annual subscription is only US\$ 20.00 (and sometimes you can find a special offer that includes a subscription to the electronic version of the magazine). Once subscribed, you can download any of the magazine's extensive collection of utility programs, and subscribe to a listserver to receive notification of new releases. Other options include purchasing three utilities for \$US 10.00, or a single download for \$US 6.00.

Downloading and installing Startup Cop Pro gives you your very own Sheriff's badge - a program icon in the form of a five-pointed star. Running Startup Cop, produces a colourful list of programs available for startup by the operating system, and flags those currently running. The table provides a range of information such as the program name, the software developer, the threat level (e.g. Major Vendor vs. Spyware), where the startup entry is located (e.g. startup directory vs. registry), and which users can access the program. A set of drop-down menus allows the list of programs to be filtered by category ([see screenshot, p.4](#)).

Clicking on a specific filename in the list provides further detail about the selected item, including the file path and command line entry, a link to the program developer's web site, or a set of related Google search results (if you have an open Internet connection). Even the basic information can be very useful. For example, on my system, the program prpcui.exe (one of those with the intuitive names!), is evidently Intel software - "SpeedStep™ Technology User Interface". I still don't know what it actually does, but I'm pretty sure I need/want it.

Changing the status of a given program is simplicity itself. Click on the program's name to highlight the entry and toggle between Disable and Enable using menu buttons in the form of red and green traffic lights. Having trouble with a renegade program that decided it just had to be loaded at boot-up? No problem, just disable it and it won't trouble you again. If you are really brave, you can use the Delete button. And, if you really know what you are doing, you can manually add a new entry to the table.

A concise, but extremely informative, help system can guide you through any such process. The help menu provides a series of screens with coloured illustrations of all the various menus and controls for the program, together with clear information on the use of each of the latter.

Changing Startup Cop's options is just a matter of checking or unchecking

various options in a dialogue box, including some for the format for the display of the program list, and if/how to check for and obtain program updates from PC Magazine. The latter consist of revised entries for the database of material to be displayed for specific programs.

A similar menu allows for changing the settings for how a given program is to be allowed to run. In addition to running normally, a program can be set to run at a specific time or on certain days; program launch can be delayed in time or until after another program is running, or a network connection has been established. No doubt, great stuff - if you need such features.

One item that you may wish to modify from the default settings is "Check for updates" by changing this from "At program startup" to "Do not check for updates". If you don't have a permanent

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Next Meeting: **Wednesday, November 9th, 2005**

November Raffle

by Chris Taylor

At the November meeting, thanks to the generosity of Acronis and User Group Relations, we have a copy of Acronis True Image 8 to raffle off.

This powerful disk imaging program lives up to its tag line of *Compute with confidence*. Easily back up your entire system, including open files and the complete operating system. Restore in a few clicks in the event of a disaster. You can also recover individual files from the images created.

For a review, see http://opcug.ca/public/reviews/true_image8.htm. For more information, see <http://www.acronis.com>

Acronis True Image is available through <http://www.usergroupstore.com> for US\$34. See the newsletter review above for details on this special pricing.

Raffle tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.



Upcoming meetings

Wednesday, November 9, 2005—Michael Ondrechak, O-C Linux Users Group will show us how easy it can be to run Linux using a CD-based "live install" that can leave your current configuration untouched.

Wednesday, December 14, 2005—Back by popular demand! Harley Bloom from Bloom Microtech will be here for his 7th annual Christmas Wish List.

January 11, 2006—S. Cruise of Adobe Canada (topic TBA)

February 22, 2006 (FOURTH Wednesday)—Elliott Finkleman, Practical Computing, "Protect Your Computer from Virtual Crime"

March 8, 2006—TBA

April 12, 2006—DBx GEOMATICS, "Web Mapping with Scalable Vector Graphics"
<http://www.dbxgeomatics.com>

October Prize Winners

At our Oct. 12th meeting our prize winners were:

John Cocklin who wore his new limited edition Microsoft Vista ball cap home & **Bob Gowan** who took home the copy of Zoo Tycoon 2 software we raffled off!

Thanks to Microsoft for the prizes.

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, November 9 th	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, November 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, November 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG)	Wednesday, November 9 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).

2005 OPCUG WORKSHOP

For the third straight year, the Ottawa PC Users' Group will be offering a beginners' workshop; however, this year, the approach will be a little more "focused" as we cover the basics of purchasing a digital camera and processing the resulting images. If you are planning to move from film to digital images, are thinking of upgrading your current digital camera, or want to know how to take your pictures from snapshots to works of art, this just might be the workshop for you.

Club members who have spent considerable time researching the associated issues, and developing advanced digital imaging techniques, will share their knowledge and expertise with workshop participants in four basic sessions:

Buying a Digital Camera - When selecting a digital camera, you are faced with a bewildering variety of choices, a wide range of prices, and a large number of confusing terms that differ considerably from those typically used for film cameras. This session will provide information on important features such as: megapixels and memory cards; optical vs. digital zoom; viewfinder and battery technologies, and will put you on a firm footing to find the camera that is just right for you.

Image Processing - This session will show image enhancement techniques and illustrate the power of advanced image editing. We will show you how to use advanced selection techniques, transform images every which way, use layers and a variety of filters for special effects, and much, much more. As part of the presentation, a digital collage for this OPCUG event will be created in real time with participation from the audience.

Output Options - Are you going to print your digital images on your own colour printer, or should you consider using a professional printing service? How are you going to store and catalogue

your images so that you can easily retrieve them later? Do you know the best ways to share your images with friends and relatives electronically? Our expert will cover all the bases of capturing, storing, and preparing digital images for output.

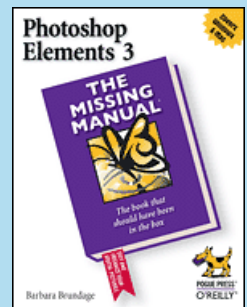
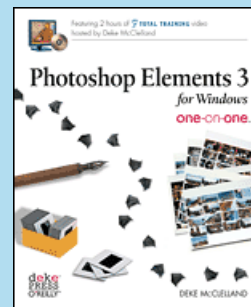
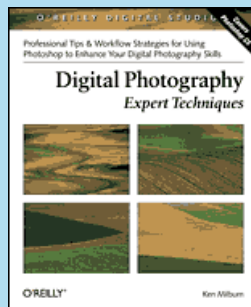
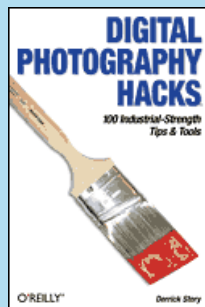
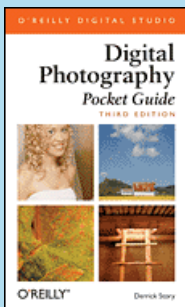
Problems and Solutions - Do you have a specific problem with digital imaging? This is a workshop, and we are here to help. If you are going to participate in the workshop, send your query to us in advance (E-mail: workshop2005@opcug.ca). This session will deal with common imaging problems and provide you with the solutions.

The workshop will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 19, 2005 at the Heron Road Community Centre (1480 Heron). Registration is \$50.00 which will include a CD-ROM with all the presentations from the workshop, and a range of associated reference information. The registration fee also includes lunch and coffee breaks, and a one-year membership in OPCUG (a \$25.00 value by itself).

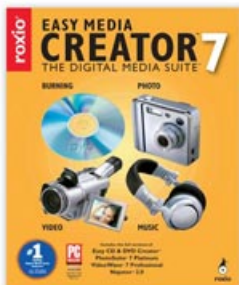
This year, as a special bonus to workshop participants, we will be featuring a draw for a number of software packages, books related to digital imaging, and lots more. Prizes will include copies of Microsoft's Digital Image Suite 2006 and Roxio's Easy Media Creator 7.

Attendance will be limited to the first 60 registrants, so send in your registration fee promptly. Complete details of the workshop and a copy of the workshop registration form are posted on the OPCUG's web site at: <http://opcug.ca>. A registration form is also available on the [back page](#) of this issue. The registration form can be mailed (details on form) or handed in at an OPCUG meeting to Mark Cayer (at the back of the room). The last meeting before the workshop is November 9.

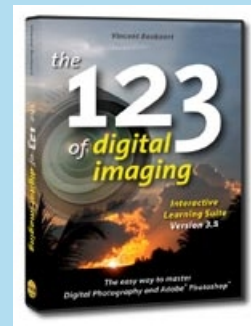
7 Book Prizes



9 Software Prizes



8 copies of
Microsoft
Digital Image
Suite 2006 to
give away



Details on all the prizes at http://opcug.ca/public/Workshops/workshop_2005_prizes.htm

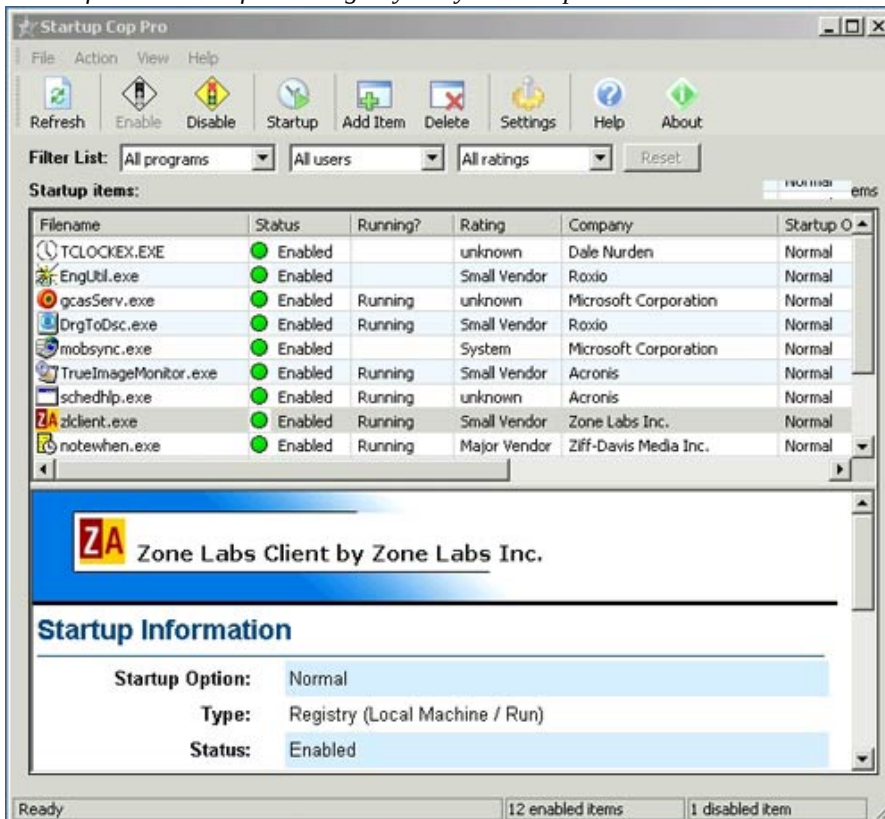
Startup Cop Pro *(Continued from page 1)*

connection to the Internet on boot-up, Startup Cop will bug you with a request for access to the web in order to seek out updates. By choosing not to allow this you effectively take manual control of the updating process. Since the program is not likely to be needed on a daily basis to control errant software, such a course of action is probably appropriate for most of us.

In fact, one interesting wrinkle in this entire process is that there is no entry in Startup Cop's program list for Startup Cop Pro itself - so, who polices the policeman? I suppose this is reasonable. The program actively monitors startup entries and will issue a prompt if software attempts to add a new entry. Obviously, it has to be running in order to function like this in real time. Also, if one has set some specific options, such as timing, then the program has to run every time the machine boots up in order to control the startup of these other programs.

But, if all you want to do is to occasionally stop an errant program from loading, it's a little intrusive for Startup Cop to load itself into memory all the time. One way to deal with this is to uninstall the program (rather a Draconian solution!) The documentation suggests that if Startup Cop Pro is uninstalled, any disabled items can be re-enabled so that nothing will be lost. But, another method of preventing Startup Cop from loading automatically, is to use a different utility to turn it off! So, let's call a good cop...

Screenshot: Startup Cop Pro informing the user that the ZoneAlarm firewall loads from a Registry entry at startup.



In the past, I have used StartUp Control Panel to disable errant programs from loading. Version 2.7 of this program is available from [PUB II](#) as SRTCPLX.ZIP. But, also check the associated files STRTCPL.ZIP and SRTCPL27.ZIP since each of these contains the instructions as a readme.txt file.

StartUp Control Panel is more or less a no-frills version (some would say efficiently programmed version) of Startup Cop Pro. It was written by Mike Lin, now a computer science student at MIT. He has written several utilities and makes them available on the web. Mike has quite a sense of humour about his programs. Tongue-firmly-in-cheek, he lists a Microsoft Knowledge Base bug report for one of his utilities on the awards' page of his web site! Mike's site at <http://www.mlin.net> is well worth a visit.

This freeware (small donation requested) utility provides a simple screen display with a series of tabs, including Startup (user), Startup (common), HKLM/Run, and HKCU/Run, that list programs set to start for the current user, all users, or load from registry entries under HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE and HKEY_CURRENT_USER. Check boxes control if programs listed under these tabs are enabled or disabled, and right clicking on a program name brings up a menu with a variety of options including edit the program's properties, delete an entry, and run now.

It turns out that Startup Cop Pro is loaded from a registry entry under the HKCU/Run tab. Removing the check mark in the box is a simple way to temporarily prevent the program from running at startup. One can always run it manually, from the on-screen icon set up during installation, or by running the executable, StartupCopPro.exe, from its installed location. Of course, as noted above, such a course of action will limit the program's functionality.

So, if you have a renegade program (or two) on your machine that insists on loading, taking up memory, resources, and task bar real estate, take control. For a few dollars, you can get the all-singing, all-dancing Startup Cop Pro (and the opportunity to download more of PC Mag's great utilities). Or, log onto [PUB II](#) and download the freeware program: Startup Control Panel. Either program can readily disable specific software from loading at boot up.

Bottom Line

Startup Cop Pro (US\$6.00 to 20.00 subscription)

PC Magazine <http://www.pcmag.com>

Startup Control Panel (Freeware; donation requested)

Mike Lin

<http://www.mlin.net/StartupCPL.shtml>

PUB II - Area 68 - Miscellaneous Utilities

<http://opcug.ca/default.htm> (members' area)

SRTCPLX.ZIP (38 KB)

ENTRY FOR BEST NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

For contest details, see September's newsletter or visit <http://opcug.ca/public/Articles/contest2005.htm>.

Book Review:

"Mind Hacks: Tips & Tools for Using Your Brain"

Reviewed by Don Chiasson

O'Reilly Media is well known for publishing books, particularly on open source software. The company has published a number of books in a popular "Hacks" series, such as "Google Hacks", "Mac OS X Hacks", "Linux Server Hacks" and others, a total of about 50 titles. I have "Online Investing Hacks: 100 Industrial-Strength Tools & Tips" and found it useful. As you might expect, there is a Hacks web page at <http://hacks.oreilly.com>. The formula for the books is to have 100 hacks (or tips) divided by topic into several chapters.

"Mind Hacks" is different in the O'Reilly stable in that it is not computer related. The back cover has the key word Psychology. The Ottawa Public Library has the book and the subjects it is listed under include Brain; Thought and thinking; Visual perception; Attention; and others. No mention of computers.

The ten chapters of Mind Hacks give an idea of the span of material: Inside the Brain; Seeing; Attention; Hearing and Language; Integrating; Moving; Reasoning; Togetherness; Remembering; and Other People. There are 100 hacks, so each chapter covers about ten hacks or topics. Omitting index, foreword, and so on the book has 344 pages, so each hack is just under three and a half pages. Typically, each hack is structured to include a summary, "In Action", "How it Works" and "End Note."

The book is well organized, with interesting topics. Each topic essentially stands alone, so it is difficult to give a broad-brush review of the book or discuss continuity. Discussing each chapter, let alone each hack goes beyond a short review such as this. Each hack

covered a particular topic well: intelligent and not trivial while avoiding jargon or pretentiousness.

What did I like? Chapter Seven, "Reasoning Hacks 70 – 74" was my favourite part of the book. These were indeed hints on thinking, particularly numbers. Hack 70 notes that our brains haven't evolved to think about numbers and that funny things happen to numbers as they go into our heads. Hack 71 points out how it is better to think about frequency of occurrences rather than about probabilities.

Hack 87 talks about using context to improve memory. Then there is Hack 92, "Make the caffeine habit taste good." "Caffeine chemically hacks the brain's reward system, boosting the value we give not only to the morning cuppa, but also to everything associated with it." In other words, the context of your coffee or tea is important to the enjoyment.

What didn't I like? I found Chapter Two, "Seeing" not as compelling as it could have been. To my mind, optical illusions provide amusement while at the same time demonstrating vagaries of how our vision works. The examples provided were not as good as they should have been.

In spite of the subtitle, "Tips & Tools for Using your Brain" I did not think the book was aimed at improving the reader's brainpower. It is not a manual for how to increase your memory or improve your mathematics, though this could happen by understanding how your brain does work. Though the book covers a number of topics well, it is not comprehensive as it chooses interesting micro topics rather than a macro view. That statement is not a criticism but rather a description of the philosophy of the book.

Is "Mind Hacks" a good book? Definitely yes. It is not a book for serious study, but it contains a lot of interesting information. Because each hack stands alone (though there is some cross-referencing), it is a good book to graze allowing you to read a few pages then lay it aside and pick it up later, perhaps reading a different topic. Traveling or going to the cottage? Buy or borrow a copy of "Mind hacks." You will relax and increase your knowledge.

Bottom Line

"Mind Hacks: Tips & Tools for Using Your Brain"

by Tom Stafford and Matt Webb,

Published by O'Reilly (2005)

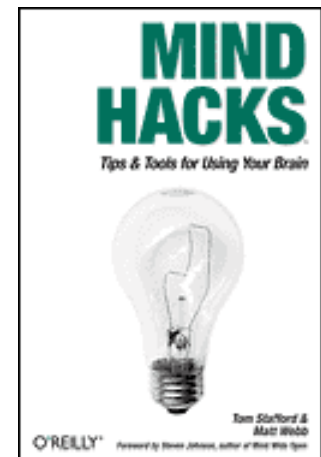
<http://www.oreilly.com>

394 pp. Price: \$36.95

Dimensions: 23cm by 16cm by 2.3cm.

For an OPCUG discount on this and other O'Reilly books, visit

<http://opcug.ca/public/promos.htm>



CLUB LIFE

Top Ten (reasons for subscribing to the electronic newsletter)

1. You will obtain much faster delivery. The electronic newsletter is distributed by E-mail around the time the final copy is sent to be printed. Consequently, you will receive the newsletter without waiting for the hard copy to come of the press, or for Canada Post to get around to delivering it to you.
2. The PDF version will give you an extremely rich, full-colour experience. All those graphics in the black-and-white printed newsletter are actually fabulously coloured images in the electronic version.
3. You can help save the planet by reducing the number of trees being used to provide paper for all those hard copy newsletters.
4. You can justify that high-speed Internet connection to your significant other on the basis that it will be much faster to download OPCUG's terrific newsletter each month.
5. The PDF version will provide hot links for multi-page articles, and direct access (provided you have a live Internet connection) to web sites referenced in the articles.
6. You can help keep your membership dues low by saving the club money on printing and postage costs.
7. Hey, we're a computer club - we should be using electronic files and data transmission for everything - and you should be doing your part.
8. You can justify that newer, faster, bigger computer and/or monitor to your significant other (or bank manager) because you need to have that technology to gain the full benefit of the electronic newsletter.
9. Did we mention the electronic newsletter arrives faster, is in full-colour, provides hot links, helps save the planet, keeps your membership dues low, and provides absolute justification for that new computer, monitor or high-speed connection?
10. Finally, just think about the smile you will put on the face of the club's Treasurer as he sees the current huge expenses on the newsletter rapidly declining as all OPCUG members subscribe to the electronic version and cancel mailing of the paper copies!

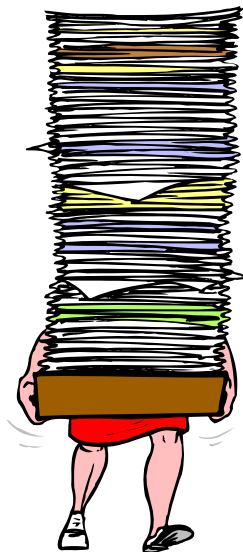
Here's how to subscribe:

It's really easy to subscribe to the newsletter. The instructions are on the back page of most newsletters (except when the space is taken by a workshop registration form). Just send an E-mail message to listserv@opcug.ca and type *subscribe newsletterpdf* in the body of the message.

Make sure your E-mail is being sent as plain text and not formatted as HTML. The listserver will try to read HTML code as text, won't recognize this as a valid command, and so will be unable to process the subscription.

Note that, if you haven't yet convinced your significant other of the benefits of new technology, and don't want to wait for the PDF download (hey, it doesn't take that long, even on dial-up!), put the phrase *subscribe newslettertxt* in the body of the message to get the plain text version of the newsletter (but, you won't see all those neat coloured graphics!)

Finally, and most importantly, send an E-mail message to the Membership Secretary (mark.cayer@opcug.ca) and tell Mark that you no longer wish to receive a copy of the newsletter by regular mail.



Computers are supposed to reduce our paper use—let's do it!

CLUB LIFE

IT-Pro SIG News

October's meeting gave you an insight into upcoming products from Microsoft. I imagine that you'll have plenty to discuss about them during November's SIG hour. Since I'm also away for the November meeting, I'll leave it to you, the SIG members, to host November's SIG meeting yourselves.

Thanks to our System Administrator, Chris Taylor, we now have an IT-Pro Conference area at our OPCUG website. You can reach it after logging in to PUB II (<http://opcug.ca/default.htm>). Below are Chris' instructions for accessing the conference for keeping our IT-Pro discussions alive between SIG meetings.

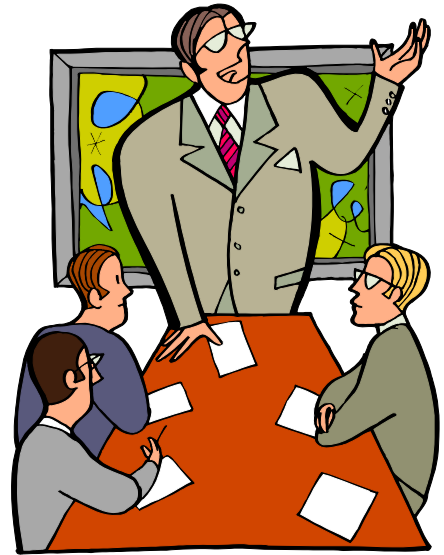
It may be accessed through all the normal means: on-line messaging, newsgroup, and listserver.

The listserver address is: **itpro-sig**

To subscribe, send a plain text (not HTML) email to listserv@opcug.ca and in the body of the message, put: **subscribe itpro-sig**

See you all in December!

Bob Thomas
IT-Pro SIG



Wing SIG East?

A tradition in OPCUG is to get together after meetings for a "Wing SIG" for a beverage and perhaps a snack. This happens at Chances R at College Square Shopping Centre, Woodroffe and Baseline. I live in the east end and find it a long trip to Chances R and back.

The SIG is a traditional and informal geek get meeting, as is the Birds of a Feather (BOF) session. I would like to suggest a complementary function, a Beer BOF to be held at Liam Maguire's, the pub at the corner of St. Laurent and Innes, within walking distance of the Museum. I have never been to Liam Maguire's, but assume it is a reasonable place.

The web site is at <http://www.liammaguire.com/index.html>

Anyone else interested?

Don C++ (aka Don Chiasson)



OPCUG Elections for the 2006 Board of Directors

by Jocelyn Doire, OPCUG Secretary

Once a year, the OPCUG holds elections for the 9-member Board of Directors. We are once again coming up to this annual event.

I encourage all members to consider running for a board position or getting involved in some other manner in the operations of the OPCUG. If you want more information about what is involved, please talk to any current or past board member.

As well, we need a member to come forward to act as the head of the election committee. The duties are minimal. All you need to do is collect nominations by e-mail, postal mail, or in person at general meetings. If more than nine nominations are received, you would then need to select two other members to join you in an election committee and oversee the actual elections. If you are interested, please let one of the existing board members know.



OPCUG

**OPCUG WORKSHOP 2005**

Saturday, November 19, 2005
9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Heron Road Community Centre
1480 Heron Road
Ottawa, ON

REGISTRATION FORM
(please print neatly)

Name: _____

Address (complete address please): _____

Tel: (____) _____

E-mail: _____

I wish to register for this workshop which includes lunch, the presentations and associated material on a CD-ROM, and a one-year membership in OPCUG.

Please find enclosed my cheque in the amount of \$50.00, made payable to: OPCUG.

Mail the completed registration form and your cheque to:

OPCUG Workshop 2005
3 Thatcher Street
Ottawa, ON, K2G 1S6

The OPCUG has established a Privacy Policy to comply with government legislation. The purpose of the policy is to safeguard your personal information. Your workshop application constitutes your acceptance of this policy:
<http://opcug.ca/public/privacy.htm>.

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
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Web address:	http://opcug.ca	
Bulletin board — PUB II (BBS)	http://opcug.ca/default.htm	

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