OTTAWA PC NEWS

Let PUB II Come to You by Chris Taylor

We have installed a 1istserve" on PUB II to allow members to do PUB II messaging. You do not have to log on to PUB II; instead, you can do it from any e-mail system with Internet connectivity.

Listserve primer

The listserve is a process running on the PUB II computer that *receives messages and* redistributes them to everyone who has signed up for a particular list. A *listserve has* two main components. The first is the administration address: Listserve@opcug.ottawa.com. You send commands to this address to tell the listserve that you want to subscribe to or unsubscribe from various lists. The other components are the actual lists. You send to *these* lists e-mail that you want distributed to all members of those respective lists. Additionally, the *listserve has* the capability to distribute text files on demand.

On-line help files

Let's start by asking the *listserve for* a text file explaining what lists and additional text files are available, how to subscribe/ unsubscribe, etc. Send an e-mail message to the administration address: Listserve@opcug.ottawa.com. Leave the subject line blank, and in the body of the message put the command: get info. Send the message (If you are sending from your PUB II account, be sure to send the *message through* conference area *0 [zero]* "Private e-mail.") and in a matter of minutes you should receive a reply with the information. You will see that you can get additional information files *e-mailed to* you by using the "get" command followed by the name of the information file you want. For *example, sending* the command: `get clubmeet` will reply with the upcoming *meeting schedule.*

Joining a list To join a list, you send the "subscribe" command to

Listserve@opcug.ottawa.com. In the body of the message you put the word

"subscribe" followed by the name of the list you want to join. For *example, suppose* that you want to join the "General" list, which is associated with the "General Messages"
conference area on PUB II. The info message sent to you (using the "get" command above), would instruct you to send the command: `subscribe general` to the administration address. Within a few minutes, you will receive a "Welcome" message from the
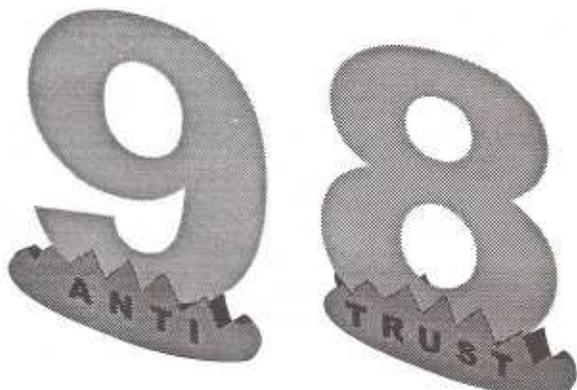
INSIDE

Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, June 3ᵗʰ, 1998**

Summer notes by Bert Schopf

Windows 98 is **coming on Wednesday June** 3rd -not to retail stores but to OPCUG! Bill Noel, Systems Engineer, Microsoft Canada will be giving everyone a peek at what's in the Windows '98 box! Be certain to attend this event and preview this much heralded upgrade. What's more: BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

Coming ?

The OPCUG will re-convene in September-look for the next newsletter in late August.

Have a great summer!

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DTP SIG **field trip** *to Tri-Co Printing by Bert Schopf*

Would you be interested in seeing what happens between your computer and a finished printed product? Join the DTP SIG on Tuesday, June 2 for a walkthrough at Tri-Co Printing. The tour will be held at their plant at 1390 Star Top Road at 7:30 p.m. The tour will include visits to the pre-press department (film output and stripping), the pressroom, and the bindery. All those interested should contact SIG coordinator Bert Schopf.

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Ottawa OS/2 UG

Welcomed to OPCUG
by Bert Schopf

The OPCUG would like to welcome officially members of the Ottawa OS/2 Users' Group into our fold. Members have agreed to fuse with the existing OPCUG SIG, strengthening our SIG and the overall local support of this operating system. Members interested in finding out more about the group should contact Jocelyn Doire, Ottawa OS/2 UG Coordinator.

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Calendar			
Meetings	**Date**	**Time and venue**	
OPCUG General Meeting	June 3rd : - **Windows 98** Read your next issue of the Newsletter for info on the September Meeting.	7:30 p.m. - National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.	
Ottawa Paradox Users Group	Third Thursday of each month	6:15 pm - Inly Systems, 1221a Cyrville Rd.	
FOX Pro/Developers SIG	To be announced	7:15 pm - Sir Jean Talon Building Conference room, Tunney's Pasture, Holland Ave. (north of Scott St.)	
PIG SIG (or is it WING SIG?)	June 3rd After all the other SIGS - All questions, be they serious or not	"Good Times" cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe	

"General" list telling you what the list is about, how to post messages to the list, how to unsubscribe, etc.

Using a list
Now that you are a member of the "General" list, you will receive (at the address you subscribed from) a copy of all messages that get posted to that list. If you reply to any message received from the list, the reply would go back to the list and be redistributed to all members of the list-including yourself, since you are a member of the list.

Post a new message to the list
Send your message to the list address (not the administration address.) The address of the list is the name of the list followed by @opcug.ottawa.com. To post to the list we just joined, you would send the message to: general@opcug.ottawa.com. Include the subject and body you want. Within minutes the message will be distributed to all members of the list.

Reply to a message
If you want to reply to a message sent out from a list, then the reply-to-address is the list. If you want to do a private reply to the sender of the message, you will have to address it manually. The sender's address is always visible in the header.

Quitting a list
If you want to stop receiving messages from a particular list, send the command "unsubscribe" followed by the name of the list to the administration address. To quit the "general" list, you would send an e-mail message to: Listserve@opcug.ottawa.com with a blank subject. Include,

in the body: `unsubscribe general.` You will receive a confirmation message within a few minutes.

Consequences for PUB II
None of this detracts from messaging on PUB II. You can access the conference areas on PUB II the same as you always have. All the messages posted on PUB II will also be sent to everyone who has subscribed using the Listserve. All messages posted from the outside using the Listserve will end up in the corresponding conference area on PUB II.

Newsletter Distribution
Jocelyn Doire has been maintaining a distribution list for electronic distribution of the newsletter for some time. This service will be using the listserve very soon. If you want to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, you should subscribe to the list called "Newsletter". Note that this list will not allow you to post. Only Jocelyn will have the ability to post to the Newsletter list.

The future
We will be creating other lists that currently do not exist as conference areas on PUB II. There may not always be a one-to-one mapping of names of lists to names of conference areas due to restrictions in e-mail addresses. You can always get a current list of lists by sending, to the administration address, the command: get info. If you have any problems getting subscribed, unsubscribed or have other questions, send an e-mail to Ctaylor@NRCan.gc.ca or Chris.Taylor@opcug.ottawa.com.

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Club News

Prize winners from the May meeting

by Chris Taylor

Rolf Calhoun won a copy of "Vorton Financial Tools" and Micheline Johnson won a St. Bernard Software T-shirt.

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Club life

Reuse, recycle

Bring your old computer magazines, books, or any other computer paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the general meetings, and leave them in the area specified. 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.

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Open File Manager

by Chris Taylor

If you are responsible for data recovery on a computer system, don't skip this article. It just might save your bacon!
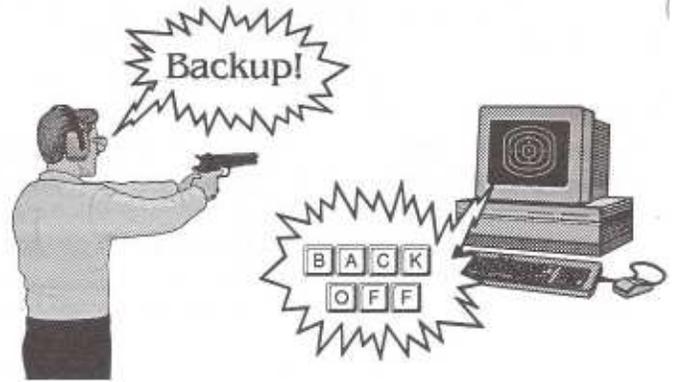
Did you know that your backups may be worthless? It surprised me to discover this fact. If you are running a 24x7 operation, you have to run your backups while people are using the system. This can put your data at risk. The problem stems from files that are open when the backup is run.

There are three ways backup programs typically handle open files.

• First, they simply skip the open file. NTBackup (the program that ships with NT) will dutifully add an entry to the log file (You do read the log files, right?) saying that it encountered an open file and skipped it.

• They may force a write to tape. Most third party backup software can do this and lull you into thinking your data is OK.

• Use a special purpose extension that handles a particular data type (for example, Exchange Server and SQL Server) to backup the data.

If you skip open files, providing you review your logs, at least you know what you are missing. In many cases, you can take steps to ensure a valid backup of the files. For example, at my office we have users' personal address books on a LAN drive. NTBackup will not backup these files if the person neglected to close Exchange before going home or if someone logged on from home while the backup is running. One solution: force everyone off the network while the backup runs. However, try to convince a couple of thousand users that the reason they can't use the network from midnight to 2:00 a.m. is for their own good!

If you force a write to tape, much of the time, you will be OK. In the example above of personal address books, it will usually work well. Although the personal address books on our network are open these files do not experience a lot of write activity. There is a not-so-special case that it won't work. Consider a large database file with active transactions happening while the backup is running. If you force the backup program to backup that file, it will be backing up part of the file while other parts are undergoing rewrites. As the backup proceeds to later parts of the file, the earlier sections (already backed up to tape) may experience rewrites. In any case, your backup does not reflect the most current file data. If you ever have to restore this file, it may effectively be junk although you may not know it until it is too late.

The third method, using a special extension to your backup software, is safe. These solutions are costly and typically very narrow in focus. You may need to purchase multiple extensions to handle all your file types or you may not find an extension for the file type you are using.

I recommend that you investigate a fourth solution-Open File Manager (OFM) version 5.1 from St. Bernard Software. It eliminates the problems in an elegant and powerful manner. It allows you to backup safely any files and works with most backup programs: OFM currently supports 21 programs from 16 vendors. The concept is simple. When it finds an open file, it begins keeping track of changes to that file. Changes are written immediately to disk; your data is not at risk. While allowing the disk write to take place, it keeps track of the data that used to be there and puts it in a pre-write cache file. When the backup program tries to backup that portion of the file, OFM substitutes the data in the pre-write cache. You end up with a faithful copy of the file as it existed at the beginning of the backup operation. For cases requiring sets of files that must synchronize at a consistent stage, such as a database file and its indexes, OFM can handle the entire file system as a single entity. The entire file system backup will faithfully reproduce the data as it existed at the start of the backup.

The pre-write cache can be configured to retain its contents until the backup software performs its verify phase. If disk space is limited, you can configure OFM to release the pre-write cache data as soon as each individual file is written. Other configuration options allow you to eliminate special handling of specific files

DTP SIG presentation *by Bert Schopf*
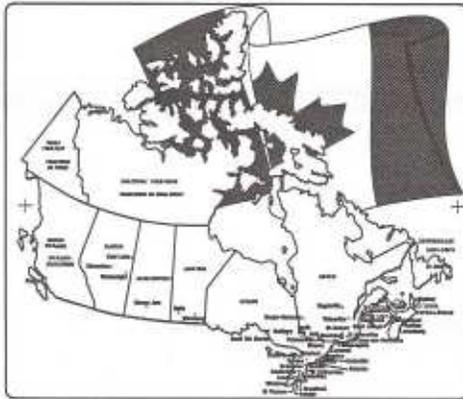
May 6 saw three members of the DTP SIG present stuff they do to fellow OPCUG members at the General Meeting. H.J. "Clem" McClemens started off with a presentation that featured projects he had worked on with common-sense thoughts on how effective typography works.

A very intriguing slide-show followed, set to music and presented by Jean Vaumoron. Jean showed us the results of his artistic talents: taking two photographic images he metamorphosed them in fantastic ways using Corel PhotoPaint, Adobe Photoshop and other programs. This was a stunning show that displayed not only his technical expertise, but also his keen sense of artistic experi-mentation!

Finally, yours truly walked the folks through the technical and developmental tasks in creating a flyer featuring a hot air balloon flying over Ottawa.
Special thanks to Jean who brought out his well-equipped computer for the presentation.

Open File Manager? (continued from page 4)

or directories (such as the paging file or the TEMP directory) and to specify the location of the preview cache file. If you have multiple backup systems in your organization, you can manage OFM on all systems from a single console.

A handy agent included with OFM allows you to configure an account to copy open files using the same technology. Numerous times I have tried the impossible: to access an open file on our network. OFM would have saved me running around getting users to close the file. This agent will act only over the network; users with a single, standalone machine can't benefit from this agent.

OFM runs as a service under Windows NT 4 (Workstation or Server) or as an NLM under Novell Netware. The memory footprint under NT is around 1MB.

I tested OFM on PUB II-the NT Workstation that runs our new BBS. The BBS software keeps about 50 files open (databases for messages, user accounts, indexes, etc.) whenever the BBS is running. OFM handled all these files perfectly and allowed NTBackup to perform a complete and accurate backup. OFM is definitely not for every situation. You must evaluate your own backup strategies; if they are adequate, do not spend more money. Perhaps you can modify your existing procedures to compensate for any deficiencies. Finally, you may decide to live with any data losses that occur. Please-if you choose this last course of action, consider carefully the risks to your company's bottom line and your own pay cheque. Don't tell your boss!

OFM manager is not cheap. Single copies for NT Server are US$575.00. Quantity discounts are available; the smallest for NT Workstation is a 5-pack at US$495.00. St. Bernard Software currently has a promotion: any organization can request a free, fullfunetion copy of the version for NT Workstation. I have requested a copy to use for OPCUG. St. Bernard is also offering a discount to OPCUG members: you can purchase an NT Workstation 5-pack for US$400. Contact Tod Helmink at I-800-782-3762 and be certain to mention your club membership. A 15-day trial version is available from the company's website: **http://www.stbernard.com.**

I will have a bunch of brochures available at general meetings for anyone interested and we have a number of T-shirts available for door prizes courtesy of St. Bernard Software.

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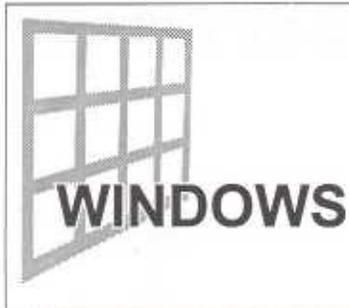
What's your FAT?

As a sneak preview of a major benefit of Windows 98, the Windows 95 OSR2 release includes an intriguing option: FAT32. "What is FAT32 and do I need it on my machine?" Under Windows 98, Microsoft is expected to provide support; however, at present, you proceed at your peril. Under the terms of Microsoft's licencing, you can obtain a

legal copy of OSR2 bundled with a new machine or with a new hard drive; however, the latter option may require some shopping to find a willing dealer. FAT32 will not work with pre-OSR2 versions of Windows 95

FAT32, unlike its predecessor FAT16 (excepting very early versions of DOS, the standard throughout DOS, Windows 3.x and Windows 95), can conserve considerable hard drive space on large partitions. Without delving too deeply into the theory, hard drive data space is configured into multi-sector segments called clusters. The size of each cluster is determined by the size of the partition. For FAT16, cluster size ranges from 2KB-for a partition less than 128 KB in capacity-to 32 KB on partitions of 1 GB (1024 MB) and larger. The problem: the smallest file (one byte) demands the full cluster. To minimize waste partitions are kept smaller than ideal, typically under 1GB; however, this lacks efficiency for the large hard drives that are prevalent today. Generally, partitions less than 512 MB in size will not accept FAT32. Using FAT32, any

partition that occupies less than 6 GB can use a 4KB cluster. To keep the discussion focussed I am deliberately ignoring any other pertinent aspects. Yes, DriveSpace compression is an alternate; however, that paradigm introduces a parallel risk-benefit discussion that I will avoid.

To use FAT32 you must have OSR2 or a Windows 98 beta version. For OSR2-I don't know the beta 98 identifier-go to My Computer/Control Panel/System/General. It must read: Microsoft Windows 95 4.00.950 B. If not: stop! You may still wish to reconsider: Microsoft's utility is one-way (from 16 to 32 bit). If you have PowerQuest's Partition Magic it offers a reversible option but at extra cost

(about $85-90 street). Of course, the change will require backing up, perhaps repartitioning and then reformatting under the new scheme. Further expenses are in store: using a 32 bit FAT will obsolete many early versions of otherwise Windows 95 compliant system utilities: far example, Norton Utilities.

That's not a bug, it's a feature!

After all the trials, bug fixes and Service Pack 1 (SP1) for Microsoft's Office 97Suite, a new crop has appeared. Merely the latest in a series of macro viruses that could infect the major Office applications, Access 97 databases have joined the club with the A97M/AccessIV.A. This virus is masked as a hidden Autoexec macro. At the

moment no virus checkers can detect it. To determine if your files are infected:

• open Access,

click Tools, Options,

• make sure Hidden Objects is checked,

• click OK, and

• click the Macros tab in the main database window.
If you see something called Autoexec, the database may be infected-or it may be an innocent autoexec macro.

If there are any other MOB files in the active directory they will also be infected. On a positive note, since it lacks any malicious code the virus isn't particularly destructive-a small comfort. Visit Trend Micro's web site for more details: http://www.antivirus.com/vinfo/faq/faqjetdb.htm.
Access is also prone to malicious attack. Supposedly secure databases in fact exhibit glaring security holes that are readily exploited through the user interface. Microsoft has been aware of their existence since version 2.0; however, it was not deemed cost-effective to engineer a solution. Worse, Access 97 is easier to crack than its predecessors.
Another problem has surfaced in Word: not only Word 97 but also versions 6 and 7 (for Windows 95). To see it:

• start Word,
• create, then save a new document-call it "reveal.doc" and save it (Easiest on your desktop: this isn't critical.),

• make changes to that document but do not save them,

• right-click on the document on the desktop and pick print.

Initially, your response will be: "What's the big deal?" You expect a printed copy of the latest version of the file and that is precisely the result. The surprise will be the side effects: when Word closes the document by itself it discards all the changes. Subsequently, if you open "reveal.doc", you'll see only the old version.
Other permutations are possible: dragging "reveal.doc" onto a printer icon, or choosing File... Print from the Explorer menu will have the identical result. Unlikely, you say: unfortunately not. Anytime that you make changes within a document but fail to close it will trigger this gremlin-oops... I mean feature! For additional information visit Microsoft's Knowledge Base at:
http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q 182/8/37.asp
To maintain consistency throughout Office 97, Excel also has several traps for the unwary. Subsequent to the Service Patch 1 release Microsoft acknowledged the
presence of a recalculation bug. In other words, when you expected the spreadsheet to display the result of new inputs, in certain cases this did not occur. Microsoft created a patch only to experience their worst nightmare:

while the original problem was solved it spawned another. The latest variant appears when the recalculation is performed across columns instead of down rows. Finally, data labels, when they are attached to charts, could cause confusion. If the data label itself is a calculated value then it might not update properly. Now, some good news: a patch for Excel that has already been Service Pack 1 upgraded is available at:
http://www.microsoft.com/excel/ enhancements/x18pl.asp.
Excel's woes continue; now Microsoft is wrestling with a circular error bug. In some cases the warning (a blue dot) fails to appear; in others, only one error in several is flagged and Excel would continue to pump out erroneous data.
Great news: a Service Pack 2 (SP2) for Office 97 is in the works: tentatively expected mid-summer! Previous installation of the SPl patch-not merely some of the individual patches-is an essential prerequisite. It looks like a "biggie": Microsoft may provide it on CD instead of a website posting.
I don't intend this article as a diatribe against Microsoft. Certainly, other software applications have their own peculiarities. Given the complexity of the programs and their myriad interrelationships with the Windows operating system perhaps it is most amazing that the code demonstrates comparatively few bugs. By now, users must have shed their innocence. Ironically, spreadsheets were initially viewed as "saviours"; now, they are revealed to have ordinary flaws and failings.

Pop up DOS windows

For convenience, you may appreciate having a DOS prompt available as an option either within a folder or from a drive icon. Here's how to do it. Before you proceed, back up your Registry!

In a Folder
Using RegEdit, drill down to `H_KEY_CLASSES_ROOT\ Directory\Shell\` and create a new key under Shell; name it DOS Prompt. Then, create another new subkey under DOS Prompt and call it command. Double-click the default value for the Command subkey and type
COMMAND.COM[space]/K[space]%[space]%l. (The syntax must be precise. To avoid any ambiguity, I have

Pop up DOS windows (Continued)

indicated where you need to insert a single space. Do not, however, literally type the character string [space].)

Now, whenever you right-click any folder in either My Computer or Explorer you will have a DOS prompt as an option. You can issue commands within that directory.

From a Drive Icon

Again, use RegEdit to drill down to `H_KEY_CLASSES_ROOT\ Drive\Shell\` and create new DOS Prompt and Command keys as described earlier. Similarly, double-click the default value for the Command subkey and type `COMMAND.COM[spacel /K [space] %1.` My earlier comments about syntax remain in effect.

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Club News

Quest for Glossy Inkjet Paper
by Bert Schopf

Several members have approached me asking if the OPCUG could get a discount on glossy paper for colour inkjet printers. Typically, retail outlets sell this media in small quantities at high prices. 1 am negotiating with vendors to get a better onetime price on a bulk purchase. At the last General Meeting, several people signed on for a "buying power" quantity of over 700 sheets. The bulk purchase order will be placed in July. Anyone interested in participating in this offer (minimum order 25 sheets) should contact Bert Schopf.

Wanted: used computer

Donation by Bert Schopf

A local nursing home requires a computer (286 or better) for dedicated use with a labelling machine. 1f you have an old CPU, monitor, or other device you could contribute, please contact Brian Wollenschlager at 731-7711 or by e-mail at AK608@freenet.carleton.ca or by Pub II.