



# OTTAWA PC NEWS

Vol. 16 number 10

The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

November 1999

## Club News

### Software Piracy

Current estimates suggest that 40 per cent of application software in Canada is pirated.

Since 1990, the Canadian Alliance Against Software Theft (CAAST) has been leading the fight against software piracy. CAAST is an industry alliance of software publishers who share the common goal of reducing software theft through education, legislation and legal enforcement.

With an estimated 4 000+ download sites, the Internet is the fastest growing form for advertising pirated software.

To protect yourself:

- Don't fall for an offer that sounds too good to be true. It's probably illegal. Internet auctions are reputed to sell significant volumes of pirated software.
- Buy or download software from the software publisher or reputable stores and catalogues.
- Don't buy or download "cracks" or "warez." Cracks are programs that make illegal modifications to software to bypass the copy protection. Warez or appz are slang terms for pirated software.
- Do inspect the item promptly and return suspicious items.
- Be suspicious of computer systems that have an operating system (and possibly applications) already installed but lack the source media



and manuals. Yes, some of these are legitimate; however, recent press releases suggest that many more are not.

- Does the appearance of the packaging, attention to artistic and typographic detail, and the presence of holographic or other security seals really support the claim that it is genuine retail product?

Visit [www.caast.org](http://www.caast.org) for more information or call our anti-piracy information line at 1-800-263-9700.



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Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1999**

# Swap Meet

Every November the club holds a swap meet. Come on out to the Train Hall at the Science and Technology Museum on Wednesday 3 November at 7:30 p.m. Bring all the hardware and software that you don't use any more. Everyone is welcome to buy or to sell. Bring your friends! Tell your neighbors!

## A few suggestions and rules:

- First come; first served: no reservations for either tables or locations. **Sellers can enter at 7:00 p.m. to setup.**
- Persons selling need not be club members; however, no commercial vendors, advertising, signs or displays are permitted.
- Electricity is available; however, please bring a long extension cord. You may also want some desk lamps.
- Bring complete programs with original media and manuals.
- Be certain that hardware works properly.

The above notwithstanding, neither the Ottawa PC Users' Group nor the Museum of Science and Technology assume any responsibility for claims for defective merchandise. All is sold "as is, where is." Caveat emptor—buyer beware!



## Calendar

| Meetings                        | Date                                                                                                                                       | Time and venue                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OPCUG General Meeting           | November 3 <sup>rd</sup> : OPCUG Annual Computer <b>Swap Meet</b> (See details above)<br>December 1 <sup>st</sup> : <b>Digital Cameras</b> | 7:00 p.m. For sellers setting up tables<br>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<br>Conference room, Tunney's Pasture,<br>Holland Ave. (north of Scott St.)             |
| PIG SIG<br>(or is it WING SIG?) | November 3 <sup>rd</sup> , after all the other SIG's<br>- All questions, be they serious or not                                            | "Good Times" cafe at Shoppers City West,<br>Baseline and Woodroffe                                                       |

# Election notice: OPCUG Board of Directors

by David Reeves, Secretary

If you want the experience of guiding the activities of a large group or want to have an impact on the future activities of the OPCUG, then a Director's position is ideal for you.

How much work is involved? Directors are involved in a number of different activities. The amount of work varies but, at a minimum, you are required to attend monthly Board of Directors' meetings. Directors also co-ordinate several of the OPCUG functions, such as SYSOP. A list of the functions is available on our WEB site.

The Board of Directors consists of nine members who administer the affairs of the OPCUG. From their ranks, they select a President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary, and any other position they deem necessary.

Nominations for membership on the Board of Directors must be in the hands of Harald Freise (past chairman) on or before 10 PM EST, Tuesday, November 30, 1999. You can nominate yourself or another person (who must accept the nomination). For a nomination to stand, the nominee must file signed acceptance of their nomination with Harald Freise, 1034 Hindley Cr., Ottawa, or send a private message to him via PUB II. Please include the telephone number of the nominee. If there are more than nine candidates, an election will be held at an early 1999 general meeting.

Candidates will have the opportunity to outline their platform in the January newsletter. (Reasonable rules concerning submission deadline, article length, and omission of potentially slanderous content applies.) Additionally, at the General meeting candidates will have the opportunity to address the membership to clarify their platform immediately before the election.

Harald Freise is looking for two non-board members to review the club's records and financial statements before the publication of the Financial Report. In addition, Harald would like volunteers to assist if there is an election.

Having been a Director for a number of years, I have found it to be a rewarding and learning experience. I strongly encourage you to consider becoming a Director. If you would like to find out more, please contact me or any of the current member of the Board of Directors.



## Member assistance

The Board of Directors would like to thank the club members who assisted in staffing the booths at:

- **Ottawa Business Technology Show**, Lansdowne Park, 17 and 18 September: Bert Schopf, Ernie Schreiber, Ted Havrot, Jean Vaumoron, Bob Gowan, Dunc Petrie
- **Canadian Computer Fair**, Nepean Sportsplex, October 2 and 3: Bert Schopf, Morris Turpin, Dunc Petrie, Warren Sleeman, Mark Cayer, Bob Gowan, Jean Vaumoron and Jocelyn Doire.



### Club life

## Reuse, recycle

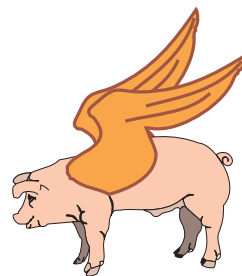
Bring your old computer magazines, books, or any other computer paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the general meetings, and leave them in the area specified. If you don't bring something, you may want to TAKE AWAY something of interest, so look in on this area. Any item left over at the end of the meeting will be sent to the... recycle bin.



### Club Life

## Fly West

The "Good Times" cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe, for chicken wings and a drink after the General meeting: may be the best and most informative SIG meeting of the evening. See you there!



# DataKeeper, Version 3.0 by Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.

One of the tasks that no one really likes to do is to take time to backup their hard disk. I always think there are better ways to spend my time. But there is no job that is more important than backing up your hard disk. Most tape backup software can be set up with a scheduler to do regular backups.

However, on a large hard disk, a complete backup can take hours. Then, as many tape users have found, when you need to restore, you may find that the tape is unusable. Even if you can restore, it is very time consuming, especially if you only need a few files restored. A better solution is needed.

PowerQuest's ([www.powerquest.com](http://www.powerquest.com)) DataKeeper allows you to back up to diskettes, removable hard drives, writeable CDs, DVDs or other optical media. If it has a drive letter, you can back up to it. It will also backup across multiple disks, if necessary. In addition, you can run a full backup and then do a continuous backup. This latter term simply means that any file that is changed is automatically backed up to the location you selected. The backup takes place at a time when there is no other hard drive activity on your computer. It is the most flexible backup software that I have used. It also comes with the least documentation of any software program. Basically the documentation is an on-line Help file and a Readme text file. But, it works!

The software comes on a CD-ROM and requires 4MB of hard disk space for installation. After the installation is complete, the files take up less than 3MB on my hard disk. After the software was installed, I set up a backup specification file for the two partitions on my hard drive. Then I did a complete backup to a 1GB Iomega Jaz drive. The backup and verification took less than 30 minutes. After that, I changed the specification file to prevent backup of temporary files and other files that are used, but don't change. This includes DLLs and some other file types. Then I found the check box to start the program whenever Windows starts. Finally, I set it to monitor changed files continuously. Now I have a backup system which provides a full backup and also any changed files since the last backup. You can also select no data compression for your files. The default is 50% compression of the backup files. You can password protect the backup files, if you wish. DataKeeper will not backup files over a network, only files on a local hard drive.

The process was really quite simple in spite of the lack of printed documentation. The initial window in DataKeeper has four numbered sections. In the first section you select the drives or folders that you want to backup. In the second section you select the destination for the backup files. In the third section you have the advanced options, including the "continuously monitor files" checkbox. There are "file filter" buttons and "backup options" buttons. The final section is the Run selection. In my case, this has the "monitor files" button.

When this was clicked, the program reduced to an icon in the system tray. It now changes from green to yellow in color and indicates that it is monitoring the file changes. When the monitoring is turned off, and the program is minimized, the icon is red.

Restoring files, folders or drives is just as simple as the backup process. You click on the restore tab in the program. Then you select the files, folders or drives that you want to restore. Next, you select the destination for the restored files. If you don't select a destination, the default is to restore the files to the original location. Then you select "Run". The restore process is just as quick as the backup process. In fact, if you have only a few files to restore, it is as quick as the file copy process in Windows. The ones I have tried have been too quick to time.

Now for the downside: if you do the continuous file monitoring you will need to run periodic backups on your own. There is no scheduling function built into DataKeeper. However, if you have Windows 98 you can use the Windows scheduler program to schedule automatic periodic backups. This will use your DataKeeper specifications file which can be different from the file used for the continuous backup. The Help file has instructions for using a shortcut icon to run a backup set. The command line for this shortcut can be used with the Windows Scheduler to do automatic backups at a time of your choosing.

Frankly, the versatility of this program, along with its low cost, certainly recommends it to me. If you need reliable, easy-to-use backup software for other than tape drives, then try this one. The street price for DataKeeper is \$50 (Cdn). However, user group members may purchase DataKeeper v3 at a special price by ordering from their secure web site at [www.ugr.com/order](http://www.ugr.com/order). Indicate the special price code of UGEVAL99 with your order.

*[Editor's notes:*

*1. Availability and pricing for user groups in Canada is unknown.*

*2. Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D. is a member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc. Copyright 1999. This article is from the June 1999 issue of the Sarasota PC Monitor, the official monthly publication of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., P.O. Box 15889, Sarasota, FL 34277-1889. Permission to reprint is granted only to other non-profit computer user groups, provided proper credit is given to the author and our publication.]*





# DUNC PETRIE'S CORNER

BEGINNERS



## Hardware Review

### Storage options today

I discussed, in the January 99 issue (Whither Removable Storage), several new drives that promised greater speed, lower prices or the best of both worlds—faster and cheaper. While none of these manufacturers have succumbed to market pressures, optimistic expectations have, in some cases been tempered by reality. Where are they now? What else is new? Let's have a look.

#### Iomega Zip

Iomega, as the de facto leader in sales and installed base, has the greatest exposure. Can the company maintain its lead? The Zip drive offers the largest selection of both capacity and interface choices. Its sole deficiency is the lack of backwards floppy compatibility. Since floppy drives have not yet followed the dodo bird to extinction, OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) who include a Zip must, of necessity, also install a conventional floppy unit (see further comments for the Imation). A new driver package, Iomegaware 2.0 (Ioware20.exe), was introduced in early September to offer a simplified user interface. Instead of having to download a series of separate files, everything is included in a single 11.6 MB file. The user interface now provides a single window, multi-tabbed interface to call any add-in application. This download, despite its size, offers convenience since there are no upgrades to install to assure the latest, Y2K compliant application.

#### Other high-capacity floppies

The competition has had mixed results.

Sony's HiFD (200 MB) boasted floppy compatibility, higher speed and greater capacity than most (the 250 MB Zip is the only exception). It launched to good reviews but was recalled within a few weeks due to persistent technical problems. To my knowledge, at this writing (mid-October), it has not resurfaced.

Caleb Technology's offering, renamed the "it" will be available in internal and external versions. It is directly supported in Windows 95b (OSR2) or NT 3.51 (with SP5) or later; some earlier OS variants will have software driver support. A

search of the website ([www.caleb-bladr.com](http://www.caleb-bladr.com)) suggested that they are still setting up a distribution chain: retail availability is very limited, if any.

Imation's Superdisk has achieved good success as an upgrade on OEM installations and the latest drivers have improved the speed of its operations. Also favourable is the slight decline of the cost of its media; ideally, competition from third-party manufacturers would surface. Unfortunately, the higher hardware cost offsets the convenience of one physical drive. A Zip and conventional floppy combination is, I gather, somewhat less expensive for OEMs to purchase.

#### High capacity removable media hard drives

The surprise in this arena is the Castlewood Orb drive. Orbs are available (even in Ottawa) and have received excellent reviews: fast, high transfer rates and low access times that place it on par, or even slightly ahead of the Iomega Jaz. (The parallel port model Orb, while capable, is notably slower.) Stunningly, it has met its projected price-point and usurped the Jaz on price: about \$320 (Cdn) for any hardware variant (IDE, internal and external SCSI, parallel, USB—some variants are announced but not released) versus a Jaz that is closer to \$600 (Cdn) or more (external SCSI is more expensive). Equally impressive is the media cost: \$50 (Cdn) for a 3.5 inch cartridge with a 2.2 GB capacity versus the Jaz at easily three times the cost.

Still, it faces two formidable hurdles: Jaz' long lead gives it an installed user base among graphics professionals or enterprises. Here, the ability to exchange media among already-installed hardware would likely offset the price advantage. Second, Orb will have to develop a positive track record and prove its reliability.

The continually plummeting cost of high capacity, conventional hard drives (about 13 GB and beyond) does make the logic of purchasing removable media devices

more difficult to sustain. While portability and off-site storage are tangible pluses, the same could be achieved, usually with considerably lower costs, using alternate media. Indeed, a conventional hard drive can become a removable drive (not simply removable media) for a price that is comparable to a Jaz cartridge. The cost of the tray plus the conventional hard drive is considerably cheaper than the Jaz plus the blank media to provide equivalent capacity. The equivalent formula applied to the Orb would make a more persuasive argument; however, prices will probably continue to decrease faster for conventional hard drives than removables.

Once again, despite the glamour of the latest gadget, assess your requirements carefully.

## Conventional hard drives

Hard drives have posted impressive gains in capacity while the prices continue to plummet. High capacity drives (approaching 30-50 GB) are the norm; no one gets excited. Recently, I have noticed that the price gap between 5400 and 7200 rpm drives has significantly narrowed. Whether this results in a noticeable performance increase is another question; however, the technology and manufacturing advances to achieve this milestone deserve recognition.

[Editor's aside: Y2K may have an undocumented feature. My system, dating from late 1996, had a flash BIOS upgrade available on the motherboard manufacturer's website. Included, but not documented, was BIOS support to extend the hard drive capacity without using a software overlay (OnTrack, for example).]

## Optical media

The optical arena has behaved predictably. As the CD-R/RW hardware has matured, it has become easier to configure and use—result: fewer “coasters.” Formatting and writing speeds have also increased while the hardware costs continue to decline. While SCSI devices remain the high end choice, ATAPI devices post impressive results at considerable cost savings. The media costs (single use and rewritable) continue to fall. Name brand CD-R blanks are well-below \$2 each as a single purchase (bulk rates are even better) and rewritable media is about \$4. Given the capacity—and barring the media tax—these prices argue strongly for their use for data backup.

DVD and its companion writeable formats remain mired in standards conflicts. Movies aside, there are very few computer applications (Microsoft's Encarta is one) distributed on this format. It seems an expensive way to view a movie—on a small screen to boot. What it really requires, like its cousin CD-R/RW, is mainstream

introduction of a single, rewritable standard at affordable prices.



## What about tape?

The real loser in the storage arena at present, in my opinion, is tape (enterprise applications with multi-gigabyte capacities excepted). For home and small office users, although current tape drive costs are similar to the drive-in-a-tray or a CD-R/RW drive, tapes' perception is negative. The drive-in-a-tray has no recurring media cost and present CD-R/RW media prices buy a lot of blank disks for the price of a tape. Tape is considerably slower; the perception, I fear, is worse than the reality. SCSI drives are an exception but pose additional expenses. Tape also bears the burden—right or wrong—that it is troublesome for inexperienced users to configure and use. Its breadth of usefulness is limited; unlike CD-R, MP-3 tape drives would never become best-sellers. Tapes form a strong bond with their parent: the hardware that created them. Playback on a different drive (supposedly compatible) can become a trying experience.

While I speak from experience, I also admit that is limited to parallel, floppy drive or ATAPI interface devices. I feel that these tape drives need—“there ought to be a law”—top flight bundled software: not the entry level, restricted capability application that is the norm. Too often the software to do it right is an extra-cost upgrade.

Better, it would become an integral part of the operating system. Windows 98 bundled Backup module (from Seagate) was a monumental leap forward, compared to previous efforts, but still has room for improvement. Windows 98 supports numerous hardware devices but only tape for backups. If backup software looks like an afterthought, it will suggest that backups are also an afterthought. Perhaps they are: after a system crash, don't you wish that you had made a backup? If it were less of a chore to perform, I venture that many more would be made.



## Access CD-ROM in Safe Mode

In case of boot problems, Windows has included an escape valve. Defective drivers are often the cause and the cure is replacement. Here is the Catch-22. To replace the driver, you need to access the application media. In this era of bigger-and-better, most applications ship on CD-ROM. But “escape valve” protocols rely upon real mode drivers; almost certainly, your CD-ROM reader screams through Windows 98 using a virtual mode driver. Guess what—you “Can’t Get No Satisfaction.” Well, maybe...

In Windows 98 (this doesn’t work, to my knowledge, with earlier versions) you require access to the Startup Menu. Some system settings will offer a series of choices, using a command line menu, before Windows graphical interface is enabled. If not, depress (and hold down) the Ctrl key during

the boot process to access to the Startup menu. From the Startup menu:

- choose Command Prompt Only,
- type “win /d:m” (without the quotes) and
- press ENTER.

Windows should start in Safe Mode with your CD-ROM drivers. If you still can’t access your CD-ROM drive, it means your real mode CD-ROM drivers aren’t installed. For installation instructions, send an e-mail message to [mshelp@microsoft.com](mailto:mshelp@microsoft.com) with “Q190303” (less the quotes) in the subject line (nothing in the body of the message). Microsoft’s automated help system will send back the instructions.



### System tweak

## Findfast

Does your hard drive work overtime? Is it always churning? I noticed this when I wanted to recover a file using Norton Utilities Unerase. It had to restart repeatedly due to mysterious disk writes.

Microsoft Office (at least the 95 and 97 variants) installs an application called FindFast. This application creates an index of “everything, everywhere” with the intention of helping users to locate a requested file faster. Now, I have not put a stopwatch on FindFast to determine how quickly it performs these searches. For those who remember the “old days of DOS” (No, I did not say the “good old days...”) and Lotus’ file utility Magellan, you may remember the true meaning of the word “fast.” I assure you that FindFast, in that context, is most definitely not fast.

I will also state, up front, that I do not produce several forest-equivalents of output using Microsoft’s Office Suite. I am not anti-Microsoft; I just prefer WordPerfect for word processing. Since most of my time is spent with that word processor, Microsoft’s FindFast file indexing provides me with little benefit.

Apparently, much of the frantic drive activity is coupled to FindFast’s mandate: index everything, now! If you—like me—want relief, go to Control Panel, click on FindFast and turn off or delete every index.

Lest I be accused of picking unfairly upon Microsoft, I assure you that it is not the sole culprit. Norton Utilities Image

utility, if enabled, will also cause numerous disk writes—I am certain that there are others.

My point is to suggest that you evaluate the merits of various applets and utilities to determine if they really contribute to your productivity.



### Free Software

## Free-Plan v1.2 W9x/NT

I found this freebie on the Web courtesy of Lockergnome.

For new or expanding businesses banks look for (among many other things) a business plan and cost projections. If the concept is less than clear, visit [www.planware.org](http://www.planware.org) and have a look at their freeware. There are several free templates for both Microsoft Word and Excel: at least, the 97/2000 versions. A more limited selection of templates is available for the Windows 95 versions of these programs.



## OTTAWA PC NEWS

*Ottawa PC News* is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July and August. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members. Deadline for submissions is four Saturdays before the general meeting.

### Group Meetings

OPCUG normally meets on the first Wednesday in the month, except in July and August, at the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meeting times are 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

### Fees

Membership: \$25 per year.

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[Http://opcug.ottawa.com/](http://opcug.ottawa.com/)

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Up to 33.6 kbps V34 ..... 228-0665

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## Club news

# Door prizes donation

The club extends a very sincere "Thank you" to Mr. Michael Kuby, an OPCUG member from Kingston, for his very generous donation to club members of numerous distribution Linux CD-Roms.

Included were various releases from all the major companies: Red Hat, Caldera, S.u.S.E., Slackware and Debian.



## Door Prizes *by Mark Cayer*

### • May 1999

Howard Macumber won a copy of the Vorton Financial Powertools. Thanks to Vorton Technologies.

### • June 1999

Cornel Bierman won an original work of computer art donated by club member Jean Vaumoron.

Andre Cote and Frank Rogers each won a copy of Toggle Software's ToggleMouse.

Doug Sherar won a copy of PowerQuest's Partition Magic.

### • September 1999

A sincere thank you to Corel Corporation for the large selection of prizes awarded at this meeting.

Eric Clyde, John Cocklin and Irving Huss got Corel Baseball Caps; Charles Schofield received a Nostalgic Pictures CD; Paul Gagne won a Lakes & Rivers CD; Harald Freise was awarded a copy of Corel Print House Deluxe and Fred Beisswahger went home with a copy of Corel Draw 9. A few also won neckties or a Corel balloon. Mouse pads and key chains were freely available to all persons present.

### • October 99

Wayne Houston won the 1,000+ images library supplied by Corel.



## Club News all about Club Life!

To receive the newsletter by e-mail, send the message "subscribe Newslettertxt" or "subscribe NewsletterPDF" (without quotes) to [listserve@opcug.ottawa.com](mailto:listserve@opcug.ottawa.com).



Did you know that the PDF issue was in color ?

