

BGA-Bytes

Official newsletter of the Bowling Green Area Microcomputer User Group, Inc.

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our website www.bgamug.org

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The latest Swiss Army Knife



April Presentations

Going back to our usual format of two twenty minute sessions, we have two presentations this month, one by Mike Moore and the other one by Doug Skinner.

Mike Moore:

My presentation this month is on E-bay selling.

I only have twenty minutes, so I decided to write out a set of E-bay and PayPal words and definitions, and to print off enough sheets of these for everyone at the meeting. Based on prior E-bay sessions and the fact that this meeting is being advertised on the non-profit circuit around town, we may have a full house, so I will bring at least 50 copies and everyone can be assured that there will be enough copies to go around.

Then, using a live internet connection, we will work through the actual posting of an item on my E-bay account. Included will be a short discussion on BGAMUG's charity donation affiliate, Mission Fish, which allows up to 100% of the proceeds of any auction to go to BGAMUG. If there is a problem with the live internet link, I'll have a quick power point to back up the presentation - just in case.

If there is time, I will show a view of an auction already in progress to show how we can view bids, watches, and failed auctions.

I'll reserve about 5 minutes or so for questions at the end of the presentation.

Doug Skinner:

My presentation is on the Linux operating system, which is an excellent alternative to Microsoft Windows.

I will be discussing:

What Linux is.

The history of the Linux operating system.

Where Linux is used today.

Where Linux is expected to go in the near future.

Who should consider running Linux.

Trying to squeeze all that into 20 minutes will be difficult, but I am certainly going to give it the old college try.



Last Month's Presentation:

All forty minutes of last month's presentation was about Microsoft Access and was given by Trish Steelman. Trish is one of the 2005 winners of the Part-Time Faculty Awards at Bowling Green Community College. Highly recommended by our program director, Linda Todd, Trish was not disappointing. BGA-Bytes will announce her new classes at the beginning of the next term.

President's Message

April 9, 2006 —

The big news this month is Treasurer Elisa Davison's resignation. Elisa has chosen to focus on other areas of her family and work life, and we wish her the best of luck and hope she continues to visit and contribute as her time permits. The BGAMUG Bylaws provide that, "If six (6) months or more remain in the term of a vacated office, a special election to fill that office will be scheduled and announced for the next regular Membership meeting." So here's your announcement! We need to have an election at the April meeting and the nominating committee will be working to provide use with some candidates. If you are interested in this very important position within our group, please let me know as soon as you can. My NEW E-mail address is webstar@hughes.net.

Officers also voted to acquire some software from the Techsoup.org program operated by CompuMentor. We will be purchasing a copy of Windows Office Professional, ten copies of Windows XP, and a copy of Studio 8 from Macromedia. Various other software titles will be funded by members and officers directly.

Our annual picnic will be held June 17th, Saturday, starting at 11:AM at my place, which is in Alvaton off Alvaton Road (formerly Scottsville Rd), about a mile past New Cut. 158 Hunters Hill Lane. I will make sure a map gets posted and we'll have the usual balloons & signs out. Everyone is invited *including the grandkids!* We typically have a blast. Edwin's bringing the ice and drinks, and I usually grill a little something, and everyone else brings a dish to pass. We will have several rounds of Bingo and Bill's going to help me with some other games. Any suggestions? Please feel free to call me.

New member Gilbert Lakes was at our officer meeting and had a number of suggestions relating to better identification of officers at the meetings, and also enhancing the ability for new and intermediate users to hook up with officers and other senior members of the club to provide tech support and general assistance with computing and technology information.

I ran into Doug Skinner at an undisclosed restaurant (initials W.H.) and I have to tell you, he has a real treat for you in the way of a "Linux Teaser" session. What is Linux? It's an operating system, like Windows, but based on a much older standard known as Posix. A young grad student known as Linus Torvalds began a grass-roots development effort several decades ago, and the result is a consortium of skilled programmers, analysts and even lawyers, all donating their time to see that the idea gets out there in pure form, unsullied by commercialism. A short 20 minutes of introduction to this "new" 20-year old operating system. I say "new" because Linux, is only now becoming as easy to use and install as Windows. We also agreed we would have a list of words written out with definitions, but if you are expecting a highly technical show, forget it. Whether you buy Linux pre-installed on a low cost computer or get fed up with Windows and install it yourself, Doug's going to show you what a treat you are in for, and it only *starts* with free software.

And those of you who wanted a tutorial on E-bay selling will finally get a glimmer of what you asked for. I will have time for a live session on how to post an item for sale on E-bay and we'll have time for a question and answer session. For those of you new to E-bay and PayPal, the online banking service associated with E-bay, I'll make sure to bring copies of some of the past presentations we've had on the topic. Both Doug and I realize there may be some follow-up questions to our presentations and we are working on a venue for a follow-up workshop.

Several members have indicated a desire to build their own computer, as we did with Intel last year. This year, AMD is a sponsor, but we may also be able to continue the excellent deal we received on Intel parts from pclub.com. Stay tuned for more information about the Build-It-Yourself project!

Mike Moore

Minutes of the March 28, 2006 Membership Meeting

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Michael Moore, president

Minutes: January and February Minutes accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Beginning balance \$1931.20 Income \$60.00, expenses \$159.01, ending balance \$1832.01

Highlights of Executive Board Meeting on March 4:

1. BGAMUG is now a recognized charity for EBay funding.
2. Results of member's interests survey, to date, were presented in chart form.
3. An audit is underway.
4. A lifetime membership was awarded to Ramona Bobbitt, the first lady to join BGAMUG. She has been a large part of BGAMUG since its inception. We congratulate Ramona for a job well done.
5. The "Katrina" report and a request for help from Gene Iglehart, PC Placement Coordinator, were presented.

New Business:

Ramona was unable to be present because of a flu infection, so Mike talked to her on the phone and told her of the honor accorded to her – Lifetime Membership. Her certificate will be presented later or mailed to her.

Officer Reports:

1. Linda Todd: For April's program (1) Mike Moore will give information about selling on E-Bay and also information about Mission Fish, and (2) Doug Skinner will give a presentation on the LINUX operating system.
2. Gene Iglehart and PC Placement: With the Scout Troop from Owensboro bringing a number of computers and another load to come, there will be over 100 computers to go to Baton Rouge in the near future. Owensboro will furnish a truck to carry the computers to Louisiana. As computers are checked out, they are being stored at Poor Folks Treasures- a consignment shop on Indianola Street in Bowling Green. Gene is asking for help in checking out the computers. He asked volunteers to just come by, and he will give instructions on how to check-out the computers.
3. Ginny Molloy: There will be no Rules Committee meeting in April, but the committee has finished reviewing the Constitution and By-laws and will soon have them ready for presentation to the membership for approval/disapproval.
4. Mike Moore said the profit of anything he sells on EBay will go to BGAMUG.

Introductions: New Member, Gilbert Lakes was welcomed. Ruth Hyden and Helen Bardin were guests of Kitty Hildredth. Edwin Phelps guest was Jerry Phelps. Any relationship, Edwin? Herb Siewert was a guest of Chuck Thomas.

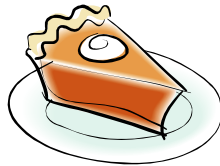
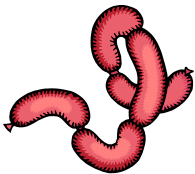
Program: Trish Steelman gave an excellent basic presentation on Microsoft Access. She highlighted the ways that Access can be useful as we all collect data of one sort or another, whether dealing with high finance, cataloging our record collection, cataloging books in our library, or organizing our recipes.

Q & A: Chuck Thomas answered questions, mostly involving e-mail problems and virus prevention.

Door Prizes: A CD of 60's and 70's music was won by Carlisle Barnes and a can of compressed air was won by Sam Small.

Social Hour: After adjournment, there was an informal and optional social meeting at Hardees.

Lou Travelsted,
Secretary

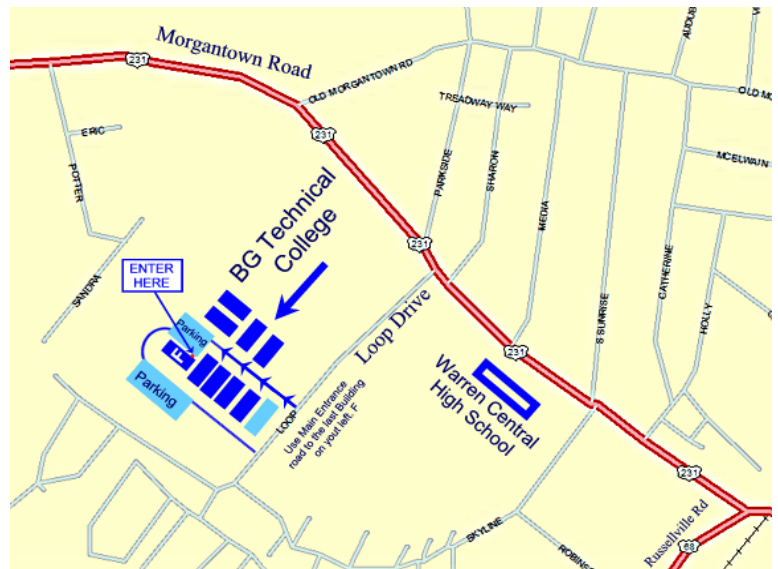


OLD FASHIONED PICNIC ON JUNE 17

Just in case you didn't read the president's message on page 2, there will once again be a picnic this Summer. It will be at Mike and Cheryl Moore's home, starting at 11:00 AM, Saturday, June 17. The next newsletter will have a map of how to get there. Picnic activities are not finalized, but as of now there will be Bingo, horseshoes, a mouse toss, and an (outdated CDs) disc toss. The mouse toss involves tossing dead mice (or is it mouses perhaps?) by the tail. The disk toss involves tossing "dead" CDs by however you want to hold them. Maybe we can get some fake dead mice. We will have some inexpensive and fun type door prizes, with perhaps a more useful prize for the Bingo winner.

Proposed Auction

We are still very serious about the proposed general auction. We need to continue the search for an appropriate location, and we also need volunteers. If you would like to help the club, we very much need your help. Please contact



***** **Maps, Dates** *****

BGAMUG Meeting Dates

May 2006

May 2, 6:30 PM. Board Meeting at the Alamo room in the San Antonio Steak House. Dinner at your own expense in the same room starting at 5:30 PM. No reservations needed.

May 23, 6:30 PM. BGAMUG general meeting in Building F of the Bowling Green Technical College. The College is just off Loop Road, which is accessed from Morgantown Road, and which is near the Warren Central High School.

May 23 after the meeting. Optional Social hour at Hardee's Restaurant at the intersection of Russellville Road and Campbell Lane.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Interesting Dates in May

May 1, May Day. This is a most interesting "holiday." It has a comparatively short history as a day celebrating the labor movement throughout the world. It is often used as a tribute to workers involved in the Haymarket Riot in Chicago in 1886. The riot was the end result of a strike starting on May 1 of that year and ending in fatal violence. The worst incident was in Haymarket Square, where a bomb killed several people. Various countries with Communist or Socialist governments celebrate the day as a national holiday in honor of "workers." In the old USSR, it was the occasion for huge military parades, etc. On the other hand, the oldest tradition of May Day is as a festive celebration around a May pole, with dancing and food and drink. It is most evident in the Germanic countries of Northern Europe, including Great Britain and the rest of the United Kingdom. In England the traditional celebration includes "Morris Dancing" and the crowning of a May Queen. It all seems to have evolved from the ancient pagan festival of Beltane. In the United States the day has never become widely celebrated.

May 5, Cinco De Mayo. A Mexican holiday commemorating the victory of a Mexican Army over a French Army in the battle of Puebla in 1862. Eventually the French occupation of Mexico was ended. Only recently known in Kentucky, and having only limited participation here, it is a very well known celebration day in states with a large Mexican population. There are huge celebrations in California, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. There, many Caucasians become "Mexican" for one day, just as on Saint Patrick's Day many Americans become "Irish" for one day whether or not such a blood line exists.

Second Sunday in May, Mother's Day. This year it is on May 14. It is a day to honor all mothers, with the tradition of wearing a red rose for a living mother and a white rose for a deceased mother. It was started by Anna Jarvis to honor her mother, who had moved from Grafton, West Virginia to near Philadelphia. It was first celebrated on May 10, 1908 at Anna's mother's old Methodist Church in Grafton. Supported by John Wanamaker in Philadelphia, it became recognized as a day of honor by the United States congress in 1914. Before her death, Anna Jarvis publicly objected to the day's commercialization.

Last Monday in May, Memorial Day. Initially a memorial to Union Army soldiers killed in Civil War battles, it is now a memorial to all deceased soldiers from armies of the United States, even those not killed in battle. It includes Confederates.

BGAMUG MIX (Members Information Exchange) Meet Michel L Moore, President



Who am I? And even more, who am I to you?

Inevitably when asked to write biopically, most of us put it off for months, in my case years. I know that I was interviewed for a member exchange piece years ago. So long ago I can't even find it in the records. But this autobiography, well, it's been a long time coming. No one that I know actually enjoys describing themselves.

I was born 1956 in Dallas, Texas, which I do not recall, but have been told I had a gentle nanny to whom I can attribute just about everything in my life. That I am alive at all can be attributed to an Army surgeon named Jernigan, who fortunately specialized in pediatric surgery after the war and removed a grapefruit sized infection from my bowels at age 7 months. I can only imagine the distress this must have caused the family but the antibodies cultivated during this time no doubt saved me again as an adult. I was 3rd of four kids. My sister Leanne died in 1993 of Huntington's.

My older bro has lived in Phoenix, my younger sib in Michigan near my mother.

In '59 we moved to Denver, as my father, a toolmaker, got transferred to the Martin Marietta plant there. Denver holds some beautiful memories for me; I've only been back once, but the clarity of the air and the gorgeous panorama of the Rockies encircling the city to me, trumps anything bad you've heard about Denver. The house on Harrison Street still stands today, and it was old enough for push button switches and a coal-fired furnace back then. I am very glad that I did not contract cancer nor blow up the house, for all of the trouble I got into mixing chemicals in my father's tool room. It seems like I was always mixing something! Once I made what turned out to be a VAT of pancake batter (I guess I couldn't seem to get the right consistency) and ended up tossing it out the back alley. At the time I could not figure out how my mom knew what I'd done. Guess the lack of eggs and milk in the house may have been a clue.

Around 1964, my dad got a job with NASA in New Orleans at the Michoud Assembly plant, which I understand is miraculously still standing after Katrina hit. I don't see how! At the time, the Vertical Assembly Building on the campus was the largest volume building in the world. It required the continuous operation of air conditioning to keep it from raining inside! Quite impressive for a young mind, and my brothers and I went there and to the beach nearby quite often. We enjoyed fireworks a little too much, and were naturally boggled at the local dialect and customs, particularly the open segregation in public areas. There was little to like about the Big Easy back then, especially after we endured Hurricane Betsy and Hilda the year before. But I liked it anyway. I excused my friends for having dads involved with the KKK, horrified my mother regularly with what I brought home from the swamp waters, and generally had a great time down there. It seems, now, that we were down there longer than just two years, but that was it.

In 1966 we moved to a suburb of Detroit, Sterling Heights, where my dad was to take a job with Ling-Temco-Vought, an aircraft and aerospace company. LTV also made missile parts, so he could definitely find his way around the plant. We had moved to Michigan, I found out later, so that he could participate in taking care of his mother, who was very ill. I remember that she lived with us for a time until she passed away in 1967. I was in fifth grade then, developing writing and science skills. In '69 when Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon, my father and us (boys) were glued to the black and white tube – it was a dream come true for all of us. In 1970 my parents gave me a Polaroid camera, the kind where you had to heat up the film while it was developing if you were out in the cold. I rigged up a clip to hold the shutter open and clamped the camera outside, pointed up at the heavens onto a makeshift tripod. I have the photo to this day, a time-lapse cosmic arcade of concentric stars circling Polaris. I read voraciously, spending most of my time at the library or poring over an old 1948 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica.

By 10th grade I was precocious in matters relating to computers, even though properly speaking, there were no computers yet. Our math department had a single Teletypewriter, a contraption that sounded like an old timey newsroom i.e., like a room full of manual typewriters. This console was hooked to an IBM360 Mainframe computer via a 300 baud acoustic modem. You dialed a number with the rotary phone and jammed the phone's headset into this foam gadget that sent and received the signals. We loved to find the most arcane commands! Once we entered into what had to be the world's first Instant Message exchange with the system operator of the mainframe. I was mesmerized!

(Continued on Page 6)

Mix (Continued from page 5)

At some point, my dad lost his job, as did so many in Michigan then and since. We were not sure where the house payment was going to come from. My father was one of the most resourceful men I have ever known, and he was no stranger to depression-like economics. He was able to acquire his uncle's printing press, and an old kerosene heater to keep the rollers tacky, and we printed up a storm in our little garage in Utica, Michigan. I still remember the linseed smell of that ink, and some of the other print shops we visited. And so we were able to keep our heads above water for a few years, when my father again found work on a night shift in East Detroit. Later, in high school, that printing press could have gotten me into a lot of trouble, but somehow I always managed to prevail. Learning this trade taught me the power of the printed word.

Somehow I managed to get enrolled into the College of Pharmacy at University of Michigan, which I attended from 1974 through 1979. Back then you could go straight through from high school and come out a pharmacist. I married my high school sweetheart, Cheryl, in 1976 and we settled in for what would be a very long run. Jeni came along in 1979, Michael in 1980, and Daniel in '81. By all accounts, the kids grew up well and happy. By and by I came to the realization that Michigan was not the best climate to raise kids in, and I'm not talking about being cold and gray most of the time. So when Cheryl's dad died, we moved back south, or at least half way, to Bowling Green, because we had been vacationing down here since 1986, visiting with Cheryl's sister.

In 1981, I picked up a Timex Sinclair personal computer, which I still own. Incredibly, its entire operating system fit inside of a memory space of only 65,535 bytes! Later I bought, at great expense, a thermal printer and little expansion pack that I think brought it up to a whopping 256 *kilobytes* (not megabytes) of system memory. I was as happy as a pig in a poke. I learned that operating system backwards and forwards, and learned Z80 machine language programming while I was at it. In the years after the Timex craze I went nuts after a series of computers, culminating in the Commodore 128 in 1987, with a 1200 baud modem and the Holy Grail of Commodore computing back then, a 10 megabyte hard drive. I don't remember the exact year, but around about this time I ended up in the hospital with a burst appendix, only it had burst about two weeks earlier and somehow I'd built up this sheath around the infection to wall it off from the bloodstream. Thank you again, Dr. Jernigan. Anyway I figured something was up when I came crawling to my wife at 3am and couldn't even pronounce the word 'hospital.' I ended up getting operated on by a guy who was in the medical careers club at Utica High school and probably had a great deal of influence toward my decision to go to Pharmacy school.

In 1989, after the Commodore actually almost crashed my marriage, I fell for my first Packard Bell, which as I recall had a 20 meg hard drive and a CGA (four color) monitor. After the problems we had with the Commodore, I cranked back the time spent on the computer, but did gradually become interested in the nascent internet and its early predecessor, the Bulletin Board System. It was around this time that I also started teaching on-line (using various modem-based services like Genie and Compu-Serve) at CALC, the Computer Assisted Learning Center. I am still an instructor at CALC today (www.calcampus.com) but it is very hard to get people to understand how we were managing online instruction in the days before the internet.

Once in Bowling Green, I was horrified to learn that there were only a few Bulletin Board Systems and no high speed (at the time, 9600bps) online modem based services in the city. I think I referred to the city being "data starved" at the time. I happened to see a reference to a local BBS in the old Computer Shopper magazine, so I called, and the rest is history. I went on to operate the club's BBS for nearly 12 years, at one point I had the capacity for 24 phone lines in my house!

I still have every file we ever collected on that BBS, but it's all out there on the internet anyway – just Google what you are looking for and you can find it. So there's no real reason to keep the stuff except for a small number of historically important files. But we collected probably 12 gigabytes of information altogether, and I was damned proud of it. I don't mind telling you there was a tear or two shed when I finally had to put that BBS to rest.

In 2003 my father passed of diabetes and other disorders, he was 83 years of age and taught me to be humble and gentle. He never went to church but remains one of the most Christian men I have ever known. I thought it fitting that he fell ill for the last time just days after the shuttle disaster; thank God he was too sick to ever know about those brave souls.

I work for Kroger now as a recruiter for pharmacists. I sometimes get a chance to work behind the counter, and enjoy that a lot. In the future, I want to buy a pancake wagon and a couple of drums of Bisquick and cart it all around to various churches and non-profits, putting on pancake breakfasts for charity. In my spare time (ha) I'll take over for Gene (as if he's ever going to retire) and put together computers for charity.

Michael Moore
President, BGAMUG

Some Useful Software

The Right-Click by Jerry Gillette

Most computer users are familiar with popular applications, word processors, spreadsheets, browsers, and email programs. There are other less known programs called utility programs that enhance the existing features of these more common applications. I hope to address many of these and other technical issues in future issues of BGA-Bytes. In this, the initial issue of "The Right-Click," I want to share with you my favorite utility program titled ClipMate™ by Thornsoft Development, Inc.

I was first introduced to ClipMate™ by an article in APCUG Reports by Editor Don Singleton. At the time I was the BGAMUG newsletter editor and ClipMate™ sounded like an editor's dream. I tried the trial version and, sure enough, it lived up to its claims. I registered and have been using ClipMate™ ever since. That is about ten years. It remains to this date, my most valuable of all utility programs.

What is it? ClipMate™ is a windows clipboard extender and makes you more productive by making the windows clipboard work better. It adds the functionality that Windows leaves out, starting with the ability to hold more than one item! (The regular Windows clipboard holds only one item at a time, although the Office clipboard, limited to Microsoft Office applications, holds up to twelve.)

What does it do? ClipMate holds literally THOUSANDS of "clips" for days, or weeks, or even years if you need to save them that long. You can organize, edit, re-format, print, combine, search, and manage your data. You can even encrypt sensitive information like credit card numbers. Of all things, it even has a spellchecker with thesaurus.

Do you have a need to keep often-used (or seldom remembered) scraps of data around for easy pasting? Do you often need to move many pieces of data from one application to another? How about answering questions on a mailing list or help desk? Do you wish there was an easier way to make screen captures or prints? Or an easy way to clean up those >> marks and BAD FORMATTING in a great joke that arrived by e-mail before you pass it on? Doctors, Lawyers, Teachers, Clergy, Genealogists, Help Desk Staff, Engineers, Programmers, and Internet Marketers of every sort, depend on ClipMate every day to make their work easier.

If you don't do much copying and pasting - maybe there's a reason for that! The regular clipboard is LAME (underpowered). Don't give up on cut 'n' paste until you've tried it with ClipMate. You'll find new ways to use the clipboard, because it finally makes sense.

If you've ever misplaced something that you know you copied days earlier, if you've ever been overwhelmed by data, or if you've ever had to read data from one application as you typed it into another because cut 'n' paste would take too long, then relief is at hand.

Perhaps I can demonstrate this program at a future meeting. Meanwhile, please try it on your own. You can download the free 30-day trial version of ClipMate 7.0 from the link <http://www.thornsoft.com/>. You can order the licensed version for the retail price of \$34.95.

Screen Image Capture by Carlisle Barnes

There are several methods of screen image capture. The simplest, which most of us do not use often, uses the *Print Screen* key on the upper right of your keyboard. In DOS, pressing *print screen* printed out whatever was on the screen, but now in Windows it captures whatever is on the screen and saves it to a clip board. The image on the clip board can then be used for a print-out, or it can be saved as part of a MS Word document, or a PDF document, or whatever. Print Screen captures the entire screen, while *Alt + Print Screen* captures only the active screen. As a side issue, there are two different clipboards on your computer. The Windows clipboard holds a single image. The Microsoft Office clipboard, if you have installed Microsoft Office, holds up to twelve images for Office 2000, and up to twenty four images for Office 2003.

In another capture technique which most of use regularly, you can highlight areas of the screen by clicking and holding down the left mouse button then dragging the curser across whatever you want to capture. The highlighted region is captured by right clicking on it and then from the resulting pop up menu, left clicking on *copy*. The image is put on a clipboard. This technique is even effective in scrolling down to capture things that were initially off the bottom of the screen. Unfortunately, such highlighting is not entirely arbitrary. Often we end up highlighting more than we want, and there is comparatively little we can do to restrict highlighting to the exact region desired.

Enter the Snagit screen capture program, which has a clipboard that holds literally thousands of images. Snagit can scroll down off screen for an image capture, then preserve this image as a PDF file. Snagit allows completely arbitrary capture areas on screen, including outlining specific areas of your choice. Once a capture has been made, you can easily add text, arrows, or various other effects, and save the capture to a file, or share it immediately by e-mail.

Snagit can capture a single drop down menu or even cascading (multiple-layer) menus from Windows applications. This is particularly valuable for people working in technical support documentation.

Snagit has been on the market for a number of years, and is now in version 8.0. It has received the top five star rating in PC Magazine's list of Incredibly Useful Utilities. A free 30 day trial version is fully functional. A single-user license is \$39.95.

For further information, or for ordering a trial version or license, visit the Snagit website at <http://www.techsmith.com/snagit.asp>

SynchToy by Mike Moore

I have always been fascinated by Microsoft's line of free programs known as "PowerToys." The best known of these is the TweakUI ("Tweak User Interface) toy that has been around since Windows 98. PowerToys are compact programs that are specifically designed by Microsoft engineers to deal with a single, distinct shortcoming of Windows. Since Microsoft offers no support for these programs, their software engineers can develop them with little regard to downstream cost. And yet, they work very well and are programmed strictly according to Microsoft standards, so there is little risk involved in using them. As a special benefit, they are all free and don't require you to give your e-mail or be submitted to advertising, although you do need to prove you own your copy of Windows in order to download these programs.

In the case of TweakUI, the shortcomings it deals with are not singular – that little toy manages to allow the customizing of a myriad of settings in Windows as well as in the Microsoft Internet Explorer browser application. Most of the toys do only one thing, but they do it very well. The link <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx> is to the current toy box for WindowsXP, or if you prefer, just Google Microsoft Powertoys and click on the first link that comes up.

The PowerToy that I discovered recently was in response to a need I had, and I think many of us have, with regard to these little USB drives that have become so common. Typically we use these drives to make the files on our computer portable. Thus, I load something I've been working on at home to the thumb drive, take it to work, and use it on a computer there. The same issue occurs with digital cameras containing SDdram or other solid-state memory chips that can be subsequently loaded onto a computer.

Anyone who has ever used this kind of portable memory will agree that one quickly begins to notice that the portable drive may be out of synch with the "home" computer's hard drive, or vice-versa. What does that mean – "out of synch?" Simply that we never seem to have the correct or most current file where we need it. Either it's at home on the personal computer, or it's in the car on the USB drive, or it's in the camera. It is difficult to remember what version of a given file is current, or whether the pictures you took in December are on your computer or on the camera.

Some USB drives come with software that allow you to "sync" the contents of the thumb drive with your main hard drive, but you do have to be careful, as this software can inadvertently over-write the files we need! What if the new version of a file – the version you just worked on – is actually wrong? Say you went in a different direction than you should have and actually saved the old version over your new version. This is the quandary we often have when trying to keep everything up to date between our PCs and our remote memory devices. I've used several different "sync" programs, but none have come close to the combination of ease and safety that WindowsXP users can enjoy with Microsoft's SyncToy.

The SynchToy comes as a self executing installation program of just over 800kb, which is typical of PowerToys. Installation is effortless and upon running the program, it asks you for a pair of directories that you wish to synchronize, or perform one of several other operations. You can name a directory on your PC as the "right" side of the equation, and a corresponding directory on your thumb drive as the "left" side. Upon running the toy, any file newer than a similarly named file on the other side will be updated. After completing the synchronization, each directory will contain an exact copy of the other, and any files that were over-written will show up in the Recycle Bin in case there is a problem and you need to recover an old version of a file. No muss, no fuss!

As a case in point, I present this very article, typed up on the road and saved in my Synch directory, which can be any directory I choose. As long as I use SyncToy regularly, and keep all important material in the synch directory, I never have to worry about where my article has gone off to. If I have either my laptop or my USB drive, I know it's there. When I get home, I'll create another synch drive on my main computer and run the SyncToy again with the USB drive inserted.

Microsoft may have a monopoly on Windows, but that has not stopped their engineers from producing some truly innovative programs. Here's a current list of the XP PowerToys and what they do:

Color Control Panel Applet – For professional photographers and designers. Helps get control of Windows color schemes in one central location.

RAW image thumbnailer and Viewer. Allows storage and manipulation of RAW image files, a favorite of professional photographers.

ClearType Tuner. ClearType is a Microsoft innovation that allows fonts to be cleaned up when they display as choppy on low resolution monitors. Especially useful for laptop owners.

HTML Slideshow wizard. Helps produce slide shows – similar to Power Point presentations, but with a series of web pages.

Open Command Window Here. For those of us stuck in the Black Screen days of DOS, allows you to open a command session at any given directory level.

(Continued on page 9)

MEMORY TESTER by Gene Iglehart

Carlisle started us off well last month by telling us about Belarc Advisor, a very useful but unfortunately not frequently used piece of software. I would like to continue the tradition by adding one of my little known but very useful favorites.

We get a lot of computers because, as their owners tell it "It just does weird things." One of the first things I do is to test its memory. Usually the memory is incompatible rather than defective. Just because a certain chart says its memory will work, doesn't guarantee anything. The memory timing could have been reset in the CMOS, the chart could have been read wrong, or even YOU may have read the computer model wrong. Etc. etc.

There are many free memory testers available; you just have to "Google for them." My favorite is from Simmtester.com and is called "DOC MEMORY." You have to run it from DOS by booting into it. It will run until either the computer or you lose interest.

You have to register to get the download, and the bootable version is bloated. However, if you need to use the program, just e-mail me and I will copy one of my lean and mean floppies for you.

The very minute it starts, I find most of my errors. I have learned that if the test reports a memory which varies considerably from what I know is in the computer, then there is most certainly a mismatch problem. It can be a few megs off due to shared video memory, but the difference must be slight for things to work properly.

If this type of error occurs, sometimes it may not be the memory's fault. Perhaps the slot just needs to be vacuumed out and the memory stick carefully wiped off. After all, if you have added memory the computer probably ran for some time with the slot exposed to the internal dust the fans drew in. When you inserted the memory you could have also inserted a good contact insulator i.e., that dust!

One additional thought. "The more memory, the better!" How many times have you heard that? Well, it is indeed true up to a point, but then it begins to have diminishing returns. After all, if I gave you 128 million more memory locations, to keep track of, how much would it slow you down? Yes, the computer has to page and track any added memory. The "sweet spot" for Windows 98 and Windows ME has long been established as 256 meg. After that, diminishing returns sets in. XP handles additional memory and resources much better than 98 and ME, but I have never heard a recommended sweet spot for it. I have 4 computers running XP with 256 or 512 memory each, and I can't really tell any difference between them. However, I am not a gamer. Someone with gaming experience might have the answer for us. Send me an e-mail if you know the answer.

About the Apple McIntosh Computer from various news services

It is certainly no secret by now that Apple Computer is going to use Intel Chips and will make the next McIntosh computers compatible with Microsoft Windows software. McIntoshes will thereby have dual operating capabilities. More next month.

SynchToy (Continued from page 8)

Alt-Tab replacement. In addition to seeing the icon of the application window you are switching to, you will also see a preview of the page. This really helps when multiple sessions of an application are open.

TweakUI – Gives you access to system settings that would normally require editing the dreaded Windows Registry. This application thus makes a pretty dangerous manipulation of system settings easy.

Power Calculator. This is a replacement of the standard Windows Calculator that can be used for trig and higher math calculations.

Image Resizer. Good for making larger image files smaller in preparation for e-mailing.

CD Slide Show Generator. Makes a power-point like Slide Show for a series of picture files.

Virtual Desktop Manager. This was borrowed from Unix and Linux – keep up to four separate desktops handy and switch between them with just a flick of a key.

Taskbar Magnifier – Magnifies part of the screen for easier viewing.

Webcam Timershot – for internet camera operators, allows one to get pictures at specified time intervals and save them to a location designated.

Tech Corner by Chuck Thomas

For this month's article, I'm offering some tidbits that you might find helpful as you try to use your computer more productively. Each is based on a recent question by a BGAMUG member.

After our March meeting, Sam Small asked if any program was available to reduce the size of image files in batches for emailing to family and friends who access the Internet via modem. Well, I was sure such capability exists but decided to look for the capability in my installed image programs before searching the Web for a separate product to do this.

I got lucky on my first try! Wanting to keep the cost low, I decided to check the FREE Picasa program from Google that I demonstrated at the January meeting. Not only does it allow you to select a number of images to reduce in size for emailing, but it also offers a continuous range of output file size between 160 bytes and 1024 (1 K) bytes for each photo. Also, after reducing them, it automatically creates the email with the photos attached! A message shows the total number of bytes in the email and an estimate of how long it will take for the recipients to download the email with a 56K modem. All you have to do is to add the email addresses and a personal note.

Here are the steps: Open Picasa, navigate to the image folder containing the photos you want to send, select photos by holding the Ctrl key down as you left-click each one, and then click the E-Mail icon at the bottom of the screen. That's all there is to it when you don't need to change the email options. But to change the email options first, click Tools-->Options and then select the Email tab on the popup window. There you'll find settings for file size for multiple & single images, file size for movie files, and a choice of Outlook Express, Picassa Mail, or Gmail.

Give it a try! If you don't have Picasa installed, you can download it from: <http://picasa.google.com/>

A topic that came up during the Q & A session in March related to printing emails in Outlook Express. Specifically, Warren Risse had asked (in an email) how he could print an email without all the header information. Since there isn't a setting in OE allowing that option, my response focused on using Copy (Ctrl-C) from the email to the clipboard and Paste (Ctrl-V) into WordPad. Then I emphasized how many neat things you can do to format the contents before printing from WordPad.

After our BGAMUG board meeting this month, Bill Hullhorst asked a question and also provided a valuable piece of information that I had left out. His question is, "Where do I find WordPad?" Since I keep a shortcut for it on my desktop and use it daily, I hadn't thought to provide its location. To open WordPad, click Start —>Programs—> Accessories —>WordPad. This works in any version of Windows

Also, Bill pointed out that he uses the "Print Selection" option to reduce the amount of an email that is printed. To do this, open any email, use your mouse to highlight the portion you want to print, click Print, and then check the circle in front of "Print Selection" in the "Page Range" area of the Print dialog window. Although this doesn't solve Warren's wish to omit the header, it is a quick and easy way to print only the content that you want, and, especially, to avoid printing the '<' and '<<' emails that led to the current one. Thanks, Bill!

Comparison of Microsoft Office and Open Office

An extensive head to head comparison of Microsoft Office and OpenOffice.com has been made by TechSoup, from which we get some bargain software. Since the report is six pages long, it is too long to be presented in BGA-Bytes. We considered making an abstract, but the longish article is really best read in it's entirety. With that in mind, Mike Moore has reproduced the complete report. Copies will be free for taking to any club member who attends the next BGAMUG general meeting..

An easy way to help BGAMUG by shopping at Kroger's

You can earn funds for BGAMUG without it costing you either time or funds. You simply shop at Kroger using a Kroger Gift Card for your purchases. Otherwise, you just do normal grocery shopping. You start by purchasing a gift card thru BGAMUG for \$25. Since it comes with a \$25 balance, the card is actually free. Then, use that card to pay for your Kroger purchases. You can add to your balance as much and as often as you want thru the customer service desk at any Kroger store prior to making your purchase. BGAMUG will receive a percentage just because you cared enough to use that card.

You can recharge a gift card, but remember that there is a five minute delay from the time you recharge the card at the customer service desk or a check lane and then use it in another check lane, pharmacy, or fuel station. This does not apply to recharging and redeeming it in the same check lane. Example: If you recharge your gift card at the customer service desk and go straight to a check lane, pharmacy, or fuel station, they will get a reading of "invalid expiration." You will have to wait at least five minutes to redeem the gift card. However, if you are in the check lane and recharge your gift card, you can use it after your groceries are rung up. The five minute rule does not apply to the same check lane.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Mike Moore, either at the monthly meetings, or preferably by e-mail at webstar@hughes.net, or by phone at 843-9535. Keep in mind that this helps the club and costs you nothing.

With Regard to Club Members

Happy Birthday in May

Ramona Bobbitt: 4th
 Patricia Vincent 12th
 Carlisle Barnes 17th



Happy Anniversary in May

Bill Hullhorst 16th



Sick Call

Wayne Gent, Elisa Davison's dad has had surgery.
 Carol Brodner will have ankle surgery before the next meeting.



Community Activities

Abel Court News

The concrete pad has been poured for the 12' by 12' addition to the existing computer lab. On Monday 4/10/06 the contractors will begin the actual construction of the roof and room. On the third week of April 2006 Abel Court will partner with the Apostolic Church to hold a meeting educating both children and adults about disaster awareness. Educational materials have been received from FEMA. Mike Moore donated magnets that will be used to make an emergency phone list to be placed on the participant's refrigerators.

Contact Debbie Fugate at aca0401@bellsouth.net

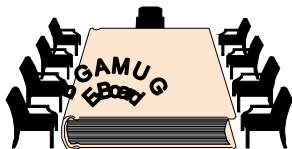
Fern Terrace News

We had to take an unexpected day off at FT on the 7th because of the Tornado warning on that Friday afternoon. Also the 14th was Good Friday, and Fern Terrace has an Easter egg hunt plus other activities, so the residents are busy that day and we don't show up. We will need a volunteer for April 26 and May 5,12,19,&26...So I hope to see you there in the near future. Thank you for caring.

Contact Raymond Hunton, Fern Terrace Coordinator
Rhunton@insightbb.com Phone: 781-2380

Officer Back-up

We are trying to get back-ups for officers. At times when an officer is not able to fulfill his/her duties, regardless of the reason, we need someone available who can temporarily fill the position.



If you desire or would even consider being an officer of the club, please make the fact known. If you have a particular position in mind, then please contact the person now holding that position. Alternately, contact Mike Moore, our current president. Between now and the time to elect new officers (we have a few permanent members, but no permanent officers,) a potential new officer can be a valuable back-up and also a useful assistant.

Club Officers

<p>President Michael Moore 843-9535 webstar@hughes.net</p>	<p>VP of Protocol Ginny Molloy 846-7274 charmcat@aol.com</p>
<p>Treasurer Position Open Election on April 25</p>	<p>Program Director Linda Todd 781-7872 linda.todd@wku.edu</p>
<p>VP of Membership Bill Hullhorst 781-8504 bill.hc4@att.net</p>	<p>Webb Master Chuck Thomas 843-6380 chuckt@insightbb.com</p>
<p>Secretary Lou Travelsted 586-5959 travel@bowlinggreen.net</p>	<p>Newsletter Editor Carlisle Barnes 846-1515 newcarlislebarnes@insightbb.com</p>
<p>Sergeant at Arms Raymond Hunton 781-2380 rhunton@insightbb.com</p>	<p>Librarian Karen Wickliff 842-2715 kwickliff@bellsouth.net</p>
<p>Officer At Large Edwin Phelps 842 6451 edolph@isp.com</p>	<p>Officer at Large Pat Vincent patvincent@wku.edu</p>
<p>PC Placement Program Gene Iglehart 842-4570 Iglehart@aol.com</p>	<p>APCUG Representative Jerry Gillette 781-6309 jagky@insightbb.com</p>

Kroger Cares™ Information
 Mike L Moore Webstar@hughes.net 843 9535

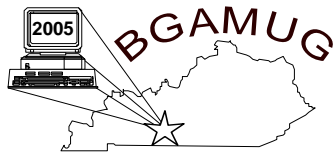
Fern Terrace Information
 Raymond Hunton rhunton@insightbb.com 781-2380

Abel Court Information
 Debbie Fugate aca0401@bellsouth.net 842-4114

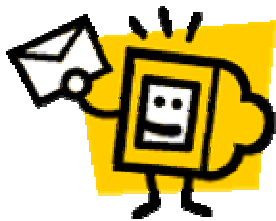
BGAMUG Website: www.bgamug.org

Our thanks to Betty Lyne for proof reading

BGAMUG
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Bowling Green, KY 42102



Don't forget our May meeting at
the B G Technical College,
Building F,
May 23, 6:30 PM.



BGA-bytes is online, now in two formats to allow a choice between speed and better quality.

If you have fast Internet service, or if you wish to print-out the newsletter with best quality, then access:

<http://www.bgamug.org/newsletterarchives/mar2005-hi.pdf>

If you use the phone for dialup Internet service, and want to access the newsletter more rapidly, then access:

<http://www.bgamug.org/nesletterarchives/mar2005-lo.pdf>

In either case, to see our online edition of the newsletter you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. If you do not have it, then you need to download and install Acrobat Reader by accessing;

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

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The views expressed in BGA-bytes are those of the author(s), and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the organization. BGAMUG is a member of the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) membership.

BGAMUG holds regular presentation/membership meetings the fourth Tuesday of each month (except December) at the Bowling Green Technical College (BGTC) on Loop Drive in Bowling Green, Kentucky. **The public is invited to attend our regular presentation meetings. To join, our annual membership dues are \$25 for an individual, and \$35 for a family.** Loop drive intersects Morgantown Road just West of Warren Central High School. There is a stoplight at the intersection. The access road to BGTC from Loop is clearly marked with a sign. The meeting building is Building F in the last group of buildings down the access road. A map is inside this newsletter.