

PPCUG

NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

Monday August 14, 2000 **Buying & Selling Stuff on the Internet!**

Sol Libes

Sol has made several thousand dollars selling stuff that he was cleaning out of his basement, garage, and closets. Learn his successful techniques for selling on web auctions, web rummage sites, and in Usenet news groups. Learn what is good, and what is not good, to buy on auctions sites and how to not get taken advantage of.

At

Lawrence Library

Meeting Rooms 1 & 2

US Route 1 South & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, NJ

☆☆

*Meetings of an organization at any of the facilities of the Mercer County Library System
in No Way implies endorsement of its programs*

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Joel May, right speaking to Karl Juelch and Milt Koosman prior to Joel's presentation at the July general meeting on creating your own web page.

Digital Photo by Ed Weiss



About PPCUG

General Meetings

Second Monday of the month at the Lawrenceville Library.
Route 1 and Darrah Lane.
7:00-7:45 PM: Social Time / Tech Corner
7:45 PM: Meeting Comes to Order
8 PM: Featured Presentation

Board Meetings

Third Monday of the Month
8 PM at Lawrenceville Library.
Board meetings are open to All.

Board Members

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Voice Mail System

For information about, meetings, etc. call 908-281-3107 to leave a message.

Web Site

<http://www.ppcug-nj.org>

Annual Dues Rates

Normal dues rate is \$25 per year.
New Members Only: after February, the rate is \$2 per month times the number of months remaining in the year.

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Coming Events

September 11, 2000 - Home Networks

Scott Vincent will be here to show how easy it is to Network your home.

October 16, 2000 - To Be Announced - 3rd Monday!

November 13, 2000 - To Be Announced

December 11, 2000 - Holiday Party & Elections!

January 8, 2001 - Microsoft

Microsoft representative to demonstrate WinME and Much More!



Presidents Message

by Paul Kurivchack

Focus, a word that means; the focal point of a lens, to concentrate. Why did I start this month column with a definition? Well to me, I'm starting to see many things out of focus especially my eyesight if I don't order the bifocals the doctor tried so hard to convince me I needed two months ago. Besides, my eyesight going, work at MTV Networks has created it share of distractions since the merger with CBS. Friends that I have worked with for the past three years are abandoning ship weekly. Rumors abound that by October my position and over one hundred others could be outsourced. Not that there are no jobs out there, but who needs the aggravation of finding a new job and starting over. Also, my oldest daughter is starting college in September, attending a school in Massachusetts which is going to occupy a couple of weekends each semester of my time and still I have to make time for my younger daughter and wife. With all this going on, I still make time for the PPCUG but sometimes I think my focus is waning.

Unfortunately, there is only a limited amount of time each day and we all live by the same rules. It can't be stretched nor shortened. One-way that time can be stretched is by having extra hands helping. There are many things that need to be done for our group such as publicity, membership records, doing software reviews and articles. You do not need to attend the board meeting if you do not want to or have the time, but there are many ways to communicate. E-mail, fax or even by phone. Information can flow and your involvement could be as little as an hour per month on your part, but an hour I do not have. Please volunteer to help.

One thing that always surprises me is how little communication we have as a group other than when at the general meeting. I know my time is stretched so thin to speak on the phone many nights, but still, I get little or no feedback about the articles in the newsletter, comments about speakers or the presentations, or even if it would be nice to change from Chips Ahoy and Oreo cookies to Vienna Fingers and Hydrox. Feedback is good, no matter if it is positive or negative. It is nice to hear that Vic's articles are helpful and interesting, the software reviews provide you with the information that helps you make a decision to purchase the application or not. It is all still welcomed. In fact, if I ever get enough feedback letters from the members, we could have a feedback column in the newsletter. We are a user group using PC's every day and each of you have your likes and dislikes about the computer industry in general, let us know.

For those in attendance at the July meeting were treated to an excellent presentation from Joel May on creating your own web pages. He provided great information on web hosting services both free and paid software to use and how to develop content. Thanks goes to Sol Libes for arranging to have Joel here for our meeting.

I look forward to seeing you all on August 14.



The Linux Dabbling

Caldera Open Linux eDesktop 2.4

Review By: J.D. Abolins - PPCUG

Earlier this year, I started reviewing Caldera Open Linux 2.3 when I encountered several problems. These problems and the resulting review setbacks gave me insights for the "Who Wants to Be a Linux Dabbling?" article in the April 2000 issue of the PPCUG. (The article is available on the Web at <http://www.ppcug-nj.org/articles/linux/whowants.html>)

After I had restored my system, Caldera had a new version of Open Linux available: Open Linux eDesktop 2.4. So I started a new installation of Linux for this review. I am glad to have had a delay in the review. Caldera has made some significant improvements in the new version.

What Comes in the Box

The package includes three CD-ROMs for the Open Linux itself plus an Omnis Studio Rapid Application Development Tools CD-ROM. The Omnis software is a fully functional evaluation package in both Linux and Windows versions. (A nice bonus for people using both Linux and Windows.) Also included is a Linux boot floppy diskette in case you need it for installation.

The manual is designed with attention to the Linux novice or dabbler. (You can sneak a peek at the manual at <http://www.caldera.com/support/docs/>) The manual takes time to explain various aspects of Linux installation and configuration. There is a Quick Install chapter followed by an In Depth Install chapter for those people who have special needs or encounter problems with the Quick Install. The manual is loaded with illustrations to support the text. I did encounter a few discrepancies between the manual and what I saw on the screen but it was easy to figure out what to do if I took a moment to read the manual further.

HINT: Pay close attention to both the manual and the prompts on the screen as installing and configuring Open Linux. The details are important. If possible, have another PC with Web access available. The Caldera Web site provides support via a Knowledgebase and via email. Open Linux comes with free 30-day telephone support and 90-day email support to get you through installation.

Installation

Caldera Open Linux eDesktop 2.4 is designed to be readily installed on a PC running Windows as well as fresh install as the sole operating system. The installation CD-ROM can be run in Windows to kick off the installation. I did get confused with CD-ROMs as there is an "Installation from Windows and Commercial Packages" CD-ROM and a "Binaries and Installation" CD-ROM. Both will run under Windows. If the wrong one is used, it will tell you to use the other CD-ROM. No big problem.

HINT: The installation program has an option for creating boot diskettes. I recommend creating the boot and module diskettes to have just in case things really get messed up. Linux boot diskettes, like Windows startup diskettes, are very handy to have around.

Open Linux includes a special edition of the Partition Magic utility to help prepare the hard disk partitions so the PC can be shared by Windows and Linux. The one downside with the special edition of Partition Magic is its lack of flexibility. Unlike the full version, it gives only preset partition sizes. Many people might not be sure what size to choose. If you really want serious partition management capabilities, get the full version of Partition Magic. (By the way, check the information accompanying this article regarding a Partition Magic upgrade offer for Open Linux users.) If you use the special edition of Partition Magic and want to do some serious dabbling with Linux and Linux applications choose the larger partition size (at least a gigabyte if you have it).



During installation, Caldera Open Linux eDesktop asked me what kind of system I was setting up. Unlike many other Linux packages, this Linux does not provide a lengthy checklist of software to select for installation. Caldera tried to be user friendly to novices by giving options such as "Minimum Installation", "All Packages", "Home Computer" (which is what I chose for this review), and "Business Workstation." These preset software installations are a mixed blessing. They do try to give a good setup for common uses of Linux system. Sometimes, however, we may want combinations not covered by one of these choices.

HINT: By the way, how do we know what is installed with each of those options? The Caldera Web site does provide the answer. Go to <http://support.calderasystems.com/caldera/search> and search for "What is installed with", having the AND keywords checked off.

After installing Open Linux on the PC, there is the option of installing Boot Magic utility to make it easier to select which operating system to run during a session. It works nicely.

Running Open Linux eDesktop 2.4

Caldera has added several nice features to Linux.

The default installation puts up the K Desktop Environment (KDE) graphic user interface. There is an introductory tutorial for new users. Linux and KDE novices will need to take some time to get the hang of this new environment but it is much easier than the traditional Unix/Linux command line environment. (Oh, if you prefer that environment, you can either bring up a console terminal window or configure Open Linux to boot

up in the command line mode. This is analogous to the DOS Prompt windows and the MS-DOS mode boot up in Windows 9x.)

HINT: KDE has some thing very different from Windows. It provides multiple desktops among which you switch. A spreadsheet open on one, a Web browser on another, email on a third, and so on. There is the option for a virtual desktop that's larger than the visible monitor screen. (If using this option, don't forget to keep scrolling the screen. I forgot about and was wondering where my taskbar went.) These features make up for Linux's general lack of multiple video support like that on Windows 98.

One of the great helps Caldera incorporated into Open Linux is the Caldera Open Administration System (COAS). Think of it as the Control Panel for Linux. It makes it easy to adjust systems settings. A similar utility is the Webmin remote Web based administration tool. It allows you to configure the system, administer user accounts, check running processes, and more.

Caldera's Open Linux comes with a good selection of software to make it easier to get off and running in Linux. Included is Sun Microsystems Star Office suite with a word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation software. For graphics work, Caldera has bundled in the impressive Cameleo Light, which I used to do the screen capture of the KDE desktop for this article. This is only scratching the surface of the software that gets installed by Open Linux.

On the CDs are more software packages. In the Linux environment, software installation is somewhat different than in the Windows world. Not as simple as an .exe file. There are several different installation approaches. One of the easiest is the "package" approach. Caldera Open Linux supplies a friendly kpackage program to aid installations via packages. This program will check to see if you need to have other software installed first and run the installation for you. Nice!

Summary

Seasoned and advanced Linux users will find some aspects of Caldera Open Linux eDesktop 2.4 geared too much for novices

and average computerizers. But this is what makes Caldera Open Linux such a good choice for Linux dabblers. Advanced computerists can work around some of the mildly annoying presets such as the limited partition size choices in the special edition of Partition Magic.

The software and utilities bundled with Caldera Open Linux make it a good Linux choice. You will get a useable desktop system with this package with less troubles than many other Linux packages. If you don't have a special reason to use another version of Linux such as Red Hat's, take a good look at Caldera Open Linux eDesktop 2.4

Dabble on!

The Linux Dabbler Several Good Deals

If you have purchased Caldera Open Linux, there are some special deals at the Caldera Web site (<http://www.caldera.com>). At the time of writing this review, Caldera's Open Store section offers a full version upgrade from the Partition Magic SE that comes with Caldera Open Linux. If you have an earlier version of Caldera Open Linux, there is an upgrade package available for a modest cost.

A Special Offer for User Group Members

User group members may purchase Open Linux eDesktop 2.4 at a special price of \$20 plus \$5 shipping by ordering from the secure Web site at <http://www.ugr.com/order/>. Indicate the special price code of UGEVAL00 with your order.



Web Tip: Go Global

Sometime it is easy to forget that the Internet is a *global* network. But this fact can be very helpful when we are looking for certain info. If you are looking for something have to do with another country, try looking at search engines closer to that country.

Altavista have several foreign search engines which can be accessed by changing the .com in <http://www.altavista.com> to one of several two letter Internet country codes. So far I have found these working codes: .uk for the United Kingdom, .de for Germany, .ca for Canada, .for for France, and .it for Italy.

Can't understand what's on the search engine and the pages it finds? Try Altavista's Babelfish site at <http://babelfish.altavista.com>. It can translate text snippet between different languages. If you enter a Web address, Babelfish will translate that page. The results aren't perfect but they are usually good enough to get the sense of the site.
By: J.D. Abolins

PhotoSuite III Platinum Edition Software Review

By: Paul Kurivchack - PPCUG



For the members who attended the May general meeting, you saw Randall Wittle from MGI do an outstanding presentation on PhotoSuite III and were hopefully impressed enough to go out and purchase it. For those unable to attend and are in the market for a photo editing application here goes.

As a maven for photo editing software; I currently have loaded on my Pentium III 450 MHz, 256 MB RAM PC, Adobe PhotoDeluxe 3.0 (4.0 is waiting on the sidelines), Adobe PhotoShop 5.0LE, Microsoft PictureIt 2000, PhotoDraw 2000, & PhotoEditor, Canon Creative Image, LivePix 2.0 and Corel PhotoPaint5.0. I am probably missing a couple other photo editors, but I still have more than enough to choose from. Choosing the best one is hard as they all do the same basic thing, edit your photo, but do it in different ways that may or may not be easy to use, produce the results you are looking for or have similar options.

This is the latest edition of PhotoSuite from MGI. MGI set out to offer many of the standard editing features plus some new features such as Stitching, PhotoTapestry and very, very strong printing options.

Starters

PhotoSuite III PE is a two CD product. One disk contains the program files and the second is a content disk with all the special content for making a wide variety of projects from collages, to calendars, business stuff and an other fun projects. Installation was painless and took less than 15 minutes. I always do the standard install, but only after checking the custom install features, mainly to see what I may not want to install and how to go back and add features later.

After launching PhotoSuite III, it brings you to the welcome screen where you select Browse, Get, Prepare, Compose Projects, Organize, Share and Print. For this review, I will focus on the Getting of Photos, Preparing (Editing) the Photo and Printing



with a minor mention about Projects and Organizing. One thing that impressed me is the ease and amount of information presented by hovering the mouse over a selection. There is no floating tool bars, but a tool window on the left side of the screen. All actions are started and controlled from this window and it should be noted that it occupies about 25% of the viewable screen. Working on a 15 inch monitor is all right but for serious editing, a 17 or 19 inch would be preferable.

Working with PhotoSuite

Getting the photo is easy, just select from the tool bar listing of Computer, Album, Digital Camera (Direct & Twain) Scanner or Kodak Photonet. I was able to capture photo images from both my Canon FB620U and Kensington VideoCam without any trouble using the cameras capture program and then edit in the Prepare Photo section. I would assume that getting photos from a digital still camera is just as easy.

Now that the image is captured, using the Prepare Photo the selection of tools is quite amazing. From the standard rotate and crop and cutouts. The cutouts are limited to rectangle, ellipse, and freehand, magic wand or edge finder. I would have liked to see some other cutout shapes like stars or other geometric shapes standard, but I guess that is what the freehand tool is for.

Navigation is very easy from one tool to another. In fact, MGI included a tool bar with a Back and Home button to easily return to the last action or back to the start. Another feature is multiple undos. As I was testing the program, I would try the different editing functions and after five or six steps forward, I was able to step back one change at a time.

The touchup tools are very impressive with the Enhance tool at the top of the list. I was able to automatically adjust a digital camera captured image that had numerous brightness, contrast and color adjustment problems to a decent looking photo. There is still some tweaking to do, but not much. One note about all consumer level photo-editing programs is they do not have the depth of a PhotoShop5.5 so do not expect PhotoShop results. Other tools included are the Redeye, Scratches, Blemishes and Wrinkles removal tools. All tools are easy to use with instant preview and the ability to start over at the tool level. You do not have to go back to the beginning.

The one tool that was the most fun is always the Special Effects. Here the choices are Effect, Preset Warps and Interactive Warp. The Effects tool that was very interesting was Artistic Cartoonize. It produces a cartoon rendering which is remarkably very good. I see much more use for this tool than some of the others, but MGI gives you the artistic freedom to do whatever your imagination dreams up.

If you have a digital camera and are interested in doing panoramas, the tool is included. Just select the menu item drag the

PhotoSuite III continued on page 6

Minutes for the Board Meeting July 17, 2000

By: Ed Weiss

The board meeting was held in Room # 1 of the library. In attendance were Paul Kurivchack, Bill Hawryluk, Tom Canavan, Sol Libes, John Abolins, and Ed Weiss. The meeting opened at 8:12 PM, with the first item of discussion being the program schedule for the remainder of the year. Second item discussed was the Presidency, and the openings on the board for the upcoming elections.

Next item consisted of discussions on, and inclusions for the club's home page. Paul said that the web site was looking good, and thanked John Abolins for all his work on keeping it up. Paul asked if it were possible to put info related to the upcoming months program on the web pages as soon as it was available. At 9:30 PM, the meeting was adjourned, the tables and chairs returned to the appropriate positions, and we left the building.



PhotoSuite III continued from page 5

images you want to stitch, follow the steps and before you know it, you have a panorama.

All the tools offered in preparing the photo are straightforward and easy to use. A real delight to use.

Printing

Now that you have prepared the image, it is now time to print it out. One complaint I have had with many of the other photo editing applications is their weakness in printing multiple images on a single piece of paper. It is not a big deal if you are just using normal bond paper but what if you are using the special coated photo paper at a buck a page. You really want to maximize its use. PhotoSuite III really shines here. Select Print Multiples and there are a variety of paper categories to pick from and then layouts from a single 8x 10 to numerous page collections as the school photos you get of your kids to postage stamp size photos. Select the layout and the image is correctly sized and placed on the page, all automatically. At this point, hit the print button and off to the printer the image goes.

Conclusion

If you are in the market for one photo-editing program, this is easily the one to go for. The features of photo stitching, editing effects and the strong printing capabilities make this package a great all around package.

Visit www.photosuite.com or www.mgi.com for additional information and pricing.

Minutes for the General Meeting July 10, 2000

By: Ed Weiss

At 7:55 PM, Paul opened the meeting. First item was to announce that there would be a Board Meeting on the 17th. The program for August is going to be presented by our own Sol Libes, titled "Buying And Selling On The Internet". Septembers' program will be dealing with Home Networking. At this point Paul opened the floor for questions. One question asked was how to switch off the ads on Comcast Cable. Another question concerned a new laptop from Sony that only runs Windows 2000, and the last question was about dual booting between Win-98 and 2000. Paul then asked everyone to check their email addresses listed on the last page of the newsletter, and reply to him with any and all corrections. At this time (8:12 PM), Paul then turned the meeting over to Joel May our presenter for the night speaking on "Your Own Web Page".. Joel talked about the reasons for having your own web page, and some of the ideas and concerns that go into designing a Web Page. He gave a URL to look at that has lots of links to various useful web items, and other internet goodies. "WWW.GEOCITIES.COM/JOELMAY/WEBSITELINKS.HTML"

At 9:15 PM, Joel finished up and turned the meeting back to Paul who adjourned the meeting.

Thanks to all who stay to help clean up at the end of the meeting. Please remember, If you enjoyed the refreshments, please dispose of your cups and papers.

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(Last Update: 7 August 2000)

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Frank Middleton

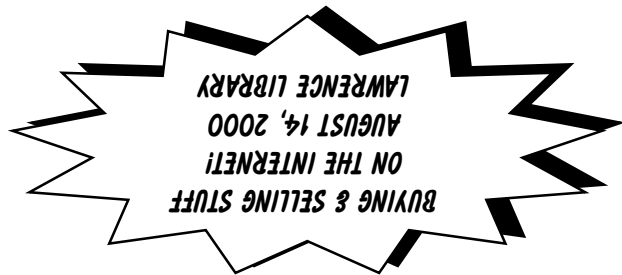
**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN
2000!**

WELCOME TO THE USERS GROUP

The Lawrence Library is at the corner of Business Route 1 South and Darrah Lane.

From Princeton and North: Take US Route 1 South, past the Quaker Bridge / Mercer Shopping Centers. Continue on approximately 1 3/4 mile past I295 to the Route 1 split, stay to the right to Business Route 1(Brunswick Pike). First traffic light is Darrah Lane. Library is on right side. Park in lot towards Route 1 and to the rear. Enter Library at main entrance in front. Meeting rooms A & B are located through glass door on Route 1 side of building.

From Trenton and South: Take I295 North to US Route 1 South. Library is approximately 1 3/4 miles south of I295. Continue south to Business Route 1(Brunswick Pike). First traffic light is Darrah Lane. Library is on right side. Park in lot towards Route 1 and to the rear. Enter Library at main entrance in front. Meeting rooms A & B are located through glass door on Route 1 side of building.



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