

BGA- BYTES

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

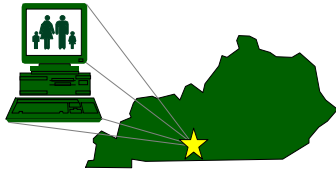
BGAMUG

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PO Box 50882, Bowling Green, KY 42102-4182

Member of



Association of PC User Groups



May 27th Presentation at Bowling Green Technical College

Refilling Printer Cartridges—Presentation by Jerry Gillette

One of the favorite things to do with my computer is print documents, photos, signs, posters, and reports. At this month's meeting I will share my experience making printing less costly by demonstrating how to refill ink cartridges and tanks.

As a follow-up workshop, the following Saturday, May 31st, (11:00 AM to 1:00 PM), we will invite all members to bring your printers to the Able Court Computer Lab for a free fill-up. Just bring your printer with power cables and we will fill and test them.

Getting Started with Genealogy Presentation by Kathy Jill Johnson

I hope you will join me at this month's BGAMUG meeting for my Getting Started with Genealogy Presentation. My presentation will be short, but will cover some of the many places and resources beginners can reference to find various documentation to get started. I will provide handouts to list some of these plus a list of sites and valuable recourses that are available as your searches become more in-depth.

President's Corner

Jerry Gillette

How Are We Doing?

As we near the half-way point of 2008, we continue the quest of what BGAMUG members desire and expect from it's elected officers. During our next E-board meeting we will be reviewing the various services we offer in an attempt to fine-tune and make them better.

As we try to focus on educational computer related issues for our programs, it is mystifying how some of our presentations relate to computers. This month's presentation on **Getting started with Genealogy**, for example, sounds like it has nothing to do with PC's. But the many ways you can use your computer as a tool to do the research and record the results is amazing. Our objective is to show those of you that would like to get started with genealogy, how to use your computer to do it.

I have always said it is difficult to learn computer skills without having a goal or something you want to accomplish with one. Using your computer to do genealogy research and documentation may be just the thing you would like to get involved with. Then you can expand and hone your computer skills as you proceed.

And, as always, using your BGAMUG Membership Directory, you can call or email a fellow member when you stumped or need some helpful guidance. Plus, in the near future our webmaster, (VP of Technology, John Walker), will hopefully have our website perfected to include a forum where members can ask questions and exchange ideas about our computing interests.

We managed to slip in a good afternoon of fun and fellowship April 26th for a Spring Picnic/Cookout at the Diamond W Farm thanks to our great hosts, Gary and Karen Wickliff. We are looking forward to returning to the Diamond W Farm again for another event maybe later this year. Thanks Gary and Karen. I hope to see everyone at the meeting Tuesday May, 27th.
Jerry



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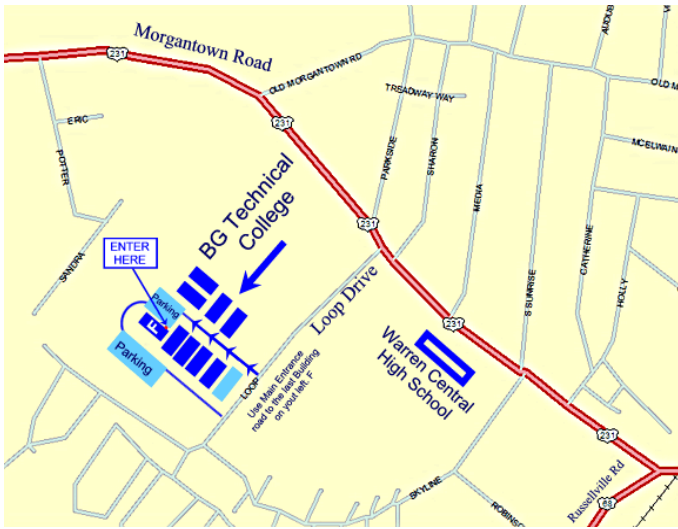
10. Jay QSL's a VERY large antenna!

11. Anniversaries, Birthdays

May 2008

Sun Mo Tue We Thu Fri Sat

				1	2	3
4	5 Workshop Abel Court	6 Board Mtg	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Member Meeting	28	29	30	31 Abel Court Workshop



BGAMUG General Meetings are on the 4th Tuesday of each month. The next two meetings are on May 27th and June 24th. These meetings are at the Bowling Green Technical College, Bldg F, at 6:30 PM. See the map above. The entrance to the BGTC campus on Loop Drive is clearly marked. Building 5 is the last building on the left, down the road through the campus.

BGAMUG Board Meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month. The next board meeting will be on June 3rd, at our usual location, the Alamo Room at the Lone Star Steakhouse on Scottsville Rd, near Best Buy. Board members should come at 5:30pm for an optional dinner, and the business meeting starts at 6:30 PM. All members are welcome to attend.

June 2008

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

Executive Board Email Discussions

Between regular BGAMUG membership meetings our elected officers meet on the first Tuesday of every month to discuss and make decisions regarding BGAMUG programs and business. These meetings are called E-board meetings, short for Executive Committee Meetings. These meetings have always been open to any and all BGAMUG members to attend and participate in the topics being discussed. Prior to these meetings a series of emails flow between members of the e-board to exchange views, ask questions, and make suggestions. As everything we do during these meetings hinges around our members' needs and interests, we want to include any of our members willing to participate in these email discussions so we can make better decisions on your behalf. If you would agree to contribute your views and participate in the Eboard Email Discussions, please email Jerry Gillette, jagky@insightbb.com or any BGAMUG officer.

Membership Benefits

- Annual software distribution of recommended spy-ware, free software and reference material
- At least 22 high quality, short, basic, fact-filled presentations on topics that you request
- At least 11 follow-up sessions where we use an up-to-date workshop to focus on more advanced aspects of topics suggested by our presentations.
- Annual Picnic and Potluck in June and on other dates!
- Learn basic techniques in Plain English
- Monthly newsletter
- Discounts and preferred shopper status at various retailers
- Access to low or no-cost technical support for your computer issues.
- Build-your-own computer seminars
- BGAMUG Workshops at Abel Court

Still Missing From Windows

By Mike Moore

Microsoft got a lot of things right with Windows XP, which is now nearing the end of its life cycle. The software giant is currently telling System Builders they may not put XP on PCs after January 31st, 2009, but of course, as more people violently reject Vista, that date may be apt to change!

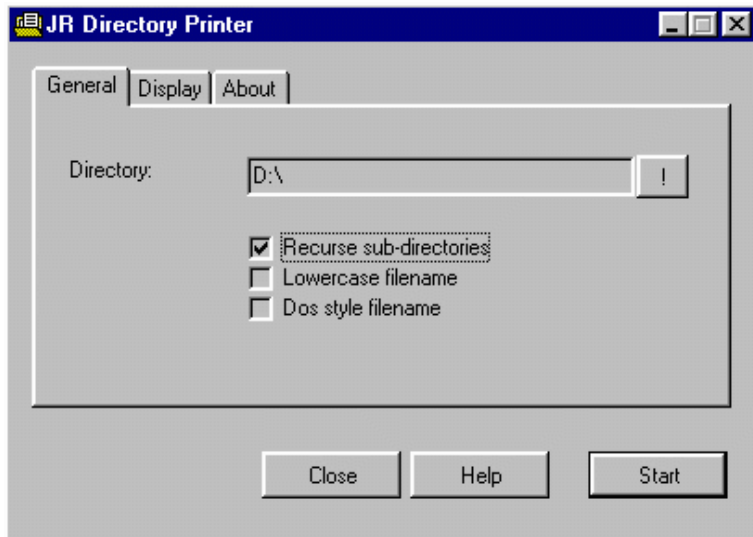
There are still a few things that DOS does better, but don't worry, I am not about to take you back to the "black screen" days of MS-DOS (well, at least not beyond a few one-line examples). As usual, if you can think up a need for an application, there is someone out there that has put together a solution. Herein we provide a quick glimpse of two Windows utilities: **JR Directory Printer** and **Lupas Rename 2000**.

Printing or Editing a Directory Listing

I often need to print out a list of files in a particular directory. I have been collecting electronic textbooks (e-Books) on the topic of gardening, and thought my wife would like these titles placed onto a CD-ROM for quick reference. Considering all the things that Windows XP can do, it's surprising to find that there is no easy way to print out a list of file names. Associated with the task of printing a directory, you may want to enter the file names into some kind of database, or edit them in a word processing file. You are out of luck with XP. Printing files in a directory was a simple command in DOS, something like DIR > PRN: or DIR C:\gardening > FileList.txt to copy the names to a file. It is not as simple in Windows.

You could use Windows Explorer to view the directory, then do a screen capture with a utility like [PrintKey](#) (which is on your BGAMUG software CD). But the result of a screen capture is an image file, which is not editable in word processing software unless you go to the trouble of doing OCR (optical character recognition) processing. Then too, the gardening library had many more files in it than would fit on one screen! To get all of them, I'd have to do multiple screen captures, each time positioning the screen just so. Way too much work!

So I looked in [Google](#), entering the search terms **print file list**. There were some cool retro DOS batch files that you could cleverly imbed into your right-click context menus. But in the end, even DOS failed me and I just wanted more flexibility in



the way the listing looked, so I kept on searching.

Without too much ado, I found [JRDirPrinter](#), a tiny, free utility that creates a directory listing in a plain text file named **dir-print.txt**. **See the screen shot accompanying this article.** Find JR Directory Printer at <http://www.spadixbd.com/freetools/jdirprint.htm>

This utility is a great way to make a quick little text catalog of a directory, and if you like, it will even "recurse" into each subdirectory under the chosen directory and capture those files too.

Renaming Files As a Group

Another thing missing from XP is a multiple file, pattern matching renaming faculty. You *can* do [multiple file renames using Windows Explorer](#), but the result is limited and often unsatisfactory. Windows XP's idea of a multiple rename is to just tack on a serial number in parenthesis to make the files unique. This is okay for some applications, but totally inappropriate for others.

As an example, look at this listing of several parts of the first chapter of a popular audiobook (shown here as compressed MP3 files), which I have abbreviated for clarity:

```
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 1. mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 2. mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 3. mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 4. mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 5. mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 6. mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 7. mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 8. mp3
```

Let's say that I wanted to combine these sub-chapters into one large file containing the entire first chapter of the audiobook. To do that, I would utilize a small utility called HJSplit (available on your BGAMUG CD). However, HJSplit requires that the file names end in .001, .002, .003, etc. as a means of properly placing the files in order as they are combined. (More on HJSplit at <http://freebyte.com/hjsplit/>).

For only these eight files, manually renaming the files one at a time would probably not be a big problem, but what if there were, say, 150 such files? This enormous task would be boring at best, and the opportunity for error would be great. We definitely need a better solution.

Trying to use Windows to rename these files *en masse* (that is, selecting all the files, right clicking and choosing 'rename') provides these disastrous consequences:

```
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 1. mp3. 001
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 1. mp3 (1). mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 1. mp3 (2). mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 1. mp3 (3). mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 1. mp3 (4). mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 1. mp3 (5). mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 1. mp3 (6). mp3
Cynthi a Ri ggs, The Crane fly Orchi d Murders, 1. mp3 (7). mp3
```

Only the first file has anything like the required format, but worse, the numerical information in the file names that originally contained the sequence of these files has been obliterated and replaced by Windows. Again, not a problem for just a few files, but if you had actually done a Windows rename on those 150 files—you would now be looking at a whole lot of work!

Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG)

Our parent group, to whom we owe so much, is doing what it can to promote and retain user groups. In addition to their annual event held in Las Vegas, APCUG will be sponsoring the Midwest User Group Regional Conference this year, hosted by the Chicago Computer Society. See <http://mwug.apcug.org/> for more details. APCUG provides ideas, solutions, newsletter articles, vendor presentation opportunities and various awards programs of which your own BGAMUG has been able to partake of several times in the last few years. Viva APCUG! We so appreciate you!



A message from your Librarian

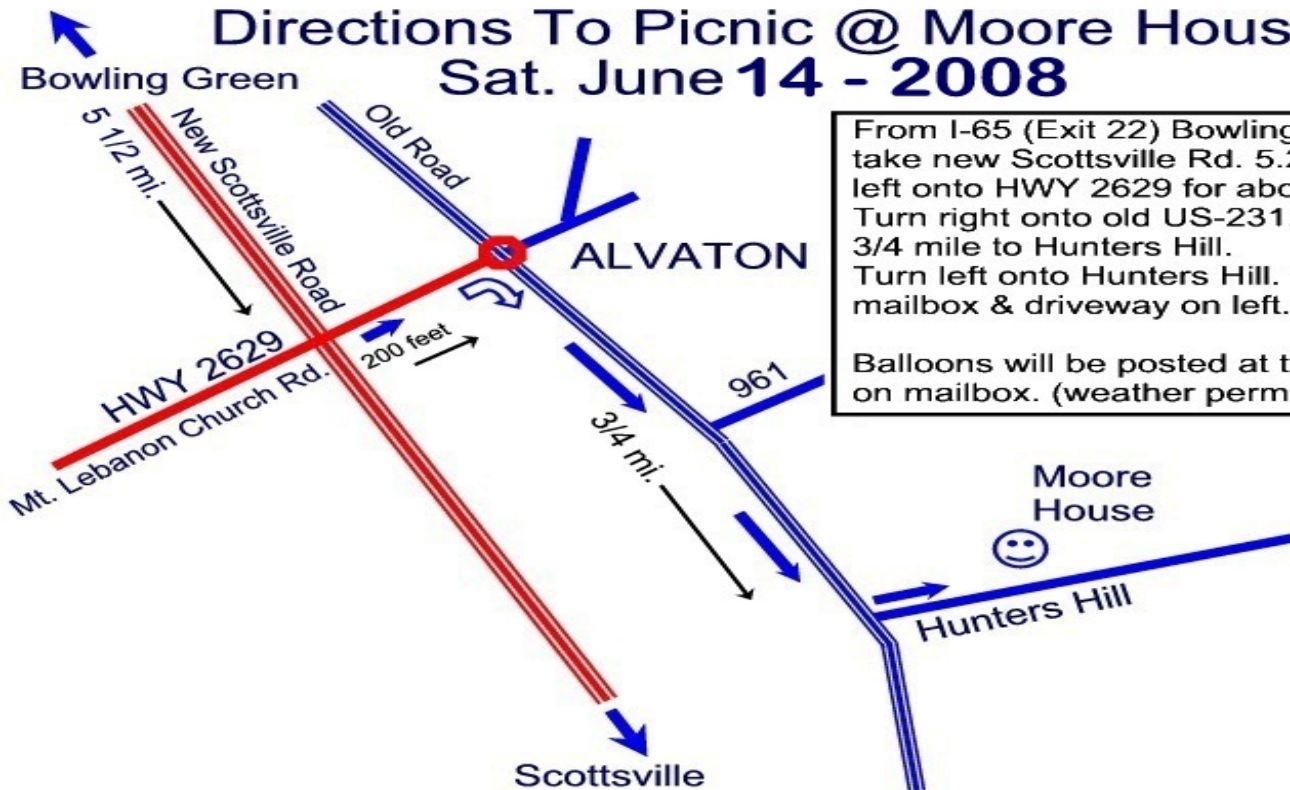
We want to encourage all members of BGAMUG to use the Library and its resources and to return the articles for others to use after the ones borrowed have been used and reviewed. Also, please bring any old computer related magazines or books to add to the library. Any pertinent information will be kept in the library for members to review and return.

Thank you! **Karen Wickliff**

Pot Luck at Mike and Cheryl's House

Saturday, June 14th, 2pm — Bring a Side Dish!

Directions To Picnic @ Moore House Sat. June 14 - 2008



From I-65 (Exit 22) Bowling Green, take new Scottsville Rd. 5.2 mile & turn left onto HWY 2629 for about 200 feet. Turn right onto old US-231. Go about 3/4 mile to Hunters Hill. Turn left onto Hunters Hill. Watch for 1st mailbox & driveway on left.

Balloons will be posted at turn points and on mailbox. (weather permitting)

Kroger Gift Card update

Folks, keep using your Kroger BGAMUG Gift cards. We get 4% of everything that flows thru these gift cards. See Jerry Gillette for your initial card with \$20 loaded. Good for Gas and Prescriptions too.

I have not found out of these will be good for Wine and Spirit sales, but if they are this program should really take off!

Mike Moore



(Multiple File Renaming Continued from page 3)

Windows helpfully tries to add its own numbering to the files, but since HJSplit requires the numbering sequence to occur in the file extension (the last three characters of the file name), the result of the Windows rename operation is completely unacceptable.

I would like to present a *smart* renaming utility, [Lupas Rename 2000](http://lupasrename.com). As with most of the utilities we promote at BGAMUG, this program is free. You don't have to pay for it, and it won't bug you to pay for it, and it does not have any adware or bad programs in it.

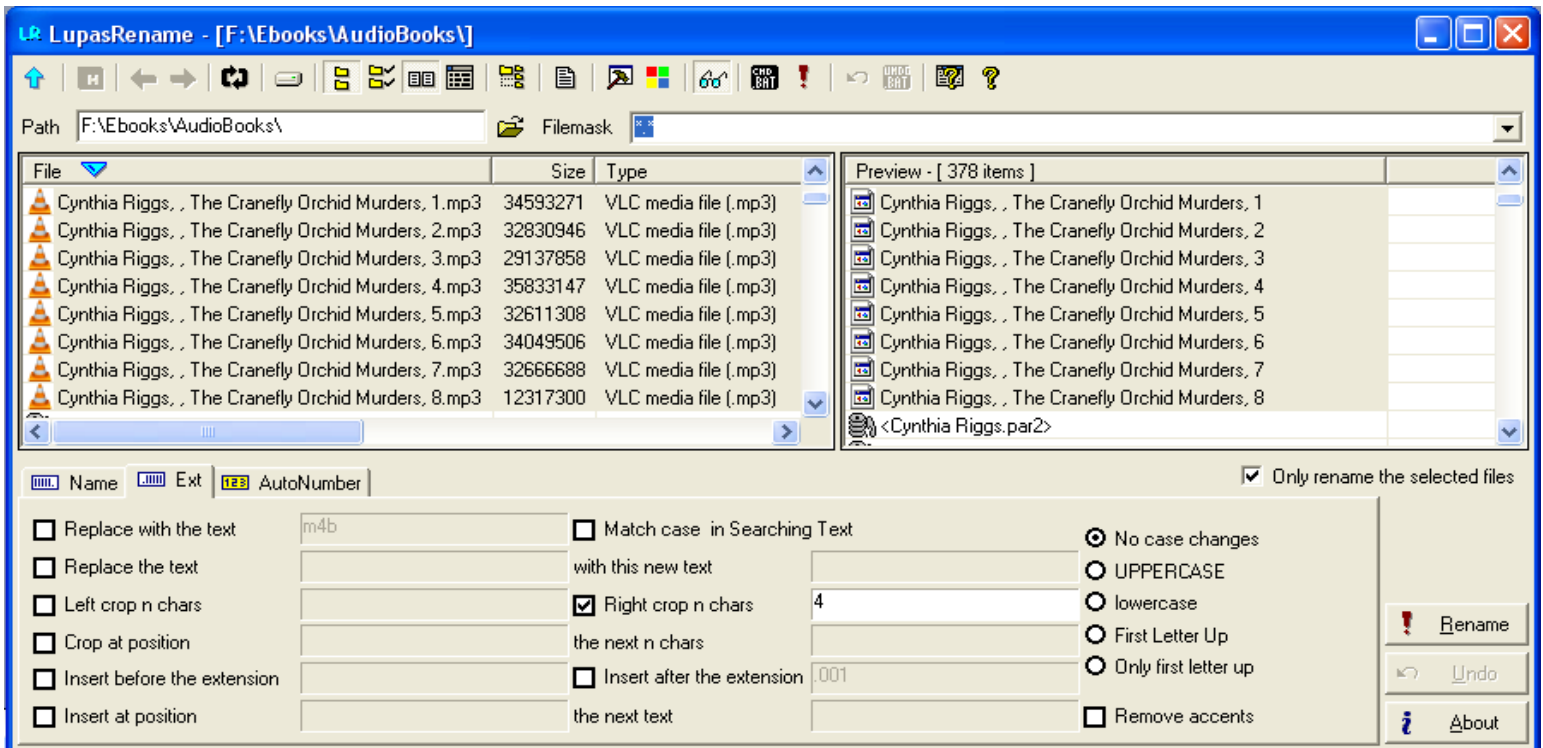
Lupas Rename is available at <http://rename.lupasfreeware.org/>

A typical Lupas Rename 2000 screen is shown below.

Working with the EXT (Extension) rename tab down below, we can remove the right-most four characters of the selected files, effectively removing the '.MP3' on each file. From there, it is a simple matter to add .001, .002, .003, etc to each of the file names, using the AutoNumber tab of Lupas Rename.

Working with Lupas Rename for even just a few minutes shows you the value of this small utility. Since the right-hand pane shows you a **preview of what you will get** when you press the "Rename" button, you will never be surprised with the results.

I am sure you can think of other uses for Lupas Rename 2000. It has become an indispensable tool for me, as I use it every time I need to apply a new format, or change an existing format to a large collection of files. **(END)**



Late News

<http://pcdecrapifier.com>

If you have purchased a Brand Name computer, chances are good it has a whole lot of useless trialware (sometimes humorously referred to as **craplications**). Some of these programs work for awhile and then quit, wanting you to pay for continued use, and some are supposed to be valuable additions to your computer, but do nothing for you. May times it is hard to tell what these things are even supposed to do. The new computer is so loaded with desktop icons, it's difficult to tell where "their stuff" ends and "your stuff" begins. "Helper" applications like Adobe Reader should work silently, and since they open automatically when you double-click on a PDF file, there is hardly ever a need to open these programs from the desktop, and therefore there is no need to have a link on the desktop to Adobe Reader. This situation is kind of like buying a new toaster and, upon unwrapping it, finding it festooned with all manner of advertisements and useless buttons and gizmos. Ladies and gents, reclaim your desktop and your hard drive! It belongs to you. Don't let these companies advertise on your time and on your machine for free—simplify your life! If you do not use AOL or MSN, why should their software be on your computer? If you can get past the rather uncouth name, go to pcdecrapifier.com, and download their application for removing this stuff. Make sure you read the fine print, because one person's trialware may be another's killer application.

What Not To Install

By Mike Moore

Imagine starting over. Your computer crashes; you take it into the shop and your guru says there's nothing left. You cry. A new hard drive is installed. He gives you the option of Vista or Windows XP, and you wisely choose the path of least resistance; but then what? What software do you install or re-install; and what can you safely leave off? With the jillions of download sites on the internet, how can you decide what is safe and effective? Any more, hard drives are so large and provide so much storage space, you might wonder why not just install everything? I hope to help answer that question on these pages.

First, let's look at what you probably already have. You probably have a box of CDs; let's take them one by one:

Your operating system

Windows of some type. You don't need this if your computer guru already installed it, but I'll take this a step further – having this disk too handy can be dangerous! Many computers are set up to boot from the CD drive or automatically run the “setup” program from the CD. If this disk is inadvertently booted instead of the installed operating system, it's possible that you can overwrite the current system. It actually happened to us out at Abel Court – a Windows Server installation disk was left in a CD drive; and the next time the computer booted up, this operating system was half way installed before anyone knew what was happening. And installing an entire operating system even just half way, pretty much shuts down the computer. Keep these disks in a safe place, and don't let your grandkids play with them.

Your Driver Disc

This usually bears the logo of the computer brand or the manufacturer of the main circuit board (motherboard). If you don't have one, don't worry about it. Drivers are small programs that communicate between the various parts of the computer and the main processor. They are critical; but at this point, your computer guru should have already installed them. Find out for sure by looking in the control panel. Click Start, Settings, Control Panel, System. Select the “Hardware” tab toward the top and then click on Device Manager. If you see any icons with a little yellow exclamation point, that means those hardware components need to have drivers installed. It's time to call one of the gurus in your computer club. On the other hand, if everything that you use on your machine is working fine, don't try to fix what is not apparently broken.

Driver disks are a common media on which computer manufacturers will foist useless programs upon us. These applications add nothing to the value of your computing experience and are often several versions out of date. Manufacturers want the appearance of adding value to their product (that is, either the computer as a whole or the motherboard). So they work with other manufacturers and software companies, but the products they include are no-cost helper applications like Adobe Reader or applications that crowd your computer with useless stuff that you'll never use.

So here is the first rule of thumb – **don't install anything from a manufacturer's driver disk**. Since drivers are often updated by a company's software engineers, there is a good argument

that supports the idea of just throwing these discs out. After a year or so, anyone needing to install the drivers would probably want to download the updated drivers from the manufacturer's web site.

Microsoft Office, including such applications as Word, Excel, Power Point.

You should probably install this. Once installed, go to <http://office.microsoft.com> to see if you need an update. If you don't have high speed internet, contact someone in your computer club who does. Ask them to download the latest Microsoft Office Service Pack and burn it to a CD for you. Service Packs are large packages containing many of the latest updates. Downloading something like this using dial-up internet is not feasible.

Microsoft Works

This is an economy version of Office, and there is usually no need to install it if you already have Microsoft Office. Even if you don't have Microsoft Office, instead of Works consider installing a free Office Suite such as OpenOffice.org, which is available on your BGAMUG software CD#2. The reason that OpenOffice.org is better is that it reads Microsoft Office formats (except for Publisher), whereas this operation is not complete and is poorly implemented in Microsoft Works.

Adobe Reader

If the computing world has a document standard, it would have to be PDF (Portable Document Format). We come upon PDF documents almost on every web page we visit; and if you don't have Adobe or something similar installed, you are not going to be able to read these documents. Adobe comes out with new versions of their Reader faster than breeding rabbits; but the latest version, 8.1, seems to be the fastest and most efficient reader out there; I'd highly recommend installing it. If you don't have high-speed internet, pop in your BGAMUG CD and install it from there. Definitely **do not** install version 6 or 7.

AOL

Whether or not to install AOL depends on several things. Obviously, don't install this software if you do not have AOL. AOL CDs contain approximately 80% junk and 20% *possibly* useful software. AOL also uses your desktop as a billboard, placing no fewer than five shortcuts that simply route you to advertising web pages. AOL does not do this just to make you aggravated. They do it because it equates to revenue; in fact that's why all the software and hardware companies do it. Even if you have AOL, I can make a case for not installing this software if you have a high-speed internet connection. If you do, then all you really need is a browser; and you already have a browser (Internet Explorer). The website is <http://www.aol.com>

PC-Cillin, McAfee's, Norton's antiviral and internet security tools.

Any commercial anti-viral or general security package needs to be evaluated carefully before installation. These products have only about a year of life before they become affected by a major upgrade.

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All anti-viral and anti-spyware products need to be updated regularly for them to be of any use to you; and in general, older versions can't be updated properly. There is a good chance that what you have is not the full program – it may be a “lite” version that comes packed with nag screens to get you to send in your money to unlock the full potential of the program. But why bother? There are full, updatable, and free (really free) programs out there (such as [AVG Free](#) and [Comodo Firewall](#) and [Ad-Aware](#) anti-spyware) that do a pretty good job of clearing infections and blocking you from harm. These don't inundate you with advertisements in the process.

Printer & Scanner Software

There is printer software, and then there are printer drivers. On a new computer, with the printer attached and the power to the printer turned on, nine out of ten times the printer will be installed automatically when you turn on the PC. It will be installed with precisely the driver software you need and no more. That is, you don't need the driver disk, usually, to install the printer. This makes a huge difference in cutting down the junk associated with simple printing tasks. Most printer software discs have well over 100 megabytes of software on them. A majority of that massive amount of data is provided in support of other languages besides English. Most of the rest is devoted to buggy programs that you don't need; or if you do need them, the programming can be supplied by other programs that are both no-cost and considerably more efficient in the way they handle memory and other computer resources. Some of this stuff might be functional but at the cost of a massive slowdown of your computer. The programmers seem to think that there is nothing else running on your computer when they design these applications.

What else?

Plenty else. The internet is covered up with un-installables! Be careful with anything downloaded – run it through a viral scanner if you obtained it from a site with dubious credentials. Beyond that, take some time to actually use the program and make a determination to see if it needs to stay installed. My rule of thumb is: if I haven't used it in six months, take it off using a its un-installation option. Here are some other warnings and red flags:

- **Anything that uses the word “toolbar.”** Toolbars (with the possible exception of Google Toolbar) are notorious for containing bad programming and outright spyware.
- **Anything that uses the word “free” in an inter-**

net web site. Free is not free; it usually means something like “free to bug you to pay.”

- **Anything that uses the word “emoticon” in its description.**

An *emoticon* is a little smiley or frowny face that is supposed to help convey emotion in the messages we write to one another on the internet. My mother absolutely must update her emoticon subscription each year and actually pays \$12.95 a year for this privilege. I asked her if they at least give her some new emoticons for her subscription and she didn't know, but presumably there is some benefit to this feature that I am failing to grasp. Emoticon programs are often full of spyware, but my mom doesn't care about that; she says she has nothing whatsoever that is private on her computer, and I can't really argue that point!

There are countless other categories of programs that fall into a sort of gray area – one example is “weather helpers” that integrate with your browser to show you local weather alerts. Some are okay; some are not so good, and some are positively evil.

This is the kind of issue that belonging to a computer club helps you with. If you have any software you suspect of ulterior motives, or of just being a dullard and not worth the magnetic bits in which it wallows, send a note to me at sevu-ian@gmail.com and I'll do an evaluation. If you have personally had a bad experience with software and would like to share a warning with your fellow BGAMUG'ers, by all means let's hear about it.

If you do need software, start by looking on your BGAMUG CDs—if you need a copy, drop me a line. These programs have been well vetted and are not just pretty calling cards for software and hardware companies. If you do find yourself searching for software on the internet, try using the phrase “OPEN SOURCE” (quotes required) in your Google search keywords, instead of the word FREE. Open Source software is licensed with a philosophy that includes concepts like sharing, caring, non-profit and teamwork. While it's possible that you may find someone out there charging money for open source software, it's just as likely you'll find the same or slightly better package on the next web site for no cost at all. Open Source is not a guarantee, by any means, but at least it has a legally proscribed meaning, and that meaning is by all accounts very user friendly, and we can't say as much about the word FREE, at least on the internet.

Mike Moore

BGAMUG WOULD LIKE TO THANK—

PC Placement volunteers Mike Bultez and Tim Pedigo of Bowling Green, and Rob Dillard of Franklin. These guys have taken “raw” computers and empty hard drives, and turned them into working machines that are ready for donation.

Barren River Health District's Joey Rich, and staff, who in just the past three months blessed us with 22 inkjet printers, 4 laser printers, 3 fax machines, 68 PC monitors, 62 PCs, 38 input mice and 44 keyboards.

Gene Iglehart, Dave Lozen, and Ken Salmon, who helped me haul and store all this stuff.

Door Prizes (available to Members and Guests)

Winner to choose among:

- **Kingston 1 GB Keychain Drive**
- **50 Pack CD-R discs**
- **CD/DVD Dispenser (Holds 100 discs)**
- **CD/DVD Case (Holds 40 CD's/DVD's)**

Progressive Door Dollars (members only)

Door Dollars prize of \$70 was won in April by Francis Tully.

No wonder he cancelled his e-mail !

The current jackpot is now: \$10

Software and Site of the Month

<http://www.worldwidetelescope.org/>

After months of media wrangling and years of research and planning, Microsoft has managed to harness millions of gigabytes of astronomical information as the WorldWide Telescope, which hopes to become the "Google Earth" of the open sky.

Word of the Month:

Address Munging (pronounced MUHN-jing or MUHN-ging)

The practice of disguising, or munging, an e-mail address to prevent it being automatically collected and used as a target for people and organizations who send unsolicited bulk e-mail. Address munging is intended to disguise an e-mail address in a way that prevents computer software from seeing the real address, or even any address at all, but still allows a human reader to reconstruct the original and contact the author. For example, your editor's address is actually sevulan@gmail.com, but the same address can be munged as follows: "sevulan at gmail dot com" Some experts feel that e-mail address harvesting software has become so sophisticated that munging no longer provides any benefit, if it ever did. Probably derived from [munge:/muhnj/](#): to imperfectly transform information.

Canceling AOL in Ten Minutes Flat

I realize that some of you use and like AOL, so please don't take this as a slam—but cancelling an AOL account has been compared to getting rid of gophers! Here's how I cancelled my AOL account in just under ten minutes.

Call 800 827-6364. Say: "Cancellation." You'll need answer to your security question. Voice recognition is not too bad.

Then you get a live attendant. They ask why you're cancelling the service. Just repeat: I didn't like it. I didn't like it. Don't be any more specific, or they'll go off into a tree.

Then they'll ask, are you planning to go on high speed? Do you want high-speed? Just keep saying No. No. No. No thank you. No thank you. Just repeat it without getting mad or changing the inflection in your voice. You'll have to do this about five times. Amazing. Like talking to an automated attendant who can't understand what you're saying.

Don't explain anything, or it just takes longer.

The Editor would like your assistance in determining whether or not everyone is using the downloadable (PDF) version of BGA-Bytes, and if so, whether or not you have used the low resolution format, which is about 700kb in size, readily downloadable even over a telephone dial-up link. Creating, storing and linking online to the low-res format has proven challenging, but if you need it, we will continue to provide it. If I get no feedback on it, I'll recommend to the board that it no longer be supported.

Special Interest Group (SIG) News

BGAMUG's only Special Interest Group, formerly known as the Non-Profit SIG, is now known as the Technology Access Group. We've still been busy collecting computers and refurbishing them. We outfitted a network and internet access at the African American Heritage Center and upgraded several computers at Big Brothers Big Sisters.

We are also working on two promising technologies for our system rebuilders (Slipstreaming and Sysprep Cloning) that we hope will make the process of adding a new operating system, drivers, and software a far easier and faster operation than it ever has been in the past.

Do you have a needy individual in mind that you would like to place a computer with? Go to www.bgamug.org and fill out a PC Placement form, and we'll get a custom built machine placed in their home, church or non-profit.

AMATEUR (HAM) RADIO

Jay Eatherly

Amateur Radio, as opposed to Citizens Band Radio, requires you to be tested and to obtain a license from the Federal Communications Commission. These licenses are in three levels, the lowest being the Technician Class, the middle being the General Class and the highest being the Extra Class. There was a requirement to show proficiency in Morse Code but that has now been dropped as of February 2007.

I first became interested in Ham Radio in the early 1960's. I took the tests and passed for my General Class license and received the call sign WB4WOZ. I was stationed in the Panama Canal Zone at the time and had to obtain a license to operate there. There was no retesting required, just a paperwork drill to get a Canal Zone license. I received the call KZ5AJ.

I was able to communicate with over 100 countries from there. I entered and won several Ham contests and generally had a good time with my radio.

At that time everything in electronics was vacuum tubes. Solid state was in its infancy. There were no computers and the nearest thing to a pocket calculator was called a slide rule, which was a mechanical device used to make mathematical calculations.

As time passed I became more and more involved in my military career and I let my license lapse in 1972.

I was sitting in my recliner in October 2006 and remarked to my wife that I would like to get back into Ham radio again. She said she thought it was a good idea and to go for it, so I bought some license books and began to study. On December 3, 2006 I took the tests for all 3 license levels and passed the first 2 and the Morse code test and received my General Class license and the call sign KI4SMU.

In February of 2007 I went back and retook the exam for the Extra Class license, passed it and put in for a "Vanity Call". I was granted the call sign KZ5JE which has an easy rhythm in Morse code and of course has my initials.

I bought a brand new, state of the art, 100 watt output solid state radio transmitter receiver which actually has two receivers and a transmitter. This allows you to operate on split frequencies. That is where you send on one frequency and receive on another. I won't go into detail on that except to say that it is sometimes very convenient to do so. I also bought an amplifier with which I can boost my output power to 1500 watts. I also bought 50 feet of television antenna tower and what is referred to as a tri-band beam antenna and a device that allows you to rotate it 360 degrees. It is a directional device which concentrates the signal off of the front of the antenna and rejects signals from other directions. This particular antenna had the capability of operating on three different amateur frequency bands: 20, 15 and 10 meters.

I did quite well with this antenna, but if there was any adjustments or repairs to be made it meant climbing the tower and at age 72 I really don't feel as if I have much business doing that any more. Also there was the problem that if I wanted to use any other frequency bands I had to have separate antennas for them and switch back and forth between them. My yard looked like a bowl of spaghetti with wire antennas strung all over.

I decided to take the big jump. I bought a new tower that has 4 sections that telescope within each other and allow you, with the aid of a winch, to crank the tower from its minimum height of 22 ft. 10 in. up to 72 feet. This tower also has a "Gin pole" device that allows you to tilt the tower over all the way to the ground with the use of a second winch. This means no more tower climbing.

Since I was going with the new tower I decided to go the

works and get a new antenna. The new antenna has 7 cross elements instead of three. The 3 inch diameter boom is 24 feet long, and the cross elements spread 48 feet wide. This single antenna operates on the 40, 30, 20, 17, 15, 12 and 10 meter amateur frequency bands, and weighs 130 pounds.

In real estate they tell you there are only three important aspects; location, location and location. In radio communications there are also only three important aspects; antenna, antenna and antenna. You can have the greatest, latest best radio in the world and a poor antenna and you will not be able to communicate very well. If you have a mediocre radio and a very good antenna you will be able to talk to the whole world.

There are two different ratings commonly used to measure an antenna's efficiency. They are "Gain" and "Front to back ratio". The gain of an antenna is roughly how strong a signal it emanates as compared to a "Whip", or vertical, single element antenna. My new antenna has an average gain of about 12 decibels. I won't go into decibels (a logarithm function), let's just say that it is at least 12 times stronger. The other measurement is front to back ratio. It is the ratio of the transmitted signal strength off of the front of the antenna as compared to the strength of the signal off the back of the antenna. In other words, it's the concentration of the signal. The new antenna has a ratio of about 25 to 1. This is called a directional antenna, and as the name implies, you need to point it toward whoever you wish to transmit to. I have a chart that shows me the compass headings to 400 locations around the world. When I want to talk to someone in Siberia I look up the heading and rotate my antenna to that direction and make a call.

Through international agreement, each country has designated radio call sign prefix assignments, thus a call beginning with AA to AZ, KA to KZ or WA to WZ is a United States call sign. One that begins with D is Germany and so on. I (and most Hams) have a list that shows the prefixes for the entire world, so when I hear a station give the call sign BY6ABC I know that he is in China and I can aim my antenna at him and give him a call.

Generally if you can hear a station on the air fairly clearly he will be able to hear you. There are a couple of internet web sites that show world wide up to the minute radio conversations taking place. If you are subscribed to one of these you can see that there is a Bolivian station talking to a Mexican station right now and what frequency they are talking on. If you want to talk to one of them you look up his heading, rotate your antenna towards him and wait for a break in the conversation, and then give him a call. It's as simple as that.

Since I got back on the air at the end of February 2007 I have talked with over 140 different entities all over the world. Note that I say entities. Most are countries but some are isolated reefs in the middle of the ocean a thousand miles from the nearest land. There are a set of rules that define what is considered a country for the purposes of winning awards such as the DXCC award, which is an award for two way contact with at least 100 different countries. At present there are 349 recognized "Countries".

Some day when you have a little spare time on your hands, get on your computer and go to www.QRZ.com. Type my call sign (KZ5JE) into the blank and hit enter. My personal information will appear. It will tell you my name and address, what class license I have, when I got it and several other pieces of information on me including a short biography This site lists millions of operators from all over the world. Try Googling "Scarborough Reef". The web site is: <http://www.scarboroughreef.com/>. That is an isolated reef in the mid-ocean that a group of hams went to for the sole purpose of letting other Hams from all over the world communicate with this rare entity. It has pictures and will absolutely blow your mind.

(Continued on the next page)

(Ham Radio—continued from previous page)

Many of the countries I have worked you will no doubt have never heard of. Try any or all of the following sites (found via Google.)

Googling Revillagigedo. The web site is:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islas_Revillagigedo

Nuku Hiva. The web site is:

<http://www.thetahititraveler.com/islandguide/nukuhivaintro.asp>

East Kiribati which has a web site at:

: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1836.htm>

I have talked to all of these places on my radio. I recently talked to Pitcairn Island. That is where the mutineers from the ship Bounty went after their famous mutiny. The modern day inhabitants of the island are direct descendants of the original mutineers. The population is about 50 full time residents.

If any of you are interested in amateur radio or have questions I will make myself available and to do my best to answer them.

- Jay Eatherly



Baseplate Framed



Raising the Tower



Diggers Arrive



Tower Arrives



BGAMUG Club News

Birthdays



Pat Vincent 5/12
Ward Coleman 5/22
Bill Hullhorst 6/10
Jesse Puckett 6/20

Anniversaries



Bill Hullhorst 5/16
Laura Whites 5/12

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The Editor is indebted to Betty Lyne for her copy-editing
eagle eye and split-infinitive-smashing red pen!

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Good News for BGAMUG members through our parent organization [APCUG](#):

Laplink is very generously offering a **20% discount on PCmover** to every member of an APCUG affiliated user group. PCmover is an essential tool for migrating to the new computer in your future. You will need to set up a Laplink account as part of the PCmover download process. PCmover is the only migration utility that moves programs, files, and settings from your old PC to your new PC.

We would also like to encourage you to write a product review on PCmover, so that it can be published in our newsletter and on our website. Send your review to Karen at kwickliff@bellsouth.net



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Don't forget our next meeting at
the B G Technical College,
Building F,
May 27th, 6:30 PM.

BGA-bytes is online! Please see <http://www.bgamug.org>

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 please download and install Acrobat Reader by accessing;
<http://www.adobe.com/>

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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.