



The official newsletter of the
Amador Computer User's Group
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Bytes & Bits

Volume 13

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Issue 10

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Sign in, Use it, and Everyone Benefits

President's Message

By President, Barbara Kreiss



Our October meeting will be an exciting Members Night look at ACUG's new "Vista Ultimate Laptop". Member's Nights are a great time to discuss any computer related problems you may have with your fellow members. Everyone has either a question or a tip to share and it is a great way to make new friends and help out your fellow club members at the same time. Vista Ultimate is Microsoft's newest top of the line consumer and small business operating system. The Dell Inspiron 1520 laptop is state of the art with many features that will be useful to the club.

Besides installing Microsoft's latest Office software: MS Office 2007 Pro and also Adobe's latest version of Acrobat Pro, version 8 for the club's use, I have also installed **MS Virtual PC 2007 software**, a new technology which allows us to run older Operating Systems and programs inside Vista. This exciting innovation will allow the User Group to cover older Microsoft technologies with the new Vista laptop. I have installed MS Windows 98 SE inside a VM (Virtual Machine), and Windows XP Pro inside another VM for demonstration purposes. This Virtual PC software will be utilized in the near future for our New Users Special Interest Group that meets on the 4th Wednesday here at the Senior Center. Members are encouraged to take a close look at this capable machine which should carry the club mission through for the next 4 years. For more information on the latest programming lineup, take a look at ACUG's Web site: <http://www.acug.net> and check the site regularly for program changes. See page 2 for more details on this months program.

The Association of PC Users Groups (APCUG) of which our club is a member, is having their annual meeting and convention just before the 2008 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada in January. If you would like to have a great time and represent the club, please contact me. We are looking for people who would attend the conferences held January 3-6 2008, take notes, collect information and ideas and bring them back to us as an official ACUG Representative. The event will be held at the Riviera Hotel and Casino. You will meet a lot of nice people, and might be able to attend the CES running January 7-10 to see the latest and greatest gadgets coming out for consumers.

APCUG Photo Contest: this is your chance to be famous. Enter here: <http://www.apcug.net/2007contest/photo.htm> Deadline and postmark must be no later than October 15, so hurry! See page 9 for more details.



October General Meeting

Our General Meeting on Tuesday, October 2nd, will feature an exciting Members Night look at ACUG's new **"Vista Ultimate Laptop"**. Member's Nights are a great time to discuss any computer related problems you may have with your fellow members. Everyone has either a question or a tip to share and it is a great way to make new friends and help out your fellow club members at the same time.



Raffle Prizes

To add to your enjoyment, we will hold our usual Mystery Raffle at the end of the meeting to help fund ACUG's community service efforts. Our Mystery Raffle prizes are announced during the meeting. Prize winners are drawn at the end of the meeting, and you must be present to win.

This month's prizes are: from O'Reilly Press: **Digital Photography, the Missing Manual** donated by Richard Kennon. Everything you need to know to take great digital photographs. **100 bag box of Lipton Tea**, great for the last days of summer, or the first days of fall. A **Tech Elastic Closure Notebook**, keep your notes neat! Lastly, donated from Symantec Corporation: **Norton Antivirus 2007 software**, keep your computer secure and have peace of mind with the latest technology from Symantec!

Announcing a special Holiday Raffle to be drawn in December: we will be selling tickets for the next three meetings for a **Palm m105 Handheld** that will be raffled off in December. The winner of this special raffle does not have to be present to win. Don't miss this chance to get your tickets to win a great Palm Handheld, generously donated by Emco High Voltage Corporation of Sutter Creek. Tickets are \$5 each.



Don't miss this! Meeting held at the Jackson Senior Center, 229 New York Ranch Road, Jackson, 95642.



From the Editor

By Barbara Kreiss

We will be entering the Association of PC User Groups Newsletter contest this year, held before the Consumer Electronics Show, starting January 3 in Las Vegas, Nevada. We will be sending them three issues of this newsletter to judge. The most important award we can receive however, is that our members find the newsletter useful to them. We were delighted to receive an email from a satisfied member last week. Thank you!

As Editor, I would like to include articles of interest to the readers. Let me know what kinds of articles you would like to see by sending an email to: editor@acug.net



September Raffle Winners

And, the winners were:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Attendance/Badge Winner: | Mr. W. E. Donthavethis |
| Flash Drive | George Matthies |
| Auto Mug | Charles Campbell |
| UBUNTU computer system | Ted Langlet |
| Dinner Ticket for Two: | David Blair |

For information about last month's program:

Please see ACUG's Web Site where you can find all our past and future programs, plus lots of information about the club.

www.acug.net



Amador Computer Users Group

Board of Directors' Meeting
Minutes
September 19, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM at Barbara Kreiss's home. Present were Barbara Kreiss, Sherre Tassos, Dick Johnson, Charles Campbell, Graham Paul and Richard Kennon. Karen Crabtree was absent.

President's Report: Barbara presented an invoice for \$2,320.59 for the new Dell computer, Office Upgrade, Vista Ultimate and Adobe Acrobat Upgrade. Dick wrote a check for the amount. It was moved and seconded that we authorize Graham to purchase a copy of the Microsoft Windows XP operating system at Staples. Carried. Barbara reviewed the problems with the Acer computer at length. It was agreed that we would not try to have it fixed at this time. Barbara distributed the User Name and Password for the new Dell computer.

Barbara announced that Kim Still, Scholarship Chairman has resigned and that she has asked Ted Langlet to be Scholarship Chairman. Ted has agreed. Barbara asked for volunteers to help with refreshments when Graham cannot supply them. Charles volunteered as he has been helping Graham with setup and is familiar with the coffee making routine.

Barbara passed the newly adopted bylaws around for each Director to sign and gave the copy to Richard who will secure Karen's signature and reproduce the bylaws for the Board Members. Charles reported he had emailed Dave Blair our thanks for Dave's presentation at our last General Meeting. Barbara asked Charles to give her the mailing address for EMCO so she can thank them for the Palm m105, which they donated for a raffle prize. It was decided to collect ticket money for three months for this special raffle. Barbara asked Richard to remove Kim Still from the Contact List and add Ted Langlet. She also asked Richard to add a column to the list titled "Position." Richard agreed to do this.

Secretary's Report: No report. Barbara suggested two changes for the Form 1023 reflecting recent personnel and equipment changes.

Treasurer's Report: Dick distributed the Treasurer's report and it was accepted by the Board.

Vice President's Report: No report.

Program Director's Report: The October General Meeting will be a "Members Night" and Barbara will demonstrate our new Dell computer. Richard suggested that the book, "Digital Photography: The Missing Manual" be included in the October raffle since it will be reviewed in the October issue of the newsletter.

Barbara reminded us that we must be prepared for nomination of officers in November. Graham has contacted the manager of our Staples store and asked him to present a program on Gadgets in November. He is checking "corporate" to see if it is OK. Charles offered to contact the owner of the Radio Shack store to see if he would do the same.

We could feature Norton's Security Suite in November if we can find a presenter. Barbara pointed out that the Security Suite is installed on the new Dell computer. Graham offered to present Skype, a long distance telephone over the internet service.

The December program will feature Keith Johnson of Amador County who will present a program on GIS.

Publicity Director's report: Sherre reported that she had distributed a PR news release to all the usual outlets.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Richard Kennon, Secretary



October 2007						
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			

October 2007 Schedule of Events			
Date	What	When	Where
2	General Meeting	7:00PM 1st Tuesday	Senior Center
4	Board Meeting - First Thurs. aft. General Meet	7:00PM	Barbara's Home
15	Advertising Deadline, Print and Web	15th	Contact Barbara at editor@acug.net
17	Newsletter / Web Deadline	17th	Contact Barbara at editor@acug.net
19	Advanced/Programming/Hardware—APHSIG SIG Leader - Barbara Kreiss	7:00 PM 3rd Friday	RSVP Barbara
24	New Users/Windows/Internet - NUSIG SIG Leader - Ted Langlet	2:00 PM 4th Weds	Senior Center
24	Geographical Information System—GISSIG SIG Leader— Bob Devlin	5:30 PM 4th Weds	RSVP Bob
	Genealogy GENSIG: see Genealogy page at www.acug.net for helpful links	24/7	Also held online in ACUG Forum www.acug.net/bb/
	ACUG Forum	24/7	Held online only www.acug.net/bb/

Quarterly Treasurer's Report

By Treasurer Dick Johnson

Overview as of Sept.17, 2007

Bank Statement Balances Dated _Sept. 17, 2007

Beginning		Ending
Savings -----	\$5488.98 interest \$1.96	\$5492.82

Checking ---- \$876.57 Cleared Balance \$506.96
 Checks Cleared, \$480.61, Deposit \$136.00. Transfer \$25.00
 Net check book balance – \$531.96

Transfer of funds from Savings to Checking \$2320.58 (for new computer)

Savings Balance ----- \$3172.24
 Check Book Balance - \$2827.24

Saving Account Fund Balances

	AUG.	SEPT.
Equipment Fund –	\$4265.96	\$2548.94
Software Fund ---	\$200.00	\$0.00
General Fund ---	\$1211.84	\$671.64
Scholarship Fund -	\$0.00	(This year due to a very generous anonymous donation, the Club was able to award a \$500 scholarship to a high school student. Because of the budget constraints, we are not currently allocating funds for this purpose.)

August 1-Through September 17

Receipts

Memberships \$125.00
 Dinner Raffle \$45.00
 General Raffle \$107.00
 Interest \$1.86

Expenditures

Senior Center \$100.00
 Bonanza Dinner raffle \$60.00
 Post Office Box rent \$40.00
 Insurance \$208.00
 Sherre Tassos (PR) \$19.71
 Ted Langlet (Acer softwr) \$52.90
 Raffle prizes \$66.00
 Office supplies \$15.00
 Refreshments \$4.00

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(Continued from page 4)

Total Receipts \$278.86 Total Expenditures \$565.61
 (Check for new computer not yet written).

Treasurer’s Comments

Reviewing our financial performance for the current year indicates that our current income is not keeping up with our expenses. Fortunately, The Club has been productive in the past and we have a comfortable savings balance. This balance, however, is being eroded by making up the shortfall from the current unbalance of income and expenses.

Our principal income is from members, so it is important that we all work together to increase our membership. The Board of Directors should solicit suggestions for attracting new members and membership thoughts about interesting, useful meeting programs and Special Interest Groups that would help retain members once they have joined.



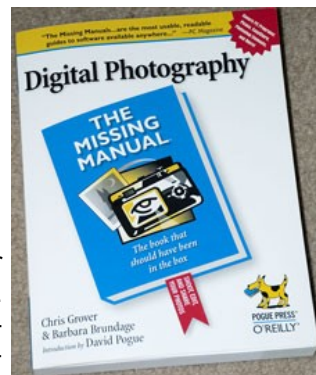
**Book Review:
 Digital Photography, The Missing Manual**

by Richard Kennon

Publisher: O’Reilly Media, Inc., 1005 Gravenstein Highway North, Sebastopol, CA 95472

Authors: Chris Grover and Barbara Brundage
 ISBN 0-596-00841-4
 List Price: \$29.99
 Street Price: \$19.79

Chris Grover has been a prolific technical writer for twenty five years and an avid photographer. Barbara Brundage is the author of several popular “how to” books in the field of digital photogra-



phy. Together they have produced a fine over-all introduction to the subject of digital photography. Their book is technically correct, by my reckoning, yet very readable and clear. The Missing Manual series published by O’Reilly covers most aspects of computers and digital photography. They are generally witty and well written. The novice should have no difficulty understanding the content of this book.

It could be said that this book is “all things (digital) to all people” and that would only be somewhat overstated. The first thirty pages are devoted to explaining just about everything one needs to know about cameras. There is one small technical error on page 13 where they say, “...your 50mm ‘normal’ lens will seem more like a 150mm telephoto lens on most digital SLRs.” Actually, “150mm” should be “75mm” since the lens factor on most DSLRs is 1.5. This may be important to people with 35mm camera experience. The authors do not have any axes to grind and give an impartial description of camera features and terms. They pretty much admit that cameras from all major manufacturers are roughly equivalent in quality so someone searching for a camera should concentrate on features rather than brand.

Next, they tackle the subject of composition and the art of picture taking in forty five pages. This is certainly adequate to whet the appetite but, of course, it only scratches the surface. Many whole books have been written on the subject and none are complete. The authors demonstrated a certain amount of bravery tackling such an esoteric subject in so few pages. But, they do a fine job of presenting the fundamentals.

Next the authors cover getting your photos from the camera to the PC. What many who take up digital photography fail to understand, at first, is that this is

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the point at which we used to send our film off to the drugstore and the prints magically came back all bright and colorful. Now, that responsibility falls upon the photographer. There is still much to do before we can proudly show our pictures to friends and family. And, there are new ways to show off our great artistic efforts. The great bulk of the book is devoted to what we used to pay the drugstore to do. Therein lies the value of this book for the novice. It introduces us to the vast field of processing that most of us did not even think about when we first purchased a digital camera. Heretofore, we did not realize it when we blew the exposure because the kind person (or automatic machine) at the drugstore compensated for it when the print was made. Now, we can see and recognize our mistakes and must take the responsibility for correcting them. Fortunately, this can be easy if we use the many automatic fixes available to us. After all, that is what they did at the drugstore.

Throughout the balance of the book, the authors describe how to utilize EasyShare, Picasa and Photoshop Elements for processing our photos. The first two are free programs and the third is reasonably priced below \$100. All are excellent but Photoshop Elements has many more features than the two freebies. For this reason, the authors devote more space to what can be done with Elements. There are feature comparison charts on pages 191 and 274 to help with making a choice between them. Once the reader has chosen one of these programs, he or she does not need to read two-thirds of the remainder of the book! The subjects of organization, storage (online and in your computer), backing up, basic fixes (and, almost all pictures need a little fixing), cropping, resizing, retouching, special effects, sharing, printing and creative photo projects are all covered in some detail utilizing each of the three featured editing programs. The chapters and subchapters are well labeled so you can easily find what you want to do with whichever program you have chosen to use.

Digital Photography, The Missing Manual is a "must read" for anyone who has an interest in digital photography but is not heavily into it yet. Often, the authors will make you smile and always they inform you in the clearest terms. I do not hesitate to recommend this book to anyone not already an expert at digital photography. I give this book a rating of ***** (5 out of 5 stars)

Guide to the ratings:

***** Excellent, **** Good, *** Acceptable, ** Poor, * Unacceptable

Home Financial Records, Part 1

by Richard Kennon

On August 7, 2007 Dick Johnson gave us an excellent presentation on "Personal Finances" with emphasis on record keeping and check writing. I, like Dick, have used QuickBooks to write my checks and keep my financial records. Recently, a friend chided me for not using BillPay at my bank. I had looked into this a long time ago and determined that my bank charged a little more than it cost to write a check and mail it – so no good. After my friend prodded me to join the 21st century, I checked with my bank, again, only to discover that if they changed the name of my checking account, BillPay would be free. Done. So, I write many fewer checks than before. Perhaps I can write them by hand! (Gasp) That is reason #1 for this effort.

Reason #2 is that the average household (at least mine) does not need the sophistication of an accounting program to keep household records. About the only thing we need besides a check record (i.e. stubs) is a way to collect some information for the IRS each year. Twenty or twenty five years ago, I wrote such a program in Basic and used it for most of those intervening years. But, Bill Gates decided that he would no longer let me run Basic programs using his latest operating system. That program also printed the checks on an old Epson 24-pin printer that served wonderfully for at least twenty years. That is when I turned to QuickBooks.

These two intersecting forces of minimal "accounting" and lowered demand for check writing led me to wonder if, just maybe, an Excel spread sheet might do the job. Yes, I think it will. This thinking has resulted in a spread sheet that looks suspiciously like a check record in your check book. There are four added columns and they are "Account", "Memo", "Cleared" and "Reconciled." Maybe "account" is too grand a term. What I mean it to be is a code name that may apply to a number of different checks written to a number of different payees. This might be like lumping the electric, gas, water and phone bills under "Utilities." Or, lumping Red Cross, American Cancer Society and Yosemite Fund under "Contributions." But, then, one might write enough checks to one organization (i.e. Church At The Cross) to make that a separate "Account" like "Church." The Cleared and Reconciled columns are useful when it comes time to see if you and the bank agree. This is such an anxious moment that I use smiley faces to indicate it is done. Here is an example of

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YOUR 2007 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President	Barbara Kreiss	555-5555
Vice President	Graham Paul	555-5555
Secretary	Richard Kennon	555-5555
Treasurer	Richard Johnson	555-5555
Program Director	Charles Campbell	555-5555
Publicity Director	Sherre Tassos	555-5555
Director	Karen Crabtree	555-5555

HELP LINE

Karen Crabtree	555-5555	Hours: 10-12 AM and 6-9 PM 7 Days a Week
Del Burwell	555-5555	Hours: 6-10 PM Week Days Weekends 10 AM - 10 PM
Ted Langlet	555-5555	Hours: 6-10 PM Week Days Weekends 10 AM - 10 PM

The above members have volunteered to staff the ACUG Help Line. Please call within the hours and days indicated.

Newsletter Editor.....	Barbara Kreiss
Contributing Editor.....	Richard Kennon
Circulation.....	Richard Kennon
Hospitality Chair.....	Graham Paul
Hospitality Committee.....	Charles Campbell
Library Chair/Raffle Ticket Sales...	Dave Butow
Library Committee.....	Frank Blauvelt
Membership Chairperson.....	Frank Blauvelt
Membership Committee.....	Richard Kennon
Set up Chair	Graham Paul
Set up Committee	Charles Campbell
Scholarship Chairperson.....	Ted Langlet
Scholarship Committee.....	Not currently needed
APCUG Representative.....	Barbara Kreiss
Webmaster.....	Barbara Kreiss
Consulting Programmer	Joran Kreiss
Welcome Chair	Volunteer needed
Welcome Committee	Volunteer needed

(Continued from page 6)

what the spread sheet looks like. It is assuredly a fictitious account because I

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Checkbook								
2									
3	Owner's Name	Dogburn Crankshaft							
4	Address	12345 Home Dr.	Tuesday, September 18, 2007						
5	City, State, Zip	Podunk, AK 99999							
6							Cleared		Reconciled
7	Payee	Account	Date	Check #	Amount	Deposit		Balance	
8	Beginning Balance	Beginning Balance	03/15/07					\$123,456.00	
9	Church At The Cross	Church	04/23/07	BillPay	\$500.00	\$700.00		\$123,656.00	
10	PG&E	Electricity	05/19/07	BillPay	\$85.98			\$123,570.02	
11	ACES	Trash Hauling	05/25/07	BillPay	\$77.93			\$123,492.09	
12	Amerigas	Propane	05/17/07	124	\$234.00	\$123.00		\$123,381.09	
13	Church At The Cross	Church	06/21/07	125	\$400.00			\$122,981.09	
14	PG&E	Electricity	06/23/07	126	\$78.92			\$122,902.17	
15	ACES	Trash Hauling	06/24/07	BillPay	\$77.93			\$122,824.24	
16	Red Cross	Contributions	06/25/07	BillPay	\$25.00			\$122,799.24	
17	American Cancer Society	Contributions	06/27/07	BillPay	\$33.00			\$122,766.24	
18	Payless Market	Groceries	07/22/07	BillPay	\$44.00			\$122,722.24	
19	Cash	Cash	07/30/07	127	\$100.00			\$122,622.24	
20	Volcano Telephone Company	Phone	08/11/07	128	\$67.45			\$122,554.79	
21	Yosemite Fund	Contributions	08/13/07	120	\$25.00			\$122,529.79	
22	Wells Fargo Bank-Visa	Miscellaneous	08/24/07	BillPay	\$1,456.23			\$121,073.56	
23	Cash Machine Withdrawal	Miscellaneous	08/30/07	Cash Machine	\$200.00			\$120,873.56	

don't think I know anyone with this much money.

I had to scrunch it together to print it here. It looks better on the Excel spreadsheet where I set it up to print in Landscape orientation so there is plenty of room for about 48 lines per page. There are lots more accounts you will want to use such as Taxes, Medical, Insurance, House Payments, etc. I am a terrible organizer so I am sure you can do a better job of this than I can. Think mostly of what you need for outside demands like the IRS. Don't think in terms of detailed budgets because, admit it, you are not going to follow through with that. It seems as if I should be much more organized than I really am when I use QuickBooks or other accounting program. That is why I have a big "Miscellaneous" group in our personal records. That is none of the IRS's business.

One nice thing about Excel is that when you start to type something you have typed above in the same column, Excel finishes the entry for you. So, we two-fingered typists can create entries more quickly later in the year! I have anticipated that you and I will make less than 400 entries per year so have activated 400 lines on each sheet. Of course, the spreadsheet does the calculations automatically. The sheet is locked except for the columns where entries are required.

Now, how do we find out how much we gave to charity for the IRS? On the spreadsheet there is a little down arrow by each of the column headings that can be searched. Like this:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Checkbook								
2									
3	Owner's Name	Dogburn Crankshaft							
4	Address	12345 Home Dr.	Tuesday, September 18, 2007						
5	City, State, Zip	Podunk, AK 99999							
6							Cleared		Reconciled
7	Payee	Account	Date	Check #	Amount	Deposit		Balance	
8	Beginning Balance	Sort Ascending	03/15/07					\$123,456.00	
9	Church At The Cross	Sort Descending	04/23/07	BillPay	\$500.00	\$700.00		\$123,656.00	
10	PG&E	(All)	05/19/07	BillPay	\$85.98			\$123,570.02	
11	ACES	(Top 10...)	05/25/07	BillPay	\$77.93			\$123,492.09	
12	Amerigas	(Custom...)	05/17/07	124	\$234.00	\$123.00		\$123,381.09	
13	Church At The Cross	Beginning Balance	06/21/07	125	\$400.00			\$122,981.09	
14	PG&E	Church	06/23/07	126	\$78.92			\$122,902.17	
15	ACES	Contributions	06/24/07	BillPay	\$77.93			\$122,824.24	
16	Red Cross	Electricity	06/25/07	BillPay	\$25.00			\$122,799.24	
17	American Cancer Society	Miscellaneous	06/27/07	BillPay	\$33.00			\$122,766.24	
18	Payless Market	Propane	07/22/07	BillPay	\$44.00			\$122,722.24	
19	Cash	Trash Hauling	07/30/07	127	\$100.00			\$122,622.24	
20	Volcano Telephone Company	(Blanks)	08/11/07	128	\$67.45			\$122,554.79	
21	Yosemite Fund	(NonBlanks)	08/13/07	120	\$25.00			\$122,529.79	
22	Wells Fargo Bank-Visa	Miscellaneous	08/24/07	BillPay	\$1,456.23			\$121,073.56	
23	Cash Machine Withdrawal	Miscellaneous	08/30/07	Cash Machine	\$200.00			\$120,873.56	

I have clicked on the Account column arrow and a choice box has dropped down. I have selected "Miscellaneous" and once I did that, this display popped up.

Do that for any other account name or payee name and you will have the information you need

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Checkbook								
2									
3	Owner's Name	Dogburn Crankshaft							
4	Address	12345 Home Dr.	Tuesday, September 18, 2007						
5	City, State, Zip	Podunk, AK 99999							
6							Cleared		Reconciled
7	Payee	Account	Date	Check #	Amount	Deposit		Balance	
18	Payless Market	Miscellaneous	07/22/07	BillPay	\$44.00			\$122,722.24	
22	Wells Fargo Bank-Visa	Miscellaneous	08/24/07	BillPay	\$1,456.23			\$121,073.56	
23	Cash Machine Withdrawal	Miscellaneous	08/30/07	Cash Machine	\$200.00			\$120,873.56	

for preparing your income tax. You can print this sub-list in the usual way. Now, to get out of this, click the arrow in the same column and then click on (All). The original full list will show up. You can do that operation in either the Payee or Account column and you will have all you need to find out how much money you have spent in any given category. For some fun, you can click on the arrows in the Check Number column and search for a check

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number or all the checks over some number or under a certain *number*. You can do the same in the *Date* column. This may come in handy when the sheet grows large late in the year and you want to find an entry made on or before or after a certain date.

More about this next month!

This article may be used in any non-profit publication if credit is given the author and the Amador Computer Users Group of Jackson, California.



Member Survey

As you can see, if you read the Treasurers Report on page 4, the club needs to increase it's income. The Board has done it's part this year, trimming many expenses, but we have run out of expenses to trim. The Members need to let us know what they think. Please respond by email to: president@acug.net

- 1] Should we increase the \$25 dues to \$35, \$40, \$45, \$50 per year per family? (has not increased in 12 years. \$50 would really help the club!).
- 2] Should we charge dues per person instead of per family? (many clubs charge per person: \$25 per, \$35 per?)
- 3] Should we let go the extra room for the NUSIG and have that held at the SIG leader's, or another volunteer's home instead? (we pay the S. C. for our use of rooms).
- 4] Should members of the NUSIG pay for the cost of the room they are using the night they attend. (Cost of room divided by attendees that night. This actually has been the policy in the past. SIGs = self supporting).
- 5] Should we have several fund raisers during the year, and if so, what kind?
- 6] Should the members evangelize the club and help bring in more members? Would you be willing to help Sherre do this?
- 7] What programs have been the member's favorite?
- 8] What programs would members like to see?
- 9] What do you like or dislike about the newsletter and website?
- 10] What would you like to see in the newsletter and website?
- 11] Do you support the club through the raffle? If not, why not?
- 12] Your thoughts on how to increase membership, and fund the club?
- 13] Would you volunteer to help your club achieve its goals?

Nibbles & Bits

Brief Tips, Techniques and News Bits by Barbara Kreiss

Photo Contest for ACUG Members

Following up on the success of the Association of PC User Groups 2006 Digital Photo Contest, the APCUG is pleased to announce a 2007 Digital Photo Contest. Again, it will showcase the talents of our member group photographers! Somewhere inside of all of us is a creative genius just waiting for the chance to grab the spotlight.....and the APCUG wants to give you that chance. There will be multiple chances to win, the contest will include professional judging and a special "Photo Idol" chosen from the APCUG Conference attendees! There are four contest categories: People, Animals, Landscapes and Still Life. So, grab those cameras and start shooting! Contest Rules can be found here: <http://www.apcug.net/2007contest/photo.htm> Deadline for postmarks is October 15th.

Microsoft Says It will Extend Sales of the Windows XP OS

If you need a new PC soon, and just love XP, you are in luck. Microsoft has just announced that due to brisk sales and customer requests, it will continue to sell it's Windows XP operating system until June 2008. Previously, the availability of XP was to end by January 30, 2008. Historically, Microsoft has made it's older OS available for up to two years, but Vista is selling very well, comprising 88% of Windows sales, with XP only accounting for 22%. Microsoft said that the top 50 consumer software applications now have a Vista compatible version available, and Vista provides support for more than 2.2 million hardware devices. For those who keep track, various versions of Windows reside on about 95% of the world's computers.

Thinking of Upgrading to Vista?

A Windows Vista capable PC must have a modern processor of at least 800 MHz, 512 MB of system memory and a graphics processor that is DirectX 9 capable. However, most people would be happier running MS Vista Premium and that requires a 1 GHz 32-bit or 64 bit processor, 1 GB of system memory, support for DirectX 9 graphics with a WDDM driver, 128 MB of graphics memory minimum with Pixel Shader 2.0 and 32 bits per pixel, 40 GB of hard drive

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space, DVD-ROM drive, Audio, and Internet access.

If you have your heart set on Vista Ultimate, then your machine must be beefier to match. Try and get a discrete video card where at least half of the memory touted is on the card itself. The more memory on the card the better.

Recommendations? Buy a new computer with Vista installed, but watch the vendor's offering carefully to make sure it does meet the above standards. Older computers have older components that usually do not have drivers for a new Operating System. Sometimes these are available from the manufacturer, but unless the hardware is fairly new, often the manufacturer wants you to move on to their new hardware, and declines to support the old stuff.

Member Discount Offer from User Group Relations

Gene Barlow, from User Group Relations announced an offer from Acronis regarding a new release of their top rated backup utility, **Acronis True Image 11 Home**. The software features a new "Try and Decide" feature that sets up a "SecureZone" on your computer where you can try out the software without risking damage to your computer. Also, a new "Disk Clean-up" security feature that lets you totally wipe your hard drive before donating an old computer, along with a set of tools for disk clean up to help keep your hard drive running smoothly. There are many new and updated features for backup including the new Scheduler features, Silent Mode Backups, Archive Encryption, Sector by Sector backups, Ignore Bad Sectors, Search for File in Backup Images, System State Backup and Message Level Outlook Restore. Supports Windows 2000 Pro through Windows Vista.

For more information and your UG member discount, go to: www.ugr.com
Acronis True Image 11 Home Edition is \$29 as a download. The CD price is \$33 plus shipping. CD(s) include bonus "Perfect Backup Approach" tutorial, step by step guide for installing and using the software, Acronis manual on CD. **IMPORTANT:** use the order code of **UGTIH11** when ordering to receive the UG discount.

Discounts featured in this column are a benefit of membership in the Amador Computer Users Group. Do your friends and family a favor, let them know about ACUG!

Note that ACUG does not endorse or recommend products or services.



Benefits of ACUG Membership:

- Discounts from Vendors such as:
 O'Reilly Books—No Starch Books—Paraglyph Books— Peachpit Press
 PC Publishing—Pragmatic Bookshelf— YoungJin Books
 Webcentric Computer Services
 Goldrush World Access
- Various Vendor Special Limited Discounts
- Herb Goodman Discounted Magazine Subscriptions
- Discounted business ads in the ACUG Newsletter
- Tiger Direct Corporate Discounts!
- Family Membership for the price of \$25 *per year!*
- FREE newsletter with articles, hints and tips
- FREE ACUG Forum: ask questions get answers 24/7
- FREE General Meeting: learn about new products
- FREE Special Interest Groups: ask questions, get one-on-one help
- FREE software, ask about writing a review and presenting to our group
- FREE Computer related Classifieds
- FREE opportunities to help others and make new friends



Have a Nice October!