

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF
PERSONAL COMPUTER USERS
WHO FREQUENT THE INTERNET,
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON GIST
SUPPORT GROUP MEMBERS.

safe surfing

SUMMERTIME ODDS & ENDS:

- ◆ COMPUTER REPAIR HORROR STORIES
- ◆ HOT WEB SITES & SOFTWARE
- ◆ STUMPER CONTEST RESULTS
- ◆ FEEDBACK



*Sum, sum summertime fun in the 1980s - The
Codrons crusin' the Caribbean!*

Computer Repair Horror Stories

I found this article (actually a video clip) very interesting on several levels:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hxqx4hgeKgQ&mode>

First of all, the "journalist" barely gives a nod to the great places (one of which is going out of business, I'm afraid: CompUSA) that accurately diagnosed and resolved the problem.

Secondly, the tag line could just as easily been "Only one L.A. computer repair shop proves dishonest in local survey!" But NOOoooo! It's a hit piece implying that most shops are dishonest (and/or manned by idiots).

Thirdly, the real message here is exactly the same when you're shopping or researching in any unfamiliar territory: When in doubt, "Get a second opinion!"

And if you're still confused or doubtful, email me! I'm always happy to give you the benefit of my opinion!

Hot Web Sites & Software

movie review query engine



If you like movies as much as I do, visit this site sometime soon.

MRQE.com is a site devoted to reviews, listings and community discussions of movies. It is allegedly "the largest online database for movie reviews."



Kelley Blue Book
THE TRUSTED RESOURCE.
kbb.com

Kbb.com is the famous Kelley Blue Book online. If

you're in the market for a vehicle or you're trying to sell your own, you owe yourself a visit here to do some quick and reliable research.



Whether you're planning a rip or just trying to figure out what to wear tomorrow, Weather.Com is the place to

go. The site is particularly amazing for its ease of operation (just enter either a zip code or a city name and watch how fast the weather comes up) and its extra features. For example, you will find live traffic information for many major cities, a real boon for trip planning.



Unlike other (similar) sites that allow and

encourage you to store photos with them for free, Photobucket.Com also allows you to store it to a url address. That means you can simply pass that url (link) along to anyone and everyone you wish to have access to the photo(s). That's particularly useful for adding photos of items you're selling at places like Craigslist or eBay. You can make your photos much better and more detailed because there is no file size limitation on Photobucket.

DOWNLOAD.com
SAFE, TRUSTED, AND SPYWARE-FREE

This site is part of CNET.com, a great company I've mentioned before, and is every bit as reputable as its parent. Their specialty is reviewing and rating software. If it's not described at Download.com, I usually don't even bother trying

it. You can search by keywords and then sort their listings not only by type or category of software, but operating system, editor and user review ratings. Then you can also eliminate or include freeware, shareware and commercial programs. Which brings to our next topic this month, some recommended software "picks."

UNIQLOCK

I don't know why this is so fascinating. I was searching for information to use in the newsletter this month and happened here somehow:

<http://www.uniqlo.jp/uniqlock/>

The Japanese company is apparently only trying to sell polo shirts, but their technique is very interesting, in fact mesmerizing. Every four seconds or so there's a short (six second) clip that's oddly rewarding to watch. Very pleasing music plays throughout (a jazz version of **Get Me to the Church on Time**) with a clock running as well. Mindless in a way, but satisfying too!

You can download the program as a screensaver as well.



Legacy Family Tree 5.0

Legacy Family Tree is a genealogy program that helps you track, organize, print, and share your family history. According to the authors, it "includes source documentation, over 100 beautiful reports, expert merging capabilities, To Do list, pictures, videos, Web page creation, spell checking, Internet searching, relationship calculation, and name tag printing." And, most importantly if you're sharing someone else's tree done in another format, it provides import/export support. The free program has a number of disabled functions and "nags" trying to encourage upgrade to the paid version, but this is a very reasonable penalty. I had been looking for a way to share our tree done in a popular format with folks who have no genealogy program and this fills the bill!



Stumper Contest Results

Sandy Ellis won the Stumper of

the Month contest. As a reminder, I asked the following question:

You have both your laptop and your desktop (or your computers at work and at home) connected to the internet and use Outlook (or Outlook Express) to check your email from the same ISP on both machines. However, once the email messages are downloaded on one machine, the messages don't appear on the other machine. What can you do to insure that the messages are downloaded and available to both machines?

Sandy answered:

In Outlook 2002, go to Tools, EmailAccounts, change settings of selected account.

Use ADVANCED tab and check the box of "Leave a copy of messages on the server".

Sandy is right on! In Outlook Express:

1. Go to Tools,
2. Properties (for your web served email account),
3. Advanced and,
4. Under the "Delivery" section at the bottom, check the box next to "Leave copy of messages on server"

I had planned to continue this feature for awhile, but changed my mind because of very low participation, so I'll just give you this month's question in the form of a suggestion:

Here's a solution for sound problems when using Skype or any program like it for PC telephone (Yahoo,



AOL, etc.): ALWAYS use a headset, NOT a microphone and PC speaker. That way you cut out echoes. First

plug in the headset (it has a plug for both the ear part that looks like a headset icon on the soundcard) and the microphone (which usually has the imprint of a tiny microphone, but sometimes the letters "MIC" instead), then test it with Skype to make sure the external speakers are disconnected. If they are not, right click on your volume control (looks like a speaker on the toolbar or find it in the Control Panel under sounds), then select "Adjust Audio Properties," go into Advanced under speaker settings and select stereo headphones.

Sandy was also nice enough to respond to my request for suggestions on what I might cover in upcoming newsletters. In fact, she was so thorough I think I'll just print what she recommended right here with minimal editorializing:

1. Everyone has **address books** around their house and they usually have lots of cross-outs in them. I think Outlook's contacts are the best way to go as they print in almost any format, can be portable or electronic, can contain notes, etc. Even if the reader doesn't have a computer, they will know a son or daughter who does and has Outlook and it is a wonderful gift to give someone...an updated address book printed on pre-punched paper [you can get loose-leaf stationery suitable for printer use like this at the following: <http://www.waresdirect.com/products/Office-Supply/WILSON-JONES/Refill-For-347786>]. Then you can update the books as future gifts and it is so well appreciated. You can even choose font size for your older friends. [And you can spiffy the little books up quite a bit by adding personal photos of a few addressees!]



2. **Wireless and wired backup devices** for automobiles or people pulling trailers. Consumers Reports recently recommended the wireless VR3 which we bought at Walmart for \$100. Cost \$200 to have installed at Subaru. We also look at another for \$600 in Austin, TX which was a little larger, nicer but wired. I have seen the installed



backup device on new Infiniti and new Range Rover and I really think the little \$100 device is comparably quite good rather than spending the \$2000 for the installed option. [I found one very similar at COSTCO the other day for only \$80 and thought it would be a fantastic gift for a family with young kids; how perfect for your grandbabies' parents!]

3. Other items of interest now are **GPS devices**. We bought the Garmin Nuvi last year and think it's wonderful but there are many price ranges and other manufacturers that are probably equally



as nice. Good idea for gift buying this Christmas.

4. **Google Earth** seems to be of interest even to beginning computer users. I'm not so enamored but I see they have a new feature where you can look at your street up and down in different views. I haven't found it yet, just heard



about it. [Download it here: <http://www.earth-2008.com/>]

5. A company I have been especially impressed with and have used for 2 years now is **photoenlarge.com**. They make very reasonable



enlargements and excellent quality and service. I recently ordered 16 x 20 enlargements, color, on a Monday night and received them on the following Friday morning. What fun for a party, anniversary, business. They were only \$18 each plus \$6 shipping total for 8 of them. I use them to send pix of grandchildren every 6 months and have them enlarged and dry mounted to poster board so we can easily mount and display them on a ledge around our living room. We love looking at their cute faces every day as several do not live near us. It only takes me about 1 hr to cut out the pictures when they arrive and press down on the existing boards so not a big time investment.

Thanks again Sandy!

COMMENTS PLEASE!

Once again I ask for your comments, questions and suggestions for this newsletter. It is achieving an



increasingly wide distribution by request, and I am getting good general feedback about how you're receiving it. However I am not hearing enough specific ideas to suggest an appropriate level of focus.

Barry Codron still lives (with his wife and doggie and near his children and grandchildren) in the Sacramento area. He is technically retired (from the Air Force, he's proud to say), but often consults in areas including technology and music, among other fields that pique his interest from time to time. He welcomes your questions, comments, ideas or corrections. Email him at barry.mart@sbcglobal.net