

Philadelphia Bits & Bytes

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President's Report – April 2001

by Tom Burke

Our next meeting is April 11, 2001 at 7:30 PM at 9940 Haldeman Av (Bayerischer Volksfest Verein aka BVV).

New Meeting Place

As I explained last month, we have available to us an alternate or replacement location to hold our meetings. This new location is JEM Electronics is located at 5401 Oxford Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19124. We could have the option of continuing to meet on a weekday evening or switch to a Saturday meeting at this location.

The advantages to relocating to this site would be that it is in a computer store where you could purchase or order your supplies or equipment. In addition, we are apt to gain new members from JEM's walk-in trade. There is also a McDonald's across the street for those who are in need of nourishment. The disadvantages are that there is no off-street parking but there is adequate parking on the street around the store. The actual space inside is not as spacious as at the BVV.

I have been informed at our last meeting at the BVV that the management has decided to try to keep their doors open indefinitely. This is still a rather "iffy" situation. The advantages to meeting at the BVV are that there is plenty of off-street parking; plenty of room for meetings and refreshments are available for those who want to indulge. The management has also expressed an eagerness to assist us with any outdoor events we may want to sponsor on their grounds.

I am going to propose that we alternate our meetings between the two locations. For example, on all the even number months we would meet at JEM on Saturday. On all the odd number months, we would meet at the Bayerischer on Wednesday evenings. This would allow all members the opportunity to attend whichever meetings best fit their schedule. We will discuss this in further detail and make a decision at the next meeting.

Software Reviews

Microsoft Pinball Arcade by Art Potts

When the President of our Group asked if I would like to evaluate a game and do a report on it I said OK. The name of the game is Microsoft's Pinball Arcade, the install takes About 5 Min. and there are 7 different games on the CD ROM, all taken from The **MASTER** of pinball games **GOTTLIEB**. As a child I spent many hours in front of A Gottlieb pinball game, and I have the pleasure to be the owner of a Gottlieb table. And I have to say the Graphics of **Microsoft's Pinball Arcade** has the look and feel of the **REAL THING**. The first game I played is called **KNOCK OUT** taken from the 1950s game by the same name, since I grew-up in the 50s this brought back many memories of my youth. I can't say enough about the look and feel of **quality** in this game, as simplistic as it is, I enjoyed it more then most of today's tremendous Star Wars type games the other games on the disk are:

- Baffle Ball from 1931
- Humpty Dumpty from 1947
- Knock Out from 1950
- Slick Chick from 1963
- Sprit Of 76 from 1976
- Hunted House from 1982
- Cue Ball Wizard from 1992

This is a great Game and I highly recommend it.
And my thanks to Tom Burke for letting me evaluate this game.

Club Member
Arthur Potts

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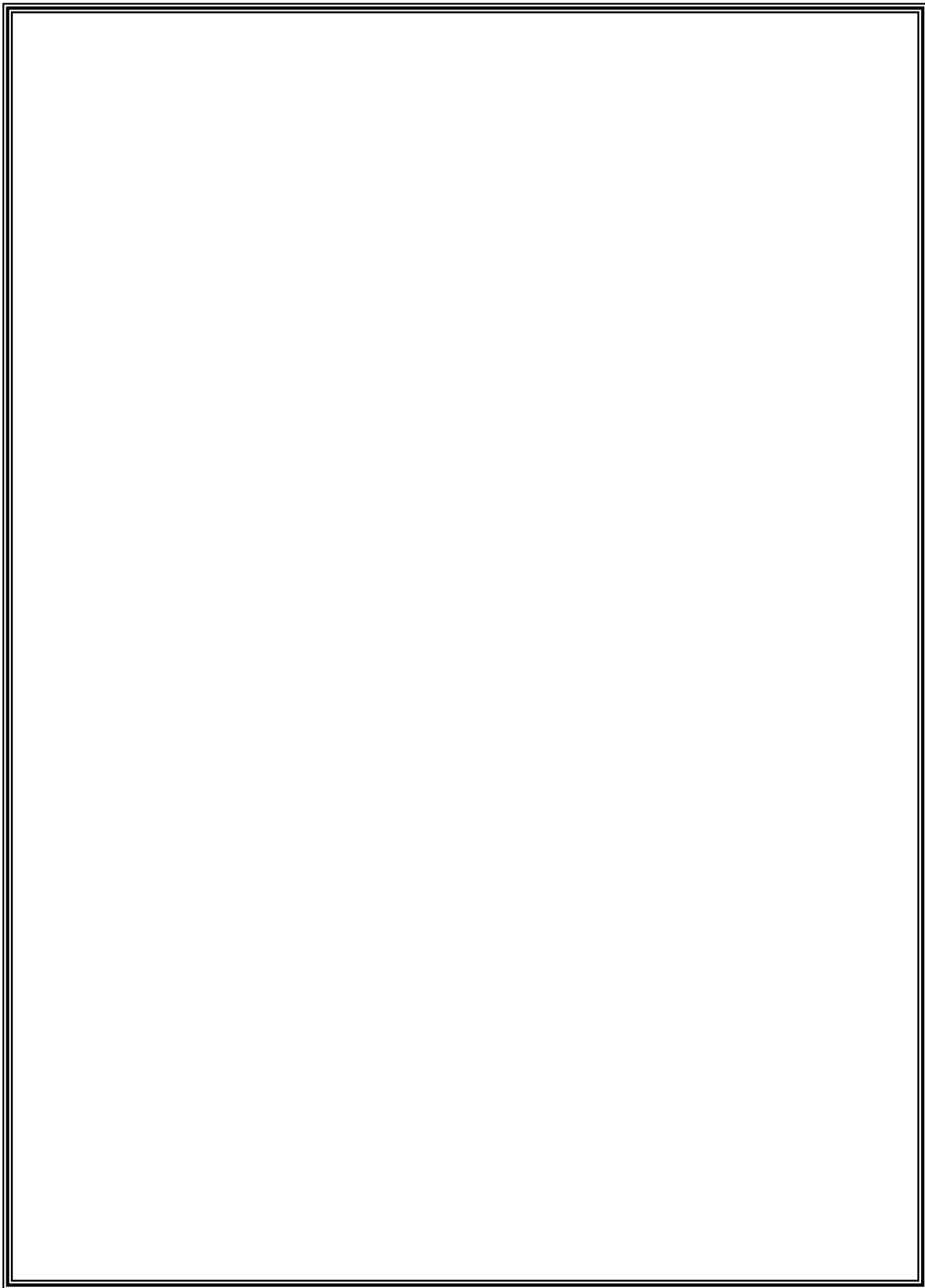
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The Computer Education Society of Philadelphia, Inc. holds its monthly business meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at the Bayerischer Volksfest Verien in Philadelphia, Pa. The meeting is called to order at 7:30 pm. BVV is located at 9940 Haldeman Ave.

CESOP is formed exclusively for charitable, educational and scientific purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (the "Code") (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and particularly to: engage in the exchange of ideas, techniques and information for the broader and more effective use of computer hardware and software; promote the general pursuit of knowledge and education in computer hardware and software generally; sponsor meetings, seminars, lectures, and workshops to share knowledge, experiences, and discussion of computer topics of interest to members and the general public; publish and distribute a periodic newsletter containing computer information and news...

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Software Reviews (continued from page 1)

Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia Deluxe 2001

I was supposed to give a review on this app but unfortunately, one of the CDs are defective. I contacted Microsoft for a replacement but I have not yet received one. Until then, the program is not fully functional.

I can tell you this much... from what I was able to use, this thing is fantastic. It is easy to use and the information seems endless.

I will give it a full review if I ever receive a replacement for the defective CD.

High Speed Internet Access

As you all know, I had DSL through Telocity and quickly dropped it. I searched for another source of high-speed Internet access and finally narrowed my selections to Verizon, MSN, and Comcast@Home. I went with Comcast and I have been very satisfied overall.

You have a choice of ordering a "do it yourself" kit or have it installed by there technicians. I chose to have them install the line. For \$49, the cost of installation, it wasn't worth the aggravation of doing it myself. The wait from order to installation was approximately 2 weeks. They were on schedule and had everything connected inside of two hours. They only had one minor snag and that was that they were not given the IP address for the account. It took about one hour to get that straightened out. At first I was a little disappointed with the speed but I did a little research and found how to tweak the Windows Registry for high-speed modems. (More on this in future issues). I sometimes hit speeds that I don't believe. Just the other night, I downloaded a Windows update file and was told that it would take 1 to 2 hours with a 28.8 modem... I had it in under a minute. WOW!

Whatever, or whoever you get, beware of Telocity. I am still waiting for my refund.

Serious Internet Explorer Security Problem

(This information is from the Langa List – check it out at <http://www.langa.com>)

It's another bad one:

Last week, Microsoft acknowledged that an "incorrect MIME header can cause IE to execute E-mail attachment" with the result being that your system would "run code of attacker's choice." Yikes.

Anyone running IE 5.12 or 5.5 needs the patch available at <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/bulletin/MS01-020.asp>

There also are some manual workarounds (such as turning off File Downloads for the affected Security Zones). The above link will bring you to a full explanation, as well as to the download link for the patch.

The difference between Windows 9x and Windows Me

(Taken from The Trouble With Windows. Visit them at windowstrouble.com)

Windows Me is a new version of the Windows 9x family, and at first sight you may not notice that much difference. After examining this OS more closely, you may not notice that much difference either... Here's most of the new stuff:

- SFP (System File Protection): no more System File Checker or Version Conflict Manager in Windows Me. They are replaced by the automatic System File Protection: if a program or application wants to replace a system file (DLL, OCX, EXE,...), Windows will verify the digital signature of the new file to see if it is the correct Microsoft version. IF the signature is not valid, the new system file will be considered unhealthy and will not be installed.
- System restore: for us, this utility is the great plus of Windows Me.

(The very easy to use System Restore utility lets you undo anything that could have messed up your system. If you installed an application and start getting errors or blue screens, you can restore your system to the state it was in before you installed the app.)

Click Start and go to Programs - Accessories - System Tools and click System Restore (shortcut to Windows\System\Restore\Rstrui.exe). You will see that this utility is easy to use and the instructions are very clear. As you will notice, you don't have to activate System Restore: it will create "system checkpoints" automatically. In the calendar you will be able to see when exactly those points were created.

You will also see the restore points you created yourself and, if you ever performed a restore, the exact time you did that.

When Windows Me restores your system, it will delete files and, of course, restore other files that it backed up into CAB files located in C:_RESTORE, a hidden folder. This folder will eat up some disk space, of course, but Windows Me was not designed to be used on old(er) computers with small disks anyway.

It is recommended to create a restore point each time *just before* you make a significant change to your system, like installing an application or a plug-in, or a new driver.

CAUTION!

The sad thing about System Restore is that it often doesn't work just when you need it most... After installing an application, for instance, which crashes your system, restarting your computer can result in all your restore points being lost. This is turning into a bit of an issue among WinME users, but you should know that a failing System Restore is most probably not caused by your particular configuration: this is how the utility works "as designed".

If you think the large amount of disk space isn't worth it, you can disable System Restore by going to Control Panel, click System, Performance, File System, Troubleshooting and check Disable System Restore.)

- Multimedia: Media Player 7 & Movie Maker. These are not really operating system enhancements, but (upgraded) programs added to the operating system.
- My Pictures folder: a subfolder of My Documents. In My Computer/Explorer, you will see thumbnails (previews) of the items stored in this folder instead of the usual icons. (You will already have this folder in Windows 98 after you install some Office 2000 programs.)
- Explorer enhancements: "Find" is replaced by the more detailed "Search", you can display more columns in the details view... Consistent with it's home-user appeal, Windows Me favors the "My Computer" view over the "Windows Explorer" view, which has moved from Programs to Accessories. (This last "enhancement" has, strangely enough, also been implemented in Windows 2000.)
- More eye-candy: the Help files, for instance, are more easy to use, with a new colorful interface etc. But the content is even more unsatisfying than it used to be.
- MSN Messenger Service: you can include this Microsoft version of ICQ if you like it.
- Smart Menus: some submenus of the Start Menu will remember which items you recently used and won't display everything unless you click the double arrow. Useful if you have large, cluttered menus.
- Changed startup: hiding DOS. Settings that were in Autoexec.bat en Config.sys are moved to the Registry. You can still use DOS, but only from within the Windows environment.

Should you upgrade?

Windows Me is clearly an operating system designed for non-professional home use, keeping users away from under the hood as much as possible. At some points it seems like this OS is just Windows 98 redesigned for entry level users who are primarily interested in toying with cute multimedia applications. Nothing wrong with that, of course--the interface enhancement do have their appeal and well, this is only the *image* of Windows Me: this is a powerful OS, and it won't keep you from using any app you like, but on the other hand Windows Me's reluctance to turn over control to the user in case of trouble could be irritating.

System File Protection could prevent serious problems and the System Restore utility can be a powerful troubleshooting tool, but on the other hand, for instance, you can't restart in DOS-mode and "Command Prompt Only" is left out of the Windows Me startup menu.

Concluding: although File Protection will probably add some stability compared to Windows 9x, Windows Me does not offer enough to say that upgrading is a must. If you really want to get serious, upgrade to Windows 2000 Professional, or get the best of both worlds and install a dual boot system.

If you have questions regarding you PC or applications you use with your PC, be sure to listen to **PC TALK with Rich Levin**, Saturday mornings from 10-12 on **The Big Talker WPHT 1210 AM**. You can call them with your dilemma or just listen and pick up a lot of interesting information.

As always, I want to thank our Internet domain sponsor, PlantagaNet for their generosity. For those of you that have asked me about an ISP, give them a call. See their ad on page 3.

Thank you also goes to the Bayerischer Volksfest Verein for allowing us to use their facilities for our meetings. If you have need of a hall for an upcoming affair, give them a call at 215-673-5646. They can cater any type of affair.

Remember this is your club, come out and support it. See you at the meeting

Tom Burke

The Computer Education Society of Philadelphia
Members Helping Members

The next CESOP business meeting will be
Wednesday, April 11, 2001 at 7:30 pm



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