



# The Cursor



Monthly Newsletter of the  
Washington Area Computer User Group

Meeting Location:  
Fairfax County  
Government Center



Next Meeting:  
Feb 11, 2006



## Presidential Bits

### February 2006 Meeting

By Paul Howard

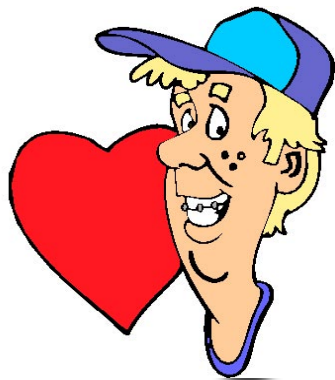
During January's meeting, WAC's networking gurus brought us up to speed on home networking. Chuck Roberts provided an extensive discussion on what goes into a network, with an easy to understand explanation of some of the underlying technology. A wired and wireless network was established, and file and printer sharing was explained. Geof Goodrum helped with network setup and provided additional details on the topic.

At the February 11<sup>th</sup> WAC meeting, Geof Goodrum will introduce the GNU/Linux Operating System and several popular desktop applications for it. Besides being noted for stability and security, GNU/Linux also offers its users a wide choice of software, including desktop environments, office applications, games, graphics and sound editors, image managers and e-mail clients. Geof will provide some background on Open Source software and GNU/Linux distributions, then demonstrate the KDE and Gnome desktop en-

vironments and several popular applications such as OpenOffice.org, Kword, Scribus, the GIMP, ImageMagick, Gnucash and Celestia.

Geof will also show video highlights from the APCUG 2006 Conference and the 2006 International Consumer Electronics Show.

**Editor's Note:** Be sure to read about Paul's DSL installation experiences in "Keeping Up," on page 8.



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# 10 Tips for Managing Digital Pictures on the Road

By Tony Northrup, Microsoft

**D**on't miss an important picture because your camera's memory card is full. Here are 10 tips to help you prevent the dreaded Out Of Memory message.

## 1. Delete bad pictures right away.

Check your camera's screen after you take a picture. If the flash didn't go off, if someone's eyes are closed, or if the picture is out of focus, delete it immediately. Most digital cameras have a button with a trashcan icon that you can press to quickly delete the picture. Checking your pictures right away will also ensure that you got the one you wanted.

## 2. Delete wasted pictures every night.

Everyone takes a few bad shots during the course of the day. Each night, use your digital camera to preview the pictures you took that day, and delete any pictures that didn't turn out the way you'd hoped.

## 3. Upgrade your memory card.

The memory card that came with your camera probably isn't big enough. Typically these cards are only capable of holding about a dozen images. A new memory card is one of the most useful and least expensive digital camera accessories that you can invest in to make your experience better. This table shows approximately how many pictures you can fit onto different sized memory cards. (These estimates will vary depending on the resolution size at which you're saving your pictures.)

## 4. Buy extra memory cards.

If you're not ready to replace your current memory card, you can contin-

ue to use it and buy extra memory cards. If you decided to carry more than one card, be sure to label them so you can remember which ones you've already used. There are a variety of different cards that today's digital cameras use such as CompactFlash cards, SD cards, Smart-Media cards, and xD-picture cards. Be sure to choose the type of memory card that's right for your camera.

## 5. Move your pictures to a laptop computer.

If you take your laptop with you on the road, you can download your pictures to your computer each night, freeing up the space on your memory cards. Be sure to remember to bring your camera's cable to connect directly to your computer.

## 6. Pick a higher compression.

All digital cameras compress your pictures before storing them on your memory card so they take up less space. The higher the compression, the more pictures you can fit on a memory card. However, high compression levels (which might be called "basic" with your camera) can introduce jagged edges in your pictures. For example, low compression levels (which might be called "fine" with your camera) will show the sky gradually fading from light blue near the horizon to dark blue near the top of your picture, while high compression levels will show the sky fading in a number of distinct stages, which might be distracting. Experiment with your camera's settings to find the compression setting that offers the best compromise of quality and capacity.

## 7. Choose a smaller picture size.

Most digital cameras can capture small, medium, or large pictures—these designations relate to the quality of the picture. Typically the

larger the size the better the options are for printing the picture at larger sizes. If you have enough memory, you should always capture large pictures, because they'll look great when you make large prints. You can fit many more small pictures onto your memory card, however, and smaller pictures are just fine for e-mailing and printing standard prints. Some cameras show picture sizes as "Full" (which means large), "XGA", which means medium, and "VGA", which means small.

## 8. Use a lower ISO speed when shooting outdoors on sunny days.

The "ISO speed" controls how sensitive your camera is to light levels. If you manually adjust your camera's settings, use a lower ISO setting whenever possible, because your pictures will take up less space on your memory card. For example, on my six megapixel camera, a picture taken at ISO 200 is about 1MB in size. Pictures taken at ISO 1600 are about four times larger, because the higher ISO setting has more noise, and noise reduces the effectiveness of image compression. Noise in a digital picture is random specks of color, like static on a television channel or grainy film.

**Tip:** If you use your camera's automatic settings or if you don't understand ISO speed, don't worry because your camera is doing the lighting work for you. You might notice that you'll be able to fit more pictures on your memory card on sunny days than you can on cloudy days, though. When the lighting is dim, pictures have extra noise in them, which makes the pictures bigger.

## 9. Switch from continuous to single-shot.

Continuous shooting is

See *Tips for Pix* page 10



## GNU/Linux SIG

By Geof Goodrum

### Press Release: REALbasic for Linux

27 January 2006

REALbasic for Linux recently received a Linux World Readers' Choice award for Best Linux Development Tool and Best Linux Programming Environment. We think this is a pretty well-kept secret, and we believe that Linux users could be creating more Linux software, more quickly and easily than ever before, with REALbasic, if they knew more about it.

So, we'd like to offer your entire user group the opportunity to get their very own copy of REALbasic for Linux, Standard Edition, completely free of charge.

In addition, REAL World, the REALbasic User's Conference, is coming up at the end of February – get more info here:

<http://www.realsoftware.com/realworld>.

It's a great time to meet other REALbasic developers, gain knowledge from their experience and get introduced to REALbasic for Linux in a hurry.

What's more, if you register for the

conference by February 6, 2006, we'll give you a free 12-month subscription to REALbasic Professional Edition, (a \$399.95 value). Use REALbasic Professional Edition to create software not just for Linux, but for Windows and Macintosh as well, all from a single source code base. (Note: This is a special limited offer and expires February 6, 2006 so act now. Send email to [janet@realsoftware.com](mailto:janet@realsoftware.com) to get this special discount.

So, don't delay. As a member of a Linux User Group, you can download REALbasic for Linux Standard Edition for free right here: <http://www.realsoftware.com/download/linux> and register for the conference here: <http://www.realsoftware.com/realworld>

We hope to welcome you to the vibrant, exciting REALbasic community and we hope to meet you in person at REAL World 2006.

Best regards,  
Janet Camacho

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### Linux CD of the Month

In addition to the CD-R discs described below, I can provide any downloadable GNU/Linux operating system distribution (e.g. Fedora Core, Mandriva, Debian, Knoppix) on CD-R. Note: download versions of commercial distributions do not include official technical support or printed documentation.

Discs are available only by pre-order. Contact me by phone (703-370-7649) or e-mail ([ggoodrum@bigfoot.com](mailto:ggoodrum@bigfoot.com)) at least 48 hours before meeting day to or-

der or for more information. Single discs are available with a \$3 donation; GNU/Linux distributions on two or three discs are available for a \$6 donation per set. All executable programs are for Intel x86 compatible Linux distributions unless stated otherwise. Your requests and suggestions are always welcome!

### February 2006

**Advanced Strategic Command** – v1.16.3. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Mandriva and SUSE by Martin Bickel. ASC is a free, turn-based strategy game. It is designed in the tradition of the Battle Isle series from Bluebyte. A tutorial campaign explains the functionality of ASC and shows most features. Although primarily a multi-player game, ASC includes a single playable campaign against a computer opponent.

**crip** – v3.7 and v1.0. Free GNU General Public License Perl script by Charlton Harrison. crip is a terminal-based ripper/encoder/tagger tool for creating Ogg Vorbis files (or MP3 files for crip 1.X) under Unix/Linux. It is well-suited for someone seeking to make a lot of Ogg/MP3 files from CDs and have them properly tagged and professional-quality with a minimum of hassle.

**dvdauthor** – v0.6.11. Free GNU General Public License source code by Scott Smith and executables for Mandriva. dvdauthor is a simple set of tools to help with authoring a DVD.

**dvd-slideshow** – v0.7.3. Free GNU General Public License shell scripts by Scott Dylewski. dvd-slideshow makes a DVD-compatible slideshow video with menus from a

See *Linux* page 4

batch of pictures. It consists of a set of scripts: dvd-slideshow reads a text file list of all the pictures you want in one slideshow and creates a DVD-compatible MPEG movie with your audio tracks and specified timing. It supports effects such as fades, crops, and the Ken Burns effect (slowly zooming and panning at the same time). dvd-menu makes a top-level DVD menu with the output files from dvd-slideshow. dir2slideshow makes a dvd-slideshow input file from a directory of pictures. gallery2slideshow makes the input file from your Gallery album. jigl2slideshow makes the input file from your jigl album. The output is fed through dvdauthor to create DVDs.

**gambas** – v1.0.14. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Debian, Fedora Core, Mandriva and SUSE by Benoît Minisini. This project aims at making a graphical development environment based on a Basic interpreter, similar to (but not compatible with) Microsoft's Visual Basic™. Gambas includes a compiler, an interpreter, an archiver, a graphical user interface component and a development environment.

Slideshow Creator – v0.4.0. Free GNU General Public License source code and Debian, Mandriva and SUSE executables by Marco Colnaghi. Slcreator is a graphic interface to dvd-slideshow, making creation of DVD slideshows quicker and easier. Requires the gambas runtime (above).

### GNU/Linux Distribution Updates

- Security and bug fix monthly updates for Fedora Core 4.

**Kernel Source** - The latest versions

of 2.4 and 2.6 kernel source code for all platforms.



Screen-shot of Advanced Strategic Command – v1.16.3.



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## Sony BMG – Shame on You!

By John Brewer

December 2005 eMonitor,  
Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Computer users may have noticed the recent brouhaha about Sony music CDs. Is there a valid issue or simply a lot of heat with no real threat?

The issue developed from the desire of Sony-BMG to copy-protect its music CDs. If the music CD is played in a personal computer, and the “accept” button is clicked, then software known as XCP is installed. XCP reportedly uses “rootkit” technology. Wikipedia states that a “rootkit is a set of software tools frequently used by a third party (usually an intruder) after gaining access to a computer system. These tools are intended to conceal running processes, files or system data, which helps an intruder maintain access to a system without the user’s knowledge. Rootkits are known to exist for a variety of operating systems such as Linux, Solaris and versions of Microsoft Windows. The rootkit concept is the dominant controversial aspect of the 2005 Sony CD copy protection controversy, which has made the previously obscure concept of a rootkit much more widely known in the technology community, and to the general public.”

The technical issues seem to be rather complicated, but a survey of the articles available on the Internet is disturbing. Apparently, rootkits install a backdoor to the computer and are difficult to remove. Apparently, there is a patch available that may or may not remove the Sony software. Personally, this author thinks

the only alternative is to avoid Sony CDs or to avoid playing any Sony CDs on a personal computer. The music industry is very serious about copyright violations and may think that the “end justifies the means’ in this particular matter.

The following is a portion of a Sony response dated November 18, 2005. “You may be aware of the recent attention given to the XCP content protection software included on some SONY-BMG CDs. This software was provided to us by a third-party vendor, First4Internet. Discussion has centered on security concerns raised about the use of CDs containing this software. We share the concerns of consumers regarding these discs, and we are instituting a mail-in program that will allow consumers to exchange any CD with XCP software for the same CD without copy protection and receive MP3 files of the same title . We also have asked our retail partners to remove all unsold CDs with XCP software from their store shelves and inventory. Please click here for exchange program details.

“Our new initiatives follow the measures we have already taken, including the voluntary suspension of the manufacture of CDs with the XCP software. In addition, to address security concerns, we provided to major software and anti-virus companies a software update, which also may be downloaded at <http://cp.sonybmg.com/xcp/english/updates.html> . We will shortly provide a simplified and secure procedure to uninstall the XCP software if it resides on your computer.”

Sony sounds like it is trying to respond in a responsible manner. However, this type of response is also an attempt to institute damage control. Sony has been sued by the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Attorney General for the State

of Texas regarding this practice.

EFF filed its complaint in a California state court on November 21, 2005. The EFF Web site states that “by including a flawed and over-reaching computer program in over 20 million music CDs sold to the public, Sony-BMG has created serious security, privacy and consumer-protection problems that have damaged music lovers everywhere.

At issue are two software technologies: SunnComm’s MediaMax and First4Internet’s Extended Copy Protection (also known as XCP), which Sony-BMG claims to have placed on the music CDs to restrict consumer use of the music on the CDs, but which in truth do much more, including monitoring customer listening of the CDs and installing undisclosed and in some cases hidden files on users’ computers that can expose users to malicious attacks by third parties, all without appropriate notice and consent from purchasers. The CDs also condition use of the music on unconscionable licensing terms in the End User Licensing Agreement (EULA).

After a series of embarrassing public revelations about security risks associated with the XCP software, including warnings issued by the United States Government, Microsoft and leading anti-virus companies, Sony-BMG has taken some steps to respond to the security risks created by the XCP technology. Sony-BMG has failed, however, to address security concerns raised by the MediaMax software or the consumer privacy and consumer fairness problems created by both technologies.”

The Attorney General of the State of Texas has also filed litigation re-

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garding the same spyware from Sony. The Web site for the AG addresses the litigation. Today [Texas] “sued SONY-BMG Music Entertainment as the first state in the nation to bring legal action against SONY for illegal “spyware.” The suit is also the first filed under the state’s spyware law of 2005. It alleges the company surreptitiously installed the spyware on millions of compact music discs (CDs) that consumers inserted into their computers when they play the CDs, which can compromise the systems.

The Attorney General’s lawsuit alleges the New York-based company violated a new Texas law protecting consumers from the hidden spyware. The company accomplished this by using new technology on certain music CDs to install files onto consumers’ computers that hide other files installed by SONY. This secret “cloaking” component is installed without the knowledge of consumers and can cause their computers to become vulnerable to computer viruses and other forms of attack.

“SONY has engaged in a technological version of cloak and dagger deceit against consumers by hiding secret files on their computers,” said Attorney General Abbott. “Consumers who purchased a SONY CD thought they were buying music. Instead, they received spyware that can damage a computer, subject it to viruses and expose the consumer to possible identity crime.”

SONY insists on its Web site that it has recalled all affected CDs. However, Attorney General’s investigators were able to purchase numerous titles at Austin retail stores as recently as Sunday evening.

According to SONY’s Web site, the

company recently distributed millions of CDs across the nation on 52 CDs by various artists. These CDs contained embedded files used for copy protection – or XCP technology. The files prompt consumers to enter into a user agreement to install SONY’s audio player. By opting into the agreement, which Sony represents is the only way a consumer can listen to these CDs on a computer, the consumer is unaware that SONY secretly installs files into the computer’s Microsoft Windows folders. Consumers are unable to detect and remove these files.

SONY-BMG claims on its Web site that this XCP technology merely prevents unlimited copying, is otherwise passive and does not gather personal information about a computer user. However, the Attorney General’s investigation into this technology revealed that it remains hidden and active at all times after installation, even when SONY’s media player is inactive, prompting concerns about its true purpose.

The Attorney General’s lawsuit also alleges that a phantom file is installed to conceal the XCP files from the user, thus making it difficult for the user to remove the files from his or her computer. Moreover, recent news accounts allege that newly created viruses that exploit this phantom file have been spreading. A user unfamiliar with installation – and removal – of this technology may be vulnerable to new security risks and possibly identity theft.

Because of alleged violations of the Consumer Protection Against Computer Spyware Act of 2005, the Attorney General is seeking civil penalties of \$100,000 for each violation of the law, attorneys’ fees and investigative costs.”

**Sony-BMG – shame on you!**

John Brewer practices law in

Oklahoma City, is a member of the Governor’s and Legislative Task Force for E-Commerce, and enjoys issues relating to eBusiness and cyberspace. Comments and questions are welcome and can be emailed to [johnb@jnbrewer.com](mailto:johnb@jnbrewer.com).

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## NCTCUG

Visit our “sister” user group. The National Capital Technology and Computer User’s Group meets the first and fourth Wednesday of the month. They meet in Carlin Hall in Arlington at 5711 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Visit their web site for more information, a map and directions:

<http://www.nctcug.org/>  
Meetings start at 7:00 PM

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## Tech News

By Sue Crane, Vice President & Editor, Big Bear Computer Club, California  
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[sue.crane@charter.net](mailto:sue.crane@charter.net)

### Microsoft Previews IE7

Internet Explorer's program manager, Eric Lawrence, recently posted a blog that said IT7 plans to support the Transport Layer Security protocol by default. He also explained how IE7 will behave differently from earlier versions when it encounters potential security problems. From an HTTPS page, users will be forced to access insecure content via the information bar, since only the secure content will be rendered by default. IE7 is also rumored to have tabbed browsing similar to competitor Firefox.

### A Computer for Every Kid

A \$100 laptop? A global effort is underway to make it happen by next year. It was a pipe dream only a few months ago but soon will be reality. An ambitious effort from MIT Media Labs to put a \$100 portable in the hands of every child in the world is picking up big corporate partners, top engineering talent, and interest from several countries. One Laptop Per Child (OLPC), a nonprofit venture, is expected to start distributing machines late next year and to produce 100 to 200 million in 2007.

### AMD plans 4-core Opterons by 2007

Advanced Micro Devices put a quad-core server processor on its road map and promised to upgrade its software investments, as it outlined its general technology direction for the next couple of years. The new processor will incorporate

four cores connected together by a new version of the Hypertransport Interconnect technology, and will support DDR3 (double data rate 3) memory. The 2006 dual-core chips will also introduce AMD's Pacifica virtualization technology and its Presidio security technology into AMD-based systems. AMD's goal for 2006 is to improve its standing within the business PC market, both in desktops and notebooks.

### Phishers use Phony IRS Tax Refund to Scam Consumers

A spam e-mail message has been sent around the world telling people they are eligible for a \$571.94 tax refund from the IRS. The e-mail offers a link to a fraudulent IRS Web site, but the link actually goes through a legitimate Government Web site. The link in the phishing e-mail goes to a forged IRS Web site that asks for a Social Security number, tax returning filing code and credit card details including security codes and PIN. The government is aware of the issue and is working to fix it.

### New TiVo Product Promotes Targeted Ads

After introducing a generation of television viewers to the joys of skipping over ads, TiVo plans to launch a new service to let its subscribers seek out the advertisements they've cut loose from their TV viewing. Digital video recorder (DVR) maker TiVo is positioning the new service, scheduled for a mid-2006 launch, as a way for subscribers to find targeted as in categories that interest them. The opt-in technology will let TiVo subscribers use keyword searches to look for information on specific products or services. The ad service will be free for subscribers; pricing for advertis-

ers is still being determined.

### Microsoft Considers Making Desktop Apps Free – With Advertising

Although no specific plans have been made, executives within Microsoft are examining whether it makes sense to release ad-supported versions of products such as Works, Money, or even the Windows operating system itself. Microsoft officials confirmed the authenticity of the paper, dated winter 2005, but declined to comment on its contents. But Chief Technology Officer Ray Ozzie and Chairman Bill Gates outlined some of the opportunities and the challenges Microsoft faces in a series of October memos. In the blunter of the two memos, Ozzie said Microsoft had an obligation to act on the shift to ad-supported software. .."It's clear that if we fail to do so, our business as we know it is at risk," Ozzie wrote. "We must respond quickly and decisively." The company's exploration of ad-supported software extends even to Windows, it's most important product. An ad-supported version of the operating system could make some sense, Microsoft researchers argue, noting that the product reportedly earns \$9 per year per user.

### A New Kind of Music Label

40 years ago Jac Holzman changed music distribution with the release of The Doors' album on his independent Elektra music label. He's introducing a similar change with Cordless Recordings – the first all-digital music label operated by a major record company, the Warner Music Group, which is launching on the Web and on digital music

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## Keeping Up

by Paul Howard

While most of my user group colleagues might not recognize the term "LAN Party" they'd recognize the concept - dragging computer equipment to meetings and trying to safely carry it. I'd be hard pressed to guess how many dozen times I've negotiated stairs with a tower case in my arms. I found a solution in the CYBERGUYS catalog - a Gear-Grip Carrier - straps and a handle that allow you to carry a CPU case like a briefcase. The one I purchased works for systems up to 60" in circumference and 70 pounds for 17 bucks. They have similar tools for flat panel and CRT monitors.

In the past, I purchased a CaseLogic Auto organizer from CYBERGUYS that allows me to store maps, sunshades, hats, gloves, ice scrapers, snow brushes and assorted other vehicle detritus in a folding cargo bag that will fold flat when unneeded. When I need to carry passengers, I can shift the whole thing to the trunk, and don't need to spend minutes chasing down all the stuff floating around the back seat. A larger model can also be used to keep grocery bags upright in your trunk.

Just when I thought I'd cured my "master antenna system" TV reception problems both UHF and VHF stations started looking awful about two weeks ago. I thought the new amplifier I replaced the defective twenty year old one with had suffered an early failure. Up into the garage attic again - swap amplifiers (I had a spare, after my last adventure in TV land), and ... reception still awful. Thank heavens for the FRS walkie talkies - at least I didn't have to scramble up and down the

ladder to check the changes in reception as I made changes - I could ask Linda to check the TV. Not much left in the signal path - I replaced the matching transformer and first section of coax to the input side of the amplifier. Bingo - no more halos around people on channel 9, and I can watch "24" on channel 5 without looking through a snowy fog. FIOS TV, wherefore art thou?

### Speeding

Sitting at the breakfast table on Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, Linda and I noticed what appeared to be a hole in a neighbor's house. Plastic vent louvers for their garage attic had shattered during the high winds of the night before. With rain forecast for the next day, I looked up their phone number on Verizon's web site, and let them know so they wouldn't have a flood in their attic. With the Verizon DSL ad staring me in the face, I decided once again to put in my number in the eligibility block to see if my line qualified for DSL - previous entries over the last five years have been in vain.

Over the years, I tried to get DSL service in some of the early employee-based field trials, but I'm slightly more than 18,000 cable feet from the central office, which is the normal limit for DSL, and I was rejected. What a surprise - really - my line now qualified for DSL ! I completed the order process on line Sunday morning, with a "service ready" date of Monday, 1/23. The price was certainly right - \$14.95 a month for a year of 768K download / 132K upload speed DSL service. Also included was an \$20 order processing fee, and a \$15 charge for the wireless modem I selected. I decided to get the Westell unit Verizon offered, rather than use the Belkin modem I already had, to insure the

install process went smoothly.

I got several emails confirming receipt of the order, following up on what to expect of the installation process, and announcing shipment of the modem with a tracking number. The installation package arrived via UPS Wednesday afternoon. I received a recorded telephone message confirming the order on Monday, and another on Friday morning advising that the service was ready for use. I had received an email message on Thursday evening, 1/19 shortly after 7 PM, that the service was ready, and I should complete the installation process.

I spent much of Thursday rearranging my telephone wiring at the main junction point inside my house. I have two phone lines serving my home, and I wanted to minimize the need for lo-pass filters on all phones and devices on the same line as the DSL service. (For a understandable discussion of DSL, see: <http://computer.howstuffworks.com/dsl.htm>) I mounted a 66 block, a telecommunications connector that allows the termination of telephone or data wiring in an arrangement of two 25 pair x 2 connectors. This allowed me to establish a connection point area for the incoming lines, DSL connections and input to the filter; area for the output of the filter and cross connection to a termination area for all the existing telephone wiring.

On Friday, I spent the morning working on my TV system (noted above.) After lunch, I mounted a connecting block / RJ11 jack, drilled a hole through the floor at the baseboard, and ran a new piece of telephone wire from my computer area to the junction point 66

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block, connecting it to the input / DSL section of the 66 block for the appropriate line. The toughest part of the whole job was moving things stored in the basement to get my ladder where I could staple the new wiring to the floor joists. At about 3:30, after getting some of the chaos restored in the basement, I started the installation of DSL, with the supplied CD, which provided on-screen Flash demos of all the necessary steps: hooking up the phone line from the new jack to the DSL modem, running a network cable from my computer to the modem. I loaded the software on my computer, and the DSL modem went through various tests. At one point a message was displayed that "This will take several minutes." After half an hour, I left it to take a shower, and on my return, the message was still being displayed.

I called Verizon DSL Tech Support, and was talking to a support tech after a forty second journey up the voice-response tree. I was directed to terminate the installation application, and issue an IPCONFIG command. After reading out the results to the tech, and issuing an IPRELEASE command, I was quickly up on the Internet, able to surf and get mail within about four minutes. Verizon DSL offers a choice of MSN or Yahoo for front end interfaces to the Net, and mail clients. I chose Yahoo, but haven't installed it yet. I had to call Tech Support again later, as I was setting up the security features of the Westell wireless modem. The default user ID and password of the modem are changed during the setup process to your Verizon ISP account ID and PW. Three minutes to get the info,

try the UID and password, verify I was reaching the secured screens of the modem, and off the phone.

I'm a happy camper - snappy loading of web sites, fast email downloads, fast and easy downloads of software upgrades and patches. Measured speed, via dslreports.com test tools is 689K down, 130k up. It's not 5M cable or 15M FIOS, but it's a world above the old 48K dialup connection !! Next week I try the tweaking tools and see if I can push the envelope.



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services such as iTunes and RealNetworks' Rhapsody. Music from the label's first six bands is being sold only online in 3-song "clusters" instead of albums. The bands will be promoted on blogs and sites like MySpace. Artists get to keep ownership of the master recordings they release under Cordless. If they want to release their music elsewhere after a short contract is up, they are free to do so. The Cordless Recordings labels is an experiment for Warner Music, which has increased its focus on digital distribution, and a bet that inexpensive Internet distribution and marketing may give labels a cost-effective way to nurture new bands. On the label side, it's an attempt to reach out to a music-consuming world that is deserting radio and record stores for iTunes and MySpace.

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## Chuck's Corner

Chuck Roberts, WACUG

This month I have located some free or low-cost utilities that are helpful when diagnosing problems on your PC.

To check if a application is accessing your hard drive download Filemon from Sysinternals — [www.sysinternals.com/utilities/filemon.html](http://www.sysinternals.com/utilities/filemon.html) – This program will show you which files are accessing your hard drive at any give time.

PC Diagnostic Company offers programs for trouble-shooting assistance with system problems. **#1-TuffTEST-Pro** is a self-booting program that's operating system independent. It has over 200 tests and functions and is menu-driven. It will identify and test ANY size hard drive and supports up to 4 IDE, EIDE, SATA and/or SCSI drives per PC. This utility will identify and test up to 4 Gigabytes of memory.

For end-users there is **#1-TuffTEST** which is an automatic PC Diagnostic. This is the first self-booting diagnostic software product that can "automatically" test a desktop PC's basic hardware. Each test session produces a simple PASS/FAIL report. This version contains a suite of 48 tests.

#1-TuffTEST-Lite is the free version of #1-TuffTEST Automatic PC Diagnostic product for end users. While some tests have been slightly limited in scope, this is a fully functional Freeware PC diagnostic utility that has no time limit or restrictions on its use.

Visit <http://www.tufftest.com/> for more details and for pricing information.

great when you're taking pictures of fast-moving activities, because taking multiple pictures with a single button press ensures you capture the action. However, using the continuous shooting setting on your camera can cause you to accidentally take two pictures when you only meant to take one, which wastes memory. Switch to single-shot mode when you're not photographing fast action.

**10. Disable interpolation.** Some cameras are capable of interpolating pictures to increase the picture's size. Interpolating increases the number of megapixels in a picture by adding extra computer-generated pixels between the pixels in your camera's sensor. Interpolation doesn't add more detail to your pictures, but it does use more space on your storage card. Turning off interpolation saves space without significant disadvantages.

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Delete undesirable photos right away!

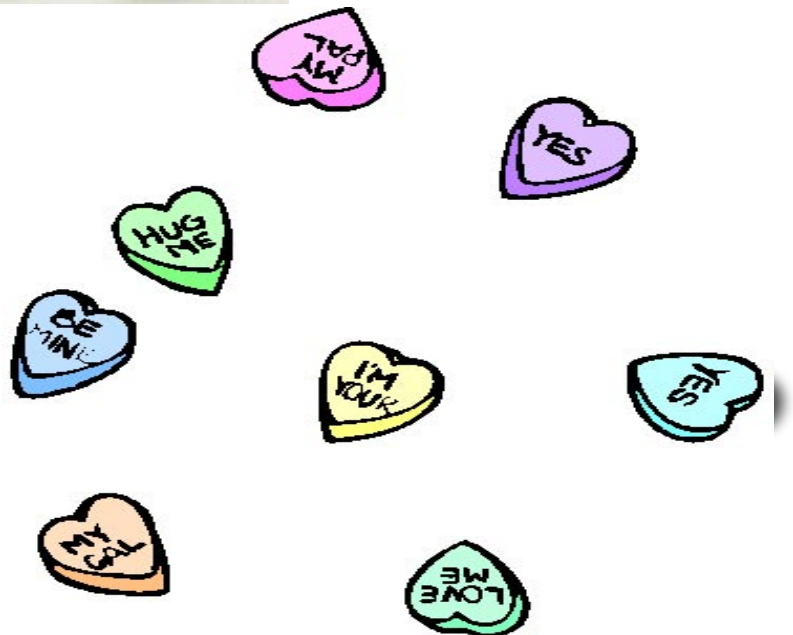
Pictures per Megabyte of storage per megapixel camera

	16 MB	128 MB	512 MB	1 GB	4 GB
1 MPix camera	39	312	1,250	2,500	10,000
3 MPix camera	23	184	737	1,474	5,896
6 MPix camera	6	50	200	400	1600
12 MPix camera	3	25	100	200	800

Tip: 1 GB memory cards offer the best compromise of storage capacity and cost



SmartMedia cards, and xD-picture cards. Be sure to choose the type of memory card that's right for your camera



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*The Cursor* provides news, commentary and product information to members of the Washington Area Computer User Group.

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Send article submission and reprint requests to the Editor: [cursor@wacug.org](mailto:cursor@wacug.org)**

**2006 WAC Membership/Renewal Application**

2006 Dues are for the Calendar Year and include Disk Library Discounts, and WAC's monthly newsletter, *The Cursor*, by 1<sup>st</sup> Class mail to your home.

Individual/Corporate/Family Dues: \$25.00

Remit payment in person at the WAC Membership table on meeting day, or by mail to:

**Washington Area Computer User Group  
30 Fendall Ave.  
Alexandria, VA 22304-6300**

Make checks payable to WAC. Please do not send cash by mail. *Thank you for joining WAC!*

Complete if you name and address do not appear on the reverse side. Include E-mail Address

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: (    )       -       \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Membership Survey:** Help us to help you by completing this survey.  
 List the computer systems you own / use (in order of preference)

\_\_\_\_\_

Operating System(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Modem(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Printer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Other Hardware: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Software: \_\_\_\_\_

Connection: (circle one)       Dial-up   or   Broadband

**Circle Your Interests:**   Photo Printing   Investing   Games  
 Digital Photography   Internet Access   Education   Music  
 Graphics/Animation   Genealogy       Video       Finance  
 Programming Language(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hardware Upgrades/Repair       List others below

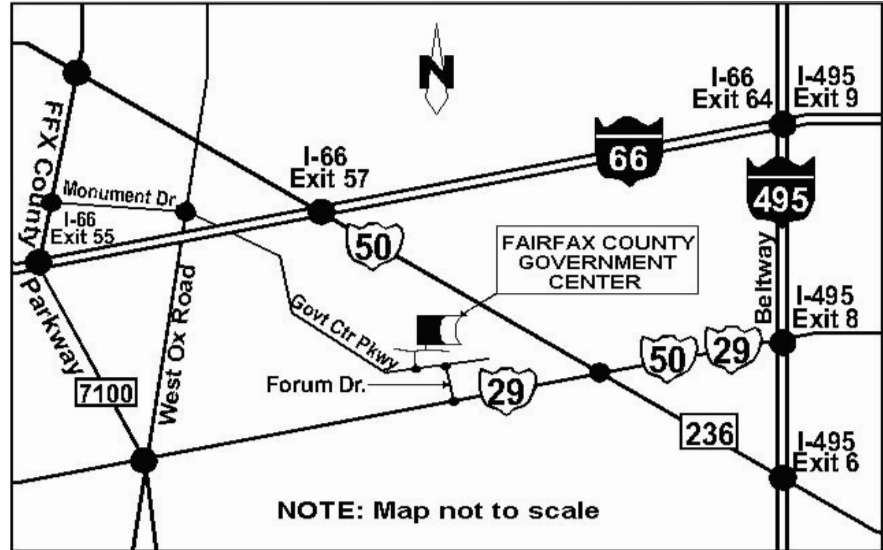
Next WAC Meetings: • Feb 11 • Mar 25 • Apr 15 • May 20 • June 17

Call (703) 370-7649 for the latest meeting information or Visit our Web Site at:  
<http://www.wacug.org>

December Meeting will be held at the Fairfax County Government Center

Through Front Entrance to the Left Hallway, Past the Elevators to:  
Conference Room 4/5

Service Desks Open at 12:30  
Meeting Starts at 1:00 PM  
FREE ADMISSION  
BRING A FRIEND!



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