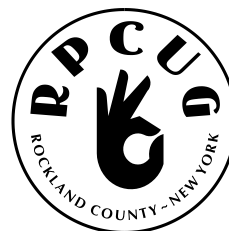




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The Rockland County  
PC USERS GROUP  
February 2002



# THE COMPUTER CONNECTION

## PowerQuest Software Presentation

**P**lease join us for the next GENERAL MEETING of the Rockland PC Users Group on Tuesday, February 12th, 2002, at 7:15 PM, in the RASO Community Room, fourth floor, Palisades Center Mall, West Nyack, NY.



We are having a **Powerquest** product presentation performed by our Intergroup Liaison, Jack Marsella, and WPCUG's Sig Coordinator, Richard Nayman. They will be demonstrating **Partition Magic** disk partitioning software and **Drive Image** ghosting software. There will be a copy of each to be awarded in our drawings.

**PowerQuest's** award-winning home and small office products provide step-by-step, easy-to-use wizard interfaces to help you simply manage and protect your data or upgrade to a new system.

**PartitionMagic** allows you to create, resize and merge partitions on your hard drive without destroying data. PartitionMagic helps organize and protect your data, run multiple operating systems, convert file system types and fix partition table errors.

**Drive Image** allows you to quickly and easily clone important hard disk data. With the click of a button, you can back up, restore or upgrade your hard disk. Drive Image's proven and award-winning technology provides step-by-step guides to help you easily back up important files to several drive types.

This month's Multimedia SIG (Special Interest Group) will be held on February 12th, at 6:00 PM. The meeting will be held in the Raso Room in the Palisades Mall, prior to the RPCUG scheduled monthly meeting.

**FEBRUARY:**

**Partition Magic &  
Drive Image**

**MARCH:**

**Linux Presentation**

**APRIL:**

**MAC Presentation**

## Join The Fun !

MEETINGS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC *with newcomers especially welcome.*  
For directions and up-to-date meeting information, visit RPCUG's Website at [www.rpcug.org](http://www.rpcug.org)

## WEB SITES editor's picks:

**The 2nd Annual 20 Worst People, Places, and Things on the Internet for 2001**

[www.brassknuckles.net/features/cyber/worst.php](http://www.brassknuckles.net/features/cyber/worst.php)

**What it means to be poor**

[www.funpages.com/richorpoor/](http://www.funpages.com/richorpoor/)

**Scam artists database**

[www.superhighway.is/iis/names\\_of\\_crooks.html](http://www.superhighway.is/iis/names_of_crooks.html)

**The Wearable Computer**

[www.intelligentx.com/newsletters/technology/articles/story\\_tech1\\_012302.html](http://www.intelligentx.com/newsletters/technology/articles/story_tech1_012302.html)

**Marijuana by the ounce? Holy Water? Beetles? Bibles? Live Shrimp?**

**Previously worn panties? Buy any or all of this stuff in privacy, just between you and your pocket change.**

**Vending Machines -**

[www.chaparraltree.com/vending/](http://www.chaparraltree.com/vending/)  
[www.chaparraltree.com/vending/](http://www.chaparraltree.com/vending/)



## THE ROCKLAND PC USERS GROUP

### OFFICERS

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Marian Baade, ~ mcbade@aol.com

### The Purpose of the Group:

To exchange computer-related ideas and information among its members; to engage in computer-related activities for the benefit of the membership and the community at large; to increase understanding and utilization of the personal computer; to provide an opportunity for the formation of special interest groups (SIGs), to provide a medium for the exchange and propagation of public domain software, freeware, and shareware.

—(From the RPCUG Constitution & Bylaws)

## MEETING SCHEDULE

### GENERAL MEETING

7:15 PM

### MULTIMEDIA WORKSHOP

6:00 PM

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

The Palisades Center Community Room

Palisades Center Mall, West Nyack, NY

**Multi-Media Workshop** meets on the second Tuesday of the month, prior to the general meeting at 6:00 PM in the Raso Room in the Palisades Mall, West Nyack

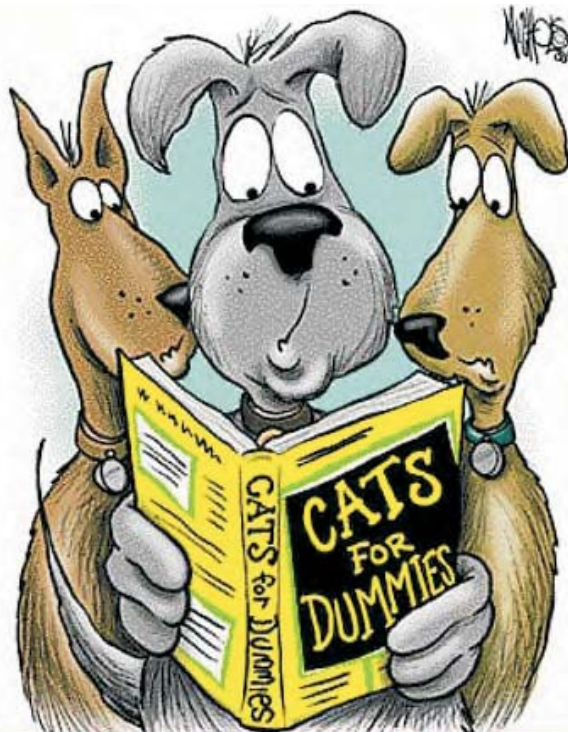
**Windows 98/ME SIG** meets on the third Tuesday of the month in the Pearl River Room at the Pearl River Library, 7-8:45 PM.

The **Investment Workshop (SIG)** meetings will vary for the present; please consult the web site for details

The **Executive Board** meets last Thursday of the month  
West Nyack Library, 7:00 PM

The Rockland PC Users Group, a tax-exempt educational organization, meets monthly, usually on the second Tuesday. Meetings begin at 7:15 PM. The latest information about meeting programs and dates is available on the Internet at

<http://www.rpcug.org>



Get more funny pictures and jokes at  
<http://top-greetings.com>

## Past and Present

Over 15 years ago the **Rockland PC Users Group** was born. The founding members wanted to create an organization that would be a forum for the exchange of knowledge about computers, software and the technologies on which they are based. They also wished to be of service to the community.

The **RPCUG** became a place where novices and experts alike could bring questions and learn from the answers offered. Although the Internet existed, it was the area of the ardent hobbyist, barely known, of no real interest to club members. It resembled nothing of what it has evolved into today.

*Bulletin Boards* were used through primitive dialup services at the blistering speed of up to 9,600 bps. The 286 processor was the standard with spreadsheets being run on Visicalc and word processing done with WordStar. Files were stored on 5 ¼ floppy drives that resembled square flexible frisbees—and you write-protected them with little silver tabs.

Bill Gates was working on his first billion dollars.

A “Members Helping Members” desk was created with SIGs on DOS and other operating systems. Meetings were held at the New City Library until it could no longer handle our expanding membership. Software was reviewed; vendors made presentations, and our newsletter won awards on a national level. At our peak, our membership was over three hundred.

Today, although our membership is half that, we are as active and important to the Rockland community as ever before. We offer SIGs in Graphics, Windows O/S, and Information for beginners. We meet once a month, and have had great vendor presentations: Microsoft visited us this past January with information about Windows XP.

Our is also available electronically in a state-of-the-art PDF format. We have a help desk on-line and question and answer period at our monthly meetings. We have an excellent website that is

full of useful information on many different areas of interest to our members. Our treasury is strong.

A year ago, we expanded our contribution to the residents of Rockland with the establishment of **Project PC ReNew**, where one can receive hands-on training in our own workshop, learning about computers and computer repair. Run by our own expert volunteers, our accomplishments have been written up in several newspapers; we have changed the lives of many Rockland families who have received computers that we refurbished.

Over 300 entries for United Way Vision Grants in Rockland County were applied for in 2002, and only 11 recipients were selected. We are proud to announce that our **Project PC ReNew** was chosen to receive almost \$5,000 to help fund this worthwhile community service. We are proud of the efforts of all our member volunteers who helped to make this happen. **PC ReNew** is truly “The Home of the BIG Hearts.”

The RPCUG offers the Rockland community an organization where people can learn about computers no matter what their skill level, from beginner to expert. Our service to the public continues to grow like the vision of our first members back in the 1980’s.

Volunteer and become an active part of the RPCUG! Like any organization, we are as good as our members. When you become involved you will find out how great our members are and how much information and time they are willing to share.

You can make a difference not only to the RPCUG but to Rockland County as well. 🐼

### Programmer's Drinking Song

99 little bugs in the code,  
99 bugs in the code,  
Fix one bug, compile it again,  
101 little bugs in the code.

101 little bugs in the code,  
101 bugs in the code,  
Fix one bug, compile it again,  
103 little bugs in the code.





# Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty Tricks

by Scott Kelby

*reviewed by Roberta Mikkelsen*



Okay another book on Photoshop, you ask? Well for all of us that are self-taught and are serious about Photoshop this book is definitely worth looking into. It is full of intriguing tricks, special effects and inside secrets all from the pen of Scott Kelby.

Scott Kelby is a Photoshop guru, editor of Photoshop User magazine and president of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals.

The book arrived the same day a client requested a rough design for a retail display. I thumbed through the book and to my surprise I found the book to be exactly what the ads state. Every page is in full color. You are given detailed step-by-step instructions on how to create each effect. And there are more than 300 of the hottest new tricks, tips, and techniques in one mondo cool book! Within minutes I found just what the client wanted. I followed the ten-step tutorial and to my amazement it worked! No Murphy's Law here. Scott included every click and command in understandable English. Some of the topics include: Drop Shadow Techniques, Cool Type Effects, Metal and Chrome Effects, Photographic Effects, Down and Dirty Tricks, Paint and Brush Effects, Advertising Effects, Texture and Background Effects, Interface Design, Photoshop Web Effects, and Special Effects.

In **Photoshop Down and Dirty Tricks** Scott teaches how the Pros use Photoshop. He doesn't bore us with instruction on how to mask or what a pixel is. He just gets right into using Photoshop to get results. Scott uses humor throughout the book creating a personal and memorable tutorial. For example, in the tutorial on drop shadows he instructs you to drag the shadow layer down and to the right then adds "I think moving it down and to the right is a federal law, but I can't swear to it." Every page has screen shots of where and what you are supposed to be doing. In addition, on every page there is a sidebar that tells of a

Photoshop tip. Sometimes it relates to the effect; sometimes it's just a random comment from Scott. The tips alone are a book in themselves.

There are many good books on Photoshop but **Down and Dirty** is on the top of my list. It's not a book to be read cover to cover. You just find an effect you like follow the tutorial and sit back and grin. If you need a reference that is full of inspiration the **Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty Tricks** should be on your shelf.

New Riders Publishing, \$ 39.99  
[www.DownandDirtyTricks.com](http://www.DownandDirtyTricks.com) 

## ***The WHAT NEXT department:***



*This **Byte Bill** parody is the ultimate toy for every kitty hacker. One look (or sniff) and your cat will be simply monopolized by its very essence (it's the catnip).*

*You can buy it at:*  
[www.shopusanimal.com/bytebill.html](http://www.shopusanimal.com/bytebill.html)

# Cookie Pal, Version 1.7a

## Kookaburra Software

*reviewed by Angelo Parra*

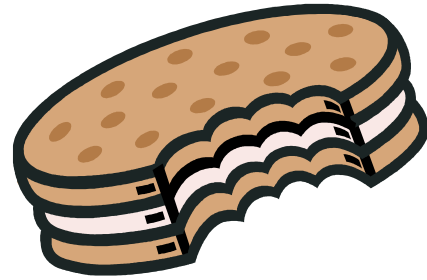
**B**efore I joined RPCUG, I was one of those computer users who clicks away merrily, blithely oblivious to what's going on inside the computer – until something goes wrong. What went wrong for me was rapidly diminishing hard disk space on my old Dell Dimension 200. I began looking for stuff to delete, and I discovered cookies on my computer! I had more cookies than Famous Amos, and I thought I should sink my teeth into them.

I found out that, like chocolate chip cookies, which I love, and oatmeal cookies, which I can do without, some cookies you want to have on your computer and some you can do without. Not knowing the difference, I turned to **Cookie Pal** for help.

**Cookie Pal** describes itself as “a complete Internet cookie management system for Windows 95, 98, ME, NT 4.0, 2000 and XP. It works with your web browser to give you complete control over the cookies which are accepted by and stored on your system.”

In short, I agree, but not without some qualifications. My first round with **Cookie Pal** was a bit doughy. On the plus side, I installed it on my choking Dell Dimension 200, and all appeared to be going well. **Cookie Pal** installs in minutes, and offers three choices of start-up: on demand; when opening your web browser; or when Windows starts up. There's a minimal but adequate online tutorial at [www.kburra.com/cptut/home.html](http://www.kburra.com/cptut/home.html). **Cookie Pal** automatically works with Internet Explorer, Netscape, and Opera, even if they are all running at the same time, according to Kookaburra.

When a cookie is received, the cookie alert window prompts you to accept it or not, or always accept or never accept it. The “always” feature is nice if you habitually go to a website that stubbornly wants to put something in your oven. Check a wild card box on the prompt



window, and **Cookie Pal** will reject all sites related to the cookie in question.

**Cookie Pal**'s main window lets you define or change the filters that it uses to automatically accept and reject cookies...which is great if you trash raisin cookies, but later decide you want to taste them. (And some websites require that you accept cookies for the sites to work properly.)

But my needs were not cookie cutter. The problem came when I tried to use **Cookie Pal** to sort through and delete the stale cookies that had accumulated on my computer for more than four years. The software hardened and seemed to go into a state of paralysis. I contacted tech support, and received the following message in return: some users who have a very large amount of cookies on their system have found that it does take **Cookie Pal** a while to read all the cookies on their system... I would recommend letting **Cookie Pal** sit for perhaps up to 1/2 hour to see if it finally comes up with your list of IE cookies. Although this is unusual, some customers have found it can take that long to read the cookies on their machines. “A very large amount of cookies”? Well, duh.

As it turned out, I never was able to see my cookie list with **Cookie Pal**. So I turned to trusty old Windows Explorer (which, incidentally, can be set to offer more information on each cookie than does **Cookie Pal**), found my mile-long list of cookies, and did my own culling. It took forever, but it seemed I had no choice. Not that I knew what I was deleting.

In the end I resorted to the ultimate answer to all computer woes, I bought a new computer. I got a new Dell, dude, and I installed **Cookie Pal** to keep my new computer from getting funky up with cookie crumbs. And it works great, except for one inconvenience. **Cookie Pal**

# SOFTWARE

## ailable for REVIEW

**Email Roberta** at [Roberta316@yahoo.com](mailto:Roberta316@yahoo.com) or  
**Ken** at [hobbikat@hobbikats.com](mailto:hobbikat@hobbikats.com)

- ✓ **ArtIcons Pro 3.0** (\$19.95)  
It is the best tool for creating buttons, tiny icons or editing smaller graphics; works with Windows XP.  
[www.aha-soft.com/articons](http://www.aha-soft.com/articons)
- ✓ **CDH Media Wizard** (\$ 50)  
A powerful, all-in-one multimedia application supporting playback of all popular formats.  
[www.cdhnow.com](http://www.cdhnow.com)
- ✓ **Express Thumbnail Creator 1.4** (\$39.95)  
A powerful yet easy-to- use tool which lets you create HTML image galleries ready to be published on the Web.  
[www.express-soft.com/etc](http://www.express-soft.com/etc)
- ✓ **Fitznik 1.00** (\$19.95)  
An unusually clever puzzle game that doesn't require arcade reflexes to play  
[www.dexterity.com/fitznik](http://www.dexterity.com/fitznik)

### Cookie Pal (continued)

conflicts with [www.TVGuide.com](http://www.TVGuide.com). (Thank God it doesn't conflict with the TV remote!) When I flip though the TV Guide listings, the browser hangs, and becomes inoperative, even though I've allowed TV Guide online to place its baked goods on my pristine hard drive. However, when I disable **Cookie Pal**, the TV Guide site works perfectly. Which makes me wonder if there are other sites in cyberspace that are going to give **Cookie Pal** a tummy ache.

But, all in all, **Cookie Pal** sits in my task tray, vigilantly helping me bar unwanted cookies. I now know the power of a saloon bouncer. And that, in and of itself, to me is worth the price.

## Cookie Pall, version 1.7a

*Kookaburra Software*

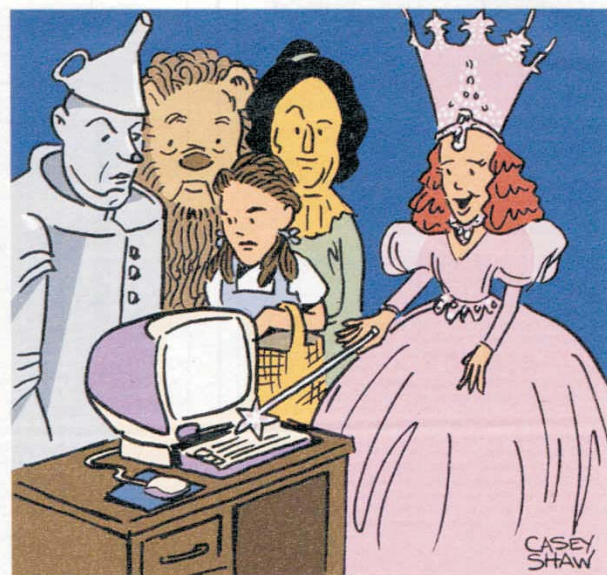
[www.kburra.com/cpal.html](http://www.kburra.com/cpal.html)

Free trial; \$15 to keep

System requirements:

Windows 95/98/ME/NT/4/2000/XP 

- ✓ **Heartwood Hearts 2.2** (\$24.95)  
An addicting game with gorgeous graphics and an alluring mystique that makes every other card game hard to look at.  
[www.silvercrk.com](http://www.silvercrk.com)
- ✓ **HTML Guard 2.0** (\$15)  
Protects your web site from unauthorized copying.  
[www.aw-soft.com/htmlguard.html](http://www.aw-soft.com/htmlguard.html)
- ✓ **HyperText Studio 4.0** (\$99.00)  
WYSIWYG Web Authoring Tool Enables More Efficient Web Site Development  
[www.olsonsoft.com](http://www.olsonsoft.com)
- ✓ **Remote Task Manager 3.7.1** (\$40.00)  
Complete Remote Access Management Solution for Multiple Networks! Windows NT/2000/XP  
[www.protect-me.com/rtm/](http://www.protect-me.com/rtm/)
- ✓ **Space Searcher 1.01** (\$17.90)  
A File Management utility that allows you to easily search for disk usage and free disk space.  
[www.express-soft.com](http://www.express-soft.com)
- ✓ **Visual Day Planner 7.3** (\$29.95)  
A customizable network capable calendar planner for Windows 9.x/ME/NT/2000/XP.  
[www.inklineglobal.com/products/vdp](http://www.inklineglobal.com/products/vdp)
- ✓ **Web Media Publisher** (\$50.00)  
Introduced as the first 32 bit professional HTML editor.  
[www.wbmedia.com/publisher/](http://www.wbmedia.com/publisher/)



"All you had to do was press the 'Home' key."



# Dream Suite, Auto fx software

*reviewed by Roberta Mikkelsen*

**A**uto fx, one of the major developers of Adobe Photoshop plug-ins, one of my favorite filter companies. Their software doesn't crash, it is user-friendly, and it works! My first filter purchase was Auto fx's Photo/Graphic Edges and Patterns. This program allows me to add borders to my photographs and design instant background patterns. They give you thousands of choices.

**Dream Suite** doesn't have thousands of effects, only eighteen. But within that eighteen you will find graphic design gold. You can take a photograph and make it look like as if it is in a slide holder by using the "35 mm Frame" effect. Selecting "Instamatic" makes it look like it is a Polaroid Instamatic photograph. You have control over every aspect of the effect. For example with the "Instamatic" effect you can shade the border so it appears that the photograph is being lifted from the surface of the page. This produces a much more realistic effect than the typical drop shadow. Some other effects are: chisel, cubism, deckle, dimension x, focus, hotstamp, liquid metal, crackle, metal mixer, photoborder, phototone, putty, ripple and tape.

As a traditional painter, one technique I like is a crackle effect. To do this on a canvas you apply different coats of paint and glazes that interact with each other. When this dries you have a crazed or crackle effect which gives the painting an aged antique look. This method is time consuming, often irreversible, and toxic. With **Dream Suite** I can not only create a realistic crackle effect, I can also select certain areas and, by using the flake tool, make it look like the plaster has chipped off, thereby adding to the antique look.

"PhotoDepth" and "Crease" both bring depth to lifeless images. You can add frays or creases along the edge of an image to make it appear as if it were raised up from the image. You also have over a dozen textured surfaces with PhotoDepth in which you can add a slight texture or a dramatic one such as a canvas

texture. "Crease" adds bends or folds in a page which increases the illusion of dimension.



**Dream Suite** has several presets and control tabs which have sliding adjustable settings that allow you to control depth, edge, radius, smoothness and much more. There are also memory dots that let you capture your current state, experiment some more and then go back to the saved version. The user-defined presets also allow you to save and load your effects and reapply them. The zoom and pan tools are helpful for seeing detailed areas. Another nice feature is the control you have over the light and shadow areas.

The effects are resolution independent and supports file loading and saving for .psd, .tif, .bmp, .jpg, .gif, and .png files. Most of the effects add dimension and add that "special" look you may be looking for. Some effects like crease, crackle, focus, liquid metal and tape became my favorites. With these effects I can age my photograph, tear it up, then tape it back together for a very unique effect.


It is a bit slow when applying the effect just for viewing purposes; I wish they had added a preview window so you could see the effect faster and then move on if you don't like it.

A nice feature is when you fly over a control; a paragraph length "Tool Tips" pop up. I like quick short answers without having to break out the manual.

For the average non-professional artist Dream Suite Series I may be a bit pricey but for the Graphic Designer or computer artist it is a real asset. If you really fall in love with one effect I would strongly recommend buying a single effect for \$50.00. Auto fx is a professional software company and works without a hitch everytime. **DreamSuite** is a stand-alone program or a Photoshop plug-in.

**Dream Suite** from AutoFx, [www.autofx.com](http://www.autofx.com)  
\$299.00 for Series One,  
or \$50.00 for each individual effect module

System requirements:  
Windows 98, ME or NT/2000  
Minimum of a 400 mhz PC  
192 mb Memory recommended

There is a downloadable demo at:  
[www.autofx.com/demo\\_pages/form.htm](http://www.autofx.com/demo_pages/form.htm) 

## Speed Up Your Hard Disk

**I**f programs and files don't load as fast as they used to, you need to defrag your hard disk.


Your computer stores files on your hard disk in chunks. If you create and delete a lot of files, the chunks that make up an individual file may not be next to each other on the disk. If you have lots of files scattered in this way, your disk performance slows noticeably.

Defrag — short for defragment — is a process that finds the scattered chunks of files and orders them sequentially on your hard disk. Once that's done, the read mechanism barely has to move to load a file, so the load time decreases. The result is much faster system performance.

To defrag the hard disk of your Windows system, use the Disk Defragmenter utility found in the Programs/Accessories/System Tools folder.

Select the disks you want to scan. ScanDisk can check all writable disks in your system, even removable media disks. The Standard test checks the disk for file system errors. Run this test at least once a week or after any system crash.

The Thorough test checks the physical surface of your disk for hard errors — spots on the hard disk that can no longer hold data. A Thorough test can take an hour or more, depending on your system's speed and your hard disk's size. If you select this option, ScanDisk fixes any errors it finds based on the settings you select on the Advanced screen. Otherwise, the program stops whenever it finds an error.

The Advanced options let you indicate how ScanDisk should deal with errors. After a disk crash, select Make Copies under Cross-Linked Files and Convert to Files under Lost File Fragments. Examine the resulting files to see if they are files you need. For your weekly cleanup, select the Delete and Free options, respectively. 

## Videogame for travel sickness...?

**V**irtual reality computer games could hold the key to combating travel sickness.



UK scientists will use the 200 volunteers they have recruited to test the idea. The researchers think the body can adjust to the sort of motion that causes queasiness in cars or aeroplanes. A virtual reality racing car game will be used to mimic the feeling of travel sickness. It is known that motion sickness can be overcome if someone is exposed regularly to real motion. Dr. Peter Howarth of Loughborough University wants to test this phenomenon, known as habituation, in virtual environments.

Each will be asked to play a virtual racing car game, using head-mounted displays, for 20 minutes at a time.

"It could be that if people play these types of computer games at home and habituate to the appearance of motion, they will experience less motion sickness in the real world," said Dr. Howarth.

"So the playing of computer games could not only be fun, but could also be beneficial in cutting down feelings of sickness whilst travelling."

The volunteers will be asked to report back on how they are feeling while they are playing the game. This will allow the scientists to gather information about how someone adjusts to virtual motion.

The next step will be to see if a person who has become used to experiencing virtual motion will cope better when exposed to real motion. The Department of Human Sciences at Loughborough has recruited the 200 volunteers it needs to undertake the study. It requires no more.

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) is funding the work.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid\\_1767000/1767941.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid_1767000/1767941.stm) 



# Project PC ReNew receives a United Way Visions Grant

*Hank Feinberg, Director, PC ReNew*

**Y**esterday I received a phone call from a reporter at the Journal News. He asked "How does it feel to receive a United Way Visions Grant?" I told him I didn't know that we had won. The congratulatory letter and the first check for the \$4,765 grant were sitting in a post office box in New City.. I told him that "I'm just thrilled. It helps so much. We are totally non-profit and we receive no funding of any kind. We've been going into our own pockets to buy the software that goes on the computers we give away. " To quote Bob Jenks, "America! What a great country."

I would like to thank all of those who have contributed their time and talent to make PC ReNew the "Home of the BIG HEARTS." In a little over 8 months we have gained county-wide recognition and stature with other non-profit organizations. We have obtained the exclusive right to take from the Rockland County Waste Drop Off Center any and all electronics and computers that are discarded. We have recycled many telephones for battered spouses through Rockland County Family Services.

We have storage space that is donated and have established relationships with several corporations who have donated their older computers. Recently, we received almost 80 Pentiums from M & T Bank, Novartis Pharmaceuticals and Provident Bank.



We have an ongoing relationship with Rockland County Big Brothers and Big Sisters, The County of Rockland Department of Social Services, Vocational Counseling

Services of Rockland, The Commons at Spring Valley and Nino's 9-11 Fund. The need for our services and the computer systems we refurbish is great.

Every time we donate a system to a child, we are helping to secure another computer-literate adult who will be able to function in tomorrow's society. Fewer than 10% of the people in the world have ever even touched a computer let alone own one. We are helping to build America's future.

Let me tell you about some of the people we gave computers to in 2001. Almost everyone comes with a heart touching story. We gave a computer to a grandmother who is raising her 12 year old grandchild; a mother who is on dialysis 3 times a week and just got her 8-year-old son back from foster care; a woman who had a stroke when she was 20 and now is 40 and is on social assistance; a family of 5 on social assistance; several young mothers who are on social assistance and are being trained in computer and office skills for future job placement.

These are just some of the stories representing the more than 40 computers we have given to the community since September. We are now refurbishing from 150 to 200 computers a year, at a cost of less than \$10 per unit.

In 2002 we want to develop a course in Basic Computer and a formal course in Computer Repair. We need volunteers to help transport donated equipment. We want to expand our hours and get the maximum use out of our facility to increase our PC System output and help get even more computers recycled.

We need all the volunteers we can get. There is a job for you if you will donate some time.

Become part of **PC ReNew**. Learn how to repair computers and printers. Make friends with our volunteers the nicest group of "Big Hearts" you will ever meet. You can make the difference. ☺

# How to Expand & Upgrade PCs, 2nd Edition, 2001

by Preston Gralla

*reviewed by William L. Ballinger*

## BOOK REVIEW

This book got my attention because of the color cutaway of a computer tower's insides. It led me to believe that my tower was roomy and spacious and parts would be easy to install. Reality hit real quick when I opened up my Sony Vaio. Parts were close together and the circuit board, where my SDRAM was going to be installed, was partially hidden behind the power supply and three circuit ribbons.

I choose to double my SDRAM from 128 to 256. On the advice of the author, I went to the Sony website to find out how to open up the tower case. The three screws that held the case to the chassis were hidden behind some plastic trim. Getting the cover off was the easy part. Installing the SDRAM into the chassis was harder because of my big hands. I tried to make room by removing the power supply but two screws I could not get to stopped me. Using some of my previous experience on working with electrical and electronic items, I used an unsharpened pencil to push open the clips that would hold the 128 SDRAM module on the circuit board and wooden tongs used for black and white print development. The pencil and wooden tongs were not in the chapter on tools as the author suggested. The tongs do look like the tweezers the author said you would use.

When working with electronic components you should follow the precautions the author mentions. They are: work with the item unplugged from the power source, and discharge yourself of static electricity. Since this is the winter season now I would suggest not wearing clothing that would generate static electricity or use a humidifier to make the transfer of static electricity harder, and definitely don't work on a carpeted surface.

After, I had gotten the SDRAM in with the aid of the wooden tongs and saw the clips holding it in securely I hurried to close up my tower. Reconnecting the wires and cables was easy because I followed the author's suggestion to label everything. I must have done everything

right because my machine starts up normally and when I click on settings and system properties it now says 256 RAM.

The book has other items you can add to your computer to expand its capabilities. Such items are a DVD or CD-RW drives, power supplies, modems, and various video and audio cards. The author does advise you to backup your important files to tape or CD-R before doing a major job.

In the last chapter, the author talks about the least expensive ways to make your machine work faster. He recommends that you remove all the stuff you have on your hard drive you are not using; use your system maintenance program to check for errors, duplicate programs, and useless internet files, and then defragment your hard drive. You should go to the manufacturer's website periodically for updates, too.

Try to quantify any changes for speed by using stopwatch. See how long it takes something to be done before you make any changes.

I do recommend the book because it will give you insight to what you can add to your system before you decide to buy a new one. Doing it yourself saves you the few days your machine would sit in a shop before a technician would complete the job. You also know what brand component(s) went inside, too. Before you do any upgrades, you may want to consider waiting until your machine's warranty has expired. Perhaps, having the manufacturer perform the upgrade may extend your warranty.

The glossy photos and drawings are first class. Everything is explained thoroughly without using a lot of technical terms.

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# MICROSOFT HAIKU

IN JAPAN, they have replaced the impersonal and unhelpful Microsoft error messages with their own Japanese haiku poetry, each with only 17 syllables: five in the first line, seven in the second, five in the third. Some examples:

Your file was so big.  
It might be very useful.  
But now it is gone.

The website you seek  
Cannot be located, but  
Countless more exist.

Chaos reigns within.  
Reflect, repent and reboot.  
Order shall return.

Aborted effort.  
Close all that you have worked on.  
You ask far too much.

Windows NT crashed.  
I am the Blue Screen of Death.  
No-one hears your screams.

Yesterday it worked.  
Today it is not working.  
Windows is like that.

Stay the patient course.  
Of little worth is your ire.  
The network is down.

A crash reduces  
Your expensive computer  
To a simple stone.

Three things are certain:  
Death, taxes and lost data.  
Guess which has occurred.

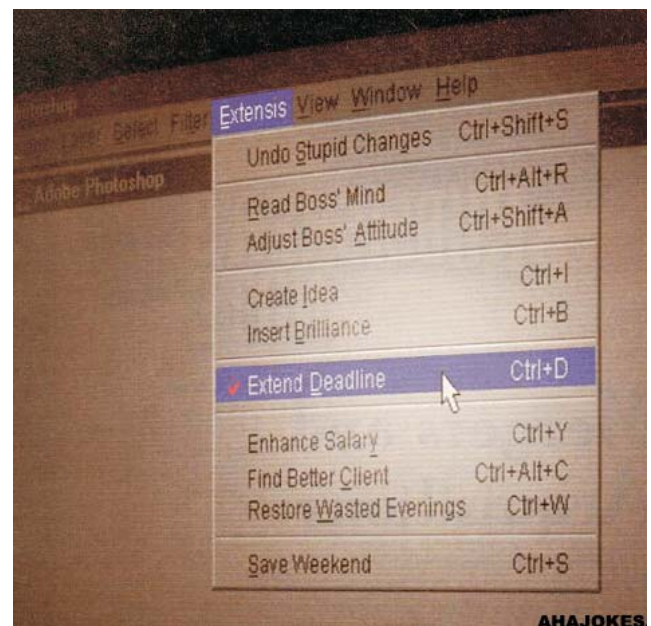
You step in the stream,  
But the water has moved on.  
This page is not here.

Out of memory.  
We wish to hold the whole sky,  
But we never will.

Having been erased,  
The document you're seeking  
Must now be retyped.

# IDIOT SIGHTINGS

- ✓ I worked with an individual who plugged her power strip back into itself and for the life of her could not understand why her system would not turn on.
- ✓ A rare "double sighting:  
A friend had a brilliant idea for saving disk space. He thought if he put all his Microsoft Word documents into a tiny font they'd take up less room. When he told me, I was with another friend. She thought it was a good idea too.
- ✓ *Tech Support*: "How much free space do you have on your hard drive?"  
*Individual*: "Well, my wife likes to get up there on that Internet, and she downloaded ten hours of free space. Is that enough?"
- ✓ *Individual*: Now what do I do?  
*Tech Support*: What is the prompt on the screen?  
*Individual*: It's asking for "Enter Your Last Name."  
*Tech Support*: Okay, so type in your last name.  
*Individual*: How do you spell that?



AHAJOKES





## ROCKLAND PC USERS GROUP

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F I R S T C L A S S



## WANT TO JOIN THE GROUP? HERE'S HOW!

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RPCUG at 169 South Main Street, Suite 384, New City, NY 10956-3358. (PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION)

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Spouse's E-mail address

Evening Phone:

Children's Names (for Family Membership)

INDIVIDUAL \$ 35	JOINT \$ 40	FAMILY \$ 45	STUDENT \$ 15	CORPORATE SPONSOR \$ 100	RENEWAL: Member # _____
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