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In this issue: *News Digest - The New, The Best And The Worst - Dufferdum - Inner Circles
To Dual-Core Or Not To Dual-Core - Laptop Desk - Should You Upgrade To Vista - Buying An HDTV
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JOURNAL OF THE CHICAGO COMPUTER SOCIETY

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Commentary and news about some of the articles and also our writers, along with related matters, all intended to make this journal more useful to you.

by Charlie Sickels, Managing Editor
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Greetings again, loyal readers and CCS members. We have here our monthly journal of CCS happenings, as reported to us by other CCS members, and PC-related events, trends, and developments which are made available to us and deemed by us to be of interest to you. As the title implies, we also have some occasional behind-the-scenes items to relate.

Regarding that last-mentioned point, we tell you that CCS President Al Cheeks has just been to both the annual APCUG conference in Vegas and the immediately following giant Consumer Electronics Show. This show incorporates what remains of the once-vaunted Comdex exhibition and conference, which occasionally used Chicago for its smaller Spring version. A touch of nostalgia here. At the last appearance of Comdex in Chicago, I had a chance meeting with Harold Driscoll. He was well known for his strongly-held views on computers, large and small. But on that occasion he spoke only of his driving hobby—old style steam locomotives. A few of them still exist, fondly maintained by enthusiasts like Harold, and are available for exhibition runs near Chicago. Alas, Harold and Comdex succumbed soon after. Sad ends of an era. Bright flames dimmed and dead.

So now, Al has survived both APCUG and CES. We expect that he will make

available to us his impressions and assessments of developments, events, and trends. His and others’ views of what is good and profitable—and maybe useful and worthwhile—should be in eH-C soon. Watch for them.

Something over a year and a half ago, at a Hard-Copy staff meeting, we were discussing what we might do to expand our use of graphics. We were all aware of the interest in and growth of digital photography. We didn’t bet the farm on it, as Kodak seems to have done—rather successfully—but felt it could and should have its place in our journal. I suggested, to no great enthusiasm as I recall, that we start a member photo feature showing each month a picture selected from the expected flood of submissions. Since I’m the managing editor, we did it. Ho ho. The response was underwhelming and we had to scabble for pictures to show, only temporarily priming the pump as I claimed. So it went with some hard pumping.

Then a critical mass developed, not here exactly, at least not yet. Our umbrella organization, APCUG, in its collective wisdom looked into a similar endeavor. But instead of offering a gracious showcase for member submissions, they proposed a contest. Bingo. There is apparently something in this country about a contest that arouses the competitive spirit and what it can produce.

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Network Solutions.
Contact our CCS Administrator,
Beata Kernan, at
(708) 588-0385 for a membership
application.

(May it be ever thus.) Their contest entries began to trickle in while we were still pumping.

So, being somewhere north of foolish, we paid some attention and applied some analytical consideration. We looked at their rules and procedures with an eye or two to see what would make sense for a somewhat similar effort on a smaller, local scale. Their rules, both for entry submissions and for subsequent evaluation thereof by a small group of judges, seemed to us to be pretty steep, too restrictive. We felt it a bit much to require the snail-mailing of multiple high quality photo paper submissions which would pass content tests of which the IRS would be proud. We were not, after all, a nature, news, or fashion publication charging big bucks for our output. We are what we are, a local and regional journal presenting content of interest to our friends and neighbors, hoping to entertain, enlighten, and even sometimes inspire them. So what to do?

Some productive thoughts emerged. Al Cheeks wisely appointed Irene Ganas as administratrix of the project-to-be, the CCS Photo Contest. Irene has among her skills some experience with photo contests. She at first favored us with contest rules from other organizations which, it might be claimed, would repel a thundering throng of all but the most skilled and dedicated of advanced amateur or professional photographers. Someone consigned those rules to a merciful end and the CCS contest rules and regs evolved from APCUG's into the simple rules you have seen in the announcements of the contest here and on the CCS website.

Some crucial easements for the CCS version began with the far simpler submission of entries as JPEG attachments under one megabyte in size to ordinary e-mail, more than one permitted per fewer and simpler category. Another I believe to be a means by which the anonymous judges may themselves submit anonymous entries without prejudice to their evaluation. Since the larger number of judges are anonymous in the CCS contest—not so in APCUG's—they are also made immune to any temptation of bribery; very few have complained. Since the prizes to be awarded are far from monumental, interference from organized crime is also highly unlikely. Wise choices made.

So how are we doing in our version of the photo contest? APCUG's closed with, to my understanding, fewer than 70 entries nation-wide. The CCS version, open until end of January, has so far 150 entries, with others still coming, all fielded by Irene. Jerry Sass has worked very hard to get all these posted for your viewing, in advance of the awards, on our CCS website. To my knowledge, none such are available on APCUG's. Double ho ho! Will we be doing this again next year? You betcha. Double bingo! We may try for triples. ■ (TOC)

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Chicago Computer Society Purpose

The Society is an education and information service organization dedicated to expanding knowledge, understanding, and the use of microcomputers by individuals and professionals.

The purposes of the Society are to operate exclusively for charitable, scientific or educational purposes, in the course of which operation and in furtherance thereof:

TO PROVIDE its membership with timely, accurate, and practical solutions to microcomputer productivity problems.

TO ATTRACT and help educate new microcomputer users, and to retain and learn from experienced, knowledgeable users.

TO SATISFY the information needs of its membership.

TO BE a recognizable force in the industry so that Society opinions may positively influence future microcomputer products.

News Digest

News Briefs from the January 2007 *PC Today*

by Calvin Clinchard

Boring? Nah

by Calvin Clinchard

Think Excel spreadsheets. Now think PowerPoint presentations. Still awake? Impressive! Well, Crystal Xcelsius, maker of “data visualization” software for business, is out to change that sleepy impression with its new CX Now! (www.cx-now.com) software. CX Now! enables everyday users to transform spreadsheets into cool-looking, interactive PowerPoint slides. CX Now! is currently available as a free download.

.....*More*

The New, the Best, and the Worst

by Pim Borman

Watch the Back Door!

Many an afternoon I see a school bus stopping in the neighborhood to unload students toting enormous bags of expensive text books on their backs. It always irks me because it seems so unnecessary. The heavy backpacks put an unhealthy strain on the students’ spines, and the expensive books put a severe strain on family budgets, especially if there are several children of school age. (Public school students must pay for their text books in Indiana, in case you’re not from around here.)

....*More*

Dufferdom

Kingdom of the Ordinary User

by David D. Uffer

Ever think about this, one of the consequences of Internet spam: missed genuine messages? Calling them “false phonies” may make them sound less serious but it is a real loss. Having a publicly known e-mail address would only add to the risk of garbage, obnoxious, or offensive messages, which is why I do not announce my address here—and no longer elsewhere—and why I wonder at the bravery of those who do. As it stands, I get a bunch of suspicious messages, a consequence of having previously been too open and trusting. I assume a lot of readers have the same experience.

.....*More*

Inner Circles

by Berry F. Phillips

The birth of a new year brings changes in membership and planning activities within the “Inner Circles” that often operate almost like occult groups in their private inner sanctums. They are elected or appointed to serve others and work without compensation. These “Inner Circles” operate in civic organizations like computer clubs and represent a very small percentage of the memberships. While those of us who served in the military were told never to volunteer, the “Inner Circles” volunteered.!

.....*More*

CCS Help Line

For Members Only.

You can get help with your computer needs by going to the CCS web site in the members only area.

Click CCS Help Line.

....More

Announcing the Chicago Computer Society Photo Contest

CCS Photo Contest Rules

Prizes

Grand Winner -- 250-300GB External Backup

Each Category --

1st	\$25 Gift Certificates
2nd	Subscription to Smart Computing
3rd	1GB Thumb Drive

...More

West Suburban Computer Club

4th Quarter Report

By Terry Moye (scribe)

Meeting of October 5, 2006

Stan Hungness, the group's coordinator, called the October, 2006 meeting of the West Suburban Computer Club to order about 7:30 PM. The meeting as usual started with Open Forum, included Latest Technology Update, and ended with the Presentation.

...More

REVIEW

NeatReceipts Scanalizer

The SCANALIZER by NEATRECEIPTS is a hardware/software package that allows you to organize the paper products in your life. It is specifically geared to copying, analyzing, organizing and filing receipts (with provisions to identify and present Income Tax info) and business cards, and copying, sorting and storing documents.

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Mini Expo V Revisited



The Chicago Computer Society is the largest Personal Computer user group in Illinois. We have over a dozen Clubs and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that meet regularly in Chicago, the suburbs and northwestern Indiana. There is a CCS meeting or event held every week! Click the “Monthly Calendar” hotlink (located to the left and on the menubar above) for meeting information.

We offer our members a wide range of educational and networking opportunities. If you’re a beginner, joining CCS is a GREAT way to learn how to use your computer more efficiently and effectively. If you’re already an expert, you can meet CCS Members who share similar interests, explore new computer-related topics and showcase your computer knowledge and leadership skills. CCS offers something for EVERYONE and provides numerous opportunities for us to help each other find the RIGHT answers to tough questions and the BEST solutions to difficult problems.

Feel free to attend any of our meetings, talk with any of our Members, browse our Website, read our Journal, “eHard-Copy”(tm), and see for yourself what CCS has to offer YOU!

CCS is a not-for-profit, 501c3, educational Personal Computer user group.