

# WINNERS



## Vote pad

WINDOWS USERS NOVEMBER 2002

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## Your Old PC: Keep it or Dump it...

### Bass explores the hassle of giving away your PC

By Steve Bass  
Pasadena IBM Users Group

If you're reading this column, there's a good chance you have an old PC sitting around gathering dust. I have some ideas and a few sites that'll help you decide what to do with it.

Me? For the last month I've been staring intently at the PC in the corner. It's a third generation, poky PII, the one I used as my main production machine for years.

There are two other PCs under my desk—my current production machine, and the one it replaced, a 450MHz PC I use for testing.

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## Bits & Bytes & Xp

By Siles Bazerman

**R**ecently comments have been made to the effect that I have reported on so many problems with Windows Xp and SP1 that it is discouraging people from upgrading to either. My only comment is that if I didn't write about problems, workaround and bugs, I would have nothing to write. This column would get boring very fast if all I did is repeat "no problems."



There have been over six million downloads of SP1 and only a small percent of problems reported. If you rule out user error, then most problems have been caused by incompatible hardware or software. Your ten-year-old 28.8 modem will not run under Windows Xp. Neither will any Winmodem. Many companies will not write new drivers for old hardware. They will only support the newer items, stating that the old ones have reached the end of their life cycle. What is defined as old varies with the company. It is the manufacturer's responsibility to provide drivers and not Microsoft's. While they do test and certify drivers, many unsigned drivers work perfectly well. It is just that the manufacturer does not wish to pay for the certification process.

The same problem exists with software. Many companies have released updates for their programs specifically for Windows Xp. They have not always got them right. Roxio has released several updates and five or

six patches for Windows Xp and several more for SP1. They seem to have finally gotten it right. Nero had released several updates and their InCD program was patched as late as October 2. In several cases the earlier release of InCD 3.37 work fine but the updated 10/2 version of 3.37 caused problems.

Let me tell you a story about that. I have been running InCD under SP1 for a while. I upgraded to 3.37 from 3.20 back in early September when it was released. No problems. I was advised to update to the October 2 version because of reported problems. I did so and then went on my trip to the east coast. On my return, I found that turning off my printer while Windows Xp was running caused an immediate reboot.

In order to troubleshoot that problem I turned off the automatic reboot (Control Panel, System, Advanced Startup, Recovery). This lets me see the error messages and to look them up. By this time I had forgotten about the update. You can then look up the error messages by either the wording or the stop and eight digit number by doing a Google search.

The messages varied all over the place, from symevent (NAV), to networking, to memory errors, and video card. I updated symevent several times and would get a temporary fix. I replaced the video card and drivers. I have three more AGP cards in the garage and both old and new drivers for each. I disconnected my network, and also ran docmem memory tester overnight with no errors. None of this

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## Telephone Help Line

| PROGRAM/SOFTWARE                    | NAME                   | PHONE        | TIME  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|---|
| CompuServe                          | Cathy Grammer-Margolin | 949-645-5950 | 6-10 p.m. & weekends                          |
| CorelDraw 5                         | George Margolin        | 949-645-5950 | Most times                                    |
| CorelDraw & Ventura<br>& PhotoPaint | Sunny Lockie           | 949-644-0103 | 6-10 p.m. weekdays<br>9 a.m.-10 p.m. weekends |
| Hardware                            | Jonathan Means         | 714-542-1653 | 6-9 p.m.                                      |
| Internet                            | Cathy Grammer-Margolin | 949-645-5950 | 6-10 p.m. & weekends                          |
| Novell, NT & Networking             | Jonathan Means         | 714-542-1653 | 6-9 p.m.                                      |
| Quicken & Quickbooks                | Max Lockie             | 949-720-8170 | 6-10 p.m. & weekends                          |
| Windows 95,98,Me,Xp                 | Siles Bazerman         | 714-897-2868 | 9 a.m.-8 p.m.                                 |
| Word for Windows                    | Cathy Grammar-Margolin | 949-645-5950 | 6-10 p.m. & weekends                          |
| WordPerfect Windows                 | Sunny Lockie           | 949-644-0103 | 6-10 p.m. weekdays<br>9 a.m.-10 p.m. weekends |

## General Meeting November 9 Orange Coast College 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon in Science Room #149

## LEARN ABOUT YOUR COMPUTER & IMAGE EXPERT

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### PURPOSE

WINNERS, a computer association, is a volunteer organization providing a forum for sharing information and experiences related to Windows-based software, encouraging ethical use of computers and software, and offering service to our communities.

### MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership is \$20.00 for individuals; \$5.00 each additional family member.

### MEETINGS

WINNERS generally meets the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at Orange Coast College in the Science Building, Room #149, 2701 Fairview, Costa Mesa.

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Info/Message Line 949-644-0295  
Website: <http://windowsusers.org>

## FUTURE MEETING DATES

- ★ November 9
- ★ December 14
- ★ January 11
- ★ February 8

solved the problem. The only way to avoid crashing was to turn off the printer after the computer was shut down. Then, by chance, I found a message in one of the newsgroups I monitor that reported the identical problem and more importantly, the solution. The culprit was the last update of InCD. Retrograding to the earlier version resolved the crashes. Only a few people have reported this problem, and all of them had no problems with the earlier version, while those with problems with the earlier version have had no problems with the latest. I am not even going to attempt an explanation of this. Nero can't either.

Do I blame Microsoft, Nero, or a combination of hardware and software on my computer? The reality is if it were either Nero or Microsoft, then the problem would be repeated on all computers running both InCD and Windows Xp. With any luck the next update of InCD will fix the problem. Similarly, I once had a problem with a Quarterdeck beta of Partition It. Beta 1 worked pretty well with a few minor bugs. Beta 2 crashed all the beta testers' machines. Beta 3 went RTM almost immediately. Someone mistyped a few or even one line of code.

With the release of new CD burners with Mt. Rainier capabilities to do packet writing without formatting the CD-RW, look for the next service pack for Windows Xp to have this built in to the native CD burning program.

More next month.

## Elections were held in October



Elected by the Membership:

George Margolin  
Cathy Grammer-Margolin  
Ken Kamber  
Rudy Wolf  
Ray Howard  
Charles Schreiber

### Election of Officers by the Board

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| President      | Terry Carrier   |
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| Secretary      | Ken Kamber      |
| Treasurer      | Rudy Wolf       |

### Appointments

|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
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| Membership      | Louise McCain |
| Publicity       | Steve Dela    |
| Parliamentarian | Max Lockie    |

# President's Message

## November 2002

*By Terry Carrier*

**T**ired but plugging along. . .

You may notice that I haven't done any reviews for the past few months. I am in a new position at work and they are making a number of demands taking more time from me. I am in fact now working for the most part in Ontario—working ten-hour days and driving one hour each way (in good traffic). I said for the most part because there have been some times that I will drive over to my old location and finish there for a nice fifteen-hour day. It's not so bad, though, at least I have a job, and I get paid for the overtime. I have also found a lot of new places to eat near our new facility. Hopefully we will be on a regular basis by the end of the year. Meanwhile I do owe some reviews which I hopefully will get caught up.

I have learned some new things though with my new job. All of our computers in the new building are loaded with Windows 2000. I like it in that it is a whole lot more secure than previous operating systems. At least I won't have to go around and take off Yahoo messenger from the new computers. The setup will not allow them to install any new software themselves (but I can). The bugbear virus that went around affected us. While we did not get the virus, we had things being sent to our printers from Australia and South America until they updated their anti-virus definitions.

**Terry**

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## YOUR OLD PC

Continued from page 1

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### Put it to Work

One way I use a second machine is by networking it to my production machine and using it for drudge work. For instance, I often up- and download humongous video files. Rather than tie up—and slow down—my production PC, I let the second machine do the work. Have a big print job? Send it to your new-found print server.

The other neat way to use the other PC is for testing and playing around.

Start by creating a backup image using Norton's Ghost  
<http://snurl.com/ghost>

or PowerQuest's Drive Image.  
<http://snurl.com/image>

Then load up any of the tons of freeware and shareware you've wanted to try but wouldn't dare install on your production PC. It's the trick I've used for my work at *PC World* for years.

I have the test PC networked to my production machine. Networking is easy with Win 98SE, and even easier with Win XP. You can pick up a pair of network cards for under \$20. If the PCs are close, a six foot network cable will suffice. If you're already using a broad band connection—DSL or cable modem—all you need is a cheap-o router. Here's a good how-to article that will tell you more about setting up a low-cost home network:  
<http://snurl.com/network>

### The Guilty PC

I know what you're thinking. Why be greedy? Giving the computer to your parents, a friend in need, or maybe a neighbor would be a great deed. Well, kids, be careful with your generosity.

On the one hand, it's a really kind thing to do, and you'll feel good about your donation.

On the other hand, you'll discover another part of the guilt syndrome: You want to make the system perfect before you give it away. Hours, folks, you'll spend hours doing things you

wouldn't, didn't, *couldn't* do when it was your production machine.

Sure, you think, it might be a good idea to throw in a faster hard drive (heck, it's just a 2GB) or maybe a little better graphics card.

You'll also feel an obligation to try and explain how to use all the programs you left on the PC. And I'll bet most are without documentation, and guaranteed to throw your donatee, most likely a novice, into a tizzy.

Then there's the tech support you'll inevitably have to provide. Don't think you will?

I promise, on the grave of three systems buried in the garage, you'll be spending hours working on your old computer. (And discovering just how slow an old computer can be.)

I'll say it again:  
Don't bother.

My recommendation? If that neighbor or friend wants a PC, help them shop for a new one. If it's a parent, be a sport and buy them a brand new computer.

### PC Recycling

Your other option is throw the PC in the virtual dumpster by way of a local recycling center. If you do some digging, I'll bet you can find a local non-profit that does the dirty work examining and repairing PCs, and distributing them to needy school kids. You can find out more at the TechSoup's Recycled Hardware site.  
<http://snurl.com/recycle>

The PC Disposal site provides services for large companies needing to bury old systems  
<http://snurl.com/dispose>

and Dell has a program that lets you trade in, sell, auction, or donate your PC  
[http://snurl.com/Dell\\_ex](http://snurl.com/Dell_ex)

I bumped into an article that addresses many of these issues. *PC World's* Kirk Steers is a recycling expert. In the story, he explains how to decide whether a PC's worth upgrading, and how to recycle it when



it reaches the end of the road. Read "What Should You Do With Your Old Computer?" at  
<http://snurl.com/whatnow>

Listen, if you need me, I'll be in garage hunting down some old monochrome monitors. §

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Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with *PC World* and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check his Home Office columns at  
<http://snurl.com/homeoffice>  
and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at  
<http://snurl.com/signup>

# BugBear Warning—A Dangerous Computer Worm

By Ira Wilsker

I started writing this week's column on freeware utilities. I just checked my email again, and so far, I have received over 40 copies of the highly dangerous and recently released BugBear computer worm, also being referred to as the Tanatos worm. According to reports published in recent days in the computer media, BugBear has surpassed the infamous Klez in becoming the fastest spreading computer worm or virus in history. Trend and Panda, two major providers of free online virus scans, each now report that nearly 20 percent of computers infected with malicious code now have the BugBear worm. The Helsinki based antivirus and computer security firm F-Secure rates the BugBear worm as the worst current computer security outbreak. Symantec, publisher of the popular Norton AntiVirus rates the threat as "severe." McAfee considers the risk as "high."

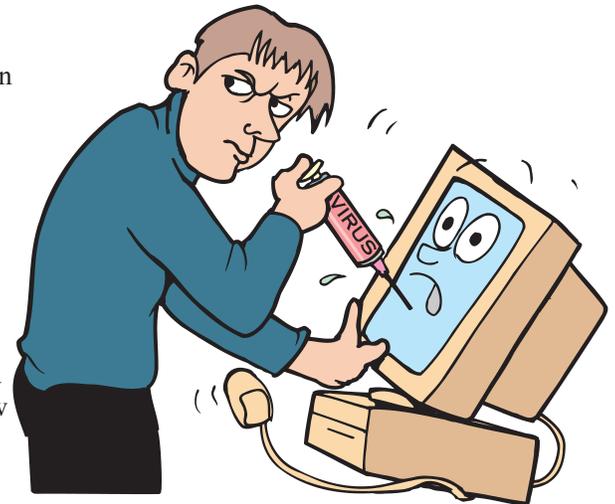
This new worm, or piece of code, is written in the common and popular C++ language, and combines the worst of the Badtrans virus, the Klez worm, and a backdoor Trojan into one extremely dangerous program. Capable of destroying both antivirus software and firewall protection on an infected computer, this nefarious program can also spread rapidly through a network to all computers connected, and through email utilizing its own integral mail program.

Just like the Klez, which until the recent introduction of the BugBear, had been the most rapidly spread virus or worm, BugBear targets the highly publicized security holes in Microsoft's web browser Internet Explorer versions 5, 5.5, and 6, as well as Microsoft's popular email programs Outlook and Outlook Express. Despite the fact that Microsoft released a heavily promoted

patch to close these holes about a year ago, and is included in "Windows Update" integral in all versions of Windows since Windows 95 (click on START-WINDOWS UPDATE while online, and download the customized and free "Critical Update" compiled by Microsoft), millions of Windows users have never installed the patch. Now, in exchange for their complacency, these users are at extreme risk of having their personal information stolen by hackers. There is a real chance of having their identity stolen (referred to in law enforcement as "Identity Theft"), private or confidential information accessed, credit card and banking information compromised, and any files on the hard drive available to a hacker to read, modify, or delete at will.

The BugBear, just like the Klez, Yaha, and similar variants, can be activated by simply opening an email containing the malevolent code, or allowing the infected email to appear in the preview pane of any of the unpatched versions of Outlook or Outlook Express. With email programs other than the Outlook series, opening the attachment containing the worm will infect the users' computer. Once infected, antivirus and firewall utilities will be crippled, with no indication of that fact being noticeable by the user. BugBear will then attempt to replicate itself both by repeatedly emailing itself to addresses in the user's address book (the idea of beginning an email address with "!0000" to prevent this is a HOAX), using a variety of subjects, email content, and attachments, as well as sending itself out over a network to all computers so connected. Using the popular human engineering technique of sending the infected emails to addresses in the victim's address book, the malignant

messages will appear to be from a person known to the recipient. Multiple references to the worm are written to the registry and ".INI" files, ensuring that BugBear is loaded each time the computer is booted. There are no clearly visible indications to the user that a computer is infected. Once installed on the victim computer, a utility to capture the user's keystrokes is activated, enabling a hacker to see user names, passwords, credit card numbers, and any other information or data entered. A "backdoor Trojan" is activated allowing access to the infected machine, the downloading of



the keystrokes by the hacker, and unrestricted access to all files and documents on the computer. Since BugBear itself is transparent, and not apparently destructive, the user will likely never know his computer is infected, and outsiders can access his computer remotely. Antivirus software will still appear to be loaded and updated, and firewalls will appear to function, but in reality they will be useless.

What is a shame is that this infection is easily preventable. Properly updated Microsoft files have significant immunity to the infection. Frequently updated antivirus software offers

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excellent protection, but only if updated with the BugBear information prior to the infection. Practicing “safe hex” and deleting suspicious emails and attachments before they can appear in a preview pane can greatly reduce the chance of infection.

The free online scans available at [housecall.antivirus.com](http://housecall.antivirus.com) and [www.pandasoftware.com](http://www.pandasoftware.com) can detect and kill Bugbear. Most major antivirus publishers, including Symantec (Norton), F-Prot, and Panda have free utilities available for download that can detect and kill BugBear.

Since BugBear is written in the common C++ language, it is likely that some wicked programmers may modify the code, and create variants to get around the protections offered by recently updated antivirus software, just as what happened with many variants of the Klez worm.

It is a darn shame that I have to do so many columns on the topic of high-tech vandalism, but BugBear is especially insidious. I hope that next week, I can write my column on the topics I originally planned, rather than warning all of you about some new danger.

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Ira belongs to the Golden Triangle PC Club, has a radio show and writes a column for the examiner, and is on the Board of Advisors for APCUG as well as a faculty member of the Lamar Institute. You can email him [ira@apcug.org](mailto:ira@apcug.org)

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.

# Computing Factoids

**There are unrelated things I pick up in e-mail that are terrific—but not long enough for an article. Here are two of them.**

*Compiled by Steve Bass,  
Pasadena IBM Users Group*

## **Saving Paper? Ha!**

I just bought a program (which I think is excellent) called “Cool Edit Pro” from Syntrillium ([www.syntrillium.com](http://www.syntrillium.com)) which is audio editing and processing program.

The registration card has a box to check that has this amusing statement:

“Yes! Please send me a hard-copy manual. (A complete manual is included on your CD. In the interest of paper conservation, Syntrillium ships hard-copy manuals only on demand.)”

So I can print it out (conserving their paper) or have them send me something that should have been in the box in the first place (conserving my paper, 225 pages for the manual plus 42 pages for the addendum). Since I paid \$399 for the program, I think I’ll conserve my paper instead of theirs.

—*Stan Slonkosky*



## **Listen Up and Take Heed!**

I always tell people to unplug their PC when working on the insides. It’s something I never do. My unsolicited advice? Do it. All the time.

Here’s why: I added a sound card to my wife’s PC the other day. Easy enough, right? Then, while the system was up and running, I replaced the cover. I’ve done it that way since I started with PCs in 1983. This time it bit me on the butt. The case cover touched an add-in card and the systemboard fried. Better it should have happened to my PC, you know what I’m saying?

—*Steve Bass*

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*Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He’s also a founding member of APCUG. Check his Home Office columns at*

<http://snurl.com/homeoffice>

*and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at*

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# Outrageous Help Desk Stories

## From the Help Desk of a company that would rather stay anonymous

### Printer problems

My favorite story comes from my past when working in a tech support organization for a computer company. At the time of this story, the company had released some buggy spooler software in their product, which was a database product.

We were quite used to frantic customers calling after trying to run an end-of-month job to complain that nothing is coming out of the printer. The typical fix was to dial in to their computer, go into a debugger and through a laborious process unplug the confused spooler software so the job would print. We would then admonish the customer to install the latest patches.

In this particular instance, the customer called at the end of the day, frantic and upset. A couple of us sat around a terminal and modem and dialed into the system. After pawing through the entrails of the machine for a while, the tech next to me talked to the customer on the speakerphone.

tech: "would you mind going over to the printer?"

customer: "OK, I'm there."

tech: "Do you see a white, square button labeled, 'On Line?'"

customer: "Yes, I see it."

tech: "Is it illuminated?"

customer: "No."

tech: "Please press it once."

customer: "OK, I did that...Wow! The most amazing thing just happened: the report is spewing out of the printer. Good job! Thanks a lot!"

And this, of course, is why most companies don't use local support.

They know it is impossible to kill someone over the telephone.

### Upside Down Envelopes

A long-time user complained that the network printer had begun printing envelopes upside-down. I told her the printer could not be printing them upside down, but the envelopes had to have been inserted backward. She insisted that she had been putting envelopes into that printer in exactly the same way for over a year and she knew it had always worked that way before. My solution was to open the printer, take out the toner cartridge, shake it up a bit, turn the envelopes around, reinsert the cartridge, and have her try again. Voila! "See," she said, "I



KNEW I had loaded the envelopes right! It really was something wrong with the printer!"

### It's Magic!

This incident occurred at a previous employer. It was not an outrageous complaint, but was more an example of how incompetent users can be. A user came to me complaining that she could not get any of her documents to print. I went through the normal checks to make sure everything was functioning

properly, which it was. I then determined that she had not logged on properly to the Novell network so her documents were not getting to the networked printer.

Without her knowledge, I got her logged on, but before I printed anything, I thought I would have some fun with her. I asked her if she was familiar with the terms bits and bytes, and she said she was. I told her that her computer sends bytes of information through the network to the printer to be printed.

But for some reason, there were a large number of bytes clogging the line to the printer. We then went over to the printer where I unplugged the network connection. I told her we had to let the bytes "escape" out of the line so it would be clear to print again. I plugged it back in, went to her machine and printed a document. She was amazed!

After that, whenever she had a problem, she asked me to come "Clean the lines again."

### Black and White in Color

Received a call from a new user wanting to know why her documents were not printing in color. I told her that the printer is a black and white laser printer. She said well the program said what you see is what you get. I told her again that the printer is only prints in black and white. She continued to blame the software and her computer and wanted someone to come take a look at it.

### Click the Power Switch

I had a guy who was sitting in the building with all the power off calling me and screaming that he could not print his Excel spreadsheet.

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Article reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group. §

# November 9 – 9 a.m. to 12 noon Orange Coast College Science Building Room #149

*The basics of caring for your computer*

*Random access—come loaded with questions and share some answers*

*Ken will show you his favorite program for editing images—Image Expert.*

*This is now marketed and updated by Jasc as After Shot.*



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