

# COMPUTER TIPS 2005

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What I have done here, is to put all my computer tip articles together from the RPA newsletters, into one place where you can download the whole series. I've attempted to give a index guide for each month during the year indicated and to each months subject so that you find what you are looking for easier. Each month I'll add the newest article to the list and keep it all up dated. If at any time you have a question about something, or want information about something else, don't hesitate to call me at (516) 579-1195 or e-mail me at [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com)

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**January 2005**

**INFO YOU MAY BE L@@KING FOR**

I received quite a few calls and e-mails from members thanking me about the info last month about digital cameras and Florida car rentals. Well at least I know some people are reading my articles. I received a call about the digital media cards and if they can be used with some older computers.

One of the things I should have mentioned was that most of those devices need to be connected to your computer by a USB connection. That's what goes into the flat looking hole on your computer. Most people with computers under 5 years old should have a USB port on their computer but there are some older ones out there that don't have it. In that case, you can get adapters that a USB device can be plugged into your computer using the PS/2 plug or you can add a USB plug adapter card to your computer. The device will work but may not be as fast as one already built into your computer.

Some people asked me about suggesting a new computer for them. You can look in past issues of Consumers Reports magazine to find out how some of the store brands compare to other store brands on the market in regards to dependability and service. My advice to most is that you should check with your friends and relatives who have computers and ask them how they like what they have. One thing you won't see in the magazines is information on computers that are made by a local computer person in your own neighborhood. In many cases, I find these computers are much more reasonable in price and reliability than the major brands sold in the stores and they are all custom built to your needs and wants. Check with your friends to see who made their computer and I think you will find that they are very satisfied with a local computer guy. One important thing is that if anything ever goes wrong, you can just bring it back to the guy for repairs. You do not have to spend hours on the telephone trying to understand someone who is reading scripts from a book to try and fix your computer and then maybe having to pack it up and mail it back to the manufacturer. Now that you have your computer, let's look at some things that might help you out sometimes.

How many times have you said, "Look at this @#\$%e5&\*)@3 % traffic!!!" Are you stuck in Traffic? How many times have you started out on a trip only to get bogged down five minutes from your front door? The NYS Dept. of Transportation has set up a new

Internet site that provides you with all kinds of travel advisories, road conditions, closures, construction zones and web cameras throughout the NYC and Long Island area. The new site [www.travelinfony.com](http://www.travelinfony.com) is suppose to provide a one stop location for state road conditions according to the NYS DOT.

Heading into NYC or upstate? You can check the web site for traffic updates and conditions. There are live web cams posted throughout NYC that will give you real time photos of what the traffic looks like. Area maps will show you any traffic tie-ups in the area.

Another source for travel information is WNBC Channel 4 traffic updates on the web. WNBC has a host of travel advisories that cover the whole Long Island and NYC area. They post information about broken down vehicles on the side of the road, auto accidents, construction delays, heavy traffic advisories and a host of other traffic related information in hope to make your commute easier. Log onto [www.wnbc.com](http://www.wnbc.com) and check out the conditions in your travel destination. Both sites also give updates on any mass transit delays you might expect in your travels along with weather advisories that may affect your travel. Most of the major TV stations offer this same information on their web sites and also the New York AAA has a travel info site at [www.aaany.com](http://www.aaany.com) If you are living outside the New York area, check your local TV station web site for your local travel conditions.

All this is fine if you have a computer. If you don't, you can watch the local cable channel for traffic conditions and advisories. While you are sitting at your computer downloading all this information, are you sitting there pulling out your hair waiting for the information to download?

Remember the first home computers with their 300 bps(bits per second) speed modems? There wasn't much of an Internet at that time to even worry about download speed. Modem speeds were increased to 14.4 kilobits per second by 1991. Then, in 1994, it doubled to 28.8 kilobits per second. Soon after, there came 33.6, which was thought to be an upper limit for phone line transmissions. But along came the 56k modem, and a new set of standards, so the speeds continue to push the envelope of the capacity of the telephone system. Today we have DSL (digital subscriber lines) that hook up your computer over the telephone line in your house and the cable modem which hooks you up to the internet over your cable TV line.

Now things are about to change again in

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super-high-speed version of its Internet access service and charge a premium for using it. Spokesman for Optimum Online said they could reach download speeds of up to 30 megabits per second compared with the current speeds of 5-10 mbps.

In addition to DSL with the phone company and cable modems with the cable company, a new option is being tested out in California right now and that is getting hooked up to the Internet over your electric line going into your house. Right now it is being tried out in several locations in California. This system promises to be able to give every household in the US that has electric, high speed Internet service. The reason being is that more households are hooked up to the U.S. electric power grid than are hooked up to cable TV or even the telephone. Keep tuned for further developments.

Got a problem with your computer or something you don't understand? I'm not an expert but I might be able to help you out with some problems. Send me an e-mail [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com) or give me a call at the RPA office and maybe I can help you out. For those of you who don't have a computer at home and would like to try out how computers work and "surfing the web", check with your local library. Every library has computers for use by their residents. Going to your local library you can use the computer there and get to see things that other computer users are talking about. If you are interested in getting a free e-mail account, even if you don't own a computer, you can set up a free e-mail account with Yahoo ([www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)) or Hotmail ([www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com)) by going to their web sites. You can then check your e-mail on any computer in any part of the world. Beware. Once you do that, welcome to the world of spam!

**February 2005**

### **WHICH WAY TO THE INTERNET??**

So, you got a computer for Christmas. Now you want to know how to get on the Internet. Chances are if you bought your computer from one of the big name brands like Dell, Gateway, IBM or at one of the stores like Best Buy, Circuit City or a computer store, it probably came with software for several different Internet providers already installed. ISP (Internet Service Provider) is the service you use to hook up to the Internet. AOL, MSN, Earthlink, Juno. These are several of the hundreds of Internet service providers you can use to hook up to the Internet.

One thing you have to keep in mind is, no matter what service you choose, your computer will get connected to the Internet through one of three ways:

- 1) Dial up using a telephone modem installed in your computer
- 2) DSL (digital subscriber line) special telephone modem connected to your telephone line
- 3) Cable modem (through your TV cable line).

Access speeds between the three varies immensely. Dial up is the slowest, then comes the DSL telephone modem and the fastest of the three is the cable modem. What's the difference? Dial up service you use the telephone modem installed in your computer to dial a special phone number to get onto the Internet. Speeds are limited to 56K bps. Only additional thing you may need is an ISP like AOL, Earthlink or one of the others. Monthly prices for these service vary from about \$9 per month to \$25 a month. The other two ways, the telephone company and cable company are also the ISP. Only additional thing you might need when you hook up with them is an e-mail program unless you use the free one that comes with Windows. Most if not all, ISP's will give you a free one-month trial period.

Unless you already know who and what you want to use, take their free trial offer. Most people sign on with AOL because it is the most user-friendliest program there is. There are others that are almost as easy. Talk to your friends and get some suggestions. Whatever service or program you use to go onto the Internet, you will have a screen name with them. You may want to think of a special name to be known by other than [jane12345@-----](mailto:jane12345@-----) or [Bill27378@-----](mailto:Bill27378@-----). Most people like to use a special name. Remember that whatever name you use, once you make that choice, you may not be able to change it. There are some exceptions. With AOL, you can have up to 7 different screen names on one account. With most other services, you are only allowed 1 screen name per account.

First make your choice of access:

1. Dial up (you can't use your telephone the same time you are on the computer)
2. DSL (you can still use your telephone while on the computer)
3. Cable (you can still use your telephone and TV while you are on the computer).

After that, pick an e-mail client to use with your access. You don't have to use the one the Phone Company or Cable Company gives you but you may have to pay an additional cost along with your access

fee. You can use Optimum Online or Verizon DSL and still use AOL for your active e-mail account. In that case, you would get AOL at a reduced rate because you are not using them as your primary access to the Internet. If you are interested in having different screen names for other family members, some ISP's do not offer that nor do they offer free web space in the event you want to set up a web page. There are some places you can get free web space, but there are always conditions attached to them. We'll talk about web pages in another issue. One thing to remember, some local library's offer their residents free dial up access to the Internet. It requires you to do some configuration to set it up but is not that difficult. Call your local library to see if they offer it.

If you choose a dial up access, remember that it is the slowest of the 3 ways to connect to the Internet. The difference is like a bicycle racing against a car. It's also the cheapest if you don't spend a lot of time on the Internet.

Next month, we'll take you surfing on the net and explain a few things to watch out for. If you have any questions, give me a call or send an e-mail to [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com)

## March 2005

### COMPUTER TIPS AND HARDWARE .....

One of the most asked questions I get and an operation that many first time computer users cannot figure out is the **copy and paste or cut and paste function** and how and where you can use it. This function is used to copy any particular text or photo and then paste it into another spot or application in an e-mail, text document or photo editing program.

First step is to highlight what you want to copy or cut from the original. You do this by simply pressing and holding your left mouse button down and dragging it over the selected text or photo you want to copy or cut. You'll notice that as you drag it over the text, the area turns black and the text turns white. When you have highlighted everything you want, you can now copy or cut out that particular text in one of two ways: 1) After it is highlighted, right click on it and pick the option you want or, 2) Go to the top of your menu bar on the top of your screen and left click on Edit and then pick the option from the drop down menu that appears. Once you have copied that highlighted text or photo, you can now take it to any other application like a word processor program or e-mail program. You can paste it into that application by left clicking on Edit in the

application you want it to go to and then use the drop down menu to Paste it wherever you have your cursor set. If you want to entirely cut out the selected text or photo from an open application, you simply use the Cut option and the highlighted material is cut out of your original application.

The computer mouse is one of the pieces of computer hardware that you will use constantly. Without a mouse, you have to use the arrow keys to navigate around an application and then use certain application keys to perform the same functions you can do with the mouse and menu bar. There are several different types of computer mouse's. Is it mouse's or mice??? It's your choice. The most common mouse is the one with the ball on the bottom. As you move the mouse around on a hard surface, the ball rolls around and as it does, it moves two rollers that are inside of the mouse. This type of mouse is the cheapest and most trouble prone type there is. As you roll it on a surface, it picks up dust and dirt and the rollers get dirty and don't perform the functions correctly. An optical mouse has a little red laser on the bottom and the laser reads the movements of the mouse and since there is no moving ball on the bottom or any moving parts, you don't have to worry about it getting dirty. The optical mouse is by far the best type. Then there are what they call the track ball. The track ball type is simply a mouse with the ball on the top. Some people like this type because it may be faster for them by rolling the ball with the palm of their hand. Every mouse comes with one, two and even three buttons and some with a scroll wheel.

The best type of mouse to get would be an optical mouse with at least two buttons and a scroll wheel. A typical optical mouse can be bought for under \$20, and it is a worth while investment. Brand name doesn't make any difference either. Normally the mouse is programmed for right handed people, but you can change the properties to a left-handed person. The two-button mouse is used for operations like cut and paste described above. The third button on a three-button mouse can be used for special operations that you have to set it up for. An example is that one button can be set for a double click option. The scroll wheel on a mouse is used to advance a web page or a word document up or down. By turning the scroll wheel, the page moves automatically up or down and you do not have to click on the side bar to move it up and down.

Mouse functions can be changed through the Control Panel on your computer. Left click on START.....Settings.....Control Panel...double click

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on the Mouse Icon. From there you can see the various actions that you can change that apply to your mouse. You can change the rate at which it moves, give it a tail, and change the style of pointer and other things. If you change the settings and you don't like them, simply go back and change them to whatever you want.

Clicking on the Display icon can also change display settings. There are various options that you can change including the screen resolution that I've mentioned earlier or the color or style of the active window.

In the upper most right hand corner of your screen with an open application, you will notice three small boxes. The first one has a dash in it, the next one has two small boxes one behind the other and the third is a red box with an X in it. To close out that particular application, left click on the red box with the X. To reduce the size of that active window, left click on the box with the two small boxes and to hide the window, click on the box with the dash in it. The left button of your mouse is the one programmed to make primary functions.

Spell checks. Every e-mail program and word processor program has a spell checker built into it. Since we are not all-perfect English students, we do make mistakes in spelling and grammar. In the word processor programs like MS Word or Corel's Word Perfect, place the cursor on the first word of your document and then click on the little arrow with the abc located on the menu bar. This will automatically check your spelling against the programs dictionary. Anything it thinks is wrong is underlined in red and if you right click on it, it will give you various options. If you know your spelling is correct and it comes up with an autosuggestion, you can add your word to the programs dictionary. There may also be autosuggestions for grammatical factions it finds.

You may have an interesting e-mail that you want to forward to other people, but it really isn't necessary to send all the headers and in some cases, pages and pages of other e-mail addresses wit it. Have some mercy on the friends you want to send it to. Rather than forwarding the whole thing, left click and drag your mouse over the items you want to copy and then past it into another e-mail without having to send tons of garbage with it. Other people will appreciate it and they won't have to down load tons of things just to get to a simple picture. This works the same with all e-mail clients and with text as well as photos.

**April 2005**

## **L@@KING AT THE WORLD WIDE WEB**

The most widely used part of the Internet is theWorld Wide Web (often abbreviated "WWW" or called "the Web"). Its outstanding feature is hypertext, a method of instant cross-referencing. In most Web sites, certain words or phrases appear in text of a different color than the rest; often this text is also underlined. When you select one of these words or phrases, you will be transferred to the site or page that is relevant to this word or phrase. Sometimes there are buttons, images, or portions of images are "clickable." If you move the pointer over a spot on a Web site and the pointer changes into a hand, this indicates that you can click and be transferred to another site.

Using the Web, you have access to millions of pages of information. Web browsing is done with a Web Browser, the most popular of which are Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator, Mozilla, Opera and others. The appearance of a particular Web site on your computer may vary slightly depending on the browser you use. Also, later versions of a particular browser are able to render more "bells and whistles" such as animation, virtual reality, sound, and music files, than earlier versions.

The Internet, sometimes called simply "the Net," is a worldwide system of computer networks - a network of networks in which users at any one computer can, if they have permission, get information from any other computer (and sometimes talk directly to users at other computers). It was conceived by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the U.S. government in 1969 and was first known as the ARPANET. The original aim was to create a network that would allow users of a research computer at one university to be able to "talk to" research computers at other universities. A side benefit of ARPANet's design was that, because messages could be routed or rerouted in more than one direction, the network could continue to function even if parts of it were destroyed in the event of a military attack or other disaster.

Today, the Internet is a public, cooperative, and self-sustaining facility accessible to hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Physically, the Internet uses a portion of the total resources of the currently existing public telecommunication networks. Technically, what distinguishes the Internet is its use of a set of protocols called TCP/IP (for Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). Two recent

adaptations of Internet technology, the intranet and the extranet, also make use of the TCP/IP protocol.

For many Internet users, electronic mail (e-mail) has practically replaced the Postal Service for short written transactions (AND TO GET THIS STRAIGHT RIGHT NOW, there is no movement or ever has been any intention of the post office to tax you because they are losing money on you not buying stamps to send e-mails). Electronic mail is the most widely used application on the Net. You can also carry on live “conversations” with other computer users, using Internet Relay Chat (IRC). More recently, Internet telephony hardware and software allows real-time voice conversations.

The Internet is like every library, every piece of written material or photos hooked up to every computer in the world that can be assessed by every other computer in the world. When you are hooked up to the Internet, you can access all this information simply by typing in the appropriate Internet address. One thing to remember is that it is a very exact location. One single letter typed incorrectly will lead you to nowhere or to another place.

Along with this vast array of information put up by commercial sites and various agencies, there are individuals who also have published on the web, their own personal web sites. If you are an AOL customer, AOL gives you free web space to post your own personal web site. If you are not an AOL user, you will have to find someone who is willing to give you free web space to do this. Along with that “free space” option, comes a catch. Often with that free space, your web page will have pop-ups or ads or links to other places that you may not want. That’s the price of a free web site. There are various ways of making a web page and putting it on the web. When you write a web page, it gets written in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) - The coded format language used for creating hypertext documents on the World Wide Web and controlling how Web pages appear. The average computer user is not knowledgeable in HTML so most people use a special program that converts their regular typing in HTML and is able to develop a web page for you. Often, these programs give you a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) formats. There are many other formats that you can include on your web pages for special effects such as JAVA, GUI, Flash, GIF to name a few. Then you have various options on transferring those files to a web site.

Several people have asked me why they can’t see the whole page displayed on their computer screen

that they have to use the side to side scroll bar to see everything. Most likely this is caused by the way you have your display resolution set up on your computer monitor. If the display is set at a low resolution, everything appears larger and therefore every thing can’t be displayed on the monitor screen. The higher the screen resolution is set for, the smaller the entire display is and thus more is shown on the monitor screen.

What is a domain name? A domain name is everything you see in an e-mail address after the @ symbol or the after the www in a web address. Want a special domain name of your very own? Your e-mail name can be jack@jonesfamily.com or your web site can be www.jonesfamily.com. In order to do that, you first have to register the domain name you want (if it’s available) and then find a place that will host your domain name for e-mail and/or web site. Registration of a domain name usually runs about \$5-\$10 per year and insures that no one else can get that name. There are various places that will host your new domain name for e-mails at a nominal fee of about \$35 a year depending on what kind of services you want with it. One place to check about it is at Yahoo.com Go to the Yahoo web page and type in domain name and read it over. Some places will charge you a fee for every time someone accesses your web page. As an example, one of our RPA web pages has been accessed over 15,000 times.

That can add up to a lot of money over time, but with AOL hosting our site, there is no extra charge whenever someone views our web site.

Next month we’ll discuss using some applications you can apply in your e-mails or word documents like adding a signature to your e-mails, sending blind copies or how to insert special symbols in a word document. Got questions or want to know about something else? Drop me an e-mail at gotsha@aol.com

## **May 2005 SPYWARE, ANTI VIRUS SOFTWARE AND FIREWALLS**

There is always someone out there who wants to check on your Internet browsing habits. On the Internet, spyware is programming that is put in someone’s computer to secretly gather information about the user and relay it to advertisers or other interested parties. Every time you visit a web page,

that site may be collecting info on you and attempting to change some settings on your computer. You may be completely unaware of what is going on. You may have applications known as spyware (also called adware) installed on your system. Spyware applications are installed on your system without your knowledge for the purpose of publishing ads and transmitting information about you to marketers, and are often bundled with filesharing applications, like Aimster or Kazaa. To eliminate spyware, I recommend that you run a software program that looks for and eliminates these pesky programs, such as Spybot or Ad-Aware. These are FREE downloads that detect spyware, present a list of suspected spyware files to you, and help you quickly and easily eliminate spyware from your computer. There are a host of other programs out there that may be free and others you have to pay for, but these two come recommended by numerous services and other computer people.

Whenever you visit a web site, you collect something from them called “cookies”. These cookies are used by the web sites to make a record of what you are looking at, your preferences of certain web sites and in some cases, they are needed to supply information to the web site that you and they need. Not all cookies are bad. It should be part of your regular computer maintenance to delete these cookies and also to delete temporary Internet files from your hard drive. Some of these cookies are considered spyware.

AOL and Optimum On Line users are given free virus software, firewall and spyware software. Check with your IPS to see if they also offer it. Most if not all also offer pop-up blockers with their web browsers. Their tool bars allow you to control pop-up and pop-downs from appearing on your browser while you are looking at web sites.

### **What is Phishing and Pharming?**

Phishing attacks use both social engineering and technical subterfuge to steal consumers’ personal identity data and financial account credentials. Social-engineering schemes use ‘spoofed’ e-mails to lead consumers to counterfeit websites designed to trick recipients into divulging financial data such as credit card numbers, account usernames, passwords and social security numbers. Hijacking brand names of banks, e-retailers and credit card companies, phishers often convince recipients to respond. Technical subterfuge schemes plant crimeware onto PCs to steal credentials directly, often using Trojan keylogger

spyware. Pharming crimeware misdirects users to fraudulent sites or proxy servers, typically through DNS hijacking or poisoning.

Typically, a phishing email will appear to come from a trustworthy company and contain a subject and message intended to alarm the recipient into taking action. A common approach is to tell the recipient that their account has been de-activated due to a problem and inform them that they must take action to re-activate their account. The user is provided with a convenient link in the same email that takes the email recipient to a fake webpage appearing to be that of a trustworthy company. Once at that page, the user enters her personal information, which is then captured by the fraudster.

### **Use BCC field when addressing mass mail**

RPA member John Collier has been urging people to use BCC in e-mails. He asks to PLEASE READ and become a better E-mail user. This information is intended not only to make you a neater “e-mailer” but one that is more considerate and more thoughtful... Your friends will be thankful. Would you write your friends’ phone numbers on the walls of public places? If you answer no, then why would you spread their e-mail addresses to a bunch of strangers, many of whom will in turn forward the same addresses to even more strangers? Don’t do it! Instead, use the BCC feature of your E-mail program.

BCC means Blind Carbon Copy. It is a way of addressing mail to more than one person so that everyone’s address is not displayed for all to see. Every E-mail program, even free, web-based e-mail services, allow you to address messages using BCC, in other words, to “BCC” one or more recipients. Some require that you provide at least ONE address in the TO: field. If this is the case, place YOUR OWN address in the TO: field and all your recipients’ addresses on the BCC field.

WHY:

- Using BCC protects your recipients’ e-mail addresses from being spread to strangers.
- Using BCC helps prevent SPAM (Unsolicited Commercial e-mail)
- When using BCC, messages will be easier on your readers because they will be smaller, with fewer addresses on each message. They will even download faster.
- Using BCC shows your consideration of others by not publishing hundreds of your

friends' addresses to strangers and potentially, SPAMMERS or maybe even stalkers.

John Collier got this link for more information on Blind Copy in various e-mail programs. It contains all the info on how to do it with the different e-mail programs. Take a look at: <http://www.rudder.com/safe/bcc.html>

He says use Blind Carbon Copy to your advantage when e-mailing (It amazes me to see the number of people who either pay no attention to this option or have no clue in how to set it up). One of the big problems with group e-mails is getting people to respond. If you send an e-mail to 40 people, most won't respond. They assume the other 39 recipients will take care of the problem. Studies show that people are much more responsive if they think they were the only ones queried.

There's a way to do this. The key is the BCC line in the address portion of your e-mail. BCC means, "blind carbon copy." Anyone whose address is put there will only see the address in the To line.

It works this way: You want to send a note to a bunch of people. In the To line, you put your address. Then list all recipients in BCC. Each recipient sees your address in the To and From lines. There is no evidence on the e-mail that it went out to other people. This is the only way to forward jokes, angel poems, and more.

All e-mail programs have a BCC area. In some cases, you have to hunt for it. Start a new message and then:  
--In Outlook, if BCC isn't showing, create a message, and from the View menu, click BCC Field.  
--In Outlook Express, click View>>All Headers.  
--In Netscape, click the To button, then double-click BCC.  
--In AOL, put the BCC addresses in the Copy To box, using parentheses.  
BCC is immediately available in Eudora, Hotmail and Yahoo! The option is there in the new message window. Next month, how to delete programs and stubborn files from your hard drive. Till then, got a question? E-mail me at [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com)

## June 2005

### Deleting certain files.....

Sometimes our computers get infected with spyware and unnecessary programs that have been downloaded by a spyware program or Internet site that you may have clicked on. Normally you can go into the control panel to delete these programs. Sometimes it is necessary to delete individual files. Whenever you delete a program from your computer, it leaves behind traces of files that it didn't delete. Sometimes it

becomes necessary to delete these individual files.

To locate a particular file, left click on Start.....go to Search and then go to For Files or Folders and left click on that. The Search Results window now opens up and presents you with several options. Left click on All Files and Folders. In the box "All or part of the file name" type in the name of file you are looking for. Then click on Search. The computer will now search through all the files and folders on your computer to locate the item. All the files and folders with that name will now appear in the window. Highlight the ones you want to delete and then hit the delete key. You will now see a window asking if you want to send that file to the Recycle Bin. Click yes and the item you highlighted will now be sent to the Recycle Bin. Sometimes you can't delete the item and will get a message that the file or program is being used by another program. If you still want to delete that item you will have to restart your computer in the Safe Mode.

To start your computer in the Safe Mode, click on Start...Turn Off Computer....Restart. While the computer is restarting, press the F8 key a number of times until it boots up in the Safe Mode. You will get prompts to go into the safe mode and you answer the prompts by clicking the Enter key and scrolling up to the name of your operating system by using the up arrow key. You then have to find the file and delete it in the safe mode.

You can also use the search for files or folders to find items you have placed in the computer such as pictures or text files and can't remember where you put them. As seniors, more of us do that than we want to admit.

### PDF files.....

What is a PDF file and how do you view it? Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) is a special format that is use to display important documents that cannot be changed. In order to view these files, you must download a special program called Adobe Reader. [Adobe® Reader® 7.0](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html) — free software that lets you view, print, search, and share [Adobe Portable Document Format \(PDF\)](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html) files more securely using a variety of platforms and devices is a must for all computer users. It is available for free download at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Have you ever looked on the web for a manual for your cordless telephone or a manual of instructions on your microwave? Most if not all of documents such as these are done in a PDF file. Why? PDF files can

only be viewed using Adobe Reader and when you view it, it is exactly as the originator wrote it. Some computers and document programs view documents in a different manner and might change some things very subtle without you really noticing it. Using a PDF file, it will appear the same to everyone on every computer because it was written using a special program. Our RPA web site has the RPA application in a PDF file on it. The reason is that every computer user who views it will see it exactly as it was written without any deviations of any kind.

Important documents that are e-mailed between business clients are often done in a PDF so that either party can change nothing and either party can view everything the same way. The program that converts the word document to a PDF is called Adobe Acrobat and it is used to create, control and deliver more secure high quality Adobe PDF documents. When you print a PDF file, it is printed exactly the way the originator wrote the document.

#### **COMPUTER TUNE UP.....**

Every operating system (Windows) has tools that will help tune up your computer so that it operates more quickly and efficiently. You'll find these tools by left click on Start....Programs....Accessories....System Tools. There you will see the various tools used to check and clean up your hard drive, Disk Cleanup and Disk Defragmenter. It is good practice to use these two tools on a regular basis to clean up your hard drive and put everything into good order. If you have a program called Norton System Works on your computer, that program contains additional tools used to tune up your computer in addition to a good anti-virus program.

#### **YOUR OWN FAX MACHINE.....**

Windows XP contains an included fax program that allows you to send and receive faxes right from your computer. Your computer must be hooked up to a telephone line for it to work.

Click on Start....Programs....Accessories....Communications.....and then configure the Fax program by following the directions using the Fax Console.

#### **Firewalls.....**

by Dhugael McLean

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Did you know that if you have a high-speed connection, (i.e.: cable or DSL) your computer is continually attacked by people trying to break in? That

rather sensationalistic line may seem inflammatory but it is accurate.

There are people out on the Internet who do the computer equivalent of trying the knob on the front door of your house to see if it's open. Every computer that's connected to the Internet is given an address. This group of so-called "hackers" runs through those addresses looking for holes they might be able to use to gain access to some of your data, steal passwords, or even shut down your system. To stop these attacks you need to erect a barrier to stop them. This barrier is called a Firewall.

A firewall was originally a barrier that was put into single engine planes in World War I to protect the pilot from the dangerously hot engine. Firewalls for a computer do pretty much the same thing, but prevent hackers, rather than heat from doing damage.

Firewalls come in two flavors: hardware or software. Most common with home computer users are the software ones, ZoneAlarm, BlackIce and a few others. They do a pretty good job of stopping attacks on your system.

If you are very security conscious you may want to consider getting a hardware firewall. These physical firewalls go by many different names: "Web Safe Router", "Gateway Router", "Internet Gateway" and others. The concept behind these is fairly simple: get in the way between the Internet and the computer and filter attacks out. The firewall will prevent the attack from even getting near the computer. Hardware firewalls tend to be more expensive than software ones but the added security is generally more than worth the extra cost.

If you are concerned about the safety of the data on your system, you cannot afford to be without some kind of firewall. **COMING IN SEPTEMBER.....VOIP.... Internet Phone Service - Make calls through the Internet**

I'll have a complete report on an exciting new phone service that will definitely save you hundreds of dollars each year using a phone service over your broadband connection for your computer.

#### **September 2005**

#### **COMPUTER TIPS AND INTERNET PHONE SERVICE.....**

Well here we are again. I hope everyone had a nice summer and got to do everything they wanted to.

As promised, I have a report on Internet

Phone Service or what some call Voice Over Internet Protocol. Internet Voice, also known, as Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) is a technology that allows you to make telephone calls using a broadband Internet connection instead of a regular (or analog) phone line. Some services using VOIP may only allow you to call other people using the same service, but others may allow you to call anyone who has a telephone number - including local, long distance, mobile, and international numbers. Also, while some services only work over your computer or a special VOIP phone, other services allow you to use a traditional phone through an adapter. You've seen ads in the newspapers every week for these Internet phone services.

**VOIP** allows you to make telephone calls using a computer network, over a data network like the Internet. VOIP converts the voice signal from your telephone into a digital signal that travels over the Internet then converts it back at the other end so you can speak to anyone with a regular phone number. When placing a VOIP call using a phone with an adapter, you'll hear a dial tone and dial just as you always have. A broadband or high speed Internet connection is required. This can be through a cable modem, or high-speed services such as DSL or a local area network. You hook up your regular telephone to a Broadband Router in order to make the calls and after disconnecting from your regular telephone service such as Verizon or Bell South. You connect the router to your regular phone jack in your house and use all your telephones as you normally would. There are several things to remember before going over to a system such as this.

1. If your electric or cable service goes out so does your phone service. With some VOIP services, you get what they call a virtual phone number. This number is separate from your regular phone number and you can use this number instead of your regular phone number to receive calls. Since it is part of your service provider, it isn't affected by any local power outages.
2. 911 enhanced service may not work with some of these systems. Right now with VOIP, your phone number is programmed to call your local police department's regular phone number and not their 911 switchboard. This is now being changed and most areas now give you enhanced 911 (E911).

**WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM A SERVICE LIKE THIS.....**

The bottom line can be a saving of hundreds of dollars a year. There are no local taxes, FCC fees, 911 fees, state taxes and only a small Federal Excise Tax involved. Your monthly phone service can range from \$7.95 a month to \$24.95 a month with unlimited calling, free long distance calls to any number in the US, Canada, Puerto Rico and with some, Western European countries, caller ID, conference calling, call forwarding, voicemail and other features at no additional cost.

I've been using a service for the past 4 months and haven't had any problems with it. When I go down to Florida, I have all my calls automatically transferred from my home in New York to my Florida number without any additional cost. Need more info? E-mail me [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com)

### **DIGITAL PHOTOS.....**

While we were on vacation this summer, I saw more people with digital cameras than with film cameras. Unlike film cameras, you can take a thousand digital photos and only have one printed. There is no cost for film involved and you only pay for the ones you print. If you went on a trip this summer and took some pictures with your new digital camera, you may have some editing to do with some of the photos you took before you get them printed. There are several ways of doing the editing. A few cameras can remove red eye, crop photos at the edges or rotate an image from landscape to portrait. The camera alone can't usually correct exposure or color balance, but if you have photo editing software that came with the camera you can use that. If not, you have a choice of some free software like Irfan View ([www.irfanview.com](http://www.irfanview.com)). Its only for Windows but its freeware and has many useful features, including one that corrects color balance, adjusts brightness and contrast and resizes files. For advance users, you may want to buy an editing program. In that case, I would consider Adobe Photoshop or Paint Shop Pro. Each of them sell for \$80-\$100 either on line or at most computer supply stores. When buying software, I always recommend that you buy the actual software package if it is available and not download it. This way you can always install it on another computer you may get later.

One thing you should be aware of when taking pictures with your digital camera is the image size you shoot at. Make sure you use a size that is large enough and fine enough to make 8 X 10 photos. Usually an image size of 1280X960 will allow you

to make a decent 8X10 photo. If in doubt, shoot at 1600X1200. By shooting in a larger mode, you can always down size the photos before e-mailing them but if you attempt to increase the size, you may have a problem with distortion. Always shoot in a fine mode if you have that option. You should also be aware that shooting in a larger size would also decrease the amount of photos you can get on your memory card. One of the fun things you can do with your photos is have them put onto a CD. If you have a CD burner on your computer, you can do it your self. If you don't have that capability, you can take your digital media to a local drugstore and get it done there or in some cases, do it on line. If you decide to do it your self, you might also want to look into a program that you could use to add captions to your photos or even sound bites. Usually you can view these CD's on a DVD player attached to your TV set. Most DVD players will play photo CD's. Organizing photos on your computer can be trying unless you have a particular program that will do it automatically. A free program to organize your photos is Picasa ([www.picasa.com](http://www.picasa.com)). Picasa also gives you the ability to rename your photos to something more meaningful than DSC000016 to something like "Bills boat".

Instead of trying to e-mail all your friends with your latest vacation pictures, look for a place online that you can upload them to and then just send them the web site to view them. If you are an AOL user, use "You've Got Pictures" to easily share, organize, print and store digital pictures. It's free to create an album online to share with your friends.

### **Is it time to go to a LCD monitor?**

The price of LCD monitors has dropped dramatically in the past few years with some computer manufactures including a LCD monitor as standard in some of their computer packages. What can you expect with a LCD monitor? Brighter colors, much clearer display and a true image size. A 17" LCD is probably ¼ the weight of a CRT and is only about 4" deep so it takes up much less space on your desk. A 17" LCD monitor is a true 17" while a 17" CRT monitor can be as small at 15.5" measured diagonally. Bigger is better, so if you are thinking of replacing your old monitor go for a 19" size. Did you know you could adjust the size of the display on your monitor? Go to the control panel and click on the Display icon and then go to Settings. There you will see a slide button that you can change your screen resolution from 800 pixels and up. The

smaller the resolution, the clearer the display is and the more you actually see of what you are looking at.

### **Deleting files?**

Click on one and hold the shift button to delete more if they are together in a list or if they aren't together, hold the Ctrl button and click on the files you want to delete. After they are highlighted, click on delete the selected files.

### **Cyber crime.....is someone looking for your information??**

Beware of the scam artist out there looking to get into your bank account. Suspicious e-mails asking you to confirm your account number or routing number on your checking account have been received by a lot of people. This is called "phishing."

A new con being tried now is directing you to a fake web site that looks like the real thing such as eBay, Pay Pal, Citibank or Amazon. The site asks you to confirm information relative to your account or your activity with them. Keep your eyes out for these suspicious things and check to see if the site is using secured sockets layer (SSL) encryption. That's that funny looking picture of a lock in the lower right hand corner you see on most web sites. Most pharmer won't use something like that. To use SSL, the pharmer needs to forge a certificate, which will be flawed and a warning will pop up that the security of the site is invalid. Another way to check to see if its is a valid e-mail is to briefly move your mouse over the e-mail address from the sender and see if it is actually from them. A little window will open up with the senders e-mail address. If it looks suspicious, report it. Be aware of these things going on. By the way, I'm still waiting for that \$35,000 check for helping that poor person get his \$15 million out of Africa. I wonder if they are related to the person in Ireland who just sent me a similar e-mail for help.

### **October 2005**

#### **DIGITAL PHOTOS AND DOWNLOADING**

How many times have you downloaded something only to find that you can't find out where you downloaded it? First let's start off with trying to locate the file. If you click on start....Search....For files or Folders.....a search results box opens up and gives you several choices to search under. If you remember the name of the file or part of the name, choose All or part of the file name.....and in that box, type in the

name of the file you are looking for. Then click search and it will locate the file for you.

Now that you know how to find the files, let's try to download all files to the same place. Most e-mail programs, especially AOL let you choose a folder to send all the downloads to. By default, it may use the My Documents folder but you can change that to whatever folder you want. Think about creating a new folder called DOWNLOADS and have all your downloads go to that folder.

In order to make that folder, double click on the My Computer icon on your desktop, then double click on Local Disk (its usually your C drive). Double click on your C drive and the directory of all the folders on your computer opens up. Now left click on File (up in the left hand corner).....New....Folder. A new folder has now been added to your C drive with the appropriate name of New Folder and as you look at it, you'll notice that it is flashing in blue. What you have to do now is to place the cursor over the type New Folder and rename it Downloads. After you have renamed it Downloads, click on any place in that window to execute the new folder name. The next time you open up your C drive, that folder will move to its alphabetical position in the list of folders.

Now that you know how to make a new folder, its time to take all those pictures from your digital camera and put them onto your C drive so that you can do something with them. Don't be embarrassed about not knowing how to transfer photos from your digital camera to your computer. We were all first time users at one time or another and it was a lot of hit and miss trying to figure things out.

OK, with your camera you also got a cord with funny looking plugs on the ends of it or you may have what they call a digital card reader. If your camera has a removal digital media stick (99.9% do) you can transfer the photo files by using the digital card reader or by plugging that funny cord you got with the camera into the camera and the computer. The end of the cord with the small plug goes into the camera and the other end of the cord is a USB plug which you plug in any available USB port on your computer. If you were given a card reader, the card reader plugs into the USB port on the computer and all you do is take the digital card out of the camera and plug it into the card reader. You may have a multi card reader so be sure to insert the memory card into the correct slot on the card reader.

Once you have done either of those two hookups, Windows XP will automatically detect the digital card or the camera (make sure you turn the camera on first) and give you options to view the photos or copy/move them to a folder. Move the photos to the folder of your choice and all those photos you've been taking for months with that camera and didn't know how to get them out will be moved from the camera to the folder. WALLAH!! Now you can go take some more pictures again. If you are using the card reader, do the same thing and move the photos from the card to the folder.

Now that you have taken those photos from your camera and put them onto your computer you can view them, delete them or even edit them. I'm not going to get into how to edit them as it is a lengthy process to explain but one easy to do yourself. One thing I will advise you to do is to resize the photos before you e-mail them to anyone because most people make the mistake of trying to e-mail HUGE SIZE photos to people and if you are on a dial up connection, it will take forever to download them. You

could embed them in an e-mail message at a much smaller size to view directly with the e-mail. Attachments always take longer. Need help or got a question, e-mail me at [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com)

## **What's The Problem?**

Virtually all applications you install using the default installation these days decide that they should start-up when Windows starts. If you allow these to take control, you can end up with a situation where (unless you have sufficient memory installed) every other program slows down to be unusable.

The reason for this is that all of these programs use a portion of the system memory and resources which leaves a smaller percentage for other programs once they're opened. On my old system for example, prior to tweaking I had 33 programs running at start-up with the system resources at 59% and Windows took an age before it was ready for use. Post tweaking I had a mere 10, with system resources back to 92% and Windows was up and running within a minute.

## **HOW CAN I IDENTIFY THESE PROGRAMS?**

Win9x/Me/2K/XPusers:

Use the "System Configuration Utility" (MSCONFIG) to identify startup programs. MSCONFIG is available for all Win9x/Me/2K/XP users (Win95/2K user can use the respective versions from [here](#)).

You invoke it by clicking Start then Run. In the Open box, type msconfig.exe followed by enter. Once displayed, click on the "Startup" tab. You will see a list of items and the 2 columns that we're interested in are "Name" (WinME) or "Startup Item" (WinXP) and "Command". For Win98 the columns aren't named but the one on the left is the equivalent of "Name" and the one on the right is the equivalent of "Command".

## **RUN YOUR OLD PROGRAMS UNDER XP**

If pre-XP software doesn't run under Windows' latest incarnation (and an update isn't available for the program), right-click the program's shortcut and choose Properties. Select Compatibility, then click "Run this program in compatibility mode for," and choose the appropriate Windows version. Click OK.

## **Does your computer keep asking you to log on every time you start it?**

Use the classic logon screen. To configure Windows XP to use the classic logon and shutdown screens for every logon session, follow these

steps:

1. Click Start and then click Control Panel
2. Double click User Accounts
3. Click Change the way users log on or off
4. Clear the Use the Welcome screen check box
5. Note If you turn off the Welcome logon screen, you also turn off the Fast User Switching option.

## **ZABA SEARCH.....**

I've gotten quite a few e-mails and some phone calls about ZABA Search.com. Seems that this new search engine has a lot of data about people that people didn't know was available like their phone numbers and address and when they were born. Many of our members have contacted me about this and the information that is available.

While you may not like it, this information is public knowledge. ZabaSearch simply serves as a search engine in locating available public records and does not create the records found. If you go to their web site and click on their Privacy, Terms or About statement on the bottom of their web page, you'll find out how their system works and what you can do to have your information removed. Send an e-mail to: [info@zabasearch.com](mailto:info@zabasearch.com) and to [optout@zabasearch.com](mailto:optout@zabasearch.com) and tell them you want to be removed from their records.

## **November 2005**

### **Satellite Radio, What Is It?**

What with cable TV and satellite TV, we also have satellite radio. Most of these systems you see in automobiles but they are available for home use. There are only two systems, XM Radio and Sirius Radio. You get a lot of radio stations without any commercials and you can tune in the same radio station no matter where you are in the country, a plus when you are traveling in a car on a long trip.

How they work is that they receive a digital radio signal from a satellite. Most of the satellites are in a southerly direction so if you have it at home, you have to be able to receive the satellite signal from a point in the southern skies from an antenna you have to put outside. That may be a problem in some houses and its best to check with each of the companies to see exactly where you will have to place the antenna in order to receive the satellite signal. In a car it's not much of a problem as there is usually a clear view to some point in the southern sky to receive the signal.

So what's so great about it? With XM Radio,

you get 150 digital channels, 100% commercial-free music, over 30 channels of news, sports, talk and entertainment, over 20 dedicated channels of XM Instant Traffic & Weather, and the deepest playlist in the industry is what they advertise. With Sirius Radio you get about the same thing but each one has special channels the other one might not have, so the choice is yours. I'm sure you can go to one of the stores for a free demo and a complete list of all the stations they both receive.

Believe it or not, some people are going over to satellite radio just so they can here that shock jock Howard Stern. He's coming off of regular radio and going over to satellite radio because there is less government control on what can be said over satellite radio. There are many specialty stations in addition to all music stations on both systems. They range from dedicated stations that play nothing but music from the 40's, 50's and 60's to classical, rock, contemporary, talk and just sports stations, usually all without any commercials. If you have it in your car, you'll be able to listen to the same station while you are driving across country from New York to California or from Maine to Florida. The only time you might lose the signal or part of the signal is when you drive through a tunnel or some areas when an overhead bridge or tall building blocks the signal.

If you are thinking of buying a new car with a satellite radio, don't order it from the factory. Instead, get a regular radio with the car and go to Best Buy or Circuit City and have it installed there. The advantage of doing it that way is two fold. You can transfer the system to another car and you can even transfer it to your house. Both XM and Sirius cost about \$12.95 a month for all the stations and both offer systems that are interchangeable between your house and your car. That way you will be paying only for one radio and not two. You can also add on up to four additional radios at a reduced charge if you wish. If you get a system already built into your car radio from the factory, you will have to get a complete separate system for your house if you want it in the house Also you will also have to pay the same \$20 for each system. Get it installed at the store and get the systems that are interchangeable between the house and the car. If you've never listened to satellite radio, go the store for a demo. It's offers really great programming that you will enjoy no matter where you are.

## **Long Island Computer Users Group**

If you are interested enough and want to learn more about home computers, try signing up for a class at your local school adult education classes or try one of the special interest groups like the LICUG. The LICUG general meetings are held at the new Howitt School Library, in Farmingdale, on Grant Between Cherry and Van Cott at 7:00 PM sharp. Check out their web site at <http://www.lipcug.org> You might find something of interest there for you. Also check your local library to see if they have any computer user groups.

## **Sending e-mails to the RPA.....**

If you were ever in the service, you should remember an old saying, "There's always that 10%", meaning there's always that 10% that never pay attention and don't follow orders or never get the word. We have said a number of times about the filter controls we employ on our RPA e-mail to help cut down on spam. It's amazing how many people still continue to send us useless, false and in many cases just plain old dumb e-mails they pass onto everyone in their address book. We continue to get the e-mails about the \$5 million awaiting our assistance to draw out of some checking account in Africa or someplace in the Bahamas or the ones about don't flash your headlights or else someone is going to murder you. It's hard to believe that the people sending these e-mails still continue to pass onto everyone they know, this sort of trash and that they actually believe in them. Before you make a fool of your self and continue to pass on things like this, check it out before you do. There are a number of places you can do that at and while you are doing it, watch out next time you gas up at the gas station for the hypodermic needle that may be taped to the handle on the gas nozzle.

## **Turning Off Your Computer.....**

Some people say that, "Only Microsoft would have you click on Start to turn off your computer." When you think about, there might some logic to it but then to turn off your computer, why would you first have to click on Start? Well, if you would like a one step action to turn off your computer, I've got one for you. Windows XP includes a command called Shutdown that does much more than its name might suggest. Yes, you can use it to create a shortcut that you can then double-click to turn off your computer instantly. With this shortcut, you can just double click

on an icon on your desktop and it will shut off your computer. This is for people who have Windows XP. If you have Windows 98 or other versions, let me know and I'll give you instructions on how to do it for your particular operating system.

First thing to do is right click on an empty portion of your desktop...then click on new....create shortcut.. A box will open up and ask you to type the location of the shortcut. Type this exactly as it is here using all lower case and the spaces where they appear: shutdown -s -t 00 the last two digits are zeros. What does it mean and what does it do? The -s switch means "shut down" (you could use -r to shut down and restart). The -t switch defines a waiting time, measured in seconds. With this shortcut on your desktop all you have to do to shut off your computer is to double click on the shutdown icon you just made on your desktop. Next month I'll give you a shortcut for your desktop that will clear all the recent documents list from your Document list (that's the list of about 20 documents and files that you have opened last).

## **December 2005**

### **BUYING SOFTWARE**

Sometimes you may be on the web looking to purchase a particular program for your computer. Here's some good advice to follow. If the software you are looking for is available on a disk, buy it that way instead of downloading it. Some programs that you buy on line and download to your computer may only be used on that particular computer and if for any reason you have to delete the program and reinstall it, you may not be able to. A classic example of what not to download is anti-virus programs. Without the installation CD, you can only install it on the computer you use to download. You may not be able to save it. Programs like that the maker wants you to pay for each installation. In other words, they want you to pay for every computer you install it on. If you have 2 computers, they want you to pay twice. While that may be good business for them, it's not cost effective for you. When you physically have the CD, you can install that same program on other computers. Some say that's cheating, I say, "It's your money, do what's best for you."

### **One Click Clear Recent Documents**

Last month I mentioned to you about a shortcut to delete all the recent documents from the list that appears. A sneaky way to clear the folder is to create

a shortcut on your desktop. Now here is a trick you can use to create an icon that automatically flushes the contents of the Recent folder, which therefore clears out the My Documents submenu. The following steps create an old fashioned DOS batch file, which can be used to— in a flash — dump the contents of the Windows\Recent folder and immediately clear the My Documents submenu. Pay careful attention to these steps and follow them exactly:

Start the Notepad program.

Type the following lines carefully and exactly as they are shown here:

```
@ECHO OFF
CD %USERPROFILE%\recent
ECHO y| DEL *.*
CD..
CLS
EXIT
```

Double-check what you typed, make sure you have the period in-between the two asterisks and the two periods after CD.

Fix any errors as necessary.

Yes, that's At-sign, then ECHO OFF.

The letters Cd and a percent sign followed by USERPROFILE another percent sign followed by a backslash and then the word recent in lower case

ECHO space then lower case y followed by a pipe character,|, which you get by pressing Shift |, \ key on your keyboard

Next line is in caps CD followed by two periods

Next line is all caps CLS

Last line is all caps EXIT

Click File, Save As...

For the file name type Clear the My Documents Menu.bat.

Remember to end the filename with .bat (period bat).

There is no period at the end of the filename.

From the Save in drop-down list, choose the Desktop.

Click the Save button.

Close Notepad.

Now you should notice the Clear My Documents Menu icon on the desktop, which you can use to manually clear the My Documents menu.

Double-click on the Clear My Documents Menu icon. The program should run and finish, clearing the My Documents menu for you. It does that by deleting any shortcut files it finds in the \Windows\Recent folder.

Interested in more tips? Try searching google.com and enter windows xp tips or windows 98 or whatever version you are using.

### Your Monitor Display.....

There are different settings that you can use on your monitor. What they do is enlarge whatever is on the screen, change the color scheme, the size of the display. When you change the resolutions of the display, there are numerous settings that you can change it to. By changing the settings, it may be easier or harder for you to read everything because the resolution by is a little fuzzy if you make it too big. I happen to like 1280 X 1024. If I make it 800 X 600, everything is larger but not as sharp and if you are viewing web pages, you will definitely have to use the left/right and up/down scroll bars to see the whole page. That answers some reader's questions about why they can't see the whole web page at once, that they have to use the scroll bars to see portions of the page. You can try switching back and forth until you find the way you like best. You can change it anytime by clicking on Start.....Settings.....Control Panel.....and then double click on the Display icon. There are a number of things you can change while you are there. You can change the themes, the picture on your desktop, the appearance and last, the settings for the display. Got a favorite picture you'd like to see as your screen saver all the time? You are not limited to just the ones that come with Windows. You can put a picture of your dog, house, grandkids or anything you'd like on it.

### A WORD ABOUT E-MAILS SENT TO THE RPA....

A word about sending e-mails to the RPA. We have filters on our e-mail to filter out junk mail. Do not forward someone else's mail to us. Do not send any mail with FWD or RE: in the subject line. If you have something of interest to send to us, send it as an original, otherwise it may wind up in the Spam folder.

When the mailman comes to your house, do you check your mailbox every day to see if he left mail for you? That would be a normal thing to do. Well, many

of you have e-mail addresses. Do you also check that everyday? It would be nice if you did. Are you the type that gives out an e-mail address and then never check your mailbox? Do people have to call you and say, "I sent you an e-mail looking for some info but you've never answered" or do you answer their phone call by saying, "Oh I never bother to check my e-mail." Use a little courtesy and if you give people your e-mail address, then check your mail. If you have an e-mail address and you give it out to people, the courteous thing to do would be to check your mail everyday. Annoying and a pain to do everyday? Then don't give your e-mail address out to people. What's more annoying is to try and contact someone that gave you their e-mail address and have you take weeks to read their e-mail. Maybe they have tried in vain to contact you and only had your e-mail address.

Awhile back I gave out some information about using Bc or Cc when sending out e-mails. Some thought it was good and others said it created more problems because they used it on some group mailings they had and got the same e-mail back from many members of their group. That's may be true. While using Bc or Cc may be appropriate sometimes, it isn't very good usage when you group mail to the same group all the time. Reason being, that one person may thing they are the only one in the group getting it and want to pass it onto others in the group. You can see how Bc and Cc can lead to the same message being sent over and over to many of the same people again. So, use the Bc or Cc feature when you are not sending to a specific group because everyone in your group already knows everyone else's e-mail address.

## **GET YOUR FREE CREDIT REPORT**

Effective September 1, 2005, New Yorkers can obtain their credit report for free and their credit scores for a few dollars. The northeast area is the last area to be phased in for the free report. You should checkout your credit report to make sure that it contains correct information about your credit activity and if there is something wrong on it, you should have it corrected. Today, many creditors will check to see what your credit score is to determine what rate they will give you on a home mortgage or auto loan. You can go online and get your report at: [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) ;By phone:877-322-8228;

By mail: Annual Credit Report Request Service, PO Box 105283, Atlanta, GA 30348-5283. You must include a form that is available online at the Federal

Trade Commission web site ([www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)) and at the Annual Credit Report web site (see URL above). You must provide the following information: your name, address, SS# and DOB, previous addresses if you've moved in the past two years, other identifying information such as monthly mortgage payment. Your credit score is not included in the credit report. You can order the score when you order the report for about \$5.

## **ALPHABITZE PROGRAMS MENU**

Starting with Windows 98 you can drag items around on the Programs menu. New programs add their folders at the bottom. If you want to re-arrange everything in alphabetical order again right-click anywhere on the menu and choose **Sort by name**.

## **Print Current Screen/Screen Shots**

In trying to solve a computer problem, you may be trying to describe to someone else what you have on your computer screen. At times, a picture is worth a thousand words. So here's a quick and easy way to send them a picture of your screen. Give it a try. On your keyboard, click on the Print Scrn button which is located in the upper right corner of your keyboard after your F12 key. Put the cursor back on your write mail screen and then go to the top menu bar and click on Edit and then Paste. You have now pasted a screen shot into your mail Message. It works with any type file, doc, jpg.

## **Give everyone a break.....**

If you still MUST absolutely forward that 10th-generation message from a friend, at least have the decency to trim the eight miles of headers showing everyone else who's received it over the last 6 months. It sure wouldn't hurt to get rid of all the ">>" that begin each line either. Besides, if it has gone around that many times we've probably already seen it.

