



A BIT OF A

RASCAL

VOL IX ISSUE V — MAY 2005 - ROGUE AREA SENIOR COMPUTER ASSISTANCE LEAGUE

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For the very first time ever, RASCAL will participate in the Memorial Day weekend festivities in Grants Pass by entering our very own “float” in the Boatnik Parade. This will be loads of fun to take part in and it will be a great way for the club to spread the word about where seniors can come to learn the joys of computing.

Our float will consist of a truck pulling a flatbed trailer. On the trailer will be three pieces of plywood hinged together in a triangle with computers painted on all three sides. In the bed of the truck will be a table, two chairs and an umbrella with two seniors sitting there working on computers. The float will be decorated with crepe paper and balloons. Preceding the float will be two volunteers carrying a banner with our club name on it. Behind them will be four more volunteers wearing boxes painted to represent computers.

We are looking for fourteen volunteers to be in the parade and to help pass out our club flyers to the spectators. In preparation we will need several volunteers to lend us a hand with painting the banner, boxes, plywood, and decorating the float. Fun, fun, fun — that’s what this will be, and we will show you how to do it. Many hands make light work! There might even be a bit of glory in it for the creators and for the club in that there is a chance to win the \$500 prize for Best-Overall Entry. How about that?

We would like to get started as soon as you receive this newsletter. Please contact us and volunteer right away! Dawn Shively and Bill Rose are in charge of The Parade Committee, consisting of Patricia Hentges and Nancy Kain.

For information and volunteering contact Dawn at 955-9625, with e-mail at sunriz7@rascal.cc; or Bill Rose at 476-5070, with e-mail at oleracer@rascals.org.

The Boatnik Parade will begin at 10:00 a.m., on Saturday, May 28, 2005.

The parade will travel down Sixth Street, from “A” to “M” Streets. Let us have a big turnout of RASCAL members to watch the parade and let us hear your cheers ring out as the float passes by. Be prepared to have a great time!

Note that you will also have the opportunity to cheer for the community center project which will have a float just preceding or following ours.

IS THERE A "FAST LANE" IN YOUR FUTURE?

An Introduction to 64 Bit Computer Technology

~ by Chris Oman, RASCAL President

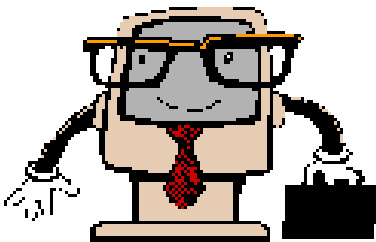


A brief review of the history of personal computers will help you to understand what is coming 'round the bend. I'm citing here four phases of development.



Phase I: When IBM released their first "PC" computer in 1982, it was based on an eight/sixteen (8/16) bit design inside of the CPU (Central Processing Unit). The information moved in 16 bits (like a freeway with 16 lanes in each direction.) Outside of the CPU, information moved in 8 bit pieces when dealing with RAM memory parts, video, and disk drives. So, even though the information inside the CPU moved quicker, it was limited once it traveled outside the Central Processing Unit.

Phase II: In about 1985, IBM released a second generation PC called the "AT" series. Some of its features included 16 bit processing (both internal and external of the CPU), faster CPU clock speed (think faster MPH automobile speed limit), and increased RAM memory capacity, previously limited to 640 KB of RAM.



Phase III: In 1988, IBM released a third generation PC, known as the "386," which allowed 32 bit processing, both internal and external of the CPU. Once again, the clock speed was increased, and RAM memory capacity was enhanced. Some of the problems associated with the AT CPU were also resolved to allow better management of the system's RAM memory and to allow true multitasking. In other words, the CPU could actually do more than one thing at a time without losing its place.

Phase IV: In 1990, IBM released a fourth generation PC, known as the "486" Once again, it allowed more RAM memory, faster CPU clock speeds, and an integrated math co-processor. The CPU was still a 32 bit design.

In 1994 the Pentium Processor was released—known as the "586" series. Again, faster clock processor speeds, increased memory capacity, etc. In subsequent years, the Pentium Pro, Pentium II, Pentium III, and Pentium IV, were all released. Although each brought additional CPU speeds, and increased RAM memory capacity, they were still all based on a 32 bit design. So, although the "speed limits" were increased, the "width of the highway" was stuck at the 32 bit design, and RAM memory was limited to 4GB. This was OK for standard workstations but it limited the performance of higher-end workstations and file servers.

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32-Bit Computer Software. Microsoft and IBM started producing 32-bit software in the late 1990's. Since most consumers didn't understand the advantages of Windows NT (New Technology) and 32-bit software, acceptance was delayed. The major requests for the advanced technology came from the business and professional arena, including financial, engineering, scientific, and governmental organizations. Most consumers were still trying to run their DOS or Windows 3.1 programs. In general, they had no clue why they should update or migrate to the advanced 32-bit technology.

To get a relevant perspective, Windows 95 was released in May of 1995. It exploited 16-bit design but still had to be compatible with earlier computer software design. Some things it did better but some things it did not, due to having to be compatible with earlier DOS software programs.

What does 64-bit technology provide the industry?

It gives the computer industry an opportunity to make a quantum leap forward in computer performance, functionality, stability, and security. Even Microsoft is designing the Windows operating system to take advantage of increased security designed into the processor. Over the past fifteen years, a couple of attempts have been made to convert the operating systems from a 16-bit format into a 32-bit format. The most successful (that is, accepted) conversion has been to Windows XP. Although Microsoft attempted to get public acceptance, starting with Windows NT 3.x, it was never realized until Windows XP, which is now being delivered with most new computers.

Once the operating system is created and finally released, the application programs usually follow over the next two to five years. Since Microsoft doesn't release the operating system design specifications to the public, it is difficult for computer programmers to successfully design and integrate their software products with Windows. Since Microsoft has the design specifications for Windows, they have the technical advantage and are usually able to release the mainstream computer programs before any other computer programmers can release their products. Some examples include MS Word, Excel, Power Point, Outlook, Access, Money, and Publisher. As the saying goes, **anyone who delivers the software with the most publicity first wins.** It doesn't really matter if it is not a superior product. If it is the most recognized product for the job, it usually is the one most purchased. For example, try to buy a new Dell

computer without Windows and get a price reduction. You can't. It comes with MS Windows whether you want it or not!

What can **you** expect from the new 64-bit computers? Some examples include:

- Voice recognition (which should now really work).
- High-end graphic manipulation programs.
- An optical character recognition (OCR) program.
- Computer-aided design.
- Heavy scientific research capability.
- Printing without slowdowns, so that you may continue to do other things with your computer while your documents are printing.



64-bit computer processors are not created equal! Currently, the AMD Athlon 64 processors have the advantage because they will also run earlier versions of Windows 32-bit software. Windows 98, ME, and XP will all run just fine on the AMD Athlon 64-bit processor. They also successfully run the new Windows XP 64-bit operating system and the windows on windows (WOW) technology. **By using the new Windows XP, and programs designed to operate with 32-bit Windows XP, things will work successfully while the software publishers come out with the full 64-bit computer programs.**

Affordability. Computer systems with the AMD Athlon 64 are now approaching the \$1,000 price level. At the time of this writing, Staples was selling a laptop computer with the 64-bit processor for under \$1,000 with rebates. Although 64-bit computer software is not yet widely available, you can still run the current 32-bit computer software today and upgrade to the 64-bit software technology in the future as it becomes more available. It is the best of both worlds: you get the faster performance of the 64-bit CPU processor, running on today's software, plus an upgrade path for the future.



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

May and June 2005



MAY

CD-RW

(Pre-Req: Beginning Windows.) Learn the functions and capabilities of CD-RW (Read-Write) drives, including basic installation of hardware and software. Understand the difference between CD-R and CD-RW blank disks, and learn how to create a CD for a variety of purposes — such as programs, data, or music — that can be played in your car or home.

eBay

(Pre-Req: Beginning Windows, Beginning E-Mail & Internet.) Learn the wonders of shopping on-line. Learn how to buy and sell on eBay, using the bidding process.

Introduction to Computers

(Required for First-Time Computer Users.) A fun class. Learn the proper method to turn a computer on and off. Learn to use the mouse and keyboard. Get acquainted with hardware, software, and computer vocabulary.

Photoshop Elements, Intermediate

(Pre-Req: Beginning Photoshop Elements.) Review the use of tools and methods learned in the Beginning Photoshop class. Have your questions answered and learn to develop your personal interests in this photo editing class.

Publisher, Beginning

(Pre-Req: Beginning Windows, Beginning Word or equal; diskette use.) With the versatile and user-friendly Publisher, learn how to create signs, flyers, greeting cards, business/calling cards, calendars, brochures, manuscripts, and more.

Word Perfect, Beginning

(Pre-Req: Beginning Windows.) Learn the elements of this word processing program and manipulate your letters and documents from plain Jane to as fancy as you like. Word Perfect has the popular REVEAL CODES screen that makes correcting mistakes easier than ever.



JUNE

ACCESS, Advanced

(Pre-Req: Beginning Access.) Learn to work smarter using advanced Access techniques in this excellent Microsoft database program.

CD-RW

(Pre-Req: Beginning Windows.) See the description for May.

Introduction to Computers

(Required for First-Time Computer Users.)

See the description for May.

Multimedia

(Pre-Req: Beginning Windows, E-Mail and Internet.) Learn the advantages and disadvantages of the common media players. This is a class packed with information, including how to use what you have, manipulating media files, using your own photos, videos, and music; learning security issues, storage, costs, and what's coming in the future.

Photoshop Elements, Intermediate

(Pre-Req: Beginning Photoshop Elements.) See the description for May.

Windows XP, Beginning

(Pre-Req: Introduction to Computers.)

Learn the names, and locate elements of this Microsoft word processing program. Emphasis on the Standard and Formatting tool bar buttons. Work with documents; print and save. Use of a 3.5 floppy disk recommended but not required.

Windows XP, Intermediate to Advanced

(Pre-Req: Beginning Windows XP.) Learn many advanced and useful features of this program, such as customizing the desktop; adding and changing menu items; capturing screen images; system maintenance: cleanup, check disk, and defrag; Help and Support Remote Assistance; System Restore review; Windows and Critical Updates; Search; File Systems, and more.

WORD, Beginning

(Pre-Req: Beginning Windows) Learn of and locate basic elements of Microsoft Word. Emphasis on the Standard and Formatting tool bar buttons. Work with documents, print and save. Use of a 3.5 floppy disk recommended but not required.





Need Help? • Dial-A-Pro

Just call or e-mail and an attempt will be made to solve the problem by phone or e-mail. If that isn't enough, most of those listed will make house calls on an individually arranged basis.



GENERAL TROUBLESHOOTING

Most Areas of Computing

Lou Lyons	476-6405	luckylou@charter.net
Chris Oman	471-1058	ckoman@rvi.net
Len Richardson	866-2541	len_r@yahoo.com
George Spencer	474-0899	gspencer1earthlink.net
George Steffensen	474-4305	steff@budget.net
Gerry Tank	476-7667	badger1gt@charter.net
Wally Zittle	476-9800	wzittle@charter.net
Bob Booth	474-2993	robtb@terragon.com
Ray Lake	956-6302	raylake@charter.net

BEGINNER'S HELP

Laura Dunwald	479-9076	beagenie@charter.net
Ginny von Gal	474-7566	skipjack@echoweb.net
Gordon Rendall	955-1000	grandpaw5@charter.net
Gerry Tank	476-7667	badger1at@charter.net
Marv Wilson	471-1867	mwlw86@charter.net

WINDOWS 98 & XP

Laura Dunwald	479-9076	beagenie@charter.net
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WINDOWS 95, 98 & ME

Ray Lake	956-6302	raylake@charter.net
Chris Oman	471-1058	ckoman@rvi.net

APPLICATIONS & OTHER SPECIFIC HELP

ANIMATIONS

Cliff Worden	471-1292	cliffmar@charter.net
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DIGITAL CAMERAS & PHOTOS (for beginners)

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EXCEL

Ron Willing	582-9694	rwilling@charter.net
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GENEALOGY

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Joanne Shields	[phone n/a]	maclady@charter.net
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Cliff Worden	471-1292	cliffmar@charter.net

QUICKEN

George Steffensen	474-4305	steff@budget.net
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SOUND

Cliff Worden	471-1292	cliffmar@charter.net
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WEB PAGE HTML BASIC

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WORD, MS

Marion Miller	955-0712	marion@uci.net
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WORD PERFECT & MS WORD (for beginners)

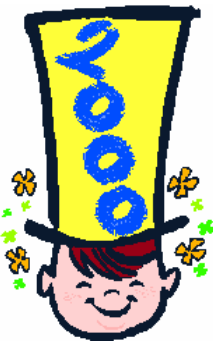
Karen Janssen	956-6067	ilea@terragon.com
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EXCHANGE COMPUTER RELATED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

For RASCAL members only. Limited to technical problems and responses. Subscribe to the **Technical Help Listserv E-mail Forum** for help with your computer problems at <http://mailman.userservices.net/mailman/listinfo/rascal-tech>. Subscribers use rascal-tech@mailman.userservices.net for discussion. The Listserv Moderator is reached at rascal-tech.admin@mailman.userservices.net.

IS THERE A FAST LANE in YOUR FUTURE?

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The Millennium Menace. Microsoft intended Windows 98 to be their last version of 16-bit compatible software. Another problem surfaced in the mid-to-late 1990's, it was known as "The Year 2000 Problem" or "Y2K." This was a concern since most computer operating systems and programs did not know how to handle any date beyond 1999. Even Windows 98 was not fully year-2000 compliant. Consequently, Windows 98se and Windows ME were created to help manage this problem.

During this time frame, Microsoft was attempting to release Windows NT 5. The professional industry was not ready for migrating to a new operating system because they were busy trying to survive the problems with the Y2K in application software. Basically, the professional industries were telling Microsoft to "Go work on Windows NT another eighteen months, then come back to talk to us after January 2000."

In the Spring of 2000, Microsoft released their more widely recognized 32-bit operating system known as Windows 2000. It looked a lot like Windows 95 and 98 but had significant improvements incorporated for better management of RAM memory, system stability, security, and fully exploited 32-bit software that was coming to market. Along with the new operating system, Microsoft released their new application package called Microsoft Office 2000. It included 32-bit versions of MS Word, Excel, Power Point, Access, and Outlook.

In about 2002, Microsoft started releasing their improved Windows XP, which was based on Windows 2000 but allowed additional features, like better graphics, animation and sound management. Two versions of Windows XP exist, one called **XP Home** for individual users, and **XP Professional**. The latter provides better computer security and network management.

In summary, the 64-bit CPU design allows several advantages over the earlier processors including: a true, 64-bit "highway" to move data into and out of the CPU processor; faster CPU clock speeds; increased RAM memory capacity (much larger than 4 GB). It allows new software designed to take advantage of improved architecture. With the 64-bit design, the operating system and application programs can finally move away from the limitations of the 8/16 bit software designs. For example, by default, the 64-bit processor is automatically twice as fast as a 32-bit processor because the "highway" is twice as wide. This allows the computer software application to move the program and data faster. The caveat to this is that the computer operating system and the associated software programs need to be designed to take full advantage of this super highway.



Windows XP Tips

File Summary

Windows XP has a neat feature that will jog your memory whenever you save a file to your hard drive. Simply fill out the file's Summary page for future reference. To get there, **right click** on the file in **Windows Explorer** and select **Properties**, then the **Summary** tab. This is especially handy if you need to search for lost files later on, because the **Summary** page can maintain category, key words, and comments.

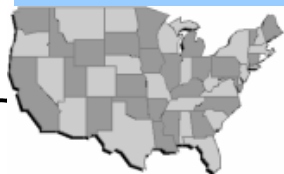
Restoring Underlined Menu Items.

You may have noticed in Windows XP that the underlined letters in menus are missing. This was a convenient feature of older Windows versions in that you could press the Alt key and the underlined letter to activate a menu item. If you've grown accustomed to that shortcut, you can restore the feature in XP by right clicking the desktop, choose **Properties** and the **Appearance** tab. click on **Effects** and uncheck "**Hide Underlined Letters for Keyboard Navigation Until I Press the Alt Key.**"

~ adapted from a Microsoft source

SHARING RASCAL with OUT OF THE AREA FRIENDS & RELATIVES

~ by Patricia Hentges



Wouldn't it be great if RASCAL type computer clubs could be scattered across the nation in every place they were needed? Have you ever extolled the virtues of our club to a friend or relative who said they wished they had a club like ours in their area?

To be sure, an out of town member wouldn't be able to enjoy our presentations, classes, or meetings, but they would be able to have computer questions answered over the **Technical Support List Server**. This is a valuable tool well worth the small price of our membership dues. Out of town members would also receive a **copy of our newsletter each month** with its up to date information plus tech expert contacts on the **Dial-A-Pro page**, and a little insight into the interesting folks who make up this remarkable, first-of-its-kind, especially for seniors, computer club.

If every member of our club contacted friends or relatives outside the Rogue Valley and informed them of what membership could do for them, computer help could be spread into areas where none now exists.

Interested people could send their checks directly to you. You would then give the check, plus the new member's name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, to our Membership Table at a General Meeting. Alternatively, either you or the new member could send the above to:

RASCAL Membership
214 SW 4th Street
Grants Pass, OR 97526

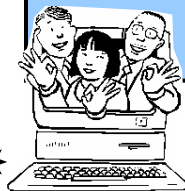
The new members would be mailed a Welcome Packet that includes the information they need, plus the current newsletter.

Inform your friends and relatives of our amazing club and see what their reactions are. They may just have been waiting for you to share just such a treasure with them.

Remember, they may also check us out at
www.rascal.cc

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

~ by Jane Frincke



Complete Board Meeting minutes, and those of more recent meetings than can be published here, are found on the RASCAL Website at www.rascal.cc. Below are highlights of the March 8, 2005 meeting.

President Chris Oman welcomed Bill Rose as the new Vice President of RASCAL. The Board agreed to look into amending the By-Laws to lower the membership age requirement from 55 to 50. Education Director Patricia Hentges reviewed various education issues, including beginners' meetings. Membership Director George Simington reported that, as of February 28, 2005, the club had 929 individual members and 757 member households. The Board approved holding a "50/50" drawing at each weekly meeting. Vice President Bill Rose presented plans for a RASCAL float in the Boatnik parade.



Great Volunteer Opportunities!

The Gospel Rescue Mission has a couple of great jobs that might be perfect for willing RASCALS. Their GED program would love to have someone able to teach **Basic Computer Literacy**. Call Jean Burkman at 476-0082.

Also greatly needed is someone familiar with **QuickBooks Pro**, to work a couple of mornings each week checking on data input, running bank reconciliation's, and prepping financial reports for their Board Meetings. Call Keith Heck at 476-0082.

"You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working, and just so, you learn to love by loving. All those who think to learn in any other way deceive themselves."

~ Saint Francis de Sales, 1567-1622
Bishop of Geneva

RASCAL
 COMPUTER CLUB
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 GRANTS PASS, OR 97526



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PLEASE NOTE: Your month of membership renewal is located in the upper right corner of your mailing label. Please mail yearly dues (\$15 single membership: \$20 for couples, \$75 Lifetime) to the RASCAL address listed above or submit at a General Meeting.

KEEP in TOUCH



Let RASCAL know when you change your e-mail address, your telephone number, or your residence address. Contact Shirley Byrd at sndbyrd@uci.net

RASCAL meetings are held in the Floral Building at the Fairgrounds in Grants Pass. Weekly meetings are on Tuesdays, except holidays. The General Membership meets from 9:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Come early for coffee and chat with friends.

We also invite you to visit our website:
www.rascal.cc

You will find up-to-date information about our club, our members, classes, meetings, and links to other websites. Our website is hosted by Smartwire Internet.

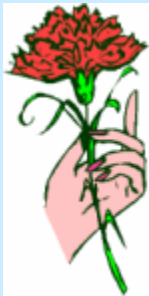
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TAPS
Day is Done
Gone the Sun

From the Hills
From the Plains
From the Sky.

All is Well
Safely Rest
God is Nigh.



BIT OF A RASCAL STAFF

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*We reserve the right to edit and/or omit submissions.
 Items received after the newsletter deadline may appear
 in the next issue.*