



**A
BIT
OF A**

RASCAL

VOL XVIII ISSUE VIII — AUGUST 2005 - ROGUE AREA SENIOR COMPUTER ASSISTANCE LEAGUE

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A TALE OF TWO SISTERS

~ by Jane Frincke



This is a true story.

Jane and her husband (Tarzan) retired to Grants Pass several years ago. Although Jane had worked on computers for many years in the business arena, she wanted to learn to enjoy her computer. Lucky Jane. She discovered RASCAL, and as her husband (Tarzan) will confirm, their computer has not had a quiet moment since.

Jane's sister lives one thousand miles away. Sister retired shortly after Jane. She also wanted to learn more about her computer. However, the city where Sister lives lacks a computer group for seniors. Without guidance, Sister has gotten into some messes—big and small—on her computer. The first time she crashed her system, she had no idea virus definitions existed, much less that she should be updating them! Her frustration mounted when her taskbar disappeared. And Spyware—what's that? The terminology "install a program" terrified her. Then there was her birthday present. Sister's six-year old grandson spilled the beans when he told her, with breathless excitement, that he and his brothers were going to give Sister a wireless optical mouse for her birthday. She knew she should be tickled but was embarrassed to admit she did not know what an optical mouse was.

About that time, along came RASCAL's Out-of-Area Membership Program. Jane e-mailed her Sister and explained that even though she lived outside the Rogue Valley, she could join RASCAL—and benefit greatly. For just \$15 a year, Sister would receive the monthly newsletter, be able to contact the Dial-A-Pro's to get answers she was currently having to pay for, and she could access RASCAL-Tech, the club's online technical support service. Now it's Lucky Jane and Lucky Sister.

Please add the title "Lucky" to the name of a family member or friend. Believe me, your family and friends will thank you!

There is a Non-Resident Membership Application included in this newsletter, along with a sample letter on its reverse side, which you may revise to fit your situation. You may choose to mail this page to friends and sign the letter with your name.

Please see pages five and six and spread the good news!



TWO VIEWS of A NEW VERSION of MICROSOFT'S WINDOWS XP



IS THIS the PROGRAM for YOU?

~ by Bob Booth

Over the next few weeks your favorite media outlets are going to tell you about a new version of Windows XP: **Windows XP Professional x64 Edition**. It is said to be faster and more efficient and supports up to 128 gigabytes of RAM (250 to 500 times more RAM than most XP users currently have). It even lets you run two single or multicore processors at the same time. This new version of Windows is a godsend for anyone who does processor-intensive academic research or corporate database manipulation. Best of all, if you already have Windows XP Professional running on your computer, you can upgrade to Windows XP Professional x64 Edition at no charge.

So, you should rush out and upgrade to this new version of Windows, immediately. Right? WRONG!

What the media isn't going to tell you is that unless you routinely use your computer to do complex arithmetic functions with integers between 0 and 18,466,744,073,709,551,615 (the amount of pennies under Bill Gates' couch cushion), Windows XP Professional x64 Edition simply isn't meant for you. **Worse still, you have to have a special type of computer—one with a brand new Intel Xeon, Intel Itanium, or an AMD Athlon 64 Processor running inside of it—in order to be able to run this new version of Windows.**

Be aware that 64-bit device drivers are as rare as elephants in Antarctica. Many of your computer's peripherals, including your DVD burner, sound card, and home-built PVR interface will probably not work once you upgrade to Windows XP Professional x64 Edition.

So, to sum up, there is a new version of Windows XP specifically designed for processor-intensive academic research and corporate database manipulation. You can upgrade to this new version at no charge, but:

1. You have to be currently running Windows XP Professional.

2. You have to have a 64-bit processor such as a Xeon, Itanium, or Athlon 64.
3. Once you upgrade, your computer's peripherals may no longer work (at least until manufacturers start making 64-bit device drivers).

Suggestion: **Even if you can upgrade to XP Professional x64, don't.** Instead, wait until the next version of Windows (codename **Longhorn**) is released later this year or early next year. Not only will you get the latest operating system, my guess is that a LOT more peripherals will work with **Longhorn** than will work with XP Professional x64 (other things being equal).

~ edited from Patrick Douglas Crispen's *Tourbus*



MY EXPERIENCE with WINDOWS XP x64

~ by Chris Oman

I have been experimenting with the Windows 64 Bit "Beta" edition for over six months, and have found it to be a pretty neat piece of software. (Beta means it is still in the final testing stage before official release.) In March, I gave a presentation at a RASCAL meeting on this program, while Lou Lyons operated the computer demonstration for the projection screen. At one time I had six plus application programs open and the OS was still stable and functioning. Not one time did we experience the famous "Blue Screen of Death," common to unstable Windows.

Although I am not generally a Microsoft "Fan," I think Microsoft has worked very hard to make sure the 64 Bit edition of Windows XP Pro is a stable product prior to its official release in June. Yes, it probably still has some hardware driver compatibility problems—considering all of the different components on the market, i.e., printers, scanners, etc. However, it does support quite a few hardware devices in addition to USB ports, video cards, network and modems, mice, etc. If you have an older printer or scanner, you may have to download the new driver for those devices.

cont. on page 3

Windows XP Professional 64 Bit edition was officially released in June for public use. It is designed to run on 64 Bit CPU processors from AMD and Intel. Although all of the 64 Bit hardware device drivers have not been released by equipment manufacturers, each manufacturer is addressing the problem. **Microsoft continues to work with hardware manufacturers to resolve compatibility issues and to add these devices to their Windows Update site. In addition, they have programmed compatibility into the 64 Bit edition so it will run many of the current 32 Bit versions of Windows application programs.** This helps the user community with current programs until the software developers complete 64 Bit editions of their programs.

The follow-on operating system to Windows XP, currently called **Longhorn**, is still in the development cycle, and my guess is, won't be released until late 2006, or even 2007. **Until the time Longhorn is released, if you are purchasing a new computer with a 64 Bit processor, you should seriously consider ordering it with Windows XP Pro 64 Bit edition. If your new computer comes with the AMD 64 Bit processor, it will also run fine with the current Windows XP Home and Professional editions.**

With some browsing on the Internet at sites such as Tiger Direct, CDW Warehouse, or New Egg, these systems, without the monitor, can be found to sell for under \$1,000.

A refurbished HP desktop computer with the AMD Athlon 64 Bit CPU, plus the Windows XP 64 Bit Pro software can be purchased for under \$800, plus shipping. A new system can be built locally for about \$995 with no shipping costs.

Other operating system alternatives are the various Linux distributions, which automatically recognize which CPU processor your system has and automatically loads for either the 32 Bit or 64 Bit processor in your system.



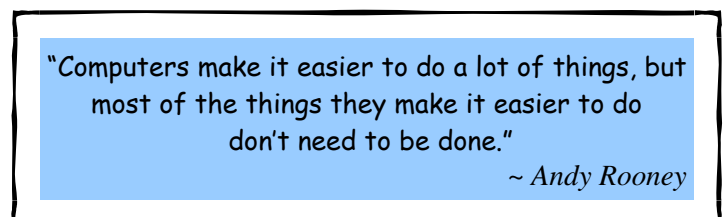
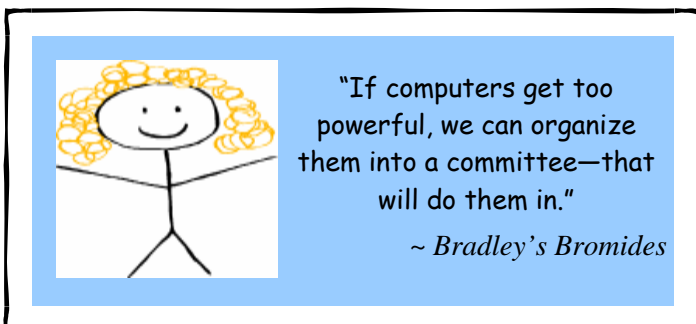
STUBBORN FORMATTING . Ever try to fix formatting that refuses to change? You can start with a clean slate by removing all formatting from the selection: **select the block of text and press Ctrl-Shift-N.;** or use Word's **Reveal Formatting** task pane to modify the formatting. In Word 2003, just hit **Shift-F1;** in Word 2002, select **Reveal Formatting** from the **Format** menu. **[Ed's note: this is great when copying text from the web to your word processor.]**

You may wish to see which styles are applied to multiple paragraphs. Choose either **Normal** or **Outline** under the **View** menu. Then select **Outline** from the **Tools** menu, go to the **View** tab, and enter a value of 0.5 inches or more next to the field labeled **Style** area width. A panel at the left edge of the window will display the styles associated with each paragraph.

WORD'S BUILT-IN CALCULATOR You can add a calculator to Word's toolbars or menus. Go to **View | Toolbars | Customize** and choose the **Commands** tab. In the list of categories, go to **Tools**, select **Tools Calculate** in the list of commands; drag it to a toolbar or drop-down menu. After you drop the command on the toolbar or menu, immediately right-click on the command, choose **Change Button image** from the pop-up menu, and choose the calculator icon.

You can use the same pop-up menu to specify whether to display text, an icon, or both in the toolbar. Now, type a simple calculation (try $2 + 2$) in a Word document. Highlight it and click on the new icon or menu item. To replace the calculation with the result, just press **Ctrl-V**. Before you press **Ctrl-V**, note that the result appears in the status line at the bottom of the window. **[Ed's note: This is a neat, nifty, quick and easy tool for those of us who need help with their math.]**

~ selections from PC World



THE AMAZING DIGITAL CAMERA:

A Digest of Tips

~ by Ed Danehey

a RASCAL and a Camera Buff



It is often pointed out that with digital cameras the images cost nothing. That is a great attraction and is certainly true, after the expense of the camera and its accessories. Add to that the time spent mastering the instrument, its software, and such. To ease that effort, some ideas were presented in The Medford Mail Tribune recently.

Their photo editor, Bob Pennell, says one can always study the manual [do what?] upon getting a high tech device. He goes on to say that one can “use the camera until you understand what it will and will not do.” He gives some ways to test a camera’s limits and reminds that “the images cost nothing.” What follows are some tips from this article, with my edits, and some comments and tips resulting from my experience.

- It is best to shoot at the camera’s highest resolution unless you are only going to e-mail photos; then the lowest resolution is adequate. Keeping the file small means less download time in e-mail for the receiver.
- Take pictures under varying light conditions: scenes with contrasts of light in them; check the fill-in flash: flash pictures at night, etc.
- Check out the autofocus: distant, close range, close-ups, and macro (if available).
- Shoot objects in motion: can you stop the action or purposely blur the object, etc. Be aware that digital cameras have a delay between the click and the picture (this varies with different models).

I find that it is useful to begin by scan-reading the written stuff about your particular model so the suggestions above can be effectively accomplished. If you do not feel in control of your camera, then this is the time to check out the material in detail on specific items so you can get the results you want in your pictures.

Even the easiest-to-use cameras have many built-in ways to help get good pictures, but you need to know what the little icons mean and what the buttons do. A vacation “got-to-have” accessory is a recharger for the rechargeables (carry some “throw away” batteries with you as backups). Pack the camera pocket guide along with the accessories.

- Learn to press the shutter release halfway initially. That forces the camera to focus the shot on the object (from whom you are waiting for that great smile). Then when you press all the way the camera will not have the autofocus delay.
- Forget the digital zoom on the camera, because the same result can be obtained from software and the image file will not be limited. Do use the **optical zoom**, if available.
- When overexposed parts of the picture are totally lost, it is better to underexpose and, again, use software to get the proper light balance.
- **Don’t skimp on memory cards** (have you seen the lowered prices?) because the built-in memory is insufficient. What size to get? Today’s cameras need 256 MB or more. Maybe two of those are better than one 512 MB, even though the price is a bit higher. Why, you may ask. Flash memory cards can go bad and two makes for better security. There are programs to help your computer recover pictures on a memory card gone bad. **PC Inspector Smart Recovery** can be downloaded for free (www.pcinspector.de).
- Remember to protect the original photo file by making backups on which to do software “enhancements.” Putting the original files in an archive folder on your hard drive is not a “backup plan.” Recordable CDs or DVDs are better.
- When you get to the point where a digicamera upgrade seems to be what you want, consider more than comparing prices. Visiting www.dpreview.com or www.imaging-resource.com (this has a lot of good stuff) will give you a lot of information, including comparative shots between similar cameras.

Again, remember that “the images cost nothing” (except for your battery use). Just have some fun with your digital camera!





RASCAL



Rogue Area Senior Computer Assistance League
of
Grants Pass, Oregon

Non-Resident Membership Application

Please print:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Tel: _____ E-Mail: _____

How did you learn of RASCAL? _____

If referred by a RASCAL member, please give name: _____

Annual Dues: \$15 / Individual; \$20 / couple; \$75 / Lifetime. Must be 55 or older to join.

Please make check payable to RASCAL. Mail application and check to:

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



Dear Prospective Out-of-the-Area Member of RASCAL:

As you probably know, I belong to a senior's computer club called RASCAL (Rogue Area Senior Computer Assistance League) which is a group of about a thousand members, all with a common interest in computers. Our club has a lot to offer seniors who want to know about their computers, even if they don't reside locally. Therefore, we cordially invite you to become a member. The dues are fifteen dollars a year.

Although you might not be able to attend our weekly meetings or our classes (we are affiliated with Rogue Community College), joining RASCAL will provide you with most of the advantages of being a member. Here is a brief list of those benefits:

- **The monthly "Bit of a RASCAL" newsletter** — Filled with computer tips, tricks, tweaks, and how-to's. It will arrive in your mailbox each month. Many people have said the newsletter itself is worth the annual membership fee.
- **RASCAL-Tech** — Our online technical help system which you can subscribe to at no additional cost.
- **Dial-A-Pro** — E-mail or telephone advice from volunteer computer experts willing to answer your questions and solve your problems.

There is more! In the near future, we hope to offer lesson plans for sale for all of our classes. There will also be access to the "Members Only" section of our web site, which is under development, plus referrals to web sites you may never have heard of for ideas. Best of all, if and when you are in the Grants Pass area, you will have a lot of fellow members to meet, talk to and exchange ideas with. **Take a look at our web site at www.rascal.cc to see more of what we are all about.**

If being a member of RASCAL would interest you, just send me a check for \$15 made out to RASCAL, along with your mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number. I'll take care of the rest and get you into our system. **Alternatively, you may mail the application on the reverse of this page, with your check, to the RASCAL address shown there.**

I'm looking forward to hearing from you and, if you have friends who don't have a convenient, dependable source of computer information and help, please feel free to extend this offer to them also.

Regards,





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	474-0161	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

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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 INFORMATION

Laura Dunwald	479-9076	beagenie@charter.net
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WINDOWS 95 RELATED

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Chris Oman	474-0161	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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HAM RADIO

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ICQ

Jean Kraft	664-8197	hikraft@charter.net
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INTERNET, General

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MACINTOSH OS

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Jean Kraft	664-8197	hikraft@charter.net
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Cliff Worden	471-1292	cliffmar@charter.net
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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)

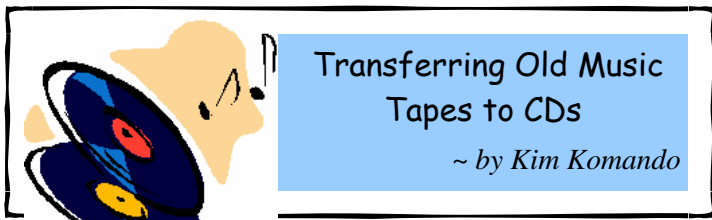
Karen Janssen	956-6067	ilea@terragon.com
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EXCHANGE COMPUTER RELATED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

For RASCAL members only. Limited to technical problems and responses. Subscribe to the **Technical Help**

Listserver 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 Listserve Moderator is reached at **rascal-tech.admin@mailman.userservices.net**.



Transferring Old Music Tapes to CDs

~ by Kim Komando

Question: Kim, I'm an old coot with a bunch of cassette tapes that I want to convert to CDs. I can't just plug them into my computer and make an MP3. My combo CD writer drive has pink, green, and yellow ports. Is there something I can use to do this?

Answer: Yes, you can turn your old tapes into music files or CDs. And you won't have to buy a bulky, expensive appliance to do it. But it will take a few tools and some patience.

First, you'll need an ordinary cassette tape player. Then you'll need a cable to connect it to your computer. You can get audio cables at most electronics stores. The average cost is \$5 for a six-foot cable. You'll most likely use a male-to-male audio cable. Both ends look like headphone plugs. These plugs are also known as 1/8th inch or 3.5mm.

Plug one end of the cable into your tape player's line-out jack. If your player doesn't have this jack, try the headphone jack. The colored ports on your computer probably include line-in and microphone. Check your manual.

The line-in and microphone jacks actually belong to our computer's sound system. Almost all retail computer models include them. Sound systems are responsible for any music or sound effects you hear.

Now test your connection. First, make sure that your computer's line-in is not muted. Click **Start>>Control Panel**. Double-click **Sounds and Audio Devices**. Select the **Volume** tab. Under "**Device Volume**," click the **Advanced** button. Under **Line In**, make sure the **Mute** box is not checked. Then turn on your tape player. The player's sound should make its way to your computer's speakers.

The last part you'll need is a recording program. **Audacity** is a robust free program that can handle the recording. You can find it at audacity.sourceforge.net. Popular software titles **Musicmatch** and **Nero** can also handle line-in recording.

To begin with **Audacity**, click the drop-down box on the right side. It will offer options for the recording

source. Select **Line-in**. Click the red record button. Then start your tape player. After each song, click the yellow stop button. Click on the file menu. You can save the song with one of the **Export As** options.

For example, you can choose **Export** as WAV. From there you can start burning your music to CDs. Most music programs, such as **RealPlayer** and **Windows Media Player**, will burn CDs that work in regular CD players.

To make an MP3, let's say you're going to use **RealPlayer**. You can download it from the **Real** site at www.real.com. Follow the instructions above to save a song as a WAV file. Then start **RealPlayer**. In **RealPlayer** click **File>>My Library**. Find and highlight your song. Click the **Open** button.

Click **View>>My Library**. Select your song from the list (it might be the only one). Click **Tools>>Convert Media Format**. Under **Format**, select **MP3**. Then click the OK button. You can use **RealPlayer** to burn CDs that will play in regular CD players.

Depending on the size of your cassette collection, this could take awhile. But once you get the hang of it, you'll probably enjoy it. I did.

*These tips are reprinted by permission of
The Kim Komando Computer Show
www.komando.com*



ONE RASCAL'S WAY

*If you would like to share a favorite tip with us submit it to
editor@rascal.cc*

Want to Keep Incoming Mail from Opening Automatically?

When an e-mail comes from an unknown sender and you are suspicious of its content, or simply don't want to waste your time on it, it is preferable not to have it open automatically. To leave the open option up to you, do this: Disable the Outlook Express Preview Pane. Go to **View | Layout |** and deselect the **Show Preview Pane** check box. Click **Apply**, then click **OK**. That'll do it! You may now open, or delete without opening. The choice is yours. A paperclip icon in the left column of OE, will tell you when a message contains an attachment.

~ Nancy Kain



KEEPING INTRUDERS OUT

~ a compilation of information
from reliable sources
via Lou Lyons

Last month we reminded you to check for virus updates weekly and to install and run, every week or so (depending upon how much you search the Internet), the free download programs of **SpywareBlaster**, **Spybot Search & Destroy**, and **AdAware**. In response to questions from members, here is a little more information on these devices.

The **SpywareBlaster** is highly recommended because it prevents bad guys from getting into the system to begin with. It has been called by a *Download.com* reviewer, "The most powerful protection program available." It does its work in the background. You need only to periodically update it. It is also **free**.

For Spybot to be its most effective, the TeaTimer utility must be enabled. This makes possible real-time scanning. As the memory resident part of Spybot, TeaTimer works in the background to block things trying to get in. If it does its job properly, when you manually run the utility each week, you will never find a problem on your weekly scan, except for those intruders which enter between database updates—and this is rare.

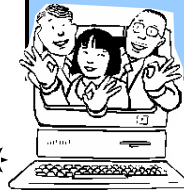
If you are concerned that there may be "side-effects" from using these utilities, Lou says that since each computer system is different, there may be instances of problems but he is not aware of any problems in general.

For XP users, Lou suggests that they download and install **Microsoft AntiSpyware**. It is free at this time and it is effective. It can be obtained from www.microsoft.com. Microsoft has just announced availability of a new version with a free trial until 12/31/05. Anyone who is using the earlier version may simply download the update which will install right over the current version.

Some question the need to use more than one of these utilities. The answer is that no single program catches everything. They each have a somewhat different focus which they perform well.

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

~ by Jane Frincke



Please see the **RASCAL Website** at
www.rascal.cc.
for complete minutes of the
June 14, 2005 Board Meeting.

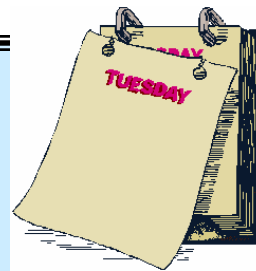
Calling all Community Minded RASCALS!



Our club was honored with a special visitor at the General Meeting, June 28. At the invitation of President Chris Oman, Gayle Daniel, Food Bank Manager of Josephine County Community Action Programs, told us of special needs of this wonderful, life-saving program that we RASCALS might be able to help fill.

As you may know, this program provides food for families in dire straights and for seniors who must choose between food and life sustaining prescription drugs. They are currently in need of people with some computer skills, and for drivers to pick up and help distribute the food.

If you would like to help out, please call Gayle Daniel for more specifics at 474-5444, or e-mail her at gddaniel@co.josephine.or.us.



WHERE IS THE AUGUST CALENDAR?

Please be reminded that there is no class schedule for the month of August. Watch for a good line up of classes in September and October.

Due to the Josephine County Fair in August, our only meeting date at the Fairgrounds will be Tuesday, August 30, when we will resume The General Meeting at 9:30 to 10:45 and The Beginner's Meeting at 10:50 to 11:30.

SEE YOU THERE!

RASCAL

COMPUTER CLUB
214 SW 4th STREET
GRANTS PASS, OR 97526



Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #22
Grants Pass, OR

Return Service Requested



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. to 10:45 a.m. The Beginners' Meeting is held from 10:50 to 11:30. All members are welcome to attend both meetings. Come early for coffee and chat with friends.

We also invite you to visit our website:
www.rascal.cc
for up-to-date information about our club, our members, classes, meetings, and links to other websites. Our website is managed by Ginny von Gal and hosted by Smartwire Internet.

GOT NEWS DISPATCH?



Every member of RASCAL is automatically entered, at the time of enrollment, into our database to receive the NewsDispatches. These are sent out to inform you of urgent club news and, routinely, of General Meetings and Special Events. If you aren't receiving these announcements, most of which go out weekly, please let us know.

Contact our Data Base Manager, Shirley Byrd, at sndbyrd@uci.net.

BIT OF A RASCAL STAFF

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Assistant Editor.....Nancy Kain
Columnists.....Bob Booth, Tom Crittenden
.....Laura Dunwald, Jane Frincke, Patricia Hentges, Nancy Kain, Lou Lyons
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