



**A
BIT
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RASCAL

VOL XIX ISSUE III — MARCH 2006 - ROGUE AREA SENIOR COMPUTER ASSISTANCE LEAGUE

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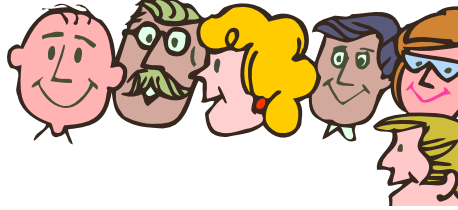
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WHAT IS A SIG?



As many of you may know by now, a SIG is a Special Interest Group and is something you can form with others who share your interest in a given subject.

As a RASCAL, you could select a subject in any area of computer-related topics, such as the RASCAL Linux SIG or the RASCAL Digital Cameras SIG, at right. Al Williams addresses a group of 34 camera buffs on January 17, 2006.

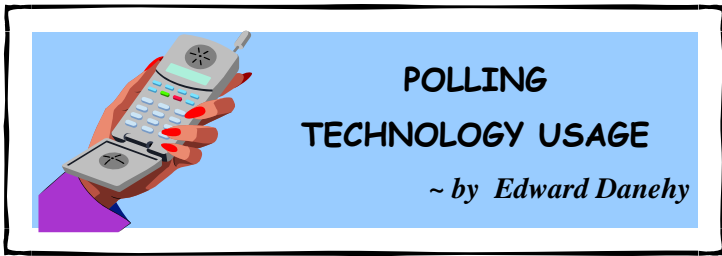


Your group might focus on such areas as: computer security issues; genealogy; creation of greeting cards and other crafty or decorative projects; web browsing; new technology such as iPods, cell phones, and other wireless devices (see Ed Danehy's article on page 2) and so forth. You name it! There are bound to be others out there in this club of over 900 members who would love to share and learn from one another.

After selecting your subject and forming your group, you would decide upon a time and place to meet regularly, such as The Floral Building following a General Meeting, or a restaurant with a private banquet room such as The Black Forrest or J. North's, or at a member's home.

For tips on getting started you may contact our Education Director, Patricia Hentges at <rascaleducation@rascal.cc>, or former President Chris Oman at <oman@uci.net>.

Give it some thought. Find a topic of interest you would like to share with others and form your very own SIG!



USA Today, Gallup, and CNN polled 1004 Americans on technology usage (USA Today 10/31/05). One question was: **"How often do you have problems when trying to figure out how to use new technology?"** Response: All of the time, 6%; most of the time, 13%; some of the time, 45%; rarely, 28%; never, 7%; no opinion, 1%.

Another question was: **"How would you describe your typical reaction when you first use new technology?"** Response: panicked, 5%; nervous, 20%; excited, 34%, comfortable, 38%; no opinion, 3%.

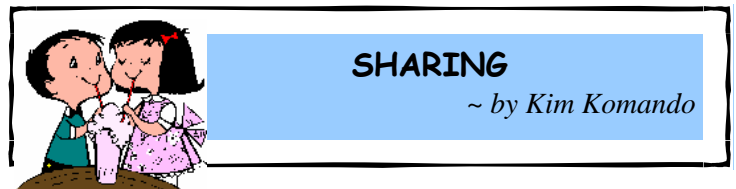
In other words, approximately 3 to 1 are comfortable or excited about new technology products, but nearly 2 to 1 have trouble trying to use the products. RASCALs know the feeling.

When it comes to getting the latest device, 81% wait until the price drops and they are confident the gizmo is good, or until most people have taken the leap. Twelve percent don't get new stuff unless someone gives it to them. Only 5% buy soon after the devices come out.

The ranking of what is considered a necessary item is: cell phone, 54%; desktop PC, 47%; cable TV or satellite, 28%; high-speed internet, 28%; DVD player, 22%; laptop 17%; and digital camera 14%.

Respondents listed what frustrates them the most in the following order: computer 41%, cell phone 13%, digital camera 6%, DVD player 5%, digital music device 3%.

If cell phones are indeed the top necessity item, and **with the convergence of the digital camera, email, and web availability**, will the next RASCAL Special Interest Group be "SIG for Cell Phones, Plus"?



Q. My son purchased an iPod. He and his friends were downloading songs through my PC. A technician told me that a lot of viruses and spyware could come sharing programs. My son swears that this is not true and that it is perfectly safe. He also says that iTunes is safe. I paid for Rhapsody for him to download, but he says that will not work for his iPod. Can you help with the truth and offer safe suggestions?

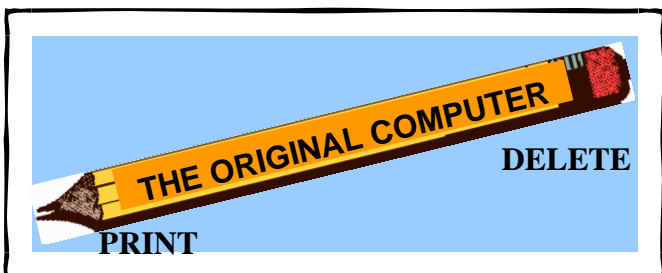
A. You are right to be concerned, although your son is probably correct. Peer-to-peer programs once carried spyware. That's how they got paid. They gave away the program and were paid to put spyware on your computer. Most claim to be clean today. However, there is much greater danger with peer-to-peer programs. They are typically used to exchange music files. **The courts have made it clear that this is illegal.** The Recording Industry Association of America regularly sues people who do this. **It is not unusual for befuddled grandparents to be sued because little Johnny was using their computer to violate copyright laws.** Generally, the RIAA settles these cases for a few thousand dollars.

It is certainly possible for sharing software to be used for legal purposes. However, your son and his friends may well be downloading music illegally. I suggest you check before you receive a subpoena. Your boy is right about **iTunes**. It is both safe and legal. I use it myself, since I also have an iPod. **iTunes** is owned by Apple Computer. The name refers both to the music store and the software that goes on your computer.

Apple revolutionized online music sales with its iTunes store. You won't have any security or legal problems with its usage. **Rhapsody** is offered by **Real Networks**. It is a subscription service. That means that you can download the songs and listen to them as long as you maintain the subscription. They are unplayable if the subscription lapses. **Real Networks** also sells songs through its music store. The buyer keeps these, just like those sold by **iTunes**. **Real** has put its music in a form that is playable on some iPods. However, Apple resists this with software changes. So, a song bought from **Real** may or may not be playable on the iPod.

I suggest you limit your son to iTunes and other legal music services, such as Rhapsody. Beware of peer-to-peer programs. Whatever the makers' stated positions, these programs are often used to break copyright law. That can be an expensive transgression.

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





PREVENTING IDENTITY THEFT

~ by Joan McDowell

At our RASCAL General Meeting of January 17, Crime Prevention Officer, Kevin Blaich of The Grants Pass Department of Public Safety, spoke very effectively on “Computer Fraud.” Here are some re-iterated warnings and additional tips culled and edited from www.netsecurity.about.com.

Tony Bradley in *About.com* says that “**Most identify theft has little to do with the internet or lax computer or network security.** Unpatched operating system vulnerabilities or hacking wizardry are involved in a relatively small number of the total cases.” As officer Blaich emphasized, it is mostly up to individuals to be aware of the hazards and the methods modern-day thieves use to “get you.”

These are some steps you may take to help secure and protect your personally identifiable information and to ensure that your identity or your credit have not been compromised.

1. Watch for shoulder-surfers. When using an ATM machine, or entering your pin number at a merchant’s check-out station, be aware of who is nearby and make sure nobody is peering over your shoulder to make a note of the keys you are pressing.

2. Require photo ID verification. Rather than signing the backs of your credit cards, you can write “See Photo ID.” Having a store clerk check your photo, rather than your signature, is far more protective.

3. Shred everything. Since trash-picking is a common way for thieves to acquire your personal information, shred old credit card or ATM receipts, medical statements, solicitation for credit cards, etc. Get a cross-cut shredder that will make confetti out of your documents.

4. Destroy digital data. When you sell, trade, or otherwise dispose of a computer system, a hard drive, or even a CD, DVD, or backup tape which contains personal information, **take extra steps to ensure that the data is completely destroyed.** Deleting or

reformatting the hard drive is not enough. Data can be recovered or “undeleted” by anyone with a little technical skill. Tony Bradley recommends a product like **ShredXP** to make sure that data on hard drives is completely destroyed. CD or tape media should be physically destroyed by breaking or shattering.

5. Be diligent about checking statements received in the mail. Ensure that purchases or other entries are legitimate and match up with your records so that you may quickly identify and address any suspicious activity. If a statement doesn’t arrive, this may alert you that it could have been stolen from your mailbox or while in transit.

6. Mail your bills at the post office. A thief who raids your mailbox could acquire a slew of critical information **in one envelope:** your name, address, credit account number, your bank information from the bottom of a check, and a copy of your signature from your check for forgery purposes.

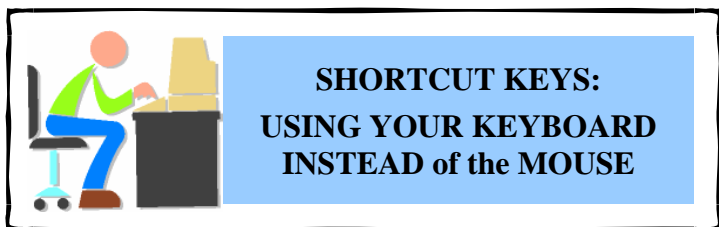
7. Limit the information on your checks. One simple omission recommended is to show only your first initial in the name space of your check, instead of writing out your given name. You could also, of course, omit your address and phone number.

8. Analyze your credit report annually. You may obtain a free report once a year from each of the big three agencies: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. The web site is www.annualcreditreport.com.

9. Protect your Social Security number. It is frequently advised that it is best not to carry anything with this number on it in your wallet. **Of course, never use your Social Security number (not even just the last four digits) as any part of a username or password that you establish.**

10. Caveat Emptor. When making purchases on line, be sure you have reason to trust the company you are dealing with. Amazon.com or BestBuy.com or any web site affiliated with well-known, national or global merchants are relatively safe. They are likely to take the security of your personal information as seriously as you do. Read the companies’ online privacy policy to ensure you agree with it and make sure you are on a secure or encrypted web site — symbolized in Internet Explorer by a small padlock at the bottom-right of the screen.





SHORTCUT KEYS: USING YOUR KEYBOARD INSTEAD of the MOUSE

Many computer usage “Pros,” such as Kim Komando of “The Kim Komando Show,” say they use keyboard shortcuts far more than they use the mouse.



Listed below are keys that Kim says will get you quickly to where you want to go in Windows using the **Winkey** (the key with the backwards Windows flag on it):

- **WinKey + D** = Minimizes all windows and shows the desktop.
- **WinKey + L** = Locks the computer (Windows XP, only).
- **WinKey + Tab** = Cycles through the programs shown on the taskbar.
- **Winkey + F** = Brings up the Windows Search Box.
- **Winkey + R** = Opens the Run dialog box.

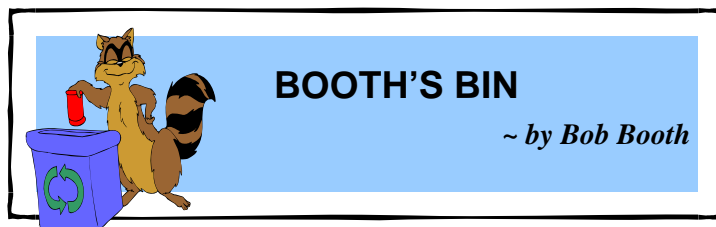
Some other favorites are:

- **SHIFT + F10** = Same as right-clicking an object.
- **CTRL + ESC** = Opens the Start Menu.
- **ALT + F4** = Closes the current program.
- **ALT + F6** = Switches between multiple windows in the same program.
- **CTRL + Tab** = Switches between multiple tabbed windows in the same program.
- **SHIFT + DELETE** = Deletes selection immediately, without it hitting the Recycle Bin.
- **PRESS & HOLD the SHIFT KEY**, to bypass the auto-run feature when inserting a CD-ROM.

And when you do need to use the mouse, here are some shortcuts for it:

- **Double-click** = Selects a word.
- **Triple-click** = Selects a paragraph.
- **CTRL + Mouse Wheel** = Use it when you want to zoom in and out (make larger or smaller) of what is showing on the screen.

Many more shortcuts can be found in RASCAL Bob Matti's “Getting to Know Your Friendly Keyboard” in the March 2003 issue of this newsletter. I hope you made a copy of it as a reference. For those who didn't, we may reprint Bob's article in a future issue.



BOOTH'S BIN

~ by Bob Booth

READY! SET! DEFRAG!

First let's explain why defragging is important so that we can understand the full purpose of the program.

How File Fragmentation Occurs

Over time, files are added and removed to your computer's hard disk (the "C" Drive). When a file is removed from the hard disk, an empty space takes its place. When a new file is written, the hard drive tries to fill this empty space; if the new file is too large for the space, it is partially written and the rest of the file is stored in another available space. This is referred to as file fragmentation.

Why File Fragmentation is Costly in Performance

A fragmented file always takes longer to acquire because the hard drive must access more than one location; this causes unnecessary wear/tear and overhead, which translates into a delay when accessing (reading/writing) a file. This is especially true if many files on the hard disk are fragmented, which is more often the case than not.

Why Defragging is Critically Important Maintenance

Defragging is the process of taking all the fragmented files and rewriting them into a contiguous (side-by-side) location. Depending on how fragmented your hard drive is, the defragging process can take anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours to complete. Once the drive is defragged, files can be accessed almost instantaneously. In terms of how important defragging is when it comes to optimizing a system: **it is absolutely critical maintenance.**

And now that we understand the defrag process, let's DO IT ON SOME REASONABLE SCHEDULE: like once a month — and more often for “Power Users.”



“We learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself.”

~ Lloyd Alexander (b. 1929), American author of children's books.



RASCAL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



MARCH

DIGITAL CAMERA, Beginning (PRE-REQ: Beginning Windows, Beginning Email & Internet.) Learn what to look for when buying a digital camera, or discover more about the digital camera you already have. Learn the basics of digital photography. Learn to find, install, and use an editing program.

EMAIL & INTERNET, Beginning (Pre-Req: Introduction to Computers & Beginning Windows.) Very detailed, very basic class. Handouts will teach you how to get started in email and the internet. Create, send, and receive e-mail over the internet using Outlook Express. Search, surf, and download using Internet Explorer.

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.

WORD, Beginning (PRE-REQ: Beginning Windows.) 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.

PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS, Beginning (PRE-REQ: Beginning Windows and Word or Works; ability to use mouse well.) Gain a basic understanding of the capabilities of this photo editing program. Learn how to manipulate photos, moving one into another; learn to present pictures over the internet; learn transferring, feathering, and opacity. Learn to choose resolutions and, generally, how to use tools.

PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS, Intermediate (PRE-REQ: Photoshop Elements, Beginning.) 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.

WINDOWS XP, Advanced (PRE-REQ: Windows XP, Beginning — or a moderate familiarity with the program.) Learn extra maneuvers such as customizing/adding/changing menu items, and capturing screen images. Learn to use the Windows Cleanup programs such as defrag and chkdsk, become familiar with System Restore. Go into this multi-layered program in detail.

APRIL

Gifs, Clipart, Signatures, & Music (PRE-REQ: Beginning Windows and Beginning Email & Internet.) Learn to search the internet for gifs, clipart, signatures, and music. Save them on a disk or in a folder and use them to enhance the appearance of email.

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, Beginning (PRE-REQ: Beginning Windows and Word or Works; ability to use mouse well.) Gain a basic understanding of the capabilities of this photo editing program. Learn how to manipulate photos, moving one into another; learn to present pictures over the internet; learn transferring, feathering, and opacity. Learn to choose resolutions and, generally, how to use tools.

PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS, Intermediate (PRE-REQ: Photoshop Elements, Beginning.) 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.

POWERPOINT (PRE-REQ: Beginning Windows, Beginning Email & Internet, Beginning Word.) Learn to produce slide shows utilizing animation and other media effects.

WEB PAGE DESIGN, Beginning (PRE-REQ: Beginning Windows, Beginning Email & Internet, Beginning Word.) Learn the basics of web page design. Create a place for family photos, personal adventures, poems, pets, diaries, gardening, and other hobbies.

WORD, Beginning (PRE-REQ: Beginning Word.) 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.



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

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Chris Oman	471-1058	ckoman@rvi.net
Len Richardson	866-2541	len_r@yahoo.com
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Phyllis Wilkey	1-541-459-1915	celticphyl@charter.net
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Marv Wilson	471-1867	mwlw86@charter.net
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WIRELESS HARDWARE

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APPLICATIONS & OTHER SPECIFIC HELP

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EXCEL

Ron Willing	582-9694	rwilling@charter.net
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Cliff Worden	471-1292	cliffmar@charter.net
Phyllis Wilkey	1-541-459-1915	celticphyl@charter.net

QUICKEN

George Steffensen	474-4305	stefff@peoplepc.com
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WEB PAGE HTML BASIC

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WORD, MS

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Phyllis Wilkey	1-541-459-1915	celticphyl@charter.net

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 FREE Technical Help ListServe 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.



NIFTY TIPS for MS Word Users

Editor's Note: These are user-friendly tips that work great!

Drawing a Line: You can create a line across the page of your Word or Outlook document with just a few keystrokes. **Type three consecutive hyphens and press Enter** to get a normal line. **Type three underscores and Enter** and you'll get a bold line. And if you **type three equal signs and press Enter**, you'll get a double line. NIFTY!

To make sure this feature has not been turned off go to: Tools | Auto Correct | AutoFormat as You Type. In the Apply as You Type section, make sure the Border Lines checkbox is checked.

Page Breaks Without Bullets: When you're creating a bulleted or numbered list in **Word or PowerPoint**, you might want an item to appear on the list without a bullet. You can start a new line without a bullet by pressing Shift-Enter. The next time you press the Enter key, the new line will continue the bulleted or numbered list. Another useful trick: In **Excel**, you can press Alt-Enter to start a new line within a cell.

Fast Access to Often-Used Documents: You can keep frequently used documents readily available on Word's menu bar so you don't have to use the File Menu and search through files and folders to find them. You do this by adding a **Work** menu to Word's menu bar. Simply go to **View | Toolbars Customize**; choose the **Commands** tab and select **Built-in Menus** from the list of categories. Then choose **Work** from the list of commands and drag it to where you want it on the top-line menu bar. While you have a document open, from your new **Work** menu, choose "**Add to Work**" to attach a filename to this menu. To remove a filename, press **Ctrl-Alt-Minus (-)** and click on the item you want to remove.

A NIFTY SYSTEMS TIP from Booth's Bin

Want to know how much RAM you have; the amount of resources free, etc.? This data and more is in **System Properties**. To view it just press and hold the **Windows Logo** key while you press the **Pause/Break** key. Behold! The **System Properties** window appears and gives you "all you ever wanted to know and were afraid to ask."



BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

~ by Jane Frincke

Please see the **RASCAL Website** at www.rascal.cc for complete minutes of the **January 10, 2005 Board Meeting**.

Because no volunteers have come forward to serve as Communications/Facility Director, the Board appointed **Wally Zittle** to temporarily fill the position. **President Bill Rose** announced that the internet service contract with Smartwire has been renewed for one year. The Board talked about the feasibility of placing paid advertising in the monthly newsletter as a means of reducing newsletter expenses. According to **Membership Director Maggie Robson's** report, 340 new members joined RASCAL in 2005. **Vice President Lou Garrotto** announced that **Ed English** and **Paul Brickey** have volunteered to serve as lab engineers to maintain RASCAL's computers. The Board discussed amending the by-laws to allow officers to serve more than two consecutive years. After announcing she was stepping down as Database Co-Manager, **Shirley Byrd** received a round of applause for her two years of diligent service in this position.



GOOD THINGS THAT COME IN SMALL PACKAGES

If you ever need to **transport data between your desktop and another computer or laptop**, you can do so by floppy disk, burning a CD, or transferring via infrared, if both computers support that feature.

Another option to consider is a small USB flash drive (aka thumb drive, mini drive etc. — see Booth's Bin in the January newsletter). When plugged into a computer's USB port, it performs like an extra hard drive on your laptop with a capacity of 128 MB to 4 GB! Most of these "drives" are small enough to fit on a key-ring, yet they hold enough data to store word-processing documents, MP3 files, graphics, spreadsheets, and more. Unlike standard CD-Rs **they are re-writeable!**

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



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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 the Membership Manager at rascalmembership@rascal.cc

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.



Are You Receiving NEWS DISPATCH?

Every member of RASCAL is automatically entered, at the time of enrollment, into our database to receive the News Dispatches. 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 Managers at rascalmembership@rascal.cc

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Graphics Artist.....Patricia Hentges
Printing.....MacGraphically Yours
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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.*