

MotherBoard

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This Month At NOPC

**Gerri
McCann**

“Best Computer Use Contest”

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BEST IDEA CONTEST

For the June NOPC meeting, we are going to have a best idea contest. The purpose of this contest is to share computer related ideas. Gerry McCann (McCann Electronics) will lead this meeting. Each member should come prepared with his best computer idea. For example:

- my best Digital Family Photo
- my best Computer Rig
- my best Screen Saver
- my best Original Corel Drawing
- my best crazy Computer Question
- my best Utility Software
- my best Label Printer
- my best Ink Jet Printer
- my best Method to Refill Inks
- my best story about Exploding Batteries
- my best Nightmare Computer Customer
- my best Techy TV Show
- my best Computer Answer WebSite
- my best Digital Camera
- my best DVD Burner
- my best experience with a Computer Salesman
- my best NOPC SIG Meeting
- my best cheap Computer Sound System
- my best Software Firewall
- my best Search Engine
- my best Scanner
- my best Camera Card Reader

- my best IDE RAID Controller
- my best Mouse
- my best Computer Gadget
- my best Photo Paper
- my best Battery Backup
- my best Wireless LAN
- my best Keyboard
- my best Remote Control
- my best

If possible, bring your idea for a show and tell. The contest will last about forty minutes. Once you are recognized by Gerry, we will pass you the wireless microphone. State your name and idea. Speak clearly because we will be writing down your name and idea. Limit your time to one minute. Hand outs and pictures are encouraged. Quick questions are allowed but will be limited. Only one idea on the first round; we should have time for a second round.

After the contest, we will vote for the best idea of the night. The winner(s) will receive a prize.

We will learn from each other at the Best Idea Contest - come share your computer experiences, have fun and pick up some new ideas!

Visual Basic Learner's Group

The VBLG will be visited by **ComponentOne** who may demonstrate **ComponentOne Studio** for .NET! on Monday June 24th at 6:30 pm. All interested Developers should try to attend to show our support for the Visual Basic 3rd Party Developers.

Manuel Dennis III
VBLG Mentor

NEW COMPUTER USERS SIG

by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

Hope all had a good memorial weekend and enjoyed the holidays. We did something a little different in our last class and hope that all who attended got something out of presentation. We started off with a question about tables in a Microsoft word doc. One of our members has been trying to get a table removed from her document and still maintain the information on the document. She brought a sample of the document to look at and work on.

I looked at the document and found that the table was corrupted and could not be manipulated to do what was desired for the document. I tried a number of functions but I could not correct the problem. After spending about ten minutes and getting nowhere fast I stopped and decided that best way to attack the problem was to start from scratch.

This was a good problem for new user. When you are up against a situation and cannot come up with a solution, it might be best to stop and start again from the beginning. This is why it is so important that you save your work constantly as you go alone. As the problem may not entail the entire document, you can eliminate just the part that is causing the problem and do just that portion all over again. This was a good lesson for everybody at the meeting to learn.

We also covered some mistakes made at our last meeting such as correctly identifying the task bar and how to make sure you can move it even when it seems like it will not move. If you are in a Microsoft word application you can not move the task-bar until the application is closed. Once it is closed you can then move the task bar around with ease.

A training CD was shown giving those present a rest from hearing my voice all the time. We recovered what a window was and how it is used. Buttons of all types were mentioned and shown. You may not know but the radio button is named for the old type buttons used on radios in the "good old" days of the thirties and forties. When you select a radio button you activate a dot in the middle of a circle and this represents the on light the use to indicate the button was in use on the old type radios. Some of our more mature members could relate to this example.

If you have any questions on using your computer, now is the time to attend this SIG. We will cover all aspects of computer usage during the year.

If you call ahead of time, we can prepare for your specific question and have answers for you at the meeting. Help get some new members into the club by coming to this informative program. E-mail me at newusers@nopc.org or phone me (Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.) at 246-7759. There will be samples of work, problem solving, and a question and answer session at each meeting.

Hope to see you there.
Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

Suites 2000 SIG

by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

Hope each and every one of you had a "suite" and happy holiday. I am sorry to report that nobody came to the May meeting of the Suite Sig. It may be that I am anticipating too much from those who actually started with the first meeting. Maybe it was confusion with the fact that Wednesday started the month and gave us an extra week in May. I even though that our meeting date was one week later than it actually appeared at one point in time. Hope we will not have a problem for the June meeting. If you can not attend the June meeting please call me at 246-7759 and let me know because I have other work that needs to get done and I can use the time.

If you have any questions on how to give a visual presentation, talk to the moderator and he will try to help at the general membership meeting with your questions. If you call ahead of time he can better prepare for your question and make sure he has an answer for you at the SIG meeting.

The e-mail for this SIG will be suites2000@nopc.org. Any communications outside of SIG meeting time is accomplished by e-mail or through phone calls (Ashton C. Mouton, Jr. at 246-7759). There will be samples of work, problem solving, and a question and answer session at each meeting.

Computer Chronicles and Net Cafe

Dear Fellow Computer User:

Nineteen years ago, Computer Chronicles was launched as the first ever weekly network television show devoted to personal computers. It happened because bulletin board sysops found out about the show (which was airing locally in the San Francisco Bay Area) and called their local PBS stations to ask them to carry the program. As a result of the efforts of local users groups, Computer Chronicles was soon being broadcast in more than 200 cities around the country.

For some reason, many PBS station program directors now think computer technology is old hat and that the excitement over the Internet is passe.

So we need your help, once again, to remind these television gatekeepers that the personal technology revolution is alive and well and that users like you want a weekly television program that delivers useful information on new hardware, software, and the Web.

If your local PBS station is not carrying Computer Chronicles and/or Net Cafe (our show all about the Internet) I would appreciate your assistance in contacting the station and urging them to carry both shows. PBS stations are very sensitive to the opinions of their viewers (and contributors) and a few calls or emails can make a big difference.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Computer Chronicles and Net Cafe have been recognized repeatedly for their journalistic excellence with a long string of awards and honors. The programs are viewed by more than a million people each week and are seen in more than a hundred countries around the world. They should be on in your town!

We've set up special pages on our web sites just for you so you can get updated contact information for your local PBS station. Please go to either:

<http://www.computerchronicles.org/forug.html> or <http://www.netcafe.org/forug.html>
for program director email addresses and phone numbers.

Thanks so much for your help.

Stewart Cheifet
Managing Editor
Computer Chronicles / Net Café

Make Your Own PDF Files

by "Paul Witheridge" <ssuccess@ebtech.net>

I'm currently Shareware Librarian of the Sarnia Computer Users' Group and a Past President. I'm in my 14th year with SCUG and am a semi-retired computer consultant.

One of today's biggest computing irritations is competing standards! While there are standards out there for such things as e-mail, file transfer and Internet protocols, and HTML coding for web display, someone is always "pushing the envelope" (to be polite) or "ignoring them" (to be blunt). Document sharing is an example. Many think that Microsoft Word is the standard for documents but it is only one in a field of word processors. At one time, they simply pretended each other didn't exist and if you created a document using one word processor, you couldn't share it with others who were using a competitive product. Now, at least the major brands provide the ability to convert between formats but often at the expense of some of your painstaking efforts to create that Beautiful Format. Enter Adobe and the Portable Document Format (PDF). If you can create (or "export to") a PDF file with your word processor, you can produce a "stand-alone" document that anyone can see or print exactly as it was created fonts, pictures, whatever but without the program that created it! Catch? Of course there's a catch! First of all, you need the Acrobat Adobe Reader to see/print these. Yes, it's free; but it is a few megabytes in size and usually has to be downloaded and installed. But how to create the PDF in the first place? Are we still somewhat at the mercy of the Adobes, Microsofts and Corels? Read on!

There are two freeware (free for non-commercial, home use) programs that can enable you to create (and read) standard PDF files (as well as postscript files):

MakePDF, (<http://www.lexacorp.com.pg/soft/makepdf22.zip>) a freeware utility for converting the postscript translations from GhostScript to a Portable Document Format file and GhostScript, (<ftp://mirror.cs.wisc.edu/pub/mirrors/ghost/AFPL/g703/g703w32.exe>) a free postscript interpreter which translates postscript documents.

NOTE: If the version numbers change, the above links will become outdated.

If you visit the Lexacorp site first, there is a link there to GhostScript as well as to MakePDF. Stuart also offers several other MAKEPDF tips and tricks at <http://www.lexacorp.com.pg> After downloading both of these, install GhostScript by double-clicking the GS703W32.EXE file. Then simply unzip MAKEPDF21.ZIP into the folder of your choice (no installation needed). I must assume that the reader can do this using their favourite compressed file unpacker.

Then, you need to define a printer that can produce postscript output such as the HP Laserjet III PostScript+ in your selection of printers. You do not need to have this printer connected, you merely need to add/install it as if it were installed and configure it to send output to a .PRN file. Here's how.

In Windows, click Start|Settings|Printers and then double-click 'Add Printer'. Choose 'Local Printer' and click 'Next'. Now select the printer you'd like, making sure that it can produce postscript. The HP Laserjet III PostScript+ is an obvious choice but other manufacturers are available on the list you'll see. After selecting one, you'll be asked where to output your data and this is where you will choose 'FILE:' and then click 'Next'. Most likely you will not want this to be your default printer, but this option is always available later if your needs should change. Click 'Next' and then 'Finish' and you will most likely be prompted to insert your Windows installation CD in order to retrieve the necessary driver files. After the printer driver files have been copied, you will be prompted for a PRN filename (in case you wanted to print a test page). You can click 'Cancel' to skip this step. Did you know that you could also rename this printer installation to something more helpful like PostScript Creation? Right click it and rename!

Once the process is complete to this point, you will have an additional printer option whenever you wish to "print" a document from any application you are using. When choosing this new option you have just installed, you will be asked for a filename and destination folder since the output will not be a "hard copy" on paper, but a .PRN file on your computer.

We now need to create a way to easily send these PRN files created by your newly installed postscript-capable (phantom) printer driver to MAKEPDF which will use GhostScript to finally create the PDF file.

(Continued on page 5)

Hard Drive Tips Part IV

by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

The bulk of this material was taken from an article titled NOT HARD AT ALL written by Jeff Dodd in a magazine called *SMART COMPUTING LEARNING SERIES: PC Tips* published by Sandhills Publishing Company, copyright 2002. Their website is at <http://www.smartcomputing.com>.

Hope that these last three articles have been informative and useful for all our readers. If you have any questions regarding the information in this article please feel free to write the author at acmoutonjr@cs.com.

Tip 8 - Do not use drive compression.

Not too long ago hard drive compression was a must for saving space. Hard drive space was expensive and every little bit was needed in the not to distance past. You needed a compression utility to get the most out a very limited amount of space. Today hard drive space is very inexpensive and cheap and most of us have lots of memory storage space.

The main reason for not compressing the hard drive is to prevent data integrity loss. Compressing and decompressing the hard drive continually introduces errors over time. Problems arise as you induced errors with the constant changes back and forth of changing the drive storage data. You also hamper drive performance in the same way. If you can avoid introducing errors why not avoid the problem. If you have large amounts of available memory why use compression? You save time from having to compress and than decompress if you do not use a drive compression utility and it saves ware and tear on your hard drive.

Tip 9 – If you most compress use file compression.

If there is a need for saving space on the hard drive than it is best if you use a file compression utility. File compression is similar to disk compression but will only affect an individual file or folder not the entire drive. A good file compression utility will compress a file to a fraction of its normal size.

Probably the two best utilities for compression are PKZIP and WINZIP. These two utilities will compress your file into a new .ZIP compressed file or files. You can retrieve your information by using the utilities extraction function, which will decompress the .ZIP field restore the original back.

Tip 10 – Organize your hard drive

Probably the best method for organizing the hard drive is partitioning followed by proper use of folders and subfolders. Partitioning involves dividing the hard drive storage area into various discrete units called clusters. Depending on you operating system the cluster size will vary with how large a partition you make. Therefore your hard drive efficiency will depend upon

how large you make your partition size.

The file allocation table for each partition determines your cluster size depending on if it is FAT16, FAT32, or NTFS. FAT16 allocations are 2KB, 4KB, 8KB, 16KB, or 32KB in size. FAT32 allocations are 4KB, 8KB, 16KB, or 32KB. NTFS allocations are 512 bytes, 1KB, 2KB, or 4KB in size. On a board general scale the smaller the size allocation the more efficient the storage allocation. This will not work in all cases. Probably the optimum allocation size for file storage is 8 or 16 KB in FAT16 with a partition size between 256 MB to 1GB. In FAT32 the optimum allocation size is 4KB with a partition size from 8GB or below. With NTFS the optimum allocation size is 4KB with a partition size from 2GB or higher (most likely the largest partition being 32 or 16 GB).

This author prefers that partitions be named according to their usage and given specific usage for their function. In his opinion you would have a system partition, a utility partition, a program partition, and a data partition. Just as they are named you would put your operating system in the system partition, all your utility and maintenance programs in the utility partition, all programs not previously listed in the program partition, and last put all your data and working files in the data partition. Doing your partitioning this way makes it easier, faster, and more efficient to store your information as well as backup that same information.

Once your hard drive is portioned next you want to place and name folders and subfolders in a similar manner within the partition. The best method you can use is where related files are kept together in common folders and subfolders. This way your information is not scattered around the hard drive making it hard to find or access. When naming related files in folders make sure the folder's name is appropriate for its contents. Your naming specification should be logical and follow a reasonable ordered set of criteria. Something similar to filing within a filing cabinet would be a good criteria or method to follow.

Some naming procedures you could follow would be placing family information in a folder designated family, if you do work for a charitable organization name the folder the same as the organization, if you have a home office name the folder after the business or office name. Your kids could have their own folder named after them with subfolders listing their different school subjects or favorite activity. The most important idea here is to pick appropriate names for folders and subfolders. Such as wave for a folder containing wave files, photo would name a folder containing your photographs, a file named images would hold various images.

Hope all of the tips you have been given are useful. See you next month.

(Continued from page 3)

One way to provide this "connection" is to add a shortcut in your SendTo links that will appear when you right-click a file in Windows Explorer (or other file manager) and select 'Send To'. Open your \Windows\SendTo folder and right-click a blank spot. Click New\Shortcut and insert a command line similar to the following, but insert the proper path for your installation of MAKEPDF in place of the square bracketed portion.

```
[C:\Utils]\MAKEPDF.EXE
```

Click 'Next' and then name it MakePDF or whatever you like. Click 'Finish' and you're done.

Now you can right-click any PRN file created by your phantom printer and then choose SendTo\MakePDF to create your PDF file.

You could also create a shortcut on your desktop in the same way and just drag and drop PRN files onto the icon.

There are a few other clever tricks the more advanced user can perform either by defining a new filetype (see end of this article) or using macros in your word processor or creating a custom printer port or having your PDF sent directly to your e-mail client but you can read about those in Stuart McLachlan's (author of MAKEPDF) Readme text file that comes with MAKEPDF. Most of us will be quite happy with a shortcut in the SendTo folder!

Using MAKEPDF

The first time you send a PRN file to MakePDF, you will be asked if you want to locate the GhostScript program. Click 'Yes' and browse your way to the GSWIN32.EXE file which, if you used the default location will be in the C:\GS\GS7.03\BIN folder. [Note that there are two similarly named executable files at this location. The one with the 'C' is for command-line operation.] Single-click the GSWIN32.EXE file and click 'Open' and this path will be saved in a MAKEPDF.INI file for future reference and you won't have to repeat this step.

MakePDF will now open and you will see the path and filename of your (input) PRN file and the same path but different file extension for the output PDF file. Unless you want the PDF file to be put somewhere else or have a different name, you can accept the default offering.

There are options offered, most of which I usually ignore; but here is a brief explanation of them as I understand them:

Delete Input File - deletes the PRN file after it has been translated to save collecting large numbers of these intermediate files.

Lower Case Output - produces a PDF filename with all lower case letters for feeding to other applications which may require that.

Sticky Output Directory - use this if you want the folder you set in 'Output Filename/Directory' ALWAYS to be the destina-

tion of your PDF files.

View Output File - check this if you want Acrobat Reader to open your new PDF as soon as it's created.

Auto-Exit on success - check this to save having to click the 'Quit' button

No Messages - all message boxes are suppressed. I wouldn't recommend this for the beginner.

Choose the version of PDF file you wish to create and after a few seconds, you will see a confirmation dialogue box that the process has been successful. NOTE: In case your intended recipient has an older version of Acrobat Reader, it may be best to create an older version PDF. The resulting PDF file you have now created can be double-clicked to be opened in Acrobat Reader and it will appear exactly as you created it in your original application and anyone with Acrobat Reader can do the same. And print it! But the Reader does not allow editing, just reading and printing. This can be a very good thing when you don't want your document altered by others!

For The Advanced User

For the more adventurous, (once you are comfortable that you have everything working) you could even establish a new filetype (change PRN to something completely new that is not already registered on your computer) so that a simple double-click on files of that type will start MAKEPDF and open them. This involves first avoiding any of the extensions already listed in Start|Settings|Folder options|File Types and then in there creating a 'New Type' and specifying a command line similar to the following to open those files:

```
"[C:\Utils]\MAKEPDF.EXE" %1 /D /V1.2 /OC:\My Documents\PDFfile.PDF
```

again, inserting the proper path for your installation in place of the bracketed portion.

NOTE: If you have difficulty with Acrobat Reader opening PDFs with a double-click, I've found that a reinstall of Acrobat Reader usually solves this.

Submitted by Carole M. Rike as received from the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG) as written by Paul Withridge of the Sarnia Computer User's Group.



Appliances That Think Too Much

NOPC President's Message for June

Boy, this year seems to be going by quickly. Congratulations to all the recent graduates, hope your hard work in school pays off in the real world! ☺

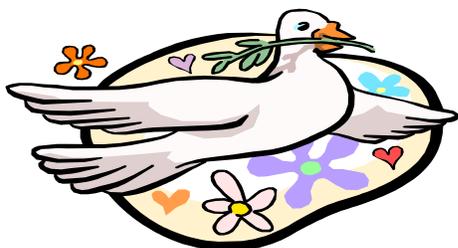
Don't forget we are doing a raffle for MS Office 2000 Premium. We are selling the tickets for \$1 each, or 6 for \$5 and will be pulling a winner at the end of the June meeting. Once again, please help support the club.

At the last board meeting the flea market was further discussed, and a few changes were made. See the article inside for this. I want to remind everyone that we will not have a meeting on July 3; the Flea Market is on July 13 and will take the place of our regular July membership meeting. A few of the SIGs will swap places during July as well; see our online calendar and the web site for more details.

I would like everyone to know that due to the efforts of one of our board members, Ashton and I made a pitch for the club at the last AARP meeting. We were warmly received and will be making an encore visit in June to see if we can add to our membership list. Again, please spread the word about NOPC to your friends and family members, and if there is something that you particularly like or dislike about NOPC please let myself or another board member know.

It is with regret that I announce the passing of one of our members, Mr. Bill Elliott. Bill and his wife Jackie have been members of NOPC for a long time and on behalf of the NOPC board, I offer our sincere condolences. We will have a moment of silence during our June meeting to honor Bill's memory.

See you at our next meeting,
Ray



More Flea Market tidbits

The Flea Market for 2002 was further discussed at the last NOPC board meeting and here's what we've come up with:

- The flea market will be held on July 13th 2002 from 10AM to 1PM in the cafeteria of J.D. Meisler school where we hold our monthly meetings. All participants will have one hour to set up at 9AM and one hour to clean up at 1PM. We must be out by 2PM, and have the cafeteria in **exactly** the same condition as it will when we come in, i.e. no trash or debris left. If there is equipment left over that is unwanted please dispose of it properly, either in the dumpster or in an environmentally safe manner.
- The cost to have a table is as follows: \$15 for members, \$50 for non-members. The cost for non-members includes a one year \$35 membership rate in the club.
- All participants (except sellers) will be asked for a \$2 donation, which will be collected at the entrance to the cafeteria.
- We expect to have soft drinks available for sale and are working towards having other food available during the market.
- Computers and computer-related items only, please.
- We will have door prizes to be given away.

Don't Miss This

BUSINESS	PERSONAL	TECHNICAL
 <h1 style="margin: 0;">MEGOHMS</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">CONSULTING SERVICES</h2> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">10311 Ploesmoor Dr. New Orleans, LA 70127-1848</p> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">Voice & Fax: (504) 241-2172 E-Mail: ACMoutonjr@cs.com</p>		
<p>ASHTON C. MOUTON, JR., M.S. CONSULTANT</p>		

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	Ray Paternostr	president@nopcc.org	737-9099
Vice President	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	vp@nopcc.org	246-7759
Secretary	Curtis Duhe'	secretary@nopcc.org	
Treasurer	Don Herrmann	treasurer@nopcc.org	831-1284
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Director At Large	Carl Henderson	director2@nopcc.org	466-3954
Director At Large	Albert Fox	director3@nopcc.org	269-5786

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Public Relations	Jeannie Okamoto	pr@nopcc.org	455-0977
Publicity	Jackie Elliott	publicity@nopcc.org	455-6203
Webmaster	Manuel Dennis III	webmaster@nopcc.org	835-7656

Special Interest Groups

Genealogy	Bob Gordon	gene-m@nopcc.org	469-4686
Internet	Ray Paternostr	internet-m@nopcc.org	737-9099
N O C K	Albert Fox	albertnm@bellsouth.net	269-5786
New Users	Zeke Zimmerman	new-user-m@nopcc.org	456-2991
Suites 2000	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	suites2000@nopcc.org	246-7759
VBLG	Manuel Dennis III	vblg-owner@listbot.com	835-7656
WADSIG	Manuel Dennis III	wadsig-owner@listbot.com	835-7656

Other Important Numbers / Addresses

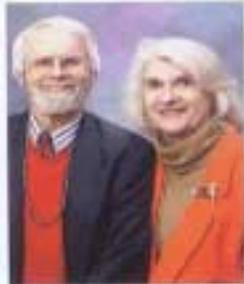
Club Hotline	Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours	454-6166
NOPCC BBS	Bulletin Board System for members. The original way to PC communicate.	486-7261
NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	www.nopcc.org



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The Computer Emergency Room

"We Fix Sick Computers"

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E-mail: ejatho@bellsouth.net

June 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Living with Home Electronics 690 AM 10A-11A
2	3 Visual Basic Learner's Group McCann's 6:30 PM	4	5 Gen'l Meeting J.D. Meisler School 6:30 PM	6	7	8 Living with Home Electronics 690 AM 10A-11A
9	10 Visual Basic Learner's Group McCann's 6:30 PM	11 Genealogy SIG @ McCann's 7:00 PM	12 Board of Directors (BOD) McCann's 6:30 PM	13 ACT! SIG McCann's 6:30 PM	14	15 Living with Home Electronics 690 AM 10A-11A
16	17 Visual Basic Learner's Group McCann's 6:30 PM	18	19 Office Suites SIG McCann's 6:00 PM	20 New User's SIG McCann's 6:30 PM	21	22 Living with Home Electronics 690 AM 10A-11A
23	24 Visual Basic Learner's Group McCann's 6:30 PM	25	26 Digital Imaging SIG McCann's 7:00 PM	27 Internet SIG McCann's 7:00 PM	28	29 Living with Home Electronics 690 AM 10A-11A
30						

The New Orleans Personal Computer Club (NOPCC) is a private non-profit organization chartered under the State of Louisiana. Its purpose is to provide an open forum for discussion and education of the membership in the use and application of PCs, peripheral equipment and software. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the NOPCC, its members or its officers. The club does not verify for accuracy the articles in this newsletter and leaves verification of accuracy to its readers. Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated as long as credit is given to the author (s) and the NOPCC. Annual Dues Schedule: Regular Member, \$40/yr.; Family Membership, \$60/yr.; and Students (under 21), \$20/yr. Meetings are held at 6:30 on the 1st Wednesday of each month at J.D. Meisler Jr. High School on Cleary Avenue in Metairie, Louisiana.

New Orleans Personal Computer Club
P. O. Box 8364
Metairie, Louisiana 70011