

MotherBoard

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This Month at NOPC

MP3 What it is and How to Use it!

***by
Ray
Paternostro,
Jr.***

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NOPC President's message

Hello everyone, hope you had a safe Mardi Gras season (or vacation, as it may be).

Let me be the first to welcome our Vice President Ashton back into the "daily grind" so to speak of running the club and moderating the SIGs. We're happy that he is able to devote as much time as he does of helping to run the club. Speaking of the SIGs, Ashton will also be taking over the New Users' SIG, which if you look at the calendar now has a start time of 6:30.

This month's main presentation will focus on the music storage format MP3, what it is and how to make use of it. Since a large percentage of us have sizable music libraries and carry a few dozen CDs around in wallets or changers, I figure this is a good time for us to learn about how to greatly reduce that load while maintaining the sound quality. Since MP3 compatibility is showing up in most new CD and DVD players, this presentation would also be of interest to anyone who is currently shopping for either of those items and would like to know what it is about. (Hint: bring friends!)

Several people both in and outside of

the club have inquired about the next flea market. This event in the past has been very well attended but difficult for the club to put on, due to the financial and manpower efforts that are required for it to be successful. The NOPC Board has been discussing this at the monthly board meeting and we are looking at doing the next one in a few months, shortly after the school season is over. We will have more details at future meetings and SIGs.

One of the other issues that the board is facing is the shrinking size of the NOPC membership. To try to combat this, the board members are trying their best to put on quality presentations for what we think the membership is interested in, along with promotion in the local media. There are always extra newsletters and membership brochures at the sign-in desk that is manned by our treasurer Don at each meeting, and now business cards as well. If you know of someone who could use (what we believe to be) the excellent services of NOPC, please feel free to pass on any of the mentioned promotional items.

See you at the meeting and/or the SIGs, I'm outta here...

Ray.

Hard Drive Tips

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>.

Part 1

What would you consider the most important part of your computer? Would it be the CPU, the motherboard, the hard drive, one of the disk drives, maybe the monitor, the mouse, or may be the keyboard, as your choice for answering the question. All are important, but few are as critical for making the computer function the way it does in today's world as will the hard drive. The bulk of your information and applications are held on the hard drive. The main storage area and boot up area all reside on this very important article or part of your computer.

In the not too distant past there were no hard drives and computing was more of a chore than it is today. Storage was at a premium in the old days and very costly. Floppies were an improvement in storage in the old days by it was the hard drive that made the computer a very productive machine. It is such a critical part of a computer today that we would not think of having a computer without one, even a hand-held PDA needs a hard drive to help store large volumes of information.

Hard drives are an integral part of a computer and our computing usage. Let us stop and look at the hard drive for a few seconds. It is a mechanical device that has one or more platters inside a hard, airtight case. These very special devices can hold up to 280GB of data for an almost unlimited span of time. Think of the amount of information contained in such a relative small space. No wonder there are so many errors associated with hard drives from physical to mechanical.

A hard drive stores its information in many different parts called tracts, sectors, cylinders, and clusters. This information is stored on each platter's surface in concentric tracks, with each track divide into a sector. Each sector will store a pre-determined number of bytes (usually 512 bytes) in two to the "n" power, (2^n where $n = 4, 8, 16, 32$, and so on) sequentially and contiguous sectors, and group them into a cluster (sometimes called an allocation unit). Clusters consist of two to eight sectors with the number depending on your operating system. A cluster holds data from only one file (even if that file has only several bytes). A given file can span more than one cluster (a possible source of error). A given number of tracks that are at a given distance from the center of the disk are called cylinders (that is a single track location through all platters). A block of information or data is addressed by specifying the head location and the distance from the center of the disk (the cylinder) to read or write. As you can see it can get complicated when many platters and large blocks of

data have to be read or written. This is why you sometimes get read errors, write errors, bad sector errors (sectors not holding information {that is bytes or data} because the disk is damage or the mechanism is malfunctioning), lost clusters (clusters that can not be used or found because their boot sector has an error when addressing a given area of the platter), and cross-linked files (where two or more files are trying to use the same cluster).

If we make the hard drive perform at its best, operate efficiently, and optimize its performance than our computing experience will be one we can enjoy and become more productive with in our daily lives. To do this we need to make sure our hard drive will operate at its peak performance level. In order to help make this happen there are some tips following that you can use to get the most out of your computer.

Tip 1 Scan for errors on the hard drive.

We previously mentioned errors that can occur on a hard drive, to eliminate, correct, or lessen those errors you will need to use some type of disk scanning utility program. There are many types and versions of disk scanning programs. Microsoft uses the ScanDisk utility program within its older versions of its operating system. With the last two operating systems Windows 2000 and Windows XP the utility for scanning was changed. It is very important to scan a hard disk ever so often to help maintain good operating efficiency in such an important device.

In older systems you can access ScanDisk as follows:

- First, click on the Start Menu
- Second, click on the Accessories Menu
- Third, click on the System Tools Menu
- Fourth, click on the ScanDisk program

submitted by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

Bomb scare, New Orleans style.

The Louis Armstrong airport was closed down yesterday for several hours. Someone left a 1 ft. sq. suspicious package in the men's room. . The box was wrapped in newspaper with info about the 911 happening. The bomb sniffing dogs gave a signal. Finally the box was hosed down. It seems someone left his container of gumbo behind.

No one has come forward about their loss of gumbo. If it had been scanned, maybe they would have seen the crab claws?

Gumbo explosive? No way..... But Red Beans?
Now that's another story.

submitted by Jackie Elliot

"A single conversation across table with a wise man is worth a month's study of bookes." - *Chinese Proverb*

"It's not enough to know how to ride— you must also know how to fall." - *Mexican Proverb* *submitted by Jeanne Okamoto*

NEW COMPUTER USERS SIG

The New Computer Users SIG (Special Interest Group) had its second meeting the third Thursday of February. Thanks to a mistake in the newsletter and in the NOPCC (New Orleans Personal Computer Club) web site some attendees did not attend. They came to the club's meeting room on the wrong night. We are very sorry for the errors and that you missed the SIG meeting and had to waste your precious time when you did come. Please forgive this very human error; we will try never to make this mistake again.

Just to let everyone know we will start the New Computer Users SIG sessions at 6:30 pm and end sometime about 9:00 pm. on the third Thursday of every month. Unless there is a holiday or some very important event happening on that day this is a permanent meeting day and time for this SIG. If you are new to computers, want a very basic, introductory, harmless way for learning how to use your computer and its operating system, this SIG is for you. Mr. Ashton C. Mouton, Jr. is moderating this SIG with help and assistance from Mr. Ray Paternostro (our club's President). This SIG will try to help and assist the new or beginning user in becoming acquainted with their computer and its various applications. As much as possible we will incorporate hands on usage for those in attendance. This SIG, like all SIG's run by the NOPCC, is for members only and is given to the members at no added cost. If a non-member wishes to attend it will only cost them the price of one membership (just joining the club) to enjoy the information presented at each SIG meeting.

This SIG is geared to the beginning or just starting computer user. It does not matter if you are young or old. We will start everyone from the very beginning and show as much as possible all you need to know about using your computer, its operating system, and some basic aspects of application programs. We will cover definitions, we will give examples, we will work out examples, and we will answer questions about using the computer more efficiently.

Because books are helpful in learning how to use the computer and for getting the most out of your computer it is recommended that all computer users obtain a good beginning book for use of their computer. The books by Que Publishing are one of the best books in learning how to use the operating system for your computer and will be very good for you to use with the SIG. When you purchase your book make sure you are getting a book on the operating system and not an application program. Some book titles are almost the same and may cause some confusion, so be very careful in making your selection. If you have the Windows 98 operating system get the book titled *Using Windows 98*. If you are using Windows XP get the book titled *Using Windows XP*. If you are using Windows 2000 or ME get the book titled *Using Windows 2000* or *Using Windows ME*. Hopefully you get the picture here, get the book that says using the operating system that you have on your computer.

For the best learning experienced it is recommended that all attendees bring their operating system book and a means for taking notes. We will try to give out as much information and in as much detail as possible. Our objective is for you to leave each meeting with some helpful instructions that you can use at home and make your computer experience better, easier, and more productive. All instructions are keep simple, with easy to follow instructions using a step-by-step process for learning each lesson given. Assistance will be given to all those needing help by letting as many people as possible receive hands-on instructions so that it will be easier to learn. As many concepts as possible are covered about the computer, computer applications, and utility programs that a new user will need to know in order to become better acquainted with their computer and its operation.

The second meeting held in February covered the very basics of basic computer information. We covered how to recognize how to turn on the machine, what happens to the computer with it is turned on, how to use the logon screen and eliminate it this is not wanted. Information on the mouse, types, and usage were covered. Information on the keyboard and some key usage were covered, than we started with the computer screen and the Windows Operating System desktop. The different types of icons, the taskbar, channel guide, and desktop background were given a basic overview. Active desktop was explained along with property sheets and how they differ from a window.

Everyone seems to have gotten something out of this first presentation and the format for this SIG will continue as if it was a classroom presentation. If you have any suggestions on what you would like to see covered at a SIG

submitted by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

(Continued from page 4)
you need.

Another area of concern is the use of instant messaging by children. Some messengers ask for personal information and make that information publicly available to others. When done this way, predators know when you or your child is online and can gain more information from contact over the Internet. Predators are known for impersonating staff personnel and trying to request passwords, credit card information, private information, and other personal information about you and your family. If you child is using instant messaging make sure you check out the privacy controls and parental controls available. An ounce of prevention is very much more than a pound of cure.

I hope these simple ideas are useful and that you and your family have a safe time with your computers and using various computer medias.

submitted by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

Internet Tips for Youth and Family

The following is a listing of some tips for families and young people when using the Internet:

1. Parents should spend time with very young children (under 13 years of age) when they are using the computer to go online.
2. Place your computer where all have access (a public place like a den) and all can see what is going on with accessing the Internet. Never give children private access without strict guidelines.
3. Instruct and guide everyone on how to properly use e-mail. For very young children (under 13 years of age) you should block all unsolicited e-mail or develop a selective listing of e-mail addresses where a child can receive e-mail.
4. Instruct everyone in the family to never give out personal information (that is name, address, phone number, access codes, passwords, etc.) over the Internet without permission from you the parent. For young girls, especially make sure they never send out their pictures over the Internet.
5. Never fill out questionnaires or surveys without properly checking with a parent or knowing what information you are giving out and how it will be used.
6. Encourage all using the Internet in your household to bring anything that might be questionable to a parent's attention. When children do bring something to your attention make sure you praise them for alerting you to a possible problem.
7. Do not overreact when given something of a questionable nature by a child. Do not intimidate a child who is only trying to make sure they are doing the right thing. Instruct and help by being positive not negative toward children.
8. If you or your children feel uncomfortable in responding to any type of contact over the Internet, check it out. If necessary get the authorities involved. Do not act belligerent or hostile over the Internet to others.
9. Do not allow any type of personal contact (that is meeting someone face-to-face you first meet on the Internet) over the Internet unless there is a good valid reason for meeting that person. If a child needs to meet someone contacted over the Internet, a parent or responsible adult should always be notified and present with the child.
10. Try to focus on the good sites and material available on the Internet. Stay away from potential problem areas and report any problems or offensive sites to the proper authorities.
11. Make sure all downloads from the Internet is on floppy disks and is virus checked. With children make sure you know where all their floppy disks are located and stored.
12. Remember that these rules apply not only in-house but outside the home also. Remind you children and others that they must be aware of possible dangers even when parents are not home or around.
13. Remember, the most important thing is to have everyone in the family communicate with each other especially about what they find or see over the Internet.

I hope these simple tips are useful and that you and your family have a safe time surfing the net.

submitted by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

Parents and Computers

A parent and a child should have a special bond between them. It may seem, at times, that bond is broken when they look for elsewhere for answers, guidance, or examples for living. Computers, if used properly, can help influence a child in just the right direction a parent or guardian is looking to achieve. This direction can only flourish when a parent's family moral direction is established early in a child's life. Using a computer and the media can help the learning process and help make it a pleasurable experience for all involved.

It is a parent's responsibility to set priorities for their children and urge them toward the proper usage of the computer and various computer media. Just as any good parent will not let a child play or work around a stove or cook top without proper supervision or work with or play with dangerous machinery with out proper rules and guidance so to with computers and computer tools. This is more so with the Internet, and various medias in use over the Internet especially when used by those under a parent's care

A simple guideline to use is that what goes for real world living should also go for dealing with the virtual world. Something simple as "do not talk to strangers" should also apply to anyone on the Internet. Over the Internet anybody can be whoever he or she make himself or herself out to be and you or your child may never know until it is too late. Just as you ask your child when he/she leaves the house to let you know where they are going, you should know where there are in the virtual world. Have them tell you were they are logging onto, where they are surfing the net, who are they spending time with on the Internet. It is no different than when you are listening to your child as they talk about their friends and time spend away from home. Listen to your child and have them talk about what they see and find over the Internet and whom they are talking to as well.

The best thing about keeping up with your child and their computer usage is that you are not always alone. You can ask for help from your Internet Service Provider (ISP). If you have a good ISP, they can help exclude some of the least desirable or inappropriate materials available over the Internet. They will help provide parental control features and show you how to activate them. Good parental control would allow various forms of restriction to chat rooms, websites, news-groups, e-mail, and other unwanted access from others. They may even be able to provide records of usage for you individual or household usage. You can check on sites visited and action taken.

Filtering software may also help in providing needed protection for you and your children. Each software and type differs from each other and you will have to do some research to find out what may be the correct one or group of software

(Continued on page 3)



Maybe there is royalty in your family!! Bob Gordon gave a very informative lecture on Genealogy at the February meeting. Bob also runs the Genealogy SIG which is held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at McCann's. If you are interested, join the SIG, or if you cannot wait for the next SIG meeting, type genealogy into your web browser's search block and see what happens. There is lots of activity in this interesting field.

Bob did have one important point in that as you acquire information on relatives and ancestors, check the source and accuracy of the information. Unless it is properly documented, the information is of little use as it may be inaccurate.

What a Month!!!

Superbowl
Mardi Gras
Auto Dealer Convention
New Orleans Mayoral Election
could we ask for more???



Googling is using the popular search engine Google.com to look up someone's name in an effort to find out more about them. You might Google your neighbor, your old college roommate, or someone you've recently met to see what *information* is available about them on the Internet. Because Google has a ranking system, there is an unsubstantiated belief that the more Google returns a person has, the more important they are.

To Google someone, enter their name enclosed by quotation marks in the Google search box like this: "Person's name". If you Google yourself, it is called autoGoogling or egosurfing.

Information theory is a branch of mathematics that overlaps into communications engineering, biology, medical science, sociology, and psychology. The theory is devoted to the discovery and exploration of mathematical laws that govern the behavior of data as it is transferred, stored, or retrieved.

In 1948, Claude Shannon, a mathematician at Bell Labs,

published a paper entitled A Mathematical Theory of Communication. The paper caught the immediate attention of mathematicians and scientists worldwide. Several disciplines spun off as the result of reactions to this paper, including information theory, coding theory, and the entropy theory of abstract dynamical systems.

Whenever data is transmitted, stored, or retrieved, there are a number of variables such as bandwidth, noise, data transfer rate, storage capacity, number of channels, propagation delay, signal-to-noise ratio, accuracy (or error rate), intelligibility, and reliability. In audio systems, additional variables include fidelity and dynamic range. In video systems, image resolution, contrast, color depth, color realism, distortion, and the number of frames per second are significant variables. One of the most important applications of information theory is to determine the optimum system design for a given practical scenario.

Information theory is an evolving discipline and continues to generate interest among experimentalists and theorists.

submitted by Tom Watkins

"He who trims himself to suit everyone will soon whittle himself away" - - Raymond Hull

submitted by Jeanne Okamoto

Suites 2000 SIG

Hello, I'm ba-a-a-ck. I missed you all. The Suites SIG will start up again on the 20 March 2002. We will cover all areas of presentation applications. Hope my absence has not cause any problems for those interested in learning about presentation programs. In March we will cover the three largest software manufactures (MicroSoft PowerPoint, Corel Presentation, and Lotus Freelance). If all goes as planned we will finish in July making this set of classes we short.

Unlike the previous classes we will have home work for all attendees and hands-on work in class. We will start out with the basics and move into the intermediate level work, than on to advance work. This class will cover animation, layout, importation, export, sound, graphic, and other type work used in doing a presentation.

If you are a new member to the New Orleans Personal Computer Club (NOPCC) and do not know about this SIG please talk to the moderator Mr. Ashton C. Mouton, Jr. in our general membership meeting. This SIG (Special Interest Group) covers various applications or programs within the three major suites put out by Micro-soft, Corel, and Lotus. In 2002 we covered presentation applications. In the future we will cover other applications such as spreadsheets, databases, calendars, and some of the specialty applications that are in some suites. The moderator tries to answer as many questions as possible and will get an answer to all questions and show examples of how to solve problems involved in the topic for the day. If you are a beginner or advance user many helpful hints are given at these meetings and we try to help all those present.

This SIG is run a little different from the way the other SIG's are handled. We setup this SIG to run similar to a school classroom setting. Hands-on work is an integral part of this SIG but mostly lectures and step-by-step information is given on how to do various actions and functions within a given application (program). Questions are answered and examples given to better explain all of the concepts covered in a nights meeting. We start a little earlier than the other SIGs. This SIG starts at 6:00 pm and goes till 9:00 pm. If the meeting time for this SIG is a problem do not let this stop you from coming to our meetings. If you come late it does not matter because you can still get information from the rest of the meeting and if time permits the moderation will be happy to stay after meeting and cover what was done earlier.

If you have any questions on how to do a given 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 meet-

ing. The NOPCC wants to make sure that you are getting the best possible value for your money with your membership so please come to the meetings and do not be afraid to ask questions.

The e-mail for this SIG will be suites2000@nopc.org. Any communications outside of SIG meeting time is accomplish by e-mail or though 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. Hope to see you there.

submitted by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

Email Pals

I had some free time, so what did I do?
I checked the computer to see if I'd heard from you! I used to walk out to a box to retrieve mail.
But I'd rather get it instantly, than wait on the snail!

Checking my e-mail is always fun!
I usually get a joke or greeting from someone.
I feel so blessed because on the other end,
I know I've connected with a friend!

When I've had a hard day and need to share,
Here I can find a friend who will listen and care.
And to this friend I hope I've let them know
That I am always there for them also!

Isn't it a strange kind of bond we form?
It isn't exactly like the "norm"
But where is it written, face to face we must be,
For you to be a very good friend to me??

That little joke or note, or just a simple "Hi",
Could be like a ray of sunshine from the sky!
So my E-mail Pals, this is dedicated to you,
For all the smiles you have made anew!

May our friendship continue to grow,
And the warmth we feel continue to flow!
Always remember this...
A smile is such an easy thing to pass along the way,
Like a ray of summer sunshine, on a somewhat gloomy day!!

Thank you for being my E-Mail Pal!!!

submitted by Jeanne Okamoto

**"When I am working on a problem I never think about beauty. I only think about how to solve the problem. But when I am finished if the solution is not beautiful, I know I am wrong" —
Buckminster Fuller**

submitted by Jeanne Okamoto

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------|
| President | Ray Paternostro | 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 |
| Director At Large | Bob Gordon | director1@nopcc.org | 469-4686 |
| Director At Large | Carl Henderson | director2@nopcc.org | 466-3954 |
| Director At Large | Albert Fox | director3@nopcc.org | 269-5786 |

Standing Committees

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------|
| BBS SysOp | Lanny Goldfinch | sysop@nopcc.org | 482-5066 |
| Newsletter Editor | Edw Jahncke | editor@nopcc.org | 897-1205 |
| 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 Paternostro | 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

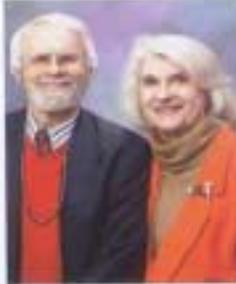
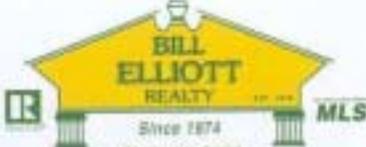
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| Club Hotline | Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours | 486-7249 |
| NOPCC BBS | Bulletin Board System for members. The original way to PC communicate. | 486-7261 |
| NOPCC Web Site | On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information. | www.nopcc.org |



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March 2002

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----------|--|--|---|--|-----------|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 Living with Electronics 690AM 10A-11A |
| 3 | 4 Visual Basic Learner's Group @ McCann's 6:30PM | 5 | 6 General Meeting J.D. Meisler 6:30PM | 7 | 8 | 9 Living with Electronics 690AM 10A-11A |
| 10 | 11 Visual Basic Learner's Group @ McCann's 6:30PM | 12 Genealogy SIG @McCann's 7:00PM | 13 Board of Directors @ McCann's 6:30PM | 14 | 15 | 16 Living with Electronics 690AM 10A-11A |
| 17 | 18 Visual Basic Learner's Group @ McCann's 6:30PM | 19 | 20 Office Suites SIG McCann's 6:00PM | 21 New User's SIG McCann's 6:30PM | 22 | 23 Living with Electronics 690AM 10A-11A |
| 24 | 25 Visual Basic Learner's Group @ McCann's 6:30PM | 26 | 27 Digital Imaging SIG @ McCann's 7:00PM | 28 Internet SIG @ McCann's 7:00PM | 29 | 30 Living with Electronics 690AM 10A-11A |
| 31 | | | | | | |

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