

MotherBoard

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This Month At NOPC Office XP The Smarter Work Experience By Daniel Hung From Microsoft

Inside this issue:

<i>New Computer Users SIG Suites 2000 SIG</i>	2
<i>The ABC's of MP3s</i>	3-4
<i>Remember When? Best Ideas Contest (Revisited)</i>	4-5
<i>FREE TechNet Briefing</i>	5-6
<i>Importance of Windows Updates XP Tweakers (cont'd)</i>	6
<i>NOPCC Directory</i>	7-8
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	

For Inveterate XP Tweakers Only

*By Carl Siechert, Co-Author, Microsoft
Windows XP Inside Out*

One of the fun things about Windows XP and Windows 2000 is that there is so much tweaking you can do if you want to. You don't *need* to do any of the things that I described at a recent Pasadena IBM User Group presentation, but if you like peeking under the hood and making a few adjustments so things run just the way you like, you can. Here's a little more information about some of the topics I discussed:

Group Policy

Group Policy lets you make all manner of settings-everything from configuring the desktop to hiding certain drives to preventing the creation of scheduled tasks. These settings (and hundreds more) are stored in the registry, which you can edit directly.

But Group Policy is much easier to use than a registry editor. A few notes before you dive in:

****To use Group Policy, You must have Windows XP Professional or Windows 2000; it's not available in Windows XP Home Edition.**

****To use Group Policy, you must be logged on using an account that's a member of the Administrators group.**

****If your computer is not a member of a Windows 2000 Server domain, any settings you make in Group Policy affect everyone who uses your computer. (There is a crude workaround that lets you set up two groups of users--those who are affected by Group Policy settings and those who are not. For details, check out pp. 1074-5 in "Microsoft Windows XP Inside Out." [Caution: this is the first of several plugs for my books.]**

Ready, Set Go...

Start Group Policy by choosing Start, Run and typing "gpedit.msc". (If you end up using Group Policy very much, you'll want to make a shortcut to gpedit.msc.) The

next two folders and their subfolders house the most interesting policies, although you might want to check out the others as well.

Then, in the left pane, select a subfolder of Computer Configuration\Administrative Templates or User Configuration \Administrative Templates. Select a useful sounding policy in the right pane, and an explanation of the policy appears. Keep poking around until you find something that interests you. To make a setting, double-click the policy name and then choose an option in the dialog box that appears.

Pretty easy stuff, but you're exploring where few Windows users dare to tread. Unless you work hard to enable policies that, for example, prevent you from logging on, the settings under Administrative Templates are pretty safe. Nonetheless, you should read the explanation carefully before you make a policy setting. Want more information? For a complete reference to Group Policy in Windows 2000, visit <http://www.microsoft.com/windows2000/techinfo/reskit/en-us/default.asp>

Look for Windows 2000 Group Policy Reference in the contents pane. Nearly all the information in this reference applies to Windows XP Professional as well, although it doesn't include the policies that are available only in Windows XP. Another good resource is the Group Policy Object Settings spreadsheet, which you can download from <http://www.microsoft.com/WindowsXP/pro/techinfo/productdoc/gpss.asp>

Although the spreadsheet doesn't explain the settings, it lists all Administrative Templates policies and shows which ones apply to each operating system; it also provides a convenient way to record your own settings. You'll also find more information in "Microsoft Windows XP Inside

(Continued on page 6)

NEW COMPUTER USERS SIG

by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

Our SIG meeting had a nice turnout of fourteen people with three new potential members. Thanks for all that attended. A number of questions were answered and we did a general review of what we have covered in the past along with a quiz to help reinforce what was learned. Some people found out they knew more than they thought and others found out they need to practice more on their computer to help better understand the concepts covered in our class like meeting.

The exam covered files and windows. We did a mini review before taking the exam and this helped all remember some of the items and subjects covered in previous meetings. Each exam help bring about more questions that were answered in detail. This allowed for actual demonstrations on the computer to give a better visual answer for all present.

This meeting also covered how to save ones files, transfer, and move files and what happens when this is done. We all had a good time with seeing what we knew and where we needed to improve. This brought up a number of questions, which Mr. Paternostro answered and covered to the satisfaction of all.

The major portion of this night's class was on boxes. Those small things that pop out, drop-down, or appear when you click on an object, a menu item, or icon. Most will appear with a right click of the mouse but others can appear with a left click.

There are various kinds of boxes used in the Window Environment. They are mainly used to control properties or styles of documents and objects that one will encounter when working on a computer. These various boxes will help you specify values, settings, states, options, and controls that will allow you to manipulate the behavior of interface elements appearing in toolbars, dialogs, windows, applications, and so on.

Boxes differ from windows in that a window has a title bar, three buttons in the upper right corner to minimize, maximize/restore, and close the window, a status bar, and sometimes a scroll bar (either vertical or horizontal). Windows can appear inside another windows and are fully operational. The same cannot be said for boxes.

Dockers are a special kind of box that is similar to a window but acts as an interface component that will enable a user to access application features of a particular program or application. Normally a docker will open and be docked as it was last posited upon its last use. Dockers can "float" or be moved to any position the user designates on the screen. A docker can be reportioned to a size that is usable when you click and drag the docker on its sides or bottom edge. Generally boxes are not movable nor can they be changed in any way. Boxes are usually used to change or control one or more elements that will appear inside a window, document, or application.

In our August class we covered Num Boxes, Combo Boxes,

Flyouts, Popouts, Color Selectors, List Selectors, Radio Buttons, Option Boxes, Toggle Boxes, Command Buttons, Spinners, Sliders, and Pop-up Menus. To add a little spice to our meeting we also covered how to change colors for text and document backgrounds.

If you have any ideas or questions that you would like covered at this SIG meeting please contact the SIG leader Mr. Ashton C. Mouton, Jr. at 246-7759 at least three days before the regular class date and he will try to incorporate it into the SIG meeting. Our SIG meetings are geared toward helping users gain confidence in using their computer, and understand how to best use their computers.

If you have any questions on using your computer, now is the best time to attend this SIG. We will be covering all aspects of computer usage during the year. If you call ahead of time, we can better prepare for your specific question and have an answer for you at the meeting. Tell your friends and help get some new members into the club by coming to this very informative program. The e-mail for this SIG will be newusers@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).

Suites 2000 SIG

by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

Please accept my apologies for not having a meeting in August. This was the second time in a row that a meeting was not held.

I got a call from my cousin in Chicago, the last week in July, that she was coming down to New Orleans for the thirteenth of August and was going back the twenty seventh of August. For three years we both have been planning to do some genealogy research in Lafayette and therefore I could not afford to let this opportunity pass.

Looks like we are down to only two people for this SIG since only two people came to the June SIG meeting. I will try to get in contact with the other participants for this SIG and will try to see if they want to continue meeting on this topic. If everyone's answer is to stop than we will start up another topic for the September meeting.

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. Please call at least three days before the next scheduled meeting day.

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.

The ABC's of MP3s

Much has been said about MP3 technology over the last few years and even some computer club presentations. This will help to explain MP3 technology and how it can benefit the consumer.

MP3 files use the third audio layer of the MPEG compression standard. The result is small data files which contain most of the audio fidelity of the source program. These are mainly songs that are copied (ripped) from audio CDs, but can also be spoken word programs or audio books. When a particular song or voice program is put into MP3 format it can then be transferred to a portable device to be enjoyed away from the computer.

In order to create MP3 files, you must first have installed a program that has this capability. These are sometimes bundled with sound cards and there are several freeware and shareware programs as well. The Windows Media player can play back, but does not have what is referred to as the CODEC for creating MP3s (it creates instead .WMA files which is Microsoft's competing format). The program I use is a \$25 shareware package called Media Jukebox.

The process of copying CD tracks and converting them into MP3 files is called ripping. The size of these files is much smaller than what they would be if the tracks were copied in their native .WAV format. There are five popular sampling bitrates that are used when ripping tracks: 128, 160, 192, 256, or 320kbps. 128kbps consumes the least amount of space (about a megabyte per minute) and is the lowest rate that most portable devices recognize but also has the most loss in fidelity; the bass frequencies will have noticeable distortion and the trebles will sound extremely tinny. The two highest bitrates by comparison will consume about 2 megs per minute but produce files that are indistinguishable from the source material. I find that 192kbps is a good balance of size and audio fidelity. The format also allows for additional data such as artist and title information to be stored inside the file.

Once the files are loaded onto your hard drive, they can either be enjoyed on your computer using any of

the "Jukebox" type programs (most of which will probably have created the files in the first place), or shifted over to another device for playback. Here is a rundown of the different types of players:

CD MP3: This uses a CD-R or CD-RW disc which is created (burned) on a computer CD writer drive. It is nothing more than the audio data files, and is the cheapest method of utilizing the MP3 format; most modern DVD players can recognize this type of disc as well as most smaller home stereo and portable units and car CD players. The cost between MP3-capable players and those that don't have it is not too far apart. Manufacturing hype usually claims up to 10 audio CDs onto a single CD in MP3 format; this is at 128kbps and therefore the lowest sound quality. Figure about 6-7 CDs using 192kbps.

Fixed/removable storage: These are the players that use non-volatile memory for storing and playback of the MP3 files. Since there are no moving parts they are very small, durable, and have the longest battery life. Stay away from the fixed-amount players; even 128mb internal memory will likely be outgrown after a few months of use. The ones that use removable storage utilize the same cards that most digital cameras use: Compact Flash, Smart Media, Multi Media Card (MMC), and the Sony Memory Stick. Of these, the Compact Flash models offer the most storage and compatibility for the dollar. My personal player is the Frontier Labs NEX II player with two 256mb Flash cards. Using 192kbps MP3 I can fit about 2.5 full length 70+ minute CDs onto a single flash card, 3.5 CDs using 128kbps WMA files as detailed below.

Jukebox storage: These players contain a laptop hard drive of at least a few gigabytes, which allows for the storage of a few hundred CDs. (How many is determined by the size of the drive.) This is the best type for the most hours of uninterrupted music and is ideally suited for long car trips or DJing (although I believe a laptop would be better for that application). Hard drives have also started appearing in full size CD players; it is possible that once

(Continued from page 3)

this type of player gains some market share it will kill off the multi-CD jukebox player and take a big chunk out of the multi-CD carousel/magazine market.

The latter two types require some connectivity to the host computer and will typically connect to a USB port for this, although some newer ones will use a FireWire port or even USB 2.0. Although the players with removable card storage will have the ability to be mounted as a removable device, it is best to use a separate dedicated reader for that; like cameras, the transfer rate is very slow compared to dedicated readers. This option also gives the user to upgrade to a reader that can use one of the faster transfer ports when the computer is upgraded to have them. Additionally, most of these players will use AA or AAA batteries to function. I recommend investing in a Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH) charger and batteries; they last much longer than Nickel Cadmium batteries between charges and are friendlier to the environment.

Although MP3 has been the file format that has gained the most ground for digital audio flexibility there is also the Windows Media Audio format (WMA) and Ogg Vorbis, both of which offer greater audio fidelity at lower bitrates. WMA is slowly but surely gaining more ground as manufacturers are building devices which can read and process files in this format in addition to MP3s. I use it for ripping my audio CDs instead of MP3s since my NEX II player supports it and can fit more music onto the Flash card.

In addition to your bitrate size affecting playback quality, the headphones or speakers used play a large part as well. Portable radios, cassette players, and CD players have typically been bundled with very cheap headphones, and MP3 players are no exception. Fortunately the same type of 3.5mm stereo plug is used on all the portable players so just as with the other types of music players, the user can substitute any model of headphones/ear buds on MP3 units, or hook it to a cassette adapter or FM modulator for use in the car.

One last thing: Avoid players with Digital Rights

Management functions, or be sure that you can turn them off. This may require a little bit of research but will be well worth it to insure that you can enjoy your player in the manner that you see fit, not how the media content companies dictate. Also remember that these companies are lobbying hard to prevent you the consumer from being able to backup or space-shift your music and therefore not be able to play it on devices like these.

Submitted by Ray Paternostro

Remember When ...

An APPLICATION was for employment. A PROGRAM was a tv show. A CURSOR used profanity. And A KEYBOARD was a piano.....

MEMORY was something that you lost with age. A CD was a bank account. COMPRESS was something that you did with the garbage. And if you UNZIPPED anything in public you would be in jail for a while.....

LOG ON was adding wood to the fire. HARD DRIVE was a long trip on the road. A MOUSE PAD was where a mouse lived. And a BACKUP happened to your commode.....

CUT you did with a pocket knife. PASTE you did with glue. A WEB was a spider's home. And a VIRUS was the flu.....

A COMPUTER was something on tv from a science fiction show. A WINDOW was something you hated to clean ... And RAM was the cousin of a goat!

Submitted by Jeannie Okamoto

Best Ideas Contest (revisited)

By Edward Jahncke, Editor

Remember that excellent presentation that Gerry McCann gave at the June, 2002 NOPCC Meeting in which those members present let us share some of their "Best Ideas". In previous *Motherboards*, we shared them with those of you who did not attend

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

that meeting. Here are some more ideas for you to consider.

Idea #8-John: Wireless LANs can have security problems by having their signals intercepted. Be sure to read carefully the equipment manuals, especially the sections on security.

Idea #9-Jeannie: When using a “free” e-mail service such as “Juno”, don’t send graphics, as the cache fills up.

Idea #10-Louis: When calling long distance, you might consider using your cell-phone. If your cell phone plan provides nationwide long distance, the call would have been based at about 10 cents per-minute.

Idea #11-Virginia: One of your best investments is joining a SIG which will have “hands-on” answers to your computer problem.

Idea #12-John: If you haven’t tried one yet, you must try (and get) an optical mouse. Doesn’t skip; jump; constantly need cleaning; and uses less space on your desk.

Idea #13-Cecil: As my eyes began to age, and found bi-focals necessary, I also found that the monitor on my desk was too high causing me to constantly be nodding my head to focus on the screen. Cut down the legs on the desk which lowered the monitor and made reading a lot easier.

Idea #14-Ashton: Need screen savers, try “tech.tv.com”. Best NOPCC SIG - *Suite SIG* Most Operating Systems (OS) don’t provide complete help, and what is provided is on the OS CD-Rom. Get a book for more detailed and better organized help in understanding your OS.

Idea #18-Pam: Best Mailing and Database program is “*My Software*” which holds 10,000 names and 250,000 files.

That is enough ideas for this month. Will have some more next month after you’ve had a chance to digest these.

Enjoy.....

Attend a FREE TechNet Briefing

Attendees will receive a chance to win a FREE high-resolution portable DVD player and COOL Microsoft games! The answers you need are right around the corner. Come to your FREE TechNet Briefing, and get the detailed, in-depth “how-to” technical information IT professionals need.

Topics:

- . Exchange 2000 Real-world Benefits
- . Building Business Intelligence with Office XP and SQL 2000 Analysis Services

Topic Descriptions:

Exchange 2000 Real-world Benefits:

Are you experiencing the benefits of Exchange 2000? All of the benefits? Whether you have already started deploying Exchange 2000 or not, join us as we take a look at Exchange 2000 real-world scenarios. We’ll discuss several companies who are already realizing the great cost savings of Exchange 2000 and discuss some scenarios aimed at helping you maximize your return on deploying Exchange 2000 including server consolidation and real-time collaboration. We will also briefly look at the roadmap for Exchange and how we will leverage the features of the next version of Windows Server.

Building Business Intelligence with Office XP and SQL 2000 Analysis Services:

In this session, we will look at how to use and integrate various Office components with the Business Intelligence features of SQL Server 2000 Analysis services. We will use Excel to access an OLAP cube. Then define and display the data with Pivot tables. We’ll talk about Office Web components and the Office Web component toolkit. We’ll show how we can manipulate data and views from a Web browser, and how data can be extracted from the Web and pulled back into Excel. We will also show basic SQL Server Analysis services, simple views, and provide an overview of Analysis Services. We will look at how the data analyzer can be used to show relationships in data elements. We’ll showcase the UI, and specifically comparison, and drilldown capabilities combined with DA views. Finally, we’ll take the data we brought into Excel, and combine that with MapPoint data to get rich geographic detail for our data using the MapPoint OLAP Add-in. We’ll take the data and pull a MapPoint graph into

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

PowerPoint to show how we'd easily make a nice presentation, and then we'll go back to Excel and see how MapPoint data can be brought directly into Excel.

September 24, 2002
8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Pontchartrain Center
4545 Williams Blvd.
Kenner, LA 70065
Event Code: 102054224

Each attendee will also receive FREE evaluation CDs of Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server 2001, SQL Server 2000 Enterprise Edition, and Exchange Server 2000!

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Submitted by Jackie Elliot and Virginia Kieran

IMPORTANCE OF WINDOWS UPDATES

Intended For
Windows XP
Windows 2000
Windows Me
Windows 98

The Windows Update feature can be a convenient way to make sure you have all the latest patches and bug fixes that Microsoft didn't bother including in the boxed version of Windows. This site also includes all of the fixes for some of the latest virus that have been know to corrupt or steal you Address Book. Although there's no mention of it on the Windows Update site, Microsoft has made all of the updates available for separate download (for installing later) here:
<http://v4.windowsupdate.microsoft.com/en/default.asp>

It is important that you run your Windows Updates on a regular basis. If you take the time to run the request updates when prompted, you may notice that your computer maintains in proper operating state. Users who do not complete their Microsoft Update on a regular basis may notice that there programs may take longer to start, or worse, the message;" Your program has performed an "illegal" operation and must be shut down..." Don't panic, just complete the latest updates and try again.

Windows Updates can be found by click on "Start" in the bottom left hand corner of the screen. Follow the menu to the top, most users will see a "Blue Globe" that states Windows Updates. Once you reach the proper website, click on Product

Updates. I suggest you do all updates that state "Critical" or "Recommended" Windows 95 or Users who did not see, "Windows Updates" on their Start Menu, may start Internet Explorer, and click on the word "Tools". Windows Updates will be included on the drop down menu. For more assistance with this, Please visit, <http://www.microsoft.com>

Submitted by Jackie Elliot

(Continued from page 1)

Out" (Chapter 34) and in our new book. "Microsoft Windows Security Inside Out for Windows XP and Windows 2000" (Chapter 19). The latter book, which should be in stores in August, includes a number of specific recommendations about policies you can set to better secure your system.

It's At Your Service

I also mentioned the Services snap-in, which is included in the Computer Management console. To open Computer Management, right-click My Computer (on the Start menu or in an Explorer window) and choose Manage. In the left pane of Computer Management, select Computer Management (Local)\Services and Applications\Services. (Tip of the day: You can open the Services snap-in within its own console. You can find a shortcut to Services in the Administrative Tools folder, or you can simply choose Start, Run and type "services.msc".)

So which services should you turn off by changing their startup type to Manual or Disable? This Web site offers some good advice: <http://www.blkviper.com/WinXP/servicecfg.htm>

And (time for another plug) "Microsoft Windows Security Inside Out for Windows XP and Windows 2000" provides a brief description of every service included with Windows XP and Windows 2000 and offers recommended settings.

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BUSINESS	PERSONAL	TECHNICAL
		
<h1>MEGOHMS</h1> <h2>CONSULTING SERVICES</h2>		
<small>10311 Ploosemor Dr. New Orleans, LA 70127-1848</small>		<small>Voice & Fax: (504) 241-2172 E-Mail: ACMoutonjr@cs.com</small>
<h3>ASHTON C. MOUTON, JR., M.S.</h3> <h4>CONSULTANT</h4>		

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	Ray Paternostrro	president@nopcc.org	737-9099
Vice President	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	vp@nopcc.org	246-7759
Secretary	Curtis Duhe'	secretary@nopcc.org	
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Director At Large	Albert Fox	director3@nopcc.org	269-5786

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BBS SysOp	Lanny Goldfinch	sysop@nopcc.org	482-5066
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Public Relations	Jeannie Okamoto	pr@nopcc.org	455-0977
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Webmaster	Manuel Dennis III	webmaster@nopcc.org	835-7656

Special Interest Groups

Genealogy	Bob Gordon	genealogy-m@nopcc.org	469-4686
Internet	Ray Paternostrro	internet-m@nopcc.org	737-9099
Digital Imaging	Ray Paternostrro	digital-imaging-m@nopcc.org	737-9099
New Users	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	new-user-m@nopcc.org	246-7759
Suites 2000	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	suites2000@nopcc.org	246-7759
VBLG	Manuel Dennis III	vblg-owner@yahoogroups.com	835-7656
WADSIG	Manuel Dennis III	vblg-owner@yahoogroups.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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September 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Computer Solutions 130 WSMB radio 11:00 am to noon	2 VB Learners SIG McCann's Electronic 6:30 PM	3	4 NOPCC Members Meeting J.D. Meisler School 6:30 PM	5	6	7 Living with Home Electronics 690 WTIIX radio 10:00 am— 11:00 am
8 Computer Solutions 130 WSMB radio 11:00 am to noon	9 VB Learners SIG McCann's Electronic 6:30 PM	10 Genealogy SIG McCann's Electronic 7:00 PM	11 BOD Meeting McCann's Electronic 6:30 PM	12 ACT SIG McCann's Electronic 6:30 PM	13	14 Living with Home Electronics 690 WTIIX radio 10:00 am— 11:00 am
15 Computer Solutions 130 WSMB radio 11:00 am to noon	16 VB Learners SIG McCann's Electronic 6:30 PM	17	18 Suites 2000 SIG McCann's Electronic 6:00 PM	19 New User SIG McCann's Electronic 6:30 PM	20	21 Living with Home Electronics 690 WTIIX radio 10:00 am— 11:00 am
22 Computer Solutions 130 WSMB radio 11:00 am to noon	23 VB Learners SIG McCann's Electronic 6:30 PM	24	25 Digital Imaging SIG McCann's Electronic 7:00 PM	26 Internet SIG McCann's Electronic 7:00 PM	27	28 Living with Home Electronics 690 WTIIX radio 10:00 am— 11:00 am
29 Computer Solutions 130 WSMB radio 11:00 am to noon	30 VB Learners SIG McCann's Electronic 6:30 PM					

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