

Mother Board

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This Month At NOPC

Favorite Software Night

Election of Club Officers

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FAVORITE SOFTWARE NIGHT

In the past, we have had a Best Idea contest as a meeting theme. Gerry McCann hosted this meeting and elicited best computer ideas (hardware, software and other) from our members. Along these same lines, we want to hold a favorite software night.

For our November 1st meeting, we would like to hear about your favorite software. It can be retail software, like Word or Excel, or shareware, like Belarc Advisor. There are no price limits. Each member will have five to seven minutes to talk about and show us their favorite software. At the end of the meeting, we will vote on which is the best and award prizes to the top three presenters.

To make this meeting go smoothly, we need to know in advance who will be presenting their software. When you have a minute, contact Tom Ford by email (tomford@bellsouth.net) or by telephone (985-643-3172) with your application and we can arrange how you can show your favorite software to our members.

Be adventurous and let our members know about your gem of an application. It will be a great evening to learn about the many software packages available!

Elections This Meeting

At the November meeting we will be electing officers and directors to lead the NOPC in 2007. The officers are President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. In addition, we have three Directors at Large. These seven members constitute the Club's Board of Directors. Each member of the Board will serve from December 1, 2006 until November 30, 2007 and we will again hold elections at the November 2007 meeting. The Board meets once a month, usually the second Wednesday, at 6:30PM. The meeting is held at McCann's Electronics, 100 Division Street (corner of Division and Airline Drive).

Listed below are the current candidates for 2007:

President – Tom Ford
Vice-President – Ray Paternostro Jr.
Treasurer – Don Herrmann
Secretary – Mary Prinz
Director at Large – Scott Minvielle
Director at Large – Jeanne Okamoto
Director at Large – Mike York

Any current member in good standing can run for a position on the Board. If you want to know more about the duties and responsibilities of each position, please contact Virginia Kieran (kierano@bellsouth.net, 504-887-5746) or Mike York (mike@gnonug.org, 504-289-4046).

At the November 1st meeting, the Nominating Committee will present the candidates listed above. In addition, nominations for the Board can be made at the meeting. The member nominated must be present at the meeting to run. We will then vote for each officer and director.

Come out to the November meeting and elect your 2007 Board.

Taking Your Data For A Drive Guide to USB Flash Drives

By *Walter L. Mora*

Editorial Staff

TigerDirect.com *Miami*

A World in the Palm of Your Hand

Could the age of floppys, zip disks and CDs be over? As media files are becoming more robust and heavy in size, portable devices that store them are getting smaller physically while storing a massive amount of information. CDs may be compact and floppys thin and small but they are limited in their storage space, security and not to mention susceptibility to damage, rendering the data unreadable. Enter the flash drive. A tiny unit that fits in the palm of your hands that can store up to 2 GB of data. These small, plastic devices connect to your computer via a USB port (which virtually every computer, desktop and laptop, has at least one) where data can be written and copied from an internal flash memory chip. You then simply attach it to your key ring, put it in your pocket and take a world of information with you wherever you go. Forget about damage to the data or if your client has the proper drives to access the files. Forget about some stranger accessing your files if you lose the flash drive as most require password and offer file encryption. If you prefer a drive that is more functional, get an MP3 flash drive player that not only stores data but can also allocate space to hold and play your favorite tunes. The following is a brief description of the various types of USB flash drives currently on the market. This list will of course evolve as time goes on to reveal more robust and possibly small removable storage devices.

Standard USB Flash Drives

We begin this guide with the standard USB flash drive. These drives are pretty simple, where you insert into an available USB port and drag files to and from the drive (your computer will recognize the drive as an external drive where you drag and drop from the USB flash drive window). The only difference among these drives is storage capacity, transfer speed (determined by the type of USB Connectivity - USB 1.1 or USB 2.0) and appearance such as size, shape and color.

Security USB Flash Drives

These drives work similar to the standard media drives but provide a security feature to prevent data loss and/or theft. Some utilize a built-in password prompt as bundled software that activates when copying to/from your drive. Another protective method that goes a step beyond a password is data encryption (64, 128 or 256 bit). A new method of protection is the integration of fingerprint authentication in addition to

encryption codes, to guarantee your information is very secure.

MP3-USB Flash Drives

If USB flash drives were made to carry data around, why not let them burst out in song? Flash technology created the MP3 player that is so popular these days (Note - there are also Hard Drive players, like the iPod, but that's another story). Each offer many different features such as displays, capacity, functions (radio tuner, mic) and cosmetic appearance. These portable music flash drives not only play your music but can also store data files to be transferred from computer to computer. Consider these the flash drives jiggling with musical entertainment rather than just sitting in your pocket.

Innovative USB Flash Drives

I call these innovative because even though they look like your typical USB flash drives, they have an added feature to distinguish them from the rest. We just covered MP3 flash drive/players with LCD screens and they certainly fall into this category. However, there are those that are not music players but offer the ability to expand memory capacity (with flash memory card slots), provide wireless LAN connectivity and faster data transfer rates via a firewire connector instead of the common USB.

Multifunctional USB Drives

Some companies have decided to put a creative spin on the USB flash drive and make them, well, more multifunctional. Rather than just develop another plain piece of molded plastic with a cap to add to your key ring, companies have developed USB flash drives that act and look like objects we would use day to day. There are currently full functioning wrist watches and pens that contain a USB cable or connector to plug into a computer and download or upload files to a certain capacity. Some even include encryption software just in case you lose the pen or watch.

*Submitted by Jeanne Okomato
Member, NOPCC*

Should Your System Be RAIDed

by Vinny La Bash,

Member of the Sarasota

Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida

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You may have heard fellow computer enthusiasts brag about their new fast RAID system as if it were a high performance sports car. If you wondered what they were talking about, you are not alone.

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Just what does RAID stand for? The source of the RAID acronym can be credited to three University of California Berkeley professors named Patterson, Gibson, and Katz. In 1987 they published a paper named "A Case for Redundant Arrays of Inexpensive Disks (RAID)". The fundamental concept of RAID was to combine multiple small disks into an arrangement yielding greater performance than a Single Large Expensive Drive (SLED). If you can see the potential to combine the acronyms to make bad jokes, again you are not alone.

The main objection to RAID was that two or more disk drives are inherently less reliable than a single disk drive. The professors overcame the objection by showing that disk arrays can be made more reliable by storing data redundantly in various ways across multiple disk drives.

The paper defined five types of RAID arrangements, each offering different trade-offs in features and performance. Over time, more RAID configurations were added to the mix. The corporate world gradually adopted RAID, but it never took the PC world by storm because until relatively recently, disk drives were not "inexpensive".

At the core of RAID is a process called "striping". With several hard drives connected to a controller card installed in a motherboard slot, you can juice up read and write speeds by breaking the data into blocks (stripes) and storing these blocks across multiple disk drives. This allows data to be either recorded or accessed in multiple blocks simultaneously across multiple drives in parallel. Without going into technical detail, the parallel operation provides the increase in performance. Of the many RAID configurations developed since 1987 only two are likely to be incorporated into a PC, and one of those isn't really RAID at all because it has no redundancy. The other is true RAID, but does not use striping.

We'll start out with RAID 1, also known as Disk Mirroring. The title gives it away. In a two disk array you mirror the contents of one disk onto the other. With 100% redundancy, there is no need to do any kind of data restoration if one of the disks should fail for any reason. A few simple instructions allow you to use the mirrored disk until you can install a replacement for the failed drive. Reactivate your array, and you're back in business with no down time. The trade-off is that a second disk doesn't give you any additional disk space, nor does it appreciably affect performance one way or the other. If reliability and preservation of data are all important to you, then a RAID 1 array can

make good sense. RAID 1 is relatively cheap, easy to use, and costs about the same as most conventional backup solutions. Turn to RAID 1 when data integrity is more important than performance. To set up a RAID for your internal drives, you will need support on your motherboard or add-in card. Finally, you must still keep current drive backups to protect against user errors, viruses, and other problems that affect both drives.

Hard core gamers and other performance obsessed nut cases are almost always referring to RAID 0 when they brag about their PC speed demons. Most of them either don't know or care that RAID 0 is not true RAID as it has no redundancy. Data is spread out among all the drives in the array, which means that if any one of your drives fail, all your data is lost. This is not important if you use your system solely for game playing, but how many of us do that? If you have important data stored on your system, RAID 0 can be a dangerous implementation that may ultimately trash every byte of information on your system.

A better way than RAID 0 is to install a hard drive with a disk cache of at least 8 Megabytes of RAM. Because computers can access data from RAM much faster than directly from a disk, caching can significantly increase performance though it won't match RAID 0. Many cache systems also attempt to predict what data will be requested next so they can place that data in the cache ahead of time. This will never stop performance crazy freaks from using RAID 0. They all backup their systems regularly, don't they? RAID 0 is for those enamored of performance where loss of data is of little concern. As an alternative, you can approach RAID 0 performance by installing drives with at least 8 megabytes of disk cache.

While it does not obviate the need for backup, a RAID 1 array can provide additional protection for those whose main consideration is preservation of data.

There are many different types of RAID configurations which we have not discussed. We have confined our dialog to RAID 0 and 1 because they are the most common arrangements on home computers. Most technical details have been left out for simplification.

For a complete description of RAID, including animated diagrams of how data is actually stored, go to http://www.acnc.com/04_01_00.html



Are You "Compuliterate?"

by *Berry F. Phillips*,
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and the eMonitor

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<http://www.ccokc.org>

"Compuliteracy" Test (unknown author)

1. Who invented the computer?
Mr. Chips, E.T., Marquis de Sade.
2. What are microchips?
What a herd of micros leave on the prairie,
What you eat with a microdip,
The reason you had to take all those computer literacy courses.
3. What is a floppy disk?
A painful lower-back condition,
An album that didn't sell,
A great Frisbee.
4. What is the first thing you associate with computers?
Bill Cosby commercials,
Eyestrain & headaches,
Annoying beeps,
Three tons of printout where once there was a 3-page report,
All of the above.
5. What is FORTRAN?
Between 3 and 5 tran,
How to get computers excited before interface,
Ridiculous.
6. What is Pascal?
7. A leafy vegetable,
A foot fungus,
A city in southern France,
None of the above.
7. When you need consulting help in deciding what to do with your computer, which organization do you think of? IBM, FBI, PLO?
8. What is the most important computer peripheral?
Bill Gates,
Someone to operate the computer for you,
Aspirin.

Some years ago, I was staring at a demo game computer with that blank stare of a computer illiterate in a large computer store. I felt a tug on my sleeve and there was a small lad who asked me rather impatiently, "Why don't you do something?" I confessed with great difficulty being an adult that I did not know what to do. This mini computer user said, "I will show you because I have this game at home." He began killing monsters right and left as I slunk out of the store in humiliation. I vowed from that day forward I would become computer literate because no eight year old was going to be more computer literate than I was!

I suspect you have some hands on computer experience since you are reading my column. Computer literacy is today a necessity when entering the job market. I remember when Time

Magazine awarded the computer, their coveted Man of the Year which dramatically illustrated the incredible impact the personal computer has had on our contemporary society. Computer literacy does not mean you need to know everything about a computer but you should master the basics and understand how a computer works. I remember thinking that just because a person used a computer in a business that they must be computer literate. I discovered that many computer users only knew how to do limited applications necessary for them to do their specific work. Further, I noticed that many computer users due to lack of computer literacy were very limited in their use of their computers. Limited computer literacy usually translates into limited use of the computer never experiencing the full potential of the computer and maximizing their return on their computer investment.

What alternatives are available to accelerate one's level of computer literacy? Basic computer courses are offered by most continuing education programs. They are usually reasonably priced and conveniently scheduled. They can be found in your local school district, or community college on evenings and weekends. There are career retraining programs that often offer computer courses through your local Labor Department Office. There are also online courses and tutorials available and the public libraries have computers available to their patrons with Internet access.

I have found that computer clubs are an excellent choice for developing computer literacy since they are economical, and less theoretical and are more focused on how to operate the computer using various applications. Computer users helping other computer users move to the next level of computer literacy is an incredible learning and motivating experience. All of those who obtain computer literacy were once computer illiterates. As they were helped to reach computer literacy, they enjoy helping others as they were helped. You are never alone in your journey to reach computer literacy in a computer club; there is always another member to ask a question or to get hands on help. Many computer clubs have computer labs as does the Computer Club of Oklahoma City, www.ccokc.org (405-843-4300) which is also affiliated with the national Senior Net Users Group and the Association of PC Users Groups. If you are not in the Oklahoma City area, please contact the Association of PC Users Groups, www.apcug.org (800-558-6867) to check on an affiliated computer club in your area .

The sole objective of computer clubs is to help each other to reach computer literacy. We often hear from our members who have achieved computer literacy how when they started they wondered how they would ever use a computer and now how they will ever get along without a computer! The transition from computer illiteracy to literacy is truly amazing. Our mission is to help each other reach computer literacy with a variety of proven classes that will get you up too speed as soon as possible. The Computer Club of Oklahoma City believes the only unintelligent question is the unasked question! Obtaining computer literacy is not a luxury but an absolute necessity in

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our rapidly evolving technological society.

I hope that I remain "compuliterate" because those eight year olds are getting more and more "compuliterate" especially the older I get!

Downloading a File

By Dave Gerber,
APCUG Advisor; VP Sarasota PCUG, Florida;
radio talk show host
www.spcug.org
[dgerber\(at\)apcug.net](mailto:dgerber(at)apcug.net)

Step 1: Create a Download Folder

The first step in downloading from the Internet, is to create a folder where you will always save your downloaded files. This will help you to locate the file once it is downloaded into your computer. To create a new folder (directory) called C:\Download using Windows Explorer, highlight your C: drive, and then click on these menu items, one after the other: File | New > Folder. When a folder entitled New Folder is created, rename it "Download".

Note: A word about distinguishing between the Windows Explorer and Microsoft Internet Explorer. The Windows Explorer is the system tool that helps you examine and access your entire computer; files; directories; drives; desktop, etc. In contrast, Microsoft Internet Explorer is the browser you can use to surf the Web.

Step 2: Download a File Using Your Browser

Microsoft Internet Explorer (MSIE), Netscape Communicator, Opera, and other browsers work in similar ways. After you click the Download Now button, a small window will open and ask you, "What would you like to do with this file?" or something similar. Simply click on the "Save it to disk" or "Save" choice, and then click OK. When the familiar "Save As" window appears, use it to navigate to your newly created C:\download folder and click "Save." Watch and wait until the file has finished downloading. Problems? Some older versions of MSIE may require that you right-click on "Download Now," and select "Save Target As" to be able to begin the process described above.

Step 3: Prepare Your File for Installation

Although some files end in .exe and automatically install or explode into many files, many of the files you will download end in .zip. Since programs almost always include more than one file, think of the trouble it would be to download many files just to get one program to install. A zip file, also referred to as an archive, is an individual file that has files stored within it. When multiple files are combined into one zip file, they are also compressed in size, which has the further benefit of saving hard drive space and shortening download time. To open a .zip file, you will need a program that will unzip the file for you. The most common program for this is WinZip. If you do not already have WinZip, follow these instructions to install the proper version.

Step 4: Download and Install WinZip

Go to www.winzip.com and download the shareware version of WinZip. (Note from Dave: This version of WinZip is shareware; registration costs \$29.) Put it in your computer's C:\download folder. The WinZip file is in the form of an .exe that can be run and installed without any additional steps.

Congratulations!

You've successfully downloaded a file, and a whole new world is available to you now! The Internet is a great source for finding software gems. By tapping into the Web's motherlode of software, you can try programs to see if you like them before laying out that hard-earned cash, and keep your favorite programs up to date by learning to download and install their latest versions.

Step 5: Install your file

Double-click on winzip81.exe to install WinZip, then follow the easy step-by-step installation instructions. We suggest you take all of the suggested default settings and scan all your drives for favorite folders. WinZip can then easily access your C:\download directory for the next step. STOP when you reach the "WinZip Wizard - Welcome" window, and proceed with the next instruction. WinZip has probably been set up to launch using wizards, which are interfaces designed to make it easier to use new programs. They present each step in a series of separate windows, with options and decisions for you to make before you click Next to proceed.

Step 6: How To Handle .exe Files

As we mentioned at the beginning of Step 3, you will find files ending in both .zip and .exe. You will find that .exe files are even easier to handle than .zip files! If you downloaded and installed WinZip earlier in this exercise, you know exactly what we mean.

The .exe files that you download are ready to be run -- the only thing is, they can act in one of several different ways. Here are a few examples of what may happen when you double-click on an .exe file that you have downloaded.

An installation routine may begin immediately. In this case, all you need do is follow the instructions that are presented to you.

A small window may appear that explains that the file will extract to a particular folder. You may wish to change the folder, or at least make a note of where the files are being placed. At the conclusion of the file extraction process, an installation process may begin. If it does not, use Windows Explorer to navigate to the folder where the files have been placed. Once there, you can look for a Readme.txt, File_id.diz, Vendinfo.diz, Productname.txt, or other file that may help you install the program. Typically, a Setup.exe or Productname.exe will be there for you to click upon.

All of the files within the .exe will be expanded into the current folder. Fortunately, this older method of packaging is not used very often

My Spyware

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS

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Everyone has computer woes...even me. Last week my office computer slowed to a crawl when accessing anything on the office network or on the Internet. It was so slow that I was anxious to begin troubleshooting.

Since we had recently moved to a new office, the first suspect was the network cabling. I replaced cables on both ends and used my laptop to confirm that the network was fine. It was obvious that something in my computer was the problem. So the first order of business was to scan for viruses. Since I always use an up-to-date antivirus program, keep my operating system patched, and don't open uninvited attachments, I felt my computer was probably virus-free. The virus scan confirmed that my problem was caused by something other than a virus.

My next thought was that I probably had some spyware in my computer. These unwanted programs infiltrate computers without the user's knowledge. They can wreck havoc with a computer. So I ran a spyware detection program named *Ad-Aware* (www.adaware.com). This is a free program that I have used for years with good results. This time, it didn't find anything. So I turned to another favorite... *Spybot Search and Destroy* (www.spybot.com). Another free program, *Spybot* has turned up much spyware in the past. Yet, even though I updated both of these programs before I scanned my computer, neither found any spyware.

Now I had a dilemma. Since I could not find the problem, my next step might have to be reformatting my hard drive and reinstalling all the programs. In trying to avoid that time-consuming hassle, I decided to try one more spyware program. On my desktop I had two additional free spyware tools that I downloaded for review but had never used before: AOL's *Automatic Spyware Protection* (<http://daol.aol.com/safetycenter/spyware>) and Microsoft's *Window's Defender* (www.windowsdefender.com).

I decided to start with the AOL program. The scan was faster than either *Ad-Aware* or *Spybot*, and it unearthed several pieces of spyware that were not detected by the previous programs. I clicked the button that said "Eliminate Spyware" and my work was done. My computer was immediately back to normal.

It's unbelievable that I would have to use three programs to find the nasty spyware that was causing my

problem, but this is the situation in today's spyware-infested computer world. The bad guys are always trying to stay one step ahead of the good guys and in some cases, they are obviously succeeding.

If you want to add the AOL software to your arsenal of anti-spyware tools, it is a simple download at the AOL Safety and Security Center at <http://daol.aol.com/safetycenter/spyware>. You will need to get a free AOL screen name before you download the software by entering your name, address, telephone, email, and date of birth. Be careful to download only what you need. AOL will offer you virus protection, a firewall, and an email program in addition to the spyware software. These may or may not be valuable to you. I checked out the free AOL *Active Virus Shield* software which you can download at www.activevirusshield.com. This program is powered by Kaspersky Lab, one of the largest anti-virus providers, and has garnered good reviews. It is an excellent choice if you are looking for a free anti-virus program. AOL's free email program, however, is probably not as good as the email program you are already using.

Since my spyware detection encounter, I have also tried the Microsoft *Window's Defender* anti-spyware program and I liked it as well. A year ago I would have scoffed at anyone using more than one or two anti-spyware programs, but perhaps in today's computer environment, it's not overkill to have four anti-spyware programs!

Sandy Berger, The Compu-KISS® Lady...nationally respected computer authority, journalist, media guest, speaker, and author is a seasoned 30-year computer expert. Sandy is a consumer advocate promoting simplicity, ease-of-use, and stability in consumer technology products. She works with hardware and software developers to help them make their products more user-friendly.

Use WinXP's Taskbar Address Bar

Dave Gerber is an

APCUG Advisor for Region 5 (Florida) and a Vice President of the Sarasota PCUG.

www.davebytes.com

Many users overlook WinXP's ability to keep an open Address bar in the Taskbar.

Right-click the Taskbar, select the Toolbars menu, and click Address.

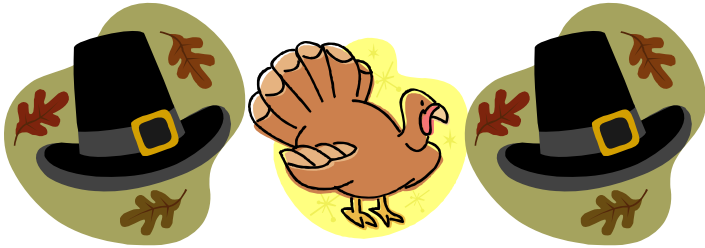
This will add an Address bar to your Taskbar that looks and acts like the Internet Explorer Address bar.

If the full bar is not visible, just double-click Address to expand it.

You can type in URLs to launch the browser directly into this destination.

If you have several IE windows open, the Taskbar Address bar will control the window in the foreground.

CLUB SUPPORTERS



THE SECRET GUIDE TO COMPUTERS

The Secret Guide is available at every New Orleans Personal Computer Club General Meeting. The latest printing is available for only \$15.00. Or contact Tom Ford either at: secretary@nopc.org or (985) 643-3172.



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November 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		End Daylight Savings Time Fall Back 1 Hour	1 NOPC Gen Mtg J.D. Meisler School 6:30p-8:30p	2	3	4 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
5	6	7	8 NOPC BOD @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	9	10	11 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
12	13	14 Genealogy SIG 7:00 pm Call 887.5746 for meeting location	15	16 New User SIG Old Metairie Library 6:30p-8:30p	17	18 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
19	20	21	22	23 Happy Thanksgiving	24	25 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
26	27	28	29	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.;

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	Ray Paternostro	president@nopc.org	737-9099
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Director At Large	Mary Prinz	director2@nopc.org	455-1412
Director At Large	Mike York	director3@nopc.org	738-5997

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Special Interest Groups

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Internet	Ray Paternostro	internet-m@nopc.org	737-9099
New Users	Tom Ford	new-user@nopc.org	985-643-3172
Web Lab	Edward Jahncke	editor@nopc.org	985-892-4797

Other Important Numbers / Addresses

Club Hotline	Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours	887-5746
NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	www.nopc.org