

# Mother Board

Volume 25, Issue 11

November 7, 2007

## *This Month At NOPC*

## *NOGCC Board of Directors Election*

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## **Elections This Meeting**

At the November meeting we will be electing officers and directors to lead the NOPC in 2008. 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, 2007 until November 30, 2008. 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 2008:

President – Tom Ford (I)  
Vice-President – Walt Christensen (N)  
Treasurer – Don Herrmann (I)  
Secretary – Ray Paternostro Jr. (C)  
Director at Large – Scott Minvielle (I)  
Director at Large – Jeanne Okamoto (I)  
Director at Large – Mike York (I)

(I)=Incumbent (N)=New (C)= Change of Office

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 7th 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 take part in the election of your Board for 2008.

## Smart Computing Tips

- **Clean Your DVDs:** DVDs are best cleaned with a lint-free, nonabrasive cloth. Dampen the cloth in clean, lukewarm water. (If your water is especially hard or contains excess minerals, use bottled water.) Starting at the center of the disc, wipe in a straight line to the outside rim; don't use a circular motion. Repeat until you've cleaned the entire disc. For very stubborn messes, try water with a mild, nonabrasive soap or isopropyl alcohol. Commercial DVD cleaning solutions are also available.

Never use compressed air to blow a DVD clean. Compressed air can be very cold and may thermally shock the disc, causing separation or cracks, either immediately or down the road.

- **Big Format, Better Pics:** Always take landscape photos at your camera's highest quality setting, meaning its uncompressed RAW file format, if your photo-editing software supports it. Your photos will take up a lot more memory card space, but they'll be much, much sharper and better looking in large prints. And if you find that you want to blow up and keep just a small portion of a photo - such as a bald eagle soaring through the enormous canyon you shot - it won't look as fuzzy or jagged as it would if you enlarged it from a low-quality image. If the RAW format isn't an option for you, high-quality JPEG or TIFF files from a camera with 3MPs or more can look very good, too.

- **Delete Files In Vista:** If you want to bypass the Recycle Bin and have deleted files removed from the hard drive immediately, right-click the Recycle Bin and click Properties. Select the Do Not Move Files To The Recycle Bin radio button, select the Display Delete Confirmation Dialog checkbox if you want Windows to prompt you for permission each time you delete a file, and click Apply.

## Read Before Opening!

by Bruce Jacobs,  
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So you just bought a brand new computer. Before you get all settled in there are a few steps you should take to help make your new computer safer and more fun.

Note: I am assuming that you bought a computer from a major manufacturer and that the computer has a Windows operating system installed.

If you are eligible for any rebates, make sure you collect all of the information needed to submit the rebate and place the paperwork in a place where you will not forget to send it in.

Check for the Windows COA (Certificate Of Authenticity) sticker. It is very unlikely that this will be missing unless the computer was purchased from a disreputable company. If it is missing, take the computer back at once! This is what allows you to run Windows. If your machine does not have this it is not legal. While you are looking at the back of the case, write down the computer's serial number for insurance purposes.

If the computer is visibly damaged or missing parts either return it or ask for a free extended warranty and a discount.

Before assembling the computer make sure you have read the manual. (OK. I know you will not read all of it) Find the section that talks about how to do a full restore of the computer. One of four strategies will be in use by the manufacturer to allow the operating system and drivers to be restored.

Media Supplied. All the CD/DVD materials are in the box with the computer.

Hard Disk based. A program is on the com-

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puter which will create the CD/DVDs needed to do a restore. The files are probably on a hidden partition

- A combination of the above where you boot a CD and it gets some of the files off a hidden partition
- A request based system. Where you ask for the media from the company.

Method 1 above is the best but rarely used. In my opinion, anything else is rudeness to a customer. Unfortunately, it is also slightly more expensive, so most manufacturers don't do this anymore.

Method 2 is quite common. They save 2 dollars(or so) and you spend lots of time making disks when you could be using your new computer. I strongly urge you take the time to create these disks before you connect your computer to the internet or install any software. If the disk is corrupted, before you get to creating them, it can cost you some money to recover from the problem.

Method 3 is also common. If you cannot find a way of creating backup media when this method has been used, contact the manufacturer. Tell them you might upgrade the disk drive and need to do a clean install.

Method 4 is the nastiest of the four. Many people never ask for the media until after the support has expired. Then, when you eventually need to reinstall, you have to pay extra costs. (Note: if you are currently in this situation, and you are legally licensed for Windows, a group member can probably help without having to pay for another copy of the media )

(optional) I will scratch build any computer after this point for a couple of reasons. I can test the restore media to make sure it works (it does not always work). It is helpful to do this before the warranty expires. Usually I can repartition the disks as I see fit without paying extra for other

software. It may also give me a chance to remove any unwanted software that was installed at the factory. I don't like to be prompted to sign up with other ISPs for example. If you purchased a demo/floor model computer, always scratch build as you can never know what teenagers may have installed on it.

It may be best to install your long term antivirus solution at this time. If you like McAfee and the computer comes bundled with a 30 day trial of Norton Antivirus, consider installing the McAfee right away. This way, you do not need to worry about any files of the Norton Antivirus not being completely cleaned up when it is removed.

If you are eligible, now is a good time to go to the company's website and apply for the free Vista upgrade. When it arrives you may not want to install it unless you have set up an extra partition. But there will probably be a time when you will want to have a copy.

Finally, figure out how you will be doing backups. If you are like me, it is very easy to put this off until you have a problem.

### Portable Data

By Corinne Goeke,  
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Which of the following is an item for storing computer data?

- A) Thumb Drive
- B) Jump Drive
- C) Flash Drive
- D) Key Drive
- D) Memory Stick
- E) USB Stick
- F) UFD
- G) All of the above

If you guessed "G," good for you. All of the above names refer to UFDs or "USB Flash Drives." USB, of course, refers to those little

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rectangular ports you can find (although there never seems to be enough of them) on the back and front of most computers.

So what is a UFD? You see them connected to people's key chains, hanging around necks on a cord and stuck in pockets and purses! Simply put, a UFD is a really convenient data storage device. Think of a one-gigabyte UFD as being 694 floppy disks all packed into a two-inch long by 1/2-inch wide package.

UFDs are data storage devices that have replaced CDs, floppies and other methods of carrying data from computer to computer. Plug one into a USB port on any computer, and you can read and write files on it. It is now the method of choice for transporting data that you need often.

In fact, there is a special class of UFDs called U3 that can also store applications. Plug one of these UFDs into a computer, and you can run Mozilla Firefox, Open Office, or even utilize an operating system such Linux.

The cost of a UFD depends upon the number of bytes it can hold. A 64 megabyte UFD used to be considered more than enough storage. But as the size of data files has increased, so has the size of UFDs. Fortunately, the prices for large storage has dropped considerably. You can pick up a 1 Gigabyte UFD for around \$15. A large UFD currently available is a 16 Gigabyte that sells for \$133 at [www.newegg.com](http://www.newegg.com).

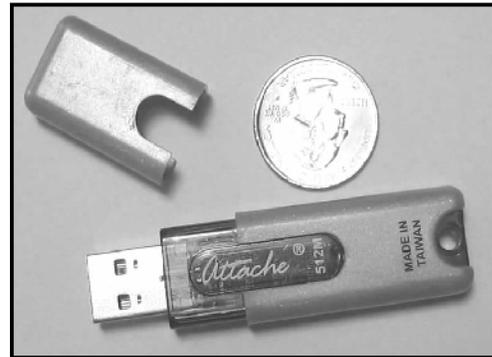


Finally, your choice of UFD can reflect your individuality. You don't have to settle for the standard gray plastic housing. You can buy UFDs that look like twigs <http://inhabitat.com/2006/02/08/ooms-twig-usb-drive/> or even animal characters [http://](http://lab.mimoco.com/)

[lab.mimoco.com/](http://lab.mimoco.com/).

So, if you find you need to transport data files from computer to computer, a UFD is an easy solution. They are available anywhere you can buy electronics.

A word of caution. To avoid losing data, be sure to eject a UFD before removing it from the USB port. You can go to MyComputer, right click on the UFD device and select eject. Or you can use the Safely Remove Icon on the lower right corner of your desktop.



Typical UFD next to a quarter

## 10 Steps to Safe Computing

by Sandy Berger,

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Unfortunately you must be proactive to protect yourself from today's bad guys. Here is my down and dirty list for PC users.

1. Install a good anti-virus program and make sure that it is updated regularly. While most of today's programs update automatically, you should check occasionally to make sure they are working properly.
2. Don't open email attachments even if they are from someone you know. Open only if you are expecting them, you know the person sending them, and you know what the attach-

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ments contain.

3. Don't fall for phishing schemes or other email where they try to get you to confirm or retype your personal information.

4. Update your operating system regularly. In Windows and Mac OS X you can turn on automatic updates, but you also need to download and install the updates as soon as possible. Often the bad guys take advantage of new operating system holes as soon as they are discovered. Companies like Microsoft, Apple, and others find a way to plug the whole and issue an update. If you wait a week or two to install the updates, you are giving the hackers and spammers time to attack your computer.

5. Be careful about the websites you visit. Don't visit porn sites or other suspicious websites. Don't download software from any website unless you are sure it is safe.

6. Use a firewall. As I stated in a previous column, a hardware router is a very good unobtrusive firewall. If you don't have a router, turn on the firewall that comes with Windows. The Vista firewall is pretty good, and the XP firewall is better than nothing. If you are an expert user, you can use a software firewall like Zone Alarm, but for the uninitiated user, these complex software firewalls can be difficult to use.

7. If you are using Vista or Mac OSX, or even Linux you should create an account for daily use that does not have administrative rights. That way, if a piece of malware gets into your system during an average computing session, it will have restricted rights. Using an account with administrative rights, gives the malware administrative rights as well. While this is also a good practice with Windows XP, most users, including myself, find that because of the way XP is engineered, it is almost impossible to perform average tasks unless you are logged on as an administrator. Fortunately, with the Vista operating system, you can easily perform

day-to-day operations when logged in as a non-Administrator.

8. Even with good habits, it can be useful to occasionally run a good anti-spyware program to scan and remove spyware from your computer.

9. Shop at Secure Sites. If you shop on the Internet, enter your personal information and credit card number only on a secure Web page. If you use Internet Explorer, a secure site will show a yellow padlock in a closed position on the toolbar at the bottom left-hand side of the screen. Netscape will show a closed darker colored padlock somewhere on the bottom toolbar. In both browsers, a secure site will have https: rather than http: in the Web site address at the top of the page.

10. Don't give your Social Security number out on the Internet. Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes because computers and the Internet make stealing an identity from an unsuspecting victim easy. So don't be an unsuspecting victim! Your social security number is the golden key to your identity. Never keep your social security number anywhere in your computer. Never give it out over the Internet, even in a secure site. Some sites, like online banking, may require you to use your social security number as a password. Take a pass on any such site or service that makes you send your social security number over the Internet. Keep your identity secure by keeping your social security number as private as possible.

One more thing— don't buy anything from spam or unsolicited email. While this won't keep your computer any safer, it might help to lessen or eliminate spam. If no one bought anything from spam, it would take away the financial incentive to send spam and it would probably disappear.

## This and That

By Elizabeth B. Wright,

a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City

[www.ccokc.org](http://www.ccokc.org)

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Have you accessed the WindowsXP "Restore" option to reset your computer to an earlier time? We often need to do this when things go haywire after installing some new software. Fiddling around with old programs or offbeat wares can sometimes land you in hot water operating wise. I found myself in just such a mess not long ago. Fortunately I had made a restore point prior to installing the renegade software, so I was able to use it to get things back to normal. Well, almost.

#### WHAT HAPPENED NEXT:

One of my oldest and most valued programs is CorelPaint. Suddenly, after going through the restore procedure, I began getting an error message plus having the program refuse to open when I double clicked on the desktop shortcut icon. This applied to CorelDraw as well. The error message said something about trying to install the program, then it would go through some strange digital machinations before rolling everything back and giving up. Strangely enough though, if I double clicked on a .jpg or .tif file in Explorer, the files would open the program with no difficulty. Several days were spent opening graphic files in this manner when it suddenly dawned on me that perhaps the programs might open from the executable files directly. Sure enough, when I went to them, again in Explorer, they both opened like clockwork. So why did it take me several more days to figure out that the icons on my desktop had some way become corrupted? I don't want to know the answer to that one.

Anyway, after deleting the icons, new ones were put in place by right clicking on the executable files in Explorer and double clicking the "Send to desktop" option from the menu. Usually the names given icons made in this way are not the best, so they usually get changed to something more useful on my computer. Often part of the name is "shortcut". Who needs that? It's fairly simple to change the name. Just click once on the icon, wait long enough so that the computer doesn't interpret the next click as a double click, then the icon text will be in "Edit" mode. You may have to experiment with the timing for this since not all "mice" are set for the same response time. The two clicks need to be fairly close together, but not close enough for a double click. Once in "Edit" mode you can type in whatever name that makes better sense to you.



We should all know by now that if there is a curved arrow in the lower left corner of the icon then the icon is a shortcut to the executable file, not the program or file itself. Be very careful. Sometimes there actually are icons for executable programs placed on your desktop when the programs are installed. Those icons will not have the curved arrow. Don't delete them unless you want to get rid of the program itself. This applies also to other things you might have placed on the desktop yourself, such as graphic or document files. It might be wise to leave those names in their original form. It might also be a good idea to examine the icons on your computer to see how many, if any, DO NOT have the curved arrow. Chances are there won't be many, possibly none. It is helpful to know if there are any that reflect actual programs or files, just to keep yourself informed about your own computer system.

Question:

**What is the truest definition of Globalization?**

Answer:

Princess Diana's death.

Question:

How come?

Answer:

An **English** princess with an **Egyptian** boyfriend  
Crashes in a **French** tunnel,  
Driving a **German** car  
with a **Dutch** engine,  
driven by a **Belgian**  
who was drunk on **Scottish** whisky,  
check the bottle before you change the spelling),  
followed closely by **Italian** Paparazzi,  
on **Japanese** motorcycles;  
treated by an **American** doctor,  
using **Brazilian** medicines.  
This is sent to you by a **Austrian**,  
Using Bill Gates's technology,  
And you're probably reading this on your computer,  
that uses **Taiwanese** chips,  
and a **Korean** monitor,  
assembled by **Bangladeshi** workers  
in a **Singapore** plant,  
transported by **Indian** lorry-drivers,  
hijacked by **Indonesians**,  
unloaded by **Sicilian** longshoremen,  
and trucked to you by **Mexican** illegals.....

That, my friends, is **Globalization!**

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# 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 Mary Prinz either at: [secretary@nopc.org](mailto:secretary@nopc.org) or (504) 455-1412.

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It always pays to figure out what your computer is up to. Since it lives a life separate from yours it is often not possible to tell just what it has been doing in your absence. With the new powerful operating systems, many, many things go on in the background when the machine is powered on, whether

you are there or not. Supernerds probably have eliminated many of the automatic actions, but most of us just muddle on, thankful that the computer runs at all.

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# November 2007

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
4	5	6	7 NOPC Gen Mtg J.D. Meisler School 6:30p-8:30p	8	9	10 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
11	12	13 Genealogy SIG 7:00 pm Call 887.5746 for meeting location	14 NOPC BOD @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	15 New & Intermediate User SIG Old Metairie Library 6:30p-8:30p	16	17 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a-
18	19	20	21 <u>PMI GNO</u> <u>General Meeting</u>	22	23	24 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
25	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

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Director At Large	Jeanne Okamoto	<a href="mailto:director3@nopc.org">director3@nopc.org</a>	455-0977

### Standing Committees

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Webmaster	Sherrie Henne	<a href="mailto:webmaster@nopc.org">webmaster@nopc.org</a>	504-913-5638

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Digital Media	Ray Paternostro	<a href="mailto:dm@nopc.org">dm@nopc.org</a>	737-9099
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### Other Important Numbers / Addresses

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NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	<a href="http://www.nopc.org">www.nopc.org</a>