

# OTTAWA PC NEWS

Vol. 14 No.9

The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users Group

November 1997

## Opening Windows

### Technical support: Microsoft Knowledge Base

by Chris Taylor

Do you get the feeling software is being released buggier and buggier every day? Product life cycles are getting shorter. Applications are getting bigger. Programs have to live in peace with an ever expanding range of other applications. And it shows in products that don't perform as advertised.

What is the poor user to do? You want the latest and greatest. But razor-thin profit margins are causing software houses to charge for technical support. Do you really want to pay extra money to get software to do what it is supposed to do?

Fortunately, there are alternatives. One of the best comes from Microsoft. It is a terrific resource available for free to anyone who has access to the Internet and a web browser - the Microsoft Knowledge Base. The Knowledge Base is a huge database of problems that either Microsoft discovered on their own, or were reported by customers. Along with the problems are fixes, workarounds, and technical explanations. Any time someone talks about a Q article, they are talking about a Microsoft Knowledge Base article.

You can find the Knowledge Base at <http://www.microsoft.com/kb/default.asp> which will present you with the search page. Once there you can select a Microsoft product and then search using either keywords or a natural language query.

#### Examples

Some samples of the types of information you can find in the Knowledge Base are:

- ◆ Do you have problems shutting down Windows 95 and ending up with your computer hanging? Article Q145926 contains several pages of logical steps to follow to isolate what is causing the problem.
- ◆ Having problems browsing remote workgroup computers on your network? Article Q149941 describes why this can happen and what can be done to correct the situation.
- ◆ Article Q173310 describes how to completely remove Office 97 SR1 from your computer, should you ever want to do this.

- ◆ Do you get a Dr. Watson error in Iexplore when quitting Internet Explorer after hosting an Adobe Acrobat PDF file? Article Q173583 will tell you to resolve the problem by increasing your colour depth to more than 256 colours.

If you call Microsoft for technical support, the first thing the support person will turn to is the same Knowledge Base you can access from the Microsoft Web site. So why not save yourself the money and see if you can find the answer yourself? I wish more companies would make their internal support information available on the Web.



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## Show us the cool stuff by Julie Dustin

Those rumours we hear about technology companies make great fodder for gossip and stock speculations. But let's face it. We're in this industry for the products. Efficiency, productivity, and value are important in software but cool stuff is still the best.

On Wednesday, November 5, Susan Finlay, Manager of Product Specialists, for Corel Corporation will show you the cool stuff. We will be seeing CorelDRAW 8.0 at the very time it will be shipping. CorelDRAW 8.0 includes DRAW, PHOTO-PAINT 8.0, and DREAM.

Dennis Van Staalduinen from Corel says, As most people know, Corel DRAW 8.0 is a vector-based graphics tool that is used by 83% of worldwide PC graphics market. This newest release can convert text and graphics to HTML pages where the graphics are set within a table structure. It is a better way of presenting information which contains graphics and text into frames on a page.

Corel PHOTO-PAINT 8.0 is for bitmap editing. It won a PC Magazine Editor's Choice award beating out Adobe Photoshop. As a high-end photo edit and image manipulation software, it ships with reduced code and will

install in a smaller space. (Wow, did you hear that. Not more megabytes. Less.)

CorelDREAM 3D 8.0 is a 3D modelling program that allows you to create objects for use in Draw or Paint products. You can take snapshots of this 3D object from any perspective to use as a graphic.

Suggested retail pricing is \$ 945.00 (Cdn.) for a full package, \$349 (Cdn.) for the upgrade. OPCUG user group pricing is estimated at \$139 without manuals. Your operating system must be either Windows 95 or Windows NT 4.0. The required hardware is (take a deep breath...) a Pentium 133 MHz, with a minimum of 16 RAM (32 recommended). The CD-ROM based software will need at least 80 MB of storage (at a minimum) and 200 MB (maximum).

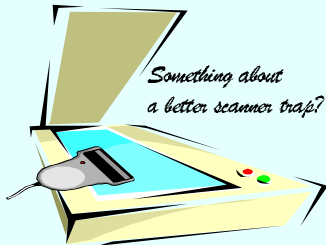


## Calendar

Meetings	Date	Time and venue
OPCUG General Meeting	November 5: Corel	7:30 p.m. - National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.
	December 3: Keating Technologies	
	January 7: Power Quest	
	February 4: DTP Special Event	
Swap Meet	November 19: (See article for details)	7:30 p.m. - TRAIN HALL of the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.
Desktop Publishing SIG	November 11: Scanning	7:30 pm - Griffin Computer Training Centre, 275 Slater St. (at Kent)
Ottawa Paradox Users Group	To be announced	6:15 pm - Inly Systems, 1221a Cyrville Rd.
FOX SIG	To be announced	7:30 pm - Sir Jean Talon Building Conference room, Tunney's Pasture, Holland Ave. (north of Scott St.)

## Scanning the scanners

by Bert Schopf



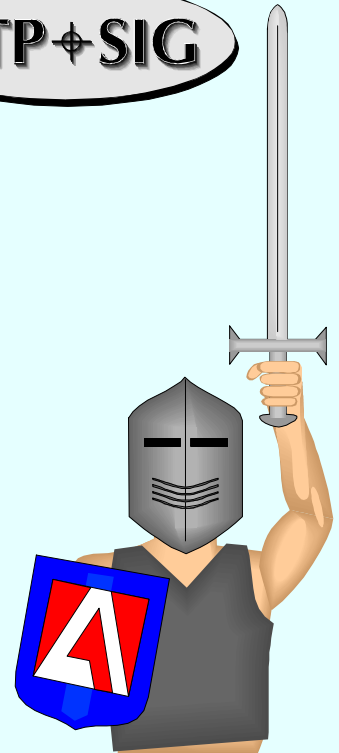
The November 11 DTP SIG meeting will focus on scanning: what tech specs to look for when buying one, scanning at the right resolution, integrating TWAIN drivers with software, and managing

your scans. SIG member Dr. G.D. Petrie will present the scanning portion and Michael Vlugt of Vorton Technologies will demonstrate Riptide software for automation of editing tasks and file management.

### Coming up

Advance notice for the December 9th DTP SIG meeting: Adobe on graphically-rich documents.

The DTP SIG meets on the second Tuesday of the month at Griffin Computer Training Centre, 275 Slater Street (at Kent), Suite 340. The meeting commences at 7:30 p.m. and will finish by 9:30. Everyone is welcome.

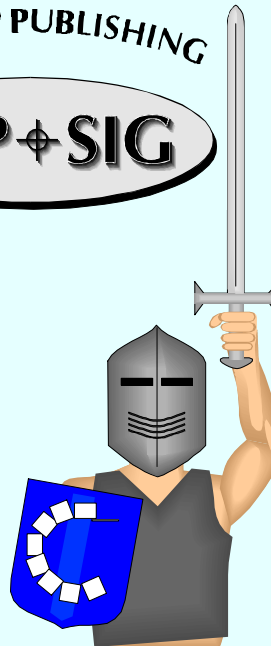


## October meeting review: Corel paints a great picture!

by Bert Schopf

Corel PhotoPaint specialist Dennis Van Staalduinen wowed the crowd on October 14th with the fantastic features of Corel PhotoPaint 7. Some of the most impressive features we saw included the layering capability, customizable brushes, tailor-made user interfaces, and a multitude of filter effects. Dennis showed us how simple it can be to make a seamless image composed from several sources, and CorelScripts made automating repetitive tasks a snap. Also astounding was the capability of PhotoPaint to edit and generate movie files (in AVI format).

As an added bonus, the DTP SIG was privileged to witness one of the very first



showings of CorelDraw and PhotoPaint 8, due to be released in November. Many SIG members who are currently using version 5 of the image editing software ordered an upgrade after seeing the new features.

The DTP SIG meets on the second Tuesday night each month at Griffin Computer Training and Consulting, 275 Slater Street (at Kent), suite 340. For further details, contact SIG coordinator Bert Schopf at 232-8427 or by e-mail at [blackbird@cyberus.ca](mailto:blackbird@cyberus.ca).



## News and reviews by Nick Potter and John Ladds

### September in review

At the September meeting of the Paradox SIG, we were visited by five members of the Corel Paradox team, including Jeremy Oldland and Sylvain Charron (Corel Paradox Product Manager). The event was a presentation of the newly released Corel Paradox 8.

Jeremy gave us a demo of Paradox 8 and showed how it integrated into Corel WordPerfect Suite 8.0 Professional. Besides the shift to a Corel look and feel (Paradox 8 is the first new release since Corel obtained Paradox from Borland), there were several significant improvements for end users and power users, including:

- ◆ a new Application Framework template (used when creating a new project)
- ◆ a new visual Menu Builder
- ◆ new Experts (wizards)
- ◆ a new visual SQL Query Builder
- ◆ an improved Project Viewer
- ◆ the ability to publish Paradox tables and reports to HTML for the Internet

After the demo, Sylvain fielded technical questions from the attendees, who very much appreciated the opportunity to communicate directly with the Paradox development team. At the end of the meeting there was a draw for a complimentary copy of the complete Corel WordPerfect Suite 8.0 Professional. Congratulations to **Howie Macumber** who was the lucky winner!

### October meeting

At the October meeting (held October 16), John Ladds presented a review of 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Borland Conference which included:



- ◆ Normalizing Relational Databases: Why, How, and Now What?, Marilyn Price
- ◆ PRODUCT ADDRESS: Paradox 8, Karen Gauthier
- ◆ Enterprise Database Replication with Paradox, Herb Sutter
- ◆ The Future of Query by Example, Dan Ehrmann
- ◆ Automating Corel Applications with Paradox 8, Reid Bolander
- ◆ Experts and Other Usability Enhancements in Paradox 8, Dan Ehrmann
- ◆ Paradox 8 and Publishing your Data to the Internet, Greg Salcedo
- ◆ Developing a High--power Delphi Interface to WordPerfect, Paul Russell
- ◆ More Rapid Than RAD, Michael Lenaghan
- ◆ Paradox 8 Tips, Tricks, and Traps, Greg Salcedo
- ◆ PANEL: Meet the Corel Paradox R&D Team, Karen Gauthier

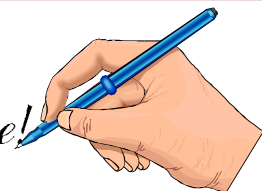
The Ottawa Paradox Users Group usually meets at Inly Systems computer store, 1221A Cyrville Road (a couple of blocks to the East of St Laurent Shopping Centre) on the third Thursday of the month from 6:30 to 8:00 PM.

### Contacts

- ◆ OPUG Web Site Address  
<http://magi.com/~chopla/opug/opug.html>
- ◆ Larry Chop236-8761chopla@magi.com
- ◆ John Ladds951-4581laddsj@statcan.ca
- ◆ Nick Potter951-2384pottern@statcan.ca



*Thank you for your articles.... we need some more!*



# Future of the newsletter

by Chris Seal

At the end of 1992 I joined the OPCUG. At the first meeting I wandered in to the DTP SIG room where I was lucky enough to be recruited by Lynda Simons to assist in the production of the newsletter. Shortly thereafter I took over the editorial role from Lynda, a position I hold today. However, I have decided that due to other commitments I cannot continue this role past the end of this year. The December issue will be the last newsletter I edit.

When I had more time for it I greatly enjoyed producing the newsletter. I acquired and edited articles, layed out the newsletter in Ventura, printed out address labels, took the camera-ready art and labels to the printer, and distributed newsletters to stores and libraries in the area.

In the last few years my work has been simplified. First by a change in printer: no longer did I have to drive into Ottawa early on a Friday to carry art to the printer I was able to upload a postscript file to the new printer. Secondly through the assistance of Jean

Vaumoron, who takes the articles, adds graphics, and creates the newsletter you see today.

There is now an opportunity for someone in the club to take on the role of editor: Jean will still layout the newsletter; but the club needs someone to acquire and edit articles.

If you are interested contact me at 831-0280 or through the Pub.



# Election notice: OPCUG Board of Directors

by David Reeves, Secretary

Nominations for membership of the Board of Directors must be in the hands of Harald Freise (past chairman) on or before 10 PM EST, December 1, 1997. The Board of Directors consists of nine members who administer the affairs of the OPCUG. From their ranks they select a President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary, and any other position they deem necessary. The current Board of Directors consists of Harald Freise, Willem Vandijk, David Reeves, Mark Cayer, Chris Taylor, Chris Seal, Bob Cross, Daniel Piegeon, and Bob Walker.

You can nominate yourself or another person (who must accept the nomination). For a nomination to stand, the nominee must file signed acceptance of their nomination with Harald Freise, 1034 Hindley Cr., Ottawa, 828-3411, or send a private message to him via the PUB. Please include the telephone number of the nominee. If there are more than nine candidates, an election will be held at an early 1998 general meeting. Bob Cross, Bob Walker, Willem

Vandijk, and David Reeves have indicated that they will run for re-election to the Board of Directors.

Each candidate has the opportunity to outline their platform in the January newsletter. (Reasonable rules concerning submission deadline, article length, and omission of potentially slanderous content apply.) Additionally, at the General meeting each candidate will have the opportunity to address the membership to clarify their platform immediately before the election.

Harald Freise is looking for two non-board members to review the club's records and financial statements before the publication of the Financial Report. Also, Harald would like volunteers to assist if there is an election.



# OPCUG annual swap meet

by Bob Walker

On Wednesday November 19th club members and members of the public (NO COMMERCIAL DEALERS) are invited to attend the OPCUG annual swap meet to buy or sell computer-related articles. This is an opportunity to find that item you require at an affordable price or to sell that old modem that someone else might really need!

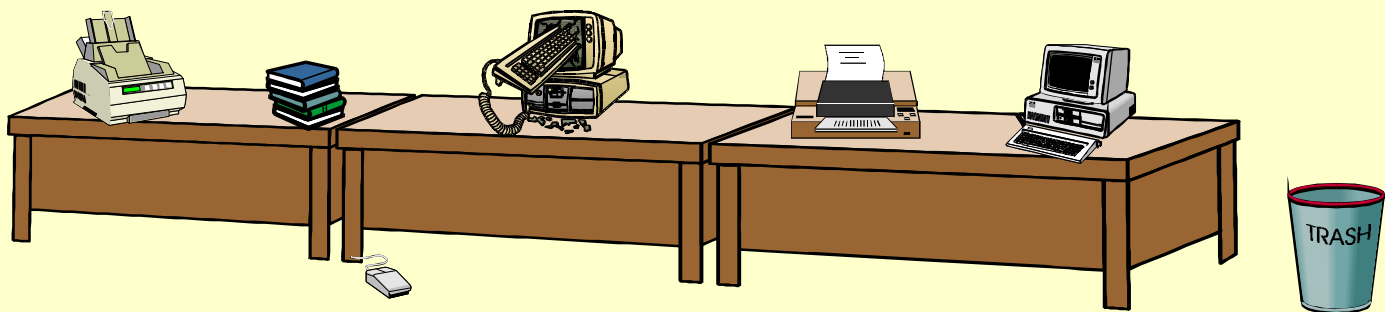
The swap meet is to be held in the Train Hall of the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd., Ottawa. Plan to arrive by 7:00 PM to set up if you have items to sell.

Contact: Bob Walker at 489-2084 or at skywalk@istar.ca for more information.

Hope to see you there!



## Bring MORE!



## October s winners

by Mark Cayer

The following OPCUG members won prizes at the October 1st meeting. OPCUG T-Shirts were won by **John Bond, Andre Cote, Paul Louiseize, and Andrew McAllister.**

**Alain Beaulieu** won the Microsoft Technet CD.



## Reuse, recycle

Bring your old computer magazines, books, or any other computer paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the general meetings, and leave them in the area specified. If you don t bring something, you may want to TAKE AWAY something of interest, so look in on this area. Any item left over at the end of the meeting will be sent to the dumpster.



# Creative Labs Video Blaster WebCam

by Jerry Gault (*Jgault@tisd.net*)

Maybe it's not the newest of the new, but the Creative Labs Video Blaster WebCam has a lot to offer the typical home user with a price tag that won't send your bank account into spasm.

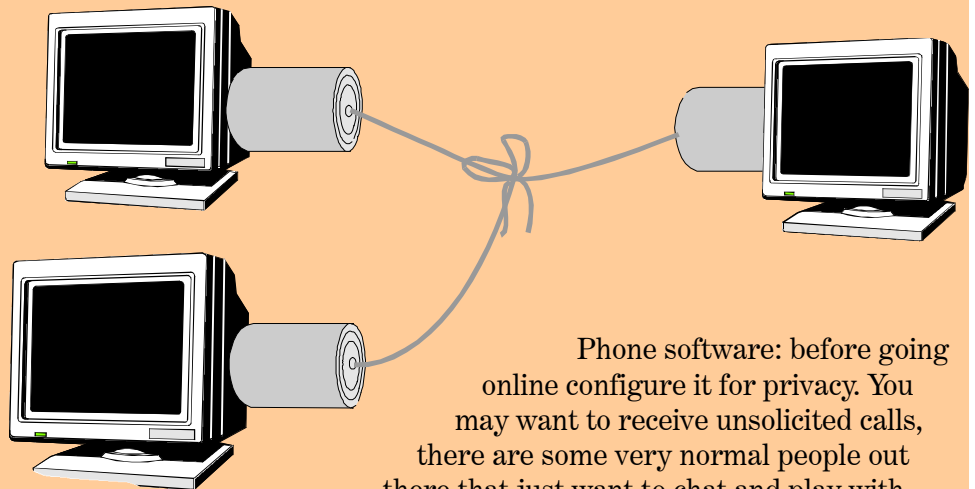
Video Blaster WebCam comes bundled with full versions of ISpy, Creative Video Web Phone and Howdy, and Microsoft Internet Explorer. As an extra treat it also includes HoTMetal Light (an easy to use Web design package), and Media Studio Video Edition (sophisticated digital video production application).

This \$200CDN package is a bargain, and provides the user with a complete suite of applications and hardware to get you up and running without much fuss. My only gripe is that a typical computer has only one parallel port and a printer is usually connected to it. Creative Labs should have included a switch box, to allow you to use your Video Blaster and printer without having to unplug devices at the back of your computer. (A switch box will run you anywhere from \$20 to \$100 CDN depending on which one you buy. I'm using a Bitronics digital switch (\$40US) and it's small enough to sit beside my monitor. It has an A/B switch on the front of the box making it easy to switch between devices.)

The Video Blaster has added a new and improved way for our families to communicate. Nan and Papa can see and hear their grandchildren as often as they like saving long distance charges from South Texas to Nepean. It's not necessary to have a video camera on both ends to use the program. You can use the Web Phone software or a freely available version of Microsoft NetMeeting or other video conferencing program. (If you use NetMeeting you both must be using the same version, 2.0 has offered stable performance for my conferencing over the past month or so.)

Going online with video and voice for the first time came with its own set of problems. Once online with NetMeeting,

anyone logged onto the server can contact you unless you setup the program to offer greater security. I setup the software and went online late at night, and within minutes I had someone from Brazil calling me. Not knowing any better, I answered and up pops a video screen on my monitor. The caller wanted to know if I would send him a pair of jeans in size 34, he would of course pay me after he received the jeans . . . ya sure. After hanging up on him, I got a call from Kent in Burnaby B.C. It was nice to hear from someone in Canada. We had a normal conversation the video was smooth and flowed along with only a little delay, voice was a little choppy but this was corrected while chatting with Kent. After this, I configured the software to allow only people in my address book the right to disturb me. The same holds true for the Web



Phone software: before going online configure it for privacy. You may want to receive unsolicited calls, there are some very normal people out there that just want to chat and play with their videoconferencing tools.

Another feature is the ability of capturing still photos or frequently updated live images and uploading them to your web page. You can also send full motion video postcards to friends. If you're in the market for a video conferencing setup take a look at Video Blaster WebCam. It's a great way to stay in touch, a complete package out of the box.



## OTTAWA PC NEWS

*Ottawa PC News* is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members. Deadline for submissions is four Saturdays before the general meeting.

### Group Meetings

OPCUG normally meets on the first Wednesday in the month, except in July and August, at the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meeting times are 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

### Fees

Membership: \$25 per year.

### Mailing Address

3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6  
Telephone answering machine ..... 723-1329  
Web address: [www.intranet.ca/~dlreeves](http://www.intranet.ca/~dlreeves)

### Bulletin board the PUB (BBS)

Up to 33.6 kbps V34..... 228-0665 (4 lines)

### Chairman

Harald Freise [hfreise@fox.nstn.ca](mailto:hfreise@fox.nstn.ca) ..... 828-3411

### Treasurer

Willem (Bill) Vandijk [bvdijk@igs.net](mailto:bvdijk@igs.net) ..... 256-3054

### Secretary

David Reeves [dlreeves@iname.com](mailto:dlreeves@iname.com) ..... 723-9658

### Membership Chairman

Mark Cayer [cayemar@statcan.ca](mailto:cayemar@statcan.ca) ..... 224-8031

### BBS Sysop

Chris Taylor [ctaylor@nrcan.gc.ca](mailto:ctaylor@nrcan.gc.ca) ..... 723-1329

### Newsletter

Chris Seal (editor) [cseal@fox.nstn.ca](mailto:cseal@fox.nstn.ca) ..... 831-0280

Julie Dustin (assistant editor)  
[micropro@fox.nstn.ca](mailto:micropro@fox.nstn.ca) ..... 823-1552

Mr. Jean Vaumoron (layout)  
[vaumojav@magi.com](mailto:vaumojav@magi.com) ..... 731-7847

### Public Relations

Bob Cross [cross@fox.nstn.ca](mailto:cross@fox.nstn.ca) .. 595-1002 (after 6 p.m.)

### Facilities

Bob Walker [skywalk@istar.net](mailto:skywalk@istar.net) ..... 489-2084

### DTP SIG coordinator

Bert Schopf [blackbird@cyberus.ca](mailto:blackbird@cyberus.ca) ..... 232-8427

### Fox SIG coordinator

[BobThomas@msn.com](mailto:BobThomas@msn.com) .. (voice/fax) 596-3313

### Internet SIG coordinator

To be announced

### OS/2 SIG coordinator

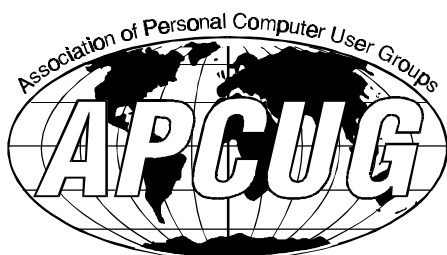
Mr. Jocelyn Doire ..... Please contact via PUB

### Paradox SIG coordinator

Larry Chop [chopla@magi.com](mailto:chopla@magi.com) ..... 236-8761 (days)

### Windows SIG coordinator

Chris Taylor [ctaylor@nrcan.gc.ca](mailto:ctaylor@nrcan.gc.ca) ..... 723-1329

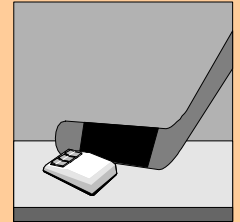


## Product review

# Hockey at it's best, NHL 98

by Jerry Gault ([Jgault@tisd.net](mailto:Jgault@tisd.net))

Brilliant design, superb play, and pure enjoyment sums up NHL 98 by EA Sports, but be prepared for less-than-optimum performance if you try to run the game on a slower than 166MHz Pentium. I always wonder why they list a minimum system requirement (this game specifies a 90MHz



Pentium). Most of the minimums provide poor performance and frustrating game play. I played NHL 98 on a P-90, P-166MMX, and my 266MMX P-II. I gave up on the P-90 after a few games: none completed because of slow play and a few hangs. The P-166 performed well with a few minor adjustments such as turning off ice textures and ice logos, and setting the auto detail to medium. I played happily with this configuration for several games and enjoyed myself. True happiness came when I ran it on my P-II, 266MHz with every option set to the best configuration for seamless game play. As with any new software, read the system requirements before you make your purchase.

EA Sports teamed up with Colorado Avalanche coach Marc Crawford, whose input is put to use with the on-the-fly coaching strategies that I found very helpful. Motion-blending technology, play-by-play colour commentary during game play, and eight camera angles add to the enjoyment. You can pick from the updated rosters: exhibition, playoffs, and tournament play, or just have a shootout. Once you start playing you will be amazed at how well the game flows: over 500 real NHL players' facial expressions are detailed, as are the goalie masks with authentic artwork. Games are played in one of 26 NHL arenas filled with excited fans, shaking boards, breaking glass, and the odd fight keep you on the edge of your seat. You can't help but get pulled into the game. I truly enjoyed the Dolby surround sound and the graphics this game offers.

EA Sports have added 4-button game pad, 3D-f/x video acceleration, and LAN/modem support for head to head play. Visit EA Sports online at: <http://www.ea.com>. Now lace up those skates and let's play some hockey.

