



OTTAWA

# PC NEWS

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May 2005

## PRODUCT REVIEW

### Copying vinyl to CD for less than five bucks *by Alan German*

**D**o you know what a tone arm is? Do you think that a stylus is only used with a tablet PC? If you have a stylus, mounted in a cartridge, installed on a tone arm, and connected to a hi-fi system, you probably also have lots of vinyl long-playing records. Maybe you have been wondering about how to transfer some of these “oldies but goodies” to CD-ROM. Well, here’s how, and all for less than \$5.00! Perhaps you also have cassette tapes or even reel-to-reel recordings. The same basic techniques described below can be used to transfer these to CD-ROM also.

First, a little disclaimer. I considered entitling this piece “Digital Recording for Dummies by A. Dummy”. By no means would I claim to be an expert in the process. The following is based on my experiences and successes with my equipment. While, in general terms, the method should be similar for most standard audio and computer systems, it may well require tweaking for specific circumstances. Some excellent reference materials for the whole process are noted at the end of this article.

Can you really make sound recordings for less than \$5.00? Well, of course, this price assumes that you already own a few computer basics, such as a sound card, and a CD-burner, but who doesn’t these days? All you need in addition is a Y-adaptor cable to connect the RCA output jacks on your stereo system to the input coaxial jack of your sound card, and some software to make things happen.

The cable we need (assuming your sound system is like mine) will provide two RCA jacks on one end and one stereo mini co-axial jack at the other end. The best buy that I found on the required cable was at Canadian Tire - an RCA 3.5mm Plug "Y" Adapter - at just over \$4, tax included.

It’s a cast iron certainty that if we can get music to run down this cable from an LP record to a computer file we can transfer the resulting file onto a CD-ROM. While, for most people, proprietary sound recording and CD burning software may be the most efficient means of capturing and storing an entire LP’s worth of music, before we take a look at which such program we might actually use, let’s first try out some freeware just to make sure that the basic transfer process works.

My program of choice for this task was Wave Repair (<http://www.delback.co.uk/wavrep/>) developed by Clive Backham in the U.K. This program is primarily a sound file editor, and to use all of its features on a regular basis requires purchasing the program (US\$30). A 30-day fully functional trial period is provided so that you can evaluate the editing capabilities and decide if the program meets all of your needs. Better yet, if you don’t need the editing function, the basic recording and track splitting functions are always available with Wave Repair operating in freeware mode. Thanks Clive!

Making a recording from an LP is straightforward. Firstly, connect the

Y-adaptor cable between the amplifier output of your sound system and an input on your sound card. The latter may take the form of “Line-in” or “Microphone”. Different sound cards seem to have a variety of different inputs. Anyway, be brave and plug the co-axial jack into one of the available input sockets.

Run Wave Repair and select Play/Record – Input (Record) New WAV File. A dialog box lets you select the directory and file name for your soon-to-be-recorded masterpiece. Wave Repair’s display now pops up a master control window. Choose an input from the drop-down list, either Line-in or Microphone depending on which of these you plugged the adapter into, and press the Monitor button.

*(Continued on page 6)*

#### Inside this issue:

<i>Calendar / Coming Up / Raffle</i>	2
<i>Review: Copying vinyl to CD</i>	1, 6
<i>Club Life: June BBQ;</i>	3
<i>Swapping old treasures</i>	5
<i>Special Interest Groups</i>	3
<i>Review: Keyboard Layout Creator</i>	4-5
<i>Archives: Newsletter Archive;</i>	7
<i>Classic Computing</i>	
<i>The recycle table</i>	8
<i>Contact Information</i>	8

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005**



## May Raffle

At the OPCUG's meeting on May 11, our raffle prize will be another copy of Easy Media Creator 7, courtesy of **Roxio, Inc.** (<http://www.roxio.com>). This suite of applications includes full versions of Easy CD & DVD Creator 7, Photosuite 7 Platinum, VideoWave 7 Professional, and Napster 2.0. With this package you will be able to capture, organize and edit digital photographs, audio files and video; easily create slideshows with background music tracks, greeting cards and calendars; burn any type of file to CD or DVD; and create professional quality disk labels. So, with this package, you will be able to handle any audio-visual media project (for more details, see [last month's review](#) of this product).

Raffle tickets at \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.  
See the lovely lady at the left.

## Coming Up...

Sylvain Dumas

Senior System Engineer

McAfee SE/ Montréal, <http://www.mcafee.com>

Title:

Potentially Unwanted Programs (or, everything you always wanted to know about spyware but were afraid to ask...)

Abstract:

Spyware, Adware, Spam, Keylogger, Remote Admin Tool, Dialers; are all out there to get you, whether you want it or not. They seem inconspicuous, sometimes benign, other times they are a real pain. It could only be a popup once in a while, or it could slow down your machine to a crawl. Potentially Unwanted Programs could compromise your security, they could compromise your identity. Learn what they are and some of the steps you can take to reduce your exposure.

Speaker Bio.:

Sylvain Dumas has been a Senior System Engineer at McAfee for the past six years. With 25 years of experience in the computer industry he understands the benefits and hazards of technology. He is specialized in Networking and Security for large enterprises.

## CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, May 11 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the <b>Canada Museum of Science and Technology</b> , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. <a href="http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm">http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm</a>
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, May 11 <sup>th</sup>	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, May 11 <sup>th</sup>	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG)	Wednesday, May 11 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (formerly Shoppers' City West)

Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).

## CLUB LIFE

### Coming Up in June—Annual BBQ!

**J**une is our wrap-up meeting before we break for the summer. Continuing with tradition, we will be having our 4<sup>th</sup> annual barbeque. It will take place under the big tent near the main doors to the museum. There will be cold drinks, hamburgers, hot dogs and dessert. Make sure you let Brigitte Lord know at [brigitte.lord@opcug.ca](mailto:brigitte.lord@opcug.ca) how many people will be in your party and how many hamburgers and/or hotdogs you will need. If you can help out at the BBQ (bringing a grill or flipping burgs and dogs) please let Brigitte know.

The barbeque will start at 6:00 and run until about 7:45. After that we will head into the museum for our regular meeting (TBA), which will start at 8:00.

See you there!



## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

### SIGs come and SIGs go

by Chris Taylor

**S**pecial Interest Groups in the OPCUG have come and gone as members' interests have changed over the years. This is not necessarily a bad thing. It is simply a reflection of the popularity of certain topics at any given point in time.

Recently, interest has waned in a few SIGs to the point where it has been decided to disband them at this time; the Internet SIG (led by Eric Clyde), the Digital Imaging SIG (led by Dunc Petrie), the Developers SIG (led by Bob Thomas), and the Delphi SIG (led by Martin Pagnan). If you disagree, and feel that you can revive interest in any of these SIGs, please speak with any board member and we will do what we can to help you get things going again.

On behalf of the entire OPCUG, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Eric, Dunc, Bob, and Martin. They have given greatly of their time and expertise over the years. Next time you see them, be sure to give them a big "thank you". It is through volunteer efforts of people like them that the OPCUG has thrived for over 20 years.

### IT-Pro SIG

**T**he April IT-Pro SIG meeting was treated to a custom tour of the Canadian and US TechNet websites by Rick Claus. Rick indicated many shortcuts and tips for traversing the site. These will prove to be excellent time-savers when we use the sites.

Thanks for the tour, Rick! It was enjoyed by all (we're looking into getting access to the high speed line for future sessions).

Rick also offered to demonstrate the use of Virtual Servers in a subsequent session.

On another note, we're looking for a volunteer to maintain the webpage(s) for the IT-Pro SIG. Please contact Bob ([ITProSIG@opcug.ca](mailto:ITProSIG@opcug.ca)).

Bob Thomas

# PRODUCT REVIEW

## Keyboard Layout Creator by Jocelyn Doire

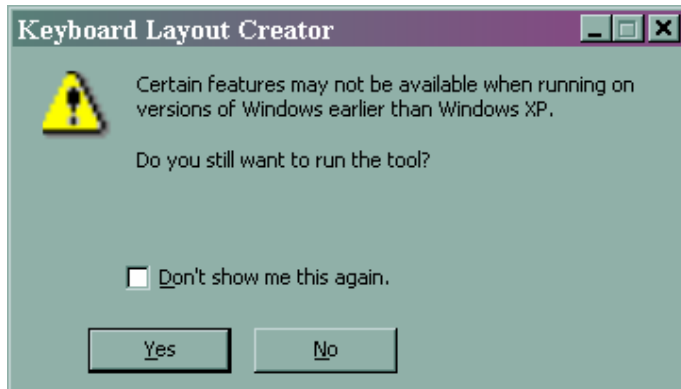
In the March 1998 newsletter (<http://opcug.ca/public/Articles/9803o.pdf>), Jean Vaumoron wrote an article on how to use the United States International keyboard to enter almost any French characters, but there was one missing character, the Œ (the letter O and E attached together) used in words such as "cœur", the heart.

Now, there are many ways to enter the Œ character, such as with Character Map (>start>programs>accessories>System Tools>Character Map), or with special keys in some programs (in Word press ctrl+shift+&, O), but they are all a bit complicated.

It is a little strange that this character was not included given that there are plenty of keys not assigned to anything. For example the AltGr-X would be a logical place to put it, just beside the Æ (AltGr+Z) key. (Note: the keyboard has two Alt keys; the one on the left of the space bar is called "Alt", and the one on the right is called AltGr, which is also available using the Alt+Ctrl key combination).

Fortunately you don't have to remain stuck with a particular keyboard layout. You can modify one, or even create one, by using a program such as the Microsoft Keyboard Layout Creator (MSKLC), which is available for free at: <http://www.microsoft.com/globaldev/tools/msklc.msp>.

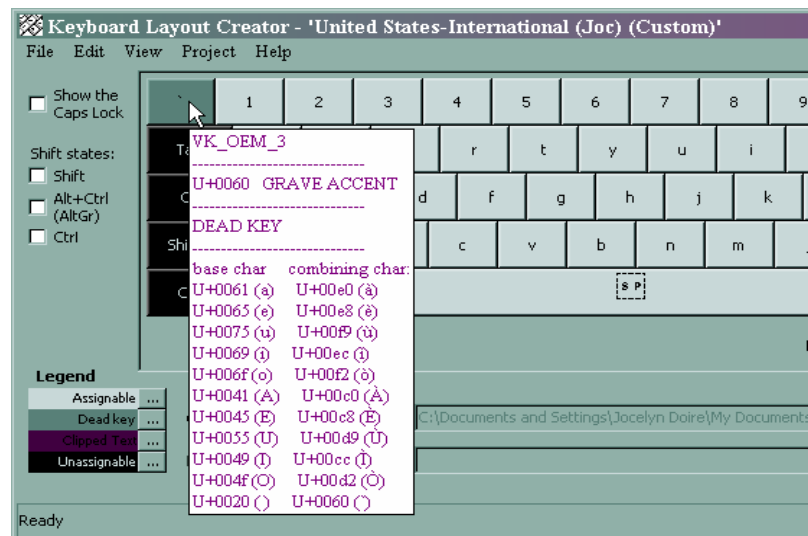
The download and the installation of that program requires you to accept Microsoft's conditions, but once that is done, the installation is fairly simple, provided you have the .NET already installed, and that you are running Windows 2000 or later. To get all the features, you may need to have WinXP or later, but that was not a problem for me when I used it under Win2k.



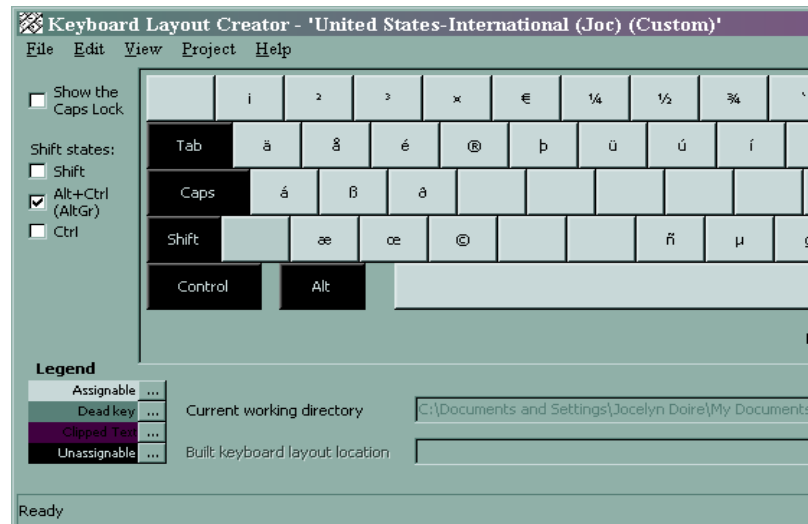
MSKLC starts with a blank keyboard, but most of the time you will want to edit a pre-existing keyboard, and in my case I loaded the "United States-International" from the list of all the keyboard layouts available on your system.



The main screen shows a standard keyboard with the "state" keys in black (such as the Alt, Ctrl, etc), the "dead" keys in a dark grey, and the "assignable" keys in a light grey.



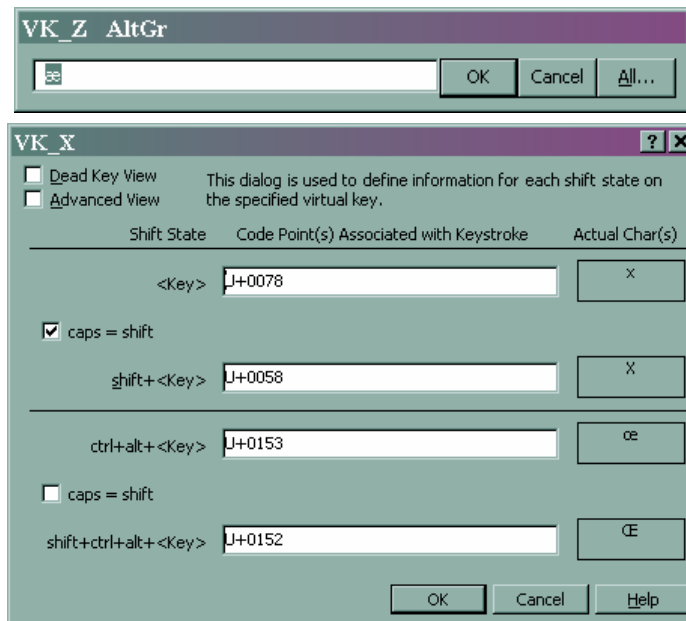
The keyboard layout is made of several layers depending on the selected "shift states" on the left side of the screen. Some of the states can be combined and some are mutually exclusive.



(Continued on page 5)

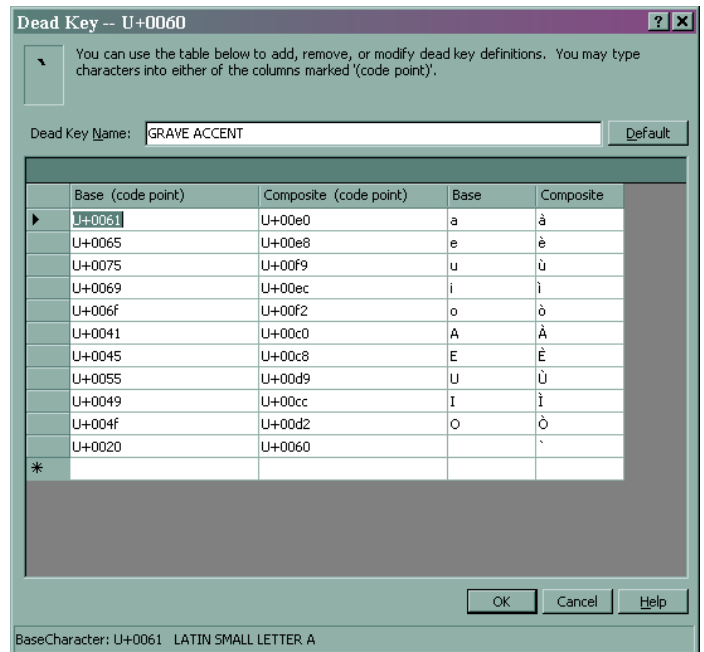
## MSKLC (Continued from page 4)

Clicking on any of the assignable keys opens a text field where you can enter up to 4 characters. Clicking on the "All..." button opens a larger window that shows all the characters that a particular key can have. The character(s) can be entered using pretty much any method available to Windows, including typing the character(s), dragging and dropping from other applications, or again entering the Unicode code (U+XXXX). In my example, I entered œ for AltGr+X, and Œ for AltGr+SHIFT+X.



Once the keyboard layout is complete, it can be tested in two different ways using the project menu; the first one validates the layout automatically by checking for things like duplications, and the second one lets you try the new keyboard using a text pad. When you are satisfied with the layout, you can then create an MSI and a DLL file that lets you install the new keyboard on any compatible computer.

I could cover other features included with the MSKLC such as assigning dead keys or changing the scan code, but I think that's enough to get a good idea of what the program can do.



Another program that looks good, but I didn't try, can be found at:

<http://solair.eunet.yu/~minya/Programs/klm/KbdEdit.html>

And finally, Microsoft has a site that has all the standard keyboards in a very convenient dynamic window that updates as you move the mouse over the keys. It's available at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/globaldev/reference/keyboards.aspx>



## Swapping old treasures

It has been many years since the OPCUG held a swap meet. A couple of years ago, we surveyed the membership to see if there was any interest in reviving this once-popular event. Only one person interested in selling and a couple of people interested in buying identified themselves.

Rather than try to organize a special evening, at this year's BBQ event at the June general meeting, if anyone is interested in getting rid of the old computer junk ... errr, *treasures* ... feel free to haul it on down and you can set up on one of the picnic tables under the big tent where we will be eating.

Only a few rules, it must be non-commercial (no businesses), all items must be legal to sell, **and you must take away everything you bring that you don't trade, sell, or give away.**



## Vinyl to CD *(Continued from page 1)*

Now, fire up the LP record on your turntable, and watch with glee as the input levels glow green, moving to the right and left as the track's volume gets louder and softer respectively. Yellow bar fragments at the right end of the display indicate volume levels are approaching maximum levels. Red bars indicate that the volume peaks are likely going to be clipped (and some of loudest of the recorded sounds may be distorted).

Slider controls let you modify the levels of the left and right channels of the stereo recording. Normally moving in concert, the two levels can be adjusted individually by checking the "enable pan" box. Set the recording levels so that they stay mainly in the green, perhaps with the occasional burst of yellow, but with no red bars showing during the loudest parts of the music.

If you don't have sufficient control over the volume levels, in that either you don't have enough volume or you can't keep the recording level out of the red, check out the side bar "Sound Problems?" for some possible fixes.

Press the Record button and let Wave Repair record one track from the record or perhaps just a minute or so of music. You want to check that you have a piece of a recording in the bag before you go ahead and spend the time to record the entire contents of an LP. So, press Stop and then Close. A status line will indicate progress as the partial recording is stored to disk.

The display will now show a waveform representation of the music. Also available on the command bar are some nor-

mal music-player controls. Press "Play" (the right facing triangle) and listen to the recorded sound. If you don't hear any sound at this point, check out the "Not enough sound on play back" item in the side bar. Adjust Windows' volume controls and try again to record a single track and then play it back to ensure success.

Now, you are ready to record your LP. Start playing the record, press Wave Repair's Record button, sit back and enjoy the music. Once the first side of the record has been recorded, press the Pause button. Flip the record to the second side, start it playing, and press Wave Repair's Resume button. At the end of the second side, press Stop and then Close. Voilà, you have made a digital recording using your very own computer-based recording studio!

Next time we'll take a look at how to process the resulting WAV file in order to burn a CD that we can subsequently play on any CD player.

### References

Wave Repair, Version 4.8.2

<http://www.delback.co.uk/wavrep/>

Transferring LPs to CDR: Some Advice

<http://www.delback.co.uk/lp-cdr.htm>

Clive's FAQ About Audio on a PC

<http://www.delback.co.uk/pcaudiofaq.htm>



## April Prize Winners

At our April 13th meeting, Arthur Bowker and Mark Merriman took home Canadian Geographic calendars donated by our friends at **Doculink Printing**.

Our raffle prize, a copy of Easy Media Creator 7.0 software (courtesy of **Roxio Inc.**) was won by Ted May.

Many thanks to Roxio and Doculink for the prize items.

## Sound Problems?

### Not enough/too much sound on record:

If you can't control the volume levels when recording, either because there isn't enough volume, or the input volume level is so high that you can't avoid clipping, check the volume levels on the sound inputs.

Right-click on the loudspeaker icon on the task bar and select Open Volume Controls. At this point, you probably only see the controls for the output devices. To change the display, select Options – Properties – Recording and make sure that at least Line-In and Microphone are checked. The Recording Control will now let you select the input levels for these latter two devices. Ensure that neither is muted and set the levels close to their upper or lower range depending on whether you need more or less volume.

If you are using the Microphone setting and the volume is still too low or too high, select Options – Properties – Recording – Options – Advanced Controls - Microphone – Advanced. If you need more volume check the box marked "1 +20db Gain". If you need less volume, make sure that this check box is not selected.

### Not enough sound on play back:

If no sound is evident when you try to play back your recording, check the Windows' volume controls. Right-click on the loudspeaker icon on the task bar and select Open Volume Controls. Make sure that both the master output "Volume Control" and the volume control for "Wave" are not muted, and that their slider bars are close to the top of their range. You can always adjust these levels later.



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Newsletter Archive

The club's Board of Directors has completed a project to create electronic versions of past newsletters. Directors Alan German and Jocelyn Doire have been busy scanning hard copies, running optical character recognition (OCR) software, creating portable document files (PDF), and posting files to PUB II.

Almost all of the newsletters are now available in electronic format, using a range of file formats, including text and PDF's created from scanned JPG images and/or using OCR on these JPG's. Links to the individual newsletters can be found by clicking on the "Newsletters" or "History" buttons on the web site's home page (<http://opcug.ca>).

Given that they span more than twenty years, remarkably few issues of the newsletter are missing, but the Board would very much appreciate the opportunity to obtain copies of the missing issues in order to complete the archive. If you have copies of any of these, we would very much appreciate the brief loan of the newsletters in order that we can make copies and create electronic files.

In particular, we are missing one very important issue – what may be the very first newsletter – the first issue of 1984. The publication date of this issue is not known to the current Board. In the second issue (Issue 84(2), November, 1984), Gordon Hopkins notes in his editorial: "...this is the second issue of the club newsletter, at least in this format..." If anyone can shed any light on what other format might have been used for the newsletter, the Board would be very interested in hearing from you.

In terms of the known missing issues, we need copies of the following:

1984, Issue 84(1)

1989, November

1991, November (pages 3-4)

If you can provide or loan any of the above, please contact any member of the Board (see [back page](#) for E-mail addresses.)

### Classic Computing

*Some quotable quotes from past issues of OPCUG's newsletter...*

*Submitted by Alan German*

"An awful lot of work went into making Word, and it shows – from the quality of their program (I have found no bugs), to the tutorial, to the well written manual..."

*Thoughts and impressions of Microsoft Word  
Jim Walsh; pp. 6-7; March, 1985*

"When I started in computing, keeping track of files was easy. I had 5 program disks and 5 data disks clearly labeled "LETTERS", "BASIC PROGRAMS" and so forth."

*Where's that file – Review of BOBCAT?  
C.J. Taylor; pp. 7-9; August, 1985*

*Those really were the good old days. Here's an example of the dedication of past Board members [current Editor please take note!]...*

"I need all the material I can get for the newsletter, Unfortunately, I don't have a modem (yet) but if you give me a call I can drop around with a disk."

*Sandy Harris, Newsletter Editor; p.1; February, 1986*

*Early newsletters carried advertisements, some (by today's standards) from very aptly named companies...*

"Super XT, 640K ram, Monochrome graphics card (720x348), High-res monochrome monitor, 20 meg hard disc drive... All for only \$ 3399.00"

*BLUE CHIP Computer Technologies Inc.; p.5; April, 1986*

"HARD DRIVE 20 MEG \$785"

*Mindbender's; p.12; April, 1986*

*Thanks for these tidbits, Alan.*

*With my dial-up connection, I'm barely ahead of Sandy Harris with her floppy in 1986. When a file is too big for dial-up, I could always buy that 20 MEG hard drive (probably for the price of a floppy these days!) and bring that around. I also need all the material I can get!*

*Brigitte Lord, current Newsletter Editor*

# OTTAWA PC NEWS

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July and August. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members.

Member participation is encouraged. If you would like to contribute an article to Ottawa PC News, please submit it to the newsletter editor (contact info below). Deadline for submissions is three Sundays before the next General Meeting.

## Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Canada Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30-9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups go until 10 p.m.

<b>Fees:</b>	OPCUG membership:	\$25 per year
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6	
<b>Web address:</b>	<a href="http://opcug.ca">http://opcug.ca</a>	
<b>Bulletin board</b> — PUB II (BBS)	<a href="http://opcug.ca/default.htm">http://opcug.ca/default.htm</a>	

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## The recycle table

As announced at last month's general meeting, some of the items that have been brought to the recycle table at general meetings have been ... well ... of a vintage that is not really interesting to anyone.

The museum has been giving us a hard time – and rightfully so – when we end up leaving old 486 computers, 14-inch monitors and the like.

While we applaud members who would rather see older computer-related items be re-used than added to the landfill, please consider carefully whether it is likely that anyone will be interested in your old equipment before bringing it down to a meeting.

**If you bring in *anything* that won't fit in the small garbage can outside the door to the auditorium, you must take it away if nobody else does.**

## Reduce, Re-use, Recycle

**B**ring your old computer books, software, hardware, and paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the General Meetings, and leave them at the table near the auditorium's entrance. Please limit magazines to publication dates of less than two years old.

You may TAKE AWAY any items of use to you. Stuff left over at the end of the meeting will be sent to ... the recycle bin.

(see article top of page)

