PRODUCT REVIEW

Building a Better Image *by Alan German*

In today's world, digital cameras are all pervasive, and readily produce hundreds of images. The problem is that, straight out of the camera, the files have non-intuitive names, such as IMG_0671.JPG and IMG_0672.JPG. So, we need to be able to change these to something meaningful (to us), like September_Vacation_001.jpg and September_Vacation_002.jpg.

Now, renaming a couple of files is easy, but what do we do if we have dozens, or perhaps hundreds, of images that we need to deal with? Clearly we need a batch file renamer. How about using – Batch File Renamer – a utility program from Ezyware Software? The program's About box indicates that you can rename or reset the attributes on up to one million files. Do you have a problem now?
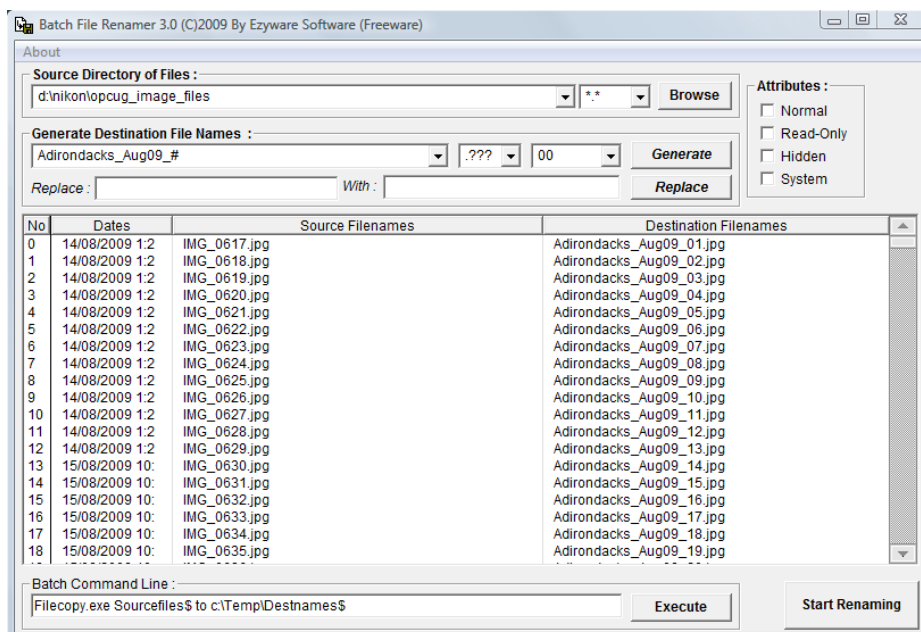
Using the program is really easy. Just download and run the executable BatchFileeRenamer.exe. It needs no installation. There is also no help file, but using the program is fairly intuitive. One caveat. There is no means to select a subset of files to rename within the program. Consequently, you need to arrange to have the specific group of files that you wish to rename in a given directory.

Once your directory of choice is established, you simply browse to the Source Directory of Files. Then, in the box marked Generate Destination File Names, replace the default "myFilename#" text with the file name of your choice.

Make sure that you leave the # sign in place, since this will generate the numerical sequence on the renamed files. Note that, in the example shown, the files are to be renamed as Adirondacks_Aug09_# in order to produce images named Adirondacks_Aug09_01, Adirondacks_Aug09_02, etc.

A drop-down menu for the file extension is initially set as .??? Leaving this setting retains the existing file extension which, for example, may be .JPG. Using the drop-down menu provides the option to create the file extension as .jpg, .png, .gif, .doc or .mp3. While this latter process creates a file extension in lower case, if you really want an upper case JPG, you can always use the Replace function later.

Inside this issue:

Next Meeting: WEDNESDAY, November 11th, 2009

Coming Up...

► **November 11th**

While Harley Bloom from Bloom MicroTech will be coming to the December meeting to help you with your last minute gift ideas, some things might take a little longer to make just the right choice.

When buying a digital camera for yourself or that lucky someone on your gift list, you are faced with a bewildering series of choices. Manufacturers come out with new models at breakneck speed and frequency. How do you decide what digital camera is right for you? What features are pure hype and what ones are "must haves"?

At the November 11th general meeting, Chris Taylor will help you focus (*groan*) your search so you end up with the perfect camera for your needs.

December 9th
Speaker: Harley Bloom of Bloom MicroTech
Topic: Christmas Goodies

Coming Up in 2010…

January 13th: TBA

February 10th:
Microsoft Hack and Defend, Bruce Cowper

March 10th: TBA

April 14th:
Colossus and early computing, Bletchley Park

May 12th:
PhotoShop editing, Bert Schopf (Blackbird PCD)

June 9th:
Pizza Night and speaker (TBA)

November Raffle

Thanks to the generosity of Corel, we have a copy of **Corel Ulead DVD MovieFactory 6 Plus** for raffle. This DVD authoring and burning software allows you to capture, edit and save home videos to DVD, complete with personalized DVD menus, music and effects. Easily polish your videos, add transitions and customize projects using handy templates. Valued at $60

Raffle tickets are just $1 for one, $2 for three, or $5 for ten.

October Prize Winners

Our raffle prize winner, **Bernard Lipski**, took home a copy of the Roxio DVD Creator software.

The door prize of fancy laptop bag, courtesy of Rick Claus at Microsoft Canada, was won by **Bob Walker**. Thanks Rick!

And congratulations to our winners.

2009 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, November 11th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the **Canada Museum of Science and Technology**, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, November 11th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, November 11th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG West)	Wednesday, November 11th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (College Square Shopping Centre)
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, November 11th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguire's, St. Laurent Blvd. at Innes Rd.

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

OPCUG 2010 ELECTIONS

Once a year, the OPCUG holds elections for the 9-member Board of Directors. We are once again coming up to this annual event. We encourage all members to consider running for a board position or getting involved in some other manner in the operations of the OPCUG.

If you want more information about what is involved, please talk to any current or past Board member. Names are listed on the back page of this newsletter and on the web site.

Nominations can be submitted to Bob Herres, 2010 Election Chair, in person at the November and December club meetings or by sending an email to nominations2010@opcug.ca.

Nominations must be received by midnight, December 31, 2009.

Please get involved. Please help the OPCUG continue in its role of *Users Helping Users*!

Bob Herres
2010 Election Chair

Member's Favourite Night *by Chris Taylor*

Always popular, we are planning a "member's favourite" night for the January 13th general meeting.

But we need your help!

Do you have a program you are enthusiastic about? How about a piece of hardware that works better for you than anything else you know of? Have you found a little-known web site that has made your day? If you answered yes to any of these questions, don't you think other members of the OPCUG might be interested in learning about it?

We need some people willing to give a 5 or 10 minute talk on their favourite computer thing, whatever that "thing" might be. Help keep the motto of the Ottawa PC Users' Group - *Users Helping Users* - alive.

If you can give a short presentation, please let me know at chris.taylor@opcug.ca.

OPCUG Presentations at the OPL

As was announced in the spring of 2008, rather than our traditional fall workshop, we are now giving presentations through the Ottawa Public Library. We hope this will continue to be a win-win situation, where we get to introduce people to the OPCUG and the library gets access to skilled presenters. Here are the remaining presentations for 2009.

Is Free Software Really Free - Thursday November 5, 6:30 PM, Alta Vista Branch
And, if it is free, can it be any good? In this session, we will find that the answer to both questions is a resounding yes. There is lots of free software available, and many free programs are very good indeed. So, join Alan German from the Ottawa PC Users' Group to find out about some must-have – and absolutely free – software!

How to Buy a Digital Camera - Saturday, November 21, 2:00 PM, Greenboro Branch
When buying a digital camera, you are faced with a bewildering array of choices. Chris Taylor, Ottawa PC Users' Group President will help "focus" your search for the ideal digital camera.

How to Buy a PC - Monday, November 23, 7:00 PM, Carlingwood Branch
When buying a computer, you are faced with a lot of choices; laptop or desktop, dual or quad core processor, AMD or Intel, how big a hard drive, how big a monitor, is it better to buy a faster processor or more memory. Chris Taylor, President of the Ottawa PC Users' Group will help sort out the choices so you can buy the computer that is right for your needs.

How to Buy a PC - Tuesday, November 24, 7:00 PM, North Gloucester Branch
When buying a computer, you are faced with a lot of choices; laptop or desktop, dual or quad core processor, AMD or Intel, how big a hard drive, how big a monitor, is it better to buy a faster processor or more memory. Chris Taylor, President of the Ottawa PC Users' Group will help sort out the choices so you can buy the computer that is right for your needs.

Presentations are scheduled as they are arranged with the Ottawa Public Library. This page will be updated as things change.
Check the OPCUG website at http://opcug.ca under Presentations.

For more information about these presentations, you can check the Ottawa Public Library web site:
http://www.biblioottawalibrary.ca/events/todayevent_e.cfm
Free registration is required.

...Better Image *(Continued from page 1)*

The next box displays a 0 by default, with a drop-down menu offering 00, 000, etc. options. This sets the format for the file numbering sequence. Numbering always starts at 1 but, if you choose the 00 formatting option, the numbers in the file names will appear in as 01, 02, etc. Note that this was the format selected in our example (i.e. Adirondacks_Aug09_01.jpg.)

You can preview the file names and extensions that will be created by clicking on the Generate button. If the new file names and extensions are going to be created just as you intended, click on the Start Renaming button in the lower-right corner of the window and – bingo! – all of your files now have new, and meaningful names.

The Replace function works similarly. Select a portion of the file name or extension to be modified and type this into the Replace box. In the next box (named With), type the text string that you would like to see instead. Click on the Replace button to see a preview, and click on Start Renaming to run the search and replace function.

There is also a Batch Command Line box in the lower-left corner of the program's window. By default, this contains the text Filecopy.exe Sourcefiles$ to c:\Temp\Destnames$ with an associated Execute button. I'm not sure what this does, or what this box is really intended to do, and I haven't been brave enough to try. Good luck if you do!

[OK – you're right – I couldn't resist hitting the Execute button. But, all I got for my trouble was the error message "Drive or File Error Encountered".]

The only other selection box, marked Attributes, is in the top-right corner of the display window. This lets you set the file attributes as Normal, Read-Only, Hidden or System.

So, once you figure out how the program works, or at least how its main functions operate, Batch File Renamer does precisely what its name suggests, and does it very well. And, since it is freeware, it's well worth having this tool available for your digital image processing.
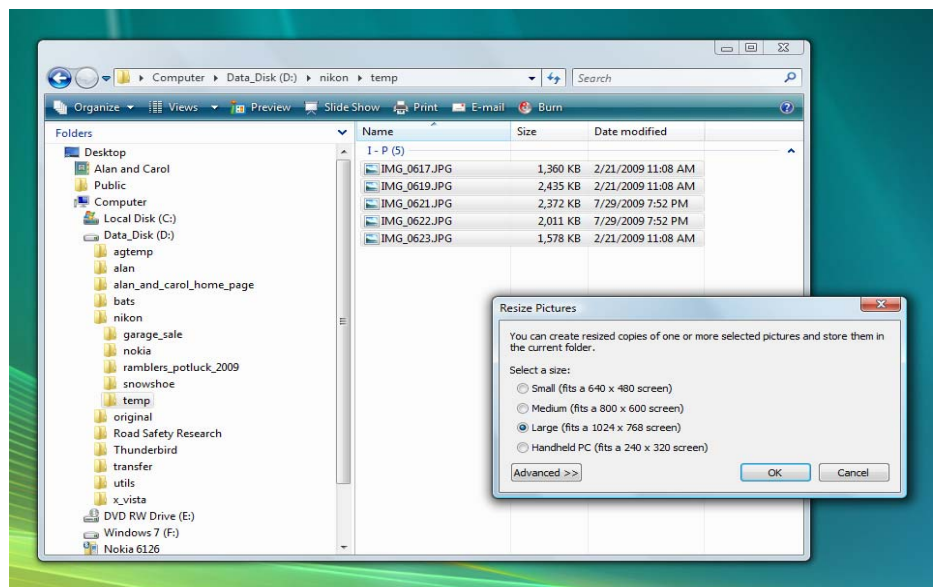
So, now we have dozens of files, all with understandable names. The next problem is that we would like to share some of these with our friends and relatives – but each of the files is 2-3 MB (or more) – which severely restricts how many can be sent by E-mail, and perhaps how many we can post to our limited web server space. What we need is an image resizer. (And, three guesses what our next utility is called!)

A completely different, but still completely free utility, that is a useful addition to your digital image toolbox is Image Resizer, one of the Microsoft Powertoys for XP. As its name suggests, this program was written for Windows XP. But, Vista users should not despair. A clone – the aptly named Image Resizer PowerToy Clone for Windows – is available from Sourceforge, released under the Open Source Initiative's Common Public License Version 1.0.

The clone works in the precisely same manner as its XP counterpart, but will also run under Vista and Windows 7, including the 64-bit versions of these operating systems. Since I am currently using 32-bit Vista as my Windows' platform, it is the operation of the associated clone that I will describe here.

The program is downloaded as an MSI file and hence needs to be installed before it can be used. Installation causes the utility to be hooked into Windows Explorer. It is then accessed by selecting one or more files, right-clicking, and choosing Resize Pictures. This opens up a dialogue box with a number of options.

In the program's basic operation mode, a series of radio buttons provide pre-set sizes for the images, ranging from Large (1024 x 768 pixels) to Handheld PC (240 x 320 pixels). Select one of these sizes, click OK, and a number of new, smaller files are created, with names like IMG_0617 (Small).JPG. In this mode, the original images files are left intact.

Clicking on the Advanced button provides a number of further options. Firstly, you can obtain custom sizing by specifying the width and height of the resized images in pixels. Secondly, two check boxes allow you to select options to "Make pictures smaller but not larger" and "Resize the original pictures (don't create copies)".

The program is simple to use yet quite versatile. In particular, the ability to resize the images while retaining the original file name is highly desirable – for those of us who like clean naming conventions – and for those of us who backup our originals before modifying the pictures!

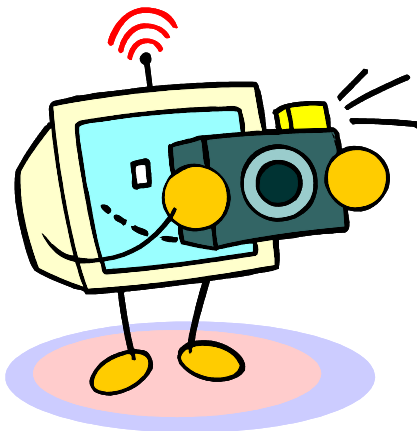**...Better Image** *(Continued from page 4)*

Custom image file names and custom image sizes. And, all for free. These two little utilities just have to find a place in your file management toolbox.

Bottom Line

Batch File Renamer (Freeware)
Version 3.0
Ezyware Software
http://www.ezyware.com/

Image Resizer PowerToy Clone for Windows (Open Source)
Version 2.0
Brice Lambson
http://www.codeplex.com/PhotoToysClone

Image Resizer - Microsoft PowerToys for Windows XP (Freeware)
Microsoft Corporation
http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx

Recycle Table

by Chris Taylor

For years, the OPCUG has been doing its bit for the environment, and helping members either remove or add clutter to their home by operating a "Recycle Table" at the general meetings. Members are encouraged to bring computer related items such as software and hardware they no longer need and leave them for others who might give them a loving home.

Unfortunately, sometimes people leave things that nobody wants and it is left to us to dispose of. This places an unreasonable burden on someone and can be a financial liability to the Group when it is an item such as a computer or monitor that does not get disposed of with the curb-side trash.

Effective immediately, if you bring anything for the Recycle Table, you are responsible for checking on your way out. If any of the items you brought are still there, you are responsible for taking them home with you.
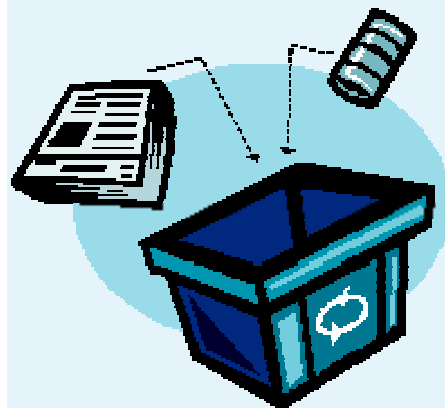
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Bring 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.

Any items left over at the end of the meeting have to be taken back home by those who brought them in.

OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 9

Compiled by Alan German

This guide features an annotated list of free computer programs. The software mentioned has not been reviewed (except where noted) nor have any tests necessarily been conducted. Consequently, no guarantees are provided that the individual programs will perform as described. Rather the list of available software is provided for the information of our members who may find one or more of the pro- grams useful. If you try one of the listed items, you are encouraged to share your experience, good or bad, by providing a brief review of the program for a future issue of the newsletter.

Google Desktop

Google Desktop makes searching your computer as easy as searching the web with Google. The desktop application provides full text search for your E-mail, files, music, photos, and web pages that you've viewed. During installation, you can also add Google Gadgets. These can be placed anywhere on your desktop to show you weather information, personalized news, and much more.
Current Release: Version 5.8
Web Site: http://desktop.google.com/

Secunia PSI

Many hacker attacks and security threats exploit software vulnerabilities and code flaws in the programs installed on your computer. But, you have lots of programs, and manually checking for updates for all of them is extremely time consuming. You need to get a program to do it for you! Secunia Personal Software Inspector (PSI) will check the developers' web sites for updates and patches for all of your installed programs, and advise you of the latest security updates.
Current Release: Version 1.0.0.5 (24-Mar-09)
Web Site: http://secunia.com/vulnerability_scanning/

Opera

Tired of that old browser? Need a change? The makers of Opera claim their browser is the fastest in the world. Special features include Opera Mail, a browser-based E-mail client; the ability to synchronize data such as bookmarks between computers with Opera Link; and Quick Find where Opera remembers the titles, addresses – and the actual content of the Web pages – you visit.
Current Release: Version 9.64
Web Site: http://www.opera.com/

Network Notepad

Network Notepad is a freeware program for creating interactive network diagrams. Options include linked diagrams and flow charts. The program will run on Microsoft Windows 9x, NT, 2K, XP, and Vista.
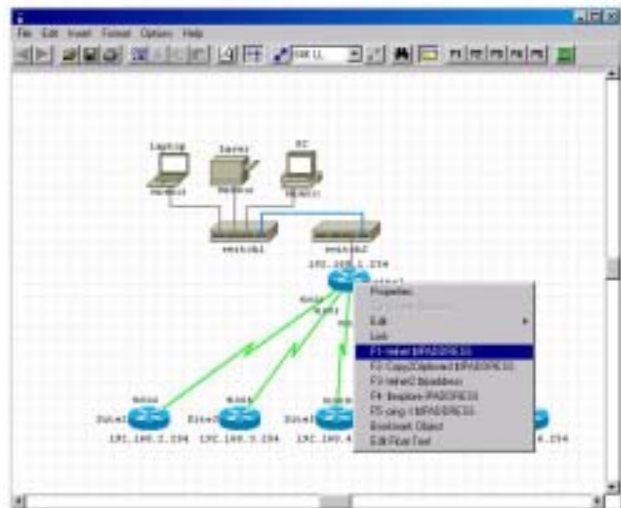Current Release: Version 4.6.6
Web Site: http://www.networknotepad.com/

FeedDemon

Looking for a great way to view and manage your RSS feeds from your desktop? Look no further than FeedDemon, the most popular Windows RSS reader.
Current Release: Version 2.7
Web Site: http://www.newsgator.com/Individuals/FeedDemon/

Mirror

Mirror, from Zeno Systems, is a freeware tool that duplicates a folder structure to a new location. Specify the source and the target and let 'er rip! Mirror requires no formal installation, and is multi-threaded so it has little impact on system resources. Only files and folders that have been added/modified are copied, so disk writes are held to a minimum for very fast backup. Mirror works with any hard drive or removable media.
Web Site: http://www.zenosys.com/mirror

OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 10 *Compiled by Alan German*

This guide features an annotated list of free computer programs. The software mentioned has not been reviewed (except where noted) nor have any tests necessarily been conducted. Consequently, no guarantees are provided that the individual programs will perform as described. Rather the list of available software is provided for the information of our members who may find one or more of the pro- grams useful. If you try one of the listed items, you are encouraged to share your experience, good or bad, by providing a brief review of the program for a future issue of the newsletter.

ExplorerXP
A small, very fast, and innovative file manager for Windows 2000/XP. Unlike the regular Windows Explorer, it displays the total size of each folder, and allows you to browse multiple folders from a tabbed interface. Free for non-commercial use.
Current Release: Version 1.7
Web Site: http://www.explorerxp.com

avast!
Home Edition is free anti-virus software that will detect and remove all forms of malware, including spyware, rootkits and trojans. It features a resident shield and self-protection, free automatic updates, Web and P2P protection, and is available in over 30 language versions. The package is free for home use.
Current Release: Version 090613-0 (13.6.2009)
Web Site: http://www.avast.com/

DisplayFusion
Do you have a spare monitor that you don't know what to do with? Why not use it in a dual-monitor set-up for your current computer. DisplayFusion will make the process smooth, painless, and very flexible. You can add a separate taskbar to each monitor, use different wallpaper on each display or have one wallpaper image span across both monitors, and much more.
Current Release: Version 3.0.6
Web Site: http://www.binaryfortress.com

War Rock
K2 Network, the developers of War Rock, indicate that this is "a tactical, modern, first-person shooter game, exploding with intense, fast-paced combat. Armed with the world's deadliest weapons and controlling the most lethal vehicles, players attack three, story-driven, killer game play modes in the air, on the land and over the sea." War Rock is free to download and free to play. The graphics are spectacular, but the download file is huge (547 MB)!
Current Release: Client Version v04082008
Web Site: http://warrock.gamersfirst.com/

The PC Decrapifier
This utility will uninstall many of the common trialware software applications often installed on PC's by the big name OEM's, and will remove unnecessary items from the start-up menu.. You can list the items that the program can detect and then choose what will be removed.
Current Release: Version 2.0.0 (09/13/2008)
Web Site: http://www.pcdecrapifier.com/

Windows Live Gallery
Do you feel limited by the choices for gadgets on Vista's sidebar? Visit Windows Live Gallery for a choice of more than 3000 items in a variety of categories. How about adding a "nixie tube" clock to your sidebar, or using gadgets to access coast-to-coast CBC radio or deliver the daily Dilbert cartoon to your desktop?
Web Site: http://gallery.live.com/

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.

Fees:	OPCUG membership:	$25 per year
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Linux / Open-Source Software SIG
    (vacant)

How to get the OTTAWA PC NEWS by e-mail

Want to get the newsletter electronically? There are two formats available: plain text and Adobe Acrobat PDF. Simply send a message to **listserve@opcug.ca**. Leave the subject blank and in the body of the message, type:

subscribe newslettertxt
(to get the plain text version).

or:

subscribe newsletterpdf
(to get the Adobe Acrobat PDF version).

And if you decide you do not need the printed version mailed to you anymore, simply let Mark Cayer (membership chairman) know. He can be reached at general meetings, as well as by e-mail at **Mark.Cayer@opcug.ca**. You might want to wait until you have successfully received at least one issue electronically before opting out from the printed version.

To subscribe to the Announcements List, e-mail **listserve@opcug.ca**. Leave the subject blank and in the body of the message, type:

subscribe announcements

Within a couple of minutes you will receive a confirmation message from the listserver.

"Announcements" is a low volume list that the Board of Directors uses to get in touch with the membership. Subscribers can expect at least one message per month – the meeting reminder that goes out a few days in advance of the general meeting. Other than that, the only time it is used is when the Board feels there is some important news that should be brought to the attention of all members.