

# BYTES & PIECES

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE HOBART COMPUTER USERS GROUP INC.

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## AGM SET TO RESUME

When we reached the Election of Office Bearers at the AGM last month, we found that there were no nominations for the positions of President, Vice-President, or Secretary. Accordingly, an adjournment motion was carried.

Incorporated in the adjournment motion was the setting up of a sub-committee, consisting of Cindy Campbell, Don Trotman and anyone else they cared to second. The sub-committee was asked to look at:

- Whether anyone would accept nomination for the vacant positions;
- Whether a merger with another organisation was feasible; and
- The Rules relating to the winding up of the Group.

At the resumed meeting we will hear from the sub-committee on what they see as the way forward, elect any nominated people to the Committee and see where we go from there. A little birdie tells me that we have a couple of nominations but still need a President. As Cindy has proved, the President's position does not require a computer guru, just someone who can chair meetings. Remember good managers delegate, so become President and tell everyone else what to do!

**Note: The Rules of the Association do not allow for proxy voting.  
You have to be present to vote on the Group's future.**

## WHAT YOU MISSED

For last Tuesday's meeting we advertised that we had lined up a guest speaker from Salamanca Systems. Because we didn't know what he was going to speak about, we did not advertise that and, I am told as a result, some members decided not to come because they weren't interested in hearing someone praising Salamanca Systems.

That's not what the meeting was about. Our guest speaker, Robert Crombie, only works there one day a week

and enjoys explaining computer processes in layman's terms – fdisk, msconfig, leaving your computer on as opposed to turning it off after every short session, order, file allocation tables, partitioning, drive imaging, how to avoid static damage when fitting components to your computer, and how *not* to clean the inside of your computer were all explained with useful analogies – and all without any reference to notes. I don't think there was anyone who went home without having learned something useful.

Members were so enthusiastic when Robert showed them the inside of the Group's computer that they were loathe to line up for coffee and had to be called to order! 'I said, "Get your tea or coffee first and then you can have a look inside the computer!"'

Robert has offered to come back, bring his own computer, and actually partition it and make a drive image and, I have no doubt, that the new Committee, once it is formed, will take him up on that.

The only thing disappointing about the night, which was one of the most interesting we've had in all the years that I have been a member, was the poor attendance. If that's the best we can muster, we don't deserve good speakers.

## FRAGMENTATION AND SYSTEM RELIABILITY

In determining how disk fragmentation affects system reliability, the following system reliability issues were considered by Executive Software International, the producers of *Diskeeper* and the *Defrag* in Windows XP and reported in a white paper from which all of the following was extracted:

- Slow, or no response, from applications or the operating system.
- Slow, or no, boot-up response
- Slow, or no, shut-down
- System crashes

Their research narrowed the target down to four major factors:

### 1. MFT (Master File Table) Fragmentation

Their testing showed that a system disk with an extremely fragmented MFT caused the boot-up time to almost double. Response time of some applications increased about 50%. Installation of a software product took 4-5x longer. On NT4, some system applications were missing their icons and reported missing dll errors.

### 2. Page File Fragmentation

An extremely fragmented Page File they found can degrade system response time so much the computer seems to hang. Responses of some operations, including mouse movement, were delayed by almost 30 seconds. A disk-intensive application ran twice as long.

### 3. File Fragmentation performance loss

In general, fragmentation worsens response time. Which applications are affected depends on what files are fragmented and by how much. In an extreme case where all the files except the Page File and MFT on a new windows installation were fragmented, Boot-up times increased by about 15% and response times worsened by about 15%.

### 4. Available Free Space

Low free space can affect system reliability as some applications can fail due to insufficient free space.

Each of these four factors have been found to cause one or more of the reliability issues noted above. For more information on the first two, see the Microsoft Knowledge Base. A combination of two or more of these factors markedly worsens the reliability of the disk, while running a defragging utility, such as *Diskeeper*, improves reliability.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

Here's a little story from Paul Turvey that he sent me before he changed jobs:

*Today at work I was moving a computer system and listening to the conversation at the point of sale. A customer had brought his caller ID box back into the store and was rather irritably asking for a refund, as the device didn't work. The customer service rep had taken it out of the box and was making sure that the customer had attached it to his phone properly. During her demonstration of the proper way to hook up the gadget, she removed the static cling label off the front, which showed a sample caller ID screen on it.*

*It was very difficult for her to maintain a straight face as the customer realized the reason the numbers on the front never changed . . .*

## EXERCISE

As most of us are getting on in years, this little exercise program sent in by Don Trotman, (who, in turn, got it from a friend in Queensland), could be just what you need:

### Exercise for Seniors

*For those who are getting along in years, here is a little secret for building arm and shoulder muscles. You might want to adopt this regimen! Three days a week works well.*

*Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side. With a 5-lb. potato sack in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides, and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, then relax. Each day, you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer.*

*After a few weeks, move up to 10-lb. potato sacks and then 50-lb. potato sacks, and eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb. potato sack in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute.*

*After you feel confident at that level, start putting a couple of potatoes in each of the sacks, but be careful not to overdo it.*

## BUY BUY

### 15" LG monitors

These monitors carry a 3-year warranty. Just \$125. At this price, isn't it time you upgraded that old 14"?

### 17" LG Studioworks monitors

These are now down to \$180. And to think we used to pay twice that for a 14" not many years ago.

### 19" LG Studioworks monitors

You want a really big one? \$315 gets you a 19" LG with a 3-year warranty (serviced locally). I was only talking to someone who has one of these today and he would not want to go back to a smaller monitor!

### Laptop

HP laptop NX9005 with AMD XP1800 mobile cpu, 256Mb RAM, 30gig HDD, 14.1" TFT screen, internal CDRW drive, Windows XP PRO, integrated NIC, modem, ATI graphics just \$1825 while they last

*Contact Peter Campbell, 6234 4691, if you are interested. But be quick!*