

January Meeting

When: Saturday Jan. 11th

Time: 9:30am-11am

Place: Sonoma Public Library
755 West Napa Street

Topics: Q&A
Future of Your Club
MacWorld Report

As always, you are invited to bring your tea, coffee, something to eat, and something to share... your latest acquisition (software/hardware), how you resolved a computer-related problem; where you can find a good deal on the internet; an interesting website to share and have us bookmark or add to our Favorites place.

Happy New Year. See you there.



President's Column

by Veda Lewis

Happy Holidays
Happy New Year
Peace and Joy



REINVENTING OUR CLUB

Dear club members,

The New Year is here and it is time to address the fact that SVCG needs a major reboot. A board member recently wrested me from my year-end busy haze by asking a difficult question about the direction of the club for the coming year.

It then struck me that we should not continue to limp along following a direction that worked a few years ago, but is no longer viable.

Think for a moment about your favorite club meeting. Was it one where you heard a lot of discussion about issues that had no meaning to you personally? Was it one where you had a chance to have one-on-one discussions or hands-on experience at something you needed to work out or something brand new? If you are like most members, the latter scenario was much more interesting. These hands-on sessions with our small group have put the focus on the knowledge base of our group.

[Prez. cont'd on Pg. 3](#)

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Sonoma Valley Computer Group

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- T. McClure**
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BOARD MEETINGS

Usually following General Meeting. Open to all members. Call 935-6690 for further information.

MEMBERSHIPS

S.V.C.G. Annual Membership: \$20.
S.V.C.G. Family/Couple membership: \$30 (residing at same address). Membership renewals are due and payable at the beginning of each year.

GENERAL MEETINGS

S.V.C.G. meets second Saturday of each month at Sonoma Public Library, 755 West Napa Street; hours: 9:30AM to 11AM unless otherwise notified. Meetings free; guests welcome.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Sonoma Valley Computer Group Newsletter is published monthly by Sonoma Valley Computer Group. Desktop publishing services donated by: Kathy Aanestad. Call: (707) 935-6690, email aanestad@vom.com. © 2003, SVCG.

ONLINE NEWSLETTER:

http://www.vom.com/svvg/index.html
Copyright © 2003, SVCG. All rights reserved. Sponsored by our local ISP, DataProfessionals, on 19480-8th St. East.

MAILING ADDRESS:

PO Box 649
El Verano, CA 95433

Donating Unused Computer Equipment

The URL listed is for the Computer Recycling Center. All of the info needed (and then some) is listed on the site.
<http://www.crc.org/>

Thanks to Wayne Till for that tip.

SVCG UG Benefits

As a benefit to being a member of the Sonoma Valley Computer Group, O'Reilly Press is giving you a 20% discount on all their books and software! For more information, please contact Kathy Aanestad at 935-6690 or email at 'aanestad@vom.com'.

In addition to the O'Reilly Press offer, SVCG belongs to the Apple User Group program whereby members can purchase Apple products at a savings. Contact Kathy Aanestad for user ID and password in order to access their online site. We need members to help with finding contacts for PC user group offers so that they can be included in the newsletter postings. ☺

Sonoma Valley Computer Group

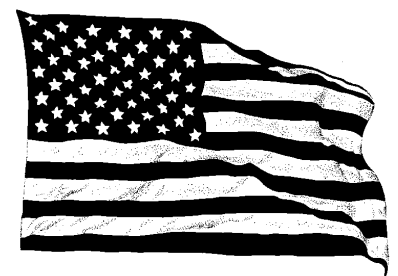


Yippee....

Celebrate the New Year!
Come to the meeting on
Saturday January 11th
9:30am-11am
Sonoma Public Library



Freedom of Speech



Proud to live in America
Land of the free
Home of the brave

Whether you have noticed it or not, our group has become a graphics-centered club. Most of us are working with graphics in some way. We all learn when others share their personal projects and challenges.

In this New Years column I am proposing that we take advantage of that and focus the group toward improving our digital skills in graphics and digital video. I truly believe that this can help us bring in new members, more young people, and restore, and exceed, the vibrancy that the club had years ago.

This does not mean that we abandon the wider world of computing. I believe that we should be a resource for new users and existing computer users who are new to the valley. Our web site should be a portal to local classes, ISPs, consultants, etc. for those who need to know what's happening in and around Sonoma. Visitors can still drop in and find out about connecting with other computer users.

As a valuable service to members and the community, our club should also coordinate workshops on technical topics to be delivered by knowledgeable speakers. These would likely require a nominal registration fee based on the reality of the need to compensate people for their services.

The response to the Digital Art Show last spring was a glimpse into the world of those young and old who are having fun with graphics on their computers. I propose that we invite the digital art participants to join us and share their skills and energy with us in a new environment.

Over the last several years, a few dedicated volunteers took up the challenge of keeping the club afloat in its traditional direction of trying to cover the whole world of computing, Windows and Mac. That direction took form years ago in the slogan '**Keeping Sonoma plugged in to technology**'. The

*Happy
New year*

timing of the computing boom and a few instructor/mentors in our corps put the club in a key position as a resource for new computer users. Keep in mind that not so long ago, we were almost all new users. However, times, as well as our needs and interests, have changed. Its time the club responded to that fact.

In this special column, I will give my personal perspective on where we came from, how far we've come, and some suggestions on how we might revamp our direction to meet the current needs of our digital community and take advantage of the club's strengths.

If you are intrigued and interested in being a part of the next chapter in the Valley of the Digital Moon, read on and come to the January 11th meeting with your practical ideas and suggestions, backed with commitments to help make them happen. Or, just bring your positive energy and an open mind for what should be a lively discussion following a report on MacWorld San Francisco by Kathy Aanestad and me.

WHERE I STARTED-

I joined SVCG in 1990, after moving to Sonoma in late 1989. I'm told that the club was only recently founded at that time. My understanding is that Wes Ford, Joy Weil, Nina Podgorny and Eileen Adams were a part of a small group that would do 'show and tell' with their machines. It expanded to a regular showing of about 35 people at the high school where meetings were held. Finding out about the club was a stroke of luck for me since computers had recently come to my office. We were excited to have new Macs in our office with a spanking 1MB of memory. The operating system took up about half of that. But I digress; the fact was that the club was a direct connection to computer classes offered to valley residents.

Eileen Adams and Barbara Heiman were most active as club mentors at that time. There was lots of activity behind the scenes as Barbara worked hard to establish **Sonoma Valley High School** (SVHS) as a satellite campus for **Santa**

Rosa Junior College (SRJC) computer courses. I personally took her *Introduction to Computing* and *PageMaker* classes back in the early days at SVHS. It was (and is) an incredible advantage being able to take courses at SVHS rather than driving to Santa Rosa in the evening. I know that I would not have been able to take as many courses as I have without that option. The **Sonoma Adult School** also provides some basic computing courses.

I recall that a short time after I joined, there was an election for club officers. The Sonoma Valley High School classroom where we met fell silent as the call went out for volunteers to step up and run the club for the next year. If memory serves me, **Melania Mahoney**, **Kathy Aanestad**, and I (all new members) determined that we would jump in and help. I think I took over treasurer duties, Melania was president and Kathy took on vice-presidential responsibilities. I remember seriously thinking that if we didn't step up to the task, the club would fold, because there were no other volunteers. I did not want that to happen.

The club seemed to thrive as we took advantage of software companies who sent some speakers our way, bringing free software to raffle off to club members. Club mentors gave presentations; members spoke on specialties such as genealogy, and local folk came in from time to time. Following in the steps of our mysterious donut fairy, **Nina Podgorny** and **Ruthie Tompson** brought a bright light by being our refreshment coordinators. They brought coffee and doughnuts to the meetings for years.

Like me, many club members continued to take SRJC courses and build our knowledge. Barbara Heiman's *Photoshop* classes have been attended by many of our members, **Harry Phillip's** spreadsheet and database courses have been popular, and Eileen Adams taught *MS Word*.

I continued my education with training in Telecommunications (the internet), Excel, Access, and Illustrator through the SVHS campus of SRJC. Things were

moving so quickly that instructors were struggling to grasp the topics in time to teach their classes.

As software became cheaper, and the tech bubble began to burst, it became much more difficult to get software companies to visit our meetings. About the same time, most of us were getting on the internet. That became our focus and our members were (and still are) hungry for information about using email and surfing the web safely.

Since there are so many different ISPs, computers, modems, bandwidth types, and email applications, answering everyone's questions became much more difficult. Our key mentors drifted away around this time too; busy with their teaching, consulting and other activities. [Ron Leal and Rob Thomas, owners of DataProfessionals, a.k.a.

vom.com, came to our rescue. Ron has spoken to our group several times, helping answer your internet-related questions. DataProfessionals has generously hosted the club's web page over the past decade at no charge to the club. —ed]

In the interim, I had given up treasurer duties to **Jeanette Woods**. Kathy became newsletter editor and has since been scouring the web each month to get computer news out to our members. I applaud her efforts. Members frequently comment on the great job she does. We have members who cannot make meetings, but continue membership so they can receive the newsletter.

I think I was in the vice-president spot around that time. The biggest responsibility of the VP, I was promised, was to write an article for the newsletter each month about

the featured speakers presentation. Little did I know that the experience would help me write articles about other computer events. One of those was published on the Apple website as part of user group activities.

If you are a longtime club member, you will see that I am jumping along and leaving lots out, probably making a couple of errors, but I am not trying to write a comprehensive club history. I just want to provide a bit of background from my personal perspective.

At some point I was convinced to slide into the presidential suite. I think I took over from **Les Berlot**. Again, it seemed that no one else was willing to step up to the task. I recall the silence in that room too.

Fortunately for me, I've worked with a great group of board members. I give special

**Invite
A
Friend**



Check out our website...
download a copy of the
newsletter **IN COLOR!**

<http://www.vom.com/svcg/index.html>

Sonoma Valley Computer Group Membership Application/Renewal Form

New Applicant

Use information below

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

e-mail Address: _____

Send \$20 (individual) \$30 (family) check to:
Sonoma Valley Computer Group
POB 649
El Verano, CA95433

Renewal (expiration date on label)

Use the name and address label on Page 12

Platform: Mac PC WinNT
Operating System: OS 8x Win3 Unix
 OS 9x Win95 Linux
 OS X Win98 WinME

Computer Make/Model: _____

How did you hear about SVCG?

class club member newspaper newsletter

User Level: Novice Intermediate
 Advanced Expert

thanks to **Joan Fabian**, club treasurer for many years, who is there at the library bright and early those Saturday mornings to help Kathy and I set up for the meetings before the library opens. She also keeps up with incoming mail through our post office box.

I would like to make an observation here about our leadership. I cannot remember the name of the woman who was club president when I joined, but I have noticed a trend that began when she left office. She, and every president since, has left the club as an active member following their term as president. I think this is an important commentary on the club's direction and effectiveness. Of course, it could just mean that the second Saturday of the month was busy with a higher priority activity. Anyway, interesting coincidence.

One great improvement at this time was our association with the **Sonoma Valley Public Library**. It has given our club an open door community focus, as some library patrons have stopped in to check out our meetings. We're saving on room rental fees (a blessing based on our tiny budget). I have received referrals from the library. New computer users who need to know about classes or other resources are happy to have a place to go. The club also acquired a cheap, refurbished iMac (the bondo blue variety) allowing us to have both platforms at the meetings where most of the demos had been on a Windows machine.

User groups across the country began to experience decreases in membership. SVCG was no exception, as members moved away or had conflicts with the meeting times and could no longer participate. Physical challenges are also a factor, in some cases, keeping members from participating.

Our small core of volunteer board members also decreased. Membership and program director vacancies have informally been covered by Kathy, along with the newsletter. **Stephanie**

Clark, who assumed the role from **Carolyn Ardalan**, stayed on as secretary this year, thank goodness. We have benefited immensely from her spark. **Beth Pickering** has done coordination with the business community. **George Pick** did lots of research on computer projectors as we worked toward obtaining that tool to enhance our meetings. We were very fortunate to be able to negotiate a purchase of an older projector from the North Coast Mac Users Group in Rohnert Park. **T McClure** joined the board this last year and brought insight on homemade web pages and changing club needs. **Jeanette Woods** has worked behind the scenes getting our club meeting information into the Club News section at the Sonoma Index-Tribune.

New members and new energy have not come in at high enough levels to replace those we have lost. Despite a successful first-time digital art show, we did not generate new members or club interest as a result of all of the work. The event was well-received by participants, but the club did not maintain their attention. We learned a lot from that experience and I would like to avoid the same mistakes in the future.

In club surveys we found that our members were most interested in email and the web. We have found that our group no longer has the cutting edge on this topic. Although the internet is of interest to most, we simply do not have the expertise to solve everyone's problems. It was a great boost to us in the early years when **Ron Leal** from **DataProfessionals**, from our local ISP vom.com on Eighth Street would come in and give us insight on the workings of the web. I'll never forget the time they gave us a demo of the satellite system they were testing. They set it up at the club picnic at

Depot Park. We were on the net from the parking lot, wirelessly. This was cutting edge. Too bad the yellow jackets got wind of the picnic and chased us away. Ron and Rob also gave the club a donation of a used overhead projector that we used to compensate for the lack of a projector for several years.

The absence of an internet connection for club meetings has also limited our ability to

provide hands-on demonstrations on the web. [George Pick has done everything possible to work with the Library to help us get an internet connection, but so far, we have been denied. —.ed]

Pardon, the digression. Internet expertise. Now, the best thing to do to keep your internet up and running is contact your ISP support. Hopefully, you have the local connection with Ron and Rob. They are the best. Walk-in service if you need it. Real people.

My theory is that people don't really want to know so much anymore about how the internet works. There is too much to know already. They just want it to work. If SVCG is not on the cutting edge of the internet, what is our edge?

VALLEY OF THE DIGITAL MOON AND MULTIMEDIA

What is the second largest interest in our club surveys after email and the web? It is digital images, graphics. A large percentage of our members have taken Adobe Photoshop or other digital imagery courses. The digital art show was dominated by Photoshop derived artwork. One of our board members suggested that we seriously consider paring down the club focus to accommodate an area where there is a great deal of knowledge and interest within the club. Since Photoshop is a bi-platform application that looks the same on Windows or Mac, we can use the club iMac and projector to show examples on screen. One of our digital art show participants, **Joe Abouata**, showed how easily a

Photoshop demo can be done when he shared his techniques for preparing his entry using the club equip-

ment.

If we continue to have a Windows machine available, we can have at least two stations for hands-on work. For a small group, that can work. In fact, that is a strength of a small group. This one thing we have pulled off this year with great success. Back to basics and hands-on brings the user group experience full cir-

"Back to basics and hands-on brings the user group experience full circle."

cle.

I can see a scenario where members bring in examples of their work on CD and take a few minutes to show what they're working on. Then we break into small groups for hands on tips and tricks and discussion.

A handful of our membership is working with digital video. Kathy has done some demonstrations on the process. I think it is time that we explore this area. I can envision a digital video show down the road. Entries could be limited to three minutes in length. Is the Sebastiani available? ("Mr. DeMille, I'm ready for my close-up.") The high school kids are shooting videos for homework. Let's find out what they're doing and learn from them.

How about rejuvenating the refreshment bar too? Did someone say, let's have fun?!

CALL TO ACTION

Well, there's my spiel. Granted, I have not run this idea through our entire board, but am taking the liberty as club president and longtime member to share my ideas with you directly. You know that the club needs a boost. It needs to work with its strengths, not drag along on its weaknesses.

If you are unable to make it to the January 11th meeting, please drop me an email with your comments on this proposal or the club in general at lap@vom.com. Make sure that you put 'SVCG' in the subject line, or your email will be filtered out as SPAM.

MacWorld San Francisco-

Well, I'm off to prepare for MacWorld and look for the latest in the digital world. Three board members, Kathy, T McClure, and me, have signed on to do table duty that day for the SVCG station in the user group booth on January 7th. I take vacation time from work to visit MacWorld each year. It has helped me immensely at work and personally.

See you at the next meeting.

Happy New Year of computing!

—Veda Lewis
SVCG President

What's News

from Edupage

STATES LOOK AT ONLINE SALES TAX

As the economy continues to suffer and many states are dealing with budget shortfalls, some are considering the possibility of collecting sales tax on online purchases. Current law does not require states to collect sales tax from companies unless they have a physical presence in the state. Furthermore, a moratorium on Internet sales taxes is in place until November 1, 2003. Still, online spending is expected to reach \$40 billion this year and could hit \$105 billion in another five years. Collecting no tax on this amount of commerce means that states are losing potentially large sums of money to online shopping. One study from the University of Tennessee estimated that states, cities, and counties lost \$13.3 billion in sales tax last year from online commerce. Even if Congress continues to prohibit tax on out-of-state sales, states such as California can collect large sums if they force businesses within the state to collect tax on in-state sales. Such collection is allowed, but California currently does not collect such tax.

Associated Press, 26 December 2002 (registration req'd)

<http://www.nandotimes.com/technology/story/689488p-5121454c.html>

AT&T WIRELESS POSTPONES HIGH-SPEED SERVICE

AT&T Wireless and its Japanese partner NTT DoCoMo said their upcoming high-speed service will not be available until the end of 2004 and will be deployed in fewer cities than had been previously planned. The two companies previously announced that the service would be available in 13 metro areas by June 2004. When the service debuts, it will only be in San Francisco, Seattle, Dallas, and San Diego. Nextel Communications recently announced a delay in its offering of a similar so-called third-generation service. Businesses are the expected customers of the high-speed service, and the

service providers involved attribute the postponements to significantly reduced demand from business customers in the current economy.

San Jose Mercury News, 26 December 2002

<http://www.siliconvalley.com/mld/siliconvalley/4820694.htm>

CHINA CLOSSES 3,300 INTERNET CAFES

In response to a fire in June at an Internet cafe in Beijing, the Chinese government has closed 3,300 cafes and ordered safety improvements in nearly 12,000 others, which are closed until the changes are made. The fire in June killed 25 people, and Chinese authorities said many cafes did not have proper safety plans or equipment, such as fire exits. Government officials also have voiced complaints that the cafes expose Chinese youth to objectionable online material. The Chinese government has encouraged adoption of Internet technology for business and education but has worked to limit what it sees at the negative aspects of Internet access in China. Wall Street Journal, 27 December 2002 (sub. req'd)

<http://online.wsj.com/article/0,,SB1040997621506132113,00.html>

ONLINE COURSE TEACHES RISKS OF ALCOHOL USE

An online course called AlcoholEdu, developed by Outside the Classroom, teaches college students some of the risks associated with alcohol use in an informal, anonymous way. Mothers Against Drunk Driving has formed a partnership with Outside the Classroom, and the course is used by about 350 schools, including Villanova University and Dartmouth College. The course, which is conducted online and works best over a high-speed connection such as can be found in many college dorms, begins with a survey and tells students that they will not be preached to about using alcohol. Paul F. Pugh, dean of students at Villanova, praised the anonymous nature of the course, noting that anonymity encourages much more honest responses. Jack H. Turco, director of health services at Dartmouth, said the course gives his institution an easy way to provide alcohol education to all of its incoming students, without having to arrange individual

classes or find faculty to teach them.
New York Times, 25 December 2002 (registration req'd)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/25/nyregion/25ALCO.html>

NEWSREELS GO ONLINE

British Pathe, which compiled many thousands of newsreels between 1910 and 1970, has put more than 3,500 hours of footage online. The footage is still copyrighted by British Pathe, but unlike some other copyright owners, the company has opted not to use digital copyright protections. The company has instead placed a small watermark on the newsreels and a note on its Web site expressing an expectation "that the images downloaded are not misused in any way." Low-resolution versions of the clips are available for free, and high-resolution clips can be licensed from the company, which also sells VHS and DVD copies. A representative of the Electronic Frontier Foundation said he was not surprised that the strategy appears successful because British Pathe is "treating their customers like customers, not criminals." Representatives from Fox Movietone newsreels and AOL Time Warner's Time Inc. said they have no plans to offer their newsreels in the same manner. Wired News, 27 December 2002
<http://www.wired.com/news/digwood/0,1412,56667,00.html>

SUN WINS JAVA RULING AGAINST MICROSOFT

A federal judge in Baltimore this week ruled in favor of Sun Microsystems in its antitrust case against Microsoft. Sun had accused Microsoft of using its monopoly power in the operating systems market to hurt Sun's Java technology, as well as the Netscape browser. Judge J. Frederick Motz agreed, saying Microsoft's products, specifically its .Net technology that competes with Java, must live or die in the market by their own value, not because of monopoly influence exerted by Microsoft. Motz ordered Microsoft to begin shipping Java with its Windows operating system and to stop shipping an older version of Java that Sun says confuses consumers about compatibility and how to develop Java software. Sun's lawsuit also asks for \$1 billion in damages, though that part of

the suit has not been decided.
New York Times, 24 December 2002 (registration req'd)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/24/technology/24SOFT.html>

BUSH SIGNS E-GOVERNMENT ACT

This week President Bush signed the E-Government Act of 2002, which is intended to foster more effective and efficient electronic communication among government agencies and with government employees and the public. The bill creates an Office of Information, within the Office of Management and Budget, which is directed by a federal chief information officer. Groups such as the Information Technology Association Of America supported the bill and said its passage relatively soon after the September 11 attacks--which highlighted breakdowns in government systems--was coincidental. The bill also won support from privacy groups, which typically are opposed to measures that facilitate greater and easier gathering and sharing of personal information among government agencies. CNET, 17 December 2002
<http://news.com.com/2100-1023-978297.html>

ACADEMICS PUSH FOR FREE, ONLINE ACCESS TO JOURNALS

Since the advent of the Internet, many academics have complained about the practice of charging for online access to scientific journals, as is done by many high-profile publications, including Science and Nature. Now, a \$9 million grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation will support a new organization that will publish two new online journals, one on biology and the other on medicine, that will be entirely free. The Public Library of Science will be led by Dr. Harold E. Varmus, a Nobel laureate in medicine and president of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Varmus, one of the critics of charging for online access to scientific articles, said, "The written record is the lifeblood of science." Dr. Donald Kennedy, the editor of

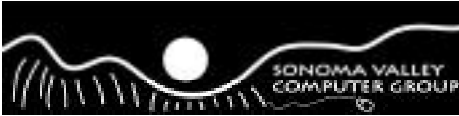
Science, defended the subscriptions, however, noting that the publication's standards and costs are high. He said that the number of downloads of articles relative to the subscription fee indicates that each article is being accessed for just a few cents each. New York Times, 17 December 2002 (registration req'd)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/17/science/17JOUR.html>

ORGANIZATIONS ASK FOR COPYRIGHT EXCEPTIONS

Several organizations, including the American Library Association, the Association of American Universities, and the Electronic Frontier Foundation, will file paperwork with the U.S. Copyright Office requesting exceptions to the copy-protection provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). The groups argue that electronic measures to prevent copying also limit protected fair use rights to make copies for backup and educational purposes. Most observers, and many representatives of groups that otherwise might file similar requests, admit that the odds of being granted an exception by the Copyright Office are extremely remote. Nevertheless, these and several other organizations are expected to file the requests, which are due today.
Los Angeles Times, 18 December 2002 (registration req'd)
<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-copy18dec18,0,5043844.story>

Hats Off
to a Great Year!

It's a
New Year!



SONOMA VALLEY COMPUTER GROUP
POB 649
EL VERANO, CA 95433

Postage



Place Label
Here

Sonoma Valley Computer Group Newsletter

Next Meeting: Saturday, January 11, 2003

Place: Sonoma Public Library
755 West Napa Street

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 11:00a.m.

Topic: *Q&A, The Future of the Club,
and a MacWorld Report.*