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Abort, Retry, Ignore...

FOUNDED 1984
The Official Newsletter of THE
COMPUTERS ARE EASY USER GROUP

CAEUG Computers Are Easy User Group

April 2011 Suggested Retail Price $1.95 Volume XXVIII Issue 4

Calendar of Events

!!! IMPORTANT !!!

*** * * NOTE * * ***

Confirmed 2011 meeting dates

April 23, 2011 (4th Saturday)

May 28, 2011 (4th Saturday)

**** ** ** ****

MEETING PLACE will be the Glenside Public Library

**** ****

Visitors Welcome

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

**** ****

Need to shop? Go to www.caeug.net Click 'Shop Here' Amazon.com

Our April 23th (4th Saturday)
Our presenter: Frank Braman
will give a presentation on computer specs to consider when getting a new computer

The Other Side of the Street

By Bill Hart, Member
The PCUG of Connecticut
March 2011 issue, The Program
http://www.tpcug-ct.org
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When IBM and Microsoft first released OS/2 in the late 1980s I was keen to try it, and even signed up as a Beta tester. I really wanted to be able to run more than one application at a time, and this seemed to offer a chance.

OS/2 could be described as a GUI-based system supporting any number of virtual machines. Open an application and you opened a virtual machine to run it. It accepted both DOS and Windows 3.0 applications. At last I could run more than one application at a time on one machine; I could run long-running simulation runs in one virtual machine while sending and receiving messages and writing documents in two others, Fantastic!

And then Microsoft, who had left the project, struck in their inimitable way. Windows 3.1 subtly changed the interfaces needed for applications to talk to Windows, so when OS/2 users tried to run the new Windows apps they failed - until IBM was able to catch up. Redmond is still doing this; they have not accepted internationally-agreed document formats, but have invented their own, ignoring the rest of the world. Windows Office apps like Excel or Word will still not accept those formats, and Windows does not recognize any other disk format than those developed by TBOR (The Beast Of Redmond).

So I just LOVE Micros**t (supply your own two letters). When OS/2 faded I looked around

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for a substitute that was not from Redmond - and chose Linux.

Linux is also fantastic, though, being derived from UNIX (so to speak), it has a somewhat different philosophy from OS/2 or DOS. But I can run many applications at once, as I did with OS/2. AND it has a feature that the miser in me loves - it is free. You can download applications without charge; you can, if you are Guru enough, download the source code for applications and modify them to fit your own needs.

Another nice thing: Linux applications used on the Internet are safer than Windows ones. Steve Gibson of Gibson Research Corporation, makers of SpinRite http://www.grc.com — take a look) many years ago fell afoul of a hacker who didn't like something he had said and retaliated by putting a "Denial of Service" attack on his site. (That's when you visit a site with an invalid request which takes time to analyze, but you do it so often so quickly that the site is overwhelmed.) During his (successful) exploration to find the perpetrator he discovered that Windows leaves all the ports on the computer CPU open by default — which is why you need something like ZoneAlarm or some other firewall-type product to keep you safe. When he told Redmond about it they just shrugged their shoulders and said they knew, but it didn't matter.

Linux only opens to the outside world those ports on the CPU which are absolutely essential. So I rarely use Windows to surf the Web any more. I said "so far" because I suppose hackers would be more likely to work at attacking Linux if more people were using it. It's much easier to go after Windows users, who are the vast majority.

There are many varieties of Linux. I usually run OpenSuSE on my desktop. A lot of people like Ubuntu. I have tried it more than once, but it has yet to recognize the Wi-Fi equipment built into my laptop. I finally settled on a variety called PCLinuxOS. (http://www.pclinuxos.com/). Go to download it, and you are immediately faced with another decision: there are many varieties of desktop available.

Like, say, Windows 95, Linux runs a GUI on top of a basic DOS-type machine. And this means that a number of people, having different ideas of what constitutes a really nice GUI, have made, and offer, their own designs. The two most used are probably KDE and Gnome, but there are, as you can see on the PCLinux site, several others, and you can read a description of each before you choose. But if you want to start somewhere familiar, probably the best to start with is the KDE desktop. It is most like Windows in its appearance and behavior. Its descriptive page on the website says of it:

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —

Features:
Kernel 2.6.33.7bfs kernel for maximum desktop performance
Full KDE 4.5.4 Desktop
Nvidia and ATI fglrx driver support
Multimedia playback support for many popular formats
Wireless support for many network devices
Printer support for many local and networked printer devices
Addlocale allows you to convert PCLinuxOS into over 60 languages
GetOpenOffice can install Open Office supporting over 100 languages
MyLiveCD allows you to take a snapshot of your installation and burn it to a LiveCD/DVD
PCLinuxOS-liveusb - allows you to install PCLinuxOS on a USB key disk

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —

Sounds a pretty good deal, despite some of the Version Number flack. "Kernel" is the basic Linux system on which this version of PCLinuxOS is founded, "KDE", of course, are supplying the GUI portion and GetOpenOffice will add the free Office Suite to your system. Well worth the price! Anyway, you can experiment if you wish. Download more than one. But make sure they are described as 'LIVE CD'. Those will run entirely from the CD without disturbing your hard disks at all.

Each will come as an ISO file — a CD image which you can burn with Nero or Roxio or whatever you have. You will end with a bootable CD. Insert it in your drive and reboot the computer. It will provide you with a menu of choices of which the top one is usually the one to pick and the bottom is probably 'boot from the hard disk", which will allow you to chicken out if you wish.

And now you are running Linux, without having

(con't on page 3)

disturbed anything on your present computer. Reboot and remove the CD, or choose the "Hard Disk" option, and you are back to Redmond's product. But I hope that you will have found, if you explore a bit before doing that, that you have a wide range of applications — an Office Suite, Multimedia players, editors, a few games, and Internet applications like Firefox. Try Firefox and you should find that your Web connection has been recognized and you are able to surf — without bothering about special software to keep you safe from Hacker Harm.

Service Packs Explained (and needed)

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS
http://www.compukiss.com
sandy (at) compukiss.com

Although most of us still think of Windows 7 as a brand new operating system, it is, in fact, starting to show its age. Windows 7 made its debut on October 22, 2009. Is one and one-half really old? Well, in the computer world, it is not old, but it is certainly full-grown. One sign of this is that Microsoft has just released the first Service Pack for Windows 7.

A service pack is a collection of updates, bug fixes, and enhancements for a software program. As you know, Microsoft routinely offers updates for their Windows operating systems. These updates come out weekly and they patch or, you might say, repair the operating system so that they remain safe from hackers. They can also include improvements or enhancements to the operating system. At a certain point in time, Microsoft gathers all of those updates, adds any other updates and enhancements they have and issues this batch of updates as a service pack. It is also important to note, that when Microsoft issues a service pack, this service pack also makes sure that all of the updates and enhancements work well together and offer good stability for the operating system.

The question that I am most often asked is this, "If I have installed every update that Microsoft has released, do I still need to install the service pack?" The answer is "yes." Often the service pack contains additional updates and/or enhancements that were not included in the weekly updates. Also, a service pack makes sure that all of the updates are put together properly to make your system run well.

In fact, Microsoft thinks that this is so important that they only support the operating system when it has the proper service packs installed. Each service pack should be installed when it is released. If for some reason, they are installed all at the same time, each is installed sequentially.

So, for Windows XP you should have Service Pack 3 installed. Windows Vista should have Service Pack 2, and Windows 7 should have Service Pack 1. To learn what service pack you have installed, just click on the Start button, right-click on Computer or My Computer, and then click Properties. You will see the service pack listed under the Windows edition.

You can go to the Microsoft website and install a service pack from there, if you happen to be missing one. All service packs from Microsoft are free. If you are using Window 7, the new service pack will be offered to you through Microsoft's automatic update service. This Windows 7 service pack can take up to 30 minutes and will re-boot your computer. I have installed Window 7, Service Pack 1 on several computers without a problem, but you should be aware that installing a service pack is a big update. Microsoft recommends that you back up your computer before installing a service pack. And to be honest, you should be backing up your computer anyway. So if you don't have a backup strategy in place, this is a good time to implement one.

The newest version of Internet Explorer - IE 9 is now in testing and it is already available for free download in a beta version. This is by far, the best version of Internet Explorer that Microsoft has ever released. IE 9 won't run on Windows XP; it requires Windows Vista or Windows 7. Although Microsoft is not requiring Windows 7 Service Release 1 to install IE 9, it is advisable to install this Service Release before you install IE 9.

Service Packs are a fact of life for Windows users. Installing them may be a bit of a pain, but you really need them to make sure that your Windows system is secure and stable and that it performs well.

April 2011
CD of the Month

Ant - Video downloader for IE and Firefox
ARI - April newsletter
CDOMlists - Lists of past CDOMs
CutePDF - A pdf creator program
DesktopOK - Save and restore the positions of icons
Earth Alerts - Monitor in near real-time a variety of natural hazard events
Evernote - Note collector including multimedia
FlashDriveControl - Controls flash drive access and use
LoseThosOS - Supplemental operating system designed for writing programs
MemberContributions - Things e-mailed to me from members
OldTimeRadio - Old time radio broadcast
PartedMagic - Move, copy, create, delete, expand & shrink HD partitions
SIV - System information viewer
SugarSync - 5 GB free cloud storage program
TeamViewer - Remote control any PC
USBudget - Copy of the 2011 budget of the United States
VLC - Updated media player
WhatChanged - Save and restore the positions of icons
WordArtGenerator - Design and create WordArt

Your Computer's Health - What Junk Files? - Part 3

By Bob Woods, Webmaster, UCHUG (Under the Computer Hood User Group), CA
March 2011 issue, UCHUG Drive Light
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The UCHUG Drive Light is presenting a series of articles on the general topic of Your Computer's Health. I have a Compaq laptop that is around 7 months old that I use for reading e-mail, surfing the web, publishing the changes to the UCHUG web site and occasionally playing games. Since I have any important files backed up on external devices I have not been too concerned with making a full backup image of the hard drive on this PC. I also have not run any cleanup utilities. After all, if it ain't broke, why fix it? But, after having the PC for 7 months I thought it might be time to take on these tasks. In the January 2011 edition of Drive Light, Art Gresham started a series of articles on PC maintenance. Part 1 of the series was tips for basic hard drive and OS data cleaning. I figured that there is no better time to do a cleanup than before imaging the hard drive.

Following Art's advice I first loaded CCleaner. I am a volunteer in the IT department at the USS Midway Museum; we use CCleaner to start data cleanup on the computers in use by the staff so I am familiar with its use. When run, CCleaner gives you a nice interface with a number of options for cleaning temporary files left behind by Internet browsers (IE, Firefox, etc.), Windows Explorer, Windows itself and other applications that use temp files. To check on what it finds you can click on "Analyze" vice "Run Cleaner." That way you have a chance to determine what the application will be doing. I expected it to list a number of IE and Firefox temp files, but was surprised at how many system and application temp files it found. In all over 350 MB would be cleaned off the drive. After running the cleaning function I clicked to scan the registry for problems. During this scan CCleaner looks for unused items, missing shared DLL's and application paths, obsolete software references, leftover installation references, fragments and a few other items. CCleaner lists all that it finds for you to review.

Again, given that the PC was only 7 months old I was surprised by the number of leftovers from updates and software removals. Cleaning these items will result in a cleaner registry which will speed bootup and shutdown times and increase system stability. When you click to "Fix selected issues." you will be given the option to save the registry prior to the cleanup or cancel the operation. It took about 10 minutes to do the all of the cleanup.

The next application to install and run is Advanced System Care. This application will allow you to further clean up the registry, remove Spyware, clean up more junk files and past browser history. You may ask why do this

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LampPost 125
by John Spizzirri
April 17, 2011

A few months ago you may recall my presentation on Google Apps **(1,2,3)**. Since then Google **(4)** has been busy spiffing up and refining that product line. At $50 per user per year, Google thinks that there is significant money to be made. I think the money they are after is the money spent by corporations that are coming to realize that Microsoft (MS **(5)**) Office **(6)** costs too much and is too limiting. Unless a company can buy 50 or more copies of MSOffice, the unit price is significantly more than $50 per year per user. Additionally, with each new version of MSOffice, the interface is changed, requiring re-training expenses. MSOffice limits the users in that the product is tied to a PC, whereas Google Apps reside on the Internet and can be accessed from any PC with an Internet connection. MS products require 'activation', a needless waste of time at best, an agrevating ordeal at worse. MS has started offering Web Apps **(7)** but with little explanation as to how they work and how much they cost. In the last month, Google has claimed that Google Apps for Government are Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA **(10)**) certified **(11)**. FISMA is a law that has to do with document classification and safeguarding **(8,9)**. MS claims that Google Apps are not FISMA certified **(12,13)** and that Google is misleading with it's on line description of the certification. The Department of Justice (DOJ) seems to agree with MS **(14)**. Google maintains that it has not mislead anyone and that it does, in fact, have FISMA certification **(15)**. The trouble seems to stem from the fact that Google is in a continual process of product improvement. The government certifies a product and expects it to remain the same. This policy favors companies that do not innovate or improve there products on a continual basis. Google Apps for Government **(16)** is not the same as Google Apps for Business or Google Apps for Education or Google Apps. Google Apps is free to anyone with a Google account **(17)**. To view the various Google Apps available for free, log into your Google account. On the upper left side of the page is a menu that reads; Web Images Videos Maps News Shopping Gmail more. Click on 'more' and click on 'even more' on the subsequent menu. The page presented has all the current Google Apps. There are now Apps listed for mobile phones.

1) https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Google_Apps
2) http://www.google.com/intl/en/options/
3) http://www.google.com/apps/
4) https://encrypted.google.com/
5) https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/default.aspx
6) https://office.microsoft.com/en-us/
7) https://office.microsoft.com/en-us/web-apps/
8) http://csrc.nist.gov/drivers/documents/FISMA-final.pdf
9) https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Classified_information_in_the_United_States
10) http://csrc.nist.gov/groups/SMA/fisma/index.html
11) http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/government/trust.html
12) http://gcn.com/articles/2011/04/15/cybereye-what-fisma-certified-means.aspx
13) http://blogs.technet.com/b/microsoft_on_the_issues/archive/2011/04/11/google-s-misleading-security-claims-to-the-government-raise-serious-questions.aspx
14) http://www.fiercegovernmentit.com/story/doj-google-apps-government-lacked -fisma-certification/2011-04-13
15) http://www.pcworld.com/businesscenter/article/225183/google_defends _apps_for_government.html

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16) http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/government/#utm_campaign=govapps&utm_source=en-redirect-na-us-apps_government&utm_medium=redirect&utm_term=apps_government
17) https://www.google.com/accounts/

An acquaintance of mine told me about a contrarian statistician, John Williams. His web site and medium priced ($175 annually) economic statistics newsletter claim to describe the economy of the United States that contradicts the official description of the U. S. economy. The free data on the web site is very interesting **(1)**.

1) http://www.shadowstats.com/

The United States budget is available on the Internet **(1)**. It is also on the April CD of the Month.

1) http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/

The U. S. Navy **(1)** has a laser weapon **(2,3)** in testing. It is mounted on the retired destroyer USS Paul Foster **(4,5)**. The question that came to my mind after viewing the test was, why attack a pleasure craft with a laser weapon? The next question was, why use a decommissioned ship to mount the laser weapon? The last question that came to mind was, will a mirror be an effective defense?

1) http://www.navy.mil/swf/index.asp
2) http://www.theregister.co.uk/2011/04/11/onr_mld_boat_burn/
3) http://www.as.northropgrumman.com/products/joint_hi_power/index.html
4) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Paul_F._Foster_%28DD-964%29
5) http://navysite.de/dd/dd964.htm

Ubuntu Linux version 11.04, code named Natty Narwhal, will be released on April 28th **(1)**. A narwhal is an arctic toothed whale **(2)**. The newest feature in this latest version is the Unity desktop **(3)**. In all previous versions of Ubuntu, the Gnome **(4)** desktop was used. Unlike Windows, any distribution of Linux can use any desktop environment. In Windows there is only one environment with no way of changing it. The desktop environment is a display of a graphical user interface (GUI). A GUI is a program that allows the user to control the PC or other device using images rather than having to type text commands. "A desktop environment typically consists of icons, windows, toolbars, folders, wallpapers and desktop widgets." **(5)** The Unity desktop was developed by Canonical Ltd. **(6)**. Canonical is the company that produces Ubuntu. The Unity desktop is a shell program that connects to the Gnome desktop. It is like a facade over the underlying Gnome controls. The Gnome developers and the Unity developers have had disagreements as to the functionality of their respective products. This disagreement will take a new shape **(7)** with the release of the 11.04 version of Ubuntu. Users may have the final say as to whether Unity remains in Ubuntu or is modified or dumped. I will be checking out the new version in Virtual Box to determine whether I want to implement it on a physical machine.

1) http://www.ubuntu.com/
2) https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Narwhal
3) http://unity.ubuntu.com/
4) http://www.gnome.org/
5) https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Desktop_environment
6) http://www.canonical.com/

 (con't on page 7)

7) http://www.lockergnome.com/linux/2011/04/11/gnome-3-vs-unity-for-ubuntu/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+nexus%2Flinux+%28Linux+Fanatics%29

Gnome desktop recently announced it's newest version number 3 **(1)**. It is strikingly different from version 2.x. Some people think that there may be a schism similar to the Unity / Gnome disagreement in Ubuntu **(2)**.

1) http://www.gnome.org/news/2011/04/gnome-3-0-has-arrived/
2) http://www.theregister.co.uk/2011/04/11/gnome_3_review/

Adobe issued a critical **(1)** security bulletin about a vulnerability in it's Flash Player program version 10.2.152.33 and earlier **(2)**. A number of writers have warned their readers about the exploit **(3,4)**. It appears that the current version of Flash Player must be uninstalled and the new version must be installed to avoid the problem. The upgrade version should be to Adobe Flash Player 10.2.153.1. In Windows 7, the way to check the version is to open Windows Explorer and type in Control Panel\All Control Panel Items\Programs and Features in the address bar. Press enter and a list of programs are displayed. In the right-most column, the version number of the program is displayed. This is also the screen where a program be highlighted by clicking on it then click Uninstall to remove the program.

1) http://www.adobe.com/devnet/security/severity_ratings.html
2) http://www.adobe.com/support/security/advisories/apsa11-01.html
3) http://krebsonsecurity.com/2011/03/critical-security-updates-for-adobe-acrobat-flash-reader/
4) http://www.securelist.com/en/blog/6182/Another_Adobe_Flash_zero_day

Germany's Berlin State Supreme Court has made a ruling about privacy that said that Google Street **(1)** View is permissible **(2)**. A German national had filed a complaint against Google about it's Street View in Google Earth **(3)** and Google Maps **(4)**. In view of this ruling, surprisingly, Google will no longer offer Street View in Germany. Their Street View camera cars will still run the streets of Germany, but will only do so to get street signs to improve their maps. Perhaps they do not want any more pictures like this one **(5)**.

1) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Street_View
2) http://news.ebrandz.com/google/2011/3986-google-mysteriously-abandons-street-view-in-germany.html
3) http://www.google.com/earth/index.html
4) http://maps.google.com/
5) http://news.cnet.com/2300-11386_3-10006669-2.html

I remember when Sputnik **(1)** was launched. A few months later Explorer I **(2)** was launched. The 'space race' **(3)** was on. Everyone I knew would go out at night to see if they could see the satellites track across the sky. Back in the late 1950's, looking intently at the sky for a an hour or so, one could see the track of a satellite. Now with all the light pollution (even in small towns), it is difficult to view a satellite track. Fortunately, the Internet provides a number of sites that can tell us where to look so that the time spent looking for satellites can be more productive **(4,5)**. If you have an iPhone **(6)** or an Android **(7)**, there are apps for satellite watching **(8)**. Selecting Android brings up a site that has a Quick Response (QR **(9)**) code on it. QR codes are also know as matrix bar codes.

1) https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Sputnik_program

(con't on page 8)

2) https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Explorer_1
3) https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Space_Race
4) http://www.n2yo.com/?s=25544
5) http://heavens-above.com/
6) http://www.apple.com/iphone/
7) http://www.android.com/
8) http://simpleflybys.com/
9) https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/QR_code

Smart phones have apps that can read QR codes. If your smart phone has a camera, it can read QR codes whether they are printed, on a computer screen, or on a television screen. There are QR code generators that allow the printing of the codes **(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)**. QR codes can contain four kinds of data; URLs, Text, Phone Numbers, and texting (phone text).

1) http://qrcode.kaywa.com/
2) http://zxing.appspot.com/generator/
3) http://delivr.com/qr-code-generator
4) http://goqr.me/
5) http://www.beqrious.com/generator
6) http://mobilecodes.nokia.com/create.jsp?terms=accepted

Harper Collins (HC **(1)**) has stated in the Library Journal that paper books wear out if lent out by a library 26 times **(2)**. They have used that figure (26) to limit the number of times an e-book license may be lent. HC has issued an open letter to librarians to explain it's position **(3)**. Librarians, in general, consider this a ridiculously low number and are, in turn, boycotting HC **(4,5,6)**.

1) http://www.harpercollins.com/
2) http://www.libraryjournal.com/lj/home/889452-264/harpercollins_caps_loans_on_ebook.html.csp
3) http://harperlibrary.typepad.com/my_weblog/2011/03/open-letter-to-librarians.html
4) http://www.libraryjournal.com/lj/home/889949-264/more_libraries_decide_to_give.html.csp
5) http://boycottharpercollins.com/explanation
6) http://loosecannonlibrarian.net/?p=396

Ion has issued a press release about it's new product that can be used to save books as e-books **(1)**. The release date has yet to be revealed but there is a picture of the device on the Internet **(2)**.

1) http://www.ionaudio.com/content380172
2) http://www.ionaudio.com/booksaver

Between you, me and The Lamp Post that's all for this month.

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The CAEUG newsletter is published eleven times annually. Contributions by members are encouraged and will be gratefully acknowledged in the newsletter. We have a policy of exchanging newsletters with other users groups across the nation. Several CAEUG member articles have already been picked up and reprinted.

Membership Costs.....

	First Yr.	Renewal
Individual	$25.00	$20.00
Family	$30.00	$25.00
Corporate	$30.00	$25.00
Associate	$20.00	$15.00

MEMBERS HELPLINE

Any member with a specific expertise can volunteer to be on the Members Helpline.

Beginner Helpline . . . . . Billy Douglas

Beginner hardware problems . . . Dick Fergus

Hardware problems, ...2K, XP & Linux . . . . . John Spizzirri

CD OF THE MONTH FORMAT: Is now available in **two** (2) flavors. The **Basic CD** will be packed with the standard items, while the **CD of the Month** will have NEW and updated items.

NEW Money Saving Offer for CD of the Month

Pre Order + Prepay = SAVE $$

The club will offer the CD of the Month on a pre order, prepaid basis. The charge will be $70.00 a year for 9 months. This is $20 annual savings over buying them for $9 each month. Lynn Johnson, the treasurer, will keep track of anyone placing a 9-month order.

MAIL Request - There will be a $2.00 mailing charge per CD

(con't from page 4)

as CCleaner did some of the same functions? Each of the applications will take a slightly different approach to scanning your system and find different items the other did not find. Sure enough, there were a few more registry issues and temp files missed by CCleaner. Advanced System Care also has a system diagnosis section not in CCleaner that will analyze and fix system performance, system configuration and security problems. Another few issues were cleaned up. Advanced System Care also took about 10 minutes for the cleanup. I could have also used it for disk defragment, but wanted to use a separate defrag program so loaded IOBit Smart Defrag.

Smart Defrag is another application that has a nice clean interface that is easy to use and understand. When ran it I found fragmentation after 7 months was less than 1 % (only .71%). Back in the earlier versions of Windows I would have expected at least 10-15% fragmentation. It seems that the OS may be getting better at not fragmenting files. Still, any fragmentation will use extra space and take extra time for the hard drive heads to move to pick up bits and pieces. So even at less than 1% fragmentation I was willing to take the time to perform the defragmentation. Total time was about 15 minutes to defrag the 50 GB of data stored on a 220 GB drive.

At the end of the whole process I saved hard drive space, cleaned up the registry, and eased the burden on the hard drive. So, did I see a performance improvement? Without running a benchmark it would be hard to tell, but the system does seem a bit quicker. But the overall benefits to the health of the system should result in better performance and longer hard drive life. As for the backup, it went smoothly and is much cleaner as I did not back up un-necessary temp files and junk in the registry.