

# The NEWS JOURNAL

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"Members Helping Members"

Lake County, Illinois

## Fed plans bug awareness week

By Erich Luening

Staff Writer, CNET News.com

October 15, 1998, 12:05 p.m. PT

Looking to boost awareness of the Year 2000 technology problem in small and medium-sized businesses, the Clinton administration is set to launch next week's National Y2K Action Week.

At a press conference today, the White House point-man on Y2K, John Koskinen, cited his ongoing concerns about the lack of preparations for the Year 2000 computer problem among many of the country's small and medium-sized businesses, and joined senior officials from the Commerce Department and the Small Business Administration in outlining the goals and schedule of next week's events.

During the week, federal agencies, including the Small Business Administration, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and the Social Security Administration, will conduct hundreds of educational events and outreach activities through their national field offices targeted at managers of small and midsized businesses to help them address the Year 2000 problem. Materials promoting the week-long event will appear in post offices and in major newspapers around the country.

"Let no one be mistaken. The Y2K problem could spell doom for any small or medium-sized company that isn't prepared," Koskinen, the chairman of the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion, said in

a statement prepared for the press conference. "The goal of this week is to give these businesses the informational tools they need to help ensure that their systems are ready for January 1, 2000."

The field office efforts will focus on assisting managers to assess how their businesses may be vulnerable to the Y2K problem, both in their own systems and embedded chips and in relationships with outside product and service providers; develop strategies for remediation and replacement work; find technical resources for addressing the problem; and come up with contingency plans, according to the council.

The council is also encouraging industry groups, companies, and state and local governments with whom it has been working to increase awareness of the problem, to support the week by participating in the field office efforts.

The Year 2000 bug originated in the design of the first computer programs. Those programs, which remain integrated into a large percentage of computerized equipment used today, register each year using a simple two-digit number. Therefore, when "00" rolls around on January 1, 2000, experts worry that many computers will identify the date as 1900--causing either delays, confused data, or complete breakdowns.

The Commerce Department will use its network of field offices to encourage small and medium-sized

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## Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

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c/o Group Ambassador

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### Membership

Membership for L.C.A.C.E is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are \$20.00 per individual/family. Associate membership is only \$10.00 (out of state, unable to attend meetings). Membership includes a one year subscription to the L.C.A.C.E. News Journal and access to all club libraries, and functions. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club Hotline and is now available on our WEB site at <http://inf-net.com/lcace>.

### Meetings

L.C.A.C.E. meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at the Warren/Newport Public Library, 224 N. O'Plaine Road in Gurnee, Illinois. The meeting location opens at 11:30a.m, and the formal meeting begins at 12pm. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

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### ARTICLE DEADLINE

The deadline for all articles being submitted for the News Journal is the 20th of each month. Send your articles via E-Mail to Corky Bell at [corky@foxvalley.net](mailto:corky@foxvalley.net) or Vic Falkner at [rvf@se-iowa.net](mailto:rvf@se-iowa.net)

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## NOTICE

If your E-Mail address is incorrect or missing or you want to add or change your WEB site url, please E-Mail us at [lcace@inf-net.com](mailto:lcace@inf-net.com) with the correct information.

## WEB Sites

The following are the addresses (URLs) of our members own WEB Sites.

Corky Bell <http://users/foxvalley.net/~corky>

Nancy Larsen <http://\users\foxvalley.net\~mamanan>  
<http://\mall.lnd.com\larsen\>

## Time to Renew

If the mailing label on your News Journal is highlighted in YELLOW, this means it is time to renew your membership to L.C.A.C.E. This information will be published in the News Journal and will also be posted on the club's WEB site which is

<http://inf-net.com/lcace>

If it is time for you to renew your membership, please fill out a new Application and a Member's Profile Sheet. These forms can be obtained at the meetings or downloaded from our WEB site.

The following Member(s) need to submit renewal applications:

**JJ - 11/98**  
**Mike McEnery - 11/98**

**Linda Heinrich - 12/98**  
**Lee Musial - 12/98**  
**Walter Sheets - 12/98**  
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If you have already filed an application, please disregard this notice.



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*(FED PLAN - Continued from page 1)*

businesses to act on the Y2K problem. The department is in a good position to promote Y2K action among small and medium-sized manufacturers and minority-owned businesses through its 400 so-called manufacturing extension partnership offices, 104 export assistance centers, and 65 minority business development centers, many of which will be holding events next week, according to Commerce officials.

"While publicity about the Year 2000 problem is widespread, many small and medium-sized businesses have not yet assessed their risk," Commerce secretary William Daley said during today's press conference. "But time is running out. If these firms

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### **MOVING THE MAIL**

Several readers have asked about transferring Microsoft Mail to another computer. Since you won't want to interfere with the mail files on the target computer, the best way may be to simply save the mail files to a floppy disk.

This will work fine as long as the Microsoft Mail program is installed on the target computer. To do this, select the file you want to copy and then choose File, Save As. When the Save Message As dialog box opens, type in a name and click Save.

Now, place the floppy into Drive A on the target computer and double-click the mail you want to read. Microsoft Mail will open, along with the selected message.

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### **UNDO YOUR LAST ACTION**

You can undo your last file action without even going to the menu--and without even being in a window!

1. Right-click ANY blank space in ANY folder window or in the right pane of ANY Explorer window or on any blank space on the Windows desktop.
2. Choose Undo from the shortcut menu. It doesn't

## **PC World MarketWatch 2.35** ***Vendor Highlights from the PC World Technology Network***

<http://www.pcworld.net>

October 9, 1998

Formation of Merch.net Creates Alliance of Best-of-breed E-commerce Applications That Take E-Tailing to the Next Level

Just announced at eRetailing '98 this week in New York, a group of leading e-commerce companies announced the formation of Merch.net, an alliance created to provide retailers with educational services highlighting "best practices" in the e-commerce industry. Charter members include BizRate(R) (of Binary Compass Enterprises), Impulse! Buy Network, Inktomi, LinkShare Corporation, and Netcentives Inc.

"Our goal is to become the first stop for any merchant looking for the information and technical resources to drive their online commerce initiatives," said West Shell, president and CEO of Netcentives. "By sharing the best of our experience, Merch.net offers a depth of industry insight and experience critical to commercial success online."

So what's this got to do with you? Everything. As E-commerce is expected to surpass 2 billion by the year 2002, you will be the one behind the wheel driving the revenue dollars upward. E-commerce initiatives, like the formation of Merch.net, anticipate consumer online buying with open wallets because the more you shop and buy, the more merchants will need to utilize their services which resemble traditional offline shopping models like coupons, reward programs, consumer reports, and the infamous blue light specials.

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### **OCTOBER 50/50 WINNER**

**Leslie Salsburg was the winner of our October 50/50 drawing. CONGRATULATIONS!**



# The PRESIDENT's RAM

To begin this month's RAM, I would like to remind everyone that December's Meeting will be our **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY** and we will be discussing plans for this event at the November Meeting. Again this year we will be conducting RAFFLES, the main one being for a grand prize of a **ONE YEAR MEMBERSHIP** in the Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts. If you have something to "show off" or something you would like to see or do, please let us know so we can attempt to arrange to have it available. As in the past, we are requesting that the members please bring a small treat. JJ will be the "**ICE CREAM MASTER**", but some desert treats, like cookies, are always nice to go along with JJ's specialty. The club will provide the drinking and eating utensils (cups, plates, spoons, etc.)

The group has been fortunate to obtain more Public Relations through the hard work and efforts of JJ. He made contact with some representatives of the Country Computer Expo, which is held at the Lake County Fairgrounds in Grayslake and obtained permission to setup a table at the Expo, which from there he was able, with the help of Mike McEnergy, to pass out information packets and applications for the group. They have made further contact with JJ and myself and we will now be posting a monthly advertisement in both our News Journal and on the WEB Site. In return we will be able to have a table (FREE), at the Expo. We will also be working in conjunction with these people in order to promote both groups.

I have not been able to attend the Expo to date and to be honest, I just learned about it from information supplied to me by JJ. However from what I have learned from both JJ and a few others who attended the Saturday, October 17th Expo, it is quite a show. They have vendors, demonstrations and raffles throughout the entire day. I hope some of the other members, including myself, will be able to attend this monthly event. For more information, please refer to

either our WEB Site, the News Journal or the Expo's Web Site, their address is <http://www.ccxpo.com/> and the sites will be updated as soon as new information is received about upcoming events.

I want to thank Arnie Gudyka for his recent articles. I have learned things from these two writings (Re: October & November 1998 - Motherboards) that I was unaware of and already they have proven themselves as valuable resources of information.

I was assisting a friend with a motherboard upgrade and we ran into a slight problem that we just couldn't resolve. Remembering a section that I had read in Arnie's October article, I retrieved the News Journal from October and sure enough, certain information Arnie had included proved to be what we were in need of in order to complete the project. Good job Arnie and hope you can continue with further articles.

Remember that November's Meeting is on Saturday, November 14th in the McCullough Meeting Room (either Room A or B, just look for the sign) at the Warren/Newport Library, 224 N. O'Plaine Road in Gurnee, Illinois. The doors will open at 11:30am and the main meeting will begin at 12pm.

We will be discussing and setting tentative plans for our the CHRISTMAS PARTY and Jim Rutledge will be doing a demo on NETWORKING COMPUTERS. Until then, Good Computing to everyone.

## HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO EVERYONE

from

**Corky, Donna & Bobby Bell**



# **Rebate or Rip-Off?**

by Roberta Furger

Air Force captain Johnny Reed thought he'd found a winner. Avatar Peripherals' Shark 250, a portable storage system for notebooks, was selling at Computer City for \$199 with a \$50 rebate. He mentally adjusted the price down to \$150--a deal by anyone's standards--and headed for the cash register. Never mind that he was actually paying \$200. He just had to fill out the paperwork and wait a few weeks for his check.

At least that's what Reed thought when he bought the Shark back in September 1997. But after eight months, his \$50 rebate check still hadn't arrived, and Reed had a different impression of Avatar's seemingly great deal and of rebates in general. "I love the product," he says, "but the rebates are a bigger hassle than they're worth."

## **The Check's in the Mail--Or Is It?**

Reed's experience isn't unique. In the past year, PC World has received many letters from irate consumers who filled out rebate forms, clipped UPC codes, and mailed off their proofs of purchase, but never received the promised check. Their purchases run the gamut: Zip drives from Iomega, modems from 3Com/U.S. Robotics, virus detection software from McAfee, and more.

Rebates are nothing new to the PC industry. Software companies in particular have been using them for years to boost sales and garner information about consumers. But as the marketplace has grown more competitive, the use of rebates--and the value of the offers--has skyrocketed. Big \$40 and \$50 rebates have become commonplace as peripherals companies fight for market share. Hewlett-Packard, Compaq, and others offer rebates of \$100 or more for items like PCs or printers.

Why the explosion of rebates? They give the perception of savings without requiring a company to actually drop prices. Retailers like CompUSA and Computer City advertise rebates aggressively to draw traffic into their stores. Their Sunday circulars typically feature the post-rebate price in big, bold type, with only a small notation that the highlighted price is "after rebate." Web retailers, too, use rebates to increase sales.

As hardware and software companies are quick to point out, when a promotion goes smoothly, everyone wins: Consumers save money, and retailers and vendors reap the added revenue. But fewer than half of all consumers who are eligible for rebates actually submit the necessary forms (estimates range widely, from 2 to 40 percent, depending on who is providing the statistics). In addition, poor planning, an ill-equipped fulfillment house, or a cash-strapped business can quickly destroy a rebate promotion--and with it customers' faith in a company.

Just ask Iomega, which became embroiled in a class-action

lawsuit last year after thousands of customers complained about the firm's failure to process rebate checks for its Zip drive in a timely fashion. The company has finally caught up with the backlog and, as part of the settlement, has issued \$3 coupons good toward the purchase of any Iomega product to consumers who participated in the original promotion.

## **PC World Goes Shopping**

Given the widespread use of rebates--and the high volume of complaints the promotions generate--PC World decided to put various companies' rebate programs to the test. In March we bought 15 hardware and software products with rebates ranging from \$10 to \$50 (see "[The Rebate Waiting Game](#)"). Where possible, we duplicated purchases, buying two of each product; in some cases only one was available. Like thousands of consumers before us, we filled out forms, collected the required proofs of purchase (receipts, UPC codes, and the like), and then waited for our checks to arrive.

In some instances, the wait was surprisingly brief: Our TimeS-lips rebate came less than three weeks after we mailed the forms; checks from Microsoft (for Office 97) and Intuit (for TurboTax and Quicken Deluxe) also arrived well before the end of the six-to-eight-week processing period. Other rebates, like our \$20 check from Labtec and the \$10 from Dr Solomon, came late, but at least we got the money. At press time--a full 20 weeks after mailing in our redemption forms--we have yet to receive rebate checks for four of the products. The missing rebates include a \$50 check from Avatar, \$40 from Hayes, \$20 from Diamond, and \$15 from Micrografx.

Once the specified processing time had passed, we contacted the remiss companies to check the status of the overdue rebates (without mentioning that we represented PC World). The reactions were remarkably uniform. First came the explanation: "We were overwhelmed by the response to our offer." Then, the apology: "We're sorry for the delay." And finally, the assurance: "We are processing checks as fast as we can."

Most companies provided us with toll-free numbers for the fulfillment houses that process the rebates and send out the checks, so we could check on the status of our rebates. Among the tardy companies, Hayes was particularly responsive, even giving us the direct line and e-mail address of the manager overseeing the rebate promotion (unfortunately, she never responded to our query).

Avatar gets the award for the most original response. Our two reporters both were told not to expect their checks to come any time soon--if ever. In lieu of checks, Avatar offered them a 250MB hard disk and a carrying case (a \$60 total value, we were told). One of our reporters took Avatar up on the alternate offer--as did a reluctant Johnny Reed. In both instances, the merchandise arrived as promised in a couple of days. When asked about the \$50 due, one representative said bluntly, "You can wait for the rebate, but I can't say when it will arrive."

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The explanation for the delay varied depending on who our reporters talked to. One person blamed "computer error at the fulfillment house," and Bill Burch, the company's direct sales manager, told us there were "changes going on internally" and that "rebates had been frozen."

A company spokesperson for Avatar in Milpitas, California, told us in early July that customer response to the \$50 promotion far exceeded expectations, and in May the company decided to eliminate the rebates and simply drop the price on all its products by \$50. At press time, however, we learned that Avatar had filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, though we were unable to reach anyone for comment.

## Don't Count Your Rebates Before They're Cashed

Although Avatar's decision to drop the price on the Shark came too late for consumers who banked on the \$50 rebate, it was a step in the right direction. "Consumers would be better served if companies simply offered the best, fairest price [in the first place]," says Cleo Manuel, vice president for public affairs of the National Consumers League in Washington, D.C.

Manuel advises consumers to think twice before being seduced by a sales promotion. "It's your money, and it's worth your time to consider all offers carefully," rather than simply buying a product because of an attractive rebate. "Rebates are only as good as the check in the mail," she says, "and many, many steps have to be followed before that check ever arrives."

The bottom line: Don't let potential savings from a rebate check determine your purchase. Consider your needs and finances, then buy the product that best fits both criteria. And if that product happens to come with a rebate, send in the forms, keep track of the due date, and don't give up until you're paid.

## The Rebate Waiting Game (chart)

Though many rebates arrived when expected or even earlier, we waited well past the promised turnaround time for others. Some never came.

Intuit TurboTax/Quicken Deluxe	\$28, \$60	\$20	6 to 8 weeks	2 weeks early
Kiplinger TaxCut Deluxe 2	\$30	\$10	6 to 8 weeks	on time
Maxtor 4.3 GB Hard Drive	\$230	\$30	12 weeks	5 weeks early
Microsoft Office 97, Small Business Edition Upgrade 3	\$240	\$40	6 to 8 weeks	3 weeks early
Microsoft Office 97, Standard Edition 3	\$230	\$40	6 to 8 weeks	1 week early
Sage U.S. Timeslips Personal 5.5 2	\$80	\$25	6 to 8 weeks	4 weeks early
Symantec Act 3.0 2	\$170	\$50	8 to 10 weeks	1 week early

Better late than never

Dr Solomon Anti-Virus 2	\$50	\$10	8 to 12 weeks	2 weeks late
Labtec 2412 Speakers	\$100	\$20	4 to 6 weeks	3 weeks late
McAfee VirusScan	\$40	\$20	6 to 8 weeks	weeks late

## Still waiting

Avatar Peripherals Shark 250	\$200	\$50	4 to 6 weeks	rebate not received
Diamond Stealth II S220	\$125	\$20	2 to 4 weeks	2 weeks late; rebate not received
Hayes 56K Internal K56 Flex Modem	\$130	\$40	8 to 12 weeks	rebate not received
Micrografx American Greetings Create-A-Card	\$50	\$15	8 to 10 weeks	2 weeks early; rebate not received

- 1 Rebate required purchase of both products.
- 2 Only one purchased (no duplicate) due to limited supply.
- 3 Rebate for upgrades only.
- 4 One rebate replaced by alternate offer.
- 5 One of two rebates received.
- 6 Second copy purchased for \$40.

## Getting the Most From Rebates

Rebates can be the source of great cost savings--or huge headaches. Here's how to profit from the promotions everyone loves to hate.

**DON'T LET A REBATE BAIT YOU.** Never buy a product just because of the rebate, no matter how big a refund check is offered.

**CHECK THE PULSE.** Note the expiration date of the rebate offer before purchasing a product. Stores often forget to remove expired promotional material. Don't assume that an offer is still valid just because the sticker is still on the box or the coupon is still in the store.

**EXAMINE THE SMALL PRINT.** Carefully read and follow all directions. While some fulfillment houses contact consumers who submit incomplete claims, others, we are told, simply "toss the papers in the trash" if any information is missing.

**KEEP ALL YOUR DOCUMENTATION.** Make copies of your receipt and supporting material. Note when you mailed the materials or get proof of mailing.

**BE PERSISTENT.** Keep track of when your check should arrive and contact the company if it's late. Even if a representative refers you to a rebate fulfillment house, ultimately it is the company's responsibility to make sure you're paid.

## The Trouble With Rebates

*Everybody likes to save a buck. But sometimes saving money can be expensive.*

*by Roberta Furger*

Money talks--just ask Daniel Ernst. When the Farmington Hills,  
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Michigan, accountant needed a removable mass storage device last year, he easily narrowed his search down to either the \$199 Iomega Zip drive or SyQuest's \$199 EZFlyer 230. Iomega's \$50 rebate offer persuaded him to go with the Zip drive.

The rebate was equivalent to one-quarter of the Zip drive's selling price, so Ernst bought the unit, filled out the rebate form, clipped the UPC code from the box, attached his receipt, and dropped his envelope in the mail to Iomega. And then he waited. And waited.

When six weeks had passed without a word (or a check) from Iomega, Ernst called the company and was told there was a backlog on rebate checks because of the "overwhelming" response to the promotion. The representative apologized, and told Ernst he could expect his rebate check shortly. And so Ernst waited. Again he called Iomega, and was told to resubmit his documentation. After seven months, two phone calls, and one e-mail message to our own PCW Advocate, Ernst finally got his rebate.

Troubles with rebates are nothing new. Over the last year, *PC World* has received numerous complaints about rebate promotions offered by Microsoft, NEC, Philips, and U.S. Robotics, and dozens of complaints from consumers about delays and other snafus relating to Iomega's rebate program. Although the specific products and offers vary considerably, the complaints are remarkably consistent: misleading promotions, lengthy delays in processing checks, and paperwork mix-ups.

## **Rebate Reprobates**

Fraud is rarely the issue with tardy rebates. Most of the problems can be chalked up to poor planning, says Seymour Merrin, president of Merrin Information Services, a Palo Alto, California, market research firm that tracks trends in the retail marketplace. Rebate programs backfire, says Merrin, because companies are unwilling to invest enough money in processing the submissions. "Many companies in our industry are so inexperienced or arrogant that they try to do the fulfillment themselves, or they use the cheapest redemption house available," he says. "It's like saying, 'Oh, the Indy 500 looks like a fun race; I think I'll enter it. After all, I've been driving for 15 years.'"

It's clear from my interviews with consumers that poorly managed promotions have soured many on rebate offers. George Siegel, a computer consultant in Southern California, is just one of many consumers I spoke with who steer clear of most rebate promotions.

"I personally view most of the present rebate offers as somewhere between sleazy marketing practices and outright larceny," declares Siegel. He cites as an example a recent promotion at a local computer store in which 8MB SIMMs were advertised for just \$29.95. When Siegel inquired further, he found that the price included two \$10 rebates--one from the manufacturer, one

from the store--but only if consumers bought *two* 8MB SIMMs. The actual price was \$49.95, which was much more than 8MB SIMMs cost elsewhere.

Siegel cites another example in which a software company priced an upgrade at \$170, then offered consumers a \$100 rebate for upgrading. His question: Why not just charge \$70 for the upgrade and spare consumers the hassle of having to fill out the forms, pay sales tax on a much larger purchase, and wait months for a rebate?

The answer is simple: Most hardware and software companies are hoping that although rebates will entice consumers to buy their products, most people will never actually get around to dealing with all the rigmarole required to redeem them.

"Based on normal marketing standards, there's a percentage of people who will [respond to a rebate offer] and those who won't," says Iomega spokesperson Cory Maloy. "Our actual response rate was greater than we anticipated," leading to a severe backlog in the processing of requests. Although Iomega won't disclose the actual percentage of buyers who responded to the rebate offer, other industry executives indicate that a response from more than 5 percent of the purchasers is considered high.

Richard Alexander, a consumer law attorney in San Jose, California, says his office has received a number of complaints from consumers who feel they've been ripped off by rebate offers. "I suspect that companies hope consumers will eventually forget about [the offer] and go away," says Alexander.

But there's another reason companies offer rebates instead of lower shelf prices: Every time a consumer does send in a rebate form, the company gains valuable information about its customers--information it can use in future promotions.

## **Consumers Fight Back**

Although no federal regulations specifically govern rebates, at some point repeated delays become a "material misrepresentation," says Allen Hile, assistant director in the Federal Trade Commission's division of marketing practices.

And what's considered timely? If a company promises to process rebates within 30 days, then "we can probably all agree that six months is probably too damn long," Hile says.

Alexander and other consumer advocates advise buyers to pursue until they get their money, rather than write off the errant rebate. The FTC's Hile says consumers should "complain to everyone they can think of" when they have trouble obtaining a valid rebate. "Write to the manufacturer, the store, the state attorney general's office, the Better Business Bureau," says Hile. "At some point it gets easier to process the rebates than to deal with all the complaints."

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## More on motherboards

by Arnie Gudyka

And when you're sending off those letters, don't forget to add *PC World* to your list of recipients. We plan to follow the subject closely in coming months.

*You can have your say on any consumer issue. Send e-mail to [consumerwatch@pcworld.com](mailto:consumerwatch@pcworld.com). Roberta Furger is a contributing editor for PC World. Her first book, **Does Jane Compute? is to be published by Warner Books in February 1998.**\**

### Rebate Smarts

Before you get swept away by a flashy rebate promotion, consider these points:

- Is the product really worth buying? You won't save a dime if you buy a product you don't need.
- Will you cash in on the offer? Consider your track record. If you never seem to find the time to fill out the forms, don't assume that this time will be different.
- Is the offer still valid? Retail shelves are full of products that tout impressive rebates, many of which have long since expired. Read the fine print--even if it means pulling the sticker off the package--to check.
- Do you need to keep your receipt? To reduce fraud, many companies require that consumers send in their original receipt to obtain a rebate. If you'll also need that receipt for business or tax purposes, you may want to think twice about the offer.
- Have you made a copy of the form? Don't send in a rebate offer without first copying the completed documentation.

Roberta Furger is a *PC World* contributing editor and author of *Does Jane Compute? Preserving Our Daughters' Place in the Cyber Revolution* (Warner Books, 1997). Staff Editor Angela Navarrete also contributed to this story.

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In reviewing my last month's write-up on motherboards, I stated that the Socket 7 motherboard would not run at 100 MHz. This is incorrect as the Socket 7 board will run at 100 MHz when used with the AMD K-2-3D Now P266 and P300 CPU's. I stated that the Cyrix and IBM

CPU's were also used with these boards but not at 100 MHz which is correct. A few people I discussed this with were not too enthused over the use of the Cyrix and IBM CPU's with this board. Whether this negativity is justified or not I can't say but maybe some of our members can add to this in future meetings.

I would like to point out that prices on the higher end of Intel CPU's fall at the rate of \$5 to \$30 a month (sometime more) and so that what you can't afford to buy today will be soon be affordable in the future. Intel's PII 350 MHz CPU is presently selling at approximately \$650, more or less, while the AMD K-6-2,3D Now P300 is going for approximately \$220-\$250. This amounts to about a \$400 price difference between the two CPU's both of which allow the motherboards to operate at 100mhz, while being almost equal in other aspects. Looks like Intel is no longer the major or even leading player in the CPU industry.

This rapid falling in prices reminds me of just three years ago when I added an additional 4 meg ram to my 486-DX 33 at a cost of \$180. (About \$45 a meg.) At the last computer show I attended, 4 megs of 30 pin ram was selling for a mere \$6. Several months ago I bought 16 meg for \$10. (or was it \$20?) Anyway, if today you cannot afford a machine that does everything with blinding speed, take heart because in one year it may well be something you will want to spend your money on.

As I mentioned last month, I am at a dead end on upgrading my 486DX-4 100 MHz. There are no im-

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provements I can make to upgrade and so my next thoughts are to get a Pentium II bare bones system and salvage what I can from my 486. The awful truth is that not much can be used from the old system. Even my mid-size tower which is an "AT" format size, is rapidly being replaced by the "ATX" tower for which most of the new motherboards are being designed. Some motherboards are still being designed for the AT tower, but the handwriting is already on the wall. To stick with the AT now means restricting your choices on upgrading in the future.

I can however salvage my sound blaster, wave blaster, speakers, monitor, 850 meg hard drive, (which I can eventually use as my second hard drive) and the 20x CD ROM drive. The floppy drive, keyboard and mouse add so little to the cost of a new system that they may as well be scrapped out with the old. However, finding a bare bones system which will include a PII CPU, a Bx motherboard with 512 K L2 cache, (APG and UDMA capabilities included) an ATX mid tower, PC100 SDRAM memory, an 8MB video board, a 31/2 floppy, mouse and keyboard, is difficult. In fact, the lower the advertised price, the more fuzzy is the description of the components involved. Consider this actual ad in today's paper: 233mmx, 32MB ram, 4.3 HDD, 32x CD, 3.5" FDD, Snd.,spkrs, kbd, mouse, 15" SVGA monitor. \$599.

Good deal? There is no way to know, as nothing is identified. Now consider the following ad in the Computer Shopper Catalogue (Sept issue, page 386) by a vendor named Amptech:

Intel PII 266 MHz CPU, Intel 440 BX AGP (chip)set motherboard with 512K L2 cache, 64MB PC100 SDRAM memory, 36x Max CD ROM, 8MB AGP Video board, 3.5" Floppy Drive, Midtower ATX-Case, PS 2 Keyboard /Mouse. Assembled and tested. Price \$529. Can Amptech deliver all this at this price? I doubt it. Individually, if the components are all as suggested, comparable prices shown at the computer show would add up to over \$800. I haven't called them yet to verify anything. I'll save that for next month's article.

## **DON'T LOSE TRACK OF YOUR MAIL**

Although we've covered the topic before, we still get a lot of e-mail on how to back up your e-mail and addresses, so let's see what we can do to make the job even easier.

To begin with, the Address Book isn't in the same location on all computers--its location depends on where you chose to put it the first time you ran Microsoft Mail. The default location for the file is \Windows\Application Data\Microsoft\Address Book, but many people click on some other folder during installation.

To locate the Address Book, choose Start, Find, Files or Folders to open Find. Now search Drive C and its subfolders for \*.wab. Once you've located the file, make a note of its exact location and name.

Now, you need to know the location of your mail files. To find the files, run Find, click the Named entry box and type

inbox.mbx

Now, click the Look in entry box and type

c:\

Select the check box labeled Include Subfolders and click Find Now. When Find locates your Inbox.mbx file, make a note of the full path.

Now, let's write a batch file that will back up both your mail messages (including added folders) and your Address Book. To write the batch file, run Notepad (click Start, Programs, Accessories, Notepad). Type in the following as shown here, making sure the path names in the last two lines match the paths where your Inbox and Address Book files are located.

```
@echo off
cls
echo.
```

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echo.  
echo.  
echo Insert a blank formatted floppy disk into Drive  
A  
echo.  
echo.  
echo.

pause

cls

copy "c:\Program Files\Internet Mail and News\Mail\\*" a:

copy c:\Windows\Application Data\Microsoft\Address  
Book\\*.wab a:

Choose File, Save As and name the file Mail.bat.  
Choose a folder in which to keep the file (C:\ will do)  
and click Save. When you run Mail.bat, you'll be  
prompted to insert a blank, formatted disk into Drive  
A. After you insert the disk, press the spacebar to  
continue. Mail.bat will copy all the items in each of  
the folders to the floppy disk.

To run Mail.bat, you can locate it using Windows  
Explorer and use the right-mouse button to drag its  
icon to the desktop. When you release the mouse  
button, a menu will appear. From this menu, choose  
Create Shortcut(s) Here. Now, you can double-click

---

### **WHEREVER YOU ARE, YOU CAN UNDO WHATEVER YOU DID**

Imagine, for a moment, that while working in a Windows  
Explorer or folder window, you delete a file or rename it  
or copy it or move it somewhere else--and then, a few  
moments later, while working in ANOTHER window,  
you decide you shouldn't have done that.

No problem. Everyone has the right to change his or her  
mind. And Windows 95 supports that right by giving you  
a way to undo what you did--and you don't even have to  
return to the window of the crime.

To undo your last file action, in any Windows Explorer  
or folder window, choose Edit + Undo. Televangelists  
can say what they will, but that's what we call true

## **The Y2K problem - solved!**

Subject: Resolution of Y2K desktop problems:

The most beneficial cost alternative for resolution of  
Y2K desktop issues has been defined. All desktops  
will be removed by Jan 1, 1999. Each desktop will be  
replaced with an Etch-A-Sketch.

Justification:

1. No Y2K problems
2. No technical glitches keeping work from being done.
3. No more wasted time reading and writing email.

Thank you.

### Frequently Asked Questions from the Etch-A-Sketch Help Desk:

Q: My Etch-A-Sketch has all of these funny little  
lines all over the screen. What do I do?

A: Pick it up and shake it.

Q: How do I turn my Etch-A-Sketch off?

A: Pick it up and shake it.

Q: What's the shortcut for Undo?

A: Pick it up and shake it.

Q: How do I create a New Document window?

A: Pick it up and shake it.

Q: How do I set the background and foreground to  
the same color?

A: Pick it up and shake it.

Q: What is the proper procedure for rebooting my  
Etch-A-Sketch?

A: Pick it up and shake it.

Q: How do I delete a document on my Etch-A-  
Sketch?

A: Pick it up and shake it.

Q: How do I save my Etch-A-Sketch document?

November, 1998 Member Profile

**Jim Rutledge**



E-mail Address:  
[JRutnet@ix.netcom.com](mailto:JRutnet@ix.netcom.com)

**Month of birth:** May

**Job:** Computer Specialist

**Hometown:** Bryan, Tx

**Book or Movie:** Goliath Awaits

**Favorite food:** Country Fried Steak

**Prized possession:** My life experiences & memories

**Someone I admire:** My father

**I wish I could stop:** Wars, hunger and animosity

**I want people to remember me:** Contributing to the world

**I use my computer for:** Everything but sex

**My favorite computer program is:** Web Ferret

**My favorite phrase or expression is:** "When the going gets tough, the tough gets going"

**Editor's Note:** Jim is one of the newer members of L.C.A.C.E., having just joined with our group in September, 1998 after attending only one meeting. Welcome to L.C.A.C.E. Jim, it's a pleasure to have you with us.

# Computer Country Expo

November 28, 1998

Great prices!

Bargains galore!

Save up to 70% off retail on everything computer!

This is Lake County's largest computer expo. The event is on Saturday from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. This show features computers, supplies, games, parts, software, accessories, CD-ROM, monitors, diskettes, printers, keyboards, modems, disk drives, cables, expansion boards, services, and anything else in the domain of computers!

New location: Lake County Fairgrounds, Route 120 (Belvidere Rd.) & Route 45, in Main Exhibit Hall Building #1—20,000 sq. feet of everything Computer!

See our WEB Site

<http://www.ccexpo.com/>

## FOR SALE:

FrontPage 97 - \$25 (NEVER USED)  
PrintMaster Gold Suite Ver 3.0 - \$10  
DeLorme Street Atlas Ver 4.0 - \$5  
Borland Paradox Ver 1.0 - \$10  
Easy Business Cards - \$5  
OS 2 Warp - \$10  
SoftRAM - \$5

Contact:

Corky Bell - 815.344.1271  
E-Mail - [corky@foxvalley.net](mailto:corky@foxvalley.net)



# Next Meeting!!!

*L.C.A.C.E Online*  
***View our Site***

[www.inf-net.com/lcace/default.html](http://www.inf-net.com/lcace/default.html)

- ◆ LCACE E-mail addresses
- ◆ LCACE information,
- ◆ LCACE history and pictures
- ◆ LCACE meeting location and map
- ◆ LCACE members e-mail addresses
- ◆ LCACE online membership application

**14 November 1998**

**Warren/ Newport  
Public Library**

**224 N. O'Plaine Road  
Gurnee, Illinois**

**11:30 am - 2:00 p.m.**

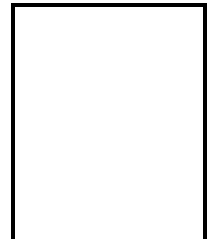
**This is the regular meeting location.**

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**L.C.A.C.E**

*Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts*  
409 S. Elmwood Ave  
Waukegan, IL 60085-5219

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**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**