



Just in time for Christmas

A free Productivity Suite, really.

MOAA Computer User Group

Our November TUG meeting was casual and laid back. No fixed agenda but a plethora of information passed among the attendees just the same

I went through (quickly I might add) my usage of Microsoft Publisher® to create this modest monthly publication. Publisher® is one of the applications within the MS Office Suite®. I then gave everyone information on Open Office.

Open Office is a suite of applications that is compatible with Microsoft Office®. The major difference is that Open Office is a free download. Free, not shareware or trial ware. You can, and I encourage you to do so, make a donation at their site to keep the project going.

Open Office is one of the open source software applications available to the home user. Open source means that it is not copyrighted and programmers of all levels of experience can contribute applets to www.openoffice.org for possible inclusion in future versions.

Let's face it, paid programmers are on deadlines to complete their particular portion of a project. Amateur programmers, or pros on their own time, have the luxury of

creating applets that can be added to an open source project at any time.

This means that actual users get to add features to the applications they want to have to use on a regular basis. A full featured application, not one with features added as you go up the pricing chain.

Open Office, version 3, contains the following applications, all of which are compatible with MS Office® suite.

- Writer—the word processor
- Calc—the spreadsheet
- Impress—presentation package
- Draw—graphics package
- Base—the database program

It's a large download, but it's still free, get your copy of Open Office at www.openoffice.org and make a donation when you do download it.

You may notice the small clipart images around the newsletter this month. Just my small way of reminding you (in case you hadn't noticed) that it's the Christmas season. A time for celebration. A time for giving. A time for sharing. Which brings me to...

Dues are due. Our annual meager assessment of \$20.00 per person, or \$30 per household is due and payable on January 1st.

For the statisticians and math wizards reading this, that comes to \$1.666666666 per month.

As you know, your continued membership in TUG gets you the benefit of a monthly newsletter and the opportunity to attend twenty-two meetings during the calendar year.

Membership also qualifies you for the monthly drawing for neat door prizes at the regular TUG session.

So in the spirit of giving, you give us twenty bucks, and will give you something to read for the next twelve months.

And, if you're *reeaally* in the giving mood, you can add a little extra to your check, it will be greatly appreciated. Anything to help defray our annual costs is always appreciated.



At the November meeting we also held our annual rail-roading, er, elections. Fortunately for us Lou, Gene and Polly have agreed to stick with us for another year. And, Sandy Wells stepped up and volunteered to be the right-hand (literally) assistant to Polly our Secretary Treasurer.

If you haven't been to a meeting recently, poor Polly broke her right thumb and has great difficulty in writing.

Thanks to Sandy for being a team player.

Merry Christmas and Aloha,

Jim

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It's beginning to look a lot like...Chapter two!



I got so many comments on my last list, most of which also included the question: "Can you do some more before Christmas?" Since this is online the 1st of December, I figured it was still time to shop, so with some help from my PR pal from Hammacher, what follows is another list which includes some from his and some I have found in various other places I like to shop. Pull out those debit and credit cards and away we go. This one is for all you Hawaii gamblers who spend your money in Vegas...with the airfares gone wild, you may want to stay home and still be able to play. **The Portable Touchscreen Blackjack Game.** This video blackjack game's color touchscreen LCD allows fast, ca-



sino-style game-play, and the entire unit is smaller than a laptop computer, ensuring ease of use when traveling. You can employ authentic blackjack strategies to take down the house; splitting aces, taking insurance to guard against a natural 21, and doubling down when you're holding an ace or a ten require only the touch of the screen. You can late surrender to cut your losses, and games can be played with one, two, or six decks to limit the effectiveness of card counting. The screen folds down and the device stores unobtrusively in a backpack or carry-on bag. Operates using three AAA batteries (not included) or the included AC adapter. Not a gam-

bling device. 9" W x 7 1/4" L x 7" D. (2 1/2 lbs.) Price: \$59.95 www.hammacher.com

How about a nifty speaker for your tunes? Great sound in a small package.

iLuv: iSP100 Mini Portable Stereo Speaker

iLuv iSP100 Brings Explosive Sound to the Palm of Your Hand

- Ideal for iPhone 3G, 2G, iPod and MP3 players

- Powerful built-in surround sound speakers

- jAura Acoustic Speaker Technology

- Auxiliary line input plug for any audio devices with 3.5mm jack

- Carrying pouch included

Price: \$34.99

www.i-luv.com



In case you haven't heard vinyl is making a comeback...so grab this one of a kind.

The Smallest Portable Turntable.



Only available from Hammacher Schlemmer, this is the smallest portable turntable available, capable of playing

full-sized LPs through two 5-watt, full-range speakers built into the front of the hardwood case. Its three-speed belt-driven mechanism can play 33 1/3, 45, and 78-speed LPs. The diamond stylus picks up all the nuances of vinyl records, and the speakers deliver clear sound with volume and

tone controls. The case's top removes completely; both halves secure with sturdy clasps for storage or transit. It also has a sturdy handle. Plugs into AC with the included adapter. 4 3/4" H x 14 1/4" W x 8" D. (8 lbs.) Price: \$99.95

The Electronic Word Search Game.

This device puts over one million word search games in the palm of your hand. You can choose from seven word list categories, such as sports, music, and food and drink, and four levels of difficulty, and the device will automatically generate a challenging puzzle that's



commensurate with your wordsmithery. The game's backlit touchscreen interface allows you to quickly

find words with the stylus, and each uncovered word remains circled, ensuring authentic word search game play. A touch of the screen provides clues and the device includes three additional word games like Letter Rack, a game that challenges you to spell as many words as possible using six letters. Requires two AAA batteries. 6" H x 3 1/2" x 1" D. (12 oz.) Price: \$69.95 [www.hammacher](http://www.hammacher.com)

(continues on page 3)

(Continued from page 2) *Da Prez*

Calling all MAC-sters...this will keep your notebook looking new for a looong time.

Agent 18: MacBook Air Shield
(not illustrated)

Fully functional protection without sacrificing any style of the world's thinnest notebook.

- Constructed of durable polycarbonate
 - Accessibility to all connectors & vents
 - Available in white, black and pink
- Price: \$49.99

The Slimmest Bluetooth® Speakerphone.

Just over 1/2" thick, this is the slimmest Bluetooth speakerphone available. Built-in echo cancellation and noise suppression software enable its microphone to capture your voice



without error, and its speaker provides clear voice quality so you can place it in a cup holder, clip it to a visor, or set it on your dashboard and

still carry on conversations with no crackling. It also has a mute button that allows you to carry on a side conversation while on conference calls. It can pair with up to seven different Bluetooth-enabled devices. Provides up to eight hours of talk time (up to 500 hours of standby time) before requiring a three-hour recharge using the included AC or DC chargers, so you can recharge at home or in your car. Requires Bluetooth-enabled cell phone. Supports Skype® calls. 5" L x 1 3/4" W x 1/2" D. (2 3/4 oz.) Price: \$69.95

www.hammacher.com

Blackline GPS: Blip

Free application for BlackBerry users that allows you to "Share Your

Where" with friends, family, and co-workers

- Free download for any GPS-enabled BlackBerry
 - Adds a new layer to Social Networking with location-based awareness
 - Track location history and view speed and direction
 - Secure system allows you to share your where with only the users you select
 - Interfaces with BlackLine's flagship product, GPS Snitch, providing on-demand tracking
- Price: FREE

www.blacklinegps.com

If u only take one trip out of the USA this coming year, pickup one of these...U WILL need it, trust me!

The 150 Country Travel Adapter. (not illustrated)

This is the adapter that fits in a shirt pocket and provides plug adaptation for USB- or AC-powered devices in over 150 countries throughout Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas and Caribbean, and Australia. The adapter's plug configures to fit a variety of international sockets, and its AC outlet and two built-in USB ports allow you to power or charge three devices at once. The USB ports eliminate the need to carry multiple charges for USB-powered cell phones, digital cameras, iPods, and more. An integral surge protector protects electronics from potential power spikes. 3" H x 2" W x 2 1/2" D. (3 1/3 oz.)

Price: \$29.95

www.hammacher.com

That's about it for now, remember my advice on 'net shopping...don't jump at the first price, look around and see if there's a bet-



2008 TUG Officers

Pres—Lou Torraca

VP—Gene Leupp

Sec/Treas—Polly Leigh

Assistant—Sandy Wells

Volunteers

Program Directors—

Herman Jordan

and Bear Maher

Newsletter—Jim Fromm

Distribution—Rose Miller

and friends

Contact info is on our web site:

www.the-tug.org



ter deal...including shipping! Also, please remember to keep your anti-virus, anti-malware and spyware up-to-date and don't click on links you're not sure about. Have fun with your Holiday shopping. Seeyah next year... where did 2008 go???

Come see us at our next meeting. Visit www.the-tug.org for schedules and directions.



Lou Torraca

Happy Holidays and

Aloha,

Lou

Shortly after the presents have been opened and put away. After the New Year's fireworks and football games are over it's time to start thinking about the most dreaded season of all. Yes, that's right, Tax season.



None of us are immune to the far-reaching arm of the IRS.

Some of you are fortunate enough to be able to afford your own accountant. Some have to rely on a store-front tax preparer. Still others like to do their own tax papers annually.

In the hope that all of you will find one that applies to your particular situation, here is a link that will give you a number of options.

<http://www.free-tax-software.net/>

While the name may be a bit misleading, because some of the listings charge a fee, this is still a good source for getting started.

Of course, you can purchase tax preparation software off the shelf and on-line.

H&R Blocks Tax Cut can be had for as little as \$14.95 and can be found at www.hrblock.com

Tax ACT standard version is FREE, visit www.taxact.com/

TaxSlayer lets you e-file for as little as \$9.95 Learn more at www.taxslayer.com/

Even the IRS gets in on the act. Visit www.irs.gov/efile/ to find a Free File company.

Free Tax USA will let you pre-

pare your federal return but Hawaii is not one of the listed 32 states they support.

www.freetaxusa.com/

Of course, Turbo Tax from Intuit is also listed. Package prices vary by complexity of your return.

I Can eFile—this site will file your federal and state returns for free. They do ask for a donation to keep the site going. www.icanefile.org

Plus, there are a number of on-line tax preparation sites if you need to file in another state. Just do a search for tax preparation software to find something to fit your specific need.

Would you like to explore our universe, and neighboring ones, from the comfort of your home? Ever seen a bubble nebula (Nov. 13, 2008 entry)? Have you seen nebulas, novas and black holes? You can if you visit this NASA website for an Astronomy Picture of the Day.

<http://tinyurl.com/jlytn>

Some really amazing and beautiful photos. A number of them from the Hubble Space Telescope. Scroll through the index for some spectacular views. Have a nice trip.

At the December 6th meeting we are planning a silent auction. Members are encouraged to bring their used, but useable, computer related items. Reference



Association of PC User Groups

The TUG is a member in good standing. An international organization dedicated to the promotion and assistance to User Groups worldwide.



books, software and hardware can be bought, traded or donated for the auction.

Here are the particulars to follow:

1—bring your item(s) for sale or trade.

2—attach the starting bid and a note with a brief description of the item(s). Leave room for folks to print their names and bids.

3—display tables will be set up and AC outlets available if you want to show off your hardware item(s) in action.

4—agree to donate at least 10% of the winning bid price to the TUG. Your choice of any percentage between 10% and 100% will be accepted and appreciated. A percentage of these proceeds will be donated to the OVC.

5—bring your hobbyist friends. Remember dues are due, maybe we can pick up some new members from your neighborhood.

6—take any unsold items with you after the meeting

There could be enough hardware items to build a working computer for the grandkids or as a backup for yourself.

See you there?

You can read all of President Lou's on-line columns by going to

Oceanic's Around Town at <http://tinyurl.com/363qew>