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THE 'NET LETTER

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FROM THE COMPUTER GUY

Hello! Welcome to this first edition of The 'Net Letter. In this letter you are going to find my ideas, opinions about computers the Internet, computer prices, news in the computer world for both hardware and software. I'll also tell you where I go to get the best buys for both software and hardware.

When I see especially good prices, software, hardware and ideas for the Internet I'll tell you about those too. It'll end each issue with questions from you, the reader.

This newsletter is going out to all my current customers and anyone they think would enjoy it for the first few issues.

COMPUTERS

WIN 95

I have been using Windows 95 (a beta copy of this program first) since April 1995, and, quite frankly, I like it and I'll tell you some of the reasons why. My desktop is clean (that's the area of your screen you look at when Windows first fires up - for you still using Windows 3.1 or 3.11 - it's called the Program Manager Group.) with just the minimum number of icons showing and customized with a picture of my favourite place, Hawaii. When you want to start a program you press the Start button. Makes sense! To help you adjust to the new look and feel Windows 95 keeps some old favourites like the File Manager and the Control Panel. Most of the accessories from Win 3.xx are carried over and improved. The biggest improvement within the Accessories, in my mind, is with the Write program(which is now called Word Pad). It now accepts long file names and uses the Word 6 format as a basis for its structure. You can still use the ASCII format or Writes' native format (*.wri) and it will import all the most

common word processing programs around. Another major new addition to Windows is the use of the right mouse button. All the most commonly used commands, in many of the Windows programs or accessories, can be accessed by clicking on the right mouse button. I have found the command I use most with the right button is 'properties'. Within properties you can change the basic configuration of the program you are using. More and more I see software companies making use of the right mouse button. Once you get familiar with it you'll wonder why it took so long for the software companies to incorporate this into their software!

INTERNET

The Internet. The Information Super Highway. Everyone talks about it; everyone says you must be a part of it, especially if you are running a business. People praise it to the heavens. There's so much information, so much to see, so much you can do! Other people warn about the pornography that runs rampant throughout the Internet and moan over the horror of it all. How will we protect our children? How can we regulate this beast before it gets out of hand? Is the Internet as good/bad as all this? Yes. If you're not on it should you be? Yes, especially if you are in business. Mind, you won't do a lot of business over the net today. But, in a very short tomorrow and the day after this is where business will be done. Can the negative aspect be controlled? Not by government, it has to be done on an individual basis. It's up to you to regulate yourself and your children just as you do in other aspects of your/their lives. In the months ahead I will go into all areas of the Internet, how to use it and how to get the most out of it, the different programs needed to run it and how to set those up. I'll also cover the newest aspect of the Internet called the Intranet.

PRICES

If you have noticed it yet, RAM prices have dropped dramatically in the past two months. The prices have gone from over \$60 per meg of 72 pin RAM to less than \$20 at one point. Currently, a 4 meg strip of 72 pin RAM can be bought for about \$85.00 (In the Lower Mainland see New Tech Computers 327-2003, Cedarwood Computers 583-2573 and Netlink Computers 451-8611.). The other primary component that has seen a large drop very recently is the Pentium 100+ CPU. These chips are forecast (at this writing) to drop by \$100 or more! It is now possible, in the Lower Mainland, to

purchase a Pentium 100 multimedia system with a 14.4 modem for under \$1,700.00.

NEWS

BBS's

America-On-Line, CompuServe, Prodigy, The Microsoft Network, Bloom County, Rogues Gallery, The Lion's Den, Uniserve... what do all these companies have in common? They are all known as bulletin boards. Some charge fees and are available world-wide while others are free and locally operated, a one man show. What is a bulletin board? It is a means by which you can use your computer to connect to another computer (the host computer) and access all sorts of things and people. It's a place where you can download freeware and shareware software, where you can 'chat' live with others on the 'board', where you can send and receive email, and where you can post messages. It's getting to the point where BBS's are fast becoming virtual communities.

SOFTWARE/HARDWARE

Do you have anti-virus software on your computer yet? If not, why not? Anti-virus software should not be an option on your computer anymore. It should be mandatory if you ever put someone else's disk in your computer, if you download files from another computer either through a bulletin board or from the Internet you need a good anti-virus program. While there are many, I recommend one of these two, Symantec's Norton Anti-Virus or McAfee Anti-virus. Both come in versions for DOS, Windows 3.x and Windows 95 formats. If any of the above scenarios apply to you, you need to have an anti-virus program. Unless, of course, you like supporting people like me who rid computers of viruses.

YOUR QUESTIONS

This publication is meant for readers. It will reflect your wants and needs when it comes to your computer(s) and how best to use them, upgrade them, and generally enjoy them. To do that I need and want your input which I will share with others through this newsletter. Those of you who are already on the Internet can receive this through your email address. If you know of someone else who would like this, let me know. Conversely, if you do not want this letter, let me know that too. I want to hear any questions you may have and what subjects you'd like me to delve into. Anything. And

there is no charge for questions asked and answered here in The 'Net Letter. Of course, if you want detailed, one-on-one assistance for software, hardware or Web Page development you can always call me at 536-0040, fax at 536-0045, email at mvanert@uniserve.com or you can visit my Web Page at http://dragon.fronet.com/the_well/well.htm to set up an appointment for personal help. My rates are still the best around — call for a quote. As an added bonus, if you refer someone to me during the month of May I'll give you ½ hr. free time the next time we get together.

MICHAEL VAN ERT

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