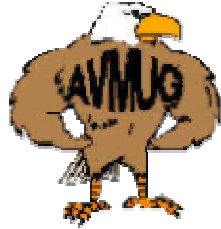


Antelope Valley Microcomputer Users Group

AVMUG NEWSLETTER



August 2005

12th Annual Southwest Computer User Group Conference – A Grand Success!

by Bob Lion, Past President
AVMUG

What a fantastic event! It was held August 5-7 as a Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday morning event. For a modest conference registration fee of only \$40.00, and a room rate of \$99.00 (single or double occupancy), about 360 computer users took advantage of of this attractive package deal. How about a bonus of 6 meals which were sponsored by supporting

vendors! In addition to all the drawings, free attendee “goodie” bag, and exciting workshops, there was an opportunity to make new friends. You could spend some personal time visiting in the Hospitality Suite and enjoy the casual atmosphere/snacks, or sit out on the patio and visit in the cool of the comfortable San Diego evening.

The conference was co-chaired by Judy Taylour and Patricia Hill, and was a concert of unified efforts of user group volunteers , vendors, and hotel support staff. This year, the conference was held at the beautiful Town and Country Resort & Convention Center, in the San Diego Hotel Circle area, just off Interstate 8. This large resort has

numerous restaurants, pools, gift shops, and relaxation areas.

This is the second conference I attended. I arrived Friday afternoon, checked in and found I had a nice spacious air conditioned room. Registration was from 2:00 to 5:45 PM. I pick up my attendee packet, which contained numerous handouts, software, and a well laid-out conference agenda.

The conference started with dinner, which was sponsored by Smart Computing. They publish several PC-related magazines. They offer subscriptions as well as online subscriptions at a very reasonable price and currently have a fantastic

promotion running for user group members. I have a subscription and highly recommend them.

Saturday, Pinnacle Systems and Family History DVD sponsored breakfast and put on demonstrations of their product. Pinnacle demonstrated how easy it was to put together digital video clips and Family History DVD demonstrated how easy it is to put together a digital album of pictures and movies. I bought the Family History DVD and I own Pinnacle software – I can recommend both as excellent.

Next was a series of simultaneous workshops – this is where I sometimes wish I could clone myself to take advantage of all that's happening. Four Ballrooms are set up to hold the one-hour each, workshops. The first set of workshops were on User Group Administrations, What is the Best Projector for your User Group, Creating a Personal Webpage, and the Digital Photo Guy – I wanted to know how to create a webpage (and I was fortunate to win a workshop door prize from Microsoft).

After the break, the next set of workshops covered How to Obtain a Grant, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), Organizing a Lifetime of Photos in Element 3.0, and the New World of 9:1 Software for our digital way of life – I went to the latter to see what's available in digital software suites.

Intel sponsored lunch and put on a presentation about their latest hardware and showed everyone the computer system they were offering as a drawing prize – good show Intel!

The next set of workshops were on Members' Only Webpage, Getting to Know APCUG, Printer Refills, Resetting and Repairs, and The Perfect Backup Approach – I attended the latter after recently having learned a hard lesson from not backing up.

After the break, the next set of workshops covered Community Service, Growing Your User Group, Demystifying Inkjet Printing, and Internet Security. I attended the Internet Security Workshop to get up to speed on how to protect my computer. A program was also put on by CompUSA – a company which is working

hard to support user groups through their stores – watch for special offerings. After all the workshops, everyone met in a large room and a panel was set up consisting of vendor representatives. Attendees had an opportunity to ask questions in an informal Q & A format.

Dinner was buffet in a large ballroom, followed by the Vendor Faire. Twenty-nine vendors set up tables all along the walls of the room. This gave everyone an opportunity to take advantage of special pricing and ask questions directly to the vendor representatives. I had a nice chat at the Digital Photo Guy table and talked with reps at some of the other tables. Before closing, Judy and Patricia went around the room with a microphone and each vendor donated prizes for a drawing (I won a years' anti-virus subscription from ESET software). It took almost an hour to give all the prizes away.

Afterwards, I went to the Hospitality Suite, had some refreshments, and met some other user group members – we discussed how to help the seniors of our communities learn the basics of computing.

Sunday morning, Corel sponsored breakfast, and put on a great presentation. The last set of workshops concerned how to better serve your user group by sharing and discussing topics of interest. These last programs were for Program Chairs, Treasurers, Editors, and Presidents. I attended the Presidents workshop and got some ideas for AVMUG. I asked the Big Bear user group to send us some of their information – they have some great ideas. The final event of the conference was lunch sponsored by Microsoft – they put on a great presentation. I liked hearing about their new digital software, Vista, and Mindshare. Microsoft also gave away many bonus items after their presentation.

Microsoft has been good to AVMUG and in 2003 sent us their Digital Imaging Suite and Office 2003 software, which we demonstrated at our January and February membership meetings last year. They provided some other items, which we have given out or used as door prizes. Their support has been instrumental to ensure AVMUG continues to be here to serve the

community. As our numbers continue to grow, we hope to get Microsoft to resume their annual visits to AVMUG.

After Microsoft's presentation, awards were given out for the winning user group websites and newsletter. AVMUG also won a drawing for software.

Our user group strives to provide you with a variety of benefits of membership and opportunities to participate and learn. The more you participate, the more you get back. The conference provides you with a chance to learn about computing, helping your club to provide more, making some new friends, and have a vacation in the process. I encourage you to take an active role in your club (via the Talent Pool) and make plans to attend next year (and leave a little time to enjoy the resort and San Diego area).

Be sure to attend the August meeting! AVMUG is committed to keeping you up-to-date on the latest information to keep your computer safe and working properly!

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Hirschbuler

vice-president@avmug.av.org

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secretary@avmug.av.org

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treasurer@avmug.av.org

Webmaster – Ky Moffet

webmaster@avmug.av.org

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Caricofe

editor@avmug.av.org

Past President – Bob Lion

past-president@avmug.av.org

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Fundraising Advisor - Ed

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treasurer@avmug.av.org

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Our Internet Site:

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Our Phones:

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and mail it (or bring it to a meeting) along with your check to:
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Membership Includes Immediate Family

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(optional)

How did you hear about us? _____
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PC Computer Information

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Dial UP ___ DSL ___ Satellite ___ Other ___

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Bring a Friend!!