



**FRONT RANGE
PC USERS GROUP**

The Monthly Edition Of The

k-Byte

Newsletter



V. 24, No. 6, June 2007

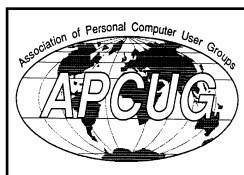
Users Helping Users

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**SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER AND LIVE
DEMO IN JUNE—SEE PAGE 6**

JULY IS “ZOO MONTH”—SEE PAGE 6



Quote of the Month

The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village.

Marshall McLuhan [1967]

Finding Ghosts In Your Computer

by Mike Morris, Front Range PC Users Group,
<http://www.frpcug.org>

You think I am kidding? The Microsoft Knowledgebase article on this subject refers to “...”ghosted” devices...” and “Phantom devices....”

Before I get started with an explanation, four facts need to be identified:

1. I owe a thank you to fellow Front Range PC Users Group member Howard Norlin for suggesting this article.
2. This article is based on the Microsoft Knowledgebase Article ID 315539 for Windows XP Home and Professional. Connect to <http://support.microsoft.com/search/> to locate the article. Enter the article number, 315539, into the search field and GO. The article has the long title of: “Device Manager does not display devices that are not connected to the Windows XP-based computer.”
3. Under the “STATUS” heading of this article, you will find this statement: “This behavior is by design.” [Ed. Note: that means that “(t)his behavior...” is a feature, not a bug].
4. Yes, I am aware of the famous movie about finding and destroying ghosts. Even I am aware of that movie and I haven’t been to a movie in a theater in decades. I decided not to use the movie title in this article in order to avoid any potential copyright conflict.

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About *k-Byte*

Published monthly, *k-Byte* is the official newsletter of the Front Range Personal Computer Users Group (FRPCUG): our mailing address is PMB 152, 305 W. Magnolia, Fort Collins, Colorado 80521.

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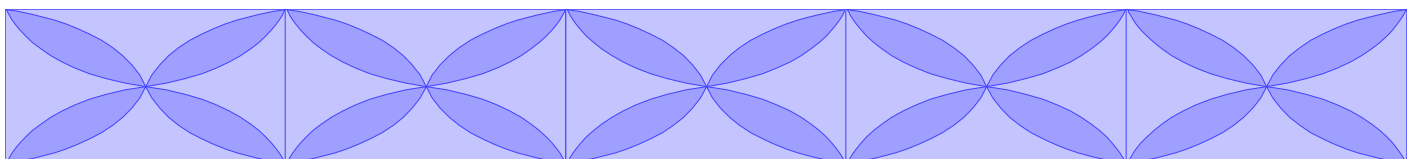
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About FRPCUG

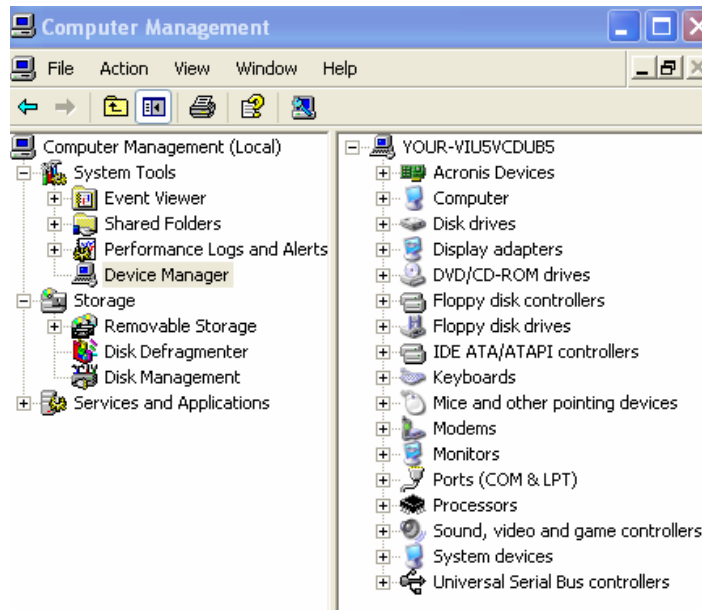
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(Continued from page 1)

The Device Manager feature in Windows can be used for several purposes. Perhaps one of the best known uses is troubleshooting. Here is one method of obtaining access to Device Manager, using a series of mouse clicks:

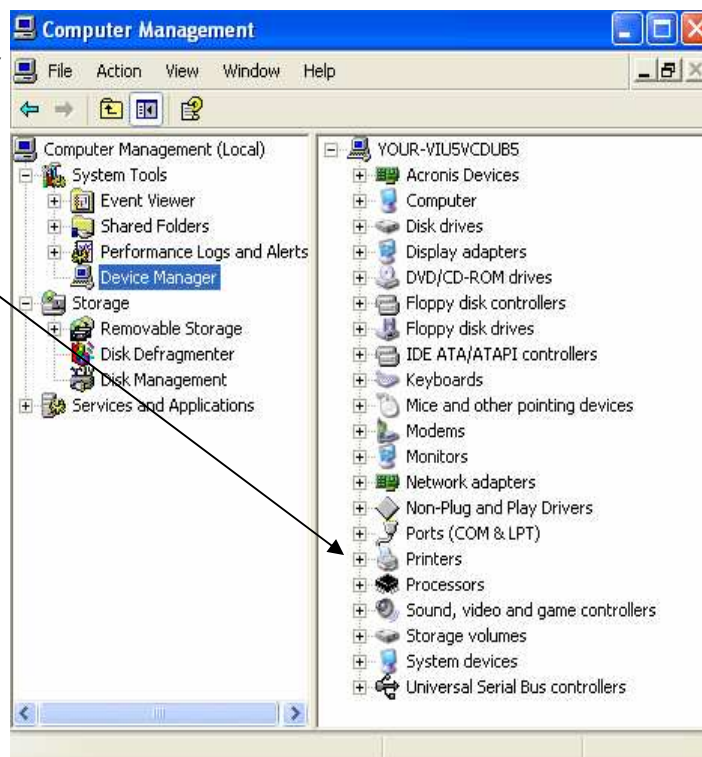
Click on Start/Click on Control Panel/Double click on Administrative Tools/Double click on Computer Management. Then, under System Tools, click on Device Manager. A list of device categories is displayed:



It may not be obvious at first glance, but not everything is displayed that you might expect. On the Computer Management Menu Bar, click on View, then on "Show hidden devices." Examine the result:

Look carefully, and you will see the "Printers" category has been added.

One may speculate—and debate—why the printer category is classified as a "hidden" device. The point is, selecting the "Show hidden devices" option still does NOT provide a complete list of hardware or software items that are—or were—connected to the computer. That result is the origin of the phrase "ghosted devices."



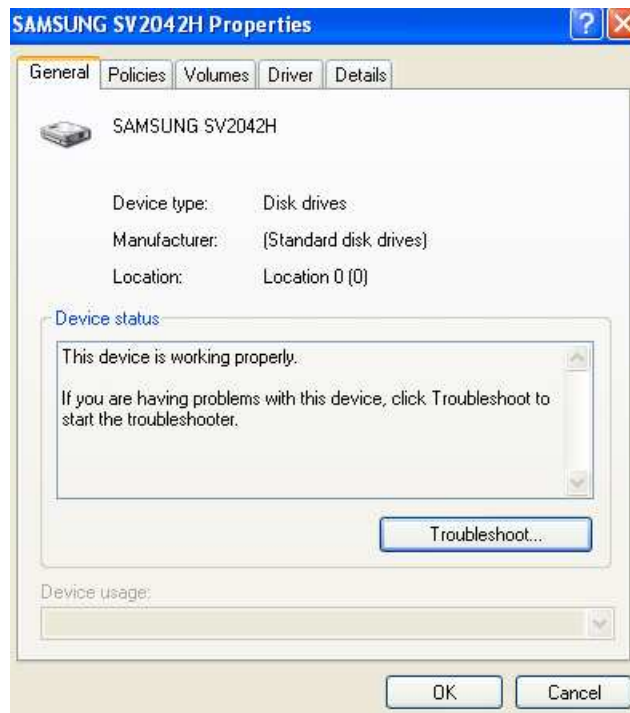
Why should you care?

Perhaps for the majority of users, knowledge of this issue is not critical. However, as mentioned earlier, Device Manager can be used as a troubleshooting aid. For example, if I click on the + sign to the left of Disk Drives listed in the right panel of the Computer Management window, and then double click on the device displayed, a device-specific window is displayed.

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This window offers several options for troubleshooting a malfunctioning device.



If the malfunctioning device is not listed when the “Show hidden devices” option is selected, it is time to use the procedure described in the article 315539. Note that the article makes reference to USB devices and docking stations for laptop computers.

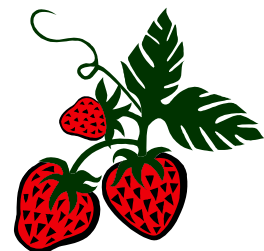
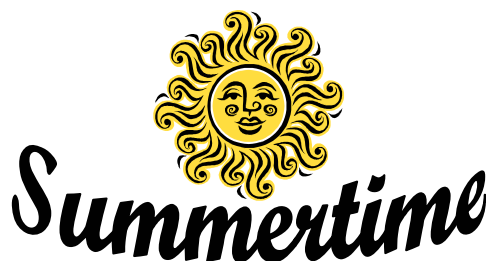
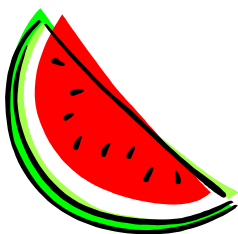
There is another type of “ghost” revealed when using the procedure described in the Microsoft article. If you have been using your computer for any reasonable length of time, the probability is high that you have installed/uninstalled hardware and software since the original purchase. Using the “show_non_present_devices” command will reveal leftover drivers that were not (but should have been) removed during the uninstall process—“ghosts” hiding in your computer.

It is time to answer the two questions I am certain everybody has:

- Q: Did I try the procedure?
- A: Yes.

- Q: Did I find any “ghosts”?
- A: Yes. I found a driver from a virus protection software package I uninstalled a long time ago. It was listed under the “Non-Plug and Play Drivers” category.

I wonder if I can now join the ranks of “Ghost B_____.” There—I (almost) said it.



VistaVexes: Part 1

by Jan Fagerholm, Assistant Editor, PC Community, Hayward, California, <http://www.pcc.org>, [jan-f\(at\)pacbell.net](mailto:jan-f(at)pacbell.net)

By the time you read this, Vista will be retail. The final version was released to businesses mid-November last year, with the boxed retail product released January 31st.

Vista has many new features, and not just the interface (GUI). Microsoft's new restrictions on kernel access creates problems for many applications. While this was done to reduce security vulnerabilities, it produces incompatibilities in many common applications. Here's a few I've had trouble with:

- McAfee Internet Security Suite
- McAfee VirusScan Enterprise
- Norton Internet Security Suite
- Symantec AntiVirus Enterprise
- Cyberlink PowerDVD 7
- ABBYY FineReader 8.0
- Microsoft Visual Studio 2005
- Google Earth (any version)
- Partition Magic 8
- PerfectDisk 8
- Roxio Easy Media Creator Suite 9

And many more lesser known programs. Anything that uses kernel space is going to have a problem. McAfee has been particularly vociferous about Windows insecurity and is having a semi-public fight with Microsoft right now to try and get information from Microsoft about kernel space in Vista, which Microsoft is reluctant to release for security reasons. Both Symantec and McAfee have beta versions of potential Vista-compatible products available. You decide if you want to trust your antivirus protection to a beta....

There are alternatives, though. Several smaller companies in that market have released Vista compatible versions of their products. I've had success with AVG and Avast! on Vista, and am using these. Windows Defender works OK for anti-spyware and anti-phishing, though the default notification settings are intrusive, and it requires too much micro management to get the in-your-face warnings down to a reasonable level. The excellent Ad-Aware SE Pro works fine on Vista, and I'm presently using that.

Many of the applications I've had trouble with are utilities: backup programs, disk partitioners, and the like. This is to be expected, as utilities generally run much closer to the metal, so to speak, and are more sensitive to the architectural changes in Vista. I'm looking for updates or replacements for about a dozen utilities I use for system-level maintenance and recovery. Anything that is written to a particular version of the Microsoft Foundation Class (MFC) seems to have a problem. If you've ever had anything that complains about MFC422.DLL, you know what I'm referring to.

Vista uses DirectX 9 to get the Aero interface, so any application that uses DirectX will turn off Aero with a brief black screen then revert to the Windows Vista Basic theme (no transparency) before continuing. When you quit the application, it goes black screen again, then restores the Aero interface. This might not be so objectionable, if it were only games that did this, but virtually every video player (including Windows Media Player 11) does this with codecs that use DirectX to display video.

Even some non-multimedia applications do this. I like to have Visual Thesaurus 3.0 running while I'm writing. It uses DirectX to produce a graphical display of word relationships, so of course it shuts off Aero while

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Calendar of Events

June General Forum Meeting

We will meet at the Fort Collins Senior Center on:

Day	Date	Time
Tuesday	June 5th	7:00 PM

Meeting Agenda:

Time	Topic
7:00 to 7:15	Announcements
7:15 to 8:00	Open Forum
8:00 to 8:15	Break
8:15 to 9:00	What's New in Sophisticated Computer Games + LIVE DEMO

July General Forum Meeting

We will meet at the Fort Collins Senior Center on:

Day	Date	Time
Tuesday	July 10th	7:00 PM

Meeting Agenda:

Time	Topic
7:00 to 7:15	Announcements
7:15 to 8:00	Open Forum
8:00 to 8:15	Break
8:15 to 9:00	Annual Hardware/ Software Zoo

*See you at the meetings!
Get full membership benefits. If you are
not a current member, download an
application from
<http://www.frpcug.org/memberap.html>*

Future General Forum Meeting Notes

The June General Forum meeting includes a LIVE DEMO! The Topic is "What's New in Sophisticated Computer Games," presented by special guest speaker Erin Varao. There is a theory that computer games are the technology driver for high speed graphics. Whether you subscribe to this theory or not, come and enjoy the fun!

July is Show and Tell time, or maybe Show and Sell. Or perhaps, Show and Swap. Whatever your interest is, The July 10th General Forum meeting is the date of the annual HARDWARE/SOFTWARE ZOO. PLUS: A Quick tour of the newly and expertly remodeled FRPCUG website. Learn about the member benefits now available—including special offers.

Future SIG's, Seminars, and Other Meetings

New Technology SIG

The New Technology SIG provides advance support for all PC related operating system and telecommunication issues. The meetings are held at 7:00 PM on the third Thursday of each month at Bluebird Manufacturing Inc., 1421 Webster Avenue, in Fort Collins. For more information, contact Chuck McJilton at 970-493-2987.

Board Meeting

FRPCUG's executive board meets on Wednesday of the week following the General Forum meeting. All members are welcome and are encouraged to attend. These meetings are held at 7:00 PM in the Staff Board Room of the Fort Collins Senior Center.

Shop Talk

One-on-one assistance. Drop in to the Senior Center lobby on any Saturday (holidays excepted) from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Directions to the Fort Collins Senior Center

The Fort Collins Senior Center is located at 1200 Raintree Drive. This site is situated at the northwest corner of the Shields and Raintree Drive intersection, on the north side of the Raintree Shopping Center. Check the marquee at the main entrance for directions to the specific meeting room. See map on page 12.

June 2007

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

					1	2 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
3	4	5 FRPCUG General Forum Meeting 7:00 PM	6	7	8	9 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
10	11	12	13 FRPCUG Board Meeting 7:00 PM	14	15	16 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
17	18	19	20	21 New Technology SIG meeting 7:00 PM	22	23 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

July 2007

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1	2	3	4 HOLIDAY	5	6	7 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
8	9 SPECIAL DATE	10 FRPCUG General Forum Meeting 7:00 PM	11	12	13	14 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
15	16	17 SPECIAL DATE	18 FRPCUG Board Meeting 7:00 PM	19 New Technology SIG Meeting 7:00 PM	20	21 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
29	30	31				

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it's running. This demonstrates what continues to be a flaw in the Windows architecture; it is still not multi-threaded, so there are many resources it cannot share.

This all sounds doom and gloom, but at least there are some nice enhancements to compensate. I'm particularly fond of the new taskbar clock, which has the ability to show three time zones simultaneously. Bring up the taskbar clock and click on the "Change date and times settings" link. There is a "Additional Clocks" tab, where you may choose one or two additional clocks and set the desired time zones. Then, when you display the clock, it will show the system time and the additional time zones that you specified. The Tool Tip also displays the additional times when you move the mouse cursor over the clock. Also, the taskbar clock comes up with a single click now, as it does in Linux.

Vista is still a bit raw. Looking at vendor's Web sites, they are not rushing into Vista versions of their software, particularly device drivers for hardware. Vista will be pain along with gain for the next few months.

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VistaVexes: Part 2

by Jan Fagerholm, Assistant Editor, PC Community, Hayward, California, <http://www.pcc.org>, [jan-f\(at\)pacbell.net](mailto:jan-f(at)pacbell.net)

Applications compatibility is still slow coming in Vista. Since Vista came out, Microsoft has released one update aimed at improving applications compatibility (KB929427). While it is not unreasonable to expect vendors to update their applications, Microsoft has not been forthcoming with information that vendors need. Both Symantec and McAfee (70% of the anti-virus market) are at open war with Microsoft over the lack of kernel information on Vista. Microsoft says this is for "security reasons". This reasoning seems specious in view of That Other Operating System (Linux), which is Open Source. Anyone can download the kernel source code and study how it works, and Linux has far better security than Windows for just that reason. Everybody knows how it works; they also know just how to prevent intrusion.

So, compatibility for lots of applications has been slow coming. The Big Kahuna application vendor, Adobe, is an example. While CS2 installs and runs on Vista, they have released about 300 MB worth of patches to address "compatibility issues" in Vista. These range from visual anomalies to outright crashes. If reliability is foremost, you may be stuck in Windows XP for several months. Don't give up that dual-boot configuration just yet. . .

ReadyBoost is a new feature of Vista that lets you use a USB flash drive as part of system memory, improving what Microsoft characterizes as "system responsiveness". It serves as storage for the system cache that gets paged to the hard drive in a low RAM machine. Computers with less than 1 GB of RAM benefit most from ReadyBoost; Vista moves a lot of the system cache to the flash drive, where it is accessed much faster than if it were paged to the hard drive.

I tested ReadyBoost by reducing the RAM on my Vista machine to 512 MB and running Vista over several sessions to get a feel of the system's responsiveness, then adding a SanDisk Cruzer 2 GB ReadyBoost-capable flash drive to see the difference. Leaving the flash drive in the computer during startup actually lengthened boot times. (Same thing happens if you add RAM: Windows simply spends more time filling the added RAM with more system components.) The speed difference shows up while you are running applications. Vista caches system and application pieces in memory, but lacking memory, it will simply page these off to the hard drive, which is the slowest component in the computer. When it can page these pieces to the flash drive instead, system response improves markedly. If you do something like load Adobe Photoshop, Adobe In-

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Design, and CorelDRAW, and switch between the applications, there is a definite improvement in system response. Crude stopwatch testing on my part suggest 25% - 50% improvements whenever Vista works the cache. Even Flight Simulator X was faster, with less delay between scenery changes while in flight. Noted from other sources, performance improvements are best in machines with the RAM configured single-channel and barely noticeable in machines that have paired modules running in dual-channel mode.

Note that the flash drive must be ReadyBoost capable. It must meet minimum speed tests before Vista will use it. Every other flash drive I own fails this test. When you go to the store, make sure the package says the flash drive is ReadyBoost capable. A side benefit of ReadyBoost is that if you don't want the flash drive for ReadyBoost, you can get an ordinary 2 GB drive for as low as \$14.

So, this month, I found out how much faster I can't run my incompatible applications using ReadyBoost in Vista; the Microsoft version of Catch-22. Stay tuned for more misadventures.

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Tip of the Month

courtesy of Glenn York, Front Range PC Users Group, <http://www.frpcug.org>

From the National Cyber Alert System, Cyber Security Tip ST04-008: Benefits of BCC

Although in many situations it may be appropriate to list email recipients in the To: or CC: fields, sometimes using the BCC: field may be the most desirable option.

What is BCC?

BCC, which stands for blind carbon copy, allows you to hide recipients in email messages. Unlike addresses in the To: field or the CC: (carbon copy) field, addresses in the BCC: field cannot be seen by other users.

Why would you want to use BCC?

There are a few main reasons for using BCC:

- **Privacy.** Sometimes it's beneficial, even necessary, for you to let recipients know who else is receiving your email message. However, there may be instances when you want to send the same message to multiple recipients without letting them know who else is receiving the message. If you are sending email on behalf of a business or organization, it may be especially important to keep lists of clients, members, or associates confidential. You may also want to avoid listing an internal email address on a message being sent to external recipients. Another point to remember is that if you use the To: or CC: fields to list all of your recipients, these same recipients will also receive any replies to your message unless the sender removes them. If there is potential for a response that is not appropriate for all recipients, consider using BCC.

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- **Tracking.** Maybe you want to access or archive the email message you are sending at another email account. Or maybe you want to make someone, such as a supervisor or team member, aware of the email without actually involving them in the exchange. BCC allows you to accomplish these goals without advertising that you are doing it.
- **Respect for your recipients.** Forwarded email messages frequently contain long lists of email addresses that were CC'd by previous senders. These addresses are highly likely to be active and valid, so they are very valuable to spammers. Furthermore, many email-borne viruses harvest email addresses contained in messages you've already received (not just the To: and From: fields, but from the body, too), so those long lists in forwarded messages pose a risk to all the accounts they point to if you get infected. Many people frequently forward messages to their entire address books using CC. Encourage people who forward messages to you to use BCC so that your email address is less likely to appear in other people's inboxes and be susceptible to being harvested. To avoid becoming part of the problem, in addition to using BCC if you forward messages, take time to remove all existing email addresses within the message. The additional benefit is that the people you're sending the message to will appreciate not having to scroll through large sections of irrelevant information to get to the actual message.

How do you BCC an email message?

Most email clients have the option to BCC listed a few lines below the To: field. However, sometimes it is a separate option that is not listed by default. If you cannot locate it, check the help menu or the software's documentation.

If you want to BCC all recipients and your email client will not send a message without something in the To: field, consider using your own email address in that field. In addition to hiding the identity of other recipients, this option will enable you to confirm that the message was sent successfully.

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*Allow for 0.5 inch margins

Shop Talk Successes

a note from your editor

Saturday Morning Shop Talk is a FRPCUG member benefit you need to know about—and use. Here are four recent successes:

- One member needed help installing the Firefox browser on a laptop with a Linux operating system upgrade. **Result: installation successful.**
- One member needed help with a laptop that wouldn't boot. **Result: Problem solved.**
- One member needed help with the installation of a wireless network card in a laptop. **Result: Problem solved.**
- And finally (for this report), another member needed help understanding how to best use a database. **Result: A database design defined.**

(Continued on page 12)

FRPCUG CONTACTS

Telephone Area Code 970

Title	Name	Work Phone	Home Phone	E-Mail
FRPCUG Officers				
President	Rick Mattingly		613-8968	rmatt(at)mesanetworks.net
Vice President	Don Anderson	498-3534	482-0943	doande(at)gmail.com
Treasurer	Virginia Febinger		498-2127	gingercln(at)cs.com
Secretary	Jim Bragonier	221-5500	484-9061	james.bragonier(at)comcast.net

k-Byte Staff

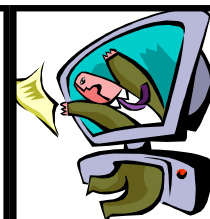
Editor-in-Chief	Mike Morris		461-2002	twriterext(at)gmail.com
Features Editor	Mike Morris			
Advertising Coordinator	Open—We need a volunteer! Contact Rick Mattingly in the interim.			

Other Contacts

Membership Coordinator	Jack Linder		663-2151	jack(at)frpcug.org
New Technology SIG Leader	Chuck McJilton	416-9286	493-2987	cdmcjs(at)gmail.com
Door Prize Coordinator	John Goldey		221-0877	johngoldey(at)juno.com
FRPCUG Fax Line		493-1408		
FRPCUG Home Page w/ E-Mail				http://www.frpcug.org
FRPCUG Officer E-Mail				board(at)frpcug.org

Front Range PC Users Group is Online at

<http://www.frpcug.org>



k-Byte

**Front Range PC Users Group
PMB 152
305 W. Magnolia
Fort Collins, CO 80521**

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It is important to note that you don't have to have a problem with a laptop computer—or any specific hardware—to take advantage of this benefit. These sessions are not limited to hardware problems. Bring your hardware, operating system software or application software questions to the Shop Talk sessions, and the dedicated team—primarily Jim Bragonier and Charles McJilton, at present, with others from time to time—will attempt to answer your questions. The team doesn't claim knowledge of all application software (or the MAC OS), but there is still a large knowledgebase available.

