

The Kingston & Area



HOME BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

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Voice of the Home Business

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NEWSLETTER

Lest We Forget!!!



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What Is KAHBA?

The **Kingston & Area Home Business Association (KAHBA)** is a group of home-based entrepreneurs, both full and part-time, offering experience, education, information, and support to each other. KAHBA is proud to announce it is now in its 16th year of operation. Yearly membership to KAHBA is \$60.00. For more information, please contact our Membership Director, David Kempson at (613) 544-2178, or contact any executive member on our website www.kingstonhomebiz.ca.

KAHBA's Executive

The KAHBA executive is as follows:

President - Rej Bruneau; Vice-President - Lorayne Bradshaw;
Secretary - Melanie Babcock; Membership - David Kempson;
Treasurer - Lyle Merriam; Guest Director - Sidney Berry;
Publicity - Gerry Koster; Guest Speaker Co-ord Pam Ferance;
Newsletter Editor - Fred Georgeadis

Mailing Address

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Kingston, ON K7L 5S5

Web Site

our web site is:
www.kingstonhomebiz.ca

Next KAHBA Meetings

Meetings are usually held monthly. Our next meeting will be announced via e-mail and will be on the 2nd Saturday in Oct '08. As well, KAHBA holds one evening meeting, to accomodate those who are too busy for Saturday mornings. This happens on the last Monday of each month, times are 6:30 - 8:00 pm. - place will be announced shortly. Come and have supper with us!! Our next evening meeting will be on Monday, 24 Nov 08.

Guests and Potential Members Are Always Welcomed

Membership to KAHBA is always Welcomed. Please take the time to bring a friend who may be considering, or already has, a home-based business. Guests who wish to just check us out, are also welcome to do so. See you at the meeting!!

This Newsletter designed by:

 **Creative Solutions**
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tion. Apparently she spoke to Paul himself about me. She asked him who the heck I was - if I was a close relative, or an important investor. He said that he knew about me, but that I was just a guy who wanted to be in the movie. She told me that she told him that I was stalking her. He replied, "Cool, you have a stalker!!" (That's Paul's legendary sense of humour coming through!)

My wife gave me good advice. She suggested that since all was in place and paid for, that I should relax, get on the plane, get settled in, and to call the background casting director. And she emphasized that I should NOT call from the airport.

So I landed in Calgary, assembled my bicycle and trailer (to the amazement of the other passengers I'm sure), and cycled to the southwest corner of Calgary. Later that day after settling in, I called as my wife suggested and asked, no, pleaded to be in the movie. I was told that the best that she could do was to give me two or three days as background in the H.Q. scene, because I would be too old and not strong enough to do the battle scenes.

I politely disagreed and requested that I be given that chance, but thanked her for the offer of the H.Q. shoots. I was told to provide a brief bio as well as a couple of shots and contact info and she would consider my request. I fired that off to her a few hours later, but with a great amount of difficulty because I had no Internet. I had to sit in a chair at the end of the driveway and hop onto a neighbour's intermittent wi-fi signal.

She emailed me back and said she was reviewing the roles.

I thought that she would consider putting me on the battlefield. So the next day I went to the Signal Hill Mall to go to Staples to get paintings reproduced and to another store

to get frames. On the way back I got a flat tire and had to fix it at the side of the road. I googled her name, found out where she lived, and brought two of my framed pictures to her, hoping they would be a good peace offering.

When she answered the door I simply told her that I had something for her. I gave her the pictures. She looked at me and asked who I was. Then I took off my bike helmet. She said, "David?! Is that you?! You're crazy! You're insane!!!" She told me that she was not dressed, that I should go home, and that she would phone me later.

She phoned that afternoon. She also told me that she visited my Website and that she loved my art. She even said that she stopped everyone there from working for a few minutes to show them the pictures on my Website that she liked. She said that I was invited to a background cast get together in the north part of town that evening to discuss my role.

So I made my way by bike to the party. On the way I was almost crushed to death by a transport. At the party Curtis told me that I could be in on the battle scenes, and that they would phone with dates and call times.

I was helping my landlord renovate while I was living here. Things were getting dirtier and dustier, and I had to move from room to room as carpet was ripped up and eventually replaced. All the carpet had been ripped up except for a small section which he said he could handle himself. So I went away for a while and came back to bad news: he had accidentally ripped the Telus line and severed both the telephone AND Internet connection that was installed just a day or two earlier. Great! How were they going to contact me?

For about a day and a half I was frantic and finally very relieved as he and his girlfriend managed to hook up the phone and Internet again. I got my call the next morning at about 8 a.m. and it was for 3:30 p.m. that day. I was told that they tried to reach me many times.

So on that first day I took my uniform with me on my bike. Yes, I have a WWI uniform I assembled after the Great War project last year. The full gear, helmet to boots. And I

Continues on pg. 6



Harold W. Smith Jr. hhhaven@cogeco.ca
Reiki Appointments (613) 634 1682

Celebration of the Fourth Annual UsuryFree Week

Submitted by Tom Kennedy

The Fourth Annual UsuryFree Week (November 13th to 19th) will be celebrated with various events. One of these events is scheduled for Kingston, Ontario.

On Wednesday, November 19th, 2008, KAHBA in co-operation with The UsuryFree Network and The Family Life Foundation is co-hosting a special event to celebrate this Fourth Annual UsuryFree Week.

Key Note Speaker: - **Peter Jon Simpson** from Atwater, Minnesota will be the key note guest speaker who will be introduced by Tom J. Kennedy, founder of The UsuryFree Network.

In the mid-1980's Peter authored 2 books: 'Avoid Bank Holidays' and 'Life Without Usury'. As well during the 1980's Peter created some noteworthy audio cassettes on issues related to money and banking.

In summary, Peter Jon Simpson has been a pioneering mentor for usuryfree creatives. His research has helped people understand just how the design flaw of usury is the evil function on our orthodox money system that is directly and/or indirectly responsible for violence, wars, poverty, scarcity and lack.

Peter Jon Simpson will be addressing the current economic crisis and various implications of Usury/Interest when he speak on November 19th, to celebrate this Fourth Annual UsuryFree Week.

Topics to be addressed will be selected from this list:

- (a) why celebrate UsuryFree Day & UsuryFree Week
- (b) comparing usury-based orthodox economics and innovative usuryfree economics
- (c) creating and spending our own usuryfree community currencies (d) unique strategies to evade usury and avoid taxes (e) the awakening in rural and urban Ontario (f) private member-supported organizations, clubs and networks.

What's the Cost of Admission??

Attendees are invited to pay-what-they-think-it-is-worth to be present and learn from this presentation. Cash, cheques, money orders and any usuryfree community currency will be gratefully accepted. The expenses to be covered are:

- (a) the cost of the room rental at the Legion
- (b) advertising
- (c) gifts or donations to the guest speaker to cover his travel expenses and his time investment for any preparation and the presentation.

Obviously, the room rental, any advertising, and the travel costs of the speaker will require federal cash. Attendees are encouraged to be generous with 'gifts' or 'donations' so that this seminar/

Continues on pg. 8 - Usuryfree

MONTHLY QUOTE

No matter what your lot
in life may be -
build something on it!!

Is your business accepting KAHBA BUCKS for part payment of products or services? Several businesses are doing just that! Find out just how to get involved with KAHBA Bucks. See you at the monthly breakfast meeting.

Continues from pg. 4 - Passchendaele...

brought it on the first day because I did not want wardrobe to tell me that they had run out of uniforms in my size or anything. I was not going to go through all that trouble for nothing. As it turns out, I did not need to use my uniform. But on the way to the filming location I got lost because I was so excited when I got the news about the first day of shooting that I forgot my directions. Also I could not reach my agent. So I headed down to the Currie Barracks where I had seen the filming office for the movie. Turns out it was not the Passchendaele movie but the Heartland office. Great!!! So I asked directions to the Passchendaele office. Even with the directions they gave me I got a little lost. Finally I found it, went upstairs, and was able to obtain a map and directions to base camp. So off I went, bike, trailer and all down that dangerous, gravelly, poorly-marked road. Fortunately I had left home with plenty of time to spare, so I arrived almost an hour before sign-in. For almost every day after that I cycled to the base camp, often in freezing cold temperatures. One day my bike broke down just as I was leaving the driveway, so I borrowed my landlord's bike. He had already given me permission to use it before. It was actually a better bike because it had fat tires. So I used it from then on.

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And fortunately many were kind enough to offer me a lift back at night, because the road is very dark and dangerous at night. And I was wiped after each day of filming.--

Visit me @ <http://www.daviddossett.com>

David Dossett is a current member of KAHBA.

Did you know..??

A naval officer, Grace Hopper, who was a noted mathematician and a pioneer programmer in the 1940s, was known for developing troubleshooting skills on the Harvard Mark I computer of that era. She found and documented the first ever computer "bug". The problem turned out to be a moth that was trapped within one of the electromechanical relays in the computer and was causing intermittent operation of the Mark I.

From that time on, any troubleshooting of the Mark I was referred to as "debugging" the system. This term has stuck since, and is being used even today where troubleshooting a computer, or any other electronic system, is affectionately known as "**debugging**".

What is Old is New Again

Movie Reviews - by Sandra Laprise

The time of year is fast approaching then snow, slush and chilling winds are going to be a daily reality and when the fingers and toes feel like ice cubes and you can't feel the tip of your nose at all, nothing will feel quite as good as a hot beverage, a big fluffy blanket and a snuggle in front of the tv to watch a good movie.

Now what movie should it be? How about a movie we haven't seen in years, some of those old ones were really good! Mind if I remind you of a few of them?

A Hot Sci-Fi for a cold day: **The Chronicles of Riddick:** Vin Diesel, Colm Feore, Dame Judi Dench

The sequel to Pitch Black, which was full of alien critters that looked upon humans as fresh meat, this movie is much more interesting because the villains are human....well, sort of. One set of villains are a group of mercenaries (read bounty hunters) who want to throw Riddick back in prison and the other group are followers of a death cult that call themselves Necromongers (read planet killers) and these bad guys are pretty much as bad as they come. And of course there are beautiful women to add relationship angles that will definitely add extra appeal for women.

The short and sweet: Excellent story, spectacular special effects, great acting from a stellar cast and lots of action to appeal to everyone. Easily 5*s, Rated 14+

Dated but still well worth watching: **Jumpin' Jack Flash:** Whoopi Goldberg,

Remember the Cold War when we all knew that those 'Commies' were the bad guys? It was way back when coloured print on black computer monitors was new and exciting...if we only knew then what we know now! Spies and intrigue and dirty double-



Guest Speaker

KAHBA is pleased to announce the guest speaker for the Nov. breakfast meeting, Tom Kennedy will be speaking on Userfree issues, and how these can be a benefit to KAHBA members and their businesses. See you all there!

crossers and doesn't Whoopi end up right in the middle of it! And she handles it all with her usual comedic bungling. You'll laugh, you'll cry....well, maybe...and in the end you'll go 'Awwwww!' The short and sweet: Keep in mind that this was supposed to have happened in the 1980's and have a real fun time watching this. Good story, great acting from some of your faves, and plenty of misadventures to keep you chuckling. Easy 4.5*s, kid safe but I doubt if they'd enjoy it.

Family Fun for Everyone: **Space Jam:** Michael Jordan, Bugs Bunny - Lots and Lots of Toons, And basketball players galore!

Mike and the Toons VS the space alien Monsters, need I say more?

My three grandsons love this movie (ages 4 to 10) but the grandparents enjoy it too.

Don't spread viruses, wash your hands often and good watching.

Continues from pg. 5 - Usuryfree

workshop model can be copied or duplicated in any community in Ontario or elsewhere. RSVP's are requested for this Special Workshop in honour of our Fourth Annual UsuryFree Day. The first 65 RSVP's will be accepted. Please request your seat for this event by sending an email to: usuryfree@gmail.com with 'UsuryFree Workshop' in the Subject line or by telephoning: 1.888.668.7879 (1.888. NOUSURY)

The event will start at 7:00 PM and will end at roughly 10:00 PM. The event location is:

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 560
734 Montreal St
Kingston, ON K7K 3J4

There are only 65 spaces available so send your RSVP NOW to confirm your intent to attend as the event is sure to fill up).

PS: For more background details at this Fourth Annual UsuryFree Day/Week readers are invited to read the article posted at the front page of The Cyberclass Network: *<http://www.cyberclass.net>



David Dossett on Movie Set
See Passchendaele Article

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A Warm Welcome for New KAHBA Members

Please welcome Blackpool The Magician:

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Contact: George Brown
Cell Phone:613-539-0390 CTB Windows & Doors is CTB



Blackpool has studied and practiced magic and hypnosis for over 30 years and has 9 years' experience in sales and marketing prior to his work in trade show magic. He is a regularly featured performer in The Kingston Buskers Rendezvous, appears on local television, and entertains in venues ranging from tableside in restaurants to crowds of 5000. His client list includes the Canadian Cancer Society, Desert Lake Resort, The Girl Guides of Canada and Tim Horton's. Blackpool is also a Certified Hypnotherapist through the International Hypnosis Assn and has helped many to overcome psychological trauma, alleviate chronic pain, shed excess weight, develop self-esteem, quit smoking, and live happier, more fulfilling lives.

Contact Blackpool for bookings by telephone or **Email: blackpool@kingstonmagic.com**

Website: www.kingstonmagic.com

Also please welcome Travis Blais and his business:



119 Dulphin Ave. KINGSTON ON K7K 6B2

Travis Blais

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Confessions of a Police Officer

by Officer Jill Wragg

<http://uneflic.blogspot.com/2007/05/confessions-of-beat-cop.html>

A Note to the readers – This article initially appeared in the Sep Edition of the KAHBA newsletter, but it did not have an author and some content was changed by unknow parties. Since that time the author has been identified, and with her kind permission we are reprinting the article in its correct and original format. Thanks to officer Jill Wragg for her kind permission, understanding and cooperation. (Editor).

Dear Citizens, Neighbors, Friends and Family,

My name is Jill and I am a cop. That means that the pains and joys of my personal life are often muted by my work. I resent the intrusion but I confuse myself with my job almost as often as you do. The label “police officer” creates a false image of who I really am. Sometimes I feel like I’m floating between two worlds. My work is not just protecting and serving. It’s preserving that buffer that exists in the space between what you think the world is, and what the world really is.

My job isn’t like television. The action is less frequent, and more graphic. It is not exhilarating to point a gun at someone. Pooled blood has a disgusting metallic smell and steams a little when the temperature drops. CPR isn’t an instant miracle and it’s no fun

listening to an elderly grandmother’s ribs break while I keep her heart beating. I’m not flattered by your curiosity about my work. I don’t keep a record of which incident was the most frightening, or the strangest, or the bloodiest, or even the funniest. I don’t tell you about my day because I don’t want to share the images that haunt me.

But I do have some confessions to make:

Sometimes my stereo is too loud. Andrea Bocelli’s voice makes it easier to forget the wasted body of the young man who died alone in a rented room because his family feared the stigma of AIDS. Beethoven’s 9th symphony erases the sight of the nurses who sobbed as they scrubbed layers of dirt and slime from a neglected 2-year-old’s skin. The Rolling Stones’ angry beat assures me that it was ignorance that drove a young mother to draw blood when she bit her toddler on the cheek in an attempt to teach him not to bite.

Sometimes I set a bad example. I exceeded the speed limit on my way home from work because I had trouble shedding the adrenalin that kicked in when I discovered that the man I handcuffed during a drug raid was sitting on a loaded 9mm pistol.

Sometimes I seem rude. I was distracted and forgot to smile when you greeted me in the store because I was remembering the anguished, whispered confession of a teenager who pushed away his drowning brother to save his own life.

Sometimes I’m not as sympathetic as you’d like. I’m not concerned that your 15-year-old daughter is dating an 18-year-old because I just comforted the parents of a young man who slashed his own throat while they slept in the next bedroom. I was terse on the phone because I resented the burden of having to weigh the value of two lives when I was pointing my gun at an armed man who kept begging me

Continues on pg. 11 - Confessions ..



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Continues from pg. 10 - Confessions

to kill him. I laugh when you cringe away from the mess in your teen's room because I know the revulsion of feeling a heroin addict's blood trickling toward an open cut on my arm. If I was silent when you whined about your overbearing mother it's because I really wanted to tell you that I spoke to one of our high school friends today. I found her mother slumped behind the wheel of her car in a tightly closed garage. She had dressed in her best outfit before rolling down the windows and starting the engine.

On the other hand, if I seem totally oblivious to the blood on my uniform, or the names people call me, or the hateful editorials, it's because I am remembering the lessons my job has taught me. I learned not to sweat the small stuff. Grape juice on the beige sofa and puppy pee on the oriental carpet don't faze me because I know what arterial bleeding and decaying bodies can do to one's decor.

I learned when to shut out the world and take a mental health day. I skipped your daughter's 4th birthday party because I was thinking about the six children under the age of 10 whose mother left them unattended to go out with a friend. When the 3-year-old offered the dog the milk from her cereal bowl, the dog attacked her, tearing open her head and staining the sandbox with blood. The little girl's siblings had to pry her head out of the dog's jaws - twice.

I learned that everyone has a lesson to teach me.

Two mothers engaged in custody battles taught me not to judge a book by its cover. The teenage mother on welfare mustered the strength to refrain from crying in front of her worried child while the well-dressed, upper-class mother literally played tug of war with her toddler before running into traffic with the shrieking child in her arms.

I learned that nothing given from the heart is truly gone. A hug, a smile, a reassuring word, or an attentive ear can bring an injured or distraught person back to the surface, and help me refocus.

And I learned not to give up, ever! That split second of terror when I think I have finally engaged the one who is young enough and strong enough to take me down taught me that I have only one restriction: my own mortality.

One week in May has been set aside as Police Memorial Week, a time to remember those officers who didn't make it home after their shift. But why wait? Take a moment to tell an officer that you appreciate her work. Smile and say "Hi" when he's getting coffee. Bite your tongue when you start to tell a "bad cop" story. Better yet, find the time to tell a "good cop" story. The family at the next table may be a cop's family.

Nothing given from the heart is truly gone. It is kept in the hearts of the recipients. Give from the heart. Give something back to the officers who risk everything they have.

Jill Wragg is a retired Police Officer from Massachusetts. She can be reached at JKWragg@yahoo.com

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CUSTOM ELECTRONIC DESIGNS

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Escape Maps of WWII

Starting in 1941, an increasing number of British airmen found themselves as the involuntary guests of the Third Reich, and the authorities were casting-about for ways and means to facilitate their escape. Now obviously, one of the most helpful aids to that end is a useful and accurate map, one showing not only where-stuff-was, but also showing the locations of 'safe houses', where a POW on-the-loose could go for food and shelter. Paper maps had some real drawbacks: They make a lot of noise when you open and fold them, they wear-out rapidly, And if they get wet, they turn into mush. Someone in MI-5 got the idea of printing escape maps on silk. It's durable, can be scrunched-up into tiny wads, and unfolded as many times as needed, and makes no noise what-so-ever. At that time, there was only one manufacturer in Great Britain that had perfected the technology of printing on silk, and that was John Waddington, Ltd.

When approached by the government, the firm was only too happy to do its bit for the war effort. By pure coincidence, Waddington was also the U.K. Licensee for the popular American board game, Monopoly. As it happened, 'games and pastimes' was a category of item qualified for insertion into 'CARE packages', dispatched by the International Red Cross, to prisoners of war. Under the strictest of secrecy, in a securely guarded and inaccessible old workshop on the grounds of Waddington's, a group of sworn-to-secrecy employees began mass-producing escape maps, keyed to each region of Germany or Italy where Allied POW camps were located (Red Cross packages were delivered to prisoners in accordance with that same regional system). When processed, these maps could be folded into such tiny dots that they would actually fit inside a Monopoly playing piece.

> As long as they were at it, the clever workmen at Waddington's also managed to add:

1. A playing token, containing a small magnetic compass,
2. A two-part metal file that could easily be screwed together.
3. Useful amounts of genuine high-denomination German, Italian, and French currency, hidden 20 within the piles of Monopoly money! British and American air-crews were advised, before taking off on their first mission, how to identify a 'rigged' Monopoly set ----- by means of a tiny red dot, one cleverly rigged to look like an ordinary printing glitch, located in the corner of the Free Parking square!

Of the estimated 35,000 Allied POWS who successfully escaped, an estimated one-third were aided in their flight by the rigged Monopoly sets. Everyone who did so was sworn to secrecy Indefinitely, since the British Government might want to use this highly successful ruse in still another, future war. The story wasn't de-classified until 2007, when the surviving craftsmen from Waddington's, as well as the firm itself, were finally honored in a public ceremony. Anyway, it's always nice when you can play that 'Get Out of Jail Free' card.

>



Dirty Little Secrets: Five Things Trade Show Attendees Don't Want You To Know

by Susan Friedmann, CSP
susan@thetradeshowcoach.com

Look out there on the show floor. Check out the attendees. They look ordinary enough -- but they have secrets. Dirty little secrets that they'd never tell anyone, not even under duress.

Successful selling at trade shows depends upon two things. One is your products and personnel: How good are your products and services, and how well do your people represent them. The second has nothing to do with you at all. It has everything to do with secrets.

Not all attendees are the same, and not every buyer on the floor shares these secrets. But most do, whether they'd like to admit it or not. These secrets are strong unifying factors that influence their buying decisions. If you, as a smart and savvy trade show exhibitor, know what these secrets are and tailor your exhibit appropriately, you'll come away with higher sales numbers every time.

If you could hear your attendee's deepest, most secret thoughts, they might go something like this:

Secret #1: We're impatient

Let's be real here. The boss just shipped me to Orlando from the middle of a Buffalo blizzard. The last thing I want to do is spend the entire day putzing around looking at new attachments for our Widget making machine. If you show me what I want, at a reasonable price, I'm gonna close the deal in a hurry and go hit the beach.

What this means to you: Understanding your buyer is crucial. When you know what your target audience needs, wants, and expects, it's easier to provide it for them. Added incentives and special savings only sweetens the pot, especially for the attendee who wants to get the business part of the business trip out of the way.

Secret #2: We're lazy

Sure, it sounds like a great deal. But to get that price, I've got to go log onto the web, go to the website, enter a code, fill out a questionnaire, and then go through the purchasing process? Forget that! I'll go over here to Vendor Z. I might pay a few dollars more, but I won't have to jump through any hoops.

What this means to you: If you're going to offer a show special or promotion, focus on making it user-friendly. Buyers are willing to pay more to avoid what they perceive as 'too much' work. Each market has a different threshold point, and this varies with how much potential savings you're offering. Customers are willing to give more when they are getting more in return.

Secret #3: We're Egotistical

You might not realize this, but I'm the smartest person here. And

the tallest. And the best looking. I'm so gosh-darned amazing, actually, that you'll find yourself compelled to give me awesome deals.

What this means to you: It's important to give your buyers recognition. "Bonus Buys" -- windfall items 'spontaneously' thrown in when a purchase is made -- is a fantastic way to do this. Offer discounted prices on the floor model, for the 'serious buyers only'. Exclusivity sells.

Don't start the recognition at the trade show. Reach out to your clients before hand via e-mail and direct mail marketing, letting them know what special deals can be had at your booth. A little extra effort goes a long way.

Secret #4: We hate math

Ok, I don't want to look like an idiot here. But there's \$25 off of Widget A, 15% off Widget A-1, and a \$500 rebate if I buy now. Exactly how much is that? Is that a good deal? I hate percentages...

What this means for you: Remember the KISS acronym, especially when promoting discounts and sale prices at a tradeshow. You want to Keep It Super Simple! Rather than listing a complex set of discounts, focus on the total savings. Have printed price sheets where your booth staffers can highlight appropriate discounted prices and write in the total savings.

Secret #5: We liked to be pushed

I see that this price is only good for a limited time. I've read it on the sign. You've told me during the sales presentation. I know and understand that there's a deadline.

And you know what? Chances are I'm going to forget. And when I discover that I missed out on saving hundreds of dollars, I am going to be miffed.

What this means for you: People have to experience a piece of information six times before they remember it -- and that's in normal, everyday circumstances, not the hustle and bustle of the show floor. Remind your booth staffers to mention the deadline often. Make note of it on any follow-up correspondence, and send a reminder notice to likely prospects. The reminder nudge will spur sales.

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Tech Tip – Extending the Life of Your Laptop Battery

By Chris Herzog Feb. 2007

NotebookThe year 2006 marked a fundamental shift in PC hardware sales as laptop computers (also called “notebooks”) outsold desktop PCs for the very first time. As society becomes more mobile, laptops become ever-more powerful, portable, and affordable, and as wireless networks become ubiquitous, this trend will continue.

Obviously, the primary advantage of laptops is mobility. Naturally, however, laptops need power to run on. Even though electrical outlets are plentiful and can be found nearly everywhere, there are times when we have to resort to using the laptop’s battery – airplane trips, meetings, etc. I have also seen sudden power failures when I could have lost all my work had the laptop not had a charged battery. Despite the ongoing evolution of battery technology, there are limits to their usage, and that leads to a discussion of ways to preserve and improve battery functionality. We can start by discussing what a battery is, how it works, and the different types of batteries in use today.

What is a Battery, Anyway?

LemonIn simple terms, a battery is chemical energy stored in a container. The chemical energy is then converted to electrical form. A battery has two terminals, negative and positive, that must be connected for the current to flow. This connection is usually provided by a liquid or solid electrolyte that is a conductor; it has the ability to transfer current. Cathode and anode are two electrodes, an electrical conductor that makes contact with the metallic part of a circuit, present in a battery.

Current flows from the cathode to anode inside the cell or device.

Different Types of Batteries

In contemporary portable electronic devices, especially given environmental concerns, batteries must not only store energy in a compact form, they must be rechargeable.

Batteries are usually named based on the metal used to make either the electrodes or the electrolyte. A lithium-ion battery (“LiOn”) has a lithium anode, a zinc-carbon battery has a zinc anode, and a nickel-metal hydride battery (NiMH) or a nickel-cadmium battery (NiCD) has a hydrogen-absorbing alloy for the anode.

Early rechargeable batteries were composed of Nickel-Cadmium (or “NiCad”). NiCads were great because they were rechargeable, but early NiCads held comparatively small charges as well as suffering from “Memory Effect” – if the battery was only partially drained and then recharged, it lost its ability to be fully recharged.

Most portable devices these days use Lithium-Ion batteries.

Lithium is the lightest metal and the one with the highest stored (“potential”) electrochemical energy. These qualities, along with the fact they do not contain poisonous metals (such as cadmium) make lithium-based batteries the most widely used to power portable devices such as laptops.

Now that we understand the basic functionality of a battery, let’s discuss ways to preserve and prolong battery life, specifically laptop computer batteries.

Life Preserver

Life PreserverJust as proper use and maintenance of your car will result in longer life and better performance, taking certain steps with your portable electronics’ batteries will result in longer use per charge, and a longer overall battery life. With replacement laptop batteries ranging from anywhere between \$100.00 and \$300.00, getting all the use you can out of your battery will save you lots of aggravation and keep more money in your pocket longer.

As soon as your portable device leaves the manufacturer’s premises, its battery starts losing capacity to store a charge. In some cases, it may show more charge stored than there actually is. You may end up exhausting what’s available without knowing it and the computer may end up shutting down causing you to lose your work. Now that is not a situation you want to find yourself in. The fact of the matter is it is unavoidable after a certain period of time as the battery goes through gradual degradation. There are, however, ways to extend your battery life.

If your device always (or usually) runs on external power, you may be inadvertently decreasing your battery life. At least once a month, let the device use up all the battery power. In other words, let the battery drain until the computer goes to sleep (“hibernate mode”) and then let it re-charge. This can help avoid capacity degradation.

Some notebooks, using a combination of specialized hardware, intelligent batteries, and special “services” (small programs running in the background) offer a “recondition” feature that will automatically prompt you to condition your battery and then attempt to do so in the background. If you are prompted by your system to condition your battery, you should probably allow it to do this.

Operating temperature is another important factor when we talk about battery life. Extreme high temperatures can cause degradation rapidly, just as extreme low temperatures can damage batteries— don’t leave your notebook in your car for extended periods on hot days or overnight on cold nights.

It is recommended that you do not use your laptop without a

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battery in the bay. Doing so may cause the electrical terminals in the battery bay to become dirty or get corroded. It should be avoided for these reasons and the fact that you may lose your work since there is no backup power supply.

Micro-Manage Your PC Power

Let's talk about power management settings on your laptop. "Power management is a feature of some electrical appliances that turns off the power or switches the system to a low-power state after a period of inactivity" ("Power Management"). On a laptop, power management is accomplished by a specialized chip working together with the Operating System. Many modern battery packs are "intelligent batteries" – they contain microprocessors that continually monitor capacity and communicate this information to the Operating System. This information is used by the system in conjunction with power management settings, specifically for determining when to issue low capacity warnings and switching to hibernate mode. In order to use these settings, your computer must be Advanced Configuration and Power Interface (ACPI) compliant, which most recent computers are.

In Windows XP, you can control the power management features of your display, hard drive, shut down, stand by and hibernate, and low battery warnings.

Even though modern monitors do not consume a lot of electricity, monitors, hard drives, and the CPU are the three biggest electricity consumers on your laptop. Big, bright LCD monitors with backlights require comparatively large amounts of electrical current, as do the spinning motors and actuators inside hard drives. It is a good idea to shut your monitor off when you are not using it.

Power management allows you to set a fixed time, and if the computer sits idle for that long, the monitor is turned off. The same can be accomplished using power management when it comes to "spinning down" (temporarily turning off) the motor of your hard drive, and even toggling the CPU into a lower power

consumption "idle speed"

You are Getting Sleepy...

hibernateHibernate and Standby are two main energy conserving features provided by Windows XP. The standby state turns off devices such as your monitor and the hard drive and the entire computer switches to a low-power state. It is easy to return where you had left off as standby leaves applications and files open on your laptop. You should only use it for short term purposes such as a short term break you may need. Keep in mind that nothing is written to the hard drive and everything is still only being stored in memory. This means that data has not been stored permanently and can be lost. Hibernate mode is another feature that can be used if you want to leave the computer overnight or even over the weekend and come back to where you left off. It writes an image of your entire laptop's current "state" to a special file on your hard drive. It takes a little longer to hibernate than it does to stand by as data are written to the hard drive before the system shuts off, but you can leave your computer in hibernate mode for days without any adverse effects.

Low battery warnings are provided when the charge drops to a certain level and the battery needs to be recharged. You can adjust these settings using power management features according to your needs. You should set it to allow ample time to switch to external power and save your work. 10-15% charge remaining is considered a safe setting to trigger such a warning so you can not only switch to external power but also save your work. Windows XP also allows for your laptop to automatically enter hibernation mode when your battery level reaches this pre-set threshold, thereby saving all of your open work (and maybe your job or your sanity in the process.)

Power v. Performance

To access the power management features on your laptop, simply double-click the battery icon in the lower-right corner of your screen (on the Task Bar), or go to Start > Control Panel > Power Options. Proper power management of these devices is an extremely useful feature, and will help you to strike the ideal performance v. battery life balance.

Even though battery performance declines over time, it is possible to prolong per-charge and overall battery life by taking simple steps.

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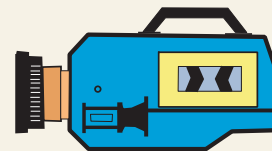
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