

# Access

Newsletter of the Louisville Computer Society  
Kentuckiana's Macintosh Users Group

April 2003

## Power Surge Protection, or How Not to Fry Your Machine

by Russ White

Spring has arrived, but up here in Vermont you really can't tell. Over the weekend we had a couple of inches of snow and temperatures remained in the low twenties -- typical Vermont weather. Since spring is officially here, mud season won't be far behind, and soon we'll be into the lazy, crazy, hazy days of summer.

"Is there a point to this?" you're asking yourself. Well, yes there is. I was thinking this morning about what the most common summertime repair is, and how easy the repair is to prevent in the first place.

What is the repair? It is power surge-related damage repair. Most people are aware of the most common surge damage, the power line power surge. After all, that's what their surge protector is there to prevent. But there are two other forms of power surges that can damage your system: the phone-line power surge, and the coaxial-cable power surge

Power-line power surges are the most common, and 99.9% of people out there have at least some form of surge protector connected to their computers, but did you know that a surge protector has a limited lifespan? Most surge protectors can take a limited number of hits before failing, and the good ones typically have an indicator light that tell you when they are protecting. When that light goes out, it's time for a new surge protector.

I'm no electrical engineer, but my rule is that if your surge protector has taken more than three good-sized hits or is over three years old, it's time to replace it. It's cheap insurance: would you

rather replace a \$30 surge protector or a \$150+ power supply, or, even worse, a logic board?

The other most common power-surge related repair is modem replacement from a phone-line power surge. Yes, you can get power surges up the phone line. They are most common during a thunderstorm, but they \*can\* happen at any time. If you're lucky, the modem itself just burns out and the rest of the computer is safe. In the worst cases, though, the surge can damage the logic board.

Most people are unaware of the danger of the phone-line surge. If you unplug your machine's power cord in a thunderstorm, but leave the phone line connected, you are still at risk for phone-line power surges. The only foolproof way to protect a machine from any power surges is to physically disconnect both the phone line and the power cord from their sources.

The G4 tower actually has one of the best designs, since its modem is a two-piece unit. The part you connect the phone line to is called the "filter board." It's connected by a long wire to the actual modem card. Most of the time, when a G4 tower is hit by a phone-line surge, the filter board burns out, thereby saving the modem and the rest of the logic board. Instead of replacing a \$120 modem card, you only need to replace a \$50 filter board.

The other, far less common type of surge comes through the coaxial cable line: the same cable that brings you your cable TV and broadband internet. There are surge protectors that protect the coax line, and for maximum

protection I recommend connecting the coax surge protector right where your cable comes out of the wall. Run it through the surge protector and all coax devices downstream of the surge protector (cable modem, VCR, TV, cable box, etc.) should be protected.

For power protection, I recommend an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS). It's basically a surge protector with a built-in battery backup. In the event of a power outage, you should have anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes to shut your machine down safely. A UPS also has phone-line protection.

<<http://www.smalldog.com/product/40047>>

On my G4/400 Sawtooth with both my NEC 17-inch and Sony 15-inch monitors running, I can get a little over five minutes of runtime in a power outage; if I only have my NEC on, I can get about 12 minutes of runtime (ironically, my 17-inch NEC is more power efficient than my 15-inch Sony). If I run my iBook on it, I've gotten well over two hours off it without even scratching the reserve capacity!

For coax-line protection, I recommend this surge protector:

<<http://www.smalldog.com/product/41445>>

It protects all three possible surge areas: power, phone, and coax. It doesn't have a backup battery, so if you lose power, your machine just shuts off. Be warned!

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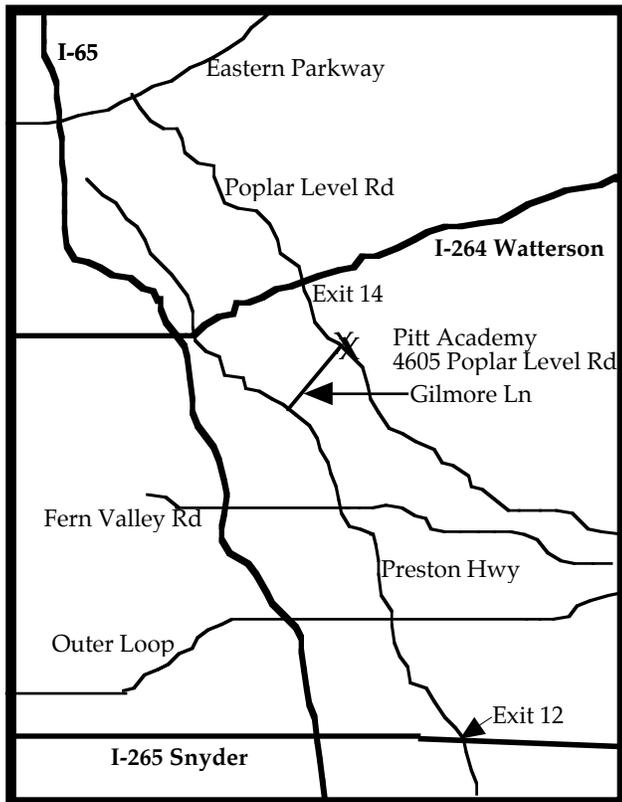
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**USER GROUP CONNECTION**

**Come to our monthly meetings**

The Louisville Computer Society meets the 4th Tuesday of each month, 7-9 P.M. (**except December**) at Pitt Academy, 4605 Poplar Level Rd. (Poplar Level Rd. at Gilmore Lane), Louisville KY 40213 (see map below).

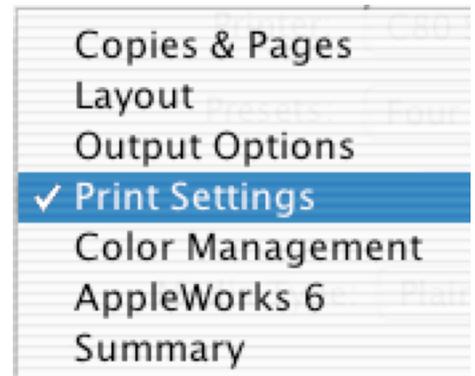
Pitt Academy is 1 mile south of the Watterson on Poplar Level Rd. If coming from the Snyder Freeway, Gilmore Ln is 5 miles north of I-265 on Preston Hwy. Turn right and when you get to the end (Poplar Level Rd), Pitt Academy is directly across the intersection.



Printer Presets or How to Save Your printer Options.

How often do you have to change your printer's settings. I do frequently. For instance, in printing out this newsletter for copying, I have to remember to print only in black. This is not just to save my color cartridges but so the color portions of the newsletter will come out sharper when photocopied in black.

Each time I go to print out a page (Command P) I have to click on the Copies and Pages and scroll down to Print Settings. Then I click on Black; then Print.



(note the AppleWorks 6; check it out)

How can one save their printer options? It's easy. At the top of the Print dialog box, there are two fields: Printer (where you select the printer to use, if you have more than one) and Presets. This latter is how you save and then later recall your various options.

Open the Print dialog box (File>Print or use keyboard Command-P) and make your settings in the Copies and Pages (like the one choosing black described above). Then go to the Preset field and pull down the pop-up menu to select Save As. This opens the Save Presets window. Type in any name that makes sense to you, like Black. Click OK and then Print. Next time you go to print Black should be in the Presets window. If you have a number of different options, Save the under different names and just scroll to pick the one you want.

For example, to print four miniature pages on one 8.5 x 11-inch sheet of paper choose, under Copies and Pages, I choose Layout. Then 4 Pages per Sheet and then under Layout Direction, pick the one that you prefer. Then go to the Presets field and save as "4 to a page." (Since I have already saved Black, the presets assumes I want four pages in black (which I do). If I want them in color I need to set both Layout and Print Settings (Color) and save as "4/Color" or something.

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Vacation Con't from

Since April is the official Internal Guitar Month you. Or your children can make a Guitar from an empty shoe box, rubber bands, ruler or stick, Remove the cover from the box. Stretch the rubber bands around the box. Attach the ruler or stick to the back of the box on one end to act as the arm of the guitar. To play, strum or pluck the rubber bands. (Thanks to KinderArt at www.kinderart.com/teachers/9instruments.shtml.

April is also the official month of frogs

Did I tell you that I was a biologist?

April is also the official month of Math so try a Tessellation Tutorial in ClarisWorks/AppleWorks; go to: http://mathforum.org/sum95/suzanne/cwtess.html Instructions are given in ClarisWorks 4, and this is a Paint document! So have fun. Or try Tessellation Town at www.mathcats.com/explore/tessellationtown.

Since tessellation requires both math and artistic skills, I'll skip to something else.

Back to Frogs. For frogs of Kentucky, including photographs and calls go to: bioweb.wku.edu/froglogger/ (photos are low res and don't make very good screen savers)



Upcoming Programs 7 P. M. Pitt Academy, see map on page 2

April 22,2003 Bill Rising: OS X utilities and tricks.

Lee Larson will present at the May meeting. Topic to be determined.

No other meetings planned. We need your input! Let us know what you want; contact: harryjb@bellsouth.net.

Louisville Computer Society
Macintosh Users Group
Membership Application

Please send your \$26 check for a year's membership, made out to Louisville Computer Society to:

Louisville Computer Society
P.O.Box 9021
Louisville,KY 40209-9021.

Thanks! See you at the next meeting.

Fill out the following ; clip on the dotted line (or copy to another piece of paper) and send in with your check .

[ ] New or [ ] Renewal Membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Your E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Home Page: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about LCS? \_\_\_\_\_

**Vacation**

Now that Spring is officially here and also (some days) feels like it, it's time to start planning for the Spring vacation or even Summer vacation.

Assuming you're going to stay close to home, were you aware that there is a toll free phone number you can call (from in Kentucky) to get information about weather, traffic delays, accidents and construction on the major highways in the state? That number is 511 (or from out of KY, call 1-866-737-3767). You can also get the information via the Internet at: [www.511.ky.gov](http://www.511.ky.gov).

This brings up the [kentucky.gov](http://kentucky.gov) 511 traffic & travel info page and a map of the state. Just click on the area you will be heading for or through. I'm going to northern KY this weekend so I clicked there. Right now the accident report shows:

Disabled vehicle on I-75 northbound at MP 187.20 between Pleasant Run Road Overpass and Exit 188 since 2:11 PM, 04/08/03 for the next two hours. The right shoulder is blocked.

I assume that will be clear by the time I drive through in three days. Construction information shows

lost of construction sites on I-75 by Lexington, but I won't be traveling near there.

And you can move the cursor over the names of neighboring states and get the toll-free phone number for those states: click on the state's names and get links to their comparable Web sites.

Now how about snakes in your vacation plans? Or even in your back yard. I looked up the Kentucky Snake Identification Web site:

[www.kentuckysnakes.org](http://www.kentuckysnakes.org)

Looked up this area and found that there are 1 different species of snakes here. Only

Kids (if they are anything like me) are going to love this site: lots of photos and information about snakes.

Look up Kirtland's Snake in the North West Geographic region of KY. Beautiful critter. Makes great Screen Saver or Screen Effects (OS X 0.2).

In 10.2 just make a new folder, name it Snakes, use Shift-Command-4 to make a screen shot of your favorite snake photographs, put the screen shots in your Snake folder. Open System Preferences, Click

on Screen Effects, click on Pictures Folders to highlight it, then click on Configure. Then just drag your new basket (folder) full of snakes to the well on the upper left and click OK. Of course you can do this with any folder of photographs. Loose that auction on eBay, Don't despair. Just make a screen shot of the item off the eBay page and add it to your screen effects. Now you can look at it all you want and you won't even have to dust it.

Don't like snakes? Try [www.kentuckytourism.com/wildflowerwatch/](http://www.kentuckytourism.com/wildflowerwatch/)

The Flower of the Week (I write this April 8) is the redbud, and the Bird of the Week is the Eastern Meadowlark.

Not into wildlife at the moment, try the Derby at: [www.kytourism.com/derby/](http://www.kytourism.com/derby/) complete with recipes for your own Derby party. Also: <http://gov.state.ky.us/derby/2003/derby2003.htm>

Which is the official site of the Governor's Derby Day Celebration so the focus is on Frankfort-Franklin County KY, which is about as Derby to me as Ascot and Epsom.

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**Louisville  
Computer  
Society**

[www.aye.net/~lcs](http://www.aye.net/~lcs)

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