LESSON 69
THE JEFF LEVY COMPUTER TUNE UP

Over the last 14 months or so I've given a lesson every Sunday here on the show. Today I'll help you combine some of the things you've learned and create a "tune up" for your computer. Here are the steps.

Your hard drive is handicapped by the size Windows assigns to the recycle bin. The default setting is 10%. If you have a 13 Gigabyte hard drive, 13 Gigabytes of that is reserved for the trash. Not good! Right-click on the Recycle Bin icon on your Desktop, and then click on Properties. On the Global tab you will that the maximum size of your Recycle Bin is set to 10% of your hard drive size. Click on and drag the point to the left and set the Recycle Bin size to 1%. You'll pick up that unused disk space.

Now we'll tell Windows how we want to set the memory cache used for keeping track of files and folders. Right-click on My Computer and then click on Properties. Click on the Performance tab. Under Advanced Settings click on File System. Click on the down arrow on the right side of the "Typical use for this computer:" dialog box. The default setting is Desktop Computer. Change this to Network Server and you'll double the amount of RAM allocated to this task. Translation? Faster performance! Make sure that the Read-ahead optimization pointer is set all the way to the right on Full. Click on OK to close.

While at the System Properties window, click on the Virtual Memory button. Windows uses part of your hard drive as virtual memory so that it can swap information back and forth between RAM, your computer's memory, and the hard drive. The file Windows uses on the hard drive is called the Swap file. The default setting lets Windows change the size of the Swap file on its own. These changes take up time and use valuable system resources. Click on the "Let me specify my own virtual memory settings" and set both the minimum and maximum size of the Swap file to about 3 times the amount of RAM your computer has. If, for example, your computer has 32MB of RAM, set the Minimum and Maximum size of the Swap file to 100MB. Now click on OK. Windows will warn you that your system may not work if you insist on these changes. It will work just fine.

Next let's make some room on our hard drive by eliminating fonts that we don't use. Double-click on My Computer and then on Control Panel. Double-click on Fonts. Right-click on a Font and then click on Properties to see the size of the Font file. Double-click on the font to see that actual font style. Click on the Print button to get a printout of that Font. Delete the Fonts you won't be using by highlighting them, and then clicking on File and Delete. Removing unused fonts frees up more hard disk space.

Finally, if you are using Windows 98, right-click on the Desktop and click on Properties. Click on the Effects tab and remove the check mark on the "Animate windows, menus and lists" box. Remove the check mark on the Smooth edges of screen fonts" box. Click on Apply and then on OK. Windows 98 will appear to operate faster because it no longer has to smooth out Fonts or animate windows menus and lists.

In terms of hardware, adding more RAM is the single-most cost effective upgrade for increased performance. 64MB of RAM should be your starting point, and 128MB of RAM will produce an increase in system performance. Take a look at **www.crucial.com**. It's a great source for RAM. You'll find your exact make and model of computer on their extensive listing. You ÿll know you are ordering the right RAM.

If you are a windows 98 user, run Defrag by clicking on Start, then on Programs and finally on System Tools. Select Disk Defragmenter. When you run Defrag Windows moves some of your Windows program files to the fastest part of your hard disk. Again, a free increase in performance.

Run Defrag once every week or so