

## **(Vice) Presidential Ramblings'**

Gerry Ching, SBPCUG

We would like to encourage members to show us what you are currently doing with your computer and your favorite applications. Member demos are valuable to other members, as they know they are getting an honest evaluation of the demonstrated item. We can provide help if you want to do a demo at one of our meetings.

### **User Group News**

If you know any member that is not receiving the newsletter and meeting reminder email, tell them to contact Mike Jogoleff" ([Bungalow@ix.netcom.com](mailto:Bungalow@ix.netcom.com)), who is in charge of our membership database.

Membership inquiries and renewals should be directed to Beverly Ching ([beverlykc@juno.com](mailto:beverlykc@juno.com)).

### **This Column**

This month topics include:

- Adobe Reader Problems
- NiMH Battery Problems

If you find this column useful, send me comments at [gching2000@yahoo.com](mailto:gching2000@yahoo.com).

### **Adobe Reader Problems**

Adobe released version 8 of the free Acrobat reader several months ago. As usual, it's bigger and slower than its predecessor, version 7. However, there have been scattered reports about problems related to this new version.



I'm running WinXP Pro, SP2 on a 800 MHz Pentium 3 with all the current patches and updates. I installed Adobe Reader version 8 in mid-March 2007. It installed without incident. But when opening and reading .pdf documents, I noticed scrolling problems with multiple page documents. I got multiple frames within frames when I scrolled the document. This behavior made it difficult or impossible to read the document.

After experiencing this several times on a number of different documents and failing to find this problem described on the Adobe support site, I headed for the Adobe Reader Forum, where users exchange comments about the reader. Here I found several users had the same problem as I did. A user did mention that WinXP users who ran into this problem often found a work-around by reducing the screen color depth from 32-bit color to 16-bit color.

This solved the scrolling problem for me. However, I noticed that when shutting down my computer (Start, shutdown) the desktop behind the dialog box that gives you the choice of whether to shutdown, restart or log-off would scramble, like an old TV set with

the horizontal control miss-set. This was sufficiently annoying that I finally removed Adobe Reader version 8, and re-installed version 7. Problems vanished.

I don't think version 8 is ready for prime time. My advice is to stay with version 7 until Adobe issues a major patch. Adobe is still creating security patches for version 7.

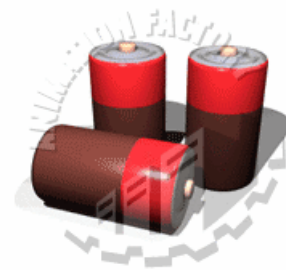
### NiMH Battery Problems

I've been using Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH) rechargeable batteries for several years in my digital cameras. I regularly use rapid chargers (< 2hrs), such as the Lenmar Mach 1 in combination with more traditional overnight chargers (>6hrs). The cells I use are almost exclusively AA size batteries, with some major name brands, but mostly bulk cells from BatterySpace ([www.batteryspace.com](http://www.batteryspace.com)).



Recently, I've been having some problems in relatively new digital cameras from Canon, such as the PowerShot S2is. Often, a newly recharged NiMH set of batteries will be rejected by the camera as being discharged or low in charge. If the camera will startup successfully with the battery set, it will function for a least an hour, even with the low battery warning. Note that most of the problematic cells are high capacity (2300 mAh) cells.

I've traced the problem to a lower than normal cell terminal voltage under load. A normal cell should maintain at least 1.2 volts under moderate load (>400 mA). And the Canon cameras apparently do a battery voltage check under load on boot-up. So the cameras are tending to reject these particular NiMH cells. The strange part is that when I use older, lower capacity cells (~1500 mAh), the problem largely goes away. Are my high capacity cells starting to deteriorate?



Now I've used the high capacity cells in my older Olympus digital camera with no problems. And regularly use them in "walkie talkie" Family radios. I suspect that newer digital cameras tend to draw very high initial currents on "bootup", which falls to a more moderate level. This puts quite a large initial load on the batteries.

Is there a way to tell when you are purchasing NiMH cells whether you will run into this problem? Not really. And once you have the cells, it is not easy to diagnose the problem. In my case, I have an older Radio Shack charger that has a discharge feature. You can use this feature to test your cells under load. The feature can also be useful to “cycle” your cells, which I’ve done as an experiment. However, I can find no useful advantage to do this to NiMH cells. This feature is useful only for Nickel Cadmium cells.

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