



# 1-Minute Newsletter – May 2016

This is another installation of our 1-Minute Newsletter – we hope you find it helpful!

## Who ya gonna call, Ghostbusters?

When your computer's network connection goes awry, things often stop working, don't they? Your security settings may not allow us to help remotely and, of course, we're unable to physically check cabling or other hardware issues because we're not there, on-site! This is why you should ally yourself with a local computer tech person who can help you solve some of these physical connection problems, remap network drives and fix problems caused by automatic software updates, especially Windows updates! Invite him out for a visit to your office, or treat her to lunch -- get acquainted! It will pay off time and time again when problems arise.

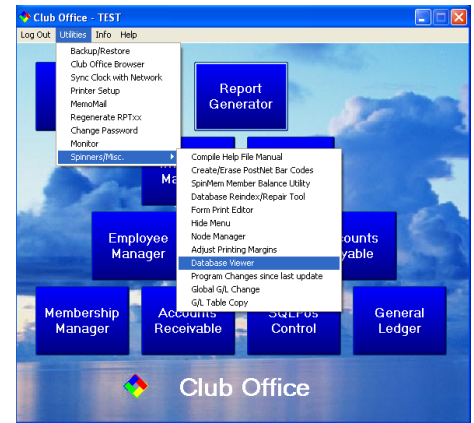
## The Database Viewer – a very handy tool!

Sometimes you're looking for a transaction that's just not quickly found via the 775+ report templates and thousands of possibilities built into Club Office. The database viewer is the answer – go right to the raw data! This is a menu option that is found on the secondary menu off the main Utilities menu. To use the viewer efficiently, it's helpful to know which database holds what information. Here's a quick overview of some of the most popular databases:

- A/R transaction history: DAILY.MDB database, ARMONTHLY table
- G/L journal history: GLJRNLMDB database, GLJOURNAL table
- A/P invoices: AP.MDB database, INVOICES table
- A/P checks: AP.MDB database, CHECKS table
- Inventory items: INVNTORY.MDB database, ITEMS table
- POS transaction history: HBPOSXH.MDB database, XACT table

When you open the database viewer, along the bottom of the screen starting at the left is the option to select the database (MDB file), after which the tables inside that database will appear in the second box. When the table is selected the screen will then populate with data. After that, clicking on a column heading (which is the database field name) will sort the data into ascending order by that field which should help you scroll the screen up/down to locate the information you seek.

POS users will find it particularly helpful to purge old data from a register's database if that register seems to be running sluggishly: the DBViewer displays a handy purge function if you've opened it from the manager panel of a SQLPos register. You should use it every spring to purge LAST year's transactions on *each* register.



## Sales Query Generator

We recently added this feature to the Report Generator to provide you with some powerful yet easy-to-use tools to get lots of interesting sales data out of your system. View sales data filtered by different combinations of criteria -- scan by class code, by a special interest code, member age (birthdate), length of membership (join date), and more. You can view the reports in summary or detail, and sorted in various ways, too. GM's will love it! Be sure to click HELP at the screen to view the module's user manual that includes several *real* examples of how it can help you!



## Windows Update Caution

We watched one of our Windows 10 computers update itself recently and afterward, we found a couple interesting things. For one, it took the PC out of action for at least a half-hour as it updated and rebooted a

half-dozen times. But the more interesting change was that the hard disk cache, which we normally disable, was turned back on. "Big deal," you say. Well, it *actually* is quite a big deal and here's why. Please read on...

Club Office is a transaction-based system. A journal entry, for example, is called a “transaction” because it actually contains *at least two* individual but closely related events: a debit and a credit, and BOTH events have to happen for the transaction to be successful. If only one of them is made, your G/L goes out of balance. So what’s this got to do with the hard disk cache? First, let’s understand what the cache is and what it does.

A cache (pronounced *cash*) is a section of the computer’s electrical memory that’s used for temporary data storage. It exists only while the PC is powered on and there are actions that can happen on the computer that can clear it. By default, Windows enables the cache to increase the speed and performance of the computer – it makes it “feel” faster to the user because storing and retrieving data from the electrical memory is much faster than storing and retrieving data from a mechanical device such as a hard disk drive. Windows automatically manages this special memory area and reads/writes to it on its own internal time schedule which is dependent on whatever else is going on with the computer at the time. This is called the Windows Lazy-Write Cache. For most computer operations it’s a good feature, *but for a transaction-based system that relies on data getting to/from the databases as quickly as possible, it can easily result in data loss and calculation problems.*

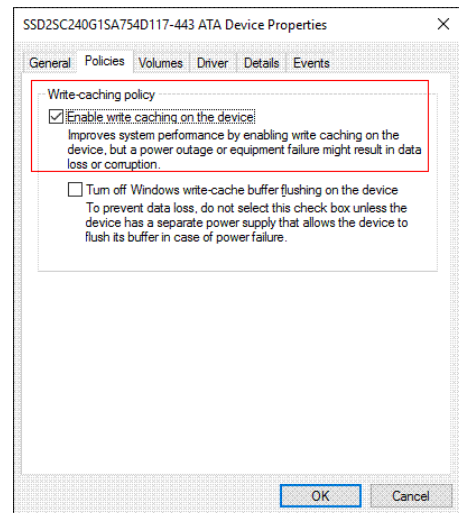
For help in disabling your disk cache, give us a call. Or you can easily do it yourself – it’s in the POLICIES property of the hard disk, which you can find in the Windows Device Manager. Simply uncheck the “Enable write caching on the device”, click OK and then reboot your computer for the change to take effect.

After our Windows 10 PC updated itself, we ran a simple test. We exported a report to the desktop and

just watched the desktop to see how quickly it appeared. With the cache turned on, the file didn’t appear for about 5 seconds. After we disabled the cache and retried the same test, the file appeared immediately. The cache created a gigantic delay!

When you process accounts receivable month-end, Club Office must create the automatic dues and other charges and afterwards, age customer balances in preparation for printing statements. With such a cache delay in place it’s quite possible that the computer hasn’t yet added the necessary entries into the database by the time the program needs to age customer balances and the result is that some customer balances may not be correct.

An active disk cache is *even more deadly* for POS systems where tickets are constantly being recalled, modified, sent to the kitchen and re-saved, recalled again, modified some more, etc. often by different users on different registers.



## **New Computers/Re-Installations**

As computers age, they often need replacement. For Club Office, this also means a reinstallation of the necessary DLLs and other support files that our software needs, as well as necessary tweaking of several Windows settings to make sure the database

engine can work efficiently on your new computer. We’re happy to provide these services, which we perform remotely from our office. As they normally require an hour of time and are not part of your normal support subscription plan, the fee is \$75 per computer and we’ll just add the charge to your normal monthly statement.