

Editorial

In This Issue

ISSN 1460-7239

1 Editorial

2 My Favourite Tipples

from Paul Pedley

3 Jobs

Assistant Librarian
Research Manager
Legal Librarian Assistant
Advertising Agency Researcher
Information Associate
Information Executive

4 Tips Article

"The Economies of the Balkan"
By Sam Vaknin

5 Bookshelf

"Super Searchers Make It On
Their Own"
Reviewed by Marylaine Block

6 Feature Article

"Answering Quick Reference
Enquiries Using Google"
By Terry Kendrick

Fact, Events and Gold Forthcoming Articles

3 Contact Information

Online Version with Activated Hyperlinks

<[http://www.freepint.com/
issues/080802.htm](http://www.freepint.com/issues/080802.htm)>

Adobe Acrobat Version

<[http://www.freepint.com/
issues/080802.pdf](http://www.freepint.com/issues/080802.pdf)>

Everyone knows that the Free Pint Bar is the place for tricky research questions, but lately it has felt more like a matchmaking agency. Which I think is great.

It seems that people in many different parts of the information industry are increasingly looking to network and seek support through formal or informal groups.

For instance, at the Bar we've recently welcomed a new breed, 'Resource Specialists', who seem mainly to talk about their collective title <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b19089>>. There is also widespread interest for an Intranet support group <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b18758>>. Even IT professionals are looking to their peers for help, especially after redundancy <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b19067>>.

We all need support and encouragement, but I'm surprised by how little of it there seems to be around. I don't have a solution, but at least people are starting to air their desire to get together with like-minded professionals. Wherever it takes place, be it at the Bar or elsewhere, it has got to be a good thing.

A big thank you then to everyone who contributes, and of course to Factiva for their sponsorship of the Bar. It seems to be benefiting not only those with research questions but also those seeking professional association <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>.

Elsewhere at Free Pint, our Summer Sale has just been greatly enhanced with the addition of 'buy one get one free' on UK company reports. I'm delighted that we've managed to negotiate this great deal for Free Pint members, whereby every report purchased in August 2002 entitles you to another report of the same value or less, completely free.

So, we've now got sale offers on company reports, newsletter and

banner advertising, and half price job listings. Only until the end of the month though
<<http://www.freepint.com/shop>>.

In today's Free Pint we're as cosmopolitan as ever, with a look at Web resources for the Balkans and for answering reference enquiries. All this, with the usual mix of tips and reviews, should give you lots of things to think about and sites to visit.

Best regards
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About Free Pint

Free Pint is an online community of information researchers. Members receive this free newsletter every two weeks packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <<http://www.freepint.com/>> and provides access to the substantial archive of articles, book reviews, jobs, industry news & events, with answers to your research questions and networking at the Free Pint Bar.

Please circulate this newsletter which is best read when printed out. To receive the Adobe Acrobat version as an attachment or a brief notification when it's online, visit <<http://www.freepint.com/member>>.

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- Buy a newsletter advert, get one free

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Free Pint Gold

If you're into photography this useful tips article in August last year could be for you. Guy Aron listed sites from underwater to forensic photography, and buying a camera. Mike Mecham's article about Latin America looked at English language web resources. He covered portals, economic analysis, databases, the press and much more.

- Free Pint No.93, 2nd August 2001. "Photography through the Web - Part 1" and "Latin America" <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020801.htm>>

Two years ago David Ogden took us through some genealogy sites. He also listed a few books that may be of some use. Stephen Lafferty's article looked at the issue of surveillance and privacy. He named companies that record and sell individual's web browsing habits and covered the latest surveillance equipment on the market.

- Free Pint No.68, 3rd August 2000. "Netting your Ancestors: Genealogy Sites on the Internet for tracing UK Ancestors" and "Surveillance and Privacy" <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/030800.htm>>

In issue 44, Marylaine Block interviewed Super Searcher Reva Basch. She found out what publications Reva enjoys reading to keep up to date with the latest research and developments. In her fascinating article, Dr. Pita Enriquez Harris (one of the founders of The Oxford Knowledge Company) gave us a few tips on how to cope with too much information.

- Free Pint No.44, 5th August 1999. "Interview: Reva Basch, Super Searcher" and "How will we survive Information Overload?" <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/050899.htm>>

Four years ago in our Tips article, Alison Scammell provided plenty of links to trade associations, including the British Trout Association and the Ice Cream Alliance, no less. Nick Gilbert offered an alternative to spending hours searching for news publications. He suggested using a news aggregator - a one-stop-shop for all the latest news.

- Free Pint No.20, 6th August 1998. "Trade Associations on the Web" and "The Need For News Aggregation" <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/060898.htm>>

Glen Recruitment

Glen Recruitment is a leading independent Employment Consultancy dealing in the recruitment of Information Specialists, Knowledge Professionals, Business Analysts, Researchers and Librarians. We provide both permanent and temporary staff at all levels from Senior Managers to recent Graduates. Our client list could not be more exceptional and includes prestigious organisations of all sizes. For more details call 020 7745 7245 email info@glenrecruitment.co.uk

Free Pint Competitive Intelligence Exchange

Arthur Weiss looks at ways of finding information on competitors, what to look for and how to communicate it to decision makers.

Thursday 19th September 2002, West London, UK
<<http://www.freepint.com/exchange/ci190902.htm>>

My Favourite Tipples from Paul Pedley

- <<http://www.tucows.com>> - Tucows is an excellent source for downloading freeware and shareware.
- <<http://www.managinginformation.com>> - Provides a daily news service covering the information industry. Has been particularly useful on copyright matters recently.
- <<http://www.northernlight.com/news.html>> - The NorthernLight current news search covers two weeks worth of news which is available free of charge, after which time it becomes part of the chargeable special collection.
- <<http://investor.ft.com>> - Useful site for monitoring companies and markets, including share price data, company announcements, and currencies.
- <<http://www.searchengineshowdown.com/>> - Greg Notess' site monitors search engines, including their sizes relative to one another.

Paul Pedley is Head of Research at the Economist Intelligence Unit, and is running two Free Pint Exchanges in the Autumn on Data Protection and Electronic Copyright <<http://www.freepint.com/exchange/>>.

Email your top five favourite Web sites to <penny@freepint.com> or see the guidelines at <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>>.

Free Pint Data Protection Exchange

Thursday 26th September 2002, West London, UK
<<http://www.freepint.com/exchange/dp260902.htm>>

This workshop will look at setting up data protection and privacy statements, tracking users, securing and processing client data.

"Paul Pedley is an excellent speaker. Very knowledgeable. Would definitely come to another event. Price was reasonable as well."

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Free Pint Jobs

<http://www.freepint.com/jobs>

SUMMER SALE: All job listings placed before the end of August are half price. Find out more at <http://www.freepint.com/shop>.

As well as the selected listings below, check out the weekly Bar postings which list the latest additions to Free Pint Jobs. This week's can be found at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b19092> and last week's at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b19004>.

Assistant Librarian

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1925>

Top law firm has chance for newly qualified info prof to join team, 22k pounds for newly qual, negotiable for law library experience.

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Research Manager

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1952>

Research Manager to manage staff, negotiate with suppliers, train end-users and provide in-depth research. To 38,000 pounds + Bonus.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Legal Librarian Assistant

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1958>

6 month contract in City law firm to support current team on all aspects of the library. Experience and enthusiasm essential.

Recruiter: Recruit Media

Information Associate

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1956>

9 month contract, info research & library work, large commercial firm, small lively team, central Herts location (need car).

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Advertising Agency Researcher

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1957>

Advertising Agency Researcher (qual.) with bubbly personality and good online database experience. To 22,000 pounds.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Information Executive

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1959>

Recent graduate in information management required for 3 month+ contract with blue chip client. Would suit pre-library professional.

Recruiter: Recruit Media

Job seekers can search the database for free, and set up a profile to be notified weekly of relevant new vacancies.

Recruiters will receive significant publicity for listed vacancies, and jobs will be matched against the 600+ stored job seeker profiles.

Events

<http://www.freepint.com/events>

The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) have their "68th IFLA General Conference and Council" in Glasgow on the 18th - 24th August <http://www.freepint.com/go/e105> with workshops, lectures, library visits and poster sessions.

Frost & Sullivan invite 'Senior Marketing Research Management' to the "5th Annual Advanced Marketing Research Executive Summit, East" in Orlando, Florida <http://www.freepint.com/go/e122>.

Also Taking place is their "9th Annual Competitive Intelligence Executive Summit, East" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e123> which will cover the 'Strategic Convergence of Customer, Competitor, and Marketing Intelligence'.

Submit details of your event today for free promotion. Simply complete the form at <http://www.freepint.com/events>.

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If you have a tricky research question or can help other Free Pinters then do post a message at the Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar> or the Student Bar <http://www.freepint.com/student>.

To have the latest Bar postings sent to you every other day, log in to your account online at <http://www.freepint.com/member>.

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Tips Article

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080802.htm#tips>>

"The Economies of the Balkan"
By Sam Vaknin

The Balkan (Southeastern Europe or SEE, put more politely), like the Middle East and Central Asia, gains exposure only in times of strife and worse. Even it's boundaries are undecided. Scholars include in it Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia - but all three reject vehemently the title "Balkanian" which they regard as pejorative. The Balkan is polarized among the very rich (Slovenia), the rich (Hungary, Croatia), the poor (Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria), and the impoverished (Bosnia- Herzegovina, Yugoslavia, Albania).

Political and geopolitical background about the region can be gleaned from the full-text reports of the International Crisis Group <<http://www.intl-crisis-group.org/projects/program.cfm?typeid=3>> and the articles authored by local journalists and outside experts on the Institute for War and Peace Reporting Web site <http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?balkans_index.html>. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty has two excellent and free reports, delivered by e-mail to subscribers: the Balkan report <<http://www.rferl.org/balkan-report/>> and the South Slavic report <<http://www.rferl.org/southslavic/>>. The online version of the Southeast European Politics Journal, published by Central European University, provides in-depth political and geopolitical analyses <<http://www.seep.ceu.hu/>>.

The Balkan Academic New list is unparalleled in its depth and width of coverage <<http://www.seep.ceu.hu/balkans/>>. For a survey of the terrain from the local point of view, visit Serbianna <<http://www.serbianna.com/>> or the vitriolic and thought-provoking "Emperor's New Clothes" <<http://www.emperors-clothes.com/>>. Another recommended resource is the East West Institute <<http://www.iewis.org/>>. Other good sources of news coverage, including economic and financial news, are the Southeast Europe Regional News <<http://www.seeurope.net/>>.

The European Internet network maintains a Balkan portal which covers the politics and economies of the region <<http://www.europeaninternet.com/balkans/>>. Another source of scholarly information is the Center for Southeast European Studies <<http://www.csees.net/>>. The Vienna based SEEMO <<http://www.seemo.at/>> is a network and advocacy group of journalists, editors, and media outlets throughout the region. The intelligence Network maintains a Balkan Topic Center <<http://www.intellnet.org/topics/balkans/>>.

For alternative - and multilingual - views about the republics of former Yugoslavia and Albania, visit AIM, Alternative Information Network in former Yugoslavia <<http://www.aimpress.org/index.htm>>. A solid directory of Balkan links can be found in Balkan Peace <<http://www.uottawa.ca/associations/balkanpeace/links.html>>. Geoscopie provides French perspectives and rare links <<http://www.geoscopie.com/>>.

Following the Kosovo war, the region benefits from a host of US and European Union driven reconstruction plans. The European Commission and the World Bank maintain an excellent Web site about the various credits, grants,

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technical assistance, and regional cooperation programs <<http://www.seerecon.org/>>. The biggest of these initiatives, the Stability Pact, maintains a separate and well worth visiting Web site <<http://www.stabilitypact.org/>>.

The next stop is somewhat surprising. The US European Command (EUCOM) maintain an excellent Web site called "Balkan Times" (formerly the Balkan Exchange). It has a constantly updated section about the economy <<http://www.balkantimes.com/html2/english/arcEcon.htm>>.

Visitors to the Balkan Regional Center for Trade Promotion <<http://www.balcantrade.org/>> can find information about the economies of countries in the region, various cross-border initiatives, and useful addresses. Southeast Europe Online <<http://www.southeasteurope.org/>> lists reconstruction and development projects and NGO's operating in the area. Both Central Europe Review <<http://www.ce-review.org/>> and Transitions Online <<http://www.tol.cz/>> (they are about to merge), carry numerous articles about Balkan economies. CER's archive is free, TOL's requires a paid subscription.

Kasna <<http://www.kasna.com/>> provide analyses of economic sectors throughout the region as well as B2C and B2B services. If you care to learn about taxation this is the Web site for you: TaxUp Central and Eastern Europe <http://www.taxup.com/eastern_europe>. Good luck!

Sam Vaknin is the author of "Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited" and "After the Rain - How the West Lost the East". He is a columnist for Central Europe Review and eBookWeb, a United Press International (UPI) Senior Business Correspondent, and the editor of mental health and Central East Europe categories in The Open Directory and Suite101. Until recently, he served as the Economic Advisor to the Government of Macedonia. Visit Sam's Web site at <<http://samvak.tripod.com>>.

Related Free Pint links:

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Free Pint Bookshelf

<<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>>

"Super Searchers Make It On Their Own"

Written by **Suzanne Sabrowski,**
Reva Basch (Editor)
Reviewed by **Marylaine Block**

This follows the standard format of the invaluable Super Searcher series: a knowledgeable interviewer asks top researchers how they do their job. What are their tricks of the trade, their favorite tools and strategies? In this case, though, the focus is not on the search but on the business. In an era when information is abundant, and most of it is believed to be free, how do you convince people that they need to buy it, and from you? How do you make the decision to go private? How do you build a clientele? Price your services?

The answers vary widely because the information entrepreneurs include generalists, experts in aviation, intellectual property, public records, search engines, telecommunications, and Canadian business, and an information expert who provides contract library services to corporations.

But there are commonalities, too. This work is not for the faint of heart. Information entrepreneurs need to be willing to take risks and trust their abilities. They need opening-day credibility, the ability to answer the question, "why should I hire YOU?" with a "Because ..." derived from years of acknowledged excellent performance in information retrieval. They need to have a clear sense of who their prospective clients are and how to market to them.

For many information entrepreneurs, the solution is added value. The fact is that raw information is valueless. Professional researchers have to have the background knowledge to ask the right questions, find the most useful data for the purpose, and recognize when key information is missing; furthermore, they need to be able to summarize the data and provide the analysis, the "so what?".

That's why many researchers specialize in highly specific subject areas. Some of the people interviewed here were never librarians, but were knowledgeable experts in a subject area who became expert in manipulating the information structure of the field. Martin Goffman, for instance, was a specialist in intellectual property and patents, was a chemist, inventor, and an owner of patents before he got into the business of

patent searching. Crystal Sharp, who specializes in Canadian business information, got her degree in economics and was a contract researcher for the Harvard Institute for International Development before she decided to offer specialized business information for a living.

Word of mouth and networking are the primary marketing methods these researchers use; as public records specialist Lynn Peterson says "every client I've ever had has led to two or three more". Many of them publish newsletters to stay in touch with existing clients and let them know about new services and tools; they encourage their clients to forward the newsletters on to anyone who might be interested (and become a future client). Many of them publish articles in the trade literature and work the conference circuit; by sharing some of what they know, they pick up both new clients and new referrers in the information community. They all maintain web sites, not so much as a way to attract new clients, but as a quick way to acquaint prospective clients with the kind of work they do, show them sample projects and/or lists of satisfied customers, and present their pricing structure.

Their search habits are living proof that it's NOT all on the web for free. They all use the internet for some purposes, but for their meat and potatoes they rely on the various databases they subscribe to. Sometimes they'll get on the phone to experts in the field, and they'll even go to libraries and archives as needed (or subcontract this work to others).

All of them must deal with the issue of continuous learning and retraining. Most of them are part of professional listservs and discussion forums, both within their subject specialties and within the information community -- the book is kind of like a love-letter to the Association of Independent Information Professionals.

All of these information entrepreneurs enjoy the flexibility of setting your own hours. Many of them went private so that they could work and still have the time they wanted with their young children. They like the control that comes from running your own business, the freedom to choose or refuse assignments, and to do them in the way they see fit. And they like the respect that comes from a job well done, respect that is measured in the willingness to pay large amounts of money for their expertise.

Free Pint Electronic Copyright Exchange

Copyright issues in the electronic environment and their implications for Web sites and intranets will be examined in this workshop. Topics include licences, deep linking, copyright law and new directives.

Thursday 17th October 2002,
West London, UK
<<http://www.freepint.com/exchange/ec171002.htm>>

As for the down side -- well, actually, there doesn't seem to be one. Not if you know your stuff, and people know you know your stuff. If you're ready to take the plunge yourself, but would like to have a lifeguard standing by, this book offers plenty of tips, things to think about, and suggested reading.

Marylaine Block, who is also known for building the well-known web site, Best Information on the Net (BIOTN), is now a full-time writer, internet trainer, and publisher of two e-zines for librarians, ExLibris and Neat New Stuff I Found This Week. She's written numerous articles for library publications and has edited a book of the wit and wisdom of Barbara Quint, *The Quintessential Searcher*, recently published by Information Today and reviewed by Free Pint at <<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/quint.htm>>.

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- "Super Searchers Make It On Their Own: Top Independent Information Professionals Share Their Secrets for Starting and Running a Research Business" ISBN 0910965595 published by Cyberage Books written by Suzanne Sabrowski, Reva Basch (Editor)

Feature Article

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080802.htm#feature>>

"Answering Quick Reference Enquiries Using Google"
By Terry Kendrick

When confronted with a queue of six people at the enquiry desk and an internet search result of 250,000 hits you may well reflect that using the internet to answer that quick reference enquiry was not such a good idea after all.

Ironically, access to vast storehouses of information has complicated our jobs as much as it has simplified them. Pressing a few keyboard keys does not necessarily deliver. Here are two practical tips that my library and information students find work remarkably well and will potentially revolutionise your searching for quick reference type enquiries. It is not the only way of searching but it is certainly an effective way to dramatically reduce the number of hits without losing relevance.

Thinking like a librarian (structures, keywords, Boolean algebra) is very useful when dealing with a traditional online host that has its information nicely indexed in searchable fields. However, the internet is still essentially a string of text (although there are some librarian-friendly controlled parts) where we are missing a trick if we simply use keywords and, in the case of Boolean, allow the ambiguities inherent in language to reduce some potential precision in our quick reference enquiries. Detailed research topics respond well to keywords, quick reference topics not so well.

The key orientation for effective quick reference internet searching is to think like a journalist rather than as a librarian.

What does this mean in practice? Well, consider the following request:

"I want to know how to wire a plug".

It's very tempting to start the search by identifying keywords. On such an approach you might consider plug wiring or wiring plug, both of which, in Google for instance, will bring you back a significant number of hits. You'll get there eventually. Is the customer getting impatient yet?

Unfortunately the early hits are very technical and not the kind of information helpful to anyone who simply wants to know which wires go where in his or her domestic three pin plug. So how can we make it more specific and relevant to the type of use to which the information will be put?

The first thing to recognise is that keywords do not carry enough information to make them specific. Words can be ambiguous in meaning or context.

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"We investigated and used other methods of distributing our newsletter and are relieved we are now using Free Pint. It is a stress free service."
Internet Resources Newsletter

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<<http://www.freepint.com/shop>>

So this gives us a first clue to more precise internet searching - think in sentences or phrases, not simply keywords. Librarians tend to think in hierarchy and keywords, journalists tend to think in text strings or phrases/sentences.

Why is this a clue to more effective internet searching? Well, consider the "wiring a plug" search. What the reader really wanted to know was how to wire a plug, not wiring and plugs. Why make it more complicated by assigning keywords? The following phrase (it's really just a string of text) put into Google's search box will deliver excellent, precise returns in its first page of results.

"How to wire a plug" ("wiring a plug" is good too) (remember to use quote marks so it will be treated as one text string).

At the phrase level this carries more than the meaning of the individual words - the context matters for greater precision. The search results are consistently practical and relevant because of the use of the words "how to" (As a general point here "how to" is an excellent start to any search for a practical subject. Why? Because practical articles are quite often written with titles which include the words "how to". For confirmation of how well this works try this form of words for items on "how to eat with chopsticks").

However there is even more sophistication in this sentence/phrase- rather-than-keyword approach. My second clue to effective quick reference searching is to use only part sentences (grammar is one of the most effective search filters we have).

On first reading, that probably doesn't make a lot of sense. It makes more sense to do it than to think about it. Try the following:

"Opened the National Exhibition Centre" (will deliver the answer to "Who opened the National Exhibition Centre?"), "Miro was born on" (will deliver the answer to "When was Miro born?"), "is the smallest church in England" (will deliver the answer to "What is the smallest church in England?"), "was the first Emperor of Japan" (will deliver the answer the question "Who was the first Emperor of Japan?").

My students are usually very impressed when they use this approach to searching. Have we got the dream ticket to answering quick reference enquiries here? In front of your eyes you will see:

- The answer. You don't even have to click on to the websites from the Google results page because the part sentence you used is highlighted and forms part of each Google search hit display
- A number of similar hits to confirm general agreement, or otherwise amongst sources - an aid to quality control

(sometimes this can be very useful too when there are potentially competing claims to part sentences such as "is the fattest man in the world")

- Not much, if any, "noise". The results are very specific (in effect the sentence grammar has been very useful here)
- Hey this was quick! And manageable on a busy enquiry desk!

By all means use Boolean algebra and keywords to search, but if you are looking to find a quick way to get the results up on the page in front of you without having to click on to websites to scan their pages then give the part sentence method a try. It's worth it, especially when one of the biggest barriers to using the internet on the enquiry desk is the time that searching and subsequent scanning takes.

Internet searching is as much a creative activity as it is a science. For effective quick reference enquiry searching remember the two tips: think first in sentences and phrases, not keywords and Boolean; part sentences will naturally deliver your answer when the sentence begins or ends with your answer.

And of course, if this doesn't work try keywords and Boolean!

Terry Kendrick is Director of Information Now Ltd <<http://www.terrykendrick.co.uk/>>. He originally trained as a librarian in the late 1970s but since the mid 1980s has been freelance initially as an information broker and, since 1990 as a marketing planning consultant. He has worked on assignments for over 50 large organisations in 17 different countries. He still maintains close contact with the library and information world and regularly presents workshops for the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) as well as doing occasional strategic planning related consultancy for library and information services.

Related Free Pint links:

- "Information and Libraries" resources in the Free Pint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>>
- Post a message to the author, Terry Kendrick, or suggest further resources at the Free Pint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>
- Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080802.htm#feature>>
- Access the entire archive of Free Pint content <<http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>>

Many thanks for reading Free Pint. Please do help us spread the word to your colleagues, and remember to check out our Summer Sale by the end of the month <<http://www.freepint.com/shop>>.

See you in two weeks!

William Hann, Managing Editor
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