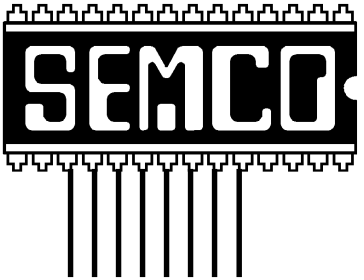

Official Newsletter
SouthEastern Michigan
Computer Organization

DATA BUS

Volume 24 **APRIL 1999** **Number 4**

IN THIS ISSUE

MEETINGS SCHEDULE 3
STRAIGHT FORWARD from the President 3
Board Minutes 5
Joint Meeting Minutes & Mac Minutes 6
SIGS-IBM, Intermediate, Advanced, Internet, Database; Novice-IBM Group 7
SIG-Macintosh—All Apple Products 8
NOVI Computer & Technology Showcase 8
Web Pages That Suck, rev. by Phyllis Evans 9
Web Style Guide, rev. by Phyllis Evans 9
Big Deals, by Bob (the Cheapskate) Click 9
PICTURES 12, 13
How to Unfreeze Your Home Computer, by Heather Newman 14
Intel's Steam Roller Hits Speed Bumps, etc. by Ken Fermoyle & Linda Gonse 15
Tax Deductible Donations 19
Resource Persons 19
DATA BUS Deadline (10th day after meeting); Calendar Of Events 20. 21
SEMCO BULLETIN BOARD "AD" 22
MAP, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY, ROCHESTER 23

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The SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization (SEMCO) is a nonprofit group dedicated to providing information, education and a forum to computer users (professional and amateur) and other interested individuals. Membership in SEMCO is open to all individuals 18 years or older. Persons under 18 years may become members through the sponsorship of a parent or guardian. Dues $25/year include monthly DATA BUS, access to SEMCO's Message Service, and free personal ads.

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Your mailing label and membership cards list the month and year your membership expires. A DUES DUE message may appear on the newsletter back cover page two months before your subscription expires. Newsletters will not be sent after the month of expiration. Back issues may not be available. Renew your membership as early as possible to avoid missing any newsletters.

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STRAIGHT FORWARD! from the President

Steve Yuhasz

Well, April is finally here and hopefully so is spring. Frankly, I have had enough of winter this year and so have many of you. I think we had the equivalent of four of the past winters this year.

However, this month I do have some bad news to report. Our membership is at an all time low of 161. While I do not like to get into the "numbers game," it does concern me that we are into a downward trend. To reverse this trend, we at LEAST need to be advertising our existence to the local papers such as the Observer, free papers such as the Troy Gazette, and the Oakland Press on a consistent basis.

At times, I am guilty of wanting things to happen overnight. In reality, it takes time to build an organization. So, I believe that SEMCO has NOT been consistently making itself known to the community. Sure, we have done community projects, trade shows, and even been on TV and radio, but the problem is that these happen only once or twice in a year's time, and we often see an increase in membership right after one of these events take place. However, being a volunteer organization, we do not have a paid staff which can do this every day or publicize us full time.

What I would like to see happen is someone volunteer to at least target these papers for us and follow up with each of them to make sure we get publicity on a monthly basis. When we do not regularly make it in a periodical, we need to find out why and make sure that we do get in the next month. As always, whomever volunteers for this effort will not go without reward.

Speaking of volunteer efforts, on March 11, Past President Bob Clyne (who drove from Yale, MI), SIG-Advanced Chair Franz Breidenich, SEMCO Member Richard Jackson, and myself all took a half-day to help Goodale Elementary in the Detroit Public School System. Goodale is located off Dickerson Avenue just north of Harper in Detroit. This school has over 1300 students and almost all of them are below the poverty level. There are 50 teachers and each received two IBM ThinkPad laptops for their classrooms this past fall.

SEMCO member Carol Sanzi, who is a teacher at this school assisting with most of the computing needs at

SEMCO MEETINGS Sunday, April 11, 1999

Board Meeting	**12:00 pm**
General Meeting	**1:30 pm**
SIGS IBM/MAC Mtgs	**1:45 pm**
Social Period	**3:15 pm**
SIG-IBM Novice	**3:45 pm**
SIG-IBM Intermediate	**3:45 pm**

Immaculate Heart of Mary School
is the correct spelling
from the last DATA BUS
on pages 6, 9, 19, and 35

the school and including a lab of Apple II's and Mac IIci's, had answered my call at the January meeting for schools that SEMCO could help as part of our goal for community service. All of us arrived around 11:30 that morning and were greeted by Carol. Carol took us upstairs to her computer lab and there one of the teachers, Mary Ellen, had set up a nice little assortment of crackers, cheese, and grapes (a mini SEMCO social period). We were very pleased at this to say the least.

The training session, which is often referred to as an "in-service," did not begin until 12:30pm, so we had some time to help Carol with a few hardware problems that she had been having. One of those problems was with a device called a "Back Pack." It is essentially a small external hard disk with a SCSI to Parallel converter built in. Bob, Franz and myself tried to get one of the IBM ThinkPads with Windows 98 to properly detect this device, but to no avail. We do believe it is defective (so we all would like to think).

At about 12:45pm all of the teachers assembled into the library/auditorium and sat at circular tables in groups. I introduced the volunteers and explained a little about our group and that all of us had come on our own free will and were not being paid. I had taken a half-day off of work and Richard had to start work at 3pm. Many of the teachers were impressed that this was the case. I began my talk by describing each component of the laptop and its function. During this presentation, each of the volunteers made themselves available for individual assistance.

We took a break at the half-way point and I went around with the volunteers to answer any questions from "How do I point and click on this Children's Educational Game?" to "How do I restore part of my menu in a paint program?" to "Can we clean these laptop screens without damaging them?" I also borrowed a laptop docking station from where I work to demonstrate how the laptops can be spared the beating that they will most likely endure from most children in the K-5th Grade. For example, the docking stations will provide these teachers with a way to use much cheaper external monitors, keyboards, and mice while securing the laptop and saving the $1000 laptop proprietary screen

The "in-service" ended with my demonstrating a Windows security program that password protects such functions as deleting, copying, and moving files and icons. It also prevents software from being installed and other settings from being changed. However, this program can frustrate the teacher trying to perform maintenance on the laptop. So, Bob Clyne mentioned that I should check to see if there is an option to turn the program on automatically upon restarting the laptop. Sure enough there was such an option. By doing this, it allows the teacher to turn off the security and not have to worry about turning it back on before shutting down the laptop.

It became apparent to me that in explaining the security program, some teachers did not have enough basic knowledge about Windows 98. So, in the coming months, I am hoping that we can again make a visit to the school and help them. The way I see

Continued on Page 18

BOARD MEETING 3/14/99 Pat Kreiling

The meeting was called to order by President Steve Yuhasz at 12:05pm.
Present: President Steve Yuhasz, Vice President Tim Mauro-Vetter, Secretary Pat Kreiling, Treasurer Roger Gay, DATA BUS Editor Beth Fordyce, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Warner Mach, SIG-Intermediate Chairman Tom Callow, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-Internet Chairman Brian Brodsky, SIG-MAC Chairman Harold Balmer, Past President Bob Clyne.

CORE BUSINESS

Treasury: Roger Gay reported a balance on hand of $3147.70 with $200 not deposited. There were no outstanding bills. February membership is 162.
Newsletter: The newsletter deadline this month is March 24. Beth pointed out that the name of the school she is working with should be corrected to Immaculate Heart of Mary. There was some discussion regarding extra copies of the newsletter.
SIG-IBM: This month's speaker will be Terry White from Adobe. April's meeting will explore video editing.
SIG-IBM Intermediate: This month's topic will be file management. The topic listed in the bulletin was in error. Faxing from your computer was February's topic.
Novice-IBM Group: Today's presenter will be Steve Yuhasz.
SIG-MAC: Harold Balmer reported that SIG-MAC will join the IBM group for the Adobe presentation.
SIG-Advanced: Franz Breidenich stated that the meetings are going well with lively, multi-topic discussions.
SIG-Internet: There will be no March meeting due to a conflict in the Library's schedule. The next meeting will be April 19. There will be an Internet Committee Meeting on March 22 at Brian's workplace.
SIG-Database: No information is available at this time.
Social Hour: Food donations continue to be plentiful. Steve expressed appreciation for the generosity of the members.
Discussion Area: Bob Clyne reported the discussion area is up and running although the activity is quite low.
Volunteer Opportunities
May 1999 Novi Expo Show: Tim Mauro-Vetter will chair this event. He is currently gathering information and will be requesting volunteers to man the booth and will be contacting members requesting their support. The first meeting will be held in approximately two weeks to work out details.

NEW BUSINESS

Brian Brodsky moved that the February minutes be corrected to read "The meeting was called to order by Steve Yuhasz at 12:00 pm." Motion carried.

Tom Callow moved that we extend honorary membership for Rob Wunderlich. The motion was approved.

The Internet Committee have completed the Adobe Acrobat Icon, the Hot Links, and are currently working on obtaining permission from OU to put our own computer—to be our Web server—there.

Bob Clyne reviewed the 501(c)(3) documents and forwarded them to Tom Callow who is currently reviewing them.

Tom Callow's presentation at the

Macomb Library on February 16 was very successful. He received excellent reviews from the library participants and the applause and thanks of the board for his efforts.

Steve Yuhasz, Bob Clyne, Franz Breidenich, and Richard Jackson went to the Goodale Elementary school at the request of member Carol Sanzi. They were warmly received by the staff and helped them become familiar with their new laptops. Steve reported a desire to have SEMCO continue this partnership with the school to help them get hooked up to the Internet and assist them with both their IBM and MAC computers.

Beth noted that Tim Mauro-Vetter made a substantial contribution of MAC hardware and software to the Immaculate Heart of Mary School.

Brian Brodsky moved that Steve Yuhasz, Bob Clyne, Franz Breidenich, Richard Jackson, Betty MacKenzie, and Mike Choley be awarded Volunteer Appreciation Vouchers for their assistance with the Goodale Elementary School Project and help with Tom Callow's presentation. Motion carried.

Roger Gay announced that he has a new email address. Please contact him by email at rgay@voyager.net

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55pm. √

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JOINT and MAC MEETING MINUTES

by Beth Fordyce

Terry White of Adobe Systems did another of his WOW demonstrations. He first got everyone's attention by playing 2 trailers of the upcoming StarWars movie.

This year his "official" demonstration consisted of showing off the latest product updates, Adobe Acrobat 4.0, Adobe Image-Styler 1.0, Adobe Illustrator 8.0 and Adobe InDesign 1.0 (a Beta version).

Attendees were o-o-ohing, a-a-ahing and wowing all the way through and I saw no one nodding off to sleep.

PC copies of Adobe PhotoDeluxe, Adobe PageMill, and Adobe Acrobat 3.0 (can be upgraded to 4.0 for only $99), donated by Adobe, were raffled off at the SIG-IBM meeting later. Richard Jackson, Franz Briedenich and Roland Maki were the lucky winners.

Terry went to SIG-Mac after refreshments and played a bunch of Apple commercials (by Apple, and about Apple): HAL from 2001, the "dancing" Macs, one from Saturday Night Live, and others that we thoroughly enjoyed. The Apple commercials are produced by Chait (pronounced "shy-a-day").

Terry also demonstrated Adobe GoLive 4.0, a new page layout program.

Charlie Sanders won the Mac copy of Adobe PhotoDeluxe that Terry brought for the Mac raffle.

Ad copies and all GIFF movies that Terry played can be downloaded from www.TheMacAd.com. Be sure you have enough space—most are BIG!, some as large as 12 Megs, but a few only 800K. √

IBM & COMPATIBLES

SIG-IBM
3/14/99
Tom Callow
Warner Mach

NEXT MEETING TOPIC:
Using Computers to Edit Video: Gary Cendrowski, Applications Specialist, Wayne State U will demo how to use your computer to edit movies and other video.

SIG-ADVANCED
3/1/99
Franz Breidenich

The next meeting will be held April 5, 1999, at 6:45pm at the Troy Public Library.
TOPIC: A wide ranging discussion of computer issues. √

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
3/14/99
Tom Callow

NEXT MEETING TOPIC: Chairman to review software from recent SIG-IBM Intermediate meetings & answer members' questions. Also to have WinFax Pro for Windows and the MS Office Suite of applications.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
3/14/99
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

NEXT MEETING: April 11
Hosts: April–Bob Clyne;
May–Roger Gay.
Q&A, member-directed discussion.

SIG-INTERNET
3/15/99
Brian Brodsky

There was no March meeting due to a library scheduling conflict.
April 19 Meeting Topic: (3rd Monday) Brian will demonstrate Microsoft's support page.
Contact: Brian Brodsky, Res. 248/544-8987 (evenings) or Work 248/395-0001 Ext. 228 for directions/info. √

SIG-DATABASE
3/17/99
Larry Grupido

We will be meeting in the Custom Business Systems offices (a subsidiary of Correll Porvin Associates, CPA).

One of our members, Ed Dolikian, works there and has reserved a few dates for us in their conference room.

For a map to the location or to be added to the database group mailing list, please send me an e-mail and I will forward the map to you. Our next meeting dates are on the third Wednesday of the month: April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21.
Larry Grupido, lgrupido@tir.com, (810) 664-1777 ext 151. √

For Tax deductible donations of computers, etc., see
Art Laramie for
Rochester Hills
Lions Club
&
Beth Fordyce for
Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Detroit
Details on Page 19

SIG-MAC
(ALL APPLE PRODUCTS)

SIG-MAC
3/14/99
Harold Balmer, Chrmn

REPLACING SYSTEM FILES

by Phyllis Evans

I've developed a habit of backing up a new system installation before going through and tossing the extensions and control panels that I don't need. If, after two or three months, I find I need one of those items, I can just go to my backup rather than having to reinstall from the system CD (and getting more things that I don't need). Additionally, once I have my System Folder the way I want with third-party goodies, I back that up, too. Makes for easy repairs if something becomes corrupted. It's also handy for those times when installing one thing messes up settings on another.

If you don't do regular complete backups, do yourself a favor and, at the very least, backup your system and documents folders. Applications can always be reinstalled, but if you have a major crash, without a backup your documents could be lost permanently.

APRIL MAC MEETING:

1:45 pm, Room 168: Phyllis Evans to demo CalComp's Creation Station graphic tablet, cordless mouse and stylus. See what you can do with a graphic tablet. Also Copy Session.

NOTICES, ARTICLES
and Other Neat Things

NOVI COMPUTER & TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASE

The 5th annual Novi Computer & Technology Showcase will be held May 18 & 19

Detailed show information is available at www.techshows.com

SEMCO Volunteers are needed to staff our booth both days from 10am to 5pm

This is an excellent opportunity to "TELL 'EM ABOUT SEMCO"

Great conversation and fun is guaranteed.

If you have one hour of time or more to help, we want YOU!

If interested, please Contact Tim Vetter by phone (248-576-7592 7am-4pm) or email (tm31@daimlerchrysler.com).

Web Pages That Suck

by Vincent Flanders
& Michael Willis
reviewed by Phyllis Evans

This is a web site that evolved into a book. Subtitled *Learn Good Design by Looking at Bad Design*, this is a must-have for anyone serious about web creation.

Most web books are dry and boring, but this is one you'll read from cover to cover. Instead of telling you how-to, they show you why you should or shouldn't, what works and what doesn't work. The authors willingly direct you to other sites to learn more about subjects such as cascading style sheets and marketing schemes.

Check this book out on the web at <http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com/> then head over to Amazon to order your copy. List price is $39.00 but I bought mine from amazon.com for $35.15, shipping included.

Web Style Guide

by Patrick J. Lynch
& Sarah Horton
reviewed by Phyllis Evans

This is another excellent web design book also based on a web site, one created by the Center for Advanced Instructional Media at Yale University (info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual). Sounds boring, but trust me, it's not.

While not humorous like **Web Pages That Suck**, it gives clear, concise advice on creating well-designed, effective web sites and pages. Subjects covered include planning and organizing, font and graphic usage and basic design principles. At just over 150 pages and lots of illustrations, it's worth taking the time to read if you are serious about web design. List price is $14.95 and it is available from both Amazon and Borders. Check it out on the web at <http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual>.

DEALS COLUMN

from the Deals Guy
Greater Orlando Computer UG
by Bob "The Cheapskate" Click

Most of you probably noticed the shorter column last month, and again this month. I didn't have much time to hunt up deals and many vendors did not answer my telephone calls or e-mail. Many editors probably welcomed the shorter column because space is becoming a premium in many newsletters.

My regular readers know that if I find something of interest, you will probably read about it. That is the case this month with an item that reoccurs periodically, a price reduction but no place to order, a home item not even computer related, and where to obtain a catalog. I attended a "Home Automation" show and home items are the result. I'll pass these on as I get them to come together.

In Review

The golf course software as well as the camping software should still be good. That company has been excellent to deal with.

There seemed to be confusion with the Voice Express offer. My proofreader was interested in it and checked out the web site. He also called the phone number and found different information, in fact, even what some might consider a better offer. However, I did see that same price for

Voice Express in a Sunday ad last week. I'm sorry if what you found was confusing; so was I. It's still a good deal but I'm not sure what the whole situation is.

Adobe Update

Here are the latest specials from Adobe. I'll leave out the descriptions since most of you already know what the software does. Adobe PhotoDeluxe, Business Edition - Windows - $69.00 (estimated street price, $99.00). Adobe PhotoDeluxe, Home Edition 3.0 - Windows - $39.00 (ESP $49.00). Adobe PhotoDeluxe 2.0 - Macintosh - $39.00 (ESP $49.00). Adobe PageMill 3.0 - Windows/ Macintosh - $69.00 (ESP $99.00).

To order, call 1-800-888-6293 and mention offer #35701. I wish they would give us a special offer on Photoshop and PageMaker. Perhaps more of us could afford them.

Color Laser Printer Price Reduction

If you've been waiting for the prices to drop for Laser Color, it has been happening, but might now have dropped into our buying range. QMS, maker of computer peripherals, announced it has reduced the price of its QMS Magicolor 2 DeskLaser color printer to $1299.00. That makes it one of the lowest priced color laser printers on the market.

The printer comes with an Ethernet network interface & has a print speed of 4 pages per minute (ppm) in full color. Does as fast as 16 ppm in black and white, and can handle as large as legal size paper. The Resolution is 600 dpi and includes 8 MB of RAM.

There isn't any deal information to offer, but I'm just making you aware of this new price structure in case you are thinking of a color laser. Visit their web site at <www.qms.com>. I read this information in Reseller News and hope it was not a misprint.

Do You Get Steamed While Waiting For Hot Water?

My house has the hot water heater in the garage. My master bedroom's bath is close so hot water comes fast, but in the kitchen, it takes a while, and in the guest bath, it takes forever before you get any hot water. This item fixes that problem, and has a payback over a period of time in water savings, especially if you are on city water.

The "Metlund Hot Water D'MAND System" is usually installed under the sink furthest from your water heater. At the push of a button, it circulates the cool water you normally let go down the drain, back to the water heater through the cold water line. At the same time, the D'MAND System fills the hot water line with hot water from your water heater. When hot water reaches the D'MAND System the zone valve closes and the pump shuts off automatically. The results are hot water very quickly to remote areas when needed, water savings as well as sewer and energy savings.

There is more explanation but this item certainly caught my eye and you can get the rest of the information from their web site <http://www.metlund.com>. "Metlund D'MAND Systems" offer both commercial and residential applications and will cost less than $1.00 per year to operate. Be advised that this pump only works when you push the button to activate it (a remote is also available to activate) and should provide hot water to the remote site in about 30 seconds.

If you like this item, call them at 1-800-METLUND (638-5863) for more info or to order. They offer the S-01 PF-R Kit which is equipped with 3/4" thread male adapters, custom T's with a matching adapter at the bottom of the T and a 5/8" compression x 1/2" stub across the top for a compression fit installation (flex lines and the remote also included). Approximate time for installation: 1 hour. Price - $311.00 + S&H of $18.00. MSRP is $395.00. Allow two weeks for shipping.

If you prefer to install it the hard way, order the S-01 Standard at $275.00. The components are pre-wired and pre-attached. To complete the installation, connect the system from the hot to the cold water supply, attach the push button to the low voltage wire provided, then plug in to a 110/115V standard outlet. (Sweat soldering may be required). To get these prices, please use the code DG (Dealsguy).

Make Magnetic Signs

I get lots of catalogs and noticed something interesting in the MEI/ Micro Center one. The Parana Auto Sign Kit allows users to create magnetic signs up to 11" x 17" for the sides or backs of their cars or trucks. You can also cut down the size to make smaller signs or novelty items like refrigerator magnets. Clear laminating sheets protect your sign against fading and the weather.

There's more description, but they say it's compatible with all inkjet printers. Price, $39.95. Call MEI/ Micro Center for their catalogue at 1-800-634-3478. This company is not new. When I first started computing years ago, theirs was the cheapest place to buy floppies. You might enjoy the rest of the catalog as well.

Where Do You Get Good Quality Sound Hardware For Your Computer?

Sometimes that is a good question, but I can give you a start. "Edirol's 'Buyer's Guide'" catalog is a part of the Roland Group and when it comes to sound boards and other equipment, they're among the best. Vendors you see at Comdex often using Roland Components etc. if you look closely.

This catalog contains keyboards, microphones, earphones and many types of midi processors and other hardware. Digital video equipment is also listed. It contains 75 pages, and six pages contain just a sampling of their midi file collection. I sometimes get midi files from the web, but the quality is often questionable.

I know there are other high quality sound catalogs, but this one is probably one with the most modestly priced, specialized equipment. If I find others, I'll pass the information on. Call 1-800-380-2580 to ask for a catalog.

That's all I have this month, but I hope to have more time next month to dig things up. Meet me here again and we'll talk deals. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click <dealsguy@mindspring.com>. √

Terry White, Tom Callow, Roger Gay, Bob Clyne setting up for the demonstration

Terry White, Harold Balmer

Jim Brun, Don Clark

Photos taken with Mavica FD-81, in Plain Color mode, compared to last month in Soft Portrait mode. Over all, last month's turned out sharper; of course it will help when the "photographer" learns something about what she's doing.

Carl Weiler, refreshment line at rear

Ted Klingler

Phil Reynaud

Tom Boswell

Sandra Woods

How to Unfreeze Your Home Computer

by Heather Newman
submitted by Betty MacKenzie

You know the sinking feeling. It's the one you get when you're just about finished with that project and your computer suddenly displays the blue screen of death. Or your mouse cursor takes a vacation. Or it refuses to move. Yes, there are almost as many ways for Windows 95 programs to crash as there are Windows 95 programs. So here is a little help for when...

Your Mouse Pointer Disappears: Don't panic. Try moving the mouse around to see if the arrow reappears at the corners of the screen or down on the taskbar. If you were having the computer save a file or do something else taxing, you might give the pointer a minute or two to return.

If it doesn't, try to save your work and reboot the computer with some keyboard shortcuts:

First, you can control the menus of virtually any Windows 95 program just by tapping the Alt key once. Try it sometime when you're not having troubles. See how the word File is highlighted or set in a raised box? You can toggle through all the menus now by hitting the right arrow key to move over each word: Edit, View, etc.

To open the menu that's highlighted, hit the down arrow. You can now use the down arrow to move the highlight down to the item you want (like File, Save), or just hit the letter on the keyboard that's underlined in the menu item you want.

If you have to fill out a dialog box (to pick a file name if you're saving), use the Tab key to move between the boxes and buttons. When a button is selected, it'll have a faint gray dotted line around it. To "click" on that button, hit the Enter key.

Once your work is saved, you can exit the program using this method (File, Exit). Now you want to reboot.

Holding down the Ctrl key, tap the Esc key. It will open the Start menu. Use the up arrow key to select Shut Down, or just hit the letter "u." To toggle the buttons so your computer restarts instead of just shutting down, use the Tab key to highlight Restart; then hit the Enter key to select it.

You Get The Blue Screen Of Death: This nasty blue screen is left over from the bad old days of DOS, and seeing it indicates that either **a)** your program has done something very, very bad; or **b)** Windows itself has become unstable, striking out randomly at programs.

You never have a choice of what to do if you get the blue screen. It will typically close your software. If it says something about the system being "busy or unstable," turn the computer off and back on again.

If you get the blue screen, but by some miracle manage to keep your program open, save your work *immediately* and reboot.

If you do have to close your software, open it again immediately after rebooting. You may be able to retrieve a version of your work that was rescued by the program.

Your Computer Freezes: Nine times out of 10, a piece of software has tied things into knots. Hold down the Ctrl and Alt buttons, then tap the Del key. Do this *once*. (Doing it more than once will probably cause your computer to reboot.)

You should get a list of everything your machine is running at the moment. If you're lucky, one item will have "Not Responding" listed after its name. That's the problem software. To shut it down, click on it (you should have your mouse back) or use the arrow keys to highlight it. Then click on End Task. You may get a second window telling you "program not responding," and should Windows shut it down? Tell it to go ahead.

If you don't see anything marked as "Not Responding," chances are it's the program you were working on when things went kablooey. You can close it, without saving your work, by following the End Task procedure we just talked about. If nothing happens, try it again.

If the program shuts down but your machine is still locked up, hit Ctrl-Alt-Del *once* to bring up the list of running software again. Now it's time for you to start guessing: Which application has gone awry? Try shutting down other obvious pieces of software first, then graduate to things that look like alphabet soup and are harder to interpret.

Eventually, you'll identify the culprit. Make a mental note of it; chances are, it'll go south again soon. Don't ever be afraid to shut things down. You won't hurt the computer.

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You can reach Heather Newman via phone at 1-313-223-3336, via E-mail at newman@freepress.com or by visiting www.freep.com/tech/pcathome √

Intel's SteamRoller Hits Speed Bumps; How Will This Affect Grass-Roots Users?

by Ken Fermoyle and Linda Gonse

The Intel juggernaut appears to be slowing recently. For roughly two decades the company forged ahead, flattening opposition, amassing huge profits and delighting stockholders. Its strategy: develop ever-more-powerful microprocessors, sell them initially at high markups, then drop prices gradually as new generations come online.

Speed bumps in its profitable progress apparent by spring 1999 range from legal woes to new Pentium III chips that may be ahead of their time (and pose privacy threats). For virtually the first time in its history Intel faces real competition from other chipmakers and serious defections in the ranks of computer manufacturers.

How will this affect the average, non-corporate computer user? Let's look at the facts.

First, Intel appeared to lose momentum when the computer market changed drastically. Prices of entry-level computers plummeted rapidly. Since the late 1980s PCs selling for over $2000 dropped from a 40% market share to less than 10% in 1998. Under-$1000 systems became common and ads now tout sub-$800 boxes routinely.

Intel attempted to fill the low-end gap in its CPU (Central Processing Unit) lineup, but critics uniformly panned the first Celeron chips. AMD and Cyrix offered chips that equaled, even out-performed, Intel's economy models. A growing number of

computer manufacturers, striving to meet the demand for lower-priced models and still make a profit, abandoned their Intel-only policies and began using AMD and Cyrix products also.

The result: Intel's market share in PC microprocessors dipped from 87% in fourth-quarter 1997 to 76% in 4Q 1998.

Legal problems occurred when the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) filed an antitrust action against Intel. A tentative settlement had been reached, but details were sketchy as this article was being written. (Almost simultaneously, Motorola filed a suit charging that Intel stole trade secrets by hiring Motorola chip designers.) Industry analysts did report that the result would be a "kinder, gentler, less aggressive" Intel, which would be good news for competitors and other technology firms (including computer makers).

Ultimately, grass-roots users at the bottom of the food chain will benefit from freer exchange of information, an end to "blacklisting" of firms that refuse to enter overly-restrictive licensing agreement and the greater competition that should result.

The Pentium III has raised problems, too. Many industry critics say it's a solution to a problem that barely exists right now. Some cautioned business buyers that PIII chips offered few plusses chips in desktop machines running most current software applications. "PIII Advances Aren't Enough," proclaimed PC Week in a cover story headline, adding: "The chip shows only marginal performance improvement over Pentium IIs—no more than 8%—when running most business applications."

A PC enthusiast site, Ars Technica, tested a 500-MHz Pentium III against a 450-MHz Pentium II and found the increase to be a meager 11%. Of course, a few applications, especially those involving 3D graphics, do take advantage of certain PIII features. But if you're not a serious game-player, don't look for much bang from the high-priced new Intel chips.

Then there is the privacy issue, which could be the most critical of all for us end users.

Computers based on the new Pentium III chips that run at 450 and 500 MHz began rolling out on February 26. These chips feature the Processor Serial Number (PSN), an embedded 96-bit ID that identifies the user's PC to any software that knows how to ask for it.

(Recent reports indicate that Pentium II 333 and 366 chips with 256K integrated cache and Celeron 266 and 300 chips for laptops were shipped with prototype PSN enabled beginning January 25, 1999. One anonymous Intel employee has been reported as claiming that all 25-micron Intel chips have PSN ability.)

On the positive side, Intel claims PSN technology will help keep stolen credit cards from being used online, aid in discouraging CPU counterfeiters, and enhance some computer services.

Groups concerned about users' privacy being compromised voice loud opposition to the PSN. They say it allows user movements to be tracked, data to be collected about specific users, and eliminates user anonymity.

Intel attempted to answer privacy

advocates' concerns with a software fix that turns the ID off when desired. However, the ID does not remain permanently deactivated. Instead, rebooting activates it again. Early on, groups called for a hardware fix, insisting a software fix will not work.

In addition, cryptography expert Bruce Schneier discussed with CMP Media's Electronic Engineering Times the possibility of serial numbers being forged or stolen.

In mid-February in an online article, Fred Langa of Windows Magazine, described the anger and frustration he saw during an informal online poll of users' opinions about the PSN. "I think we're seeing the start of a strong anti-Intel backlash, analogous to the anti-Microsoft fervor that's changing the operating system landscape." The latter reference is to the sudden swell of interest in Linux by business users, which has not yet made any impact among grass-roots users.

The latest news is Dell, Gateway, Compaq, and IBM will ship Pentium III IDs turned off in the BIOS. But, a German magazine, C'T, reported that software, quickly crafted by a techie staffer as an experiment, remotely switches the ID on and allows others to read it!

In the meantime, privacy groups have complained to the FTC and are boycotting the Intel chip. National Semiconductor (parent of Cyrix) and Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) say they have no plans to create chips with the PSN feature.

Does all this mean Intel will fade away? Hardly! Called the "amazing profit machine" by Forbes Magazine, the company has used its profits well, acquiring or investing in a variety of technologies that not only add new products to its lineup, but spur demand for its core business.

Mike Elgan, Windows Magazine editor, pointed this out in an April 1999 editorial. "The company funnels billions into technologies beyond the microprocessor: PCs, RAM, videoconferencing, CAD software, networking, Internet plumbing, graphics, e-commerce, even toys. It does this to crank up the performance of software and peripherals so buyers have a reason to buy expensive new Intel chips."

Our advice: stay at least six months to a year or more behind the cutting edge. If your Pentium 166 or Pentium II machine does the tasks you ask of it, don't upgrade just for the sake of having the latest and greatest on your desktop.

Things may change somewhat by the time you read this, but we hope the background information will put them in perspective.

For links and details go to www.orcopug.org, click on Hot News. If you have another viewpoint, please send it to: Linda Gonse editor@orcopug.org or Ken Fermoyle, kfermoyle@earthlink.net.

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Ken Fermoyle has written some 2,500 articles for publications ranging from Playboy and Popular Science to MacWeek, Microtimes & PC Laptop. He was cohost/producer of a radio show on computers and a partner in a DTP service bureau during the '80s. Ken's Korner, a syndicated monthly column, is available free to User Groups. To inquire about the column or permission to reprint his article, contact kfermoyle@earthlink.net √

Continued from Page 4
this relationship is that we should partner with this school for the long term. Just as I was stating earlier about wanting things to happen overnight, this school is not going to turn into the model for educational technology overnight. The teachers will not have another half-day free until at least May. Also, Carol mentioned that these teachers would really like to be able get on the Internet. I have invited any of the teachers to come out to a SEMCO Sunday and I would be more than happy to hold a special training session or answer any questions. So we'll see what happens. Stay tuned for more volunteer opportunities.

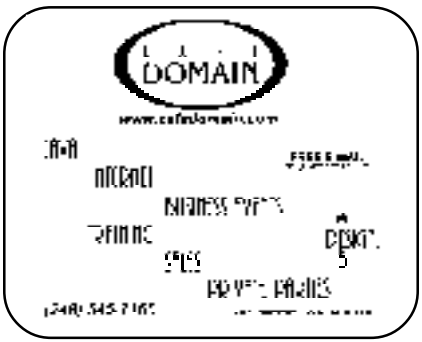
The day ended with Bob, Franz and myself taking another look at the "Back Pack" drive and being unsuccessful. I also took a look at a dead Apple IIe (yes, these computers are still in use and were quoted by Mary Ellen as still being the most reliable and easiest to use). It turns out it was a dead power supply and I just happened to have an Apple IIe at home that was bad, but had a good power supply. So, I gave the power supply to Carol's daughter, Dawn, at the last meeting.

I would like to communicate to you how good I felt helping this school and the good feeling that still exists that "we" SEMCO had made a difference in the community. One teacher in particular come up to me after the in-service to shake my hand and thank us for coming. Other teachers thanked us as well. All I can say is thanks to Carol for allowing us this opportunity to perform a worthwhile deed for SEMCO and the school.

I cannot end my column without first thanking our Vice President, Tim Vetter, for volunteering to head this year's Novi Expo Show to be held on May 18 and 19. Believe it or not, Carol Sanzi's daughter, Dawn, found out about SEMCO from our booth last year at the Expo. Tim also has been doing a great job with the Calendar-of-Events by coordinating updates from many local user groups. This adds such value to our DATA BUS and lets others know about other user groups in our community. Also, Tim reorganized the list of volunteers that is in the DATA BUS. So, the next time you see Tim, give him a round of applause.

Also, our food volunteers deserve a big round of applause as well—Betty MacKenzie brought Ham Dip & Crackers, Sandra Woods brought Cheese Puffs, Joan & Roland Maki (who never stop giving) brought cookies, Dawn Sanzi brought muffins, Regina Eicker brought Bagels, Pat Kreiling brought cookies, Bob Clyne and Roger Gay brought cheeses, and 'Ziggy' Turczyn brought rye bread.

Until next month, keep looking straight forward into new opportunities (and yes, great food!!) √



TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

SEMCO Members Helping the Community

Art Laramie is accepting computers, computer components, manuals and software for the Rochester Hills Lions Club program that supplies disabled people with computers. Contact Art at 248-398-7191

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Beth Fordyce is accepting Macintosh computers, components, peripherals, manuals and software (working or broken) for Immaculate Heart of Mary School PreK–8th grade, 175-200 students (Greenfield/8-Mile area, Detroit) for their computer science classes. Contact Beth 248-626-5105 7pm–10pm or beth_fordyce@macgroup.org

(You may bring them to a SEMCO meeting for Beth to take with her. Call her first to be sure she won't be absent that day)

If you want to use your donation as a tax deduction, make an itemized list (with one copy for yourself) of items you donate, and attach it to your donation. Include on the list the full name or description of each item, and the cost of its fair market value. Also make sure your full name, address and phone number are on it. The donatee will see that you receive a receipt. (Be advised that no one will make these lists for you.)

Membership Directory Updates

Roger Gay: rgay@voyager.net
Brian Brodsky: brian@annis.com

DONORS, MARCH REFRESHMENTS

Warner Mach, Coordinator
Bob Clyne
Regina Eicker
Roger Gay
Pat Kreiling
Betty MacKenzie
Joan/Roland Maki
Dawn Sanzi
Ziggy" Turczyn
Sandra Woods
Beth Fordyce
Others

COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

This is a list of members willing to be resources for other members to call when they have hardware or software questions. Are you willing to help members learn? Which software programs are you familiar enough with? It is not necessary to be an expert, but just have some familiarity with the program and be willing to help someone starting to learn it. Please give this some thought and volunteer at the next group meeting.

AutoCAD: Comptois, Gay, Vetter
Genealogy: Cook
IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Gay, Grupido, Yuhasz
IBM Windows Operating Systems: Clyne, Grupido, Yuhasz
Internet (browsers and mail): Grupido
Lotus 98: Chmara, Diller
MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Vetter, Yuhasz
MAS 90: Diller
M.S. Publisher: Kucejko
M.S. Excel: Vetter
M.S. Powerpoint: Diller
M.S. Word: Clyne, Diller, Grupido, Vetter
Novell Netware: Grupido, Yuhasz
Quicken: Clyne, Gay, Vetter

Chmara, Bob—248/540-6885, (Pager)
Clyne, Bob—810/387-3101. 9am-10pm
Comptois, Jerry—248/651-2504, anytime
Cook, Steven—313/272-7594 eves
John Diller—248/540-4382, eves
Gay, Roger—248/641-8245, 9am-10pm
Grupido, Larry—810/664-1777 Ext 151
Kucejko, Rick—248/879-6180, 6pm-10pm
Tim Vetter—248/576-7592, anytime
Steve Yuhasz—734/953-3794 eves

APRIL 1999 DATA BUS DEADLINE (10th day after meeting)

SEMCO & SIG DATA, & MEMBERS' ADS - Deadline: Wed, Apr 21, 11:59 pm

Members' personal ads free. To mail, use Editor address on Page 2; e-mail address **beth_fordyce@macgroup.org** PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline if possible.

BUSINESS ADS - Deadline: Second Friday monthly. Mail **unfolded** camera-ready copy; payment in full made out to SEMCO, to the Editor (address Pg 2).

Ad Rates and Rules

Full pages are 5-1/2" wide x 8-1/2" tall; Make allowance for 1/2"margins;
Halftones to be screened at 85 dpi; Offset press used; No agent pricing;
Full-page/1-issue=$30; Full-page/6-issue=$150; Full-page/12-issue=$240
Half-page/1-issue=$20; Half-page/6-issue=$100; Half-page/12-issue=$160
Qrtr-page/1-issue=$15; Qrtr-page/6-issue=$75; Qrtr-page/12-issue=$120

SEMCO CALENDAR

Apr 11 - SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday) Location: Science Building, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY in ROCHESTER. (Map: inner back page)

SEMCO **Board** Meeting at 12:00 pm, **Room 172.** For Officers and SIG Chairpersons. Other members are invited to attend.

SEMCO **General** Meeting at 1:30 pm, **Room 164. Pgm:** Business Meeting.

SIG-IBM (for IBM & compatible users), 1:45 pm, **Room 164. Pgm:** Using Computers to Edit Video: Gary Cendrowski, Applications Specialist, Wayne State U to demo use of computer to edit movies &other video.

SOCIAL PERIOD, 3:15 pm, **Room 172.** Refreshments!

NOVICE-IBM GROUP, 3:45 pm, **Room 172. Pgm:** Q&A, member-directed discussion. Hosts: Bob Clyne–Apr; Roger Gay–May

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE, 3:45 pm, **Room 164.** Chairman to review software from recent SIG-IBM Intermediate meetings & answer Q's. Also WinFax Pro for Windows and MS Office Suite of applications.

SIG-MAC (All Apple Macintosh products), 1:45 pm, **Room168. Pgm:** Phyllis Evans to demo CalComp's Creation Station graphic tablet, cordless mouse and stylus. See what you can do with a graphic tablet.

SIG-ADVANCED

Apr 5 - Monday, (Next: May 3) 6:45 pm (Meet 1st Monday)**,** Troy Public Library, Rm A, 500 W. Big Beaver Rd in Troy, at I-75 exit. Info: Franz Breidenich 248/398-3359. **TOPIC:** Wide ranging discussion of computers & computing.

SIG-DATABASE

Apr 21 - Wednesday, 6pm (Meet 3rd Wednesday) at Custom Business Systems offices (a subsidiary of Correll Porvin Associates, CPA). Info: Larry Grupido 810/664-1777 ext 151; lgrupido@traveladv.com. **Check SEMCO web site for more information.**

SIG-INTERNET

Apr 19 - Monday, 6:30 pm (Meet 3rd Monday) Bloomfield Twp Public Library at Lone Pine & Telegraph Roads. Contact Brian Brodsky: Res. 248/544-8987 (eves), or Work 248/395-0001, ext 228 for directions and more info. **TOPIC:** Brian to demo Microsoft's support page.

SEMCO

May 9, 1999 - SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday). **TOPIC:** Not available.

Tim Mauro-Vetter
TM31@daimlerchrysler.com
(to post monthly computer group info)

CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS OTHER GROUPS

***.DOS (Computer Users Grp of S.E.Mich.)**
Apr 10 - Saturday 7pm (Meet 2nd Saturday); Bryant Public Library, NW Cor.Mich. Ave. &Mason St.,Dearborn, rear parking/entrance. All MS-DOS, IBM-DOS, MS Windows PC-based software/ hardware. Open/public. Info: Dennis Leclerc 313/255-2060.

AAIICI (Amer. Ass'n. of Ind. Investors, Computerized Invstrs),
Apr 24 - Saturday, 10am-Noon (Meet 4th Saturday) (not December); W. Bloomfield Huntington Bank, Orchard Lk Rd., S. of Maple Rd. Info: Jack Lockman at 313-341-8855 or thunder@tir.com

DCOM COMPUTER CLUB
Apr 9 - Friday 6:30 - 8:30 pm (Meet 2nd Friday); Henry Ford C.C., Patterson Tech Bldg, Ford Rd/ Evergreen, Rm T143, Parking Lot C. Info: Doug Piazza 313/582-2602

Delta Computer Club,
Apr 29 - Thursday, 7pm (Meet last Thursday) (not Nov/Dec); Bay de Noc C. C., Escanaba. Info: Gordon Nelson, Pres & Editor at gnelson@bresnanlink.net or 906/428-1014.

GDOUG (Greater Detroit OS/2 Users Grp)
Apr 8 - Thursday, (Next: May 13) 6:30 pm (Meet 2nd Thursday) (not July);
Stardock Systems, Farmington Rd, N. of 6-Mile, Livonia; Info: Carolyn Kolaz, Pres at 76460.3040@CompuServe.COM; map on Web: look-inc.com/gdoug.

MacGroup Detroit,
Apr 18 - Sunday, 3pm-5pm (Meet 3rd Sunday); Southfield Civic Center, 26000 Evergreen Rd., Room 221. Info: Terry White, terry@macgroup.org or 313-571-9817. Web: www.macgroup.org
TOPIC: CorelDraw 8, latest contender to the Vector Drawing Arena.

MacTechnics, (MAC user Group), Coffee 9am, SIGs 9:30am, Main meeting 11am.
Apr 17 - Saturday, 9am-1pm (Meet 3rd Saturday); U of M, No. campus, EECS Bldg. & Dow Bldg. (see map on web: mactechnics.org). Info: Cassie at cassiemac@yahoo.com or 313-971-8743.
TOPIC: COREL Draw Suite

MCUG (Michigan Computer Users Grp),
Apr 15 - Thursday, 7pm (Meet 3rd Thursday); South Lake Hi Sch., 21900 E. 9-Mile Rd, St. Clair Shores. (Park rear lot; enter rear door). Info: Steve Skinner, Pres, at sskinner@wwnet.net or 810-412-8241. Web: members.aol.com/mcug

Michigan Apple Computer User Grp (Mac, IIGS, Apple II, some PC)
Apr 14/15 - Wed/Thu, (Next: May 12/13) 7pm (Meet 2nd Wednesday & Thursday); Apple II/ Apple-Works & Parent/Teachers Ed SIGS: 2nd Wed, 7 pm, St. Bede School, 12 & Southfield; Mac SIG: 2nd Thu, 7pm, Troy Library, I-75 at Big Beaver, **TOPIC: Carl Penddracki AOL demo, Mr. Gadget to bring high tech toys to demo (Thurs. only).**
Info: Carl Pendracki 248/647-8871 or carlpen@aol.com. Web: Detroit.freenet.org/apple.

SHCC (Sterling Hts Computer Club)
Apr 6 - Tuesday, (Next: May 4) 7:30 pm (Meet 1st Tuesday: not July/Aug); Carpathia Club, 38000 Utica Rd, Sterling Hts, Pres. Don VanSyckel at VanSyckel@voyager.net, 810/731-9232 ; Web:member.apcug.org/shcc. **TOPIC: Data Recovery, presented by Brian Ahern of Data Recovery Group**

SVCA (Saginaw Valley Computer Assoc.),
Apr 8 - Thursday, 6:39-9 pm (Next: May 13) (Meet 2nd Thursday); Saginaw. Info: Kay Engelhart program chairperson at kengelhart@hotmail.com.

Wayne State U. Mac User Grp
Apr 10 - Saturday 10am-Noon (Meet 2nd Saturday); at Mich.com, 21042 Laurelwood, Frmgtn. Info: Lorn/JoAnn Olsen 248/478-4300 or Denny MeLampy 248/477-0190, denny@mich.com

SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION

SEMCO MEETING - Sunday, April 11, 1999

SCIENCE BUILDING, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY in ROCHESTER

SEMCO Board Meeting at 12:00 pm, **Room 172** - For Officers and Chairpersons. Other members are invited to attend.

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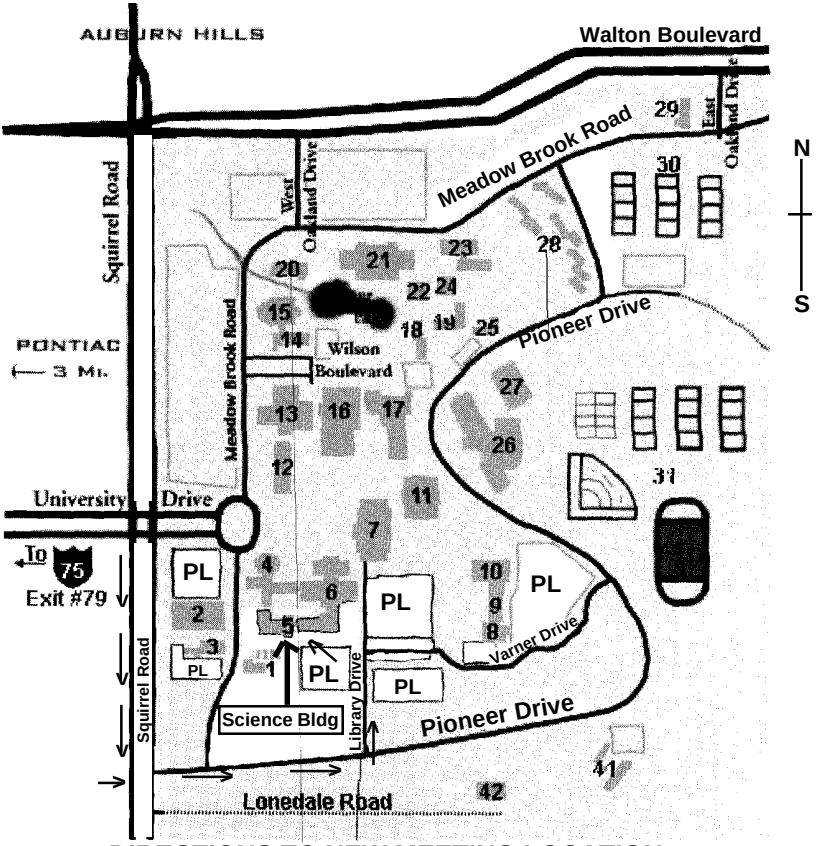

DIRECTIONS TO NEW MEETING LOCATION

5 Science Building (OUR NEW LOCATION)
6 Dodge Hall of Engineering
7 Kresge Library
PL Parking Lot (for Science Building & nearby lots**)**

Driving north on I-75 (from Detroit), get off Exit 79 (University Drive), go right on University Drive to campus entrance. Go right at Squirrel Road traffic signal; left on Pioneer Drive; left on Library Drive; left into parking lot. Park; proceed up stairs at end of lot (or take circle sidewalk around stairs for handicap access). Science Building is straight ahead on right. Enter first set of glass doors (at SE corner of building).

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The meetings at Oakland University are sponsored by OU's Academic Computer Services (ACS), and the student chapter of the Association of Computer Machinery (ACM).
SEMCO thanks OU, ACS & ACM for their assistance.

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